

Action on Interpersonal Violence and Abuse

Backgrounder – November 15, 2022

In 2022-23, the ministries of Justice and Attorney General and Corrections, Policing and Public Safety are providing approximately \$25.2 million to interpersonal violence supports and programs. The Government of Saskatchewan also addresses interpersonal violence and abuse through legislation, policies, and programs in other ministries, such as the standard curriculum requirements set out by the Ministry of Education and housing benefits provided through the Ministry of Social Services.

These investments can be broken down into three main pillars: Education and Prevention; Immediate Frontline Supports; and Long-term Programming and Legislative Supports.

Education and Prevention

Children Exposed to Violence - \$1,156,770 annually

- Assists children and youth who have witnessed or experienced interpersonal violence or abuse, with the goal of preventing them from becoming victims or perpetrators of violence and abuse in the future.
- Additional information on Children Exposed to Violence programs can be found at:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/child-protection/children-exposed-to-violence>

Indigenous Family Violence Programming - \$549,500 annually

- Indigenous service providers deliver comprehensive and holistic support and education to Indigenous families living in urban settings.

Provincial Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Coordination Services - \$218,153 annually

- Support for the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services (PATHS), Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan (SASS) and STOPS to Violence to raise awareness and provide education and training on interpersonal violence and abuse.

Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Public Awareness Campaign - \$200,000 annually

- Continued development of the Face the Issue interpersonal violence and abuse public awareness campaign.
- The Face the Issue campaign, which has been translated into Cree, Dene, and French, is a comprehensive, multi-year public awareness campaign that focuses on building education and awareness about healthy relationships and how to prevent and respond to situations of domestic violence and abuse. The campaign's landing page can be found at www.facetheissue.ca.
- Additional information on the Face the Issue campaign can be found at:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse/face-the-issue-campaign>

Saskatchewan Curricula

- In grades one to five health education, students learn about factors that make situations safe or unsafe. They practice basic skills and begin to talk about the warning signs of unhealthy relationships and develop skills and strategies to help them stay safe.
- In grades six to nine health education, students focus on developing personal standards, setting boundaries, explore reasons that people may keep abuse a secret and discover that victims of violence and abuse are not at fault. Students also learn how to access help and support others.
- In *Wellness 10* and *Life Transitions 20, 30*, students learn about setting limits in healthy dating relationships. Students reflect on signals of danger, examine the influence of alcohol and other drugs on sexual attitudes and behaviours, learn how to discuss sexual health issues with partners and examine risk factors in various activity choices.

Immediate Frontline Supports

The ministries of Justice and Attorney General and Corrections, Policing and Public Safety fund a wide variety of supports for survivors of interpersonal violence and abuse, which are outlined below. Contact information for Saskatchewan interpersonal violence and abuse supports can be found online at:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse>

Transition Houses - \$7,224,412 annually

- Provide 24-hour staffed emergency safe shelters and supports for individual women and women with children leaving abusive situations, including counselling and referrals to community services.

Police-based Victim Services - \$4,655,335 annually

- Work closely with police and provide information, support, and referrals to victims of crime and traumatic events, including interpersonal violence.

Family Violence Intervention Services - \$1,922,248 annually

- Family violence outreach workers provide services to families that are experiencing and using violence or display risk factors associated with violence.

Sexual Assault Services - \$1,654,935 annually

- Provide direct support for victims of sexual assault, including: a 24-hour crisis hotline; crisis counselling; referral services; and accompaniment to medical, legal, and social services appointments.
- Sexual Assault Services also works to improve public awareness about the risks and impacts of sexual assault.

Enhanced Residential Programs - \$1,470,362 annually

- Provide safe shelter and support to individual women and children with issues beyond family violence such as addictions, mental health concerns, and homelessness.

Victims Compensation - \$1,300,000 annually

- Provide payments for expenses resulting from criminal acts of personal violence, including interpersonal violence.

Domestic Violence Victim Services - \$786,470 annually

- Work closely with police and provide information, support, advocacy, and referrals immediately following a domestic violence offence and throughout the criminal justice process.

Family Intervention Rapid Support Teams (FIRST) - \$642,687 annually

- Family violence outreach workers provide collaborative, timely services to families that are experiencing and using violence or display risk factors associated with violence. FIRST teams are operated by community-based organizations in Moose Jaw, Kindersley, Weyburn, Estevan and Melfort.

Family Information Liaison Unit - \$630,000 annually

- Assists families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls to find information about their loved ones.

Specialized Victim Services Programs - \$251,714 annually

- Provide services to victims of domestic violence and sexual offences.

Missing Persons Liaison Program - \$214,000 annually

- Victim services for family members who have missing or murdered loved ones.

Child Advocacy Centre Victim Support - \$172,000 annually

- In Regina and Saskatoon two Child Advocacy Centres (CAC) provide support for children and parent clients who have experienced violence and abuse.

Emergency Transportation - \$164,328 annually

- Provide transportation support for residents leaving abusive/violent situations to access places of safety.

Domestic Violence Court Coordinator - \$163,449 annually

- Coordinates the services provided by the three Domestic Violence Courts in Saskatchewan.

Listen Project - \$158,100 annually

- A partnership with Law Society lawyers to provide free legal advice and information to survivors of interpersonal violence and abuse.

211 Saskatchewan - \$130,000 annually

- Provincial call/text/web platforms to connect people experiencing violence with services.

Supports for Families of Missing Persons - \$105,000 annually

- Provides specialized counselling and support groups focusing on ambiguous loss.

Victim Advocate Case Reviews - \$92,000 annually

- Victim Advocate Case reviews teams work with police agencies to review unfounded, sexual assault cases with the goal of improving transparency, accountability, and outcomes for victims of sexual assault.
- These reviews are being conducted by Regina Sexual Assault Centre in Regina and Saskatchewan Sexual Assault and Information Centre in Saskatoon, in partnership with the Regina and Saskatoon police services.

Social Services Supports

- Emergency benefits through Income Assistance programs can assist individuals seeking safety from interpersonal violence to pay for their basic needs (to move, hook-up utilities, purchase furniture and pay for a security deposit).
- If an emergency shelter is not available or there are no shelters in a community, emergency benefits for a short-term stay in a hotel stay may be provided.
- Child and Family Programs provides funding for services and supports to families impacted by interpersonal violence. These programs include Counselling Services, After Hours Mobile Crisis Services and In Home Support Services. In addition, families who are receiving services under *The Child and Family Services Act*, can access Supportive Family Living Programs which allow children to remain in parental care or reunification to occur in a timelier manner while addressing risk.
- The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation provides the Seeking Safety from Interpersonal Violence stream of the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit for individuals leaving interpersonal violence situations to help find a new place to live independently and safely.

Long-term Programming and Legislative Supports

Domestic Violence Programming for Offenders Serving Community Sentences - \$1,330,000 annually

- Community Corrections probation staff provide evidenced-based programming for domestic violence offenders.

Protection from Human Trafficking

- *The Protection from Human Trafficking Act* provides safeguards for victims and survivors of human trafficking. This includes streamlining the process for victims to seek a protection order and new provisions that prohibit traffickers from contacting their victims directly or indirectly.
- This legislation also expands the ability of police to seek search warrants for residences or vehicles to locate victims of human trafficking, and allows victims to initiate lawsuits against their traffickers and seek financial compensation for harm suffered.

Clare's Law (*The Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Act*)

- *The Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protocol Act*, also known as Clare's Law, authorizes municipal police and the RCMP to disclose information related to someone's violent or abusive past to intimate partners whose safety may be threatened.

- Additional information on Clare's Law can be found at:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse/clares-law>

Paid Leave for Survivors of Interpersonal Violence

- Amendments to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* provide survivors of interpersonal violence with five days paid leave and a further five days' unpaid leave, allowing survivors more financial security as they leave violent relationships.

Intimate Images Legislation

- Amendments to *The Privacy Act* allows a person whose intimate image have been distributed without their consent to sue the person who distributed the image. It also shifts the onus of proof to the person that circulated the image, requiring them to show that they had a reasonable basis to conclude consent had been granted to do so.
- This legislation was strengthened through amendments, introduced in the fall of 2021 and brought into force in the spring of 2022, that extend the definition of protected images to fake or altered images; require defendants to return any copies of visual recordings of the victim, and declare the distribution of all visual recordings of the victim unlawful, among other protections.

Ability to Terminate a Lease Without Penalty

- *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act, 2017* and *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020* allow persons who have experienced physical and sexual violence to end a long-term lease without penalty by providing 28-days' notice to their landlord.

The Children's Law Act

- Amended to align with the federal *Divorce Act* amendments, which came into effect on March 1, 2021. These amendments require family violence and its effects to be considered when making parenting arrangements.

Enhancements to Child Support Legislation

- In May of 2022, amendments to *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act, 1997* came into force that enhance enforcement of child support payments in situations where a payor is one month in arrears, has previously defaulted on payments, and has been acting in bad faith by maliciously withholding child support.
- Enforcement procedures include seizing pension entitlements, suspending drivers' licenses, and seizing wages for payments. This provision is the first of its kind in Canada and specifically targets repetitive malicious conduct.