



College of Liberal Arts

**Center for Public Safety Initiatives**

# CERV Wrap-Around Expenditures Analysis: May 2023 to May 2024

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## Introduction

Community Engagement to Reduce Victimization (CERV) is a community-based violence intervention program that aims to prevent the retaliation and revictimization of those who have been violently victimized. There are many ways in which CERV achieves this goal; CERV can help connect victims with employment and education opportunities as well as safe housing, and more. CERV can provide wrap-around support for its program participants and their families. “Wrap-around services or wrap-around funds are money or resources (e.g., a hotel stay) provided to violence victims, their surrogates, or any other member of a dispute to reduce the risk of retaliation occurring” (Burt et al., 2021, p. 3). This paper focuses on the distribution of wrap-around services for CERV participants.

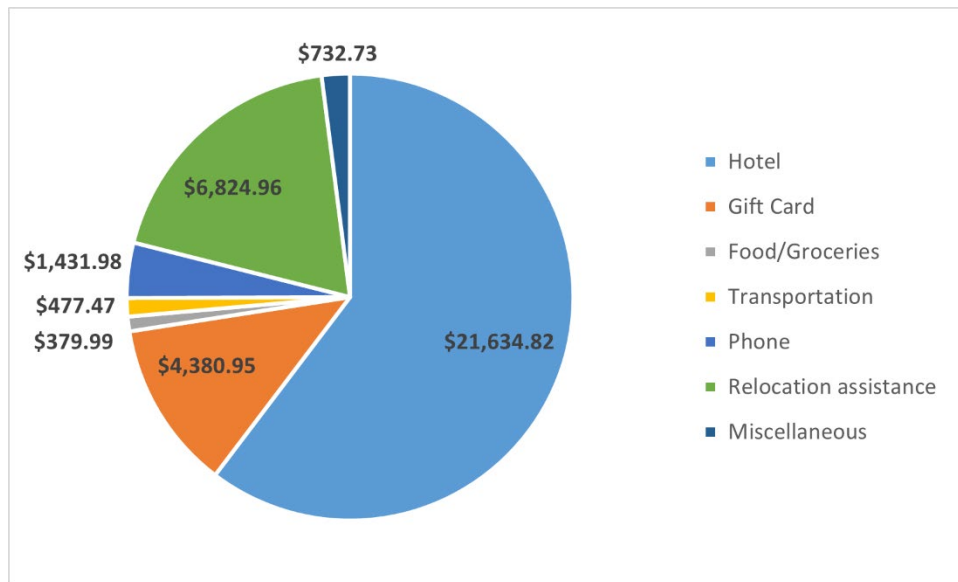
## Analysis

The goal of wrap-around funds is to provide immediate and short-term support following victimization. For example, wrap-around funds could be used to pay for a short-term hotel stay for a victim who cannot go home right away, or the funds could be used to pay for a gift card that the victim could use to buy food or other necessities. From May 2023 to May 2024, the CERV coordinator met with 74 individuals. Some of these individuals did not maintain contact, others refused the coordinator, and still others received non-financial assistance in the form of general information gathering, community connections, and/or assistance filling out Department of Human Services (DHS) applications. Ultimately, 45 individuals were supported with wrap-around funds. The total amount of

money spent during these 12 months was \$35,764.90.

Total spent per individual ranged from \$40.00 to \$3,874.67. This wide variation is partly because different people have different needs. Some individuals needed only minor support from CERV, like a gift card for groceries or money for transportation. However, other individuals needed more substantial funds for housing or relocation assistance. The median total per dispute was \$551.99 (the median is the middle of a range, indicating that half of the values are below this point and half are above). Figure 1 displays the amount expended by CERV for each of its key wrap-around supports.

*Figure 1. Key Wrap-Around Supports*



The data indicates that one of the primary needs for violence victims is safe housing. From May 2023 to May 2024, CERV expended funds for hotel stays in 27 out of 45 cases. This indicates that more than half of the individuals supported by CERV with wrap-around funds required temporary housing assistance. A total of \$21,634.82 was spent on

hotel/motel costs for violence victims who could not return home, felt uneasy about returning home and/or needed time to cool down and reset.

Similarly, another form of assistance that CERV spent significant funds on was relocation assistance. Some individuals desired permanent relocation and they enlisted CERV to help them move out of town. From May 2023 to May 2024, CERV assisted a total of 9 individuals with relocation assistance in the form of providing moving assistance and/or covering security deposits, spending a total of \$6,824.96.

The need for housing and relocation services is a prominent issue among victims of violence, therefore CERV often tries to connect individuals with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) or local shelters. For many participants, navigating DHS can be incredibly difficult due to lengthy eligibility criteria that often excludes victims of violence (Burt et al., 2021). While CERV does not have the capacity to provide permanent housing solutions to participants, the coordinator does his best to utilize his connections within DHS and the community to support participants at least in the short term.

The next most significant means of support funded by CERV was a total of \$4,380.95 in prepaid gift cards. CERV provides gift cards to victims of violence because they can be used in a variety of different ways and afford the victim some autonomy in getting personal items they may need. The CERV coordinator uses their discretion to purchase gift cards from places like Wegmans or Marshall's depending on the victim's needs. Gift cards are then used to purchase food, personal care necessities, clothing, and even

diapers for children.

While CERV did not spend nearly as much money on other supports, that does not make them less significant. CERV wants their participants to be able to stay in contact with the coordinator, as well as any other officials and community groups that the participant may need to contact. To ensure this, CERV uses wrap-around funds to purchase reloadable phones for violence victims who need them to stay connected. CERV spent a total of \$1,431.98 on communication devices for their participants. Additionally, CERV spent \$477.47 on transportation services, which included getting participants to health-related appointments and meetings with the CERV coordinator. CERV also spent \$379.99 on food, a relatively modest amount, likely because many participants were given prepaid gift cards to food stores like Wegmans. Lastly, CERV spent \$732.73 on miscellaneous expenses such as covering an individual's car insurance payment for a month so they could get back on their feet, buying a stroller for a participant's baby, buying blinds for a participant's new home, and aftercare items from CVS (i.e., bandages, Tylenol). This miscellaneous figure also captures all gift card activation fees (\$4-\$5 depending on the brand). CERV attempts to provide whatever support necessary to aid violence victims, even if it seems indirectly related to the person's victimization.

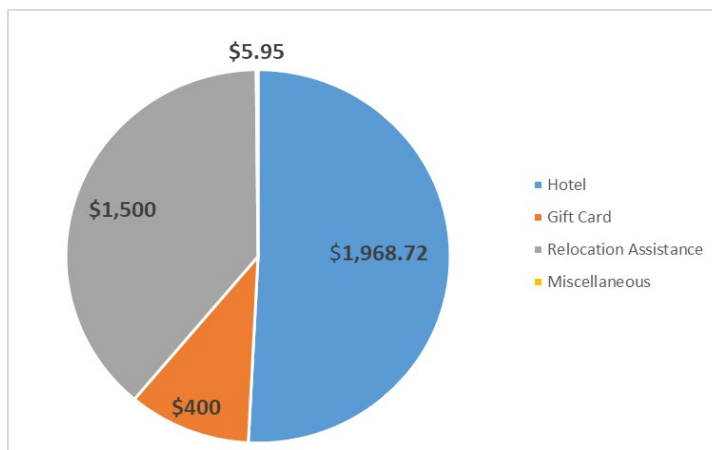
## Case Studies

### The Case of L

Figure 2 displays a breakdown of the key wrap-around supports needed for a woman (L)

who was a victim of gun violence.

*Figure 2. Wrap-Around Expenditures for L*

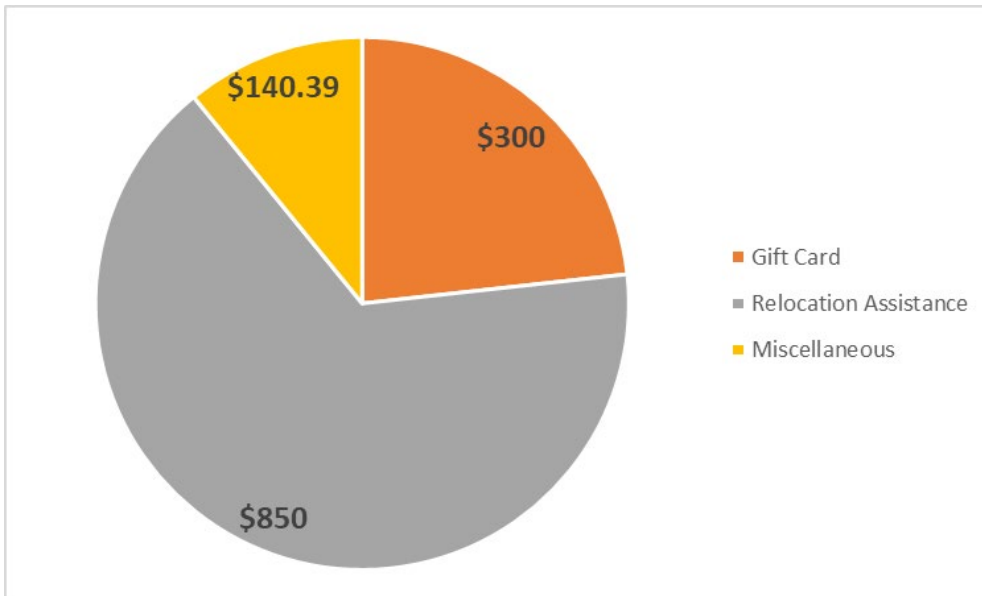


This individual was harmed during a drive-by shooting in front of her house when a bullet ricocheted and traveled through her right foot and lodged itself in her left foot. Following her victimization, CERV helped her family in any way they could. Feeling unsafe in their own home, CERV used wrap-around funds to cover a short-term stay at a hotel for L and her family. CERV also provided L with a prepaid gift card that could be used for food and other necessities. Additionally, CERV covered the costs of relocation when L finally found a permanent place for her family to live. This case showcases how CERV can support violence victims in a variety of ways.

### **The Case of R**

Figure 3 illustrates the wrap-around funds expended for a woman (R) who was shot during an altercation with her son's family.

Figure 3. Wrap-Around Expenditures for R



This individual was shot in the arm when she was caught in the crossfire of an altercation between her son and his cousins. After her victimization, R was out of work for a while and struggled to take care of her kids with her injury. CERV was able to pay the security deposit for R's new house, provide a prepaid gift card, and even buy a new stroller for R's baby. This case is another example of how CERV finds ways to support violence victims based on their individual needs, even if it means replacing a broken baby stroller.

## Conclusion

CERV strives to aid violence victims by connecting them with community partners and offering tangible support in the form of wrap-around funds. These funds are used to support participants in any way that may improve their circumstances. For example, a Wegman's gift card from CERV may support a family with a week's worth of groceries,

which is one less thing the family needs to worry about while healing from the trauma of victimization. Similarly, a prepaid phone from CERV allows participants the ability to stay connected with the CERV coordinator and any other community partners who can be of service. Additionally, while temporary housing is not a final solution, the hotel/motel stays that CERV pays for allows victims and their families the chance to escape their hostile situation and make a plan to find a new place to live. By providing participants with wrap-around support, CERV improves their circumstances and ensures that these individuals feel supported by their community.



## References

- Burt, J., Duda-Banwar, J., & Altheimer, I. (2021). *Wrap-Around Services for Victims of Violence* (Working Paper 2021-07). Rochester, NY: Center for Public Safety Initiatives, Rochester Institute of Technology.  
<https://www.rit.edu/liberalarts/sites/rit.edu.liberalarts/files/docs/CRIM%20Resources/Wrap%20Around%20Funds%20for%20Victims%20of%20Violence.pdf>

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