

EMERGENCY AWARDS

(18 P.S. §11.706)

Who?

A victim or eligible claimant who incurs an undue hardship by paying medical or funeral expenses out of his or her own pocket (not due and owing to a provider), or incurs lost wages, or was financially dependent upon a victim of a homicide (loss of support) or is applying for money that was stolen or defrauded from them.

What?

The total amount of the emergency award will not exceed **\$5,000** per claim

How?

With a paper claim form

Complete and sign an Emergency Compensation Award Application (found at the end of this chapter) along with the Standard VCAP Claim Form and required documentation.

Through DAVE

For every claim entered into DAVE, the system asks whether the claim should be filed as an emergency claim. If yes is clicked, the next screen provides eligibility information and requires selection of at least one of the following four scenarios:

- claimant has already paid for medical/funeral bills,
- claimant has lost wages,
- claimant is applying for money that was stolen or defrauded from him/her, and/or
- claimant was financially dependent upon a victim of homicide.

If none of the above scenarios apply to the claim that has been entered, hit cancel as the claim will not qualify for an emergency award.

VCAP staff will give preference to the Emergency Award request and will expeditiously determine whether the eligibility requirements have been met and review submitted documentation. Once the claim is determined to be eligible and all required information is received, VCAP staff will make every effort to process the emergency award and issue the check within three to five working days.

At no time, is an emergency award made without receiving all of the required information and verification (including a police report).

Example: *If an emergency award is being requested for loss of earnings, however, no paystubs are submitted with the claim, an emergency award will not be made until the pay stubs are received.*

Emergency Awards Q & A

- Q** Can an emergency award be considered after an initial award is made?
- A** *Yes, as long as the claim has not previously reached the Emergency Award cap. For example, a victim files a claim for medical expenses and loss of earnings. The claim was not initially filed as an emergency claim because the victim did not incur any out-of-pocket expenses and was using sick leave. However, the sick leave is exhausted a few months later. With no other source reimbursing the lost wages, the victim is now eligible to file for an emergency award even though an initial award has already been made to cover the medical expenses.*
- Q** A victim is being pursued by a collection agency for payment on a doctor's bill. Can the victim apply for an emergency award to pay a portion of the bill?
- A** *No. An emergency award may be granted only if the victim/claimant has already paid the doctor's bill.*
- Q** Does the victim/claimant have to wait until the emergency award check is received in the mail?
- A** *No. The victim/claimant, with proper identification (photo ID with victim/claimant's name), may pick up his or her check at VCAP's office at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), 3101 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110. Arrangements **must** be made in advance by calling VCAP at (800) 233-2339. The check cannot be cashed on the same date of the issue date. The claimant must wait 24 hours to cash the check.*
- Q** Is an emergency award over and above the maximum allowable award?
- A** *No. Any money received as part of an emergency award will be included in the \$35,000 cap.*
- Q** Are there any circumstances where VCAP will pay an emergency award right away without determining eligibility and reviewing all needed verifications?
- A** *No. Eligibility must always be determined and all needed documents and verifications received before any payment can be made. Staff will attempt to expedite the verification by telephone where feasible.*
- Q** What if there is not sufficient information included when an Emergency Compensation Award Application is submitted to VCAP?
- A** *The process for claims filed without sufficient information included is the same for all claims, whether filed as an emergency or not. If the claim is received without sufficient information from the claimant (such as W-2 forms or pay stubs), the assigned Program member will request the required information on a checklist sent to the claimant. If information is needed from others (such as a police report or employer information), the Program member will request this directly from the entity and include this information on the checklist to the claimant. The checklist will state what additional information is needed before a decision can be made and indicate that VCAP will request the above information, and upon receipt of the information, will review the emergency request.*

SAMPLE

**Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Office of Victims' Services
Victims Compensation Assistance Program
P.O. Box 1167
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1167**

Emergency Compensation Award Application

Last Name (claimant)	First Name	Middle Initial
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Address

City	State	Zip Code	Telephone Number
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An Emergency Compensation Award is solely for a claimant who is experiencing an undue financial hardship as a result of the crime, due to the following:

(Please check box(s) that apply--at least one box must be checked to be eligible).

- Claimant has already paid for medical/funeral bills.
- Claimant has lost wages.
- Claimant is applying for money that was stolen or defrauded from them.
- Claimant was financially dependent upon a victim of homicide.

NOTE: In order for an Emergency Compensation claim to be processed, it must be submitted with the Program's standard claim form and required documentation. Claimants under age 60 must meet the \$100 minimum out-of-pocket loss to be eligible. Claimants age 60 or older have no minimum loss requirement.

Due to an urgent financial need, I am requesting an Emergency Compensation Award. I understand that the Program will review the police report and the supporting documentation to determine if the claim is eligible for an award. I understand that this award may not exceed \$5,000 (crimes on or after 12/12/09) or \$1,500 (crimes prior to 12/12/09).

Claimant's Signature	Date
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