

# Financial assistance available for survivors of sexual violence

UPDATED DECEMBER 2020

## About the Victim Assistance Scheme

The Victim Assistance Scheme (VAS) helps survivors of serious crime in New Zealand to cover some of the costs related to the crime. It is administered by Victim Support on behalf of the New Zealand government. Under VAS, Victim Support can help survivors of a rape or sexual assault to cover costs that result from when the crime happened, reporting the crime, or for the survivor and a support person to attend court proceedings.

## Support for immediate costs

The **Sexual Violence Grant** is a one-off cash grant of up to \$500 to help with immediate costs which result from the crime, such as:

- replacing clothing, bedding, or other personal belongings lost, stolen, or damaged during the crime or taken by the police for their investigation
- medical costs (if they are not covered by ACC)
- temporary accommodation, childcare or meals, for you and any children in your care (if the crime happened at your home)
- transport costs for getting to and from a Police station or doctor to report the crime
- loss of income to attend police interviews or medical appointments

This grant is not means-tested, but some criteria do apply. Applicants must be able to show that they have incurred costs or suffered lost or damaged items, and that the crime has been reported to the police.

The Sexual Violence Grant is intended to assist with the immediate costs of crime, or reporting it, and is not available for historic costs (approx. 12 months or more prior). Exclusions apply to some items such as vaping and tobacco products, alcohol, or cash. This grant is only available for sexual crimes that occurred on or after 1 January 2010.

## Support for travelling to court

The **Sexual Violence Travel Assistance Grant** helps survivors and their support person to travel to attend court proceedings or parole hearings. Funding limits apply.

- **Travel** – return flights (domestic or international) booked by Victim Support OR mileage for personal vehicle travel, whichever is the lowest cost. To claim travel costs, you must be travelling a minimum of 16km return.
- **Accommodation** – a maximum of \$200.00 per night (but a fair, reasonable and available test is always applied) for accommodation booked by Victim Support.
- **Meals** – \$20 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch and \$35 for dinner for adults. Different rates apply for children (if childcare is not being claimed).
- **Childcare** – paid at \$100 per day, if care is outside regular routine arrangements.
- **Taxis & parking** – Taxis or parking pre-approved by Victim Support

### IMPORTANT

*All flights, accommodation, and taxis must be booked and paid for by Victim Support directly.*

*We cannot reimburse flights, accommodation, or taxis you book yourself.*

## Support for attending court

The **Sexual Violence Court Attendance Grant** provides survivors and their support person with a small daily allowance towards other costs when attending court.

Under this grant, Victim Support can contribute \$100 per day **OR** \$50 per half day each for survivors and their support person when they attend court proceedings. This grant is not means-tested and you do not need to prove that you have lost earnings or incurred costs.

## Other financial support

If you suffer an injury as a result of sexual assault or sexual violence or would like therapy, ACC may be able to help pay some of your costs. Contact ACC Sensitive Claims on 0800 735 566.

If you suffer an injury as a result of sexual assault or sexual violence, Work & Income may be able to help you with your living expenses (this is means tested). Contact Work & Income on 0800 559 009.

In serious emergency situations, Victim Support may be able to provide additional financial support through the Serious Crime Emergency Grant. See the financial assistance section of our website for more information at [www.victimsupport.org.nz](http://www.victimsupport.org.nz).

## Who can be a support person?

The survivor can decide whether they wish to travel alone or bring a support person. Additional people can also travel, but Victim Support can only contribute to the costs for the survivor and one support person.

A support person could be a parent, other family member, trusted friend, or professional support person (if they are not already eligible for government funding for supporting sexual violence survivors in court).

## How to apply

Survivors can ask their Victim Support Worker, Court Victim Advisor, or a sexual violence agency that is supporting them to help make a VAS application. You can contact Victim Support 24/7 on 0800 842 846.

Application forms can be downloaded from the financial support section of our website, [www.victimsupport.org.nz](http://www.victimsupport.org.nz).

If your application includes travel, it's important to submit your application well in advance.

Victim Support makes Victim Assistance Scheme payments twice weekly.



*For more information:*  
**please contact your Victim Support Worker  
or contact us on 0800 VICTIM (842 846).**

CONTACT

### Victim Support

Get Help: 0800 VICTIM (0800 842 846)  
[enquiries@victimsupport.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@victimsupport.org.nz)  
[victimsupport.org.nz](http://victimsupport.org.nz)

