



**VIRGINIA VICTIMS FUND**

*Helping Innocent Victims of Crime*

OFFICIALLY CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION FUND



*A division of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

# SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAMINATION (SAFE) Payment Program Review



# FY2023

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

## ABOUT THE VIRGINIA WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION

The Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission (VWC), established in 1918, is an independent judicial and administrative state agency that oversees the workers' compensation system for the Commonwealth. The Commission is headed by three Commissioners who are chosen by the General Assembly and serve six-year terms. Honorable R. Ferrell Newman, Honorable Wesley G. Marshall and Honorable Robert A. Rapaport are the current Commissioners, with Rapaport serving as Chairman. Ms. Evelyn McGill is the Executive Director and Honorable James J. Szablewicz is the Chief Deputy Commissioner.

### VWC's Mission

To serve injured workers, victims of crimes, employers, and related industries by providing exceptional services, resolving disputes, and faithfully executing the duties entrusted to us by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### VWC's Vision

Lead the nation as the most effective and innovative state agency.



*Commissioners and Senior Leaders pictured above, left to right:*  
Evelyn V. McGill, Executive Director; Hon. R. Ferrell Newman, Commissioner;  
Hon. Robert A. Rapaport, Chairman; Hon. Wesley G. Marshall, Commissioner;  
and Hon. James J. Szablewicz, Chief Deputy Commissioner

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“VVF provides services and critical functions to victims whose lives have been violated, providing much needed support and benefits, while attempting to restore some level of normalcy to their lives impacted by crime. We are honored that this important work is part of the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission.” **Robert A. Rapaport, Chairman**

# ABOUT THE VIRGINIA VICTIMS FUND

The Virginia Victims Fund (officially known as the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund) was established in 1977. Recognizing the traumatic impact that crime has on victims, it was noted that:

*The General Assembly finds that many innocent persons suffer personal physical injury or death as a result of criminal acts or in their efforts to prevent crime or apprehend persons committing or attempting to commit crimes. Such persons or their dependents may thereby suffer disability, incur financial hardships or become dependent upon public assistance. The General Assembly finds and determines that there is a need for governmental financial assistance for such victims of crime. Therefore, it is the intent of the General Assembly that aid, care and support be provided by the Commonwealth as a matter of moral responsibility for such victims of crime.*  
Virginia Code § 19.2-386

For almost a half-century, the Virginia Victims Fund has supported victims of crime in their efforts to recover from trauma. The Fund has helped thousands of victims pay for medical treatment, mental health services, funeral costs, lost wages, and other eligible expenses. The Fund also pays for sexual assault forensic exams such that no victim receives a bill for the service.

The Fund compensates victims of crime using federal grants, a portion of fines collected through the criminal justice system, and through subrogation from offenders. With the exception of the SAFE Program, no general state dollars are used to reimburse victims of crime. The Fund is also responsible for finding victims and reuniting them with restitution paid from offenders. When courts in Virginia collect restitution and cannot locate victims, the responsibility eventually shifts to the Fund.

## The Fund's Mission

Administer the Compensating Victims of Crime Act in a compassionate, fair and efficient manner. In so doing, the Fund strives to treat every victim and survivor with dignity and respect, recognizing the tremendous impact that violent crime has upon our society.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission.....	1
About the Virginia Victims Fund, Mission and Values.....	2
Director's Statement.....	3
Our Why.....	4
SAFE Information.....	5
Notes From the Field.....	8
Contact Information.....	9



## CORE VALUES

*We are*  
Innovative, Respectful,  
Accountable, Reliable,  
Impartial, Effective and  
demonstrate Integrity.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As the Virginia Victims Fund finishes another fiscal year, each of us at the fund has contemplated “why” we are here and reflected upon what motivates us to continue pressing forward. While our individual answers are unique, the common thread that binds us is our strong commitment to victims of crime and desire to provide support on their healing journeys.

Our “why” answers have motivated us this past year to include six non-English language translation services on our website because we want to reach all audiences.

Our “why” answers have sustained the team during several vacancies and staff transitions in the past twelve months because we know there are claimants waiting for reimbursements.

Our “why” has inspired us to work overtime so that we can reduce the time it takes between determining eligibility and issuing awards because we know how important financial compensation is to victims of crime.

Our “why” also helps paint the landscape of our future goals.

We are augmenting our preparation and response to mass casualty events in the Commonwealth because we have an obligation

to be there for victims of crime and localities in times of great need.

We are refreshing our training and outreach strategies because victims of crime, advocates, medical and mental health providers and all our valued partners should know about the fund.

We are exploring novel ways to reunite victims of crime with restitution money that is paid by accountable offenders, because victims are entitled to funds earmarked specifically for them.

We are updating technology platforms, including our Sexual Assault Forensic Exam system, because our staff and stakeholders deserve to have efficient and modernized processes.

Finally, we included “why” testimonials from our team and the people we serve in this year’s report because everyone needs reminders about the importance of supporting victims of crime.



Sincerely,

Shannon Dion

*In good hands...*

**The VVF Team has more than 325 years total public service experience.**



# Our "Why"

VVF Team Members share why they do what they do. We are the Fund.

"My career at VVF started as a part-time job to help me through college. As I continued the work, I found my job to be rewarding while mentally taxing. I enjoy the reward of knowing that I have made a difference in someone's life during the worst time in their lives and have been able to part of making their 'new normal' a little bit easier by easing the financial burden the incident has taken on them. The stories of healing and success of the victims are what motivate me to continue to work at VVF."

"Helping others. It's satisfying to know that I can make a difference in someone's life."

"It's something I feel I'm called to do."

"To help people in their time of need. I like helping people, from fire, EMS, 911, to VVF. What motivates me is knowing I am making a difference. For example, I could have 100 people yell at me but all it takes is 1 person to tell me thank you or that I helped them, makes it all worth it."

"I love the work, it's always something different...and the wanting to help others, the challenges and figuring out how to overcome them. Here I am 24 years later."

"It's a small, unique agency and not many people are doing it but it has a huge impact on people's lives."

"I enjoy assisting others while they maneuver through a tough/life changing situation."

"To help those in need."

"I have elevated since being hired with VVF as a co-worker and as an all-around person."

"Victim services is so very important to me. I absolutely love helping those in their most traumatic or difficult times in life... To be a voice, to advocate, to assist on the victim side, to pursue monetary justice on their behalf- all while treating the debtors like a person, to humanize the fact that some people are capable of change and will not always reoffend; but work to make things right."



# SAFE INFORMATION

The SAFE Payment Program offers evidence collection at no cost to victims of rape or sexual assault. Healthcare providers bill the SAFE Payment Program directly. Evidence is collected through a Physical Evidence Recovery Kit (PERK) and does not require the filing of a police report if the PERK is completed within 120 hours of the incident.

## \$2,196,701\*

paid by SAFE for forensic evidence collection and associated expenses

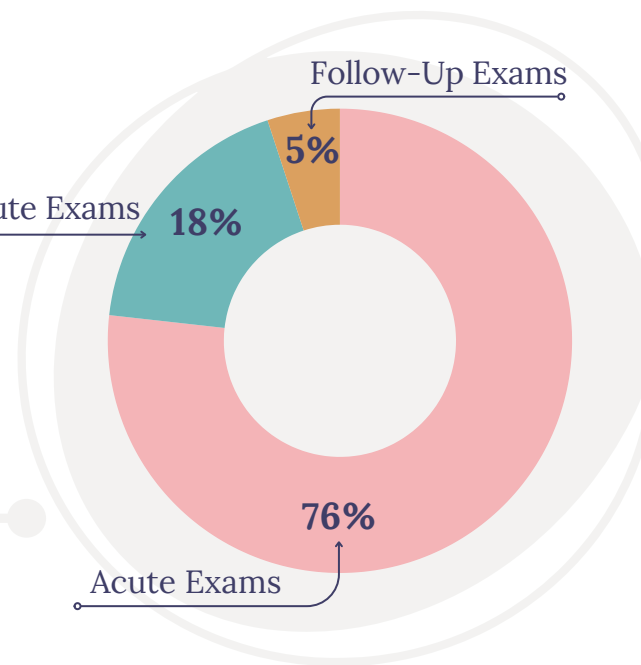
2,064 Requests for Payment

1,346 Eligible Requests\*\*

5 days Average time to receive, review and make an award

\*Exam data does not include amounts paid for non-exam expenses such as prescriptions, transportation and other physicians.

\*\*Many requests are ineligible for the SAFE program and are reimbursable by the Virginia Supreme Court.



### Demographics

86% Female

12% Male

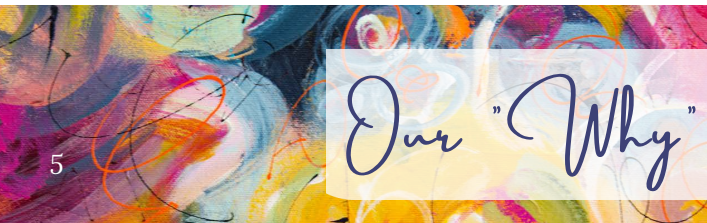
1% Not Identified/Unknown

>1% Transgender



52% Adult

48% Child



*Our "Why"*

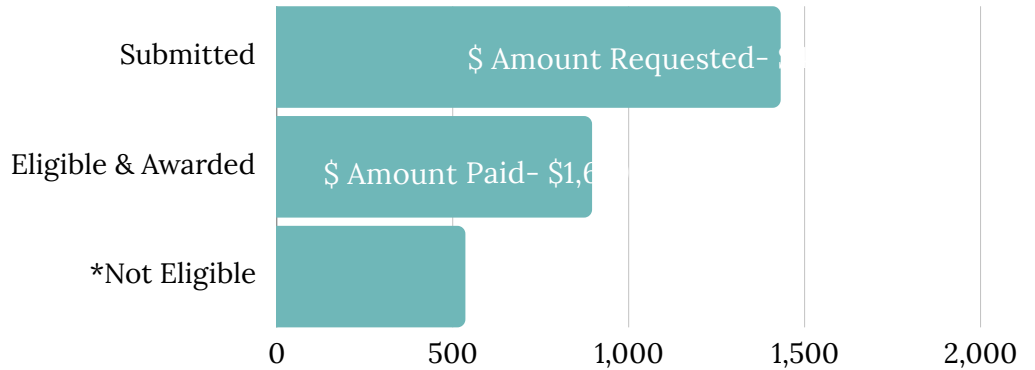
"Giving people a small sense of financial security during a difficult time." -VVF Team Member

# Exam Information

1

## ACUTE EXAMS

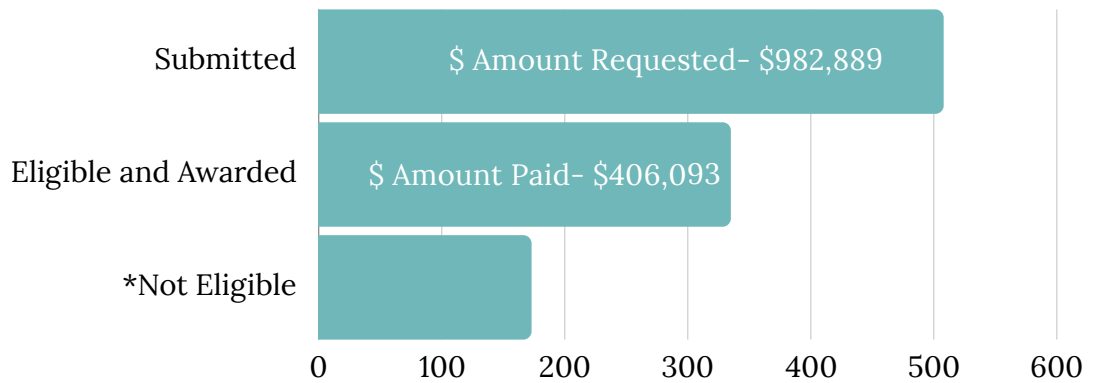
Acute Exams are done within approximately 120 hours of an assault. Virginia law caps the reimbursement rate for acute exams at 60% of actual eligible costs.



2

## NON-ACUTE EXAMS

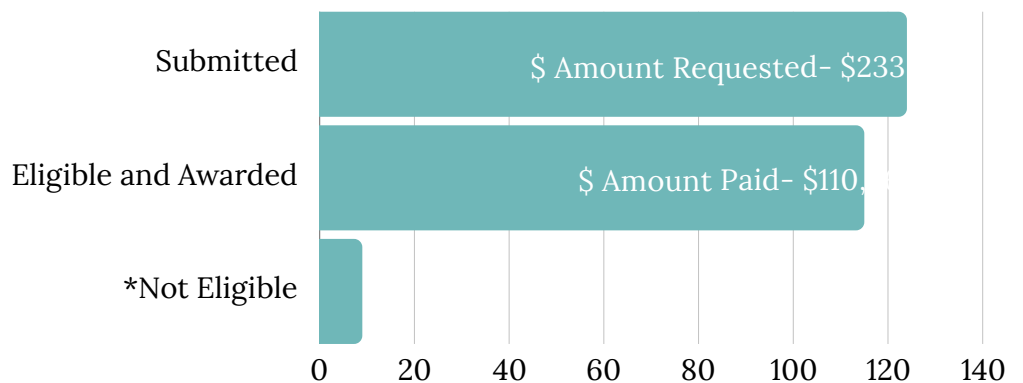
Non-Acute Exams are done more than 120 hours after an assault. Commission policy caps the reimbursement for non-acute exams at \$1,500 of actual eligible costs.



3

## FOLLOW-UP EXAMS

Follow-Up Exams are done as a continuum of care for victims and can include documenting injuries and testing for sexually transmitted infections. Commission policy caps the reimbursement for follow-up exams at \$1,000 of actual eligible costs.



\*Not Eligible: Typically means one of the following: Medicaid, TriCare, or Medicare paid for exam; it was an out of state incident; failure to provide necessary documentation; expenses not covered by program, etc.



# A Look Inside...

VVF Team Members share what has been especially rewarding in their work.

"The case that stands out to me the most was a sexual assault case. The victim had a hard time with our process, so her mom took over communications with our office and we worked together to get the claim paid...The daughter was so blown away by how we were able to help she would call her mom in tears when she received her checks. The mother also would update me on the daughter's progress as she went back to work and progressed in life with her new normal that she was now living and thriving! The mom also informed me that by going through the process with Virginia, she was able to create some legal bills [in another state] to consider implementing for their program."

"I am proud of being able to take very complicated policies/procedures and deciphering the language to a less complex type of communication- and then being able to explain that to others easily as needed."

"I am proud of being part of the Restitution & Recovery Team. We are a small group of individuals who do a very large amount of work. We are dedicated to making sure that there are funds available to provide to our new victims of crime all over the Commonwealth. Our team does not get the warm and fuzzy calls...Just being able to speak calmly and have answers to provide to the debtors ... allows us to guide the conversation to where the debtor (in most cases) calms down and agrees to make payment into the Fund. Those days, those payments that come in- that's the most rewarding part; we've accomplished our task of helping the next claimant for whatever crime has been committed against them or someone they love- to help alleviate the stress and hopefully bring a sense of control over a situation that's felt completely out of their hands since day one."

"I'm proud of the Fund in general. Also at this stage, I like to help those that are just starting their path grow within the Fund."

"..establishing relationships with these providers who initially are not on board [with accepting payment on behalf of a claimant] is satisfying. Plus I work along a great partner in crime and we get a long well so it makes the job easier."

"I love my State (Virginia), so helping its citizens, for me, it not only a pleasure, but also a responsibility."





# Notes From the Field...

VVF shares feedback about SAFE from our partners.

“The SAFE Payment Program has been a great resource to help our sexual assault patients not have to worry about how they are going to pay for their medical care. The team is always there ready to assist and ensures that the forensic nurses are paid for their expenses and helps ease the burden for the patients.”

Angela Modlin, MSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, Bon Secours Violence Response Team

“The SAFE payment program is a wonderful support to our patients who know they can receive evidence collection and treatment without receiving any bill for those services. This program in turn, helps fund our community based program by paying for those services. The process is extremely easy and does not require lots of staff time to complete requests and get reimbursed. Without this program, our small community based program would not be able to exist.”

April Bennett, BSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, GFN-C, Executive Director of SAFE Center of SWVA

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“Quite frankly, neither of the two rural programs I work with would continue to exist without SAFE. I remember a time when SAFE did not exist and it was difficult to keep programs afloat, even with institutional support. Many of the children and families our programs currently serve live in areas identified as double-poverty stricken. They often have no insurance, no available work and no financial means. For these patients, without SAFE there would be no way to provide outpatient medicines. We are so blessed to have SAFE and those staff who make it happen every day. Thank you so much!!”

“Melissa R. Harper, MSN, APRN, SANE-A, SANE-P, SAFE Center of SWVA”

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“As a forensic nurse, I appreciate that VVF and the SAFE payment plan help support my patients during the aftermath of a traumatic experience. Many times, patients decline forensic exams due to an inability to pay medical costs. Being able to offer this solution allows me to remove a major stressor from an already stressful situation.”

Kristen R. Snider BSN, RN, FNE, Forensic Nurse Examiner Program, Riverside Regional Medical Center

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# CONTACT THE VIRGINIA VICTIMS FUND



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