

Defend Dignity's Survivor Support Fund Policy

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PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY BEFORE SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

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I. ABOUT DEFEND DIGNITY:

Since 2010, Defend Dignity (dD) has worked to end all forms of sexual exploitation through our aid, awareness, and advocacy efforts. Sexual exploitation includes commercial sex buying through prostitution, strip clubs, escorts, body rub parlours, and pornography websites. It also includes online harms such as sexploitation, AI deepfakes, Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), and luring/grooming for sex trafficking. Sexual exploitation undermines the inherent dignity of women, men, and children and is 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.
- Advocacy for law and policy reform with all levels of Government and with companies and organizations.
- Aiding survivors through the Survivor Support Fund.

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 \$1,000** 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 and cannot submit multiple applications through various organizations.**

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
- new bed
- medical/dental care
- mental health supports/counselling
- obtaining identification documents and licenses
- tattoo removal

It remains under the sole discretion of Defend Dignity to determine whether an application will be accepted or declined. We have removed computers from the list of items that can be requested (if you are supporting someone who is looking for a computer, please email us and we will offer some suggestions). Kindly note that we do not provide funding for groceries.

IMPORTANT: Please include specific dollar amounts for ALL needs that are submitted in your application. 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 May and November. Applications will be accepted in April and October and can be completed through the [Defend Dignity website](#) .

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.

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/>)

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

Please attach a letter from the survivor that provides us with background information as to why they need this funding and how it would create a meaningful impact in their life. Please **do not** attach any other documents related to the applicant.

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 **within 30 days of receipt of the fund**. 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!