



HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Hamilton Police Service Board
BOARD MEETING DATE:	June 25, 2026
SUBJECT:	2025 Year End Report – Victim Services Branch
REPORT NUMBER:	26-057
PRESENTATION:	No
OUTSTANDING BUSINESS ITEM:	No
SUBMITTED BY:	Frank Bergen, Chief of Police
SIGNATURE:	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Victim Services Branch (VSB) is a civilian branch of the Hamilton Police Service.
 - VSB is the only 24-hour on-scene crisis intervention service for victims of crime and trauma in the City of Hamilton.
- VSB has 5 civilian staff members and over 80 volunteers, capable to respond to the immediate needs of people who have been impacted by crime and/or trauma.
 - In 2025, VSB assisted over 2,200 new victims in over 4,700 interactions.
 - Volunteers contributed more than 26,000 hours of available on-call coverage, with over 636 hours of direct support provided to those impacted by crime and tragedy in our community.
 - Trained over 40 new recruits as well as 24 Cadets in 2025
- VSB continued to deliver the Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP+) resulting in over 500 applications made and over \$508,965 of benefits directed to those impacted by violent crime.
- Through funding from the Department of Justice Canada, VSB developed a new “Supporting Victims of Hate” brochure and assisted the planning and delivery of the first annual Hate Crime Symposium hosted by Hamilton Police Service.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix A – 2025 Victim Services Branch Annual Report

FB/M. Schulenberg

c: Ryan Diodati, Deputy Chief – Operations

Vision: To be a trusted partner in delivering public safety.

Mission: To serve and protect in partnership with our communities.

Our Values: Compassionate, Dedicated, Inclusive, Integrity, Innovative, Professional, Teamwork

2025 Victim Services Branch Annual Report

Prepared by: Bruce Moffat



INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

**HAMILTON
POLICE SERVICE**
Together. Stronger. Safer.

VISION • MISSION • OUR VALUES

COMPASSION • DEDICATION • INCLUSIVITY • INTEGRITY • PROFESSIONALISM • COLLABORATION



VISION: To be a trusted partner in delivering public safety.

MISSION: To serve and protect in partnership with our communities.

OUR VALUES: Compassion, Dedication, Inclusivity, Professionalism, Collaboration.

Victim Services is a Branch of the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) established in 1992, and became an official unit in 1994. It is the only 24-hour on-scene crisis intervention service for victims of crime and trauma in the City of Hamilton. We respond to the immediate needs of people who have been impacted by crime and/or sudden tragedies such as homicides, suicides, sudden death, assaults, sexual assault, domestic violence, motor vehicle and fire fatalities, robberies, harassment, hate crime and hate bias incidents, human trafficking and missing persons, among others.

In 2025, the Victim Services Branch (VSB) assisted well over 2200 new victims in over 4718* interactions. With 5 full-time staff and over 80 volunteers, VSB is able to provide these services 24/7.

VSB continues to provide support through established programs, such as the Sexual Assault Support Program (245 individuals supported), Victim Quick Response Program+ (546 claims processed totalling \$508,965.29), and the Trauma Bear Program. VSB also continues to provide support through the Domestic Violence Intervention Program, which is an intimate partner violence early intervention program aimed at reducing escalation and re-victimization. To date, over 600 individuals have been supported through this initiative, with 56 individuals supported in 2025.

With funding provided by the Department of Justice Canada, VSB was directly involved with the planning, coordination and implementation of the 1st Annual Hate Crime Symposium hosted by HPS during Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. This funding also supported the development of a Hate Crime brochure that was made available to the community.

Notably, on May 27th 2025, VSB launched the “Ask for Angela” campaign in partnership with Loblaws (31 locations) across Hamilton. This campaign aims to support survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence and human trafficking by creating a safe space for individuals to reach out for support. The intention is that anyone experiencing abuse or violence can walk into a Loblaw Companies Ltd. location (Loblaws, Joe Fresh, Real Canadian Superstore, Real Canadian Wholesale Club, Shoppers Drug Mart, No Frills, Valu-Mart, Your Independent Grocers and Fortinos) and “Ask for Angela”. All store employees have been trained on how to respond and will take survivors to a private space to allow them to contact the Victim Services Branch – Hamilton Police Service for support.

Many presentations were provided to the community throughout 2025 to enhance awareness of Victim Services and supports available. Notably, Victim Services was invited as a panel speaker at the Probation Officers Association of Ontario’s (POAO) 2025 Symposium to educate on working with victims.

With a shared purpose of responding to the needs of our community, the Victim Services Branch of Hamilton Police Service will continue to: focus on its core mandate to respond to the immediate needs of victims of crime and trauma, engage with HPS members to develop programs and resources, collaborate and foster opportunities for partnerships with community agencies and stakeholders.

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH



The Victim Services Branch is pleased to share our goals, achievements and initiatives for 2024 that have contributed to the outcomes and success of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan in this Annual Report. The Branch's Annual Objectives & Performance follow.



COMMUNITY SAFETY

GOAL: Decrease Victimization & Re-Offence Rates

- **ACTION:** Continue to provide support to those impacted by crime and tragic circumstance, work with community agencies to best support victims/survivors, and continue collaborative initiatives to reduce re-offence rates specific to intimate partner violence.



COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

GOAL: Community Partnerships & Engagement

- **ACTION:** Improve awareness of supports available through the Victim Services Branch, and continue to collaborate with community agencies on programs and initiatives to best support those impacted by crime and tragedy in the Hamilton community.



CULTURE AND CAPACITY

GOAL: Recruitment, Retention, & Member Engagement

- **ACTION:** Volunteer engagement, training opportunities, and continued enrichment.



TRUSTING CHANGE

GOAL: Continued Improvement & New Initiatives

- **ACTION:** On-going involvement in the development of new programs, initiatives, and opportunities to support those impacted by crime in the Hamilton community.



COMMUNITY SAFETY

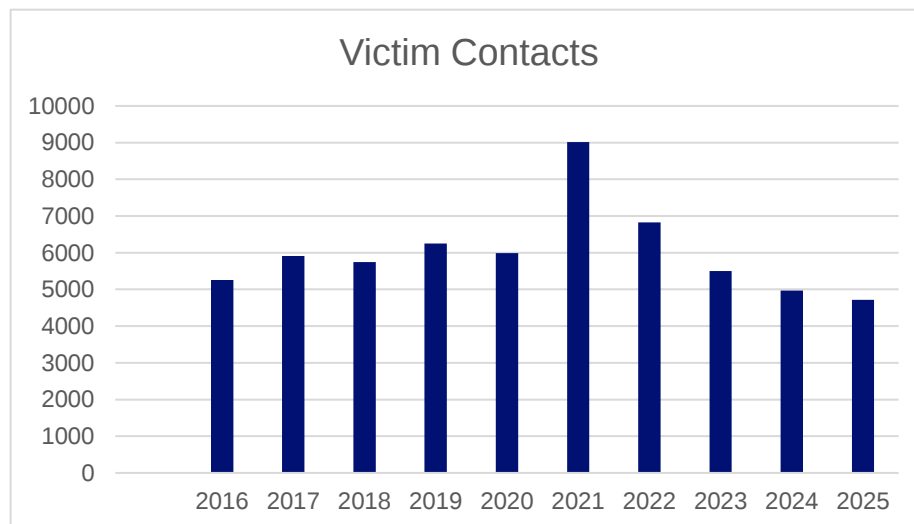
GOAL: Decrease Victimization and Re-offence Rates

Action Items: Continue to provide support to those impacted by crime and tragic circumstance, work with community agencies to best support victims/survivors, and continue collaborative initiatives to reduce re-offence rates specific to intimate partner violence.

Support Victims of Crime and/or Tragic Circumstance:

- Please note: Due to software reporting changes, data from early 2025 is under reported. 2025 contacts will be higher than indicated.
- Supported 2235* new individuals impacted by crime or tragedy
- See Figure A for 4718* total contacts with victims (includes new and existing clients).

Figure A.



**Please note: Due to software reporting changes, available data from 2025 did not capture all interactions. 2025 contacts will be higher than indicated.*

- Continued to work with victims/survivors of crime in providing support, as well as navigating systems and referrals to reduce harm and promote resiliency.
- VSB strives to assist all areas of the Hamilton Police Service to best support victims of crime and/or trauma such as: Intimate Partner Violence Unit, Bail Safety Unit, Homicide Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, Criminal Investigations Division, Crimes Against Children Unit, Major Drugs and Gangs – Human Trafficking Unit, Missing Persons Investigation Unit, Crime Prevention Branch, Training Branch, Communications, and Patrol, among others.

Support Victims of Crime and/or Tragic Circumstance (cont'd):

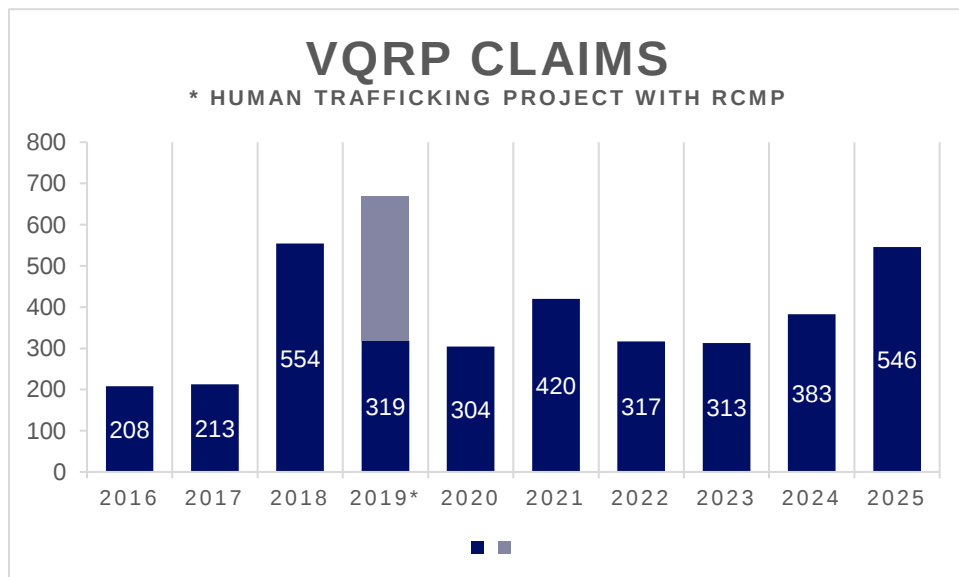
- Victim support brochures continue to be available at VSB, as well as in all Division locations.
- Victim Services Branch brochure is now available in English, French, Arabic, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, and Ukrainian.
- Coping with a Sudden Death and Victims of Domestic Violence brochure is now available in English, French, Arabic, and Spanish.
- This diversification is an on-going endeavor and we aim to expand the languages provided for all brochures.
- In 2025, VSB developed a Hate Crime brochure in collaboration with the Hate Crime Unit.



Responses to a stressful situation vary greatly from person-to-person and not all people will experience the same reaction at the same level of intensity nor for the same length of time. For many victims, they are able to empower themselves with self-supporting options and do not require further assistance after initial contact with Victim Services. Other victims may determine that continued resources/interaction with Victim Services is required to support their resiliency.

- Continued to deliver the Victim Quick Response Program+ (VQRP+) for the City of Hamilton on behalf of the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS).

Figure B.



- 546 claims processed through VQRP+ in 2025, for home safety items, emergency cell phones, travel & transportation, crime scene clean-up, funeral, counselling services, serious injury supports and supports for homicide survivors etc. [See Figure B above].
- Claims totaled over \$508,965 in direct benefit to victims of crime.



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Work with Community Agencies to Improve Supports for Victims/Survivors:

- Partnership established and launched with the YMCA through the Safer and Vital Communities (SVC) grant to enhance support for victims of hate. Through this provincial fund VSB was able to connect victims of hate bias incidents, who were not eligible for support through the Victim Quick Response Program, to access immediate support to address safety and counselling needs as a result of the incident. This resulted in a greater response to incidents of hate, as we understand the impact of hate, regardless of whether a crime has occurred, has a profound impact on our community. Through intentional referrals from the Hate Crime Unit, VSB was able to turn around requests for support with immediate, tangible assistance to address the impacts of the incident by referring to the YMCA for continued support. By offering continued validation and support to victims, HPS has strengthened its response to hate in our community. In addition, this partnership lead to the planning and development of a joint YMCA-HPS community event, Know and Grow, to welcome and educate newcomer populations as attendees and educate them on various topics, including but not limited to rights and responsibilities in Canada, policing in Ontario, municipal by-laws, victims issues, CBSA, CRA, community programs and community safety through an information fair.

Collaborative Initiatives to Reduce Victimization & Re-offence:

- Completed year 4 of the Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), which aims to provide support to individuals involved in non-criminal domestic disputes with community resources and system navigation in an effort to reduce escalation and enhance public safety. In partnership with the Intimate Partner Violence Unit, the program has received over 600 referrals since it began in late 2021 with 56 supported in 2025. All individuals were contacted and offered referrals to a wide variety of community agencies for supports such as counselling, legal advocacy, housing support, mental health and substance use services, etc. based on individual needs.



COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

GOAL: Community Partnerships & Engagement

Action Items: Improve awareness of supports available through the Victim Services Branch, and continue to collaborate with community agencies on programs and initiatives to best support those impacted by crime and tragedy in the Hamilton community.

Improve Awareness of Victim Supports:

- Training sessions provided by staff to community organizations, and conferences in the community and abroad to raise awareness about Victim Services and supports available.
 - Conferences included: Hamilton Police Service Hate Crime Symposium, and Probation Officers Association of Ontario (POAO) 2025 Symposium – Working with Victims Panel.
 - Community Presentations: Inashmuch House (Mission Services), Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP – Ministry of the Attorney General), YWCA Safety and Support Hub, Citizen's Police College, McMaster Medical Students (IF Pro Comp Session: Recognizing and Responding

to IPV), Wilfrid Laurier University (Victimology class Guest Lecture), Loblaws Companies Ltd (Ask Angela Campaign – 31 locations).

Collaboration with Community Agencies:

- Continued to work in collaboration with community organizations to ensure wrap-around supports are available to any victims/survivors supported through the Victim Services Branch.
- Continued involvement on community committees (15+) to enhance collaboration and community-based solutions to support victims/survivors of crime.
 - Committee and Community Work:** Victim Services Alliance Ontario; Emergency Preparedness Committee for City of Hamilton; High-Risk Domestic Violence Community Advisory Team; Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition (HAHTC) and Steering Committee; Women Abuse Working Group (WAWG); Public Awareness and Education – sub-committee of WAWG; International Women’s Day Planning Committee; Hamilton Police Women’s Services Advisory to the Chief; Emergency Women’s Shelter Protocol Committee; Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT); Safe at Home Hamilton, Domestic Violence Court Advisory Committee; Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Network, Hamilton School Board Anti-Human Trafficking Protocol Advisory, Hate Crime Case Review Team (HCCRT).
- VSB continued to participate as a member of the Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT). The team is comprised of the HPS Sex Crimes Unit, the Victim Services Branch, the Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Care Centre - Hamilton Health Sciences, the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton and Area (SACHA), and the Native Women’s Centre.
- With the launch of the Hate Crime Community Review Team (HCCRT), VSB remained an active member of the committee and participated in monthly case reviews of hate bias incidents and facilitated group counselling/debriefs for community members.
- Partnership continued with “Comfort Bears” to provide teddy bears to individuals impacted by trauma. All patrol cars are equipped with Comfort Bears so Officers can provide these bears to individuals at scenes to provide some sense of comfort during the immediate aftermath of a crime or traumatic event. Comfort Bears are also available through the Victim Services Branch, the Crimes Against Children Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, and Homicide Unit.
- Continued partnership with the Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton (SPCCH) to provide a Suicide Resource Kit to individuals/families who have lost a loved one to suicide.
- VSB attended several community events to enhance partnerships with community agencies including: Sisters in Sync – Reverse Job Fair, International Women’s Day, Comfort Bears Gala, Charity of Hope Gala, Muslim Association of Hamilton – Job Fair, Mental Health Wellness Fair – City of Hamilton, Project Concern – It’s a Kids Christmas, Sexual Violence Prevention Month, Women Abuse Prevention Month, and The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, Red Dress Memorial – Native Women’s Centre, among others.



CULTURE AND CAPACITY

GOAL: Recruitment, Retention, & Member Engagement

Action Items: Volunteer engagement, training opportunities, and continued enrichment.

Volunteer Engagement:

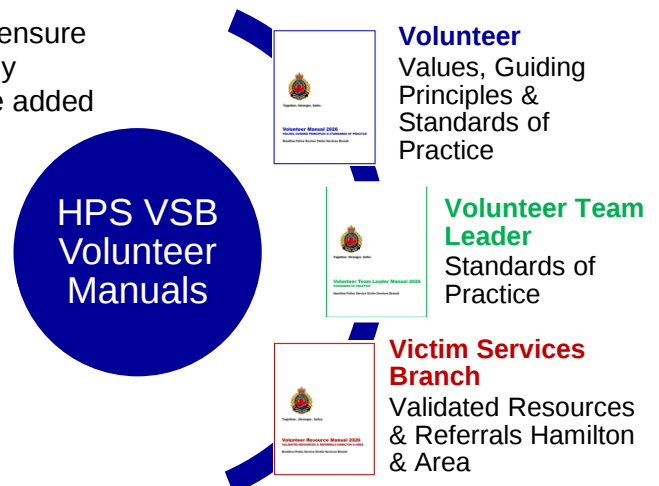
- Volunteers contribute over 26,000 hours of available on-call coverage, provided over 636 hours of direct support to victims, and offer support in 20 languages in addition to English.

- Trained 40 new recruits through 39 hours of instruction throughout our annual Victim Services Volunteer Training.
- In 2025, 24 HPS Cadets completed Victim Services Branch Volunteer training as part of their Cadet training program. VSB continued to be an integral component of the continuum of learning for the HPS Cadet program since 2014. In addition, another 4 Cadets completed a rotation working within the VSB office as part of their supervised practicum. **In October 2025, the Cadet rotation was removed from the VSB office.**
- Volunteer recognition completed throughout the year through individual notes of appreciation, as well as through National Volunteer Week and International Volunteer Day.
- Volunteers participated with quality assurance ahead of the launch of the “Ask for Angela” campaign by attending participating Loblaws locations and simulating an “Ask for Angela” scenario. An online feedback form was then completed to confirm staff were trained and provided the necessary response to support the volunteer.
- Victim Services Volunteers were celebrated through HPS Volunteer Years of Service Awards, as well as the Ontario Service Awards through Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat Citizenship, Inclusion and Heritage Division through the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.
 - 6 Volunteers received awards: two 15 Year Milestone Awards, three 5 Year Milestone Awards, and VSB Team Leader was the recipient of the Marg Marshall Aware for 2025.

Training Opportunities:

- 15+ Training Opportunities were provided to Victim Services staff members and/or volunteers throughout 2025, on topics such as Cultural Safety & Responsiveness, Sexual Violence Prevention Training, Child and Youth Pathways to Support, Labour Trafficking, Grief & Bereavement, B-SAFER and SAM-V2 Risk Assessment training (OAITH), Survivor Perspective of Human Trafficking, Trauma-informed Practice, Supporting Families of Serial Homicide cases, Supporting families of Missing Loved Ones, Responding to Hate, 2SLGBTQIA+ Rights in Ontario, MCCSS Human Trafficking Training, World Religions, Resilience training, among many others.
- 4 Professional Development Training Nights (8 hours) provided to Victim Services Volunteers, which included a presentation from Lynwood Charlton Centre, Thrive Youth Services, pflag Canada – Hamilton Chapter, internal HPS panel (ISD), community resource review to ensure consistency and quality of support, as well as networking opportunities.
- Volunteer Resource Manual was updated regularly to ensure up-to-date community resource options are provided by both staff and volunteers. Several new resources were added and updates were made to existing options.

Together, these form a part of the Volunteer's commitment to ensure that our core values, integrity and accountability are held to the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct.



- VSB also provided multiple training sessions to internal HPS members on topics such as overall services provided by the Victim Services Branch, Victim Management and Support, the Sexual Assault Support Program, and the Domestic Violence Intervention Program. Presentation groups included:
 - New Sworn Recruits Post-OPC (ongoing)

- Patrol Parade Initiative – all parades attended to increase visibility – over the course of 12 days (2 parades per day)
 - resource notebook card created
- Domestic Violence Course (DVO) - HPS and non-HPS members attended
- Sunday School presentations
- Financial Crimes Unit Detectives
- Missing Persons Investigation Unit
- Communications
- HR Civilian On-Boarding Panel
- VSB Training Video produced to enhance training presentations (both internal and external) using local settings and VSB staff/volunteers.



TRUSTING CHANGE

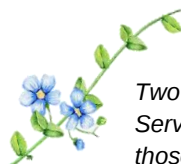
GOAL: Continued Improvement & New Initiatives

Action Items: On-going involvement in the development of new programs, initiatives, and opportunities.

Programs and Initiatives Dedicated to Change:

- Continued participation in the development and implementation of the Hate Crime Case Review Team (HCCRT) to support with systemic change of policies, procedures and training related to hate related investigations.
 - HCCRT case reviews launched in January 2025.
 - Group counselling/debrief organized for community representatives.
- Supported the HPS Use of Force Town Hall and Race and Identity-Based Date presentation as on-site victim support for those impacted by information shared and recent community events.
- Received funding for Victims and Survivors of Crime Week from the Department of Justice - Canada.
 - Funding secured: \$8,500
 - Activities: Supported the planning and development of first annual HPS Hate Crime Symposium.
 - Supporting Victims of Hate brochure developed and made available to community.
- New technologies continue to be integrated for enhanced safety planning options for victims of crime, such as spotlight cameras, personal alarms, smart monitoring etc.
- Social Media continues to be used to raise awareness for Victim Services throughout the year, as well as to recruit Victim Services Volunteers.
- Participated in HR's student mentorship program with Mohawk College
 - 2 students attended VSB office every Friday to learn about Victim Support in Hamilton, emerging victim's issues and trauma-informed care.

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Two benches are located in the courtyard at Hamilton Police Service Central Station. The benches provide a peaceful place for those who wish to pause, rest or reflect. On each bench is a plaque with an inscription: "FORGET ME NOT" ~ A Place of Quiet Reflection to Honour All Victims of Crime Because "Every Victim