

State of Vermont - Special Investigation Unit Grants Program

2013 Annual Report of the Vermont - SIU Grant Program

*Progress Report for the establishment and sustainment of Special
Investigation Units established pursuant to 24 VSA§1940.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current Status: County-based Special Investigation Units (SIU) are supported in twelve (12) counties; Essex County and Grand Isle County are supported by SIUs in neighboring counties. *Program Support Grants* are approved for the SIU administrative and operational expenses to sustain the core structure of the respective units. Nearly all of the SIUs are co-located or closely affiliated with the existing Child Advocacy Centers in their counties. On average, SIU funding provided through the Program Support Grants represents approximately 20% of the budgeted expenses for the units.

Law Enforcement Support Grants are approved for nine (9) law enforcement investigators around the state. Addison, Bennington, Orange (x2), Orleans, Rutland, and Windham counties receive this supplemental funding resource at the maximum funding level of \$60,000 per grant award, to support the services of a full time investigator from a municipal or county law enforcement department. Lamoille County receives a reduced award amount (\$25,000) to supplement another funding source in support of a dedicated investigator from the Lamoille County Sheriff's Department. Caledonia County receives a reduced award amount (\$45,000) to support a combined investigator resource provided by two local police departments in the county (St. Johnsbury PD – ½ time/Hardwick PD – ¼ time). When combined with the services of investigators assigned by the Vermont State Police, these positions represent the core of the specialized law enforcement investigators who directly support the SIUs.

Law Enforcement Reimbursement Grants are awarded to Essex County and Grand Isle County, as provided for in 24 VSA§1940. The Essex County Sheriff's Department provides investigative services to support investigations coordinated by the Caledonia SIU and the Orleans SIU, while the Grand Isle Sheriff's Department has established a working partnership with the Northwest Unit for Special Investigations in Franklin County, to include the establishment of a satellite office located in Grand Isle County.

New Initiatives: The Addison County Unit for Special Investigations (ACUSI) became operational as of January 2013. Located at the Addison County Sheriff's Department in Middlebury, ACUSI is providing service to Addison county communities.

Pilot projects continue in Windham and Windsor counties, to evaluate the efficacy of Child Interview Specialists. Windsor County approached the VTSIU Grants Board with a proposal to establish a pilot project for FY13. They are supporting a position for a Child Interview Specialist through a combined funding source of grant funds, Department for Children and Families (DCF) support and SIU Grant Program support. This model of a dedicated specialist to interview children is used extensively, and successfully, in New Hampshire and was proposed as a means of significantly improving the quality and consistency of child interviews. In Windham County, a changeover in the SIU director position prompted their

governing board to combine the part-time director position with a part-time Child Interview Specialist position as a means of evaluating the efficacy of such a position in a smaller SIU setting. Feedback received from prosecutors, investigators and DCF staff indicates that this initiative is providing a valuable contribution to SIU investigations through improved interview results. The consistency of approach by the Child Interview Specialists has also contributed to better rapport with victims and families.

Training: Forensic Interview training was conducted in two sessions during March. During February and April, seminars entitled “Overcoming the Complexities of Sexual Violence” were conducted throughout the state. A training grant award was provided to Rutland County to support an advanced training on interviewing techniques. The training was conducted by the Wicklander-Zulaski group during September.

SCOPE OF REPORT

This report covers major activity and current operational status for the Special Investigations Units in Vermont during the calendar year 2013.

Statistical reporting reflects activity during the State Fiscal Year 2013, which encompasses the time period of July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

Grant Awards documented in this report are for FY14 award amounts.

CURRENT STATUS

Special Investigations Units (SIUs), as authorized by Title 24 VSA § 1940, are operational in all Vermont counties.

In collaboration with the Vermont Children's Alliance most SIUs are partnered and co-located with Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) throughout the state.

<http://www.vtchildrensalliance.org/>

The accreditation body for the CACs is the National Children's Alliance (NCA). NCA provides detailed criteria for CAC accreditation and provides the professional standards for multi-disciplinary team operations, as adopted by Vermont SIUs.

<http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/index.php?s=24>

In addition to providing professional performance standards, the affiliation with NCA and the Vermont Children's Alliance has been an excellent conduit for obtaining the specialized training required by the units. This affiliation has also provided access to a records management system (NCATrak) that provides consistent statistical information from each of the operating SIUs.

The State of Vermont currently provides Program Support Grant funding to SIUs in twelve counties. For the two remaining counties, Essex County is supported by SIUs in Caledonia and Orleans Counties, while Grand Isle County has an active partnership with the Northwest Unit for Special Investigations located in Franklin County.

Additionally, Law Enforcement Support Grant funding is provided through grant awards to SIUs for support of investigation resources provided by local police departments and Sheriff's departments. Grant funding awards to support law enforcement investigators are currently active in ten counties (Addison; Bennington; Caledonia; Essex; Grand Isle; Lamoille; Orange; Orleans; Rutland; and Windham). Nine grant awards support law enforcement investigators by providing supplemental funding to the respective departments. Essex and Grand Isle Sheriff's Departments are reimbursed on an hourly basis for their services, as mandated by statute.

The role of forensic interviewing of children is a key component to the success of case management and prosecutions for the SIU teams. Vermont has relied upon the training of law enforcement investigators and DCF investigators to fulfill this specialized role. As a pilot project to assess the efficacy of developing a child interview specialist position within an SIU, Windsor County agreed to undertake the pilot project and has hired a trained interview specialist who will be entirely dedicated to conducting victim interviews. Without the distraction of conducting criminal investigations or managing a DCF caseload, it is believed that this model may help reduce, or eliminate, the staff turnover problems that have plagued a number of the units. Due to the time commitment and expenses for training, the turnover issue has continued to be problematic for the SIUs.

In addition to the pilot project in Windsor County, with the transition in the directorship for the Windham County SIU, that unit opted to combine two part-time positions into a full time position to encompass the administrative duties of the SIU director with child interview specialist duties. Both of these projects have been in place for the last eighteen months (beginning in July 2012), and feedback from those counties has been overwhelmingly positive. Prosecutors report seeing consistently high quality interviews of victims. This resource has reduced the workload pressures for law enforcement investigators and DCF staff in these counties. Although still present for interviews, investigators can now focus their efforts on developing the broader case and dealing with physical evidence and suspects. Likewise, DCF staff members are normally present for interviews but can devote more energy to meeting the support needs of the victims and families rather than being intensively focused on conducting interviews. The Child Interview Specialists have the sole responsibility of conducting age appropriate forensic interviews and are not diverted from this focus due to managing other aspects of case development.

TRAINING

During 2013, numerous training opportunities were provided to the SIUs with a focus on developing investigative skills and enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the social and emotional impact of sexual violence.

March 2013: One session of ***Basic Forensic Interviewing of Children*** was conducted in South Burlington. A total of 29 students attended this three-day training session. This course is the baseline training for investigators who conduct interviews with children. Participants were primarily law enforcement and DCF personnel. See link for sample description of course: <http://www.nationalcac.org/events/bfi-training.html>

March 2013: One session of ***Extended Forensic Interviewing*** was conducted in Rutland. A total of 27 students attended this three-day training session. This training introduces a model for a multi-session forensic interview of a child who is potentially a victim or witness of child abuse or other violent behaviors. An Extended Forensic Interview (EFI) is appropriate for children where the results of a single interview are inconclusive or where there are serious concerns about the child's ability to participate in a single-session interview. Such children might be the very young child, a child with developmental delays or cognitive disabilities, or an extremely traumatized child. Cultural considerations may indicate a need for an EFI, rather than a single-session interview. See link for sample description of course: <http://www.nationalcac.org/ncac-training/efi-training.html>

February and April 2013: ***Overcoming the Complexities of Sexual Violence*** – three sessions conducted throughout the state located in South Burlington, Montpelier, and White River Jct. Presented by Tom Tremblay, this course offering was a one-day seminar exploring a wide variety of topics concerning societal pre-conceptions and responses to sexual violence. Each session had 40 students registered for a total of 120 participants combined. This training was sponsored by the SIU Grants Program, the Department of State's Attorneys & Sheriffs, and the VT Center for Crime Victim Services.

May 2013: NCATrak administrator training was conducted in Montpelier. Administrative personnel from the SIUs were trained in the use of NCATrak as the primary records management system for the Vermont SIUs. A requirement for receiving Vermont SIU Grant Awards, use of NCATrak as the data management system of record was adopted by the SIU Grants Board beginning with FY13. The training focused on user updates and revisions to the Vermont standardized reporting requirements. This training was a collaborative effort between the Vermont Children's Alliance and the SIU Grants Program.

A link to the Vermont NCATrak user guidance is provided for further reference:

http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.org/file.php/4694/VT_NCAtrak_User+Guidance_FY14.2.pdf

September 2013: SIU Grant Program funding supported a training offering coordinated by the Rutland SIU. The ***Wicklander-Zulawski Seminar on Interview & Interrogation Techniques for Child Abuse Cases*** is a three-day seminar. Participants who attend the WZ Seminar on Interview and Interrogation Techniques for Child Abuse Cases will learn about three types of child abuse and what each may disclose about the suspected abuser. WZ's program provides instruction in multiple methods of interview and interrogation including BAI, the direct positive confrontational approach and the WZ Non-Confrontational Method. The seminar was held in Rutland with 30 participants in attendance. See link for further information: <http://www.w-z.com/police/criminal-interview-and-interrogation/>

Grant Award Summary – FY14

County	Program Support	Law Enforcement	Total Grant Awards
Addison	\$78,658	\$60,000	\$138,658
Bennington	\$77,685	\$60,000	\$137,685
Caledonia	\$70,227	\$45,000	\$115,227
Chittenden	\$71,426	n/a	\$71,426
Essex	n/a	\$20,000*	\$20,000
Franklin	\$81,295	\$50,000***	\$131,295
Grand Isle	n/a	\$20,000*	\$20,000
Lamoille	\$59,190	\$25,000	\$84,190
Orange	\$68,196	\$120,000**	\$188,196
Orleans	\$75,720	\$60,000	\$135,720
Rutland	\$74,890	\$60,000	\$134,890
Washington	\$80,486	n/a	\$80,486
Windham	\$84,792	\$60,000	\$144,792
Windsor	\$111,160	\$30,000***	\$96,160
Total Awards	\$933,725	\$610,000	\$1,543,725

Program Support Grants support the local SIU administrative and site operational expenses.

Law Enforcement Grants support the participation of SIU dedicated law enforcement investigators from municipal police departments and/or county sheriff’s departments.

Both types of grants limit the amount of salary funding to the 50% of total salary expense for each SIU, as provided in the enabling legislation.

* Essex County Sheriff’s Department and Grand Isle County Sheriff’s Department are covered by a reimbursement for services process; up to \$20,000 is reserved for each department as outlined in 24 VSA §1940 (c). A 50% matching funds element is included in these grant awards, and the respective counties are paying half of the personnel expense related to providing investigation services.

** Orange County receives two law enforcement support grants to provide for the assignment of two deputies as dedicated SIU investigators.

*** Franklin County was approved for a \$50,000 law enforcement grant but ultimately did not require the full award. Windsor County was granted a 6-month award of \$30,000 (in effect as of January 2014) because of the availability of the unused funding from the Franklin County award.

<u>SIU/CAC by County - 2014</u>		
<p><u>Addison County</u> Addison County Unit for Special Investigations Fred Saar, Executive Director 35 Court Street Middlebury, VT 05753 Map (802) 274-5724 fasaar@myfairpoint.net</p>	<p><u>Bennington County</u> Bennington County Child Advocacy Center & Special Investigations Unit Joy Kitchell Executive Director P.O. Box 163 Bennington VT 05201 Map (802) 442-5107 bccac.joykitchell@gmail.com</p>	<p><u>Caledonia & Essex Counties</u> Caledonia County SIU Fred Saar Executive Director 36 Eastern Avenue, Suite 4 St. Johnsbury, VT 05819 Map (802) 274-5724 fasaar@myfairpoint.net</p>
<p><u>Chittenden County</u> The Child Advocacy Center at CUSI/ CUSI Kristine Bickford, Executive Director 50 Cherry Street, Suite 102 Burlington, VT 05401 Map (802) 652-0391 kbickford@bpdvt.org</p>	<p><u>Franklin & Grand Isle Counties</u> Northwest Unit for Special Investigations NUSI/CAC Robert White, Executive Director 5 Lemnah Drive St. Albans, VT 05478 Map (802) 524-7961 whiter@dps.state.vt.us</p>	<p><u>Lamoille County</u> Lamoille County SIU Todd Shove, Executive Director P.O. Box 38 Hyde Park, Vt. 05655 http://lamoillesiu.org/ (802)-888-7945 Todd.shove@state.vt.us</p>
<p><u>Orange County</u> Orange County SIU Dawn Sprague, Executive Director 354 Main Street Chelsea, VT 57465 Map 802-685-4712 dawnsprague@orangecountysheriff.com</p>	<p><u>Orleans County Child Advocacy Center</u> The Orleans County Child Advocacy Center/ NE Kingdom SIU David Frey, Executive Director 55 Seymour Lane Newport, VT 05855 Map (802) 274-1654 director@orleanscac.org</p>	<p><u>Rutland County</u> Child First Advocacy Center/ Rutland Office for Special Investigations Wendy Loomis, Executive Director 59-67 Merchants Row P.O. Box 6822 Rutland, VT 05702 Map (802) 747-0200 info@childfirstadvocacycenter.org</p>
<p><u>Washington County</u> OUR House of Central Vermont, Inc. CAC/SIU Will Roberts 38 Summer Street Barre, Vermont 05641 Map (802) 476-8825 willatourhouse@gmail.com</p>	<p><u>Windham County</u> Windham County Safe Place CAC/ SUSI Alyssa Todd, Executive Director 114 Main Street, Suite 1, 2nd Floor Brattleboro, VT 05301 Map (802) 579-1358 director.safeplace@gmail.com</p>	<p><u>Windsor County</u> The Child Advocacy Center at the Family Place/ Windsor County SIU Julie Gaudette, Director 319 US Route 5, South Norwich, VT 05055 Map (802) 295-3882 julieg@the-family-place.org The Child Advocacy Center at the Springfield Area Parent Child Center Betty Kinsman, Executive Director 2 Main Street North Springfield, VT 05150 Map (802) 886-5242 nancyt@vermontel.net</p>

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW – FY13

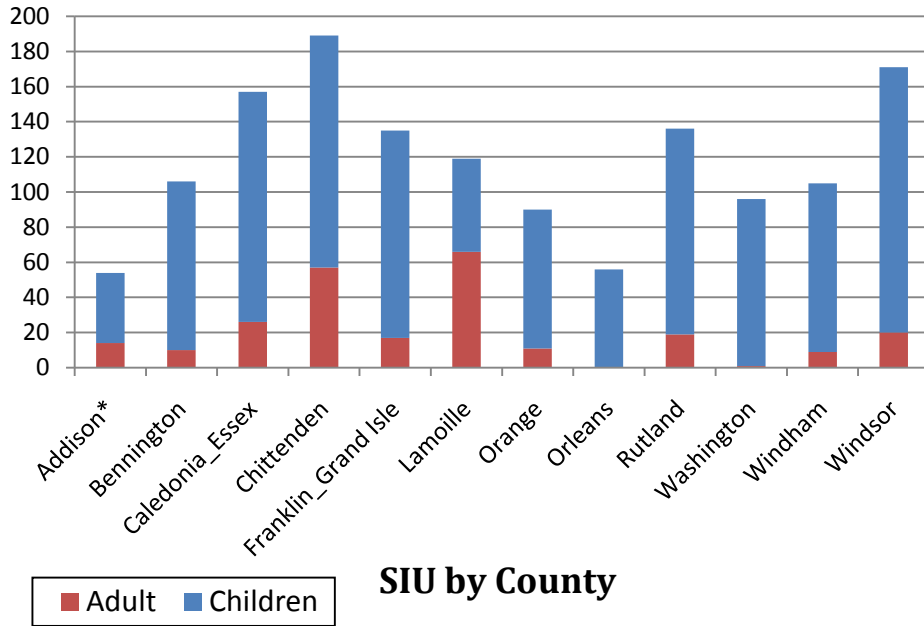
Program, financial, and statistical reporting from the SIUs are required on a quarterly basis throughout each fiscal year. Beginning with FY13, all SIUs receiving VT SIU Grant Program funding are required to use NCATrak as the standardized statistical reporting system. Although there will be some minor modifications of reporting categories, the basis of reporting will be overall caseload per SIU with breakdown categories to establish age and gender grouping for victims and offenders, as well as victim support services provided and summary of court action undertaken.

Specialized reports have been created in NCATrak that will provide the SIUs with two types of reports: the first is a statistical count report for the unit, while the second report is designed as a management tool to track case progress. It should be noted that with the combination of SIU/CAC functions, the reporting of clients served (adult/child) is often higher than law enforcement cases with charges or prosecutions reported. Primarily, this is due to the mission of the units to serve all victims when sexual violence or abuse may be suspected. Until a determination can be made concerning allegations, support for victims and non-offending family members is the primary focus with court action undertaken only when merited.

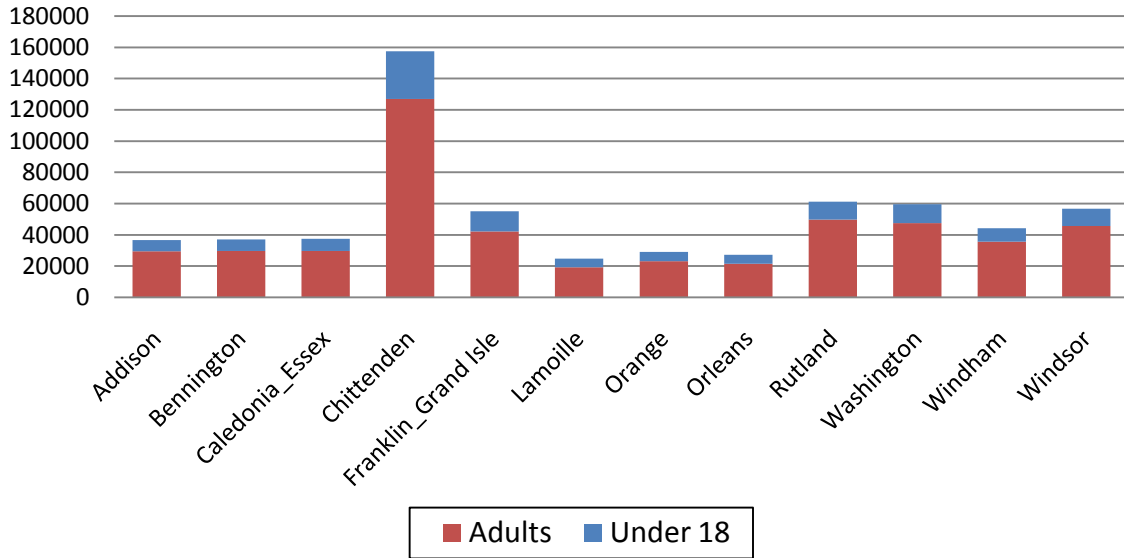
This section contains a number of charts depicting the caseload and demographic makeup of victims and offenders that comprise the workload of the SIUs. Each chart presents relevant information on the numbers of child victim cases and adult victim cases as reported by the respective SIU:

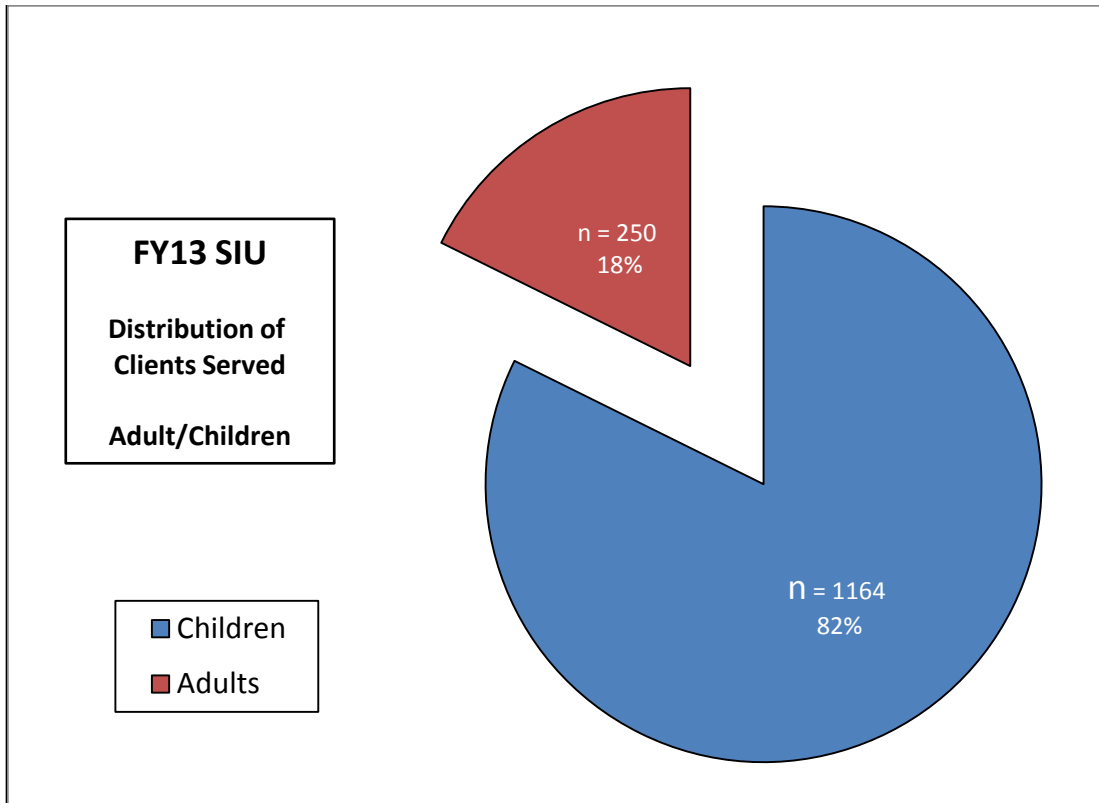
- The majority of sexual violence cases are perpetrated against children, and child victims constitute the main workload for the SIUs (82%)
 - Lamoille County is aligned to focus on domestic violence cases and carries a higher adult victim caseload compared to other units
- The majority of offenders are known to their victims and often have established relationships
- 27% of offenders who victimize children are ***under*** the age of 18
- Over half of all reported child victims are 12 years of age or younger
- 87% of offenders who victimize adults are 18 years of age or older

FY13 SIU - New Cases by Victim Age Grouping



Vermont Population Distribution - 2010 US Census by County/Age Distribution

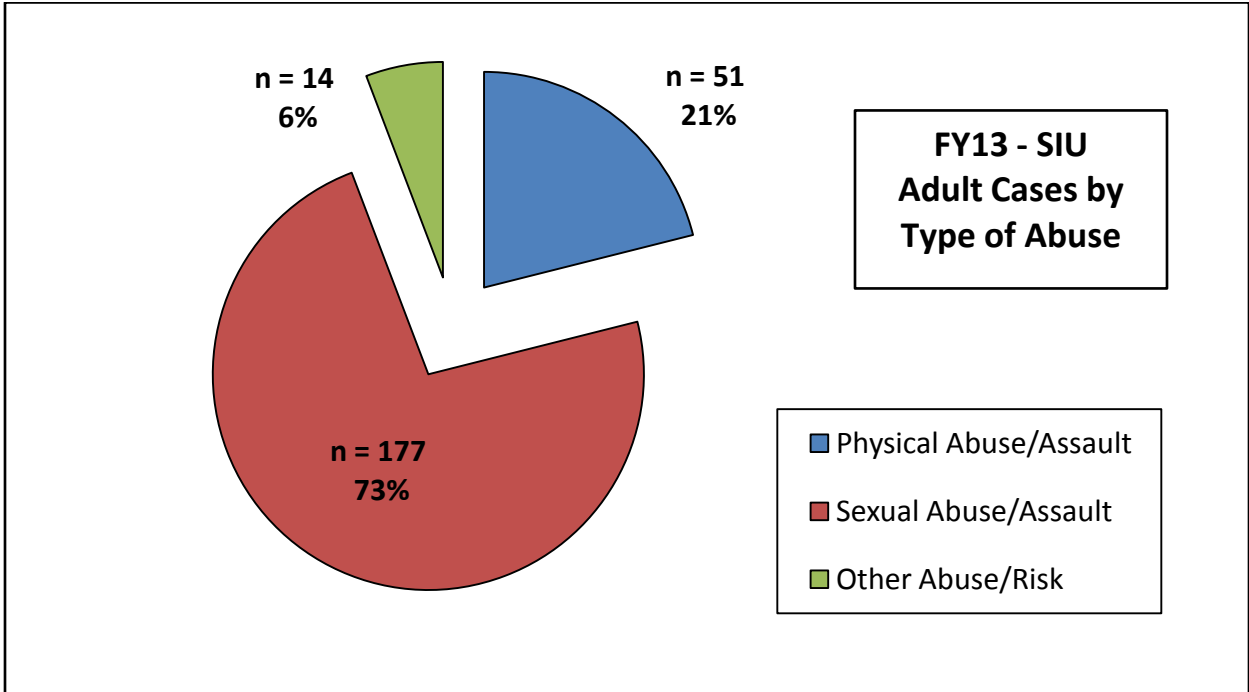
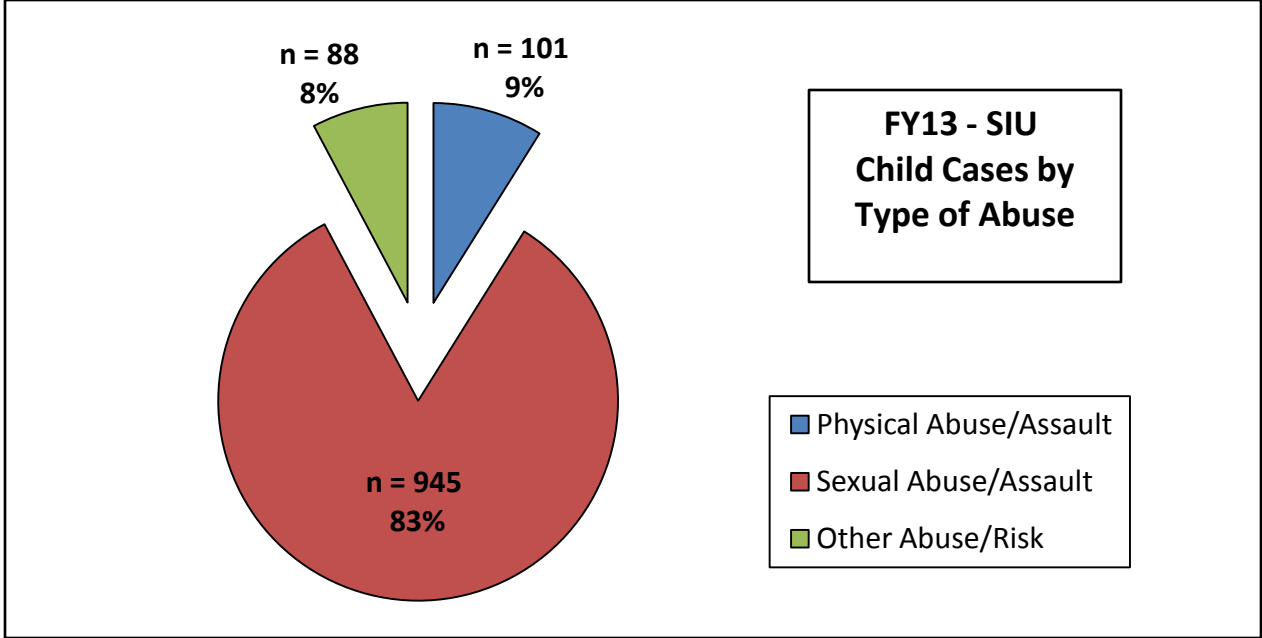




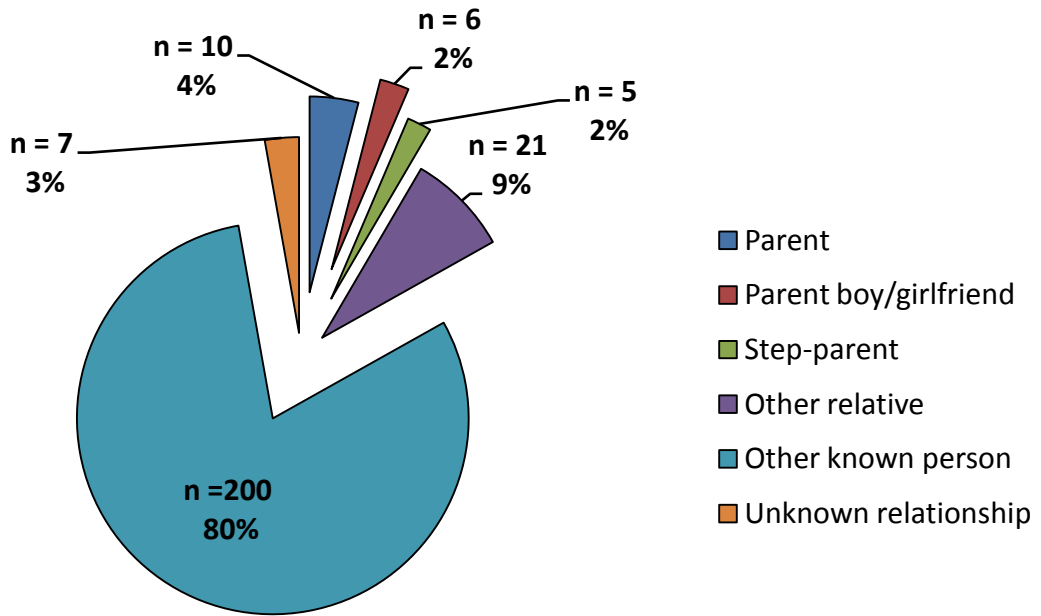
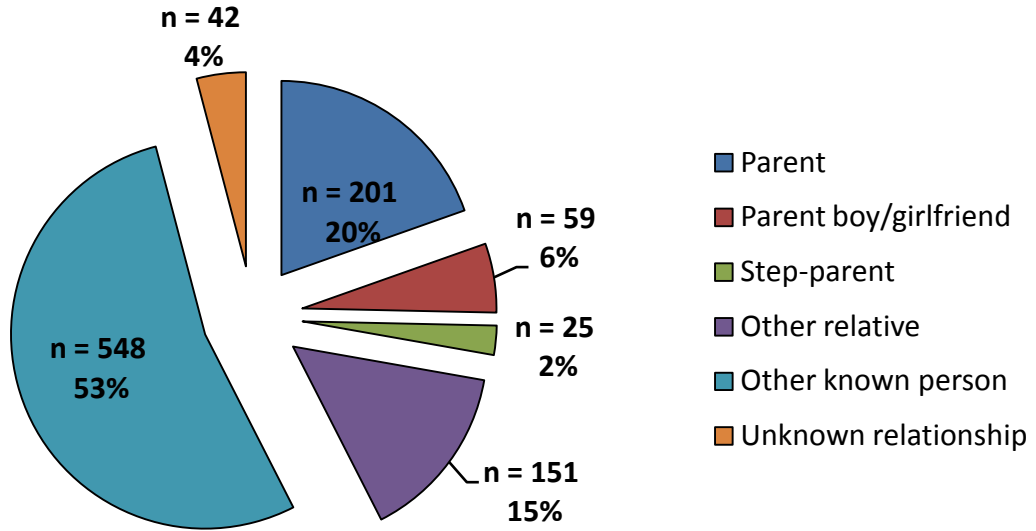
FACT: Most people think of adult rape as a crime of great proportion and significance, and are unaware that children are victimized at a much higher rate than adults.

- Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults (including assaults on adults) occur to children ages 17 and under.^{9,10} Youths have higher rates of sexual assault victimization than do adults. In 2000, the rate for youths aged 12 to 17 was 2.3 times higher than for adults.⁵³
- 44% of rapes with penetration occur to children under age 18. Victims younger than 12 accounted for 15% of those raped, and another 29% of rape victims were between 12 and 17.^{10,11}

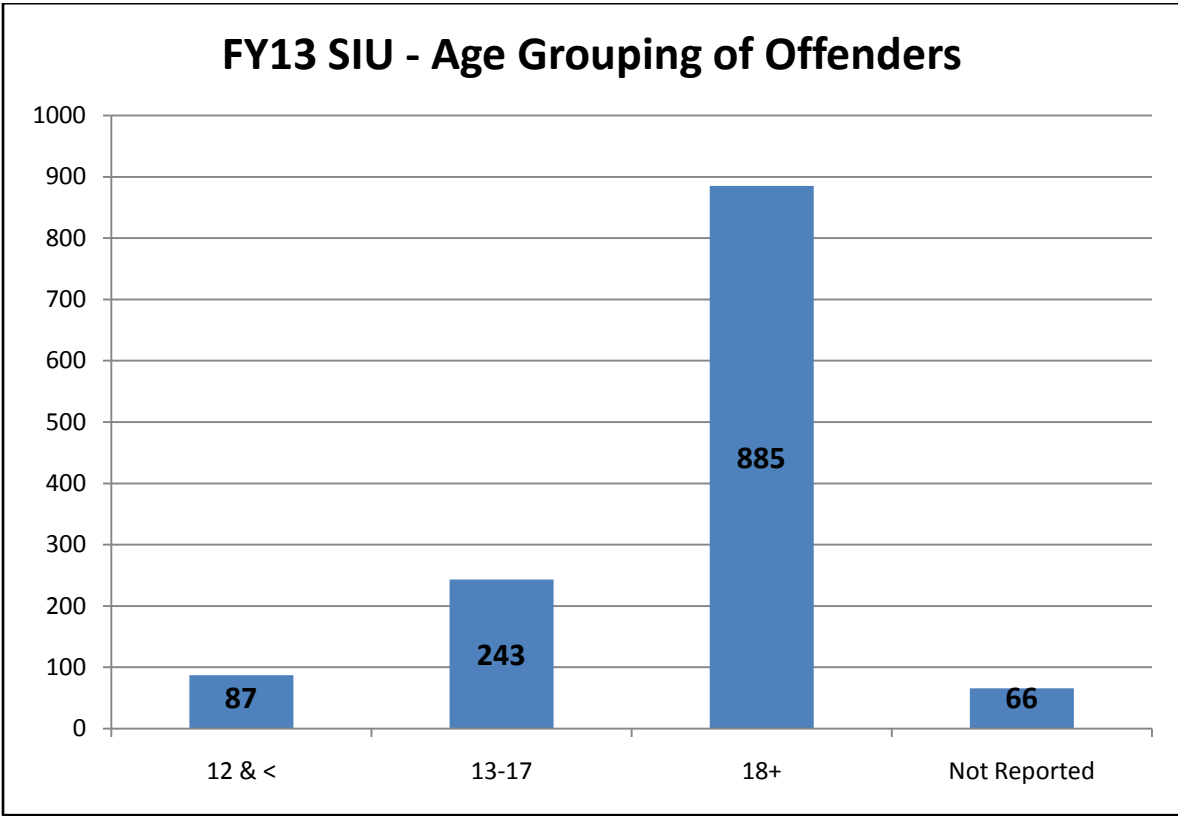
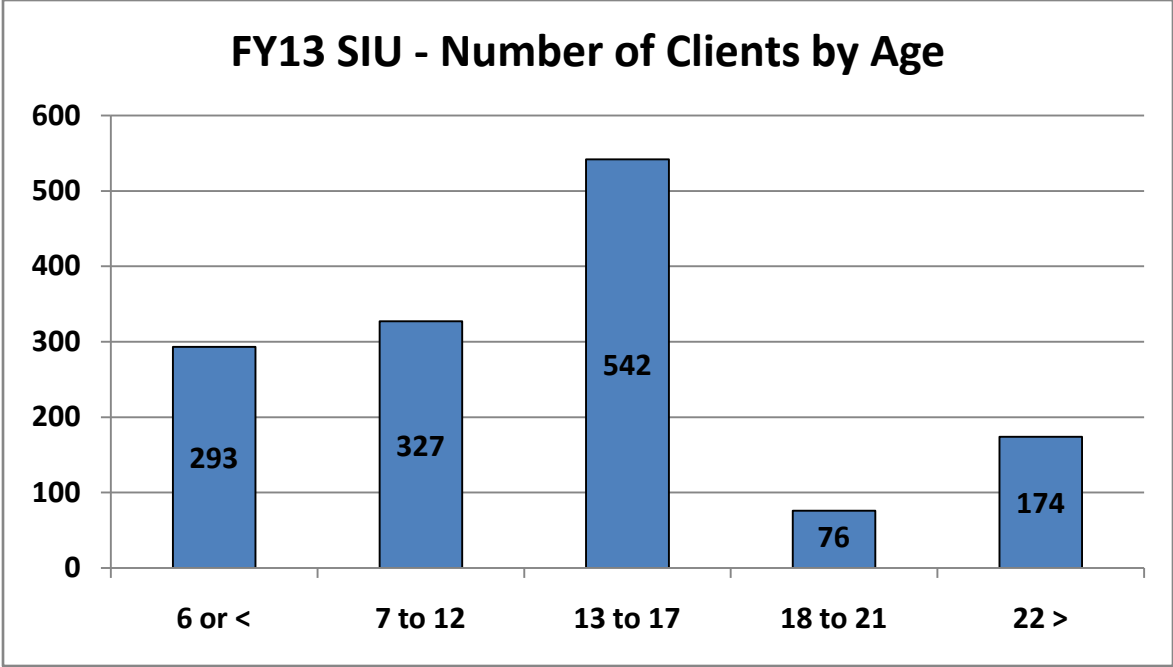
http://www.d21.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6143427/k.38C5/Child_Sexual_Abuse_Statistics.htm



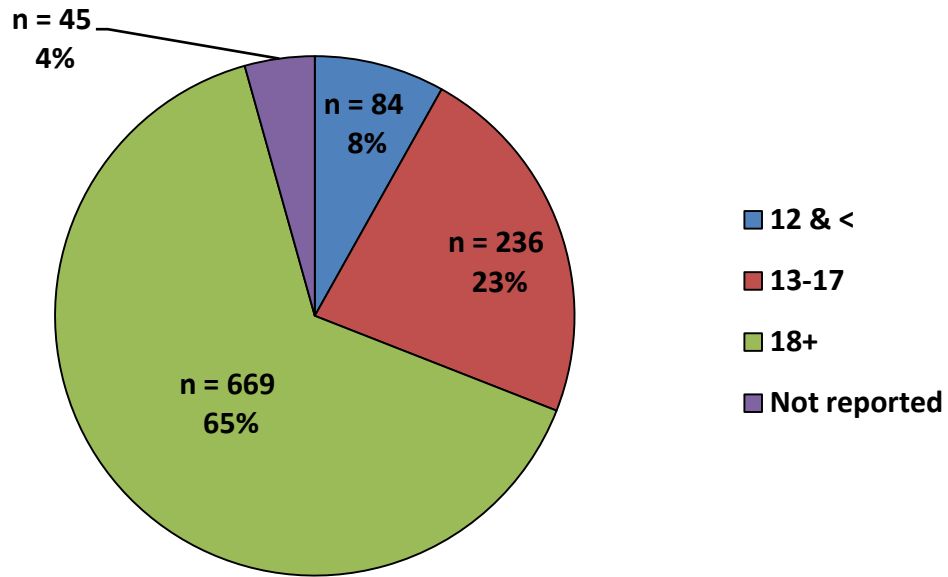
FY13 SIU- Offender Relationship - Child Victims



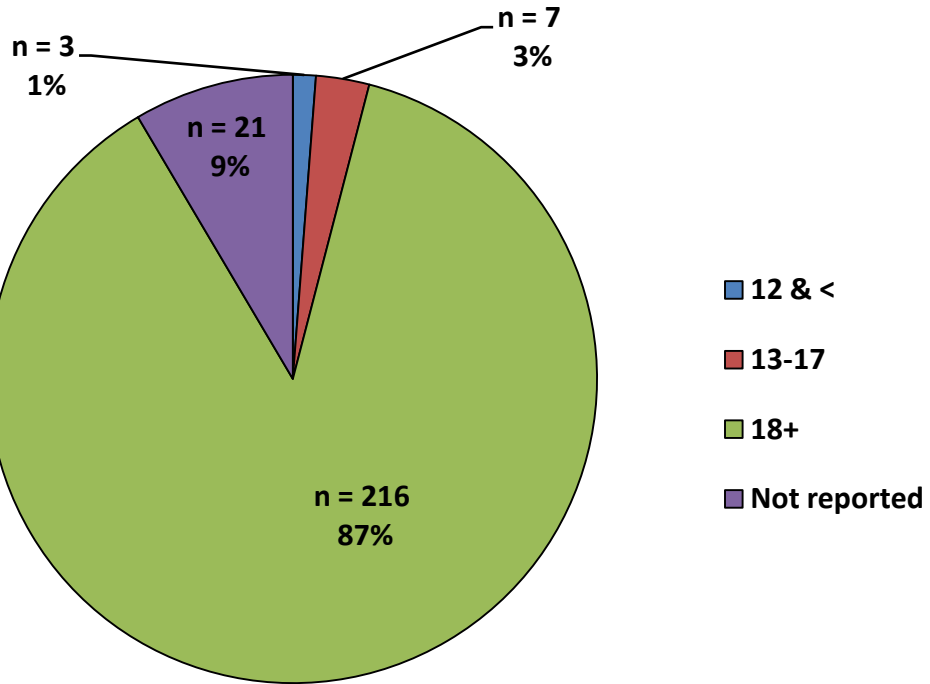
FY13 SIU - Offender Relationship - Adult Victims



FY13 SIU - Age of Offender - Child Victims



FY13 - Age of Offender - Adult Victims



SUMMARY

During 2013, Vermont continued to see growth in the development of Special Investigations Units. Addison County began to receive clients and undertake investigations as of January. As a result, the statistical information provided by Addison County represents only six months of activity (January – June).

Another indicator of continued growth was the result of increased law enforcement support funding. During the 2012 legislative session, law enforcement partners highlighted the need for additional funding to enable them to provide SIU dedicated investigators. The FY13 awards were increased to the eight recipients in place at that time, as a means of mitigating the staffing expense concerns expressed by these partners. The new maximum level of funding is now \$60,000 per law enforcement grant. Renewed interest has been noted by a number of SIUs that had previously been unable to arrange partnerships for SIU dedicated law enforcement investigators.

Windsor County and Windham County continue to pilot the use of a dedicated child interview specialist. To date, this effort has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from SIU prosecutors, investigators, and DCF personnel. Possible expansion of this resource has been considered by other SIUs, as well.

The SIUs continue to see growth in the demand for their services. In yet another indicator of SIU development, a number of the units are at the point of needing more space as co-location of team members becomes more viable. Although a co-located arrangement for each team was the original vision, as each SIU was established there was wide disparity in the number of disciplines willing, or able, to co-locate. Nearly all of the units are now faced with the prospect of establishing larger worksites to accommodate team members and provide for the needs of victims being served.

Training efforts in 2013 focused on continued development of interviewing skills for investigators. Additionally, a series of one-day seminars was conducted around the state for the benefit of all members of the SIU multi-disciplinary teams. This series provided a national level perspective and prompted engaging discussion on society's response to sexual violence.

The continuing partnership of SIUs with Child Advocacy Centers has proven to be an excellent way to maximize the resources and professional support received from both, the Vermont Children's Alliance and the National Children's Alliance. The training offerings and the operational standards provided by NCA/NCAC have proven to be very effective in the functional development of SIUs in Vermont.