

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

Williams Lake Police Based Victim Services

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MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

Message from the Program Manager

2022 was very much a “growing year” for the Victim Services Unit at the Williams Lake RCMP:

Numerically: Rhonda, the third member of the team joined us early in the year to bring our team to its full complement. She brings with her much experience both in working with victims, as her previous employment had her working in a transition house for many years, and in time in the community, as this has been her home all of her life. The support is welcomed by our two dedicated staff who have been carrying the full caseload shared between them.

Experientially: This year has brought new and challenging files that have forced the team to grow and learn to approach situations with different strategies. Specifically, the Williams Lake Stampede shooting was a huge challenge given the number of people that were in attendance: thus there was a huge diversity in reactions to the traumatic event.

Knowledge Base: the team, as well as myself as the Program Manager, has been challenged to learn the full scope and limitations of our roles as part of the Williams Lake Police Based Victim Services. With the return of many of the partner agencies after Covid, it has been an interesting learning curve to know which clients our protocol dictated that we are to refer and which we maintain. Another issue that required some navigation was that some clients refused referrals to certain agencies and it was a delicate task dealing with both the victim and the other agency.

Relationally: once the Covid restrictions had lessened, it was time to get back to in- person meetings with our partner agencies. It was again, a steep learning curve, re- building the relationships that Covid mandates and restrictions had not allowed to develop organically due to not all agencies working or not working in person. We, as an agency, had to let go of some files that we had been dealing with, as now there was again support from partner agencies. Complying with pre-Covid-19 protocols, Victim Service case workers were again referring files to the respected partner agencies. We have come a long way on this road and yet, continually have additional work to do.

Our Team is stronger for the year that we had in 2022, growing together in our rhythm to assist individuals affected by crime and provide support to and for the Williams Lake RCMP.

Cheri WIEBE Manager of RCMP Municipal Services / VS Program Manager

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program overview

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General has established both Police-based and Community-based programs throughout British Columbia to provide services to victims, witnesses and their families affected by traumatic events. The City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District contribute funds to the Williams Lake Police-Based Victim Services Program.

The program provides services to all victims of crime who may or may not have reported the crime to police or be involved with the criminal justice system. The objectives of a Police-Based Victim Service Program are:

- To provide immediate and on-going support in order to lessen the impact of crime and trauma on victims, their families and those who have witnessed these events;
- To increase victim safety and to help reduce the risk of future victimization
- To increase the level of participation and sense of empowerment for victims throughout their participation in the criminal justice system; and
- To provide emotional and physical support for a victim while acting as a witness in court proceedings.

Service area

The service area for the Williams Lake RCMP Victim Service Unit encompasses all the policing area of our local RCMP. When looking at the Cariboo Regional District, it would encompass: Area D to the north, just past McLeese Lake to the overpass at McAllister; Area E, covering Alkali Lake and parts of the Gang Ranch; Area F covering the areas of Likely, Horsefly, 150 Mile House and surrounding areas; and Area K partially, almost to Riske Creek.

Service is also provided for those needing medical treatment due to motor vehicle incidents or criminality, when they are transported to Williams Lake.

Court Support may also be provided to individuals if their local Victim Service worker is not able to travel to attend court in Williams Lake

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Services

The Program will provide the following services:

- **Crisis Intervention:** Victim Service case workers provide crisis intervention services in the immediate aftermath of a crime. This may include emotional support, transportation, referrals, and safety planning.
- **Emotional Support:** Victim Service case workers will provide victims with emotional support to assist in their recovery from the effects of crime and trauma. The program does not provide counselling services to victims, however the case workers will provide emotional support through listening to concerns, validating the experience and helping to develop coping strategies and referring to other community resources if the situation dictates.
- **General Information:** Victim service case workers will provide victims with information including, but not limited to the Justice systems, relevant federal and provincial legislation and programs pertaining to victims of crime, crime prevention, safety planning and next of kin death notifications.
- **Court Support:** Victim Service case workers are able to assist with all aspects, including: assisting victims to engage with the justice system and justice system personnel; support through the court process by assisting with pre-trial interviews and accommodations, witness room accompaniment, preparing victim for emotional responses in court, accompaniment during the trial while the victims provides testimony, providing court orientation of both the courthouse and the appropriate protocols, as well as safety planning with the Sheriffs for the actual court date.
- **Transportation:** Transportation services including, but not limited to, the transport of a victim and or family members to hospital, court, RCMP, transition houses and or shelters. This service falls within the mandate of the Victim Services team, but is not frequently used.
- **Public Education:** Public awareness and education programs in the local community on victimization, victim services, and crime prevention is something that we are focusing on reinstating as Covid had very much limited the ability for this piece of our mandate. Presently we are looking for opportunities to provide this service to our community by being involved in various committees and potentially being present in the schools.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- **New Member Orientation:** This is provided by Victim Service case workers to educate the member about services provided by the unit so they are more likely to refer and use this tool that is available to them.
- **Follow up Support:** Victim Service case workers continued to provide follow up support to victims by regular check-ins to ensure the individuals ongoing safety, to provide additional referrals to other organizations, and overall wellbeing of the victim.
- **After Hours Services:** Required or optional services as described above may be provided after regular program hours. The Williams Lake Police-Based team program provides service 8:00 am to 4:00 Monday through Friday. For after-hours calls and depending on the nature of the request, the case worker will make the decision to attend immediately or the following day.

Additional Information

The Williams Lake RCMP Victim Services Program is funded for the equivalent of 1 and a half case workers but due to the nature of the job, 3 part time case workers make up our team.

The Williams Lake RCMP Victim Service program also previously had volunteer positions. They were used in a number of different capacities; helping out in court, as relief to afford respite for case workers, or if the circumstances warranted extra help. We are looking into the logistics of welcoming back our volunteers given the changes in our world; presently we have one of our previous volunteers still interested in being a part of the program. Her security clearance will be updated in 2023.

PROGRAM CASE LOAD

Program case load

The Williams Lake RCMP Based Victim services team carries a very full workload stemming from the files of the Williams Lake RCMP. The unit is housed within the Detachment and are highly valued and frequently called upon to assist with files, as a valuable resource. All contact that Victim Services has with clients come from referrals from members, both local and other jurisdictional Crown Counsel Agencies, or from people who simply walk into the detachment front counter and request assistance. There has been a slight shift in the types of files that our unit has been dealing with in 2022, with a surprising increase in Sexual Assault files followed by issues resulting from domestic violence. Trauma files are also dealt with frequently, with sudden deaths making up a large portion of our referrals.

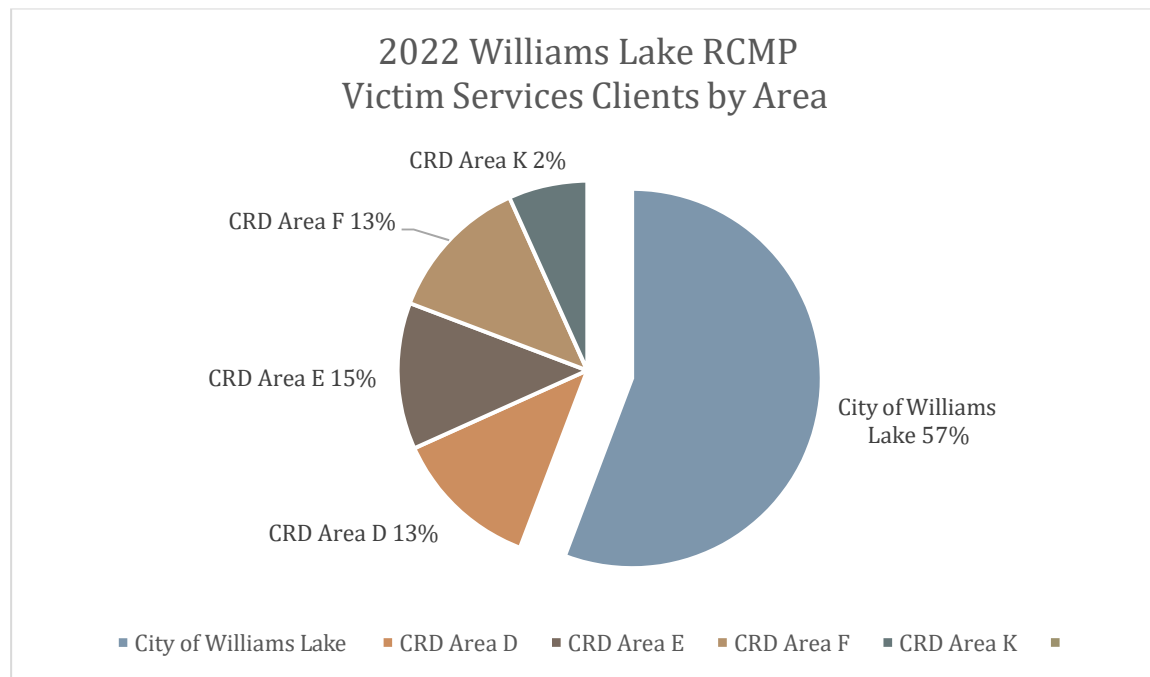
As per the contract managed by The City of Williams Lake and applying the mandate oversight provided by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, all “power-based” crimes and all files involving Indigenous clients are mandated to be referred to the Community Based or Aboriginal Victim Services team. The Williams Lake RCMP Victim Service team provides initial contact on all files that require immediate assistance and then if the case dictates, it is then referred to an appropriate service.

The following is a monthly breakdown of 2022 New Clients, compared to 2021 reporting:

| <i>Month</i> | <i>New clients</i> | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | <i>2021</i> | <i>2022</i> |
| January | 48 | 44 |
| February | 42 | 47 |
| March | 57 | 57 |
| April | 52 | 48 |
| May | 64 | 43 |
| June | 57 | 51 |
| July | 43 | 54 |
| August | 36 | 57 |
| September | 34 | 29 |
| October | 37 | 44 |
| November | 52 | 56 |
| December | 37 | 73 |
| <i>Total new clients</i> | <i>559</i> | <i>603</i> |

PROGRAM CASE LOAD

Source: Williams Lake RCMP PRIME



The above chart is a representation of files that have had Victim Services either referred and accepted on scene by a member or files that were proactively referred after the fact. It represents files that Victim Services has made contact with individuals negatively affected by the crime or trauma. Again, it is noted that Police Based Victim Services provides the initial contact and will triage files to the appropriate agency as the case dictates.

Financial

Funding for the Williams Lake RCMP-Based Victim Services is received from 3 sources; Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Cariboo Regional District and the City of Williams Lake.

In 2022, the funding amounts were:

- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General \$72,128.96
- Cariboo Regional District \$24,500.00
- City of Williams Lake \$36,575.88

In 2022, the operational expenses were \$133,204.84 which is made up of wages, benefits and miscellaneous expenses.

Source: City of Williams Lake Financial

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Information

Williams Lake RCMP-Based Victim Services unit
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