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**VIOLENT CRIMES  
COMPENSATION BOARD**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

FY2023

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**PREPARED BY**  
STAFF  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

# STATE OF ALASKA

## VIOLENT CRIMES COMPENSATION BOARD

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### FOURTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

THE HONORABLE MICHAEL DUNLEAVY  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

MEMBERS OF THE ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE:

We are pleased to submit the Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

This annual report is submitted to highlight the efforts of the Administration and members of the Thirty-Third legislature. This report is also intended to meet the requirements of Alaska Statute 18.67.170.

Our transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their Government is doing.

VCCB was created to mitigate financial hardships innocent victims suffer as a direct result of violent criminal act. Crime compensation is available to direct and indirect victims of eligible violent crimes such as: homicide, assault, arson, robbery, kidnapping, DUI, trafficking, sexual assault and domestic violence. Compensation goes to cover eligible expenses such as medical, counseling, funeral and other losses associated with the crime.

The Board and staff of this agency are honored to serve the people of Alaska in this capacity.

BOARD CHAIR

**GREG BRINGHURST**

MAY 2019 - PRESENT

MEMBER

**DR. BOB URATA**

2021 - PRESENT

MEMBER

**ANNE HELZER**

2020 - 2023

MEMBER

**ANNA COMETA**

2023 - PRESENT

# OUR PURPOSE

The Violent Crimes Compensation Board was established in 1972 to help mitigate financial hardships victims suffer as a direct result of violent crime in Alaska. While monetary compensation does not make victims of violence whole, financial help does lessen the burden and provide hope for healing.



"Even getting the letter of approval was such a relief, it immediately made me feel safer... I woke up the next day and realized I slept for the first time since the incident."

-Victim of robbery in  
Anchorage

# OUR STORY 1972-2023

## HISTORY

The Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) was established in 1972, and was one of the first such state compensation programs in the nation.

Lead by a volunteer Board of three and a staff of three, \$3,836 was awarded to 15 claims in its first year of operation. In 1984 the federal government passed legislation to assist state-run compensation programs. Today, we have programs in all 50 states.

Over the years the board increased funding, limits and efficiencies to better meet the needs of victims.

In 2023 the Alaska State Legislature approved two new staff positions to help meet the growing need of Alaskans impacted by violent crime.

IN FY 2023 THE BOARD FOUND

**86%**

APPLICATIONS ELIGIBLE

## FUNDING

- VCCB funding sources include state and federal funds.
- **100 percent of funding is comprised from criminal fines, fees, penalties and restitution – NOT from state or federal tax dollars.**
- For state funds, VCCB receives an appropriation from the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) Restorative Justice Account (RJA). Individuals convicted of felonies or multiple misdemeanors forfeit to the state their annual dividend checks, which are then diverted into the RJA account. VCCB is allotted 10-13 percent of this fund by legislative appropriation each year for operating costs (AS 43.23.048).
- VCCB applies for and receives an annual federal grant under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). VOCA is financed by Federal criminal fines, fees, penalties, and special assessments.
- VCCB may receive restitution directly from people who have been convicted of crimes.



## ELIGIBILITY

### To be eligible, a person must:

- Be an innocent person victimized in Alaska; or
- Be an Alaska Resident victimized in a US territory or foreign country without a compensation program
- Report the crime to law enforcement within 5 days of the crime or when a report could reasonably have been made
- File the application with the VCCB within 2 years from the date of the crime

### Benefits may be denied if the victim:

- Participated in the crime or was otherwise engaged in criminal activity
- Contributed to the crime
- Did not cooperate fully with law enforcement and prosecution
- Knowingly or intentionally submitted false or forged information to the VCCB.





# THE PROCESS

When an application is received, a case/claim is created. VCCB staff begin gathering information needed to determine eligibility and understand the victim's needs. Requests for information are sent to the law enforcement, hospitals, doctors, employers and other service providers, as well as the applicant. The information that is needed will depend on what expenses are being requested.

Once all the necessary documentation is received, staff bring the claim to the Board for an eligibility determination. For those that are deemed eligible, payments are then distributed by staff based on eligible expenses.\*

When a claim is denied, the claimant has an opportunity to request reconsideration. If the Board determines there is not just cause to change their decision, there is process to appeal and a hearing will be held before the Office of Administrative Hearings.

*\* Prior to November 2022 the Board approved every payment on every claim. Currently, staff are able to make payments based on policies and procedures set by the Board.*

# PAYER OF LAST RESORT

Crime victim compensation is considered a payer of last resort, meaning that reimbursements only cover expenses that are not already covered by restitution, insurance, or other financial sources.

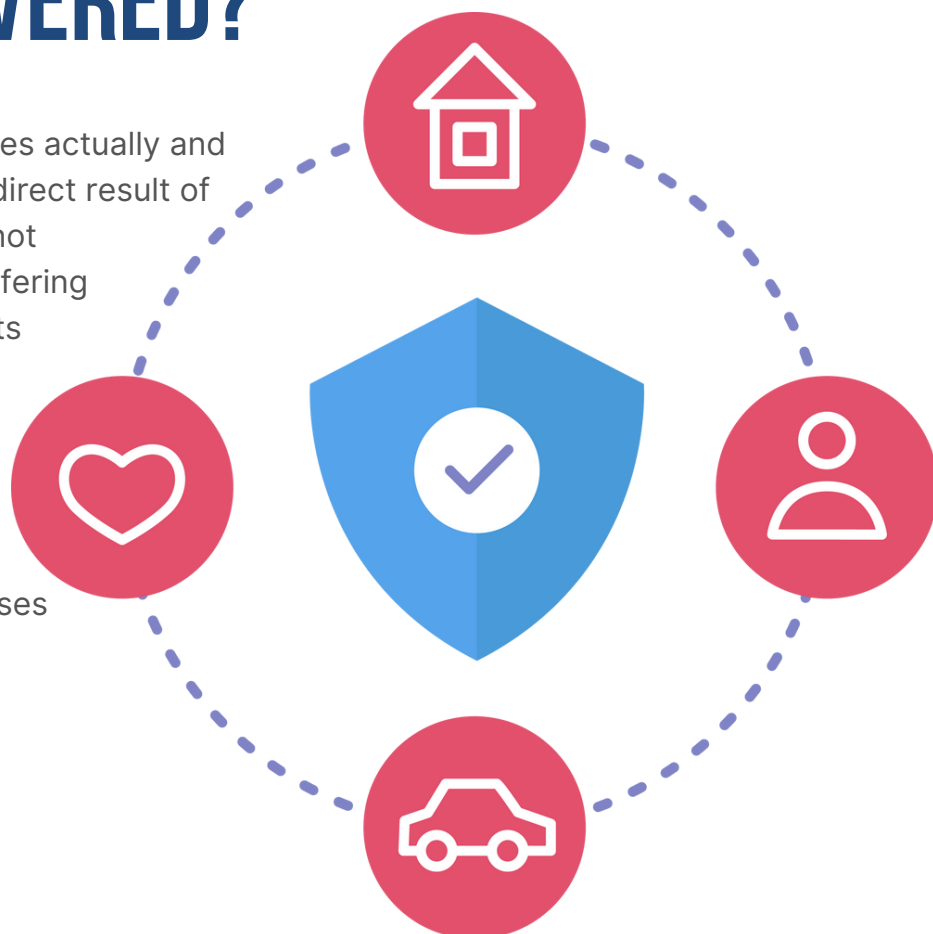
Understanding that compensation is a process that takes time and verification, the Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) works with alternative payment sources, such as insurance and Tribal assistance programs to ensure that funding is distributed appropriately.

## WHAT IS COVERED?

VCCB helps to cover expenses actually and reasonably incurred as the direct result of a violent crime. VCCB does not compensate for pain and suffering and may not fully cover costs associated with the crime.

### EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Crime Scene Clean-up
- Evidence Replacement
- Funeral and Burial Expenses
- Loss of Wages/Income
- Medical Expenses
- Mental Health Services
- Loss of Support
- Relocation Expenses
- Security Measures
- Travel Expenses







**599 CLAIMS REVIEWED**

**69 COMMUNITIES SERVED**

**\$934,162 DISTRIBUTED**

## **STATEWIDE SUPPORT**

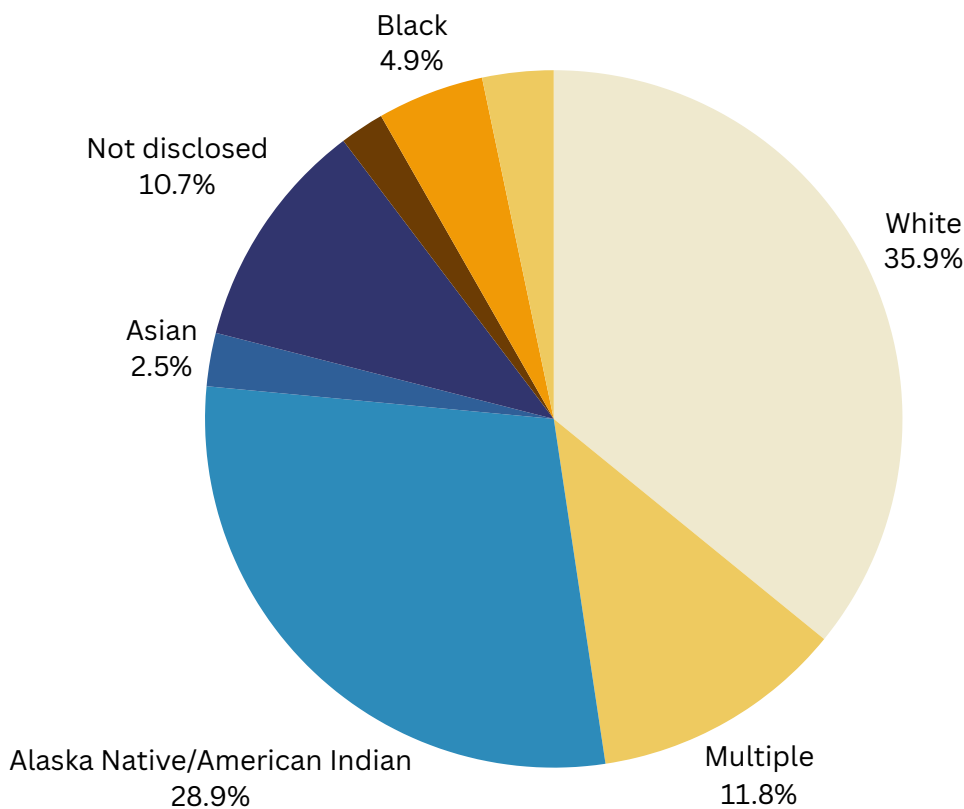
The Violent Crimes Compensation Board serves individuals and families from across Alaska. The majority of claims, 55 percent, are from outside the Anchorage area.



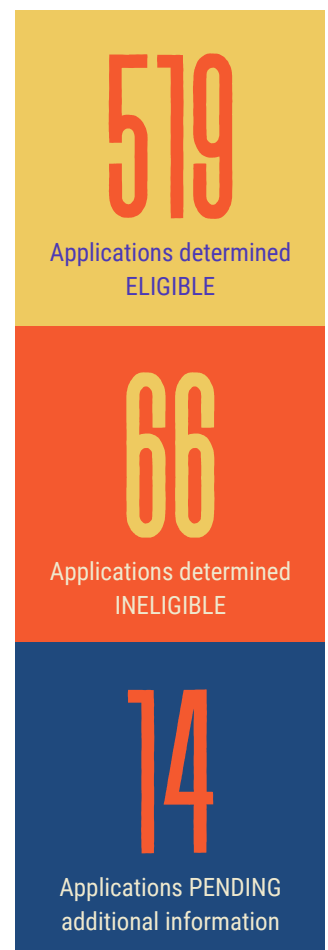
# WHO ARE WE SERVING?

The Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) evaluated 599 claims from across Alaska in FY2023. Those that were determined ineligible, were for administrative and statutory reasons such as, incomplete applications and ineligible crimes.

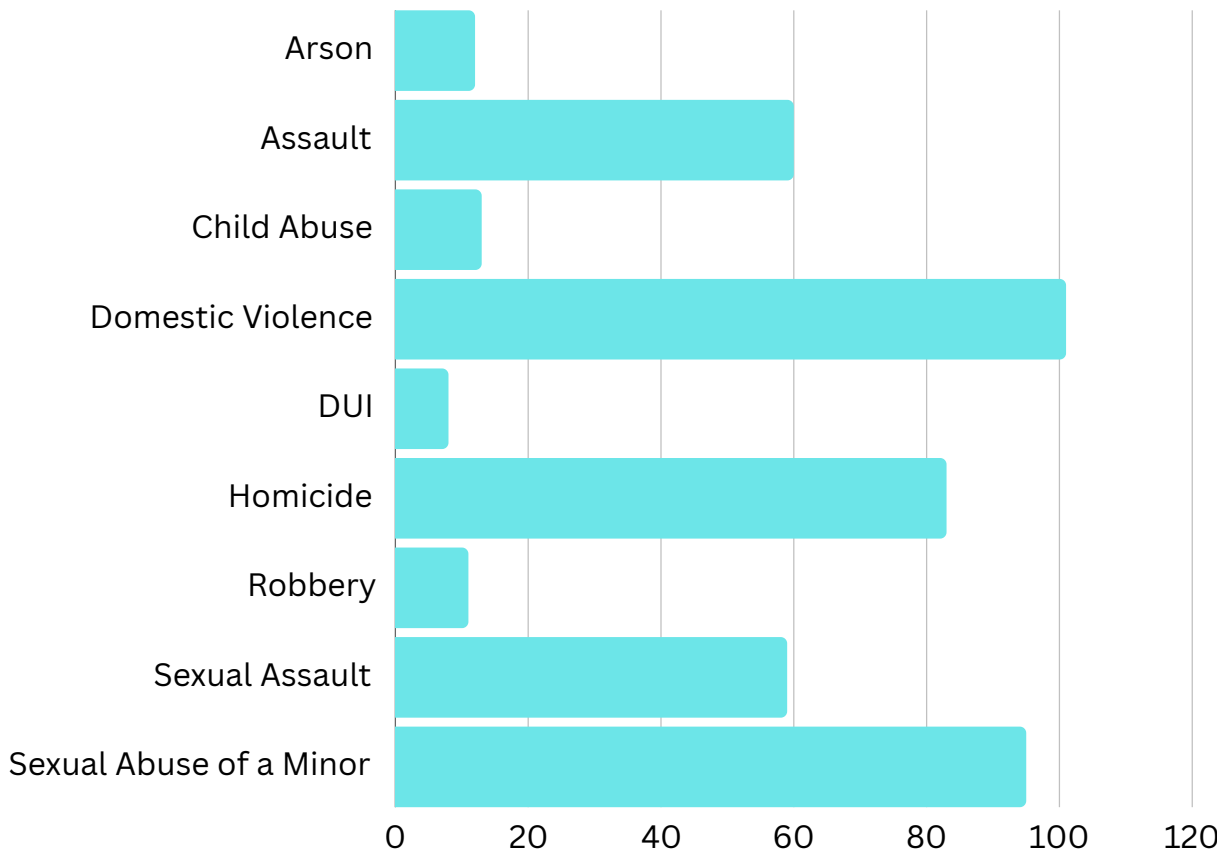
VCCB makes an effort to work with advocacy agencies, service providers and professionals in the criminal justice field to ensure Alaskans affected by violence know about the compensation program and their rights.



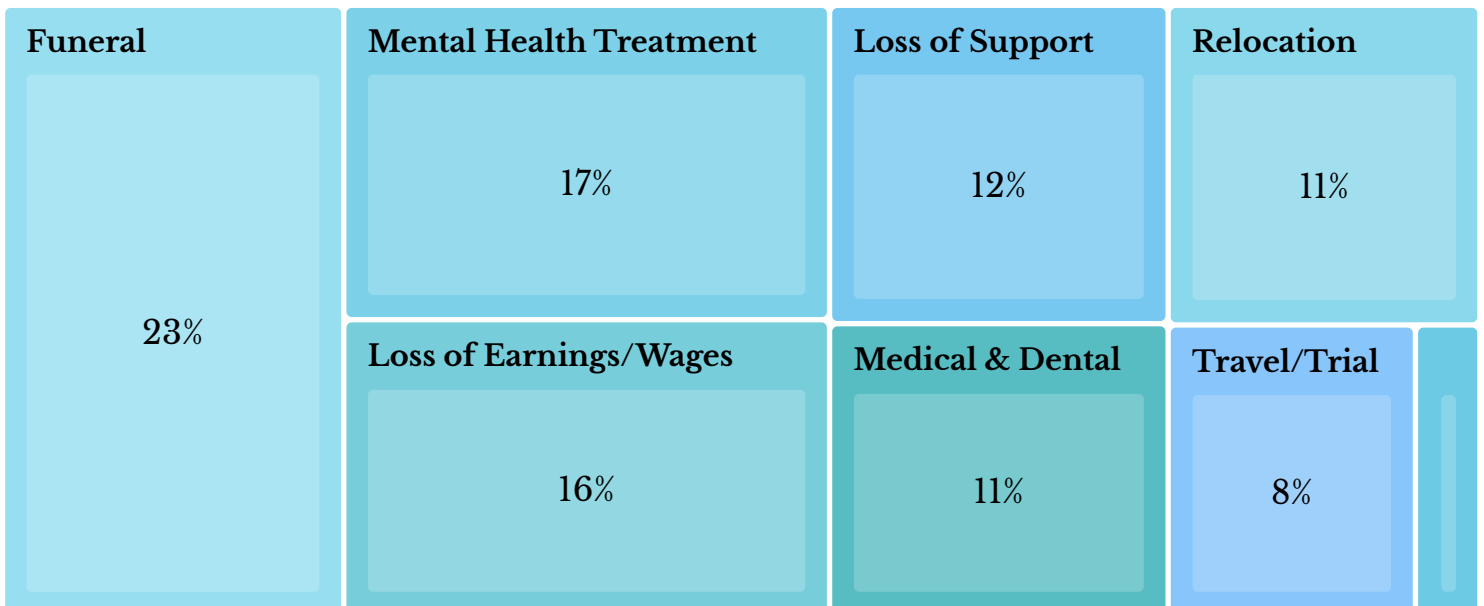
Other races and ethnicities represented include Hispanic and Pacific Islander - each was under 5 percent.



# CRIME TYPES SERVED



# FUNDING ALLOCATION



Other types of compensation may include security measures and replacement of items taken as evidence.

# OUR 2024 GOALS

The Governor and legislature recognized a need for greater assistance and took action. In State Fiscal Year 2024, the Violent Crimes Compensation Board was granted an increase in restorative justice funding to the maximum allowable per AS 43.23.048. With these additional resources the Board has set a plan for better meeting the needs of victims in Alaska.

## 1

### **Increase Capacity**

Two additional positions, a paralegal and Administrative Officer, will be hired in FY24 to assist with claims management and processing. Despite an increase in applications over the years, VCCB continued to operate with the same number of staff for the past 50 years.

## 2

### **Improve Efficiency**

VCCB is investing in technology to streamline online applications and access payment updates. In addition, the Board has taken steps to adjust the approval process allowing payments to be made by staff based on established policies and procedures. The goal is to improve overall eligibility determination and payment times.

## 3

### **Increase Outreach**

With increased capacity and increased efficiency the Board will work to improve outreach and access to crime compensation. Historically, despite an increase in crime in our state, VCCB applications remained stagnant or declined. We know that early assistance is crucial for victims of violence and outreach efforts must focus on those most affected. Updated training and materials will be produced in FY24.