

OFFICE OF VICTIM SERVICES
SANDY HOOK WORKERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE SANDY HOOK WORKERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

The Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program, administered by the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Office of Victim Services (OVS), provides immediate financial help for emergency responders, medical and mental health professionals, and Sandy Hook Elementary School employees who suffered a mental or emotional impairment because of the Sandy Hook Elementary School crisis.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

The following persons who were at or scheduled to be at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, its grounds, or the immediate area, including the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire Department on December 14, 2012 between 8:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. or the Sandy Hook Elementary School and its grounds on December 15, 2012, between 12:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m.:

- salaried officer, trooper, or a paid member of a police or fire department
- volunteer member or an auxiliary member of any police or fire department
- special or auxiliary volunteer police officer or firefighter
- licensed or state-employed therapist or counselor
- crisis response team member who is a part of the Disaster Behavioral Health Response Network
- licensed medical professional, such as a physician, physician assistant, nurse, emergency medical technician, or paramedic
- teacher or paraprofessional employed by the town of Newtown or the Newtown Board of Education
- employed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in an administrative or service position, such as a secretary, food service provider, or janitor
- response coordinator employed by the Department of Public Health or the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection

Or persons who were doing necessary duties related to the Sandy Hook crisis during the dates and times mentioned above and are:

- an employee, or working under the direction of, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner or the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protections as a:
 - licensed medical examiner
 - principal physician
 - forensic technician
 - special investigator
 - laboratory assistant
 - forensic science examiner
- an emergency service dispatcher
- a Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services employee who provided mental health services.

WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

You must include with your application to the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program an opinion written by a licensed medical professional providing mental health services to you that documents:

- the mental or emotional impairment that resulted from the Sandy Hook crisis that caused your partial or total disability, which prevented you from doing your job or volunteer service or
- that your medical or emotional impairment required medical and surgical aid or hospital and nursing services, such as medical rehabilitation services, mental health therapy services, and prescription drugs as a result of the Sandy Hook crisis.

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION THAT SHOWS I AM ELIGIBLE?

In addition to the medical opinion, you must also submit a letter from your employer or the agency that you volunteer for that documents that you were at or scheduled to be at or provided necessary duties related to the Sandy Hook crisis during the dates and times mentioned above.

WHAT TYPE OF FINANCIAL HELP CAN I RECEIVE?

Eligible persons can receive financial help for unpaid wages from their employment and payments for related medical and mental health expenses that are not covered by health insurance or any other financial resources.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION MUST I PROVIDE TO HAVE MY LOST WAGES PAID?

You must include with your application to the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program a salary history from your employer for 52 weeks before the date of mental or emotional impairment to the present date or to the date that you returned to regular duty.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION MUST I PROVIDE TO HAVE MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH EXPENSES PAID?

You must provide itemized bills that has your name, account number, dates of service, the amount owed or paid, and the providers' name and billing address. If you are requesting reimbursement for prescription expenses, you must provide a copy of the pharmacy printout and receipt showing payment.

HOW WILL MY MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH EXPENSES AND LOST WAGES BE PAID?

All medical and mental health expense payments will be made directly to you, and you will be responsible to pay your providers directly for services. If you had used vacation or sick time, your employer will be reimbursed and your vacation or sick time would be restored. If you had unpaid lost wages or a decrease in income, payments will be made directly to you. To continue to receive financial help from the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program, you must send to OVS before the first day of each month:

- a certificate by a licensed medical professional providing mental health services to you that describes your continued inability to work
- a payroll history for the time period that you have unpaid wages
- documentation of out-of-pocket medical and mental health expenses

HOW MUCH FINANCIAL HELP CAN I RECEIVE AND FOR HOW LONG?

The Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program limits each eligible person to a total of 52 weeks of financial help, including any retroactive payments to cover time lost and medical expenses before filing the application. There are maximum weekly benefit limits for lost wage assistance. If the Program does not have enough funds to provide full benefits, OVS will prorate the benefits. Payments will not be made after August 31, 2015.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE?

OVS will mail a determination letter within 10 days of receiving your application or within 10 days of receiving all of the necessary information to make a determination. If you are awarded financial assistance, it may take 4 to 6 weeks to receive payment(s).

WHAT IF I DON'T AGREE WITH THE DECISION MADE BY OVS ON MY APPLICATION?

You may request a review within 20 days from the date on the determination letter. Within 3 days of receiving your review request, OVS will assign your case to a victim compensation commissioner. The victim compensation commissioner will hold a hearing within 20 days and issue a decision within 20 days after the hearing.

IS THERE A DEADLINE TO FILE AN APPLICATION?

Yes. OVS cannot accept applications after June 30, 2014.