

# ***ADVISORY BULLETIN***

**TRANSMITTAL NO. 2020-04**

**TO: ALL FUNDED PROGRAMS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**FROM: ELIZABETH CRONIN, ESQ.  
DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: Domestic Partner Update**

**DATE: June 15, 2020**

Dear Colleague:

Please be aware of the following, important changes to the law (Chapter 70 of the Laws of 2020) regarding OVS eligibility for the reimbursement of counselling expenses of surviving Domestic Partners of homicide victims.

## **Counselling Expenses**

Effective June 17, 2020 and applicable to claims filed **on or after this date**, surviving Domestic Partners of homicide victims will be eligible to receive reimbursement for the unreimbursable expenses related to their counselling as a result of the crime. Domestic Partner will be defined in OVS' enacting statute as a person:

- Formally a party in a domestic partnership or similar relationship with the other person, entered into pursuant to the laws of the United States or of any state, local or foreign jurisdiction, or registered as the domestic partner of the other person with any registry maintained by the employer of either party or any state, municipality, or foreign jurisdiction; or
- Formally recognized as a beneficiary or covered person under the other person's employment benefits or health insurance; or
- Who is dependent or mutually interdependent on the other person for support, as evidenced by the totality of the circumstances indicating a mutual intent to be a domestic partner.

## **Related and Pre-Existing Eligible Expenses**

These changes to OVS' enacting statute only relate to counseling expense eligibility for Domestic Partners. However, there are related expenses that, as a function of law, will now also be considered. The claimant's travel expenses to and from their counselling treatments will be considered as part of the reimbursable expenses for counselling. Additionally, any award made by OVS includes reasonable transportation expenses incurred for necessary court appearances in connection with the prosecution of the underlying crime.

Also, please remember that, though not part of these recent changes, OVS' pre-existing law allows for the consideration of reimbursement for Loss of Support (LOS) for a person dependent for his or her principal support upon a victim of a crime who died as a direct result of such crime.

Please contact either Claudette Christian-Bullock (718-923-4348 or [Claudette.Christian-Bullock@ovs.ny.gov](mailto:Claudette.Christian-Bullock@ovs.ny.gov) ) or Kathy Davidson (518-457-8049 or [Kathy.davidson@ovs.ny.gov](mailto:Kathy.davidson@ovs.ny.gov) ), OVS Crime Victim Specialist 3s, if you have any questions related to these newly eligible persons.

On behalf of the New York State Office of Victim Services, thank you for your commitment to providing the highest quality services to innocent victims of crime in New York State.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Cronin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and a long, sweeping tail.

Elizabeth Cronin, Esq.  
Director