

# DefendDignity

## Defend Dignity's Survivor Support Fund: Spring 2024 Policy

**PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY BEFORE SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION**

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### I. ABOUT DEFEND DIGNITY:

Defend Dignity Canada (dD) works to end all forms of commercial sexual exploitation in 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](http://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 online without consent. The age requirement to access the fund is **16 years of age and over**. **A maximum of \$1,500** can be accessed per person who receives assistance from this fund **per calendar year**. **Please note that this fund can only be accessed by referral from a non- profit agency or church in Canada. Survivors cannot apply directly.**

Defend Dignity recognizes that every application we receive is significant. Due to the number of

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applications we receive and the limited funds available, regrettably, **many applications will not be funded**. We understand it can be difficult when an application can't be funded, so we want individuals to be aware of these limitations before applying.

### 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
- cell phones and computers
- 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 items that are requested in your application (with any taxes and/or fees such as shipping included). If there are multiple items, please list them 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. APPLICATION PROCESS/REQUIREMENTS:

The application must be completed and submitted by a staff member from a non-profit agency or church within Canada. Applications will be accepted from April 8<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> 2024, with **April 30<sup>th</sup> @ 5:00pm EDT as the deadline**.

Applications are submitted through our website and consist of:

- A completed application form (accessible from our website at the following link: <https://defenddignity.ca/survivor-support-fund/>)
- A letter from the survivor requiring the fund (details provided at the link above)

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

**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](mailto:survivorsupportfund@defenddignity.ca)

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## V. FUND DISPERSAL:

**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. 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.

Prior to applying, the staff member filling out the application must confirm with the person who oversees their agency's/church's finances that they can receive an EFT on behalf of the applicant and dispense the funds accordingly.

Defend Dignity is undergoing changes that impact the fund disbursement process, which includes switching bank accounts. This should allow for a better process in the future, but it could delay the timing of funds being sent this intake. It also means that all agencies or churches – including those who have received an EFT in the past - must submit EFT information before Defend Dignity can send the funds.

Funding decisions will be communicated by the end of May. Defend Dignity will try to disburse funds in June, but please advise individuals that it could take longer.

## VI. FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES:

Agencies/churches must submit a [follow-up questionnaire](#) for every application that receives funding **by Thursday August 30th, 2024**. 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](mailto: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!*