



## Crime Victim Benefit Modifications

March 2010

### 2010 legislation modifies crime victim benefits

*The Washington Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVC) provides benefits to victims of criminal acts. Persons injured by a criminal act in Washington, or their surviving spouses and dependents, may be eligible to receive benefits such as medical treatment, counseling, lost wages and burial expenses. The program is managed by L&I.*

### What is the background of this legislation?

The difficult state economy has caused CVC caseloads and costs to increase significantly. Without modifications to the benefits, the program would have run out of money by May and would no longer be available to crime victims. Changes to the program benefits take effect April 1, 2010 and will ensure the program continues to provide services to as many victims as possible.

#### Key provisions include:

- A limit of \$50,000 for payments on a single claim. This “hard cap” applies to all new and current claims, including those that are at the limit or have exceeded the limit.
- A limit of \$5,750 for burial expenses and a requirement that claims are filed within one year of when the death is recognized as a homicide or the remains are released for burial.
- Eliminating the lump-sum payment of \$7,500 to a surviving spouse or child of a homicide victim who was not employed at the time of the criminal act.
- Limiting permanent partial disability to \$7,000.
- No wage replacement payments to any person who was not gainfully employed at the time of the criminal act. For those employed at the time of the criminal act, the maximum remains at \$15,000.
- No compensation will be paid to a victim who has been convicted of a felony in the preceding five years if the felony is a violent crime or crime against persons, and all legal financial obligations have not been satisfied.

### What's next?

The vast majority of CVC claims cost just a few thousand dollars, so most claimants will not be significantly impacted by these changes. Very few claims ever exceed \$50,000. However, there are a small number of cases where the claimants will lose their benefits immediately because they have already exceeded the \$50,000 limit. This is a difficult situation for those who have relied on these services. L&I staff will be working with each one of these individuals to see if there are other state, federal, or local community programs from which they might receive additional assistance.

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