

Report to the Florida Legislature

The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act, The Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund and Rape Crisis Services in Florida

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the Florida Department of Health, Division of Family Health Services,
Sexual Violence Prevention Program

Each victim of sexual assault has suffered terrible trauma.

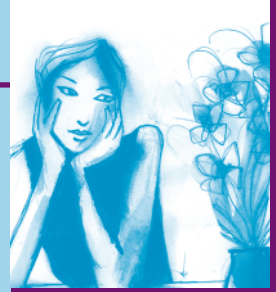


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Executive Summary

In landmark legislation passed during the 2003 Session, the Florida Legislature created The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act and the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund (RCPTF) in the Department of Health (DOH). The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act acknowledges that victims of sexual assault in the state of Florida should have access to basic services including hotline, crisis intervention, advocacy, support services, therapy, medical intervention, service coordination, and community awareness. The act creates a funding system for the distribution of monies generated by a fine of \$151 assessed on offenders convicted of sexual battery and other offenses including many of the aggravated battery and battery offenses. One hundred fifty dollars funds the RCPTF, while \$1 is retained by the Clerk of the Court as a service charge. This Act authorizes DOH to contract with a statewide, nonprofit association to distribute these funds to provide sexual battery recovery services.

As of December 31, 2004, the balance of the trust fund was \$769,642.28. During the summer of 2004, state attorneys across the state received education about the new fine and its importance in funding rape crisis centers. They were asked to include the RCPTF fine in their standard orders of probation and community control. Education campaigns regarding the assessment of the fine may also increase the deposits into the RCPTF.

The department's Sexual Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) advertised the availability of the RCPTF monies through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The proposal sought to fund a statewide nonprofit association whose primary purpose is to represent and provide technical assistance to Florida rape crisis centers. In November 2004, the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) was awarded the contract to receive the RCPTF monies. The monies in the RCPTF will be distributed to the rape crisis centers by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence to provide sexual battery recovery services to victims and their families.

The department will ensure that funds allocated under Section 794.055, Florida Statutes, are expended in a manner consistent with the requirements of this section. The requirements indicate that DOH will administer and oversee the funds awarded.

The statewide, nonprofit association will receive 95 percent of the funds. The funds will be distributed by county, based on an allocation formula that takes into account the population and rural characteristics of the county. The nonprofit association may use no more than 15 percent of the funds for statewide initiatives.

The first award to FCASV for the RCPTF was \$190,000. The FCASV will implement a statewide initiative to assist rape crisis centers in their efforts to begin the certification process. Certifying rape crisis centers will help ensure that the qualities of rape crisis centers' services are consistent throughout the state.

The Scope and Impact of Sexual Violence

According to national researchers, approximately one out of every nine adult women in Florida has been the victim of forcible rape. In other words, over 700,000 women in Florida have been the victims of forcible rape (Ruggiero and Kilpatrick, 2003).

Sexual Violence is costly to community well-being.

■ **Victims of sexual assault who do not receive services are in danger of increased substance abuse and mental health problems including major depression, suicide, and post-traumatic stress disorder (National Center for Victims of Crime, 1999).**

■ **Rape is responsible for 11 to 20 percent of teenage pregnancies (Boyer and Fine, 1993).**

■ **Rape victims' visits to medical providers increase almost 60 percent a year after the assault and over 30 percent in the second year after the assault (Koss, 1993).**

Sexual assault hurts our state's economy, and the economic impact worsens if victims do not receive the services they need to re-gain their stability.

■ **Medical expenses, lost productivity, treatment of psychological trauma, pain, and suffering are estimated to cost each victim \$110,000 (USDOJ).**

■ **Twenty-one percent of victims miss 11 or more days from work as a result of the crime. The loss of productivity based on each sexual assault is estimated at \$1,261 per victim (Bureau of Justice Statistics).**

The Response to Sexual Violence: Rape Crisis Services

Rape crisis centers provide Florida's frontline response to the crime of sexual assault. In 38 programs around the state, staff and volunteers of rape crisis centers provide an immediate response to sexual assault emergencies, operate 24-hour hotlines, provide advocacy and accompaniment through medical and legal processes, follow-up with ongoing care through individual and group counseling, serve adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, coordinate response efforts, and educate their communities on the issue of sexual violence.

Rape crisis services are provided in a wide variety of programs throughout our state. A few stand-alone rape crisis centers provide the full array of rape crisis services including medical intervention. Approximately one-third of rape crisis programs in Florida are co-located with domestic violence/emergency shelter services, and these are often referred to as "dual programs." In several communities, the county provides funding for sexual violence services through a general victim services center or program. In three areas—Broward County, Orlando, and Jacksonville—the county or city funds stand-alone rape treatment centers. Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami houses a hospital-based rape treatment center. Several communities house rape crisis centers

RAPE CRISIS SERVICES

Hotline/Information and Referral

Crisis Intervention

Advocacy/Accompaniment

Support Groups

Counseling/Therapy

Medical Intervention

System Coordination

Community Awareness/Prevention

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Stand-Alone Private

Dual Domestic Violence/Rape Crisis Programs

Umbrella Mental Health Agencies

County-Funded Victim Services

Agencies/Treatment Centers

State Attorney Programs

Community Awareness/Prevention

within umbrella mental health agencies. In two circuits in Florida, rape crisis services are provided through the State Attorney's Office. Many counties in Florida are significantly under-resourced and lack sexual assault services.

Other Funding Sources for Rape Crisis Centers

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT (FEDERAL) The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, which began in 1986, enabled rape crisis centers to survive through the 1990s. This program, funded from the United States Department of Justice through the Florida's Attorney General's Office, provides funding for direct services to most of Florida's rape crisis programs.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (FEDERAL) The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant passed in 1996 and re-authorized in 2000 has improved the systemic response to sexual violence in Florida but has done little to bolster direct services for victims. Currently, about six programs in Florida receive funding to provide services through VAWA grants to encourage arrests through the Department of Children and Families.

PREVENTIVE HEALTH BLOCK GRANT (FEDERAL) The Florida Department of Health's, Sexual Violence Prevention Program funds seven rape crisis centers to provide victim services through the Preventive Health Block Grant.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (FEDERAL) The Rape Prevention Education Program provides funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Florida Department of Health. This source supports many of Florida's rape crisis hotlines, public awareness events and rape prevention education programs.

COUNTY FUNDING (LOCAL) Florida's communities have acknowledged the need for rape crisis services. However, because of limited funds and the sensitivity of the issue, communities have responded to the need in a variety of ways largely based on whether or not funding was available and the source of those funds. Several counties have historically supported rape crisis centers, but many others do not.

Services Standards for Rape Crisis Centers

In the summer of 2000, the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence began developing standards and a certification process for Florida's rape crisis services with the following guiding principles:

- **A broad array of high-quality, sexual violence services must exist in every community.**
- **Victims are best served through sexual violence services provided in the context of a coordinated, collaborative, and multidisciplinary approach including medical/forensic providers, advocates, criminal justice professionals, and social service providers.**
- **All service providers must have victim empowerment as the cornerstone of service delivery.**

Rape crisis center standards, including both service standards and nonprofit management standards were pilot tested in three test sites throughout Florida in early 2004. Information

from these pilot projects has been used by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence to develop a certification implementation plan. Rape crisis programs will begin engaging the certification process upon receiving funds from the RCPTF, and mandatory certification will eventually be required.

With current resources, less than ten percent of sexual violence programs are able to provide the standard services identified as those most needed by rape victims. As a result, many programs have waiting lists. In addition, rural counties and outlying areas have very few, if any, services available. In rural areas, many victims have to drive two hours or wait two weeks until a rape crisis counselor is available to visit their county.

Conclusion

Each victim of sexual assault has suffered terrible trauma. The Department of Health's Sexual Violence Prevention Program, in partnership with the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence and Florida's rape crisis centers, are working to ensure that each victim is also offered an opportunity to heal.

Rape Crisis Centers in Florida

Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Incorporated (ACT)

Fort Myers

Alachua County Office of Victim Services

Gainesville

Another Way, Incorporated

Bronson

APPLE Services Crisis Center of Tampa Bay, Incorporated
NEP Forensic Services

Hotline of Hillsborough and 211

Tampa

Betty Griffin House

Saint Augustine

Bridgeway Center

Fort Walton Beach

Broward County Sexual Assault Treatment Center

Fort Lauderdale

Center for Abuse and Rape Emergencies (CARE)

Punta Gorda

The Children's Advocacy Center of Volusia and Flagler Counties

Sexual Assault Response Team

Daytona Beach

Chautauqua Office of Psychotherapy and Evaluation (COPE)

Defuniak Springs

City of Jacksonville Sexual Assault Response Center

Jacksonville

Creative Services, Incorporated

Ocala Rape Crisis/Domestic Violence Center

Ocala

The Dawn Center

Spring Hill

Domestic Abuse Shelter, Incorporated

Sexual Assault Response Assistance (SARA)

Marathon Shores

Family Service Centers Rape Crisis Program and Sexual Assault Victim Services

Clearwater

Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties, Incorporated

Sexual Assault Program

Leesburg

The Healing Tree/Sexual Trauma Recovery Center

Howard Phillips Center for Children and Families

Orlando

The Journey Institute

Miami

Lakeview Center Rape Crisis and Rape Awareness Programs

Pensacola

Manatee Glens Rape Crisis Services

Bradenton

Martha's House, Incorporated

Okeechobee

M.U.J.E.R., Incorporated

Homestead

North Central Florida Sexual Assault Center, Incorporated

Lake City

Palm Beach County Victim Services

West Palm Beach

Peace River Rape Recovery and Resource Center

Lakeland

Project Help, Incorporated

Naples

Putnam County Health Department Sexual and Physical Violence Intervention Program

Palatka

Quigley House, Incorporated

Orange Park

Refuge House, Incorporated

Tallahassee

Roxcy Bolton Rape Treatment Center/Jackson Memorial Hospital

Miami

Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC)

Sarasota

Salvation Army Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Program

Panama City

Sexual Assault Assistance Program

Fort Pierce

Sexual Assault Treatment Center

Victim Service Center of Orange County

Orlando

Sexual Assault Victim Services

Viera

Sunrise of Pasco County, Incorporated

Dade City

Women's Center of Brevard County

Melbourne

Women's Center of Jacksonville Rape Recovery Team

Jacksonville

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Sexual Violence Prevention Program

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<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/SVPP/index.html>