

Funds in Court

Funds in Court and Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal



This Information Guide explains:

- why the money awarded to you by the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal is held by the Senior Master
- how and when you can access your money
- what the money can be used for.

SUMMARY

- The staff at Funds in Court are here to help
- Your money is not “locked away”
- You can access your money for any reasonable purpose
- The Senior Master makes all decisions regarding the use of your money
- Your Trust Officer will assist you in making requests to use your money
- You should contact your Trust Officer before making any commitments to use your money
- Your money will probably be paid to you when you turn 18
- We invest your money so that it can earn income
- We will protect your personal information and privacy
- There are other support services available to you
- If you are unhappy with us you can make a complaint.

DEFINITIONS

- **Beneficiary** - A person who has money being looked after by the Senior Master
- **Client Liaison Officer** - A staff member that considers your social, welfare and lifestyle issues and visits you where you live

- **Court** – Supreme Court of Victoria
- **FIC** - Funds in Court
- **Minor** – a person who is under 18 years old.
- **Senior Master** - The Associate Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria who is the Senior Master
- **Judicial Registrar** – A Judicial Registrar of the Supreme Court of Victoria who assists the Senior Master in making decisions about applications for funds
- **Trust Officer** – A staff members that looks after your money and is your main point of contact when you need or want any of your money for something
- **VoCAT** – Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal.

WHY IS MY MONEY PAID TO THE SENIOR MASTER?

The law says that if you receive money from VoCAT and you are a minor, it must be looked after by the Senior Master, generally until you are 18.

What is Funds in Court?

Funds in Court:

- is an office of the Supreme Court of Victoria
- deals with all money paid into Court.

We call it "**FIC**".



Whom do I contact at FIC?

Your Trust Officer is your main point of contact.

Your Trust Officer is named in the “*Certificate of Money Received*” we send to you when your money is paid into Court.

If you do not know who your Trust Officer is please contact FIC and ask the receptionist.

You can:

- call your Trust Officer on 1300 039 390
- e-mail on fic@supremecourt.vic.gov.au
- fax on 1300 039 388

CAN I USE MY MONEY?

Yes.

When?

You can use your money before you turn 18 for the following:

- clothes
- food
- holidays
- computers
- TVs
- bikes
- furniture
- other things you need.

How?

To use your money you should contact your Trust Officer.

Your Trust Officer will consider the following:

- Can you afford it?
- Will you benefit from the purchase?
- Should your money pay for it or should someone else (i. e. VoCAT, your parent or the person who looks after you)?

Only the Senior Master or the Judicial Registrar can approve your request. Trust Officers can help you. They cannot give the final approval.

CAN I RECEIVE FURTHER FUNDS FROM VoCAT?

You may be entitled to further funds from VoCAT for expenses such as:

- extra counselling (advice and personal assistance)
- medical expenses
- holiday expenses
- educational expenses
- safety related expenses.

You can discuss this with your Trust Officer before you contact VoCAT.

If you believe you are entitled to further funds, please contact VoCAT. You will need to make an application to VoCAT to vary your original award to provide for further funds. When you contact VoCAT you will be advised of the steps you need to take.

Your application to vary your original award should be sent directly to VoCAT. You can find VoCAT’s address on your original VoCAT award. If you do not have your original award, contact your Trust Officer. He or she will be able to provide you with the contact details.



If you were under 18 years of age when your original VoCAT award was made, you can make applications to VoCAT to vary your original award up until you turn 24.

There is no limit to the number of applications you make to vary your award. However, the amount of assistance awarded whether by variation or original order cannot exceed the maximum combined amount available under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006*.

WILL I GET MY MONEY WHEN I TURN 18?

In most cases you will.

We will contact you shortly before you turn 18. To make sure we can contact you, you should tell us if you change your address.

We will send you an application form just before your 18th birthday.

To apply for payment out of your money, you must:

1. tell us:
 - your full name
 - where you live
 - your occupation (for example, student)
 - your bank account details.
2. return the application form to us with a copy of your photo ID.

When we receive this information, we will send you a Statutory Declaration which includes a Bank Certification Form.

Do not separate any of the pages of the Statutory Declaration as it is a legal document.

A Statutory Declaration is a:

- document you sign in front of an authorised witness
- it says that the money held by the Senior Master belongs to you
- when you sign it you are saying that the information you are giving is true and correct.

You must:

1. sign the **Statutory Declaration** in front of a witness, only after you have turned 18 years old. We will send you a list of people who can witness your signature.
2. ask your bank to sign and stamp your **Bank Certification Form**. This lists the numbers of your bank account. Your money will be paid into your bank account. Your bank account must be in your name only.

When completed, post the Statutory Declaration including the Bank Certification Form back to FIC.

Once we receive your documents, your funds will be processed and the money will usually be deposited into your bank account within two weeks.

If you have any questions, please ring your Trust Officer or visit our website: www.fundsincourt.vic.gov.au

IS THERE ANY REASON WHY I MAY NOT BE PAID OUT?

Most beneficiaries will be eligible to be paid their money once they turn 18.



There are circumstances where a beneficiary will not be paid out their funds when they turn 18.

The Senior Master may not pay out the money if you have a disability that makes it hard for you to look after your money.

If this happens, you will continue to be a beneficiary of the Court and the Senior Master will manage your money. This is to protect your money.

Your Trust Officer will still be here to help you.

If this happens we will contact you, your family or your carer to explain why this is happening and to discuss your options.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY MONEY AT FIC?

The Senior Master has Investment Officers who help him to look after your money while it is held in Court.

Your money is kept in 'Common Funds'. There are 2 types of Common Funds for beneficiaries:

- Common Fund 2, which we call "CF-2"
- Common Fund 3, which we call "CF-3".

Common Fund 2

- CF-2 is similar to a bank account but it is controlled by the Senior Master
- usually, most of your funds will be invested in a CF-2 account
- no fees or charges are taken from this account

- your money in CF-2 is protected by a government guarantee.

Common Fund 3

CF-3 is similar to a share portfolio. The Senior Master invests in companies that present low-risk and generally have good returns.

You will have money invested in CF-3 if:

- you have more than \$10,000 held by the Senior Master
- the money is being held for more than 6 years.

WHAT ELSE CAN FIC DO FOR ME?

Our Client Liaison Officers can visit you to discuss any issues you may have.

If you wish to meet with one of our Client Liaison Officers, please contact your Trust Officer.

What support services are available to me?

You may wish to access the following support services:

Victims of Crime Helpline

The Helpline offers the following services:

- advice on how to get help, and advice on money matters
- finding other services that can help you
- explaining how to get assistance from police and other services.



This is a free service. The helpline is open 8.00am to 11.00pm, 7 days a week. You can contact them by:

- Calling 1800 819 817
- Texting 0427 767 891

Victims' of Crime Website:
www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au

Witness Assistance Service

This service is available to all victims of crime and witnesses involved in cases being handled by the Office of Public Prosecutions.

Witness Assistance Service can be contacted on:

- (03) 9603 7523
- 1800 641 927

More information about this service can be found on the Office of the Public Prosecutions website: www.opp.vic.gov.au

Youth Central

Youth Central is a Victorian Government website for young people aged 12-25.

It provides information about:

- managing your money
- getting your driver's licence
- study options
- your rights.

For more information please visit the website: www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au

WHO HAS ACCESS TO MY INFORMATION?

Information about you and your money is absolutely private.

We will not give your information to any person:

- without the Senior Master's approval
- where appropriate, without your approval
- where appropriate, without the approval of your parent, guardian, or the person looking after you.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH FIC?

If you are unhappy in your dealings with FIC, you can make a complaint.

The best way to make a complaint is to call us on 1300 039 390 or write to us:

- by mail at 210 William Street, Melbourne, 3000
- email fic@supremecourt.vic.gov.au on
- fax on 1300 039 388

A **complaint form** is:

- available on our website; or
- you can ask us to send you one.

Please refer to the Making a Complaint and Providing Feedback Information Guide.

Where can I get more information?

- Our website
- www.fundsincourt.vic.gov.au
- you can download our publications
- you can ask your Trust Officer to send the information to you.



CONTACT DETAILS

Located at:

Level 5, 469 La Trobe Street,
Melbourne, Victoria

Postal address:

Funds in Court
Supreme Court of Victoria
210 William Street, Melbourne
Victoria 3000

Phone: 1300 039 390

Fax: 1300 039 388

From overseas:

Phone: 61 3 9032 3777

Fax: 61 3 9032 3700

Email: fic@supremecourt.vic.gov.au

Website: www.fundsincourt.vic.gov.au