



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

**Report Issued by the Division of Family Health Services
Sexual Violence Prevention Program**

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**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***

Executive Summary

In 2003, the Florida Legislature created "The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act" and the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund (RCPTF) within the Department of Health. "The Sexual Battery Victims' Access to Services Act" acknowledges that victims of sexual assault in Florida should have access to basic services including:

- Hotline
- Crisis intervention
- Advocacy
- Support services
- Therapy
- Medical intervention
- Service coordination
- Community awareness

The Act creates a funding system for distribution of monies generated by a \$151 fine assessed on each offender convicted of sexual battery and other offenses including many of the aggravated battery and other battery offenses. While the clerk of the court retains \$1 of the fine as a service charge, \$150 goes to the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund. This Act authorizes the department to contract with a statewide, nonprofit association to distribute these funds to provide sexual battery recover services.

As of June 30, 2006, county clerks had deposited \$3,090,937 into the trust fund. Estimates of the revenue that fines likely would generate vary widely. However, we anticipate that over time the fines will generate significant revenue, because of increased education and awareness in the courts. Increased collections in the trust fund are essential to ensure that services are available to all victims of sexual violence in Florida.

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, more than 700,000 women in Florida have been forcibly rape (Ruggiero and Kilpatrick, 2003).

Sexual violence is costly to the 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% of teenage pregnancies (Boyer and Fine, 1993).
- Rape victim visits to medical providers increase almost 60% a year after the assault and more than 30% in the second year after the assault (Koss, 1993).

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

- The U.S. Department of Justice estimates medical expenses, lost productivity, treatment of psychological trauma, pain, and suffering cost each victim \$110,000.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 21% of victims miss 11 or more days from work because of the crime. The bureau estimates the loss of productivity based on each sexual assault at \$1,261 per victim.

The Response to Sexual Violence: Rape Crisis Services

Rape crisis centers provide Florida's frontline response to the crime of sexual assault. In 31 certified rape-crisis programs around the state, staff and volunteers:

- Provide an immediate response to sexual assault emergencies
- Operate 24-hour hotlines
- Provide advocacy
- Accompany victims 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
- Educate their communities about the sexual violence issue.

Rape crisis services are provided in a wide variety of formats throughout the 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, often referred to as "dual programs."

In several communities, the county funds 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 have rape crisis centers within umbrella mental health agencies. In two Florida circuits, the state attorney's office provides rape crisis services. However, many counties lack significant resources and 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 Office of the Attorney General of Florida, provides funding for direct services to most of Florida's rape crisis programs.

Violence Against Women Act (Federal): The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), passed in 1996 and reauthorized in 2000 and 2005, has improved the systemic response to sexual violence in Florida.

Preventive Health Block Grant (Federal): The Florida Department of Health's Sexual Violence Prevention Program funds nine 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 and through the Florida Department of Health. This source supports many of Florida's rape crisis hotlines, public awareness events, and primary 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 the availability and source of funding. Several counties have historically supported rape crisis centers, but many others do not.

Services Standards and Certification of Rape Crisis Centers

In the summer of 2000, the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) 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 service standards and nonprofit management standards, were piloted in 2004. Programs began implementing them in 2005. In addition, FCASV developed and implemented a 30-hour standardized advocacy training in 2005 to accompany the certification process. Rape crisis centers are currently preparing for monitoring by an independent reviewer for compliance with the service and non-profit management standards.

With current resources, less than 10 percent of sexual violence programs can 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, Sexual Violence Prevention Program, in partnership with the FCASV and Florida's rape crisis centers, is working to ensure that each victim has 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

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

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

Apple Services

Tampa

The Dawn Center

Spring Hill

Family Service Centers Rape Crisis Program and Sexual Assault Victim Services

Clearwater

Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties, Incorporated

Leesburg

Lakeview Center Rape Crisis and Rape Awareness Programs

Pensacola

Manatee Glens Rape Crisis Services

Bradenton

Mujeres Unidas en Justicia, Educación y Reforma (M.U.J.E.R.), Incorporated (Women United in Justice, Education, and Reform)

Homestead

Ocala-Marion County Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Center

Ocala

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
State Attorney's Office, 19th Circuit
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 Jacksonville Rape Recovery Team
Jacksonville

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