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2016 Canadian Victim Services Indicators: Pilot survey evaluation and recommendations

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Canada 

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2016 Canadian Victim Services Indicators: Pilot survey evaluation and recommendations

Executive summary

The Canadian Victim Services Indicators (CVSI) survey was developed as part of a longer term project to improve information on the provision of victim services in Canada.¹ In an effort to identify data opportunities that could be used to measure the impact of the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR) on the justice system, the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) at Statistics Canada, undertook a data mapping study to outline research needs and opportunities related to measuring how victims of crime access services through the justice system. The study identified data opportunities that could be used as potential sources for assessing how victims are served by various justice systems pre and post implementation of the CVBR. In addition, the study also highlighted data gaps and where data existed but lacked the required detail or scope. The CVSI pilot survey represents the next phase of this work, the third phase of the longer-term project to develop victim services indicators

Project on the development of victim services indicators:

Phase 1 (Funded by the Federal Ombudsman): Consult with justice partners and stakeholders to determine information needs in relation to victim issues and identify potential data sets or collection instruments to address these needs (September to December 2015).

Phase 2: (Funded by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues) Consultation with provincial and territorial representatives to determine a set of core data variables based upon agreed definitions documented in the Victim Services National Data Requirements Roadmap (May 2016 to August 2017).

Phase 3: (Funded by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues) Development and implementation of the CVSI pilot survey and evaluation of the results (September 2017 to March 2019).

The purpose of the 2016 CVSI pilot survey was to select key indicators that had been identified in the feasibility study and test how well they could be measured using existing data from the provincial and territorial directorates. Information was collected in order to attempt to measure:

- a) how many victims received services;
- b) characteristics of victims served;
- c) volume of services provided to victims (a measure of victim services caseload in terms of the number of different types of services provided);

¹ Previously referred to as the National Victim Services Aggregate Survey (NVSAS).

- d) number of victims that had the opportunity to file a Victim Impact Statement (VIS) (received a form); and,
- e) number of victims that filed a VIS (whether or not it was read or filed in court).

The 2016 CVSI pilot identified a number of critical challenges to collecting standardized measures for these items. Most importantly, it was determined that it is not possible to capture a standard, comparable count of victims of crime served by victim services by province and territory, nor, as a result, is it possible to produce a reliable national count. While the definition of a victim of crime had been agreed upon as a standard by jurisdictions, the nature of available data and the point at which the victim data was collected did not permit a standard measure. Instead, the information available ranged widely by jurisdiction, from counts of all victims receiving services, to only those victims participating in the criminal justice system where a charge has been laid. Moreover, the nature of the available data does not permit all jurisdictions to report even on this latter restricted definition (post charge).

These differences in coverage (i.e., which victims were included in the data) arise from differences in the structure and delivery of victim services in each jurisdiction. Moreover, the structural differences in coverage affect the ability to produce any comparable measures. Not only are victim counts affected, but also measures of caseload, as jurisdictions do not capture the caseload for the same stage in the delivery of victim services.

The difference by jurisdiction are structural, built into the differences in how victim services are delivered in each province and territory. As a result, there is no likely solution to the coverage issue without dismantling or remodeling how jurisdictions provide their services in order to align to a “national standard”. At a more pragmatic level, it was identified by the jurisdictions that making changes to their information systems in order to attempt to meet a national standard is burdensome, expensive, and, in most cases, not possible in the short term. While the CVSI respondents were very engaged in supporting this project, it required a great deal of time and effort on their part.

It should be noted that the work carried out by the PCVI FPT working group to support the pilot study did have some positive outcomes. In particular, we have been able to document in detail the challenges in measuring victim services nationally and individual jurisdictions have been able to evaluate the nature and quality of their respective data systems used to record information on victims. As a result, several jurisdictions are considering improvements to their information systems not only to produce better measures, but primarily to improve their capacity to serve victims within their jurisdictions. In addition, they are hoping to take advantage of what they have learned through this project to learn from each other. Finally, as a result of this project, the CCJS has developed online data tables of police-reported counts of victims of violence for each province and territory—these tables will be released on an annual basis. ([Link to Statistics Canada Victim tables](#)).

Recommendation: The results of the CVSI pilot survey demonstrate that jurisdictional differences in the delivery of victim services in each province or territory prevent the development of **comparable** victim services measures. Statistics Canada, with the full support of the provincial and territorial CVSI respondents, has made a serious attempt to develop standard victim services indicators. However, the barriers to producing reliable and comparable measures are such that we cannot recommend investing further time and resources in this work.

CVSI survey: Content

Based on the results of the feasibility study, the CVSI survey content was limited to five baseline questions:

1. A count of direct and secondary victims who received Victim Services in 2016, as new referrals, based on the agreed upon victim definition
2. Breakdown of the victim counts by sex and age group
3. Breakdown of the victim counts by type of offence, using agreed upon crime categories
4. Caseload: count of services offered or provided to victims (new referrals), by service type
5. Number of Victim or Community Impact Statements: forms provided and forms submitted.

These questions were chosen to provide the most relevant information that most jurisdictions felt they could provide according to the agreed upon definitions.

Survey methodology

The Canadian Victim Services Indicators (CVSI) survey collected data from victim services directorates for the 13 provincial and territorial governments in Canada. The CVSI is an aggregate survey, meaning that there is no information on individual cases, and data are collected and reported for pre-defined categories.

Information was collected directly from staff of the provincial and territorial victim services directorates by means of an Excel-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was accompanied by a detailed reporting guide laying out the standard definitions for each question, and a separate concordance guide showing the relationship between the offence categories in the questionnaire and standard Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR) offence codes used by police. Space was provided in the questionnaire for respondents to write explanations where their information varied from the standard definitions.

Questionnaire testing

English and French questionnaires and reporting guide drafts were emailed for review to victim services representatives in the thirteen (13) provinces and territories on October 23, 2017. Scheduled telephone meetings with the respondents were organized to collect their comments on these documents. A one hour follow-up telephone call (one-on-one) was then conducted with each representative.

Because of the burden for respondents, we did not request that they actually do the work to extract data and complete the questionnaire during this testing phase. We did, however, discuss the process, time and effort that would likely be required. Some of the fundamental data issues outlined later in this document were raised at this stage, in particular, differences related to the definition of a victim and the coverage of victim services by province and territory, concerns about the over-counting of victims where multiple data sources are used and issues with respect to the caseload question.

Collection

The official survey was sent out to respondents on January 10, 2018. Arrangements were made to set up safes for electronic file transfers that allowed respondents to securely submit their completed questionnaires. We asked respondents to submit final data by January 26, 2018. This two-week window was considered adequate during testing as we had sent a draft version of the questionnaire and support documents to respondents in December 2017 for those who needed time to set up programs to extract the necessary data.

See Annex 1 [questionnaire](#) and Annex 2 [reporting guide](#).

This time frame was overly optimistic. We received 3 questionnaires by the January 26 deadline, for a total of 5 questionnaires in January. Another 4 questionnaires were received in February, and 4 in March. These delays were due to a variety of challenges faced by respondents.

Issues that arose at this stage included:

- Difficulties in extracting the requested information from administrative files, including developing programs; in some cases manually extracting data from files
- Time and expertise required to work with the data (learning curves)
- Issues with providing the information according to requested definitions
- Competing priorities

Processing and analysis

Once we received the completed questionnaires, we reviewed them for completeness and consistency (ex. parts adding to totals). We followed up with respondents where there were any discrepancies or lack of clarity that might require a note.

We then drafted text for respondents to review based on the information in the questionnaires. Because of challenges in interpreting the information for question 4 (the caseload question), we decided not to release this information.

To ensure accurate interpretation and presentation of the information, draft versions, comments and revisions were passed back and forth with respondents until a final copy was agreed upon. At this stage, the final version was sent with a table of the data elements to be released for final verification and signoff. Given competing work demands, this was a time consuming process.

Given the need for multiple revisions to data and text in some jurisdictions, there were some issues with version control where updates were made to an outdated version. Also, given the late delivery of some of the data and delays in getting to final copy, there was not adequate time for full verification of all of the data according to schedule. Many changes were made at the last minute.

In addition, the requirements for signoff so that Statistics Canada could be authorized to release the data was a challenge in some jurisdictions. Final signoff from the last respondents was not completed until the early weeks of May.

Respondent feedback

Following the release of the publication, we solicited feedback from respondents asking for comments on their ability to provide the information requested and whether it would be feasible to make changes (and in what time frame) to be able to improve their ability to provide the requested information. Although comments were not received from many respondents, the comments we received reflected a wide variety of jurisdictions. The main comments can be summed up as follows:

- No clear standard victim definition or unit of count: some jurisdictions were unable to distinguish primary and secondary victims; some have only a count of cases, others can count individual victims, challenges in capturing services for ongoing cases (not new referrals in the survey year)
- There were some specific concerns about age definitions and other gender
- Some jurisdictions had difficulty matching detailed offence categories
 - o Some collected information on a specific domestic violence category (domestic, FV, IPV) without full information on the offences involved (especially as there may be repeat incidents and more than one offence involved over time).
 - o Challenge identifying most serious offence where there are multiple charges.
- Caseload, the services for which information was available differed by jurisdiction as a result of differences in coverage.

General comments

- Respondents felt that while there is a desire for consistent and comparable data, they would like to see agreement on the standards and a demonstration of the pertinence of these standards to their own objectives before they make changes.
- Respondents need to balance operational requirements, jurisdictional reporting requirements and national data needs.
- Given IT constraints and costs, detailed changes are not feasible for most jurisdictions at this time. Because of the costs and effort required to provide the data, it is important that its relevance and **use** is clear.

Summary of data-related issues

Victim definition

CVSI Definition of a victim

A victim is defined as an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as the result of the commission of an offence.

The following individuals will also be able to exercise their rights when a victim is deceased or incapable of acting on his or her own behalf:

- The victim's spouse or common-law partner;
- A relative or dependant of the victim; or
- Anyone who has custody of the victim, or is responsible for the care or support of the victim's dependant.

Coverage

While the PCVI FPT had agreed that the main focus was to collect information on all victims of crime, the data available to the jurisdictions differed widely and thus prevented any comparable focus. Differences in the definition of victims included in the data are related to differences in the coverage for each jurisdiction, that is, how much of the population of victims of crime are included in the available databases. Because of differences in how victim services are delivered in each jurisdiction, there may be multiple agencies providing services or data may only be captured for certain services. So, for example, some jurisdictions only have data on victims served by the government victim services program, which may be restricted to post-charge victims, with no information available for victims of crime served by other agencies. In other jurisdictions, information has been compiled from multiple data sources in an attempt to capture a full picture.

While one option appeared to be restricting data collection to the most restricted category (post-charge victims), many jurisdictions were unable to reliably identify only these victims.

The following list reflects the categories of victim currently covered in the data of various jurisdictions:

- **Individuals who receive help from any victim services** (all direct and secondary (family) victims of crime or trauma or emergencies such as wildfires)
- **All victims of crime or behaviours that approach the criminal threshold** (ex. family related abuse) includes victims who reported and some that did not report to police. For some jurisdictions (particularly those that are system-based), data includes victims who self-refer whether or not they report to police. In non-system based jurisdictions, data meeting this definition is confounded because it expands the sources of data to community based programs and may lead to more “double counting” of victims.

- **Victims of a criminal behaviour only and who report to police (police referrals).** This limits data to those victims in contact with the criminal justice system and is more consistent with information reported to the Uniform Crime Reporting survey.
- **Victims of crime where a charge has been laid.** This definition is the most restrictive and only includes information on victims where an accused was identified and sufficient evidence was present to lay a charge.

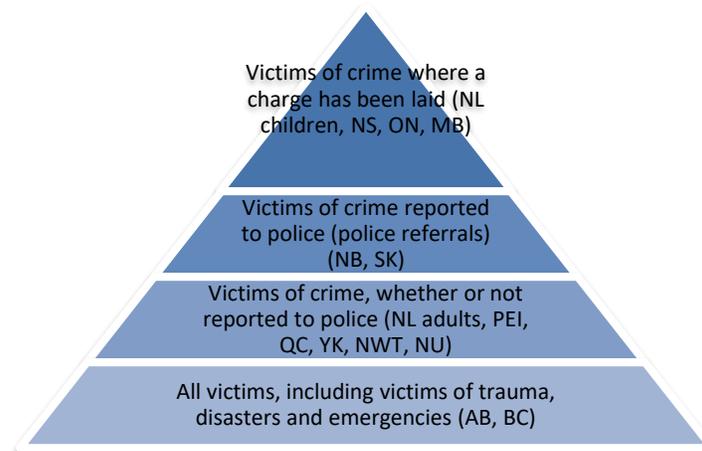


FIGURE 1: DEFINITIONS FOR THE 2016 CVSI

Differences in counts

Beyond coverage concerns, the counts of victims were not comparable by jurisdiction for additional reasons. There are three main situations which have an impact on the counts:

1. **Coverage:** In jurisdictions where a victim may have multiple points of contact (separate agencies) with the system, and data is collected from each of these agencies, that victim may be counted multiple times if the data is compiled from more than one source. For example, the same victim may be reported by a sexual assault or domestic violence program, by the police, and by the courts, and therefore counted each time for the same incident. In other jurisdictions with a single system-based program, or with more limited coverage, they may be counted only once.
2. **Database structures (file management):** Differences in counting also arise from file management practices. For example, in domestic violence situations, a single file may be maintained for a victim (especially when there is a single offender) even when there are multiple incidents, charges, and court events. This victim might be counted just once, or, if the file was originally opened in a previous year, not at all. For victims of multiple incidents with multiple offenders, a separate file may be maintained for each offender.
3. **Treatment of secondary victims:** As some secondary victims are a part of the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR), the survey collected information on secondary victims or family members of victims. Not all jurisdictions had information on secondary victims, and some had only combined information and could not provide separate counts of direct and secondary victims. However, even if information

on secondary victims was available for a jurisdiction, these victims were not counted consistently. In some instances, they are counted individually, in others they are counted once per direct victim (ex. 1 family file). Sometimes, they may be counted for each household of secondary victims (ex. where there are two family households related to a victim such as separated parents). Also, some jurisdictions included all secondary victims impacted by a crime; others only included family members of victims.

Availability of data by question

Counts of victims by age and sex: Not all jurisdictions were able to provide a breakdown of their counts of victims by age group and sex.

Counts by offence against the victim: Collecting information on the count of victims by criminal offence was more problematic. In most jurisdictions, detailed offence information was unavailable for some proportion of victims. Some jurisdictions only have information on the offence for direct victims. Moreover, many jurisdictions do not capture information in a format that identifies the offences according to the desired classification. In particular, some jurisdictions do not capture detailed offence information for spousal abuse/domestic violence victims or from violence against women programs. This may be particularly pertinent to situations where a single file is managed for a victim of multiple incidents where different offences may be involved.

Caseload measures: Generally speaking, information available on the number and types of services offered or provided to victims varied by jurisdiction and by type of service. Note that 2 jurisdictions were unable to provide any information for this question.

For services related to the CVBR rights, the highest rate of reporting was for those services related to court information and participation. Because many types of direct service are often provided by other organizations such as police or community agencies, especially in jurisdictions with decentralized services, detailed information was not available to respondents or not captured in a way to support extraction.

Comments from respondents on this question also note that where information was provided it was not always complete as it may be from an individual program and therefore not representative of all services provided.

As a result, we chose not to release the information from this question as the data quality in terms of the completeness and comparability of the information provided was inadequate.

Victim Impact Statements/Community Impact Statements: Information on the number of Victim Impact Statements filed was provided by 8 jurisdictions. In addition, one respondent was able to provide information on the number of forms provided (only). Comments from respondents indicate, however, that the counts are highly dependent on the system in place in each jurisdiction for processing victim impact statements. For example, in some jurisdictions, every victim has the opportunity to file a statement, in New Brunswick, however, statements are only prepared at the request of the courts once an offender has pleaded or been found guilty. This means that the information will not be comparable by jurisdiction.

In spite of these differences, it was felt that information on victim impact statements was an important indicator to present. Data on victim impact statements was therefore provided in the publication with clear language and notes explaining what the measure reflected.

Information currently collected by the Integrated Criminal Courts Survey (ICCS):

The Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS) collects information on victim impact statements, restitution orders and testimonial aids as well as referrals to restorative justice directly from the courts. Information on restitution orders is considered reasonably reliable, but not all jurisdictions can provide the amount of restitution ordered. Currently, five (5) jurisdictions are able to provide information on victim impact statements, but the quality of this data needs to be examined. Information on testimonial aids has been requested with the new survey redesign and will be evaluated when it comes available. It is expected that not all jurisdictions will be able to provide this information. Information on referrals to restorative justice is available from Nova Scotia only.

Summary:

The issues identified here do not allow for the production of comparable victim services indicators by jurisdiction. Although the provincial and territorial CVSI respondents have made a serious attempt to work with Statistics Canada to develop standard victim services indicators, the barriers to producing reliable and comparable measures identified here are such that we cannot recommend investing further time and resources in this work.

Annex 1: Questionnaire

**Statistics Canada
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics**

Canadian Victim Services Indicators

2016

Authority - *Statistics Act*, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, Chapter S-19
Confidential When Completed

INTRODUCTION

This information is collected under the authority of the *Statistics Act*, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, Chapter S-19.

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the **Canadian Victim Services Indicators** survey is to collect aggregate data from victim services directorates of provincial and territorial governments to provide information on the characteristics of victims accessing services, the types of services utilized, and case load demands in order to better develop programs and services for victims of violence.

While participation in this survey is voluntary, your co-operation is important to ensure that information collected in this survey is as accurate and comprehensive as possible.

Confidentiality

Statistics Canada is prohibited by law from releasing any information it collects which could identify any person, business, or organization, unless consent has been given by the respondent or as permitted by the Statistics Act. Statistics Canada will use the information from this survey for statistical purposes. If necessary, data are suppressed to prevent direct or residual disclosure of identifiable data.

Fax or e-mail transmission disclosure

Statistics Canada advises you that there could be a risk of disclosure during the transmission of information by facsimile or e-mail. However, upon receipt, Statistics Canada will provide the guaranteed level of protection afforded all information collected under the authority of the Statistics Act.

Record linkages

To enhance the data from this survey, Statistics Canada may combine it with information from other surveys or from administrative sources.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please complete and return by **January 26, 2018**.
2. Please refer to the **Reporting Guide** for survey definitions and instructions regarding what to measure and how to record it. If there are deviations from the survey definitions, please note these in the comment section provided for each question. As well, please indicate in the comments section, any changes in victim service delivery in your jurisdiction that may have affected this year's data.
3. Please provide a figure in all boxes. If there is no amount for a particular box, enter one of the following:

0	when the amount is zero;
X	when the figure is not available in your jurisdiction
N	when the figure is not applicable in your jurisdiction

4. The reference period for the data provided is calendar year 2016.

Please fax or email the completed version of the form to:

Mary Allen
mary.allen@canada.ca
Fax (613) 951-6615

Or, submit the completed questionnaire via Statistics Canada's e-File Transfer Service at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ec-ce/eft-tef> (instructions attached)

QUESTION 1 Coverage of victim services

Definition of a victim (and victim types)

A victim is defined as an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as the result of the commission of an offence (**Direct victim**).

The following individuals will also be able to exercise their rights when a victim is deceased or incapable of acting on his or her own behalf (**Family members of victims**):

- The victim's spouse or common-law partner;
- A relative or dependant of the victim; and
- Anyone who has custody of the victim, or is responsible for the care or support of the victim's dependant.

a) Please list all the data sources you are using to answer this survey (ex. victim services internal database, police data, reports from community based (funded) agencies, etc).

b) Please describe which victims (new referrals) are included in your data and how direct victims and family members of victims are counted. Please note any important differences from the definitions above. For example, some jurisdictions only have information for victims once a charge has been laid, and some databases may count family members once per household or once per direct victim, not as individual victims. Other databases include all secondary victims.

c) Are you able to provide information for calendar year 2016? If you are unable to do so (for example, you only have fiscal year information available), please explain.

QUESTION 2 Number of victims assisted by age and gender

Providing detailed breakdowns where possible, please indicate the total number of persons (new referrals) assisted in 2016 by victim services by age and gender. If some data is unavailable by age or gender, enter "X" into the appropriate box and report as unknown (see Reporting Guide for example).

a) Number of persons assisted by age at time of service

(including businesses)

- Adult (18 years and older)
- Children and Youth (under 18 years)
- Unknown (include businesses)
- Total

	Direct victim	Family member(s) of victim	Total
Adult (18 years and older)			
Children and Youth (under 18 years)			
Unknown (include businesses)			
Total			

b) Number of persons assisted by reported gender

(including businesses)

- Male
- Female
- Other

(please specify)

- Unknown (include businesses)
- Total

	Direct victim	Family member(s) of victim	Total
Male			
Female			
Other			
Unknown (include businesses)			
Total			

c) Are business victims included in the data above? (Check one)

Yes No

d) If yes, please indicate the number of businesses assisted in 2016

Comments/deviations from survey definitions (ex: different age groups) or deviations from standard victim type (please specify)

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QUESTION 3 Number of victims assisted by offence

Providing detailed breakdowns where possible, please indicate the total number of persons (new referrals) assisted in 2016 by most serious offence. Exclude victims where no criminal offence occurred. If some data is unavailable by most serious offence, enter "X" into the appropriate box and report as unknown. If assisting victims of particular offences is not applicable in your jurisdiction, enter "N" into the appropriate box (see Reporting Guide for examples).

	Direct victim	Family member(s) of victim	Total
Total Criminal Code violent offences			
Homicide			
Other offences causing death (excluding traffic violations)			
Sexual assault			
Adult victims aged 18 or over			
Child victims under age 18			
Sexual violations against children			
Physical assault			
Robbery			
Uttering threats or Criminal harassment			
Other violent offences (see Reporting Guide)			
Total Criminal Code Non-violent offences			
Break and enter			
Motor vehicle theft			
Other theft			
Fraud			
Other non-violent offences (see Reporting Guide)			
Total Criminal Code traffic offences (including impaired driving)			
Traffic offences causing death			
Traffic offences causing bodily harm			
Unknown offence			

Comments/deviations from survey definitions (ex: treatment (count) of family members of homicide victims) (please specify)

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QUESTION 4 Victim services case load

Providing detailed breakdowns where possible, please indicate the number of services offered or provided to victims (new referrals) in 2016 by service type. Enter "N" into the appropriate box if the service type is not applicable in your jurisdiction (see Reporting Guide for explanations of these service types with examples).

		Offered to victims	Provided to victims
Referrals	(such as referrals to restorative justice programs and counselling services)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Counselling services		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Restorative justice		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Crisis services	(such as crisis counselling or crisis telephone line)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Safety planning and risk assessment	Prevention training (for victims)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Risk assessment (conduct or coordinate)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Child protection services	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Safety planning - immediate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Safety planning - long term	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emotional support	(such as short-term or trauma counseling)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Medical support	(such as hospital accompaniment)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Liaison services	(such as working with other agencies)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Shelter assistance		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Justice system information	Case/trial updates	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Court orientation/information	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Information on criminal justice system structure and process	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Legal information	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Victim notification (e.g., hearings, offender relocation, offender release)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Participation	Court accompaniment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Victim/witness preparation	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Assistance with victim impact statements	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Compensation support	Claims assistance	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Compensation – financial	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Compensation – other (e.g., pay fees for professional counseling)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other (please specify)		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Comments related to the types of services included in these counts (please specify)

QUESTION 5 Victim and Community Impact Statements

Victim Impact Statements (VIS) (services provided in 2016)

Number of VIS forms provided by victim services

Number of VIS filed to police, prosecution (crown), courts or victim services

Total

Community Impact Statements (CIS) (services provided in 2016)

Number of CIS forms provided by victim services

Number of CIS filed to police, prosecution (crown), courts or victim services

Total

Comments/deviations from survey definitions (please specify)

RESPONDENT: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

Contact: _____

Phone #: _____

Date: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE
Canadian Victim Services Indicators

Annex 2: Questionnaire Reporting guide

Canadian Victim Services Indicators, 2016: Questionnaire Reporting Guide

The survey consists of five questions:

- Description of delivery of victim services in your jurisdiction
- Victim demographics and type of offence (questions 2-3)
- Victim services caseload characteristics (question 4)
- Information on Victim Impact Statements and Community Impact Statements (question 5)

Most of the questions in this survey are followed by:

- A table to be completed by the respondent;
- A section for the respondent to describe how the data reported deviates from the survey definitions.

Respondents are asked to provide a figure in all boxes. If there is no amount for a particular box, enter one of the following:

- **0** – when the amount is zero
- **X** – when the figure is not available
- **N** – when the figure is not applicable or not appropriate

A separate document is available providing information on the offence categories for question 3.

Question 1: Survey coverage

This question asks for a description of the data sources used to complete this survey and the type of victims included in the data.

Please note:

- If you are unable to limit your responses to victims as defined below, please explain. For example, there may be data sources where you are unable to distinguish victims where no crime occurred, secondary victims (such as friends) or witnesses who do not meet the Victim Rights definition.
- Some jurisdictions include in their data both 'family member(s) of victim' and other secondary victims (such as friends) who do not meet the *Canadian Victim Bill of Rights'* (CVBR) definition of a victim. Exclude these other secondary victims if possible. If unable to distinguish between 'family member(s) of victim' and other secondary victims, please report counts as 'family member(s) of victim' and explain count in comments section.

Definitions

- **Data sources:** include (but are not limited to) police-based, court-based and community-based victim/witness assistance programs and system-based victim services.
 - **Police-based:** municipal, provincial and federal police departments that provide victim services.
 - **Court-based victim/witness assistance program:** mandated programs purposed to provide services to victims and witnesses who are involved in the court process.
 - **Community-based victim/witness assistance program:** not-for-profit, community-based programs that provide services to victims. For example, crime victims assistance centres (CAVACs).
 - **System-based:** victim services that assist individuals throughout the criminal justice system, but are independent from the police, courts and crown-attorneys.
- **New referrals:** a total count of new clients (victims) who were referred to or sought assistance from victim services within the reported calendar or fiscal year. If possible, do not include victims from on-going cases opened in previous years and who are currently still accessing services.
- **Reference year:** all data should refer to calendar year 2016. If this is not possible, please provide what you have (such as fiscal year 2016/2017) and explain in the comments section.
- **Direct victim:** an individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as the result of the commission of an offence.
- **Family member(s) of victim:** individuals (such as a parent or sibling) with familial ties to the direct victim of an offence. The following individuals will also be able to exercise their rights when a victim is deceased or incapable of acting on his or her own behalf:
 - The victim's spouse or common-law partner;
 - A relative or dependant of the victim; and
 - Anyone who has custody of the victim, or is responsible for the care or support of the victim's dependant.

Question 2: Victim demographics

This question asks for a count of victims assisted by age and gender.

Please note:

- Some jurisdictions include in their data both ‘family member(s) of victim’ and other secondary victims (such as friends) who do not meet the *Canadian Victim Bill of Rights’* (CVBR) definition of a victim. Exclude these other secondary victims if possible.

“X” example

If your jurisdiction counts direct victims of an offence (or family member(s) of victims) but does not have data for their age or gender, enter “X” for ‘not available’ into the appropriate box and report their age and gender as unknown.

Definitions

- **New referrals:** a total count of new clients (victims) who were referred to or sought assistance from victim services within the reported calendar or fiscal year. If possible, do not include victims from on-going cases opened in previous years and who are currently still accessing services.
- **Victim type:** includes individuals who are able to access victim services as defined above. Some victim services will only accept direct and not secondary victims. Some victim services will only provide assistance to victims of violent crime (homicide, other offences causing death (excluding traffic violations), sexual assault, physical assault, robbery, uttering threats or criminal harassment and other violent offences), non-violent crime (break and enter, motor vehicle theft, other theft, fraud and other non-violent offences) or victims of incidences where no criminal offence occurred (domestic dispute, fire, sudden death, suicide or attempted suicide, serious injury, natural or community disaster or other). Additionally, some victim services may only provide access to victims of a particular age group (children, adults or seniors) or gender (male, female or another). Please note any similar limitations in question 1.
 - **Domestic dispute:** an argument between (common law or married) partners.
- **Business victim:** a business or employee(s) who had an offence committed against them.
- **Victim gender:**
 - Female: this category includes persons who reported being female.
 - Male: this category includes persons who reported being male.
 - Other (specify): this category is provided for counts of victims who do not identify as male or female. Please provide a description of the type of information you collect in the comments section.
 - Unknown: includes the number of persons where gender is not available.
- **Victim age** (refers to the victim’s age at the time of service as opposed to the time of offence):

- Children and Youth: number of clients aged 17 and under who received service during this reporting period.
- Adults: number of clients aged 18 years of age and over who received service during this reporting period.
- Unknown: this category includes the number of clients whose age not available.

Question 3: Types of offences

This question asks for the number of victims assisted by type of offence in calendar year 2016.

Please note:

- Some jurisdictions include in their data both ‘family member(s) of victim’ and other secondary victims (such as friends) who do not meet the *Canadian Victim Bill of Rights’* (CVBR) definition of a victim. Exclude these other secondary victims if possible.
- Provide counts by victim type at whatever detail you have available. If you have general categories such as “spousal abuse” that you cannot match to a specific offence, please include these in the appropriate “other” (such as other violent offences) section and provide an explanation in the comments section below.

“X” and “N” examples

If your jurisdiction offers services to theft or robbery victims but does not have data for the number of theft or robbery victims assisted, enter “X” for ‘not available’ into the appropriate box and report the most serious offence type as unknown. If your jurisdiction does not offer services to motor vehicle theft victims, enter “N” for ‘not applicable’ into the appropriate box.

Definitions

- **New referrals:** a total count of new clients (victims) who were referred to or sought assistance from victim services within the reported calendar or fiscal year. If possible, do not include victims from on-going cases opened in previous years and who are currently still accessing services.
- **Most serious offence:** please provide a count of victims according to the most serious offence against the victim. The most serious violation is determined by criteria in the following order of priority: violations against a person take precedence over violations not against a person; the greatest maximum penalty prescribed by law; violations causing death take precedence over other violations with the same maximum penalty. Additional information to assist you in identifying offences is provided in a separate document (see most serious violation concordance guide).
- **Criminal Code Violent Offences:** crimes against a person. They include homicide and other offences causing death (excluding impaired driving), sexual assault, sexual violations against children (such as sexual interference and luring a child (online)), assault, uttering threats and criminal harassment, abduction/forcible confinement, uttering threats or criminal negligence, robbery, human trafficking.

Offence Type	Description	<i>Criminal Code</i> Sections
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Total Criminal Code violent offences		
Homicide	Includes 1 st and 2 nd degree murder, manslaughter and infanticide.	231, 233 – 237
Other offences causing death	Includes criminal negligence and other offences causing death. Excludes <i>Criminal Code</i> traffic offences causing death (such as impaired driving).	46 – 47, 83, 219 – 220, 238, 241 – 242, 247
Sexual assault	Includes aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon and sexual assault.	271 – 273
Sexual violations against children	Sexual offences specific to children other than sexual assault. Includes sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, luring, sexual exploitation, etc.	151 – 153, 170 – 172
Physical assault	Includes common assault as well as assault causing bodily harm and assault with a weapon.	219, 221, 245 – 246, 248, 265 – 270
Robbery	Stealing an individual's property using violence (such as striking the individual or using a weapon against them) or with the threat of violence against them or their property.	98, 343 – 344
Uttering threats and criminal harassment	Uttering threats: to threaten an individual with death or bodily harm, burning, destroying or damaging their property, or killing, injuring or poisoning their animal(s). Criminal harassment: conduct (such as repeatedly following, communicating (directly/indirectly) or watching an individual's home, workplace, or other place where they conduct business, or engaging in threatening behaviour directed at the individual or a member of their family) which makes an individual (or someone they know) fear for their safety.	264 – 264.1, 372
Other violent offences	For victims of violent <i>Criminal Code</i> offences which you cannot allocate to specific offences. For example, extortion, attempted murder, incest, voyeurism, human trafficking, intimidation, arson and any other violent <i>Criminal Code</i> offence not included above. Please explain what violent offences are represented in the data provided in the comments section.	
Total Criminal Code non-violent offences		
Break and enter	Breaking into and entering a place (such as a home, motor vehicle or place of business) with the intent to commit a criminal offence.	98, 348 – 349
Motor vehicle theft	Includes stealing or taking a motor vehicle without consent.	333.1, 335
Other theft	Incidences of theft (such as from a business or motor vehicle) where the sum of property stolen is under or over \$5,000.	322, 334
Fraud	Includes (but are not limited to) instances such as breach of trust, credit card fraud, insider trading, false pretenses, forgery and identity theft and fraud.	56.1, 336, 341 – 342, 356, 361 – 372,

		374 – 378, 380 – 390, 392 – 394, 396 – 413
Other non-violent offences	For victims of non-violent <i>Criminal Code</i> offences which you cannot allocate to specific offences. For example, mischief, breach of conditions or probation, disturbing the peace, terrorism and any other non-violent <i>Criminal Code</i> offence not included above. Please explain what non-violent offences are represented in the data provided in the comments section.	
Total <i>Criminal Code</i> traffic offences		
Traffic offences causing death	Includes dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, flight from a peace officer, impaired driving/related violations, failure to stop and street racing.	249, 249.1, 252 – 253, 255,
Traffic offences causing bodily harm	Includes dangerous operation of a motor vehicle, flight from a peace officer, impaired driving/related violations, failure to stop and street racing.	249, 249.1, 252, 255
Unknown Offence		
Unknown offence	In order to ensure that rows add up to the total, please report the count of victims where offence type is unknown. If possible, exclude victims where no criminal offence occurred.	

Question 4: Victim Services Caseload

This question asks for the number of services offered to and/or provided to victims in calendar year 2016 (not limited to new referrals).

Please note:

- Because victims may be offered or receive multiple services, we do not expect individual items to sum to totals.
- Some respondents can only provide information on services offered, others on services actually provided to victims and some both. Please report as you are able.

“X” and “N” examples

If your jurisdiction offers a service type such as medical support to victims but does not have data for this service type provided, enter “X” for ‘not available’ into the appropriate box and report the service type as unknown. If your jurisdiction does not offer a service type such as liaison services to victims, enter “N” for ‘not applicable’ into the appropriate box.

Definitions

- **Referrals:** includes referrals to police, counselling programs, restorative justice programs and other referrals.

- **Counselling services:** includes conflict resolution, couple/family, group and individual counselling services, psychological assistance and self-help/peer support groups.
- **Restorative justice:** according to section 6(b) of the CVBR, victims have the right to access programs and services specifically for victims of crime, this includes restorative justice programs. Restorative justice entails a victim and offender meeting to resolve the impact of the crime committed against the victim.
- **Crisis services:** includes critical stress debriefing, crisis/debrief line, crisis counselling, crisis intervention/response and emergency and disaster responses.
- **Safety planning and risk assessment:** includes prevention training for victims, risk assessment, child protection services and immediate and long term planning.
- **Emotional support:** includes short-term and trauma counselling and providing emotional support to deal with victimization and the court process.
- **Medical support:** includes first aid/health/medical services and hospital accompaniment.
- **Liaison services:** includes liaising with other agencies on behalf of the client.
- **Shelter assistance:** includes housing assistance, basic needs provision (such as food and clothing), longer term and emergency housing and transportation.
- **Justice system information:**
 - **Case/trial updates:** according to section 7 of the CVBR, victims have the right to information about the status and outcome of their investigation, and the location, date and time and the progress and outcome of the proceedings related to the offence.
 - **Court orientation/information:** includes explaining to victims the structure of the courtroom (such as where the judge, crown attorney, defence counsel and accused are located), courtroom procedures (such as standing and bowing when the judge or justice of the peace arrives to the courtroom) and courtroom etiquette (such as explaining the prohibition of talking, cell phones and food and drink inside the courtroom).
 - **Information on criminal justice system:** according to section 6(a) of the CVBR, victims have the right to information about the criminal justice system and the role they play within it.
 - **Legal information:** legal information victims should be aware of includes their right to file a complaint acknowledging the infringement or denial of their rights as outlined in the CVBR (CVBR section 6(c)). In addition, victims should be made aware of legal information detailing their right to have their privacy considered by the appropriate criminal justice system authorities (CVBR section 11), and their right to request identity protection in the event that they are a complainant or witness of an offence brought before the court (CVBR section 12).
 - **Victim notification:** according to section 8 of the CVBR, victims have the right to know when the offender of their case has been released, the timing and conditions of that release and disposition hearings.

- **Participation:**
 - **Court accompaniment:** includes a criminal justice system authority (such as a victim/witness assistance program caseworker) or volunteer accompanying a victim to court for support during case proceedings.
 - **Victim/witness preparation:** according to section 13 of the CVBR, victims have the right to testimonial aids when appearing as a witness before the court. Testimonial aids include (but are not limited to) therapy dogs, sign language interpreters and translators.
 - **Assistance with victim impact statements:** according to section 15 of the CVBR, victims have the right to write and present a victim impact statement and to have it considered by the appropriate criminal justice system authorities when prosecuting the offender. Victim impact statements give victims the ability to express how the offence committed impacted their lives, and the right to access resources that will help them write this statement.
- **Compensation support:** includes claims assistance and financial and other (such as compensation for professional counselling) compensation.

Question 5: Victim and Community Impact Statements

This question asks for the number of Victim Impact Statement and Community Impact Statement forms that are provided by victim services, and for the number of Victim Impact Statements and Community Impact Statements filed to the police, prosecution (crown), courts or victim services.

Definitions

- **Victim Impact Statement:** a written statement from a victim that describes the physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss which the victim of an offence has suffered. The Court must take the statement into account when an offender is sentenced.
- **Community Impact Statement:** a written statement made by a person on behalf of a community. It describes the harm or loss suffered by that community as a result of an offence. If a community chooses to submit a community impact statement, the Court must take it into account when an offender is sentenced.