

DefendDignity

Defend Dignity's Survivor Support Fund – Policy

Last updated: March 2023

PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY BEFORE SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

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I. ABOUT DEFEND DIGNITY:

Defend Dignity (dD) works to end all forms of commercial sexual exploitation in Canada. dD is an initiative of The Alliance Canada.

Commercial sexual exploitation includes pornography, strip clubs, escorts, massage parlors, prostitution, survival sex, camming and sex trafficking. All involve the buying or selling of sexual acts which undermine the dignity of women, men and children and are detrimental to a healthy society.

Defend Dignity works to end all forms of commercial sexual exploitation through:

- Raising awareness on the realities of sexual exploitation through events and resources.
- Advocating for law and policy reform with all levels of Government and with companies and organizations.
- Aiding survivors through the Survivor Support Fund and First Response Bags

Further information about Defend Dignity can be accessed at www.defenddignity.ca.

II. ABOUT THE FUND:

The Defend Dignity Survivor Support Fund was created to provide accessible financial support to individuals who have experienced any form of commercial sexual exploitation in Canada, such as prostitution, sex trafficking, camming, escorting, massage parlours, strip clubs, survival sex, pornography and/or their intimate image(s) being shared without consent. The age requirement to access the fund is **16 years of age and over**. **A maximum of \$2,000** can be accessed per person who receives assistance from this fund **per calendar year**. Defend Dignity recognizes that every application we receive for funding is significant. Due to the number of applications we receive and limited funds available not every application will be awarded funds. We encourage agencies/churches to reapply in the next SSF Intake session if the need is still relevant or a new need has emerged. **Please note that this fund can only be accessed by referral from a church or non-profit agency. Survivors cannot apply directly.**

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III. ACCEPTABLE USES OF THE FUND:

The Survivor Support Fund can be used to assist an individual who has experienced commercial sexual exploitation. The list includes:

- paying off debt/fines
- paying pardons
- tuition for further education
- paying rent/utility bills
- household items
- computers/cell phones
- medical/dental care
- mental health supports/counselling/support animals
- obtaining identification documents and licenses

It remains under the sole discretion of Defend Dignity to determine whether an application will be accepted or declined.

IMPORTANT: Please include specific dollar amounts for ALL needs that are submitted in your application (with any taxes and/or fees such as shipping included). If there are multiple needs, please itemize the needs in order of highest to lowest priority. This will allow us to award funding in order of priority if we cannot fully fund all the items requested. If the funds are being requested for a time sensitive need, please indicate so in your application.

IV. FUND DISPERSAL TIMELINE:

The fund will be dispersed twice every year in June and December. Referrals will be accepted in April and October and can be completed through [the Defend Dignity website](#). The next intake will accept applications from April 1st -27th 2023, with **April 27th @ 5:00pm EDT as the deadline.**

The fund will only be disbursed to the agency or church applying for the fund via EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer). It will not be disbursed to the survivor. It is the expectation of Defend Dignity that the agency/church will then either:

- a) write a cheque directly to the institution requiring payment (such as a university, landlord, financial institution, therapist, dentist), or
- b) ensure that the funds are utilized for the intended purpose.

The financial gift can **ONLY** be used for its intended purpose as outlined in the accepted application. Defend Dignity requests that a letter advising that the funds have been utilized as approved be submitted with the Follow-Up Questionnaire [here](#). The agency or church receiving and dispensing the funds is responsible for any needed tax reporting of benefits on behalf of the individual(s) benefiting from the funds.

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V. REFERRAL PROCESS/REQUIREMENTS:

The requirements for a referral to Defend Dignity Survivor Support Fund are as follows:

- The application must be completed and submitted by a staff member from a non-profit agency or church within Canada
- A completed application form (accessible from our website at the following link: <https://defenddignity.ca/ssf-application/>)
- A letter from the survivor requiring the funds describing the need, the reason for application, and how the fund will be used.

No late or incomplete applications will be accepted. It is recommended to submit applications well before the deadline to allow time to provide any needed clarification, corrections, or missing information. Prior to submitting the application, if you have questions, please contact the Survivor Support Fund Coordinator at survivorsupportfund@defenddignity.ca

Please **DO NOT** attach any other documents related to the applicant except for the ones listed above.

VI. FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES:

A link to [the follow-up questionnaire](#) will be emailed to all successful applicants and must be completed by the agency/church **by August 31st, 2023**. The agency/church must include a letter on official letterhead confirming the funds were used for the designated purchase(s), which can be uploaded on the web form. **If the fund recipient is not able to use the funds for the intended purpose, please contact survivorsupportfund@defenddignity.ca immediately.**

Defend Dignity reserves the right to keep a confidential basic record of those who have applied for funding.

Thank you for applying!