

IRRP Funding Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is The Independent Reconciliation and Reparations Program (IRRP)?

A. The IRRP is an independent settlement and reconciliation program for survivors of sexual abuse by clergy of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Launched on November 8, 2018, the IRRP is focused on providing a path toward healing, regardless of when the abuse occurred through a compassionate and voluntary process, which is wholly independent of the Archdiocese, where survivors may submit claims which are resolved in a prompt and fair manner with a focus on compassion and dignity. In addition to monetary compensation, the IRRP offers support from a Victim Support Facilitator to assist survivors throughout the claims process. The IRRP supplements initiatives and Victim Assistance Programs already undertaken by the Archdiocese to address the sexual abuse of minors by clergy of the Archdiocese.

Q. Why is the Archdiocese communicating about the IRRP now when COVID-19 concerns are the priority?

A. We know life as we understand it has changed and that physical and mental well-being, family, loved ones, and personal finances are of most concern for people at this time. However, it was important for a progress report from the IRRP to be issued as it remains a critical part of our mission.

Q. Why was the IRRP created?

A. The IRRP was created to assist survivors in the healing process and to provide monetary compensation in a compassionate, non-adversarial, confidential environment. The IRRP builds upon and expands the Archdiocese's Victim Assistance Program that has been in place since 2002.

Q. Who created the IRRP?

A. The IRRP was created with input from survivors, advocates and two nationally recognized claims administration experts (Kenneth R. Feinberg and Camille Biros). The Administrators have complete autonomy to determine eligibility of individual claims and the amount of compensation for survivors that come forward with a claim. In addition, a highly regarded and experienced victim's advocate (Lynn Shiner), serves as the Victim Support Facilitator to support survivors, assist them in submitting claims, and connect them to resources. There is also an Independent Oversight Committee, with Federal Judge Lawrence Stengel (Ret.) serving as Chair, tasked with overseeing the successful implementation and administration of the IRRP.

Q. How do IRRP settlements work?

A. The independent Administrators of the Program (Kenneth R. Feinberg and Camille Biros) have complete autonomy to determine eligibility and amount of compensation and their decisions are fully binding. If a survivor decides to accept the settlement offered by the Administrators the survivor will sign a release of all past and future claims. Upon the survivor's acceptance of the settlement and receipt of the signed release, prompt payment is delivered to the survivor. In addition, survivors are offered independent short- and long-term counseling services through the Archdiocese's Victim Assistance Program.

Q. Where does the IRRP stand now?

A. As of April 22, 2020, a total of 800 individuals have come forward to the IRRP and 615 of them have submitted formal claims. The Archdiocese remains fully committed to funding this program and paying claims in the amounts assigned by the independent IRRP Claims Administrators. Given the claims experience to date, the Archdiocese currently estimates the total cost of the IRRP to be approximately \$130 million. As of April 22, 2020, \$43.8 million of total compensation had already been paid to resolve 208 claims fully.

Q. When did claims have to be submitted to the IRRP?

A. The IRRP implemented a broad claims submission process which allowed claims to be filed through September 30, 2019. The claims submission period has now passed, and given the claims experience to date, the Archdiocese currently estimates the total cost of the IRRP to be approximately \$130 million. That amount includes the \$43.8 million already paid to survivors through the program.

Q. What if more victims/survivors come forward?

A. Although the IRRP claims submission period has now passed, survivors who did not submit a claim with the IRRP still have access to all services available through the Archdiocese's Victim Assistance Program, including mental health services, medication, therapy, and more. They also have access to the program's Victim Support Facilitator working in conjunction with the IRRP.

Q. How did the Archdiocese reach out to survivors?

A. The IRRP cast a wide net to survivors both known and unknown. The program was communicated by the Archdiocese, by the IRRP Claims Administrators, through direct emails, through the public media, through parishes, and third parties not affiliated with the Archdiocese or the IRRP. A packet of information was sent to all survivors who had previously reported a claim of abuse that was known to the Archdiocese. Conducting such a broad and multi-faceted outreach effort was the best way to ensure equal knowledge about and access to the program.

Q. What is the difference between the IRRP and civil litigation?

A. Civil litigation is a time-consuming, expensive and difficult process for everyone involved. Therefore, we took a more proactive approach by reaching out to victims broadly instead of litigating every claim. This method honors our commitment to survivors and enables the Archdiocese to steward resources in a prudent fashion. Most importantly, the IRRP is a voluntary, independent, non-judicial process which allows the Archdiocese to quickly provide compensation as well as other support services.

Q. How is the Archdiocese funding the IRRP obligations?

A. The financial plan is being funded through the sale of Archdiocesan assets, borrowing, and risk mitigation payments from related ecclesiastical entities. As of April 22, 2020, \$43.8 million of total compensation had already been paid to resolve 208 claims fully. To fund the remaining IRRP obligations, the plan calls for the Archdiocese to receive approximately \$33.2 million from the sale or lease of non-restricted assets; \$28 million in risk mitigation payments from Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, Catholic Social Services and the Office of Catholic Education (sourced from non-restricted surplus funds); a \$10 million loan commitment from the Priests Retirement Benefits Trust; and a \$15 million loan commitment from Catholic Social Services.

Q. What are risk mitigation payments?

A. These are payments made by related ecclesiastical entities to help fund IRRP commitments to resolve claims for the benefit of the entire Archdiocesan community and to ensure maximum compensation is available for survivors.

Q. What Archdiocesan properties may be sold to fund the IRRP?

A. We are considering a variety of sale and lease transactions, including the Cathedral Block properties. Any transaction that may occur will have no impact on the Archdiocese's use of the Cathedral or the administrative offices of our local Church.

Q. How did the Archdiocese decide which assets to sell?

A. The Archdiocese focused on the disposition of assets that would generate the greatest available proceeds to fund the IRRP while preserving the overall mission of the Church for the benefit of the faithful.

Q. What impact does the statute of limitations have on the IRRP?

A. The statute of limitations has no effect on the IRRP. The IRRP was established to assist survivors regardless of the legal status or time-barred nature of their potential claims. It is the sincere hope of the Archdiocese that substantially all claims of sexual abuse by clergy of the Archdiocese have been submitted and are currently being processed by the IRRP. Although the IRRP claims submission period has passed, survivors who did not submit a claim with the IRRP still have access to all the services available under the Archdiocese's Victim Assistance Program, including mental health services, medication, therapy and more.

Q. What is meant by shared responsibility?

A. As a united human family, it is our Christian obligation to assist and support survivors and our fellow Catholics. It is the responsibility of each one of us to take steps toward increased emotional and spiritual healing in our community. We ask that everyone come together in a community effort to help support survivors. Pray for them, reach out in compassion and understanding, and offer a hand in fellowship.

Q. How can the faithful help survivors?

A. You can help by praying for the survivors and their healing. Reach out in compassion and understanding, and offer a hand in fellowship. You may also refer them to aoppdgetoprotect.com for additional healing resources.

Q. In addition to financial compensation, how else is the Archdiocese helping survivors?

A. A Victim's Support Facilitator was added to the IRRP to help survivors submit IRRP claims and connect them to resources. In addition, the Archdiocese offers broader assistance through its Victim Assistance Program to address emotional, psychological, and pastoral needs when desired by victims/survivors of sexual abuse or their family members. The Archdiocese has invested \$22 million in Victim Assistance Programs to assist survivors on their path to healing through mental health services, medication, therapy either Church-based or secular, and more; plus \$7 million in Safe Environment Initiatives such as background checks and training programs. These programs are ongoing. Lastly, The Victim Support Facilitator, Oversight Committee, and Archdiocese have established internal best practices for the Archdiocese, including reviewing current policies to improve interactions with victims/survivors, prevent future harm, and protect public safety.

Q. Other organizations have had to declare bankruptcy related to sexual abuse claims. What steps have been taken by the Archdiocese to avoid bankruptcy?

A. Each organization has a unique path based on their circumstances. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia is taking a proactive path with the IRRP. It provides an expedited means to resolve claims and provide financial and emotional support to survivors. The Archdiocese has adopted a comprehensive financial plan which provides funding for the IRRP while also allowing the other missions of the Archdiocese to continue in order to serve the needs of the faithful.