



**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

The Department of Health, Sexual Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) is honored to provide the Florida Legislature the 2008-2009 Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund legislative report, as mandated by section 794.055, *Florida Statutes*. 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 Act created a funding system for distribution of monies generated by a \$151 surcharge assessed on offenders 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 surcharge as a service fee, \$150 goes to the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund. This Act also requires the department to contract with a statewide, nonprofit association to distribute these funds for the provision of sexual battery recovery services. The department contracts with the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, Inc. (FCASV), a statewide nonprofit organization committed to victims and survivors of sexual violence and the rape crisis centers who serve them. FCASV subcontracts with rape crisis centers throughout the state to serve victims and enhance services.

Collections to the RCPTF have increased over the past several years due to efforts by the Florida Department of Health, the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, rape crisis centers, prosecutors, probation officers, and judges. As a result, rape crisis centers have improved and increased their services to victims by providing crisis intervention, advocacy, 24/7 access to hotlines, and system coordination.

From September 2003 to June 2009 county clerks deposited \$7,528,899 into the trust fund. In 2008-2009, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence received \$396,585 to provide statewide initiatives in support of victims, while 31 certified rape crisis centers received \$1,586,339 that served 8,932 new primary and secondary victims and 26,575 victims who were first seen prior to July 2008, but continued to receive services. These victims received 130,391 sexual battery recovery services.

The Scope and Impact of Sexual Violence

In 2008, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement reported 10,823 forcible sex offenses and 2,976 arrests. According to national researchers, approximately one out of every nine adult women in Florida has been the victim of forcible rape, which equates to over 700,000 women in Florida (Ruggiero and Kilpatrick, 2003). Many victims fear disgrace if they tell family and friends about the abuse, and suffer alone (Jewkes, Sen, and Garcia-Moreno, 2002).

Victims of sexual assault who do not receive recovery services face serious risks to their health and well-being:

- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including child sexual abuse, can lead to poor job performance and work absenteeism in adulthood (Anda et al., 2004).

- Victims of sexual assault who do not receive services are in danger of increased substance abuse, mental health problems, including major depression, suicide, and post-traumatic stress disorder (National Center for Victims of Crime, 1999).
- Survivors of sexual violence (especially those who do not receive recovery services) are more likely to experience dental problems, Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ), swallowing disorders, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS (Screening Your Patients for Sexual Assault: A Guide for Health Care Professionals, FCASV, 2009).
- Sixty-one percent of homeless girls and 16% of homeless boys report sexual abuse as the reason for leaving home (Estes & Weiner, 2001).

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:

- Almost half of all working women have experienced some form of sexual harassment on the job. Sexual harassment can have a serious negative impact on women's physical and emotional health, and the more severe the harassment, the more severe the reaction (National Women's Law Center, 2007).
- Approximately 500,000 women work in U.S. fields picking crops or packing fruits and vegetables, many of whom are sexually harassed and assaulted by their male supervisors who control whether they get or keep their jobs (Clarren, 2005).
- Sexual assault victims lose an average of \$2,200 due to decreased productivity and lost wages in the aftermath of sexual violence (Miller et al in MacMillan).
- Sexual assault victims earn \$6,000 less in annual income than non-victims (MacMillan, 2000).
- Lifetime income loss, due to sexual violence in adolescence, is estimated at \$241,600 (MacMillan, 2000).

The Response to Sexual Violence: Rape Crisis Services

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the Department of Health contracted with the FCASV to subcontract \$1,586,339 to 31 certified rape crisis centers for the provision of services to primary and secondary victims of sexual battery. Below are examples of services provided by the certified rape crisis centers with these funds:

Sexual Assault Treatment Center in Broward County is helping a 15 year old girl who was raped by two teenage boys, but remained silent for many months before disclosing to her mother. She finally feels safe to tell her story, and she is beginning to function better in school.

M.U.J.E.R. in Homestead worked with a client who fled with her children from years of sexual abuse by her husband. The advocate helped the client with a safety plan, court accompaniment to obtain a restraining order, follow up medical attention and placement in a shelter for battered women. The MUJER sexual violence therapist provided individual therapy to deal with the trauma she experienced from years of sexual violence. Today, the client is independent with affordable child care arranged by the advocate. The family is now free from violence, and the client has more confidence in herself and her abilities as a mother.

The Victim Service Center of Orange County helped a 35 year old man with a mental disability who was sexually assaulted multiple times by his roommate in a group home. Having the same nurse and advocate present throughout the evidence collection process fostered an

invaluable level of comfort within him. He was able to provide historical information to his service providers with minimal confusion in the quiet home-like setting.

Family Services Center in Clearwater helped a woman who was assaulted by her supervisor and subsequently fired. With two children, no education, and the trauma of the assault, the client was having difficulty finding stable employment. The advocate helped her secure a scholarship for Red Cross nursing training.

SPARCC in Sarasota helped a 22 year old woman who was raped by her cousin's husband at the age of 14. She had begun self-injuring by cutting her body and felt she had lost her confidence, self esteem, friends, trust, soul and her body. After several counseling sessions exploring different coping strategies and her painful feelings, she was able to stop the cutting. Her flashbacks and nightmares continue to be a daily battle, but she is successfully regaining her life.

Manatee Glens Rape Crisis Center in Bradenton helped a 76 year old woman who was raped by a neighbor in her trailer park home. The advocate was able to be with the victim during the forensic medical examination, help her answer police questions, and comfort her daughters and grandchildren. In the weeks following the assault, both the victim and her daughter came to counseling which proved to help them both considerably. Through counseling and advocacy the case has moved through the legal system very smoothly.

In 2008-2009, 35,507 victims received the following sexual battery recovery services:

| <u>Type of Service</u> | <u>Number of Services Provided</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Advocacy and Accompaniment | 36,755 |
| Crisis Intervention | 26,441 |
| Hotline calls | 11,713 |
| Information and Referrals | 34,640 |
| Forensic Exams | 2,481 |
| Support Group | 4,142 |
| Therapy | <u>14,219</u> |
| Total | 130,391 |

RCPTF Allocations by Program
7/1/08-6/30/09

| Provider | Counties Served | Total Award |
|---|---|-------------|
| Abuse Counseling and Treatment Center (Ft. Myers) | Lee, Hendry, Glades | \$ 62,266 |
| Alachua County Rape Crisis Center (Gainesville) | Alachua, Bradford, Union | \$ 51,927 |
| Another Way, Inc. (Bronson) | Levy, Gilchrist, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Suwannee, Columbia | \$ 105,299 |
| Bridgeway Center, Inc. (Ft. Walton) | Okaloosa | \$ 21,234 |
| Broward County Sexual Assault Treatment Center (Ft. Lauderdale) | Broward | \$ 90,968 |
| Center for Abuse and Rape | Charlotte | \$ 19,508 |

| Provider | Counties Served | Total Award |
|---|---|---------------------|
| Emergencies (CARE) (Punta Gorda) | | |
| Children's Advocacy Center Sexual Assault Response Team (Daytona) | Volusia, Flagler | \$ 48,872 |
| COPE (Defuniak Springs) | Walton | \$ 17,334 |
| Creative Services, Inc. (Ocala) | Marion | \$ 25,923 |
| Crisis Center of Tampa Bay | Hillsborough | \$ 60,150 |
| The Dawn Center (Brooksville) | Hernando | \$ 18,356 |
| Family Service Centers, Inc. (Clearwater) | Pinellas | \$ 55,934 |
| Haven of Lake and Sumter Counties (Leesburg) | Lake, Sumter | \$ 38,945 |
| Lakeview Center, Inc. (Pensacola) | Escambia, Santa Rosa | \$ 44,187 |
| Manatee Glens Rape Crisis Services (Bradenton) | Manatee | \$ 24,545 |
| M.U.J.E.R., Inc. (Homestead) | South Miami-Dade | \$ 36,550 |
| Palm Beach County Victim Services (West Palm Beach) | Palm Beach | \$ 69,988 |
| Peace River Center for Personal Development, Inc. (Lakeland) | Hardee, Highlands, Polk | \$ 68,768 |
| Project HELP, Inc. (Naples) | Collier | \$ 26,521 |
| Putnam County Health Department (Palatka) | Putnam | \$ 18,815 |
| Quigley House, Inc. (Orange Park) | Clay | \$ 19,156 |
| Refuge House, Inc. (Tallahassee) | Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla | \$ 124,988 |
| Roxcy Bolton Rape Treatment Center (Miami-Dade) | Miami-Dade | \$ 87,527 |
| Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC) (Sarasota) | DeSoto, Sarasota | \$ 42,250 |
| Safety Shelter of St. Johns County, Inc. d/b/a Betty Griffin House | St. Johns | \$ 18,614 |
| Salvation Army Rape Crisis Program (Panama City) | Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington | \$ 93,321 |
| Sexual Assault Assistance Program 19th Circuit (Ft. Pierce) | Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie | \$ 69,273 |
| Sexual Assault Victim Services (Viera) | Brevard, Seminole | \$ 61,575 |
| Sunrise of Pasco County, Inc. (Dade City) | Pasco | \$ 28,234 |
| Victim Service Center of Orange County (Orlando) | Orange | \$ 55,038 |
| Women's Center of Jacksonville | Baker, Duval, Nassau | \$ 80,273 |
| TOTAL | | \$ 1,586,339 |

Improving Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund Collections

Spearheaded by the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence and armed with circuit specific data on collections from the Department of Health, rape crisis programs across the state put together circuit-wide meetings bringing together criminal justice professionals to brainstorm ways to increase collections. Below are two examples of these meetings.

- Betty Griffin House in St. Augustine prepared for their circuit-wide meeting of criminal justice professionals by meeting with the County Clerk of Court and local judges to discuss the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund. The invitation to this meeting described how collections in St. Johns County fell short of other similarly sized counties. At the meeting, the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund was discussed with data on the local population, aggravated assaults by county, and collections for each county in the catchment area. The issues of judges waiving the surcharge, deferred prosecutions, and dismissed cases were discussed as possible reasons why collections are less than what they could be. As a result of the meeting, advocates are working with judges about waiving the surcharges and judges have agreed to make the surcharge a part of standard court paperwork and meet and talk with each other about ways to improve collections.
- The Victim Service Center of Orange County met with the Clerk of Court, judges, the state attorney's office, and community corrections/probation representatives to discuss Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund collections. A PowerPoint presentation developed by FCASV provided an overview of the agency, the certification process, sexual assault statistics, and an overview of the trust fund. The Clerk of Court provided their priority schedule of assessments and noted that the RCPTF surcharge is third. Suggestions to improve collections included the Office of the State Attorney's commitment not to waive fees in plea agreements and the role of the clerk in accepting partial payments from released defendants.

As a result of these circuit-wide meetings, criminal justice professionals across the state are more aware of the Rape Crisis Program Trust Fund fees and rape crisis centers are able to follow up with specific strategies to improve collections.

Other Funding Sources for Rape Crisis Centers

Victims of Crime Act (Federal): The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), passed in 1986, is funded from the United States Department of Justice through the Office of the Attorney General of Florida. This program 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. The Rape Prevention Education Program provides funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Florida Department of Health, Sexual Violence Prevention Program (SVPP). This source supports many of Florida's rape crisis hotlines and primary rape prevention education.

Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant (Federal): The Florida Department of Health's SVPP funds nine rape crisis centers to provide victim services through the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant.

Service Standards and Certification of Rape Crisis Centers

FCASV is responsible for service standards and the certification process for Florida's rape crisis centers. Service standards and certification are based on the following:

- 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.

In December of 2007, FCASV updated and printed the *Certification Standards* manual, which describes rape crisis center eligibility and certification requirements. The manual was distributed to certified rape crisis centers and programs interested in becoming certified.

In January of 2008, FCASV initiated on-site certification monitoring of currently certified and applicant programs, utilizing ENSYNC Diversified Management Services, Inc. as an independent reviewer. It is critical that centers are able to demonstrate their ability to effectively operate and provide quality services to primary and secondary victims of sexual assault. ENSYNC monitored fifteen rape crisis centers during the fiscal year 2008-2009.

Monitoring occurs every two years to ensure certified rape crisis centers are in compliance with service, organizational management, and ethical standards. FCASV offers on-site technical assistance prior to certification monitoring at anytime upon request.

Conclusion

Each victim of sexual violence has suffered terrible trauma. The RCPTF funding helps to ensure that sexual violence victims have access to basic services including 24/7 hotlines, crisis intervention, advocacy, counseling services, therapy, medical/forensic intervention, service coordination, and community awareness. Victim advocates in rape crisis centers throughout the state diligently work to provide professional, compassionate services to all who have experienced this terrible trauma.

The Department of Health, SVPP, joined state and community partners to develop the first-ever, five-year strategic plan to prevent sexual violence in Florida. With funding, guidance, and support from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the SVPP, along with state and community partners, created a common vision statement, mission statement, and six important goals. Through the year 2012 and beyond, statewide partners will work together on preventing sexual violence in their communities by addressing each community's unique needs, cultures, and resources.

The Department of Health, SVPP, in partnership with the FCASV and Florida's rape crisis centers, continues working to ensure that each victim has an opportunity to receive services and heal. The Florida Department of Health remains committed to providing funding to 31 certified rape crisis centers and FCASV to ensure sexual assault victims are served.

Certified Rape Crisis Centers in Florida

Abuse Counseling and Treatment, Incorporated (ACT)

Fort Myers

Alachua County Office of Victim Services

Gainesville

Another Way, Incorporated

Bronson

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

Creative Services, Incorporated

Ocala

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

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

Safety Shelter of St. Johns County, Incorporated
Saint Augustine

Salvation Army Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Program
Panama City

Sexual Assault Assistance Program
State Attorney's Office, 19th Circuit
Fort Pierce

Sexual Assault Victim Services
Viera

Sunrise of Pasco County, Incorporated
Dade City

Victim Service Center of Orange County
Orlando

Women's Center of Jacksonville Rape Recovery Team
Jacksonville

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