



REBECCA LEE KNOX CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE FUND
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(Revised 09/15/2020)

POLICY STATEMENT

The Broward Victim's Rights Coalition Rebecca Lee Knox Crime Victim Assistance Fund (herein after referred to as the "Fund") recognizes that crime victims and survivors may suffer financial hardship as a result of their victimization. Hardships may include, but are not limited to: housing, utilities, food, furnishings, clothing, childcare, rent deposits, transportation, medical care, and other basic needs.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Fund is to provide limited financial assistance to crime victims and/or their families when no other funds are available.

DEFINITIONS

1. The term "Victim" refers to a person(s) who has experienced physical, emotional, and/ or financial loss as a result of a criminal act and who meets the Fund's eligibility criteria. This includes primary and secondary victims and survivors.
2. The term "Victim Service Provider" (Provider), refers to all agencies and service providers serving the needs of crime victims.
3. The term "Criminal Act" refers to the act that physically or emotionally harms another or that results in damage or loss of property, which, if reported to the police, would be considered a crime in the State of Florida even in the absence of pending criminal charges.

BUDGETARY REGULATIONS

As specified in the By-laws, all sums placed into the Fund shall be appropriated by the members of the BVRC, prior to expenditure thereof for the purposes of establishing, operating, maintaining and improving the Coalition.

The BVRC Fund may receive its operating capital through contributions from citizens, private businesses and/or public sector agencies. Contributors to the Fund may, in some instances, designate how their donations are to be expended. The Coalition, however, will exercise maximum flexibility in distributing funds to those victims most in need of service(s).

The Coalition will maintain a separate bookkeeping system by which to account for all Fund deposits, revenues, and expenditures, and will ensure that all transactions are accounted for and justified.

The Coalition will request the Treasurer to provide financial summary reports reflecting the Fund revenues, expenditures and balance. The summary reports will serve as an accountability tool to verify that the Coalition and the Fund Committee records are in agreement.

The Coalition may enter into agreements with local vendors, where possible, to request that goods and services be provided to authorized/identified victims/survivors presenting a Coalition voucher. The voucher will be written for the exact amount of purchase, and must be signed by the Treasurer or designee.

The vendor(s) will be advised by the Coalition that original invoices for services rendered must be forwarded to the Coalition for processing of reimbursements, and that such requests will be handled expeditiously.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES/CRITERIA

The Treasurer, as the administrative designee, is fully responsible for overseeing deposits, revenues, expenditures and balances of the Fund.

The Treasurer and designated members of the Fund Committee will approve/disapprove, in writing, all victim/survivor(s) requests for financial assistance from the Fund.

The Fund will be used to provide financial assistance to crime victims/survivors in accordance with the eligibility requirements.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Residence - The Fund will be available to assist crime victims and their family members residing in Broward County. Proof of residency may be required. The Fund may assist nonresident crime victims and their family members victimized within Broward County.
2. Proof of Victimization –A Police Report or Restraining Order/Injunction is required with application.
3. Period of Eligibility - Financial assistance must be requested by the victim/survivor within sixty (60) days following the victimization, unless good cause exists for waiving this criterion. Alternate proof of victimization can be provided.
4. Non-duplication of services - The Coalition will not administer assistance from the Fund when victims are eligible for aid through other community resources. A victim applicant must first explore all other available community resources. If required, Coalition members may be asked to assist and advocate on behalf of the applicant(s).

The Coalition will serve the needs of crime victims only when other community resources have: a) exhausted their budget; b) no provision in their guidelines to honor victim/survivor's request; and c) limited funds to provide assistance to crime victims and must require matching funds from other agencies.

The Fund will provide financial assistance for current expense/needs only.

5. Crime victim/survivor(s) will be required to sign the Fund Application Form if in person.
6. Documentation of attempts to access other available resources will be written in the referral form and provided to the Fund Committee.
7. Reimbursement - The Coalition may request reimbursement when other income is expected to be (come) available.

The Coalition will not use salary garnishment or other legal processes against anyone who fails to reimburse the Fund. However, failure to reimburse may jeopardize an individual's ability to apply for future assistance, until the amount of the past assistance has been reimbursed.

8. Repeat Victimization – Previously served Crime victims, their families and survivors may be eligible for financial assistance from the Fund providing proof of subsequent victimization and based on available funds.

PROCEDURES

1. All applications must originate with a BVRC member (individual or agency member designee) in good standing.
2. The use of the Fund may be available to victims after a majority of the Fund Committee members determines that the expenditure is essential to the victim. Commencing March 18, 2015, funds will be distributed in an amount not to exceed \$500.00 per application. Thereafter, annual reviews will be conducted by the Fund committee and approved by the general membership to establish maximum financial awards per application.
3. Providers will complete and submit a Fund Application Form with supporting documentation to the Fund Committee via e-mail to an address to be established and maintained by the Coalition and provided to members.
4. The expenditure of the Fund will be at the discretion of the Broward Victim's Rights Coalition Fund Committee.
5. The Fund Committee will consist of seven (7) members in good standing with the Coalition. A Chair, an Executive Board representative and five (5) Members at Large. The Executive Committee will compile and submit to the organization a committee slate to be approved by the general membership. All efforts shall be made to insure that the committee is representative of a cross section of agencies including, but not limited to: the judicial system; law enforcement; nonprofit and government service providers; and the faith community.
6. Applicant must provide a plan of sustainability after funding is exhausted.
7. Upon approval by the Fund Committee designee, the Broward Victim's Rights Coalition Treasurer will release funds. An Acknowledgement of Disbursement form is required to be completed by the victim and provider, and must be returned to the BVRC Treasurer.
8. Funds will be given directly to the BVRC member in good standing and/or to the vendor on behalf of the victim. Funds will not be paid directly to the victim. Receipts will be required.

9. Failure to provide a receipt will result in the BVRC member in good standing to have their Rebecca Lee Knox application privileges suspended for 6 months.

10. The Treasurer is fully responsible for overseeing deposits, expenditures, and balances, and shall provide a monthly report to the general membership of the Broward Victim's Rights Coalition.

9. Documented notification of acceptance or denial will be provided to the BVRC member, who originated the application.

Committee Expenditure Guidelines

Designated Expenditures

Direct financial assistance to crime victims.

Direct Financial Assistance

Direct financial assistance means financial assistance of essential benefits to victims and/or surviving family members. Such services may include payments for damages/losses incurred as a direct result of a crime. Request of vendors may occur any time within a 24-hour day, as needed. Assistance to include, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Minor home and electrical repairs
- b. Transportation
- c. Food
- d. Shelter
- e. Medical/Prescriptions (when insurance and other assistance are unavailable.)

MINOR HOME REPAIRS:

Purpose - To determine the feasibility of assisting individual(s)/family home owners with minor home repairs following victimization resulting in property damage to their home.

Assistance

1. The Coalition may allocate funds for payments of an insurance premium deductible on behalf of homeowners for minor home repairs.
2. Minor home repairs may include but are not limited to repair/replacement of:
 - a. doors, door frames, door locks, and keys.
 - b. windows
 - c. automobile key replacements
 - d. minor electrical due to damage caused by the crime

Procedural Requirements

1. Victim/home owner(s) must contact their Insurance Company to report damages and request repairs are made using homeowner's insurance. (Verified by Victim Services Counselor)

2. The Coalition may establish and maintain relationships with vendor(s) to provide services for crime victims, prearranged through the Fund Committee.
3. When insurance premiums (deductibles) are paid from the Fund, a copy of the contractor's service agreement may be required from the victim/survivor and attached to case file.
4. When homeowner's insurance has lapsed, consideration for home repairs may be given to victims/survivors on a case by case basis.

Ineligible for home repair

Victims living in rental property, institutional facilities and/or emergency shelter are not eligible.

Note: The Coalition may contact property owners on the victim's behalf and recommend that the property be made safe for tenants.

Payment Procedure

Vendors will make necessary repairs, forward original invoice to the Coalition and may expect to be paid from the Fund by the Coalition Treasurer within a reasonable time period after services have been rendered and approved by the Fund Committee.

TRANSPORTATION

Purpose - To assist when it has been determined that the victimization has created transportation hardship for the victim.

Assistance – .

1. The Fund may be used to assist victims with taxi and/or local bus transportation to prearranged medical, social and/or civil appointments. Appointments must be in connection with the victimization. All such appointments will be verified by Fund Committee members before service is rendered.
2. Assistance with the purchase of gasoline may be provided to victim/survivors who own automobiles. The victims/survivors must have verifiable appointments, i.e. medical, social service/criminal justice, and/or employment appointments.
3. Out-of-state relocation requests must be reviewed by the Committee and Executive Board on a case by case basis.

Procedural Requirements

To recover an automobile that has been towed and placed in storage, the following must apply:

- Automobile must be reported stolen to the Police Department or impounded by the Police Department and a police report filed
- Victim must receive an authorization from the Law Enforcement Agency that the automobile can be released to the victim's custody
- Victim must show valid driver's license, proof of insurance, and authorization release of property from Law Enforcement authorization to the Fund Committee Designee.

FOOD

Purpose

To determine that food is needed by victim(s)/family members as a direct result of their victimization.

Assistance

A food voucher with a designated purchase amount, based on need, and household size, may be provided to the victim(s) to shop at a local grocery. The grocery voucher shall stipulate that neither alcoholic beverages, nor tobacco products may be purchased.

Requirements

1. A voucher will be issued only when City Welfare and Food Bank assistance is unavailable.
2. Victims eligible for AFDC, Food Stamps, and SSI must be agreeable to have BVRC Fund Committee members contact their worker, to see, if/when food stamps can be issued/reissued.

SHELTER

Purpose

To determine that safe shelter/housing is needed by the victim(s) as a direct result the victimization.

Assistance

Safe shelter may be provided to a victim(s) at a local hotel, motel, mission, boarding house for a period not to exceed five (5) days. Exceptions to this rule will be reviewed by the Committee and Executive Board on a case by case basis.

Requirements

Victim must prove that returning to their place of residence would further endanger themselves or their minor children. (Verified through police report, reliable eye witnesses.)

UTILITIES

Purpose

To determine the need to pay and or restore utilities including lights, water and/or gas on behalf of a crime victim when no other community resource is available.

Assistance

A Victim Services Provider will contact the appropriate utility authority to request the status of the bill(s) in question. The advocate will attempt to make pay arrangements on behalf of the victim.

Requirements

1. The electric company must agree to accept a voucher from the Broward Victim's Rights Coalition which promises to pay said amount to the vendor within two (2) weeks and no later than forty-five (45) days of the verbal agreement.
2. The BVRC Fund may pay for services or service restoration at the crime victim/survivor's residence only.

3. The crime victim/survivor must provide the Coalition with an original bill(s), bearing the name of the victim/survivor, which is/are to be paid using the Fund.

MEDICAL/PRESCRIPTIONS

Purpose

To determine the feasibility of providing assistance to obtain prescribed medication and/or medical supplies on behalf of crime victims when no other medical services are available to the victim/survivor. Medical supplies/prescriptions will be provided as a direct result of the crime, and when no other community resource/agency can serve that particular victim's need. Controlled substances (prescriptions) may be verified with the attending physician by a member of the Fund Committee or by proof of a prescription by the presiding physician.

Assistance

1. A referral will be made to a local pharmacy by a Victim Services Provider.
2. The Victim Services Provider will request a summary of medical costs from the pharmacy/clerk.
3. Pharmacy/clerk will service crime victim's needs after cost has been pre-approved by the Treasurer.
4. Pharmacy/clerk will provide Treasurer with an original invoice, requesting financial reimbursement.