



# pennsylvania

## COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Lt. Governor Austin Davis Highlights Importance of Proposed 2025-26 State Budget Investment for Victims Compensation and the Critical Role of the Program for Victims and Survivors of Crime**

*Since 2023, PCCD has distributed more than \$29 million through the Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) for over 16,000 claims to financially support victims of crime with medical costs, counseling, relocation, and more*

*Funding for this program is running low – that’s why the Shapiro-Davis Administration proposed a \$9 million investment for VCAP in the 2025-26 budget to replenish this critical funding for victims of crime*

**Pittsburgh, PA** — Today, **Lt. Governor Austin Davis** joined **Center for Victims** and other local victim service providers to highlight the importance of supporting victims and survivors of crime and to encourage support for the Shapiro-Davis Administration’s proposed \$9 million investment in the Victims Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) in the 2025-26 state budget.

“No crime victim should have to worry about how they’ll afford medical bills. No family should have to struggle with funeral expenses for a loved one lost to violence. And no sexual assault survivor should have to worry about covering the costs of counseling to overcome their trauma.” said **Davis, chair of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)**. “The Victims Compensation Assistance Program is a critical financial lifeline for people who have been impacted by violence and crime. The Shapiro-Davis 2025-26 budget – and our proposed investment of \$9 million into the Crime Victims Compensation Fund – will help heal families, lessen burdens, and save lives.”

VCAP serves as a critical financial lifeline for people who have experienced crime victimization. Each year, the program receives an average of 12,000 claims for eligible

expenses including medical and counseling expenses, loss of earnings, loss of support, stolen cash, relocation, funeral costs, crime scene cleanup, and more. Over the past five years, PCCD has paid more than 67,000 VCAP claims totaling \$67 million in eligible expenses for citizens across all 67 Pennsylvania counties.

In recent years, VCAP's expenses have exceeded deposits into the fund, depleting it to a critically low level. Governor Shapiro's proposed \$9 million investment in VCAP for the 2025-26 state budget is pivotal to help stabilize the fund, ensuring continued support for Pennsylvanians when they need it most.

In Allegheny County alone, VCAP has paid over 3,000 compensation claims totaling over \$5.5 million in expenses in the last five years. Center for Victims has filed more than 940 claims during that time.

“Because we file the largest number of victim compensation claims, we see daily the need for financial support for individuals and families impacted by crime,” said **Laurie MacDonald, President and CEO, Center for Victims**. “We are grateful that Governor Shapiro and Lt. Governor Davis recognize the impact and need for these services and are working hard to ensure these funds will be available to those in need in the darkest time of their lives.”

[Center for Victims](#) is the largest, most comprehensive victim service agency in Pennsylvania, and provides services to victims and survivors of all crimes including victim compensation assistance, sexual assault and domestic violence therapy for adults and children. Services include emergency shelter, court advocacy, information on victims' rights, court accompaniment for homicide victims and families, emergency crisis response teams, a 24-hour crisis hotline, and more.

### **Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault**

“Healing from sexual trauma is a process and takes place over months and years. The financial impact of trauma is prevalent throughout a survivor's healing,” said **Sadie Restivo, Executive Director of Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR)**. “We know that a traumatic event causes physical, emotional, and psychological damage. Trauma also comes with a financial burden, one that continues to grow in the weeks and months following the event. VCAP plays a critical role in restoring financial resources, or reducing the impact of this burden.”

In the last three years, PCCD has paid over 1,000 sexual assault counseling claims, totaling more than \$4 million statewide.

### **Supporting Survivors of Gun Violence**

Some expenses incurred by victims of gun violence and covered by VCAP include medical and counseling expenses, loss of earnings, funeral costs, loss of support, relocation, crime scene clean-up, and transportation costs. In the last three years,

VCAP has paid over 1,800 claims, where the incident involved gun violence, totaling more than \$9.5 million statewide.

### **Supporting Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse**

“A Child’s Place PA is very thankful that we can access VCAP to support the costs of our medical exams, as standard medical reimbursement does not begin to cover costs,” said **Dee Dee Blossnich-Gooden, Director of Programming at A Child’s Place PA**. As a child advocacy center, with the support of VCAP, we can provide child friendly exams that allow parents and children to discuss very sensitive issues pertaining to health and relationships.”

VCAP covers the costs of forensic rape exams as well as counseling and medical costs for children who have experienced abuse.

### **Supporting Survivors of Domestic Violence**

“It’s imperative to understand that the impact of crime is complex and multi-layered, very often extending beyond the immediate incident. The VCAP program provides valuable financial resources that assist victims in restoring their lives,” said **Grace Coleman, President and CEO of Crisis Center North**.

The VCAP program can provide vital support for victims and survivors of domestic violence including covering costs for relocation, medical and counseling expenses, loss of earnings, and more. In the last three years, PCCD has paid over 860 claims, related to domestic violence incidents, totaling more than \$2 million statewide.

For more information on VCAP, visit the [PCCD website](#). If you or someone you know was affected by a crime, visit the [PA Crime Victims website](#) for information and resources.



*Lt. Gov. Austin Davis at today's news conference; additional photos/video available at [PACast.com](https://www.pacast.com)*

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