

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program

Enacted in 1976, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program:

- Assists in the recruitment and retention of qualified public safety officers.
- Establishes the value communities place on contributions from those who are willing to serve their communities in dangerous circumstances.
- Offers peace of mind to men and women who are seeking careers in public safety.

A unique partnership effort of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice; local, state, tribal, and federal public safety agencies; and national organizations, the PSOB Program provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders, as well as disability benefits to officers catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

BJA's PSOB Office is responsible for reviewing nearly 700 death, disability, and education claims submitted annually. The PSOB Office also collaborates with national firefighter, law enforcement, and first responder groups to offer a wide range of PSOB training and technical assistance resources, through conferences, seminars, and printed materials, to support survivors and agencies of America's fallen public safety officers.

Review Process

1. Survivors ("Claimants") and the fallen public safety officer's agency,¹ often along with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation or Concerns of Police Survivors, work together to initiate a PSOB claim.
2. The PSOB Office receives initial information submitted regarding the circumstances of the death.

¹ For disability claims, Claimants are officers injured in the line of duty.

3. The PSOB Office reaches out to the agency or survivors for all basic required documents to continue the review of the case.

4. As needed, the PSOB Office works with forensic pathologists and medical specialists to review autopsy, toxicology, and other medical records to understand any medical issues relevant to the determination of the case.

5. The PSOB Office works with OJP's Office of the General Counsel to determine if the circumstances of the death meet the requirements of the PSOB law and regulations.

6. Once a decision is made, the PSOB Office mails a copy of the Determination and notification letters to the Claimants and agency.

7. If approved, the benefit is paid by the Treasury Department to the eligible Claimants. If not approved, the PSOB Office Determination provides detailed information regarding the PSOB appeals process.

Performance Measures

BJA is currently reporting the results of two performance measures: 1) the average time to receive basic required claim documents from agencies and survivors, and 2) the average time to review and determine a claim, once all basic required documents are received. The following data reflects all death and disability claims filed in FY 2011 (October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011).

With FY 2011 as the baseline year, the PSOB Office received a total of 345 death claims and 62 disability claims in this reporting period.

About the Data

For purposes of Performance Measure I, all basic required documents refer to the documents listed on the *PSOB Checklist for Filing a PSOB Death Benefits Claim* and *PSOB Checklist for Filing a PSOB Disability Benefits Claim* (available at www.psob.gov). Based on the circumstances and complexity of a case, other documents may be required, which are requested in a subsequent review stage. Cases may also continue

through the review process, and be returned for clarification or additional information related to the basic documents collected earlier in the review.

The outcome (approval or non-approval) of PSOB cases are often not determined in the same fiscal year in which they are filed, especially those cases received in the PSOB Office in the third and fourth quarters of a fiscal year.

FY 2011 cases that did not meet the criteria of the performance measurement data reported below remain under review.

Performance Measure I

Average time to receive basic required documents.

Performance Measure I is the amount of time in days from when a claim is assigned to a PSOB Outreach Specialist until the basic required documents related to the claim have been received.

As of July 25, 2012, there were 374 FY 2011 death and disability claims for which outreach for required documents was completed. Of these 374 claims, 316 were death claims, and 58 were disability claims.

The average processing time to receive the basic required documents for disability claims was 94 days (about 13 weeks).

The average time to receive all basic required documents for a death claim was higher than for disability claims, averaging 147 days (about 21 weeks).

Performance Measure II

Average time to determine a claim.

Performance Measure II is the number of calendar days between when all basic required documents are received by the PSOB Office and when the final determination is made on the case.

There were a total of 212 death and disability claims that were filed in FY 2011 and received final determinations by July 25, 2012.² Of these 212 claims, 169 were death claims and 43 were disability claims.

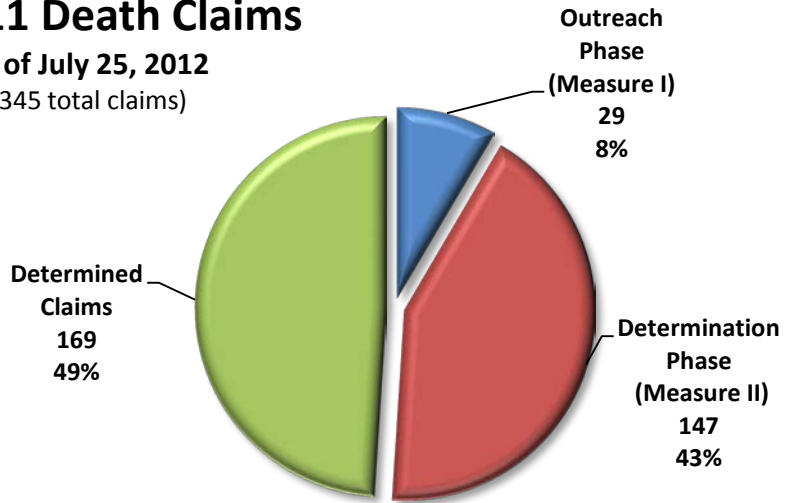
For this measure, the processing time for both types of claims was similar. Death claims were determined in 158 days, or about 22 weeks, and disability claims received a final determination in an average of 144 days, or 20 weeks.

² This data reflects only those death and disability claims that were filed in FY 2011 and determined by July 25, 2012. During this same

period, death and disability claims filed in other fiscal years, including FY 2012, were also determined.

FY 2011 Death Claims

as of July 25, 2012
(345 total claims)



FY 2011 Disability Claims

as of July 25, 2012
(62 claims total)

