



**Evaluation of the Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children Grant**

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## List of Acronyms

ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
PMMC	Parents of Murdered or Missing Children

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

This report presents findings from the evaluation of the Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children (PMMC) grant which was introduced in January 2013. This grant provides income support payments of \$350 per week for up to 35 weeks (up to \$12,250 in total) to parents who suffer a loss of employment income due to the death or disappearance of their child or children under the age of 18, where the death or disappearance is the result of a probable Criminal Code offence in Canada. Payments are available in the 52 weeks period after the death or disappearance of their child (or children).

Along with the introduction of the PMMC grant, the Helping Families in Need Act amended the Canada Labour Code to allow for unpaid leave and to protect the jobs of parents whose child dies or disappears as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence.

This first evaluation of the PMMC grant examined questions pertaining to the relevance, usage, awareness and administrative costs of the grant. The evaluation used the following lines of evidence:

- an analysis of administrative data (grant applicants data, Employment Insurance (EI) and Canada Revenue Agency taxation files);
- a review of the literature; and
- 43 key informant interviews with federal government representatives, police officers and victim support groups.

The number of parents who applied to the program varied from 11 to 14 per year between 2013 and 2016, for a total of 50 applicants over that period. Of those, 29 parents received grant payments. Between 2012 to 2013 and 2016 to 2017, a total of \$315,350 was paid in grant. These numbers reflect, in part, the low incidence of child murder and disappearance in Canada.

### **Key Findings**

#### **Relevance of the Program: Need Addressed by the PMMC Grant**

The literature and the key informants interviewed for the evaluation suggest that there is a need for the PMMC grant. Incidents such as those covered by this program result in significant emotional impacts for the parents and may lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. The trauma can impede parent's ability to function at work in the period following the incident and during the criminal justice process. As well, according to key informants, parents who return to work before they are ready often fail to function effectively and run a risk of being long-term unemployed.

As pointed out by key informants, income support is one of the greatest needs of parents whose child died or went missing due to a probable Criminal Code offence. Family members may incur costs in order to undertake their own search of the missing person or expenses in relation with funeral, accommodation if the home is the crime scene, travelling to court, loss income while away from work or therapy. The extent to which they face a financial hardship depends on their pre-existing financial situation. On one hand, as illustrated by key informants, parents with stronger labour market attachment are more likely to qualify for income replacement such as Employment Insurance or to have access to employer paid benefit (for example, long-term disability insurance). On the other hand, researches show that families with low income are more likely to be victims of homicide than economically advantaged individuals.

In Canada, the need to provide financial compensation or assistance to relatives of crime victims has been acknowledged in many provinces and territories. However, the PMMC grant appears to fill a gap in assistance, especially for family members of missing persons. Similarly, countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and some of the European Union countries are offering assistance to family members of deceased victims to cover different type of expenses resulting from the criminal incident. However, with one exception, it has not been possible to find examples of specific programs targeted to relatives of missing person in those countries.

### **Barriers to Accessing the PMMC Grant**

Key informants identified a range of barriers that may limit access to the PMMC grant by parents:

- The level of awareness of the grant is low among parents and victim support providers in general. The approach used to share information does not always reach front line staff in victim support provider offices and the information is not distributed frequently. Key informants also suggested that the grant could be advertised more in police stations and in court houses.
- Most of victim support service providers agree that the personal turmoil of potential applicants is one of the largest barriers to applying for the grant. Personal turmoil likely prevents parents from not only not looking for support, but also never accessing victim support services.
- Accessing relevant information about the grant and understanding this information is a challenge.

The following eligibility conditions are seen by key informants as main barriers to accessing the grant:

- A proportion of the parents of missing or murdered children may not be able to access the program due to having insufficient earnings to meet the eligibility threshold.
- Providing evidence that a child is missing or deceased as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence, and that the child was not a willing party of the probable Criminal Code is difficult and involves a certain level of subjectivity.
- The age limit of the victim
- Application process revives negative emotions and it requires parents to acquire too many forms.

### **Characteristics of Applicants and Reasons for Denials**

PMMC recipients were predominantly female and living in an urban area. Slightly more recipients were married or in common law relationship as opposed to single, divorced, separated, or widow. Almost all recipients were living in urban area. On average, they earned \$36,000 from employment in the year before the incident.

Compared to recipients, parents who had applied to the grant but were denied payments were predominately single, divorced, separated or widowed as opposed to married or in common law relationship. As well, denied applicants were most likely to be unemployed at the time of the incident and had lower earnings from employment (\$20,600) in the year before the incident.

Out of the 50 parents who applied for the grant between 2013 and 2016, 21 were denied funding. The main reasons of denial were insufficient employment earnings, missing earnings information, the missing child was older than 18 years of age or the incident occurred before January 1, 2013.

### **Usage of the Grant**

The average length of time necessary to resolve cases of murder or disappearance of children resulting from a probable Criminal Code offence could not be found. However, Statistics Canada data show that the median length of homicide court cases in Canada was over a year (451 days) in 2013 to 2014, which exceeds the duration of the grant payments.

The data analysis shows that the majority of recipients received 35 weeks of grant payments (maximum allowed) and that the window during which payments were received averaged 35.2 weeks. Most victim support providers and police officers interviewed suggested that 52 weeks of income support would be the minimum coverage needed for most parents. As well, many key informants felt that the window should be of up to two or three years.

## **Support Provided to Parents by the Grant**

For recipients with the lowest earnings level, grant payments replaced 145% of their lost earnings, on average. For recipients with the highest earnings level, PMMC grant payments replaced 22% of the loss earnings on average.

## **Cost Analysis**

The administrative costs of delivering the PMMC grant have decreased from \$1,389,800 in 2012 to 2013 to \$191,100 in 2016 to 2017. Accordingly, the ratio of administrative costs over the total program expenditures (that is administrative costs and grant payments to recipients) has decreased from 99.7% to 67.4% over that period. These numbers reflects the significant investment that was made in start-up activities including the development of information technology system to process applications and payments. Considering that the incidence of murdered and missing children cases is low in Canada, the program can only provide support to a limited number of individuals. In this context, fixed costs will remain high compared to amount directly provided to parents.

## **Lessons Learned**

The evaluation recognizes that the PMMC grant is a small and relatively recent program with low, but very important materiality. In that context, the evaluation findings help drawing lessons learned that the grant program management may consider in the future.



## **Management Response**

Employment and Social Development Canada (the Department) is pleased to receive and to respond to the evaluation report on the Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children grant (PMMC). This report is timely and complements the report on the PMMC grant that was recently released by the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime (Ombudsman), released in August 2017. In fact, many of the findings reported in the evaluation are closely aligned with those of the Ombudsman.

The Parents of Murdered or Missing Children grant was introduced in January 2013 and targeted a new client group for the Department by providing support to parents coping with the death or disappearance of their child due to a probable Criminal Code offence. The Department established a specialized processing centre for this grant; and staff received specialized training to better handle the sensitive interactions with parents who are coping with these tragic circumstances. The Department regularly shares information with victim-centered organizations and law enforcement agencies to raise awareness of the grant. Furthermore, the Department proactively reaches out to law enforcement when aware of incidents that may result in potential applications.

Almost five years since the launch of the grant, the Department has learned that the original estimates with respect to grant take-up were high and that fortunately the size of this target group is smaller than originally estimated. However, work remains to ensure that those who may be eligible for it are aware of the grant.

The Department continues to work with partners including Justice Canada to review and enhance the program in response to the Ombudsman's report and the findings highlighted in the evaluation will be leveraged to further inform this process. Improvements to the grant are being approached through the following three themes: providing citizen-centric service delivery; improving access to the PMMC grant; and promoting awareness of the grant.

### **Providing Citizen-Centric Service Delivery**

The Department is reviewing the application materials including the content of communications information, forms and definitions, with the aim to improve clarity and reduce the application burden.

### **Improving Access to the PMMC Grant**

The Department is reviewing various aspects of the grant including the application requirements and communications tools, and expanding outreach to under-represented communities to ensure that victims' families are able to access the grant. In addition, the Department is reviewing the eligibility criteria for the grant.

**Promoting Awareness of the PMMC Grant**

The Department continues to participate in victim-focused activities and conferences to raise awareness of the PMMC grant. Contact with key stakeholders will be continued with expansion of outreach to target groups, such as Indigenous organizations and advocacy groups for persons with disabilities.

## **1. Introduction**

This report presents findings from the evaluation of the Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children (PMMC) grant. Introduced in January 2013, the PMMC grant provides up to 35 weeks of income support to parents who suffer a loss of employment income due to the death or disappearance of their child or children under the age of 18, where the death or disappearance is the result of a probable Criminal Code offence.

Along with the introduction of this program, the Helping Families in Need Act amended the Canada Labour Code to allow for unpaid leave and to protect the jobs of parents whose child dies or disappears as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence.

This first evaluation of the grant examined questions pertaining to the relevance, usage, awareness and administrative costs of the grant. Lines of evidence used to address the evaluation questions consisted of:

- an analysis of administrative data from the grant applicants, Employment Insurance (EI) and Canada Revenue Agency taxation files;
- a review of the literature; and
- interviews with 43 key informants (federal government representatives involved in the design and delivery of the grant, police officers who had been leading investigation of missing or deceased child in the past five years and victim support groups) distributed as follows :
  - 1) 10 police officers among which three were from Indigenous police forces;
  - 2) 24 victim support providers distributed as follows: six national organisations; six police victim support providers, nine provincial and territorial victim service providers, three Indigenous victim service providers;
  - 3) 9 Government of Canada officers from Employment and Social Development Canada, Service Canada and Justice Canada.

Between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2016, 50 parents applied to the PMMC grant. This has limited the evaluator's ability to conduct statistical analysis of administrative data to examine the outcomes of the grant.

## **2. Description of the PMMC Grant**

The PMMC grant provides parents with payments of \$350 per week paid bi-weekly for up to 35 weeks (up to \$12,250) in the 52 week period after the death or disappearance of their child (or children) under the age of 18. The grant may be shared by eligible recipients. A lump sum payment is possible up to one year less a day after the incident, provided all criteria are met.

In order to access the grant, the applicant must:

- be legally responsible for the child or children involved in the incident;
- be on leave from all employment as a result of the incident, or if already on leave from employment at the time of the incident, be unable to return to work;
- have recent labour force attachment having earned at least \$6,500 in the previous calendar year or in the 52 weeks immediately prior to the incident. Both wage-earners and the self-employed are eligible for the grant;
- cannot be receiving any type of Employment Insurance benefits or Quebec Parental Insurance Plan benefits and must declare any Employment Insurance or Quebec Parental Insurance Plan benefits received since the incident; and
- must not have been charged with committing a Criminal Code offence that led to the death or disappearance of the child.

Some conditions also apply to the type of incidents for which the grant can be obtained:

- the grant is available for incidents occurring in Canada on or after January 1, 2013;
- the child has to be 18 years or less at the time of the incident;
- the death or disappearance of the child is a result of a probable Criminal Code offence; and
- in the case of a missing child, the child must have been missing for over one week. In the case of a deceased child, the requirement is that it is not probable that the child was a willing party to the crime that led to his or her death.

To apply to the grant, parents have to complete an Application Form which can be submitted online or in paper form. They also have to submit an Incident Report Form completed and stamped by the law enforcement agency where the incident was reported. As well, parents must submit an Employment Form completed and signed by each of the employers they were working for in the 52 weeks before the incident occurred.

### **3. Key Findings**

#### **3.1 Relevance of the Program: Need Addressed by the PMMC Grant**

The literature reviewed and the key informants interviewed for the evaluation suggest that there is a need for the federal government to provide income support to parents of missing or murdered children. These incidents generally result in a traumatism for the parents and impact their overall life, employment and finance. As well, Canadian provinces and territories and other countries recognize the need for specific programs to cover expenses resulting directly from a crime. No program similar to the PMMC grant exists at the provincial and territorial level. Therefore, the program fills a gap in provincial and territorial funding for parents of missing or murdered children.

### **3.1.1 Effects of the Child Disappearance or Homicide on Parent's Life, Employment and Finances**

#### **General effects on personal life**

The literature shows that criminal incidents result in significant psychological and emotional impacts; especially if the crime affects a personal relationship.<sup>1</sup> According to a research report on the needs of persons bereaved by homicide, family members may experience a traumatism for a long period of time after the incident and can have difficulties functioning in their day-to-day life.<sup>2</sup> This traumatism may be further complicated by the need to deal with the criminal justice process. As recognised in the *Diagnosics and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-V)*<sup>3</sup> and in the literature, family members of an individual who was a victim of crime are at risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Impacts on employment**

Incidents such as those covered under the PMMC grant create a range of consequences for the employment of the victim's family. Research shows that family members of homicide victim experience difficulties functioning at work due to factors such as inability to focus, lack of motivation, emotional outburst and depression<sup>5</sup>. For example, relatives of a murdered person have reported leaving their job because they would no longer feel comfortable with their responsibilities (such as working with kids after the death of a child) or being terminated by their employers who felt that they would no longer be able to do the job.<sup>6</sup> The effect on someone's ability to work may emerge a long time after the crime. Some homicide victim relatives have reported suffering from a break down years after the incident or being faced with a re-emerging traumatism once the offender is arrested.<sup>7</sup> As well, family members of victims of unresolved crime have reported that they put their life on hold while waiting for the offender to be arrested.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Spilman K, Sarah. 2006. Child Abduction, Parents' Distress, and Social Support. *Violence and Victims*, Volume 21, Number 2, p.149.

<sup>2</sup> Dunn, Peter, Chaston, Katy and Lesley Malone. 2006. In the aftermath. The support needs of people bereaved by homicide: a research report. Victim Support National Office.

<sup>3</sup> American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnosics and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-V)*.

<sup>4</sup> Englebrecht, Christine M., Mason, Derek T. and Adams, Peggy J. 2016. Responding to Homicide: An Exploration of the Ways in Which Family Members React to and Cope With the Death of a Loved One. *OMEGA: Journal and Death and Dying*, Vol 73 (4), p. 355-373.

<sup>5</sup> Mezey, G., Evans, C. and Hobdell, K. 2002. Families of homicide victims: psychiatric responses and help-seeking. *Psychology and psychotherapy: theory, research*, 75(1), p65-75 and Parkes, C.M. (1993) *Psychiatric problems following bereavement by murder or manslaughter*. *British journal of psychiatry*, 162, p. 49-54 cited in Dunn, Peter, Chaston, Katy and Lesley Malone. 2006. In the aftermath. The support needs of people bereaved by homicide: a research report, Victim Support National Office, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Englebrecht, Christine M., Mason, Derek T. and Adams, Peggy J. 2016. Responding to Homicide: An Exploration of the Ways in Which Family Members React to and Cope With the Death of a Loved One. *OMEGA: Journal and Death and Dying*, Vol 73 (4), p. 355-373.

<sup>7</sup> Van Wijk, A., Van Leiden, I., & Ferwerda, H. (2017). Murder and the long-term impact on co-victims: A qualitative, longitudinal study *International Review of Victimology*, Vol 23 (2), 145-157.

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. 2005. Developing a Strategy to Provide Services and Support to Victims of Unsolved, Serious Crimes. p. 7.

In the case of missing persons, interviews conducted in the United Kingdom found that family members often feel the need to take time away from work due to emotional stress or in order to undertake research of the disappeared person<sup>9</sup>.

The key informants interviewed for this evaluation echoed findings presented in literature. All levels of victim service providers interviewed reported that parents would need to take time away from work at two key junctures: 1) right after the incident and 2) during the court process. In particular, all victim support providers agreed that parents need time off work during the legal proceedings and mentioned that parents often collapse after the trial. Informants also reported that post-traumatic stress disorder often occur a year following the incident.

Key informants pointed out that it is very common to see parents returning to work before they are ready, and then experiencing large setbacks in their grieving process. According to several victim support providers, returning to work before being ready may also create some risks of becoming chronically out of work. In particular, parents who need to return to work before they are ready often fail to function effectively at work. As a result, they either leave on their own or are forced to resign.

Overall, all key informants agreed that the amount of time parents need to take off work varies from person to person and depends on several factors (access to financial and social supports, ways of coping, the presence of other children in the household, and the particular circumstances of the incident). Most key informants do, however, think that parents need at least a year off of work after the incident and generally take two or three years to get back to a normal life. They may need more time if the child is missing for a long period or if there are other children in their home grieving the loss of a sibling. Indigenous victim service providers affirmed that it is not uncommon for an Indigenous parent to be off work for two or three years depending on their social support network.

Most police officers and victim support providers reported that it is very common for parents to fear losing their jobs. This fear is higher for single parent families where parents are living from paycheck to paycheck. As well, many Government of Canada officials and victim support providers mentioned that self-employed parents, those whose work is precarious and lower income earners may have greater fears. While the parents may often fear losing their employment, most victim support providers (from all categories) noticed that employers are very understanding of parents in these circumstances and try to be as supportive as possible.

Most Government of Canada informants, police officers and victim support providers did not know the likelihood of losing or changing jobs as a result of these incidents. Some did mention that it is common for parents to lose or change their job because they need to take too much time off of work, cannot cope with the work environment or decide to relocate in other city or country.

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<sup>9</sup> Holmes, Lucy. 2008. Living in Limbo the experience of and impact on family of missing person. Missing People.

## Financial impacts

The murder or disappearance of a child also impacts the family from a financial stand point. In the cases of disappearance, the family may incur costs in order to undertake their own search of the missing person. Such cost may include printing posters, buying advertising space or long distance travel in order to investigate all possibilities related to the disappearance<sup>10</sup>.

In the case of homicide, having to pay for the funeral expenses can result in financial difficulties for some families.<sup>11</sup> Other expenses include having to pay for accommodation if the home is the crime scene; travelling to court, loss income while away from work, therapy or counselling.<sup>12</sup> The costs paid by families as a result of a homicide can be significant; averaging 37,000 pounds (approximately \$61,000 Canadian) according to a research conducted in the United Kingdom.<sup>13</sup>

Victims support providers and Government of Canada officials interviewed for the evaluation identified income support as the greatest or second greatest need of parents of missing or murdered children. As noted by victim support providers from all categories, parents are in need of income support to fill in the gap while they take time off work for the trial and subsequent to the trial. The police victim support providers indicated that beyond income replacement, parents may need financial assistance for expenses related to funeral, travel to attend the court process clean up in the case of an incident occurring in the home, medication, child care for siblings and moving costs.

According to Indigenous victim service providers interviewed, the need for financial assistance is higher for Indigenous families. The largest financial cost incurred by those families relates to travel to access victim support services, Indigenous medical services and trauma programs located in Toronto and Ottawa. Other costs relate to care, medications, moving expenses, and travel to attend court proceedings.

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<sup>10</sup> Holmes, Lucy. 2008. Living in Limbo the experience of and impact on family of missing person. Missing People. P. 31

<sup>11</sup> Dunn, Peter, Chaston, Katy and Lesley Malone. 2006. In the aftermath. The support needs of people bereaved by homicide: a research report, Victim Support National Office, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Casey, Louise. Undated. Meeting the Service Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, Meeting the Service Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide, p. 5. (Retrieved on August 12, 2017:

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/news/press-releases/victims-com/families-bereaved-homicide.pdf>)

The financial needs of families following the death or disappearance of a child may depend on their pre-existing financial situation. In this regard, research shows that individuals and families with low income are more likely to be victims of homicide than economically advantaged individuals. The financial situation of these families can exacerbate the financial and employment consequences resulting from the incident.<sup>14</sup> This was echoed by the key informants whom spoke about the unequal access parents have to various sources of income. They pointed out that parent's ability to access other sources of income is a product of the type of employment they have (for example, public sector, private sector, self-employed), personal investments, and capacity to save. For example, many parents in the public and private sectors will be able to qualify for standard income replacement such as EI or may have employer paid benefits such as long-term disability insurance.

Key informants noted that existing employment benefits that provide better financial supports and job security generally require parents to prove their inability to work during a time of personal turmoil. For numerous reasons, many key informants thought it would be too difficult for parents to access these supports due to the emotional turmoil they are going through.

### **3.1.2 Availability of Compensation for Crime Victim Relatives in Canada**

In Canada, along with the PMMC grant, the federal government provides financial assistance to victims of crime and, in some cases, to their relatives through programs such as assistance for Attending Parole Board of Canada hearings; Financial Assistance for Canadians Victimized Abroad; Victim Services and Assistance for Families of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Assistance for Victims and Survivors of Crime with Disabilities.<sup>15</sup>

A review of the provincial and territorial employment standard acts showed that nine Canadian provinces and territories have labour code protection allowing parents of disappeared or murdered children to take a leave of absence from work. In most cases, the duration of the protected leaves aligns with the Canada Labour Code which provides up to 104 weeks of protected leave in the cases of child death and 52 weeks in cases of disappearance. There were exceptions in two where the duration of both type of leaves was 35 weeks in one jurisdiction and 37 weeks in another jurisdiction. The entitlement criteria is generally less stringent in the provinces and territories where the parents can access the protected leave after 30 or 90 days of continuous employment while the Canada Labour Code criteria is six months of continuous employment. There was one exception where the entitlement started after 12 months of continuous employment.

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<sup>14</sup> Casey, Louise. 2011. Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide. Justice, United Kingdom. p. 10 (Retrieved on September 22, 2017: <https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/news/press-releases/victims-com/review-needs-of-families-bereaved-by-homicide.pdf>)

<sup>15</sup> Department of Justice, Victim Funds. (Retrieved on August 4, 2017: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fund-fina/cj-ij/fund-fond/index.html>)



A review of provincial and territorial government websites also showed that it is common for provinces to deliver compensation programs to victims of crime or survivors of violent crimes.<sup>16</sup> Some of those programs also provide compensation to the family of the victim. For example, the Crime Victim Assistance Program in British Columbia reimburses certain expenses (for example, counselling or funeral) to immediate family members but does not provide income support to parents of missing or murdered children.<sup>17</sup>

Another example is the Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels in Quebec, which may provide a compensation of approximately \$6,000 each to the mother and father of a deceased person. The program also covers the costs of psychotherapy sessions for the relatives of a deceased or missing victim. As well, since 2016, the parent of a child murdered by the other parent can receive an allowance while being unable to work.<sup>18</sup> To be eligible, it must be proven that the incident was committed to harm the other parent. The allowance covers up to 90% of employment income up to maximum insurable earnings which was \$70,000 in 2015.<sup>19</sup>

Overall, while some provinces and territories provide some support to parents of homicide victims, it was not possible to find any provincial or territorial programs similar to the PMMC grant.

### **3.1.3 Supports for Crime Victim Relatives in Other Countries**

The need to provide some form of financial compensation to close relatives of a homicide victim has been recognized in many countries similar to Canada. Few examples of compensation programs offered in selected countries such as the United States, United Kingdom and Australia and from the European Union are discussed below. These examples discuss financial support for family members of victims deceased as a result of a crime. With the exception of Belgium (see subsection on European Union), the literature search has not been successful at identifying specific programs that provide financial support to parents of missing children.

Overall the examples discussed below provide a small glimpse at what other countries do to support family members. Beyond those programs, relatives of crime victims may be able to access financial assistance through other existing government programs such Employment Insurance or other temporary income supports. Therefore, it is not because the research has not been able to identify any concrete examples of programs targeted at relatives of disappeared persons that these individuals are not receiving any governmental assistance.

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<sup>16</sup> Canadian Resource Center for Victims of Crime, Financial Assistance. (Retrieved on August 4, 2017: <https://crcvc.ca/for-victims/financial-assistance/>)

<sup>17</sup> Government of British Columbia, Crime Victim Assistance Program Summary of Benefits Available to Immediate Family Members. (Retrieved on August 7, 2017: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/bc-criminal-justice-system/if-victim/publications/cvap-family.pdf> )

<sup>18</sup> Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels (Retrieved on August 4, 2017 : [http://www.ivac.qc.ca/VAC\\_intro.asp](http://www.ivac.qc.ca/VAC_intro.asp))

<sup>19</sup> Direction de l'IVAC. 2015. Manuel des politiques de l'IVAC. Indemnisation des victimes d'actes criminels.

## United States

Every State of the United States delivers its own compensation program to victims of crime<sup>20</sup>. The scope of those programs varies across states. Funding is offered to family of deceased victims to cover expenses that resulted directly from the crime, such as mental health counseling, wage loss, funeral and/or burial expenses.<sup>21</sup> The funding limit varies across states but the average maximum is \$25,000.<sup>22</sup> This amount, however, includes financial compensation provided to direct victims of crime. Those programs are payers of last resort which means that the victim has to obtain payments from other sources such as private insurance before applying to the state programs.<sup>23</sup> Victim compensation programs offered in the United States are mostly funded through fees and fines charged to individuals convicted of a crime.<sup>24</sup>

In the case of missing children, a survival guide for families produced by the US Department of Justice recommends parents to contact their state missing children's clearinghouse, the Office for Victims of Crime and state attorney general to inquire about compensation programs or financial assistance available.<sup>25</sup> A search across a sample of websites of national victim compensation organisations, state missing children's clearinghouses and state Offices for Victims of Crime has not yield any concrete examples of financial assistance programs dedicated to parents of missing children.

## United Kingdom

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme in the United Kingdom compensates people whose loved ones have died as a result of a violent crime.<sup>26</sup> Under the Scheme, a loved one is a person with whom the applicant had a close relationship of love and affection at the time of the incident or, if the loved one is alive at the time of the application, a person with whom the applicant continues to have such a relationship.<sup>27</sup> The Scheme provides compensation payments up to a maximum amount of £11,000 (approximately \$18,000 Canadians) for costs of bereavement.<sup>28</sup>

The Scheme does not provide financial assistance to parents of missing children. As well, it has not been possible to find examples of financial assistance programs for parents of missing children.

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<sup>20</sup> National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (Retrieved on August 3, 2017: <http://www.nacvcb.org/index.asp?bid=6>)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards. (Retrieved on August 3, 2017: <http://www.nacvcb.org/index.asp?bid=16> <http://www.nacvcb.org/index.asp?bid=6> )

<sup>23</sup> Rosso, May Anne. 2015. How to Handle Crime-Related Debt. Collector, Vol. 81 Issue 4, p40-42, P.3.

<sup>24</sup> National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards (Retrieved on August 3, 2017: <http://www.nacvcb.org/index.asp?bid=6>)

<sup>25</sup> Slowikowski, Jeff. 2010. When Your Child is Missing: A Family Survival Guide. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. US Department of Justice. P.71

<sup>26</sup> Government of United Kingdom. Criminal injuries compensation: a guide (Retrieved on August 3, 2017 : <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/criminal-injuries-compensation-a-guide#eligibility>)

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Justice. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2012 . Government of United Kingdom. (Retrieved on August 4, 2017:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/243480/9780108512117.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243480/9780108512117.pdf) )

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

## Australia

Victim compensation programs in Australia are delivered by states. Like the United States, the scope of the programs varies across states. In the State of Victoria, close relatives of a deceased person as a result of a criminal offence can receive up to \$50,000 Australians (approximately \$50,000 Canadians) for costs such as medical expenses, funeral, counselling or assistance for distress experienced.<sup>29</sup>

The State of South Australia provides up to \$20,000 Australian dollar (approximately \$20,000 Canadians) in compensation for grief and up to \$14,000 Australian dollars for funeral expenses to parents of a deceased child as a result of crime.<sup>30</sup>

The research has not found any concrete examples of financial assistance programs for parents of missing children in Australia.

## European Union

In 2012, the European Union has established a Directive on Victims of Crime which gives the status of victim to family members of a person whose death was caused by a criminal offence.<sup>31</sup> However, not all European Union members' countries provide compensation to relatives of the deceased victim. Among countries that offer compensation to the relatives, Netherlands provides a fixed amount of 5,000 euros (approximately \$7,000 Canadian) to compensate for pain and suffering and additional compensation for funeral expenses.<sup>32</sup> Another example is Belgium where the relatives of a deceased person can receive compensation for moral damages and funeral expenses.<sup>33</sup> In Belgium, the relatives of a missing person can receive up to 6,000 euros (approximately \$9,000 Canadians) for costs related to the proceedings as well as funding for moral damages and medical expenses.<sup>34</sup>

## 3.2 PMMC Grant Uptake

The number of parents who applied to the PMMC grant varied from 11 to 14 per year between 2013 and 2016. In total, 50 parents applied to this grant during that period. Of those, 29 received payments. These numbers reflect, in part, the low incidence of child murder and disappearance in Canada.

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<sup>29</sup> Victims of Crime, Compensation and Financial Assistance, (Retrieved on September 27, 2017: <https://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au/going-to-court/compensation-and-financial-assistance>)

<sup>30</sup> Legal Service Commission of South Australia, Victims of Crime Compensation: Retrieved on September 27, 2017: <http://www.lawhandbook.sa.gov.au/ch35s02s03.php>

<sup>31</sup> European Union. Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. (Retrieved on September 27, 2017: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1421925131614&uri=CELEX:32012L0029>)

<sup>32</sup> Schade Fonds Gewelds Misdrifven (Retrieved on September 27, 2017: <https://schadefonds.nl/en/missie-visie-en-doelstellingen/>)

<sup>33</sup> Service publique fédéral belge, Justice, Commission pour l'aide financière. (Retrieved on September 27, 2017 : <https://justice.belgium.be/fr/commissionaidefinanciere/beneficiaires#a2>).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

According to data from the National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, approximately 45,000 children went missing in Canada in 2015 and 2016. Of those, approximately 75% were runaway. Moreover, approximately 90% of the missing child reports are removed within a week and 60% of the reports are removed within 24 hours of the disappearance.<sup>35</sup>

While it has not been possible to find data on the incidence of disappearances related to possible Criminal Code offence, it is worth noting that 63 Amber Alerts involving 73 abducted children were issued in Canada between 2003 and 2012.<sup>36</sup> A study from the Canadian Center of Child Protection of abducted then murdered children found that 147 cases occurred over a 40 year period (between 1970 and 2010)<sup>37</sup> which represents an average of four cases per year. This number is, however, not representative of all abductions followed by murder since the cases studied had to correspond to specific criteria.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, the Statistics Canada Homicide survey shows that between 40 and 60 children per year were victims of homicide in Canada in the last 10 years.<sup>39</sup>

### **3.3 Awareness and Understanding of the PMMC Grant**

#### **3.3.1 How Parents are Informed about the PMMC Grant**

All key informants agreed that parents typically learn about the PMMC grant through victim support services. Most police victim support service providers explained that parents are referred to them by a major crime police officer, investigator or the crown attorney's office. The contact often occurs one to two days after completing the police report. Once a contact is made, an introductory package detailing supports and services available is shared with the parents.

As explained by Government of Canada officials interviewed, the federal government's role in building awareness of the grant includes developing the following material: 1) pamphlets; 2) service information kits (e-kits) that are sent out quarterly; and 3) development of program information posted on several Government of Canada websites. As well, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) staff, including those from Service Canada, conduct victim support provider outreach by attending conferences and offering information sessions, presentations and questions and answers. Service Canada also monitors the media to identify incidents that would qualify for the Parents of Murdered or Missing Children grant. When they find a case,

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<sup>35</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada's Missing. National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR). (Retrieved on August 7, 2017: <http://www.canadasmising.ca/pubs/2016/index-eng.htm>)

<sup>36</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police. 2016. Child abduction. Just the facts, Vol. 78, No. 1. (Retrieved on August 10, 2017: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/gazette/child-abduction>)

<sup>37</sup> Canadian Center for Child Protection. 2016. Abducted then Murdered Children A Canadian Study. Preliminary Results Report, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Cases selected for that study were cases of stranger abductions where the child was under 16 years of age and the body was located or if not located, at least one person was convicted for the offence.

<sup>39</sup> Statistics Canada. Homicide Survey, Table 253-0003- Homicide survey, victims and persons accused of homicide, by age group and sex, Canada, annual (number) *CANSIM*.

they contact police services and victim services in the region to make sure that they are aware of the program.

Service Canada delivers the 1-800 O Canada phone line that answers questions from parents about the grant. Questions that cannot be answered by Service Canada are sent to PPMC grant processing where there is said to be a two day service standard to respond to inquiries.

### **3.3.2 Level of Awareness of the PPMC Grant**

Informants from all categories of victim service providers as well as police officers and Government of Canada officials agreed that the level of awareness of the program is low. Some Government of Canada officials made the nuance that awareness is fine for parents of murdered children but low for missing children and those who died as a result of Criminal Code offence that is not murder, such as negligence.

Victim support providers said that the awareness of the program is also low among the victim support providers in general. Most Government of Canada officials interviewed agreed with that statement. A victim service provider, however, mentioned that it may be hard to advertise the grant to victim support providers because they use a lot of volunteers and experience a fair amount of turn-over.

Key informants identified the following factors to explain the low level of awareness:

- The Service Canada is using a top-down approach to share information about the grant. The information is usually shared through the management of organizations (for example, victim services directors, victim services coordinator, chief of police, etc.) and subsequently shared with front-line staff. Key informants from the Government of Canada acknowledged that such approach may not be efficient to reach frontline staff in the victim support providers.
- Many key informants perceived a lack of effort from the federal government to inform victim support providers, police stakeholders, and parents on the program. They believed that Service Canada e-blast mail out are not reaching victim support providers quarterly. In this regard, many victim support providers mentioned having received information about the program only when it was launched.
- A few victim support providers believed that the lack of pamphlets and posters advertising program in police stations or in court houses is a barrier to awareness.
- Most victim service providers and national victim service providers agreed that the grant is not sufficiently advertised to parents or victim providers themselves.
- According to police victim support service providers, parents are not aware of the grant as they do not even request assistance from victim support providers because the overwhelming personal turmoil they experience and the early timeframe (a few days following a traumatic event) frequently used to engage with parents.
- Another possible factor identified by one police victim support service provider is the lack of trained victim assistance personnel in some rural and remote communities.

While key informants from every category of victim support providers agreed that there is an overall lack of awareness of the PMMC grant among potential applicants, they identified some groups that are less likely to be aware and spoke about the reasons. Firstly, the majority of victim support providers and Government of Canada informants mentioned that Indigenous populations would be less likely to be aware of the program as they have more barriers to accessing information and services in general. Respondents added that communications with Indigenous populations is harder due to language barriers, lack of phone and permanent address, more limited access to the Internet and distrust of police services. Some respondents suggested to provide information on the grant to the band councils, First Nations settlements who have a land-base and reserves, elders, traditional healers, Indigenous health centers, family support workers and to Indigenous victim service providers. As well, written materials should be made available in native language and the grant should be advertised on the radio and in newspapers.

Secondly, many victim support providers mentioned that individuals in rural or remote areas and newcomers to Canada are likely to be less aware.

Finally, low income groups and persons with disabilities were also mentioned to be at risk of being unaware of the program. These individuals may have lower literacy levels, are less likely to have access to online information and need additional support or modified materials to understand programs in general.

### **3.3.3 Understanding of the PMMC Grant Eligibility Conditions**

Although most police victim support service providers have never completed an application with a parent, they think that it can be difficult for parents to understand whether or not they are eligible for the PMMC grant. Police victim support providers described the PMMC applications as being too long and containing too many words on eligibility conditions. Based on their discussions with parents, Government of Canada informants identified the same areas of confusion as victim support providers. Those areas are:

- Parents tend to be unclear on how to determine if an incident was caused by a Criminal Code offence, especially in contexts where it is difficult for police services to disclose this information.
- Victim support providers who have been helping a parent to fill grant applications are unclear about the conditions necessary for a missing child to be eligible for the grant, and the likelihood of having an application approved.
- Some victim support providers mentioned not knowing how to interpret the criteria pertaining to the child not being a willing party to the crime.
- Another area of confusion relates to the eligibility of impaired driving in contexts where police officers are unable to press charges.

- A few victim support providers reviewed the program's website and are not sure if parents receiving social assistance payments or other government compensation programs are eligible for the grant.
- Self-employed parents or those with multiple employers find it difficult to understand if they meet the income thresholds and/or what proof is required by employers to apply for the grant.
- The concept of splitting the grant between family members is difficult to understand. For example, it is difficult to understand what happens if a parents needs are not immediate and whether the first parent has to reimburse the money disbursed if the second parent makes a delayed claim for support.

### **3.4 Barriers to Accessing the PMMC Grant**

Key informants were asked their opinion about different possible barriers that could limit the access to the PMMC grant and possibly explain the limited uptake of the program. The following presents the potential barriers discussed with the key informants.

#### **Lack of awareness**

Government of Canada employees and victim support providers all suggested that the lack of awareness is a large barrier to the PMMC grant access.

#### **Personal turmoil**

According to most of the victim support service providers, the personal turmoil of potential applicants is one of the largest barriers to accessing the grant. The trauma of having a missing or murdered child is overwhelming to families. It prevents parents from looking for supports from victim service providers. Several informants mentioned that the families they work with would not be able to navigate the grant application process. They would experience difficulty in processing the quantity of information provided in the program information kit and going through the multiple steps of the application process.

Key informants also underlined that the trauma is often aggravated when the child is missing for an extended period of time. Most victim support providers mentioned that, for family members of missing children, filling out the grant application may feel like acknowledging that their children is death. This may discourage parents from applying.

Few provincial victim service providers had a different opinion and mentioned that the personal turmoil is not a barrier to applying for the grant as it is their role to help parents complete victim compensation forms.

## **Accessing relevant information**

Most Government of Canada informants and some victim support providers who are responsible for obtaining PPMC grant information for the parents did not think that accessing relevant information about the grant is a barrier. Those victim support providers said that grant information is provided in a clear manner with a follow-up phone number and opportunities to ask questions.

The majority of victim support providers had a different perspective. They believed that there are some challenges with accessing relevant information about the grant and this is preventing parents from applying. For example, many victim support providers reported that they have tried to address parent's questions about the eligibility criteria by going on the program's web page and contacting Service Canada but were not successful in doing so. Key informants often described the grant web page as non-user friendly and hard to find information. Further, they pointed that information about the program is currently only available in French and English, limiting access to vulnerable populations such as new immigrants and Indigenous people. Indigenous communities can experience a challenge in accessing materials available by phone and Internet. Key informants added that any requirements to print and scan materials as well as any requirement to engage with police services (including police victim services) represent a barrier to Indigenous communities.

## **Accessing relevant information from Service Canada**

Victim support providers reported mixed views in relation to the information they received from Service Canada. Several victim support providers who were not satisfied with information and support received from Service Canada said the agent they talked to was lacking knowledge about the grant. Many victim support providers reported that they have been unable to obtain answers to multiple questions.

Government of Canada informants were confident that inquiries about the PPMC grant were addressed in a way that exceeds the service standards. They reported statistics which demonstrate that the 1-800- O Canada line is highly accessible. Specifically, agents are able to answer 80% of the calls within 18 seconds or 3 rings. If agents are unable to answer, a program processing agent usually responds within two days. Few victim support providers raised concerns with the fact that it is not possible to speak with grant program representatives directly.

## **Understanding relevant information**

On one side, the Government of Canada informants did not report any issue with the ability of potential applicants to understand information about the grant. They perceived the Service Canada line as extremely effective. Some police victim support service providers also believed that understanding the available information was not a barrier to applying for the grant, but said that more printed information about the program is needed.



On the other side, most police victim service providers and national service providers thought that it is difficult to understand the available information. Most said that parents who don't go through a victim service provider would find it even more difficult.

### **Difficulty fulfilling eligibility conditions**

Most police victim support providers believed that grant eligibility conditions are a main barrier to accessing the grant. The largest perceived eligibility barriers are the insufficient income of potential applicants, providing evidence the child is missing or murdered as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence, and that a child was not a willing party to the probable Criminal Code offence and the age limit of the child. Further details on why key informants thought that fulfilling some of the program eligibility conditions is a barrier to accessing the grant are provided as follows:

- Insufficient earnings to meet the requirements

Government of Canada informants mentioned that not having sufficient employment earnings to meet the eligibility threshold is a significant barrier to accessing the PMMC grant but also noted that the purpose of this program is to provide income replacement. That being said, some of the Government of Canada informants thought the earnings eligibility criteria should be eliminated.

Most police victim support service providers and national victim service providers interviewed believe that most family members of a missing or deceased child would likely not be eligible for the grant due to having insufficient earnings.

- Providing evidence the child is missing or murdered as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence

According to most victim support providers, providing evidence that a child is missing or murdered as a result of a probable criminal code offence is a barrier to accessing the PMMC grant. Police victim support service providers mentioned that the context of these incidents is quite complex, with few cases following easy trajectories. They mentioned that providing evidence is more difficult in the cases of missing children than in homicide cases.

Obtaining the evidence can take time. For example, most police victim support service providers reported that police services are reluctant to tell parents that they believe the child is dead until they have evidence that suggests that. There is also a certain level of subjectivity involved. In many cases, victim support providers mentioned that police services subjectively make the first assumption that missing children have run away from their family rather than being abducted. Police officers and police victim support service providers recommended that ESDC provides direction to police officers on how and when to fill out the police confirmation form.

Key informants also noted that criminal charges for impaired driving can be difficult to prove, especially if the driver is injured because it will be difficult to take blood tests to confirm impaired driving.

- Providing evidence that the child was not a willing party of the probable Criminal Code offence

Having to provide evidence that the child was not a willing party of the probable criminal code offence was also seen as a barrier to accessing the grant by key informants. Many victim support providers said that police officers may be reluctant to confirm that the child was not a willing party to a probable Criminal Code offence. Key informants believed that there is a level of subjectivity involved in establishing the evidence and that the process depends on the opinion of the police officer. An example of situations seen as being subjective is when the child was part of street gangs, suspected of participating in prostitution or in suspected of being involved in drug-related transaction.

Few victim support providers and Government of Canada informants had brought a different perspective and said that obtaining confirmation from the police on whether the child was or not a willing party is easy. Government of Canada explained that none of the program's applicants were rejected based on this criterion.

- Victim over 18 years old

Many Government of Canada officials, police officers and victim support providers agreed that the age of the victim is a barrier to accessing the grant. Victim support providers mentioned that parents of children aged over 18 years old also deserve time to cope with the incident. They also pointed that persons under the age of 25 are likely still in school full time and living at home with their parents.

- Incident occurred abroad

Most police victim support service providers and national victim service providers did not know if the condition that the incident had to happen in Canada is a factor contributing to the low uptake of the PMMC grant since they have never been involved in such cases. However, victim support providers who have worked on several of these cases believed this is an issue for parents.

### **Application Process**

Most police victim support service providers and national victim service providers did not know if the application process itself was a barrier to accessing the program. However, several victim support providers who have completed the form with potential applicants said that it is an onerous process, it triggers negative emotions from the parents and it requires parents to acquire too many forms. Few victim support providers also mentioned that filling in the Employers Form can be challenging if parents do not have a good relationship with their employer.

From a more general standpoint, many victim support providers mentioned that applications to any victim compensation grants are difficult across the board.

A few key informants would like Service Canada to help parents complete the application form over the phone and be authorized to obtain necessary forms from the police and employers.

Victim support providers were asked if they think the grant is delivered in a timely fashion but none of them were able to answer the question. Few provincial victim service providers, however, said that they do not recall receiving any complaints.

The service standard is to process the grant within 35 days after the receipt of the complete application package. An informal target has been established: 90% of files are processed within 35 days of receipt of application and all supporting documentation. To date, 100% of incoming files are processed within this target.

On average, PMMC recipients applied 14 weeks after they became entitled to the grant. In some cases, 45 weeks have elapsed between the moment they became eligible and the date of the application.

## **3.5 Characteristics of Applicants and Reasons for Denials**

### **3.5.1 Profile of Applicants**

It has not been possible to produce a detailed socio-demographic profile of the grant applicants since the characteristics reported in the available data are limited. For example, the data do not provide information on whether applicants self-identified as persons with disability or Indigenous individuals.

Available data show that every parent who applied to the program between 2013 and 2015 and received payments (n=20; referred as recipients in this report)<sup>40</sup> was the legal or adoptive parent of the missing or murdered child. In half of the cases, the child was aged between 13 and 17 years old. The grant recipients were predominantly female and slightly more than half were between 35 and 44 years of age. Slightly more recipients were married or in common law relationship as opposed to single / divorced / separated / widow. Almost all recipients were living in urban area. They were mainly from Ontario followed by Quebec and Alberta. Most were employed at the time of incident as opposed to unemployed or self-employed. On average, they earned \$36,000 from employment in the year before the incident.

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<sup>40</sup> The demographic profile of both grant recipients and non-recipients is drawn up for the period 2013 to 2015 since data from the T1 taxation file are available up to 2015. The T1 taxation file is used to obtain information on the following characteristics: sex, marital status and the number of dependents.

There were three notable differences between recipients and parents who had applied to the PMMC grant but were denied payments (n=16):

- Denied applicants were predominately single / divorced / separated / widowed as opposed to married or in common law relationship. Recipients were more likely to be married or in common law relationship.
- Most denied applicants were unemployed at the time of the incident while most recipients were employed.
- Denied applicants had lower employment earnings in the 52 week period or calendar year before the incident (\$20,600) compared to grant recipients (\$36,000).

Overall, these differences suggest that denied applicants may be more vulnerable economically than grant recipients. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution as they pertain to a very small number of individuals.

### **3.5.2 Number of Ineligible Applicants and Reasons for Denials**

Out of the 50 parents who applied for the grant between 2013 and 2016, 29 received grant payments and 21 were denied funding. The main reasons of denial were insufficient employment earnings, missing information, the age of the child or the incident occurred before January 1, 2013. None of the rejected applicants were denied access to the grant because the incident occurred outside Canada.

The data did not allow identifying how many applicants were denied payments because they did not meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The child is deceased or missing as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence;
- The child is missing for over a week
- The child was not a willing party to the crime that led to his or her death.

## **3.6 Usage of the Grant**

### **3.6.1 Adequacy of the 52 Week Income Support Period**

It has not been possible to find data on the average length of time necessary to resolve cases of murder or disappearance of children resulting from a probable Criminal Code offence. A search of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains suggests that cases of child reported as missing for more than a year (as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence or not) are rare. For example, the database search shows that of the children reported missing in Canada between January and December 2016, two were still missing as of August 2017.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada's Missing, National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains (NCMPUR). (Retrieved on August 10, 2017: <https://www.services.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/missing-disparus/search-recherche.jsf;jsessionid=TTkzZMvFJpXGPXyRv41VzLjBJMWQXk9qR11cQK3hLY8LHS5nP6hy!-242658704>)

A study from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police identified five cases that occurred in 2000 and 2001. Of those, three were resolved in approximately one day while the two other cases were resolved in six and 21 days, respectively.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, the review of 147 abductions followed by murder conducted by the Canadian Center of Child Protection showed that 35% of the victims, who were located, were found within one day of their disappearance while 76% were found within a month of the disappearance.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, data from the Statistics Canada Homicide Survey show that the proportion of homicide cases (involving children or adult victim) solved by the police has declined from approximately 95% in the mid-1960s to 75% in 2010. This means that, in recent days, about a quarter of homicide cases may never be resolved.<sup>44</sup>

Once charges are pressed, the victim's family has to deal with the criminal court case process. The median length of homicide court cases in Canada was over a year (451 days) in 2013 to 2014<sup>45</sup> which exceeds the duration of the grant payments.

Most key informants in all categories agreed that the 52 week window to receive income support is not sufficient to address the needs of most parents. All informants agreed that it could take more than a year to determine why the child died and whether criminality was involved. Further, many key informants reported that many parents will not have a criminal case confirmation from police officers in time to access 35 weeks of support within a 52 week window. Key informants also explained that the 52 week window is not sufficient to cover the family's attendance in the court proceedings and the very common collapse of parents following the trial. Statements made by the key informants are echoed in the literature which shows that families can have difficulty to mourn the deceased person until the criminal investigation is over<sup>46</sup> or that the criminal justice process can bring back the trauma experienced by relatives of the crime victims.<sup>47</sup>

When asked how long the window to receive income support should be, most victim support providers, many police officers and some Government of Canada respondents felt that it should be of up to two or three years and some key informants suggested a five-year window. A large segment of victim service providers suggested removing the window all together. Many key informants (all stakeholders types) advocated for a flexible grant without consecutive time requirements that allow parents to return to work based on their needs.

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<sup>42</sup> Dalley, Marlene L, and Jenna Ruscoe. 2003. The Abduction of Children by Strangers in Canada: Nature and Scope. National Missing Children Services National Police Service Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

<sup>43</sup> Canadian Center for Child Protection. 2016. Abducted then Murdered Children A Canadian Study. Preliminary Results Report, p. 13

<sup>44</sup> The clearance rate represents the proportion of criminal incidents solved by the police. Clearance are either by charge (i.e., at least one accused is identified and a charge has either been laid, or recommended to be laid) or cleared otherwise (i.e., an accused is identified and there is sufficient evidence). Hotton Mahony, Tina and John Turner. 2012. Police-reported clearance rates in Canada, 2010. Juristat Article, Statistics Canada.

<sup>45</sup> Maxwell, Ashley. 2015. Adult criminal court statistics in Canada, 2013/2014. Juristat. Statistics Canada.

<sup>46</sup> Connolly, J., & Gordon, R. (2015). Co-victims of homicide: A systematic review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 16(4), 494-505.

<sup>47</sup> Dunn, Peter, Chaston, Katy and Lesley Malone. 2006. In the aftermath. The support needs of people bereaved by homicide: a research report, Victim Support National Office, p. 9.

### **3.6.2 Average Grant Payout and Average Number of Weeks Paid**

The PMMC grant provides payments over a maximum of 35 weeks during a 52 week income support period to a maximum amount of \$12,250. Administrative data examined for the evaluation show that recipients who applied for the grant between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2015 (n=20),<sup>48</sup> received an average amount of \$11,025 over an average of 31.5 weeks per grant. However, the majority of recipients (16 out of 20) received the maximum payable amount of \$12,250 over the maximum number of weeks (35 weeks).

The window during which the payments were received ranged between 17 and 52 weeks but averaged 35.2 weeks. Most recipients (13 out of 20) claimed PMMC grant payments over consecutive weeks as opposed to alternate periods.

Most police officers, victim support providers and Indigenous victim service providers interviewed for the evaluation thought that the 35 weeks of income support is insufficient for parents grieving the loss of a murdered or missing child and to allow parents to take time off work to attend court proceedings. Some victim support providers and Government of Canada officials believed that the 35 week income support would be sufficient in most cases, but not in others. They explained that for those who are eligible, the 35 week of the PMMC grant payments coupled with EI benefits would likely provide a year of income support. These same informants, however, recognized that not all parents eligible to the program are entitled to EI, and that the PMMC grant provides more limited coverage when divided between parents.

Most victim support providers and police officers suggested that 52 weeks of income support would be the minimum coverage needed for most parents.

### **3.6.3 Extent to which Parents Share the Grant**

Only a small minority of parents shared the grant. In most cases, the grant was uniquely received by a female.

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<sup>48</sup> Data for recipients who submitted their application in 2016 were not included in the estimates since some recipients were still receiving payments at the time of the evaluation.

### **3.7 Support Provided to Parents by the Grant**

Parents who were eligible for the PMMC grant between 2013 and 2016 were not all comparable in terms of their employment earnings in the 52 weeks before the incident. As such, the extent to which PMMC payments replaced lost income varies importantly. At one end, eight recipients out of 29 had weekly earnings below the \$350 amount provided by the grant. The PMMC grant payment replaced 145% of their lost earnings, on average. At the other end of the spectrum, PMMC payments replaced 22% of the lost earnings for the very small minority of recipients who earned \$1,201 and over per week. Overall, on average, PMMC payments replaced 78% of the lost weekly earnings of these 29 recipients.

It was not possible to undertake statistical analysis on the employment and economic situation of recipients after they finished receiving PMMC payments due to the small number of individuals who received the grant and the very short timeframe of data available. However, available data still allow obtaining some insights about the post-PMMC experience for eleven recipients who applied to the grant between 2013 and 2015 and for whom at least one year of earnings data was available following the end of the grant payments. Almost all of these recipients were in receipt of employment earnings in the year after the end of the PMMC payments. Their average employment earnings were slightly lower in the post- PMMC payment year (\$40,000) compared to the earnings they had in the year before the incident (\$42,000). A minority of these recipients were in receipt of EI and/or social assistance at one point during the year after their PMMC grant payments.

Of the 20 recipients who received payments between 2013 and 2015, half had at least one interruption in employment in the year after the end of PMMC payments. In a minority of cases, the reason was shortage of work which means that for most recipients, the reason for having an interruption in employment was related to illness or injury, quit, dismissal or other.

The majority of the victim support providers interviewed were unable to answer whether the grant helped parents. Most police victim support service providers mentioned that they think the grant would help parents if the program was designed differently ( revised eligibility conditions, improve the sharing of information, provide training on the program and simplify the application process). In particular, most victim support providers said that the amount of Parents of Murdered or Missing Children support is not enough to cover the needs of parents.

The majority of Government of Canada informants thought that the PMMC grant is reaching its expected outcomes. They have noticed general anonymous positive feedback about the support received.

### 3.8 Cost Analysis

As shown in Table 1 below, the administrative costs of delivering the program have significantly decreased over the years from \$1,389,800 in the program implementation year to \$191,112 in 2016 to 2017. Accordingly, the ratio of administrative costs over the total program expenditures ( administrative costs and grant payments to recipients) has consistently decreased over time from 99.7% in 2012 to 2013 to 67.4% in 2016 to 2017.

The administrative costs for 2012 to 2013 and 2013 to 2014 mainly reflect the significant investment that was made in start-up activities including the development of information technology system to process applications and payments.

**Table 1. PMMC Grant Expenditures, fiscal years from 2012 to 2013 to 2016 to 2017**

	2012 to 2013	2013 to 2014	2014 to 2015	2015 to 2016	2016 to 2017
<b>Administrative Costs</b>					
Processing and Payments	\$293,589	\$363,151	\$174,267	\$153,301	\$107,463
Policy Development	\$148,743	\$276,380	\$32,104	\$35,403	\$14,807
Program Evaluation	N/a	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$15,372	\$15,372
Information Technology System	\$647,888	\$78,860	\$38,165	N/a	\$17,741
Dissemination of Information, Managing Client Feedback, Marketing	\$14,702	\$31,883	N/a	N/a	N/a
Integrity Measures	\$112,415	\$34,679	N/a	N/a	N/a
Legal Services	\$20,000	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Corporate Support	\$152,463	N/a	N/a	N/a	\$35,729
<b>Total Administrative Costs</b>	<b>\$1,389,800</b>	<b>\$796,953</b>	<b>\$256,536</b>	<b>\$204,076</b>	<b>\$191,112</b>
<b>Grant Payments to Recipients</b>	<b>\$4,200</b>	<b>\$70,490</b>	<b>\$95,830</b>	<b>\$52,780</b>	<b>\$92,050</b>
<b>Total Program Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,394,000</b>	<b>\$867,443</b>	<b>\$352,366</b>	<b>\$256,856</b>	<b>\$283,162</b>
Administrative Costs Ratio	99.7%	91.9%	72.8%	79.4%	67.4%

Considering that the incidence of murdered and missing children cases is low in Canada, the PMMC grant uptake may never reach a volume comparable to other programs reviewed in Table 2. The likelihood of achieving economy of scale over time could remain low for the grant. As well, some of the fixed costs may remain high compared to amount directly provided to parents.



**Table 2. Comparison of PMMC Grant Administrative Costs Ratio with other similar programs**

Program Name	Type	Number of Beneficiaries	Year of Implementation	Range of Administrative Costs	Range of Administrative Cost Ratio
<b>Parents of Murdered or Missing Children Grant (ESDC)</b>	Bi-weekly grant payment	7 per year	2013	Annual cost ranging from \$191,000 to \$1.4M	99.7% - 67.4% (from 2012 to 2013 to 2016 to 2017)
<b>Employment Insurance (EI) Special Benefits for Self-employed Workers (ESDC)</b>	Bi-weekly benefit	500 to 700 per year	2010	Annual cost of \$8.1M to \$9.3M	62% - 50% (from 2012 to 2013 to 2014) <sup>49</sup>
<b>Funeral and Burial Program (Veterans Affairs Canada)</b>	Pays for veteran's funeral related costs	1,000 per year	2005	Annual cost ranging from \$1.6 to \$1.7M	30% - 19% (from 2011 to 2012 to 2014 to 2015) <sup>50</sup>
<b>Victim Fund (Department of Justice Canada)</b>	Grants and Contribution to individuals victim of crime, organisation, provinces and territories	N/A	2007	Total of \$2.3M for the 2010-2014 period (approximately 460,000 per year)	6% (over the 2010 to 2014 period) <sup>51</sup>
<b>Financial Benefits Program (Veterans Affairs)</b>	Monthly benefits and lump sum	7,000 in 2013-14	2006	\$3.7M to \$4.3M	4% - 2% (from 2012 to 2013 to 2014 to 2015) <sup>52</sup>

The analysis presented in this report does not allow drawing overall conclusions about the value for money of the grant. In order to do so, it would be necessary to compare the costs of the PMMC grant with the benefits generated for the Canadian society. Examples of those benefits could include a lower use of EI or social assistance, helping parents to avoid long-term unemployment or helping parents to avoid contracting financial debts. Conducting such analysis was not possible as part of this evaluation due to the low number of program participants and the short period of time for which data were available.

<sup>49</sup> Calculated with data reported in Employment and Social Development Canada. 2016. Evaluation of the Employment Insurance Special Benefits for Self-employed Workers.

<sup>50</sup> Veterans Affairs Canada. 2017. Evaluation of Commemorative Benefits and Services.

<sup>51</sup> Department of Justice Canada. 2016. Justice Federal Victims Strategy Evaluation.

<sup>52</sup> Veterans Affairs Canada. 2016. Evaluation of the Financial Benefits Program.

## 4. Lessons learned

The evaluation recognizes that the PMMC grant is a small and relatively recent program with low, but very important materiality. In that context, the evaluation findings help drawing lessons learned that the grant program management may consider in the future.

The literature as well as the key informants interviewed for the evaluation suggests that there is a need to provide income support to parents of missing or murdered children in order to help them deal with the impacts of these incidents on their personal life, employment and finances.

In total, 50 parents applied for the program and 29 parents received payments between 2013 and 2016. While these numbers reflect, in part, the low incidence of child murder and disappearance in Canada, key informants identified a series of other factors that may create a barrier to accessing the grant. These include a low level of awareness of the grant; the personal turmoil experienced by parents; difficulties in accessing and understanding information about the grant and in navigating the application process. The PMMC grant eligibility conditions (income threshold, providing evidence the incident is related to a possible Criminal Code offence; providing evidence the child was not a willing party to the crime and the age limit of the victim) are also seen as a potential barrier to accessing the grant. The grant data show that some of the denied applicants did not have enough employment earnings to fulfill the income threshold.

The majority of the grant recipients received 35 weeks of PMMC grant payments and payments replaced 78% of lost income, on average. According to the key informants, 52 weeks of income support over a two or three year window would be the minimum coverage needed for most parents.

The ratio of administrative costs over the total program expenditures (administrative costs and grant payments to recipients) has decreased from 99.7% to 67.4% between 2012 to 2013 and 2016 to 2017. Considering that the incidence of murdered and missing children cases is low in Canada, the PMMC grant can only provide support to a limited number of individuals and is unlikely to achieve significant economy of scale.

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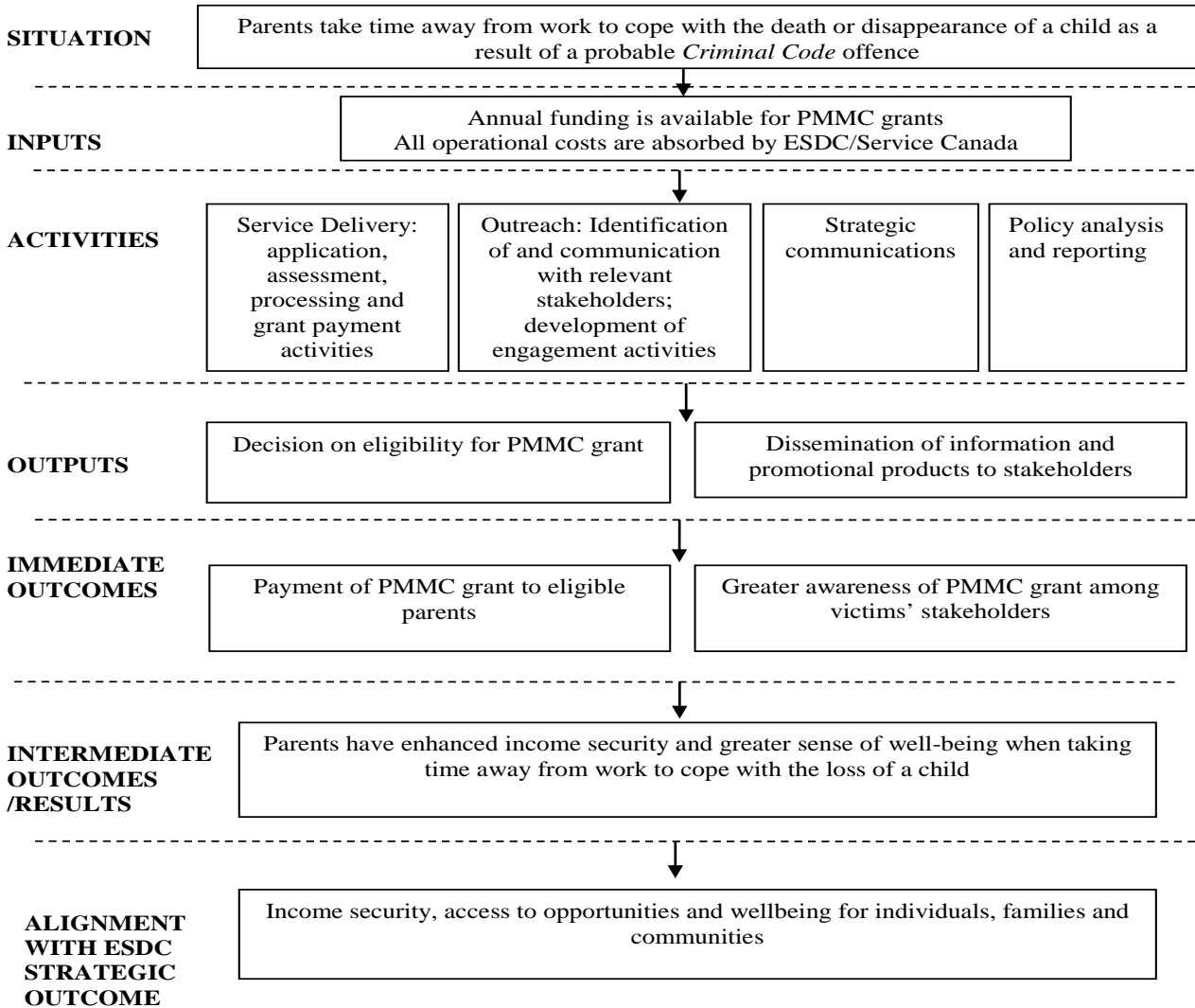
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## Appendix A – Logic Model



## Appendix B – Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions	Section where Findings are Discussed in the Report
<b>Relevance of the Program: Need Address by PMMC Grant</b>	
1. When parents take leave from work under these circumstances, how long are they off work?	3.1.1) Effects of the Child Disappearance or Murder on Parent's Life, Employment and Finances
2. Do parents end up losing or changing their jobs as a result of these crises? What are the reasons (for example, resignation, extended illness, employer unwilling/unable to maintain their current employment)?	
3. Do other countries with comparable economies support parents under similar circumstances?	3.1.3) Supports for Crime Victim Relatives in Other Countries
<b>How the PMMC is serving Canadians</b>	
4. What is the level of awareness and understanding of the Parents of Murdered or Missing Children Grant?	3.3) Awareness and Understanding of the PMMC Grant
5. Are there program delivery factors that have an impact on the number of applications (access to the internet, obtaining the Parents of Murdered or Missing Children Employment Form or the Parents of Murdered or Missing Children Incident Report Form from the Law Enforcement Agency; or providing the CRA Notice of Assessment, designating a proxy, service delivery)?	3.2) PMMC Grant Uptake 3.4) Barriers to Accessing the PMMC Grant
6. What are the main reasons some parents do not apply (awareness, emotional turmoil, insufficient income, no access to internet, incident occurred abroad, unwilling to press charges, age restriction, limited time off work, etc.)?	3.4) Barriers to Accessing the PMMC Grant
7. Is the PMMC grant application process manageable by parents coping with the loss of a child under these circumstances? Do they face challenges or barriers in completing the application, once started or following an inquiry with Service Canada?	3.4) Barriers to Accessing the PMMC ( subsection on application process)
8. Are cases of children murdered or missing as a result of a probable Criminal Code offence resolved in the 52 week income support period?	3.6.1) Sufficiency of the 52 Week Income Support Period
9. How many grant applications are ineligible and what are the reasons?	3.5.2) Number of Ineligible Applicants and Reasons of Denials
10. What is the demographic profile of individuals who receive grants and those whose applications were declined?	3.5.1) Profile of Applicants
11. What is the average grant payout and average number of weeks paid?	3.6.2) Average Grant Payout and Average Number of Weeks Paid
12. What is the impact of the grant on those who received it? What proportion of income from the previous year does the grant represent or how does the \$350 per week compare to the average weekly earnings?	3.7) Support Provided to Parents by the Grant
13. To what extent are parents sharing grants?	3.6.3) Extent to which Parents Share the Grant
<b>PMMC Grant performance</b>	
14. How does the administration cost of the PMMC grant compare to costs to administer other similar grants?	3.8) Cost Analysis