

## TOP NEWS

# Thousands draw on court's victims fund

Bill Myers, The Examiner

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### WASHINGTON -

More than 2,400 people filed claims for financial aid from a special courts program that helps the victims of crime in fiscal 2005, an Examiner analysis found.

Nearly half of those people were victims of domestic violence, hoping for a little extra help in paying their medical or therapy bills, repairing damaged property or making up for lost wages from the Crime Victim's Compensation Fund of the D.C. Superior Court, according to statistics obtained by The Examiner.

The victims fund, around since 1982, has been supervised by Superior Court since 1996. With an annual budget of up to \$9 million, the fund is designed to help victims of violent crime recoup economic losses. The fund is a "payer of last resort," covering bills that insurance companies, for instance, won't.

"We don't just give victims a stack of money," fund director Laura Banks Reed said, but "we definitely help ease the burden."

The fund draws from the courts' filing fees and costs, as well as government grants. Additionally, judges usually order criminals to pay into the funds as part of sentencing.

Suichung Kim is a believer in the fund. Kim, 60, runs a grocery store on Georgia Avenue and five years ago was robbed, stabbed and beaten. The fund helped pay her medical and therapy bills.

"I was awfully appreciative. I didn't know they could do such a thing," Kim said. "I told my friend, if I hit the lottery, I'd like to support the victim's fund. But he says they've got enough funds to go around."

### **Victims Fund**

- Claims in fiscal 2005: 2,401

- Domestic violence: 1,089

- Assault/robbery: 482

- Child abuse: 447

- Homicide: 201

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