



# Nunavut Victim Services

2023-2024 Annual Report

Community Justice, Department of Justice  
Government of Nunavut

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
SECTION 1: NUNAVUT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND .....	3
VICTIMS ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE.....	4
VAF PROGRAM COORDINATION .....	4
KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS .....	5
CHALLENGES .....	5
VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND FINANCIAL REPORT.....	5
SECTION 2: NUNAVUT VICTIM TRAINING PROGRAM.....	6
KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS .....	6
VICTIM CARE COORDINATOR POSITIONS IN ARVIAT AND PANGNIRTUNG .....	6
CHALLENGES .....	8
SECTION 3: NUNAVUT VICTIM TRAVEL SUPPORT PROGRAM .....	10
KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS .....	10
PARTICIPATION IN COURT PROCEEDINGS .....	10
COLLABORATION WITH JUSTICE PARTNERS .....	11
CHALLENGES .....	12
SECTION 4: NUNAVUT VICTIMS OF CRIME EMERGENCY FUND (NVCEF) .....	12
KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS .....	12
COLLABORATION WITH JUSTICE PARTNERS .....	12
CHALLENGES .....	13
SECTION 5: FAMILY INFORMATION LIAISON UNIT .....	13
KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS .....	13
IQALUIT MMIWG AWARENESS EVENT .....	14
INTERJURISDICTIONAL PARTNERSHIP .....	14
RED DRESS DAY EVENTS.....	14
COLLABORATION WITH JUSTICE PARTNERS .....	14
CHALLENGES .....	14
SECTION 6: FUTURE DIRECTION – NUNAVUT VICTIM SERVICES.....	15
APPENDIX A: VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND 2023-2024 FINANCIAL REPORT .....	16

## INTRODUCTION

Nunavut Victim Services is part of the Community Justice Division of the Department of Justice. It consists of five main programs:

- 1) Nunavut Victims Assistance Fund,
- 2) Nunavut Victim Training Program,
- 3) Nunavut Victim Travel Support Program,
- 4) Nunavut Victims of Crime Emergency Fund, and
- 5) Family Information Liaison Unit,

In April 2021, Nunavut Victim Services began receiving funding from Justice Canada to provide services and resources to victims and to develop and implement training sessions and educational materials for frontline service providers. The funding from Justice Canada also provides financial assistance to enable victims of crime and their families to travel for court proceedings. The current funding agreement is in effect until March 2026.

As of July 2017, Nunavut Victim Services has been receiving funding from Justice Canada to establish the Family Information Liaison Unit. The Family Information Liaison Unit complements the work of the National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) by providing support and services to families affected by MMIWG. The contract between Nunavut Victim Services and Justice Canada is renewed every two years, and, in March 2023, Justice Canada extended its funding commitment until 2025.

Positions under Nunavut Victim Services are funded by both Justice Canada and the Government of Nunavut. Justice Canada funds positions for two Victim Care Coordinators (Iqaluit and Cambridge Bay), the Victim Program Development Coordinator, and the Information Referral Coordinator. The Government of Nunavut funds the Victim Services Manager position and provides funding to the Hamlet of Pond Inlet through a Contribution Agreement to employ a local Victim Care Coordinator. In 2023-24, the Government of Nunavut partnered with the Hamlets of Arviat and Pangnirtung to employ a Victim Care Coordinator in each of these communities.

In the Fall of 2023, the Departments of Family Services and Justice signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on the implementation of Gender-based violence initiatives. The MOU also enabled the Department of Justice to receive funding through a four-year agreement with Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada.

## SECTION 1: NUNAVUT VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND

The *Victims of Crime Act* establishes the Nunavut Victims Assistance Fund (VAF) and provides for the creation of a Victims Assistance Committee to allocate the funds. This part of the report is prepared

in accordance with section 10 of the *Victims of Crime Act*, which requires the Committee to report on its activities at the end of each fiscal year.

The Victims Assistance Fund is a special-purpose fund established from revenue from victim fine surcharges imposed under Canada's *Criminal Code*. The Fund was designed to support community-based projects and activities that provide services and assistance to victims of crime, including:

- **training** aimed at sensitizing community resource workers to the needs and circumstances of victims of crime;
- **direct services** that assist victims with crisis response, personal support, follow-up assistance, victim information, and systems referral;
- **public awareness and information** on the rights and responsibilities of victims, available services, the criminal justice system and its procedures, and any issues relating to victims of crime; and
- **research projects** on best practices for addressing issues faced by victims of crime across Canada and developing strategies that support Nunavummiut who are victims of crime.

A call for project proposals is typically announced in all Nunavut communities once a year. Victims Assistance Committee members review project proposals and send recommended projects to the Minister of Justice for approval.

## VICTIMS ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

The Victims Assistance Committee is made up of three members appointed by the Minister of Justice to serve for up to three years. Committee members are respected community members with knowledge of and experience in dealing with justice and social issues.

The Victims Assistance Committee members for 2023-2024 are:

- Kendall Greenley-Aknavigak, of the Kitikmeot region.
- Charlene Nichol, of the Kivalliq region.

The Victim Assistant Committee representative for the Qikiqtaaluk region was vacant.

## VAF PROGRAM COORDINATION

The Victims Assistance Fund (VAF) is administered by a Victim Services Manager, whose role is to provide administrative support in the following areas:

- **Victims Assistance Committee:** provide training that supports the Committee with carrying out its function and achieving its goals and maintain an open ongoing platform for Committee members to share information on current issues faced by victims of crime in their respective regions and discuss strategies that address these issues.
- **Victims Assistance Fund Applicants:** support applicants with the proposal- and report-writing process and assist individuals and/or non-governmental organizations with developing effective projects that align with healing and empowering survivors of crime.
- **Public Awareness:** establish initiatives to raise public awareness about the impacts of victimization and the support available in Nunavut's communities.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Department of Justice successfully secured funding from Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada to ensure the sustainability of the Victims Assistance Fund.

## CHALLENGES

A call for proposal process for the Victim Assistance Fund was not facilitated in 2023-24 due to staffing vacancies within Victim Services, focusing resources on other key activities like delivering services to victims and survivors of crime, planning and facilitating the Nunavut Victim Services Conference, and actively seeking to fill the vacant Victim Assistant Committee position.

Further, the Community Justice division focused on the development of a sustainability plan for the Victim Assistance Fund. The Victim Assistance Fund had approximately \$153,000 in funding at the beginning of the fiscal year but with no consistently reliable and adequately sustainable source of additional funding (victim surcharge orders are limited and have decreased significantly across Canada). The Department of Justice worked with the Department of Family Services to obtain shared funding for the Victim Assistance Fund from WAGE Canada to support gender equality, including victims of gender-based violence. The four-year funding agreement was signed in the fall of 2023 and was followed by an MOU between the Department of Family Services and the Department of Justice. Under the WAGE Canada funding, \$150,000 per year is allocated to support programs to supplement funds held in the Victims Assistance Fund starting in 2023-24.

## VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND FINANCIAL REPORT

See **Appendix A: Victims Assistance Fund 2023-2024 Financial Report.**

## SECTION 2: NUNAVUT VICTIM TRAINING PROGRAM

The Nunavut Victim Training Program was established to increase front-line support and services for victims of crime and to increase awareness and training for service providers through strategic partnerships with other government and non-government agencies. Its purpose is to increase the quality of culturally relevant and safe supports and services for victims of crime in Nunavut and to mitigate the harm caused by crime.

Victim Care Coordinators in Iqaluit, Cambridge Bay and Pond Inlet administer the Nunavut Victim Training Program. Although the Program's main purpose is to enhance services for victims of crime, Victim Care Coordinators also provide direct support to victims and survivors of crime.

In 2023-2024, the Department of Justice funded additional Victim Care Coordinator positions in Arviat and Pangnirtung, which is governed by a Contribution Agreement between the Hamlets of Pangnirtung and Arviat and Department of Justice.

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Victim Care Coordinator Positions in Arviat and Pangnirtung

Adding the Victim Care Coordinator positions in Arviat and Pangnirtung has increased direct front-line services for victims and survivors of crime in the community. The Contribution Agreements and partnerships between the Department of Justice and the municipalities also encouraged the sustainable expansion of community-based Victim Services programs to residents of Arviat and Pangnirtung.

#### Training for Nunavut Victim Services Personnel

##### In-Person Training

- The Victim Care Coordinators in Arviat, Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung received on-the-job orientation, client-support training, and field training from senior Victim Services personnel during their visits to these communities during court sessions.
- Canadian Consortium Child and Youth Trauma Symposium in Montreal (3 days).
  - During this Symposium, Nunavut Victim Services personnel learned and explored various topics including the history of trauma and suffering in relations to children and Indigenous peoples of Canada, the importance of cultural safety in addressing trauma as well as the correlations of trauma, burnout and organizational stress.
- Responding to Trauma and Grief for Indigenous Communities and Organizations in Edmonton (5 days). This certificate program was facilitated by the Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute Inc. Topics include:
  - "Counselling Strategies for Healing and Resilience";

- “Walking with Grief – Helping Others Deal with Loss”;
- “Vicarious Trauma – Strategies for Resilience, Crisis Response Planning”; and
- “Critical Incident Group Debriefing”.

### Online Training

Victim Services staff participated in online training programs, including on the following topics:

- Healing Support Facilitator Training;
- Serving and supporting LGBTQIA+ victims and survivors of crime;
- Serving and supporting victims of hate motivated crime; and
- Changing the script on Intimate Partner Violence.

### **Training and Resources for Justice Partners, Stakeholders, and the Public**

- In 2023-2024, Nunavut Victim Services personnel conducted ten (10) visits to nine (9) communities (visiting Pond Inlet twice) and delivered information sessions, training and workshops based on each community’s needs. The information sessions and training were for front line service providers such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), community social services workers, mental health consultants, etc. The purpose of the sessions was to promote cultural awareness, cultural safety, and trauma-informed practices when working with victims of crime in their various capacities.

Information sessions and workshops included:

- **Victims and Survivors of Crime Week 2023:** Nunavut Victim Services personnel partnered with the Winnipeg Neurosurgeon and Medical Director of Pan Am Concussion Program, Dr. Mike Ellis, to create awareness regarding the traumatic brain injury that many victims and survivors of intimate partner violence experience. Dr. Mike Ellis travelled to Iqaluit and Arviat with Victim Services personnel to facilitate workshops and information sessions with front line service providers such as the RCMP, nurses, Mental Health Consultants, Community Social Services Workers, criminal justice professionals, community counsellors and non-profit partners. Dr. Mike Ellis also provided the presentations via MS Teams for front line service providers in Cambridge Bay and Kinngait.
- **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Training:** With funding from WAGE Canada, Nunavut Victim Services partnered with the Department of Health to offer Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Training to nurses and health care workers across the territory. Victim Services worked closely with the Qikiqtani General Hospital team to provide funding to thirteen nurses who successfully completed SANE certification and preceptorship.
- **Victim Services Conference:** Nunavut Victim Services personnel facilitated a territorial conference where frontline service providers attended training and workshops to better understand the needs of victims and survivors. Nunavut Victim Services partnered with the

RCMP (Special Investigation Unit), Public Prosecution Canada, International Association of Forensic Nurses and a neurosurgeon specializing in the traumatic brain injuries for victims of intimate partner violence, to provide a variety of presentations to participants from the Departments of Health and Mental Health, Family Services, Education, women shelters and other non-profit organizations.

- **Lunch and Learn Information Sessions:** Nunavut Victim Services personnel facilitated information sessions at the Qikiqtani General Hospital, with a focus on self-care and wellness topics for frontline service providers.

### **Collaboration with Justice Partners**

Victim Care Coordinators participated in various working groups and initiatives, including:

- **Stakeholder meeting on Intimate Partner Violence:** Victim Care Coordinators participated and contributed to the *Qullit* Nunavut Status of Women Council (QNSWC) and the Department of Family Services' stakeholders' meetings to discuss the topic of intimate partner violence (IPV) and better understand issues impacting Nunavummiut who are experiencing IPV.
- **Sexual Assault Investigation Review Committee:** This Committee was established by the RCMP in support of Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence. The Committee provides additional file reviews for sexual assault investigations that are initially considered unfounded.
- **Umingmak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre Case Review Working Group:** This Working Group is led by Umingmak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre to review the Centre's cases for best practices. Various stakeholders such as the RCMP, the Department of Family Services, and Nunavut Victim Services are invited to review the referral process and make recommendations to improve the Centre's processes.
- **Indigenous Justice Strategy Regional engagement:** The Victim Care Coordinator attended the regional engagement session that Justice Canada hosted to gather input and feedback into the development of the Indigenous Justice Strategy.
- **Access to Justice Working Group:** This Working Group is led by the Law Society of Nunavut. The Victim Care Coordinator attended multiple meetings throughout the year to assist with the development of a multi-tiered resource handbook for easy-to-access, relevant, and up-to-date information for front-line service providers and the public at large.
- **"Take Back the Night" Event:** This event was held in Cambridge Bay during the Mental Health Awareness Week and featured a walk followed by a presentation from front-line agencies.

## **CHALLENGES**



While trying to widen the scope of service delivery, Nunavut Victim Services faced minor challenges stemming from sustainability issues and limited resource availability from other services, such as counselling for victims and survivors of crime.

## SECTION 3: NUNAVUT VICTIM TRAVEL SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Nunavut Victim Travel Support Program provides financial assistance for victims and survivors of crime to travel and participate in court proceedings that are held outside their home communities. This includes financial support for air travel, accommodation, and meals for the duration of the court proceedings. The Program also enables Nunavut Victim Services personnel to travel to various Nunavut communities to provide support for victims and their families before, during, and after court proceedings.

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

#### Participation in Court Proceedings

Trauma-informed support is essential to minimize harm and reduce revictimization. Through the Nunavut Victim Travel Support Program, victims are provided with opportunities to choose family members or close friends (support person) to accompany them while they testify and recount their traumatic experience. By having a support person accompanying them, victims and survivors of crime are provided with physically and emotionally safe environments.

The Nunavut Victim Travel Support Program also allows families to attend preliminary hearings, trials, and sentencing hearings for criminal offences such as homicide and attempted homicide. Enabling families to attend these hearings supports them with finding closure by providing them the opportunity to prepare Victim Impact Statements and access information about their loved ones through information shared and decided during the proceeding.

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Victim Services staff attended twenty-six (26) court circuits in ten (10) communities: Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Kugluktuk, Igloolik, Iqaluit, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Resolute Bay, and Sanikiluaq to provide support to victims and their families before, during, and after the court proceedings. Support and services for families included access to mental wellness support services such as traditional community-based counsellors, clergy, and clinical counsellors during and after challenging hearings.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, twenty-four (24) Nunavummiut travelled to attend court using financial assistance through the Victim Travel Support Program. The clients were from eight (8) Nunavut communities: Coral Harbour, Iqaluit, Kinngait, Kugluktuk, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Nauyasat, and Rankin Inlet. Additionally, clients from two (2) out-of-territory locations – Ottawa, Ontario and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories accessed the Program.

Other supports and services offered by the Victim Program Development Coordinator through the Nunavut Victim Travel Support Program include:

- court orientation and court accompaniment;
- educating victims of crime on their rights to information, participation, restitution, and protection;
- advocating for a statement of restitution to be addressed in court proceedings;
- supporting victims to write and present Victim Impact and Community Impact Statements;
- advocating for testimonial aids, where applicable;
- assisting with Peace Bond applications; and
- assisting victims with registering with Correctional Service Canada and the Parole Board of Canada after sentencing has been imposed on an offender.

### **Collaboration with Justice Partners**

The Victim Program Development Coordinator collaborates with staff from the Department of Justice's Corrections Division to notify victims of crime when an incarcerated offender applies for early release or temporary absence for compassionate leave. This is an important service for victims, as it allows them to mentally prepare for an offender's return to the community. For their role, the Victim Program Development Coordinator informs victims of an offender's release and assists each victim with accessing appropriate resources, such as counselling and additional protective measures such as applications for an Emergency Protection Order or Peace Bond.

The Victim Program Development Coordinator and Public Prosecution Service Canada continue to work in partnership to share accommodation costs for victim witnesses and their support persons to attend and testify in court outside their home community. This is an important partnership as it allows victims to have their support networks alongside them as they recall traumatic events while testifying in court.

Nunavut Victim Services continues to strengthen its partnerships with other Justice stakeholders, such as the RCMP's Major Crime Unit, to enhance Victim Services personnel's ability to disseminate information to victims and their family members regarding ongoing police investigations.

The Victim Program Development Coordinator also maintains collaborations with various partners to offer comprehensive supports and services to victims of crime and their families. These services range from income support and financial assistance, to clinical, community-based, and traditional forms of counselling. Partners include representatives from the Government of Nunavut's Department of Family Services and Department of Health's Mental Health Division, Municipality of Cambridge Bay's Department of Healthy Living, and non-profit organizations such as the Ilisasqivik Society in Clyde River and Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre in Rankin Inlet.

## CHALLENGES

At the beginning of 2023-24, we had operational challenges due to staffing shortages. However, as the year progressed, we recruited and trained three (3) new staff members and streamlined the services delivery system.

## SECTION 4: NUNAVUT VICTIMS OF CRIME EMERGENCY FUND (NVCEF)

The Nunavut Victims of Crime Emergency Fund (NVCEF) was established to meet victims' immediate practical needs and offset financial burdens that arise from criminal offences by providing short-term financial support for expenses associated with crime scene clean up, funerals and funeral homes, repatriation, and related travel expenses.

The NVCEF complements other funding programs such as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated's bereavement and compassionate supports that is available to Nunavummiut grieving a loved one.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2023-2024, the Nunavut Victims of Crime Emergency Fund assisted eight (8) families from five (5) Nunavut communities – Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, Pond Inlet, and Kinngait – and one (1) out-of-territory location – Ottawa.

Fund expenditures assisted with expenses such as:

- emergency shelter in hotels, overnight essentials, and meals for victims of crime;
- crime scene clean-up;
- funeral home expenses, including the cost of a casket and hearse funeral transportation;
- airline waybills for repatriation of a loved one to their final resting place; and
- travel-related expenses for family members to attend a funeral.

Other non-financial supports and services offered to clients include:

- referrals to RCMP Major Crime Units and victim services in other jurisdictions (Ottawa); and
- referrals to remote counselling and covering appointment costs.

### Collaboration with Justice Partners

Nunavut Victim Services personnel worked with the RCMP's Major Crime Unit, Nunavut's Office of the Chief Coroner, the Government of Nunavut's Department of Community and Government Services, Hamlets, and funeral homes in Nunavut and Ottawa to provide wrap-around services for grieving families as they planned for bringing their loved ones to their final resting places.

## CHALLENGES

There were operational challenges with the administration of the Nunavut Victims of Crime Emergency Fund related to out-of-territory vendors' procurement processes. Many of these procurement processes were unfamiliar to Victim Services personnel, which caused some inefficiencies and delays while staff familiarized themselves with different jurisdictions and partners' unique procedures.

## SECTION 5: FAMILY INFORMATION LIAISON UNIT

The Nunavut Family Information Liaison Unit is a resource program that was established as a one-stop centre to provide various supports to families of MMIWG. The program is administered by the Information Referral Coordinator.

Supports that can be accessed through the Family Information Liaison Unit program include:

- **Information:** Assistance with system navigation for families seeking to access third-party records about their missing or murdered loved ones;
- **Healing Workshops:** Referral to and coordination of group and/or individual healing sessions for family members, with options for facilitators from a pool of Elders, therapeutic counsellors, clergy, or clinical psychologists; and
- **Celebration of Life:** Financial aid to support with coordinating family feasts in commemoration of a loved one.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Family members of MMIWG can access funding and resources through the Family Information Liaison Unit (FILU) program.

In 2023-2024, the Information Referral Coordinator held information sessions with families from seven (7) communities: Igloolik, Pond Inlet, Kugaaruk, Arviat, Taloyoak, Cambridge Bay and Pangnirtung. The purpose of the information sessions was to facilitate initial contact between the Information Referral Coordinator and MMIWG families and allow the coordinator to share information with each family and assess their needs. During information sessions, the coordinator and families began building foundations for the healing process by exploring ideas on how to move forward with coping with the loss of their loved one.

Throughout 2023-2024, the Information Referral Coordinator organized and facilitated various gatherings to meet the needs of MMIWG Families. The family gatherings were hosted in Taloyoak, Pangnirtung, Arviat, Iqaluit and Igloolik and accessed resources through the Family Information Liaison Unit. Overall, FILU supported over two hundred (200) community members from various MMIWG

families. FILU provided funding for the events, travel-related expenses, and honoraria for Elders and cultural health support workers who assisted with counselling.

Below are additional highlights of collaborations and successes for 2023-2024 fiscal year.

### **Iqaluit MMIWG Awareness Event**

The FILU, in partnership with YWCA Agvik Women Shelter in Iqaluit, hosted a gathering for MMIWG families from Iqaluit. The FILU invited MMIWG families in Iqaluit to offer information regarding FILU resources and additional support available through FILU. Families who have already received resources from FILU shared their lived experience regarding their healing journeys and the positive impact that FILU had on their families. Inuit counsellors were available to provide mental health support to the families attending this 5-day event.

### **Interjurisdictional partnership**

FILU partnered with the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, a Family Support Branch with the Quebec government, to support a family's informational needs regarding their loved one. Through this partnership, the family had an opportunity to retrace the journey of their loved one and to hold a celebration of life ceremony.

### **Red Dress Day Events**

On the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people, Nunavut Victim Services personnel organized and facilitated activities such as commemorative walks and BBQs. In 2023-2024, events were hosted in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay.

### **Collaboration with Justice Partners**

The Information Referral Coordinator continues to stay informed about available counselling resources to ensure they can offer clients a bigger pool of options. The coordinator also maintains good relations with Health and Justice partners, including the Healing by Talking program, community mental health nurses and consultants, and Inuit Counsellors from wellness societies such as the Ilisaqsivik Society in Clyde River, Pulaarvik Kablu Friendship Centre in Rankin Inlet, Healthy Living Centre in Cambridge Bay, and Tukisigiavik Society in Iqaluit.

## **CHALLENGES**

The scope of services offered by the Family Information Liaison Unit program continued to increase as more families learned of the program. The increase in clients also presented challenges with the

contracted resources, i.e. cultural -relevant counsellors and staffing issues.

## SECTION 6: FUTURE DIRECTION – NUNAVUT VICTIM SERVICES

The Department of Justice is committed to the advancement of Victim Services and will continue to build momentum going forward. All Victim Services staff continue to build stronger relationships with various Justice partners to offer seamless services and supports to victims and survivors of crime.

## APPENDIX A: VICTIMS ASSISTANCE FUND 2023-2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

### STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENDITURES: APRIL 1, 2023 – MARCH 31, 2024

<b>Opening Balance</b>		<b>\$ 153,077.56</b>
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#### **Revenue**

Interest accumulated (2023-2024)	<u>\$ 8,482.79</u>	
	\$ 8,482.79	

**\$ 161,560.35**

#### **Expenditures**

Bank charges	\$ 0.00	
Disbursements – Project	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	
	\$ 0.00	

<b>Closing Balance</b>		<b>\$ 161,560.35</b>
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**Note: \$ 150,000.00 in additional funding is also allocated to VAF programs under a funding agreement (2023 to 2027) with WAGE Canada and MOU with Department of Family Services. These monies are part of the Department of Justice's Grants and Contributions and not deposited into the Victims Assistance Fund.**