

Sec. E.206 SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT FUNDING  
STUDY COMMITTEE

**Committee Purpose: ... (a) identifying and recommending equitable and sustainable funding options for specialized investigative units.**

**(c) Powers and Duties... The Study Committee shall identify all possible funding sources for special investigation units and shall consider the sustainability and equitability of each possible source on local, county, and State levels.**

The SIU Study Committee met on September 10th and reviewed current funding. The findings were as follows:

In FY 2015 the SIU's are funded from several sources including:

- State appropriation of \$1,583,126
- Grant from the Center for Crime Victims Services to support Child Advocates of \$266,400
- Local funding of \$75,158
- Fund raising of \$27,300
- Federal grants of \$248,850

The SIU's also benefit from non-cash support as follows:

- State in-kind below market lease for space
- Other staff in-kind from State and local Police budgets amounting to a value of \$3.17 million. This in-kind support was 80% state and 20% local.

Program funding support varies from a high of \$914,453,000 in Chittenden County to \$264,647 in Caledonia County.

The combined state SIU and CAC appropriation contribution totals 12% of the budget in Chittenden to 59% in Orange with the average being 34%. In Caledonia and Orleans counties the state contribution totals 48/49%

Title 13 V.S.A., Sec. 7282 provides for a surcharge on fines and penalties that are intended to support the SIU's. These revenues are deposited into the general fund and raised \$394,000 in FY 2014. This revenues source is not reliable since it is declining due to fewer fines and penalties being assessed. Funding has also been divorced from this revenue source so there is limited direct correlation although the statutory relationship exists.

Other information:

- SIU's received a boost in 2005 when the board was created and funding was stabilized.
- Currently there are five accredited SIUs with 7 others in various stages of development. The accreditation process may lead to increased costs for several reasons:
  - Training and staffing needs
  - Space needs and service expectations
  - Is 12 the right number?? -- There was a northeast kingdom initiative to combine four counties which did not survive

- While SIU'S are a national model, there have not been extensive evaluations of their operations. Vermont has an evaluation which was done in "An Outcome Evaluation of the Special Investigation Units established Under the Sexual Violence Prevention Act of 2006. The evaluation was done in 2011 by VCJR <http://www.vcjr.org/reports/reportscrimjust/reports/SIUreport.html>
- The committee interest in funding regularization allocation and support arguably is tied to an expectation of value and need to complete the development and accreditation process. There might be a value in reviewing them for effectiveness and performance measures.
- While the state receives budgetary information for the various state appropriations there is minimal SIU specific budget submissions
- The Committee expressed a concern that weighted caseload information would be useful to determine funding adequacy and need. There is no weighted caseload information at this time and that might be an area in need of development. CUSI may have done some work on this.

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Factors driving budgetary challenges:

1. Disparities among communities and counties paying for SIU services. Some municipalities within a county contribute more than other county municipalities to SIU's, and some counties receive more state assistance than others for SIU's.
2. Statutory mandate for statewide SIU coverage. This requires more staffing, training, and physical co-location; accreditation is a measure for meeting this mandate, and currently only 5 out of 12 SIU's are accredited.
3. Increased work load. More complex cases occur each year, and there is discussion of expanding SIU jurisdiction to broader range of cases. As demands rise, costs will as well.

Possible steps Committee mentioned to assist with budgetary challenges:

1. Are there ways to more fairly divide existing resources from the state to reflect workloads and needs?
  - a. Revising the formula of payments to reflect weighted caseloads and case difficulty
  - b. Developing a distribution system like the public transit funding system which funds specific activities and has specific match requirements?
2. Are their ways of increasing the funding or the stability of funding?
  - a. Providing some resources through the county budget process?
  - b. Providing some additional sources of state funds?
  - c. Role of private funding
  - d. Funding issue in demand is not regular but intermittent. Funding SIUs in a sense is an insurance function in that services are critical to a community when there is a need.

3. System transparency