

State of Vermont - Special Investigation Unit Grants Program

2015 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.*

David Cahill, Executive Director – Dept. of State's Attorneys & Sheriffs
2/2/2015

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. This affiliation allows the SIUs and CACs to minimize duplicative administrative functions while strengthening the ability to provide a coordinated response for Vermont citizens.

Law Enforcement Support Grants are approved for ten (10) law enforcement investigators around the state. Addison, Bennington, Lamoille, Orange (x2), Orleans, Rutland, Windham, and Windsor 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. Caledonia County receives a reduced award amount (\$49,250) 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.

New Initiatives: Pilot projects continue in Windham and Windsor counties, to evaluate the efficacy of Child Interview Specialists. Windsor County approached the VT SIU 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. Orange County has instituted the position of case coordinator/child interview specialist primarily based upon the success noted in the original pilot projects. At the conclusion of FY15, a survey will be conducted to assess the impact these positions have had within the respective counties.

Training: NCAC Forensic Interview training was conducted in two sessions during May. Each session was conducted over three days with the basic class held in South Burlington and the advanced class held in Rutland.

Technology Training for SIU Investigators was conducted in June at Champlain College and was coordinated by the Caledonia SIU and VCA.

Introductory training on Results Based Accountability (RBA) was received by a team of SIU/CAC directors during September. Follow up training sessions were attended during October and November with Flint Springs Associates in Stowe. In support of this effort, the members of the Vermont Children's Alliance (VCA) agreed to adopt the web-based Outcome Measurement System (OMS) provided by the National Children's Alliance (NCA) for use by Vermont CAC's. This tool will provide survey style feedback from clients and partners to fulfill performance measurement components of RBA.

SCOPE OF REPORT

This report covers major activity and current operational status for the Special Investigations Units in Vermont during the calendar year 2014.

Statistical reporting reflects activity during the State Fiscal Year 2014, which encompasses the time period of July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014.

Grant Awards documented in this report are for FY15 award amounts.

CURRENT STATUS

Special Investigations Units (SIUs), as authorized by Title 24 VSA § 1940, are operational in all Vermont counties. Each SIU has an executive director responsible for the administrative duties of the respective SIU. As of this report, transitions are occurring for executive directors in four counties: Chittenden, Lamoille, Orleans, and Washington.

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 newly introduced Outcome Measurement System (OMS) is another example of leveraging the resources of partner organizations.

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 eleven counties (Addison; Bennington; Caledonia; Essex; Grand Isle; Lamoille; Orange; Orleans; Rutland; Windham and Windsor). Ten 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. Beginning in FY13, pilot projects in Windsor and Windham counties have been operating to assess the viability of 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.

Feedback received thus far has indicated an improvement in the quality of interviews, and a reduction of workload pressures for law enforcement officers and DCF staff in those counties. The positive feedback has prompted the SIU in Orange County to adopt a model similar to Windham County by instituting a case coordinator/child interview specialist position for FY15. A more formalized evaluation of this model is planned during the upcoming year.

TRAINING

During 2014, a continued focus of training effort was in the development of forensic interview skills. Continuous turnover for law enforcement and DCF partners working with the SIUs has sustained the need for ongoing training offerings in this area.

May 2014: One session of ***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>

May 2014: One session of ***Advanced Forensic Interviewing*** was conducted in Rutland. A total of 35 students attended this three-day training session. This course is designed as the follow-up instruction for attendees of the initial Forensic Interviewing of Children training that have had the opportunity to use these skills in field practice for at least a year. See link for sample description of course: <http://www.nationalcac.org/ncac-training/afi-training.html>

June 2014: **Technology Training for SIU Investigators** was a two-day training offering on the use of technology for evidence gathering in criminal cases. Emphasis was on the recognition and examination of a variety of personal electronic devices. A total of 28 investigators attended this training at Champlain College in Burlington.

September 2014: **Results Based Accountability Workshop** conducted in Northfield. This one-day workshop focused on RBA methodology, developing community outcome indicators, and developing program outcome indicators. This workshop was attended by a team of SIU/CAC executive directors to assist in development of RBA tools for program performance evaluations. Additional workshops, conducted by Flint Springs Associates in October and November, were attended by a smaller team of SIU managers.

December 2014: **Outcome Management System (OMS)** offered by the National Children's Alliance. The Vermont Children's Alliance coordinated introductory training and implementation of a web-based survey tool which will complement and support the development of RBA methodology in Vermont.

Grant Award Summary – FY15

County	Program Support	Law Enforcement	Total Grant Awards
Addison	\$70,013	\$60,000	\$130,013
Bennington	\$81,119	\$60,000	\$141,119
Caledonia	\$64,744	\$49,250	\$113,994
Chittenden	\$79,526	n/a	\$79,526
Essex	n/a	\$20,000*	\$20,000
Franklin	\$88,020	n/a	\$88,020
Grand Isle	n/a	\$20,000*	\$20,000
Lamoille	\$77,314	\$60,000	\$137,314
Orange	\$71,993	\$120,000**	\$191,993
Orleans	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$105,000
Rutland	\$92,273	\$60,000	\$152,273
Washington	\$89,249	n/a	\$89,249
Windham	\$96,995	\$60,000	\$156,995
Windsor	\$111,160	\$60,000	\$171,160
Total Awards	\$967,406	\$629,250	\$1,596,656

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.

<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>SIU/CAC by County - 2014</u></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 VACANT, Executive Director 50 Cherry Street, Suite 102 Burlington, VT 05401 Map (802) 652-0391</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 VACANT, Executive Director P.O. Box 38 Hyde Park, Vt. 05655 http://lamoillesiu.org/ (802)-888-7945</p>
<p><u>Orange County</u> Orange County SIU Jocelyn Stohl, Executive Director 354 Main Street Chelsea, VT 57465 Map 802-685-4712 jstohl@orangecountysheriff.com</p>	<p><u>Orleans County Child Advocacy Center</u> The Orleans County Child Advocacy Center/ NE Kingdom SIU VACANT, Executive Director 55 Seymour Lane Newport, VT 05855 Map (802) 274-1654</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 VACANT, Executive Director 38 Summer Street Barre, Vermont 05641 Map (802) 476-8825</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</p> <p>The Child Advocacy Center at the Springfield Area Parent Child Center campus (fiscal host agent, The Family Place)</p>

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW – FY14

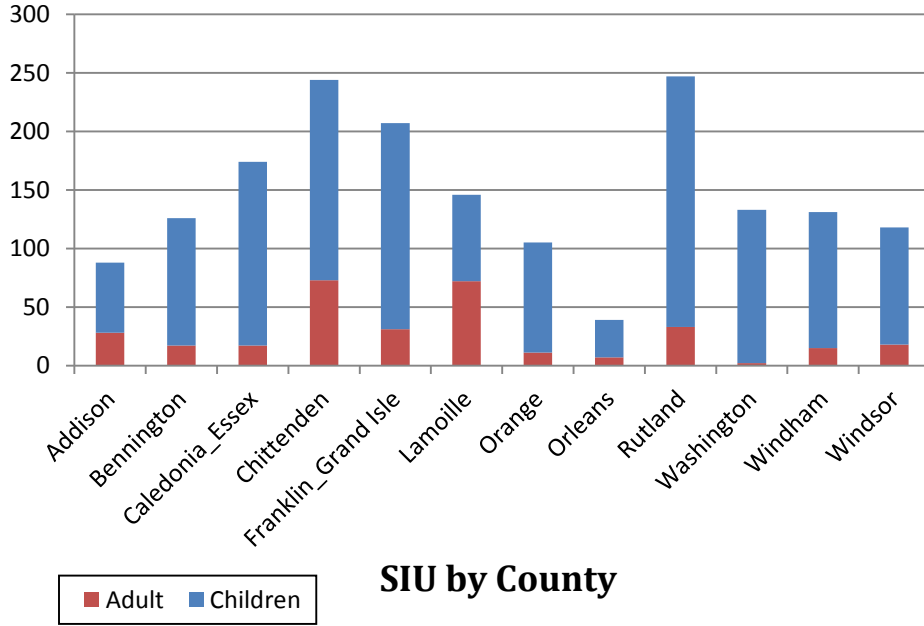
Program, financial, and statistical reporting from the SIUs are required on a quarterly basis throughout each fiscal year. Beginning with FY13, all SIUs receiving VT SIU Grant Program funding are required to use NCATrak as the standardized statistical reporting system. Although there will be some minor 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.

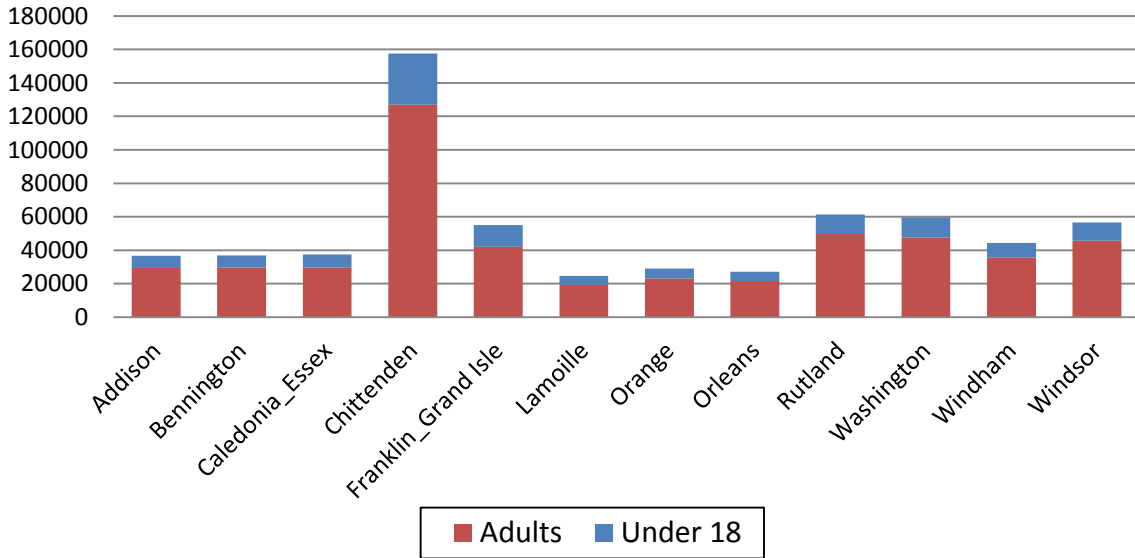
This section contains a number of charts depicting the caseload and demographic makeup of victims and offenders that comprise the workload of the SIUs. Each chart presents relevant information on the numbers of child victim cases and adult victim cases as reported by the respective SIU:

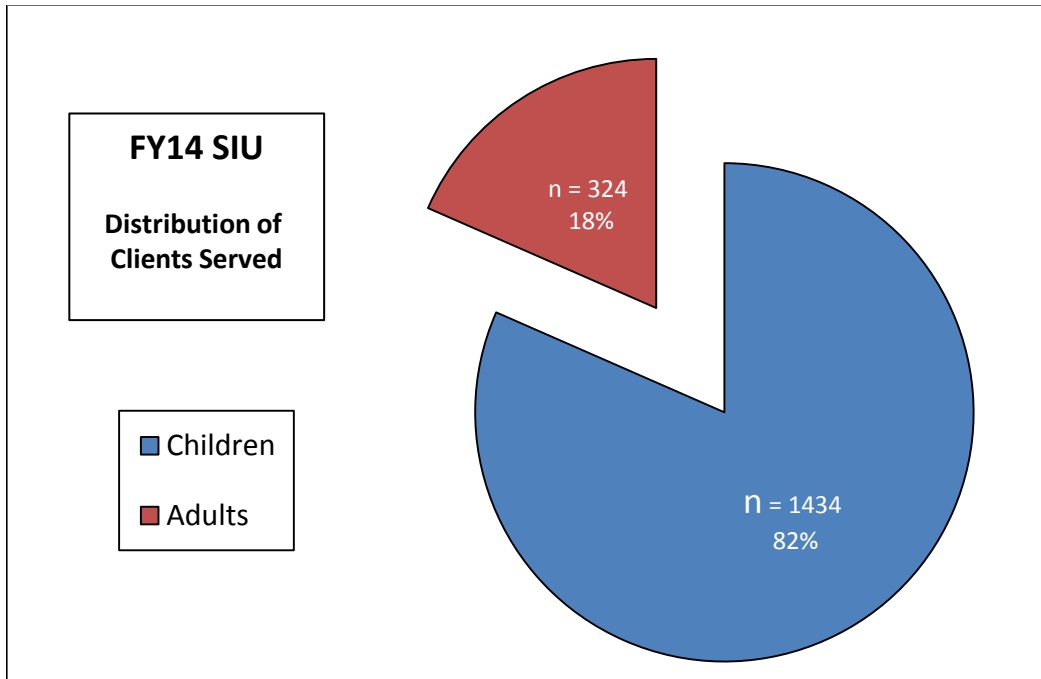
- ***The majority of sexual violence cases are perpetrated against children, and child victims constitute the main workload for the SIUs (82%)***
 - ***Lamoille County is aligned to focus on domestic violence cases and carries a higher adult victim caseload compared to other units***
- ***The majority of offenders are known to their victims and often have established relationships (over 90% for both age groups)***
- ***28% 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***
- ***91% of offenders who victimize adults are 18 years of age or older***

FY14 SIU - New Cases by Victim Age Grouping



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

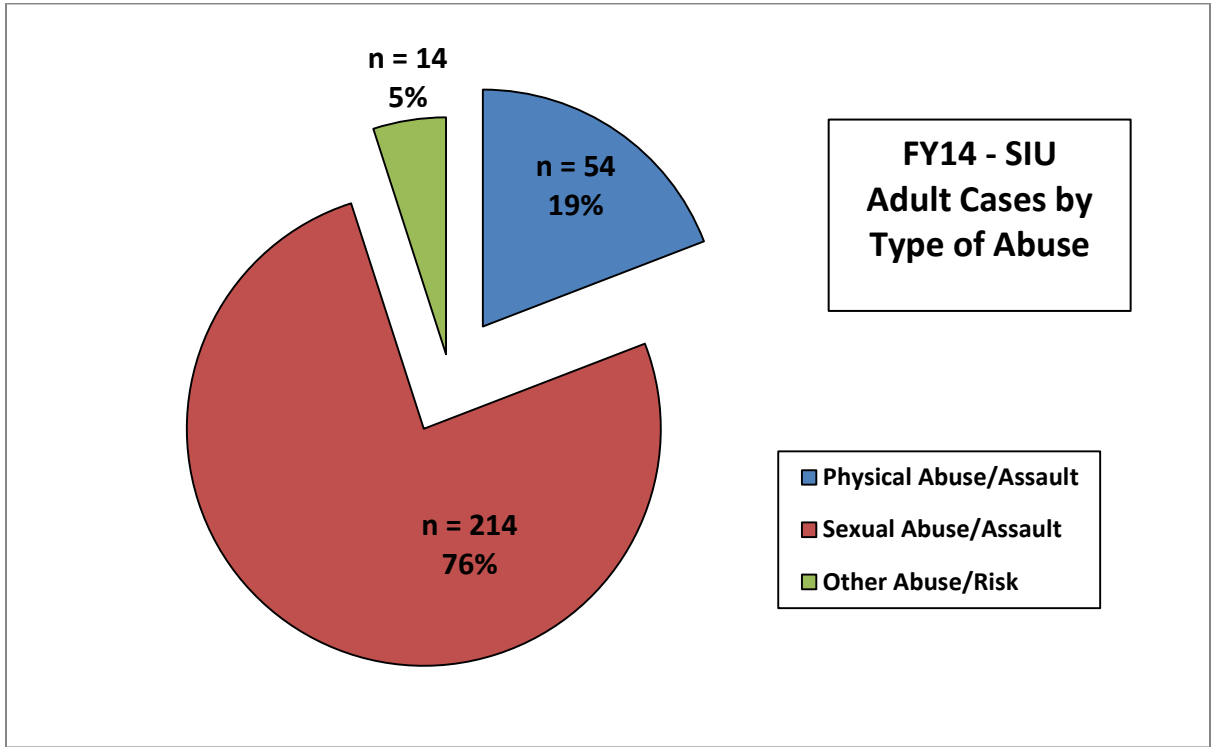
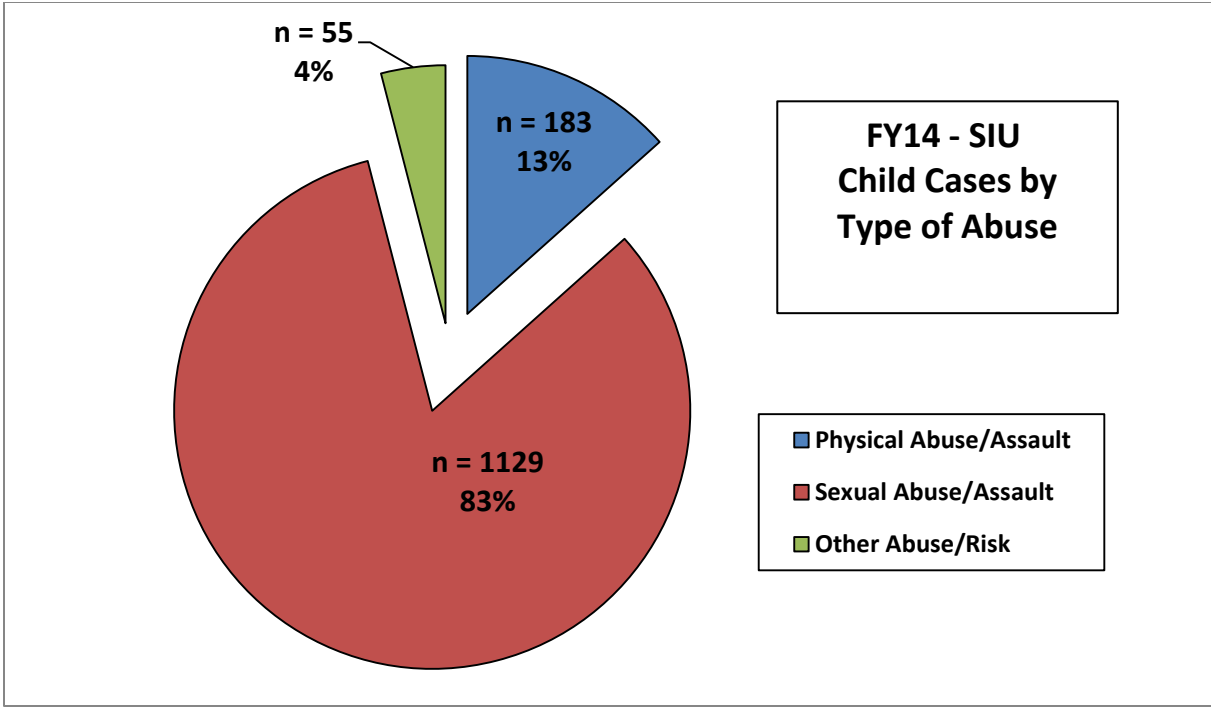




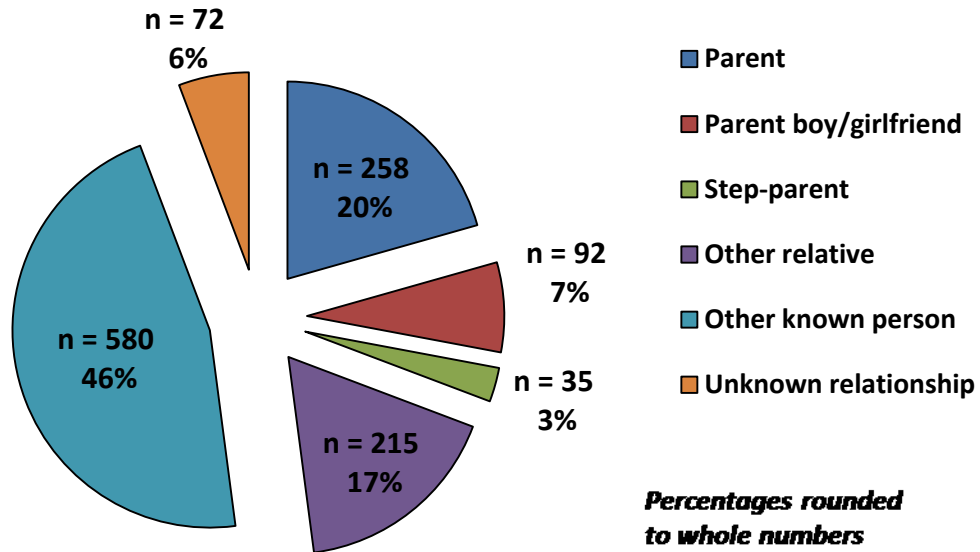
FACT: Most people think of adult rape as a crime of great proportion and significance, and are unaware that children are victimized at a much higher rate than adults.

- 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}

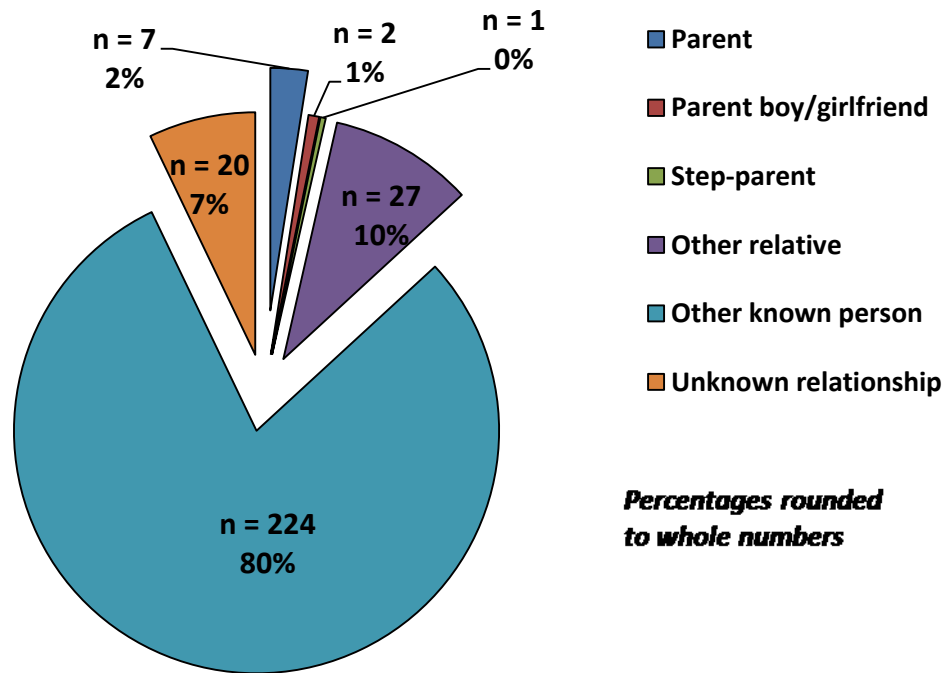
http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOkGcISE/b.6143427/k.38C5/Child_Sexual_Abuse_Statistics.htm

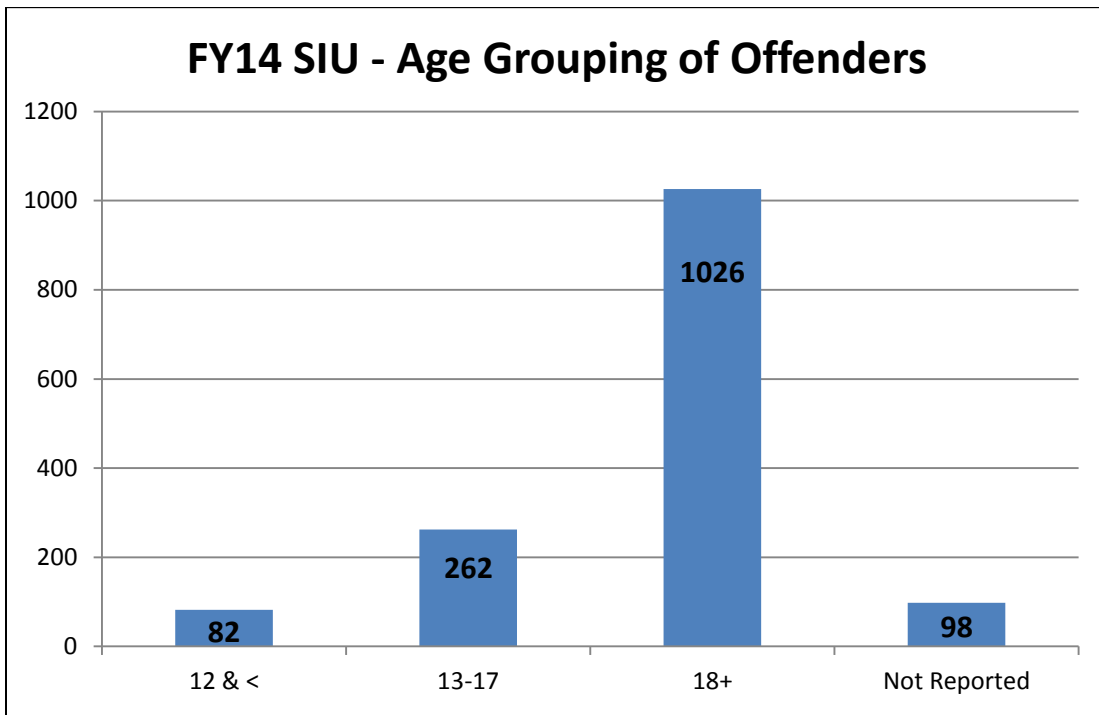
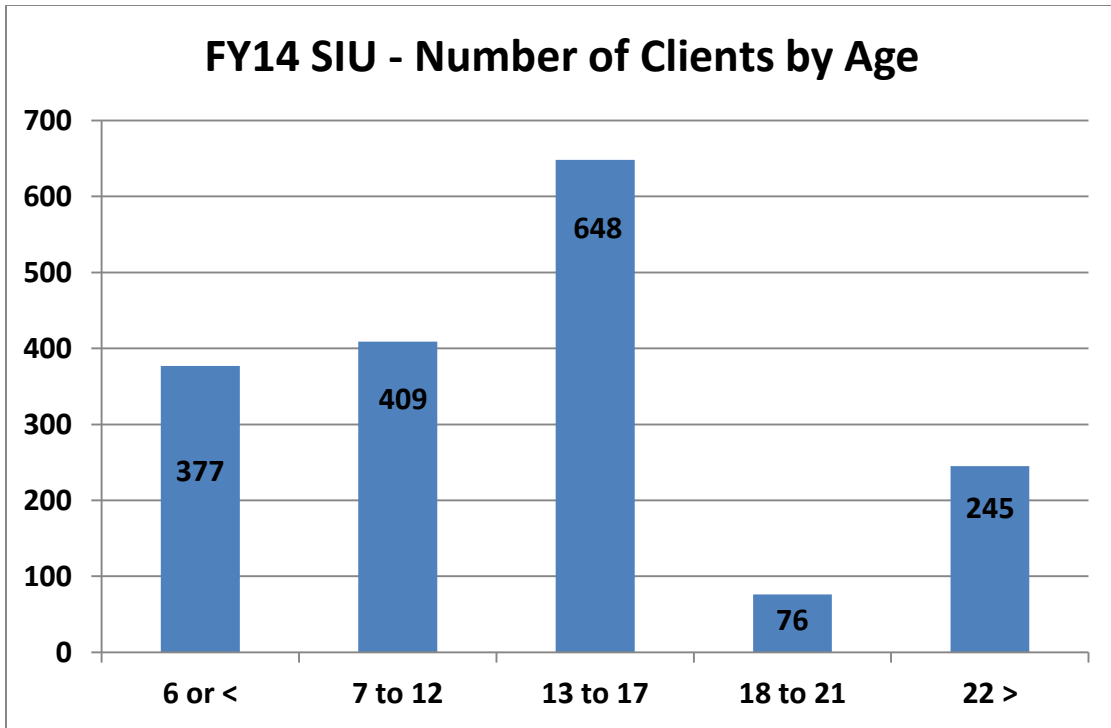


FY14 SIU- Offender Relationship - Child Victims

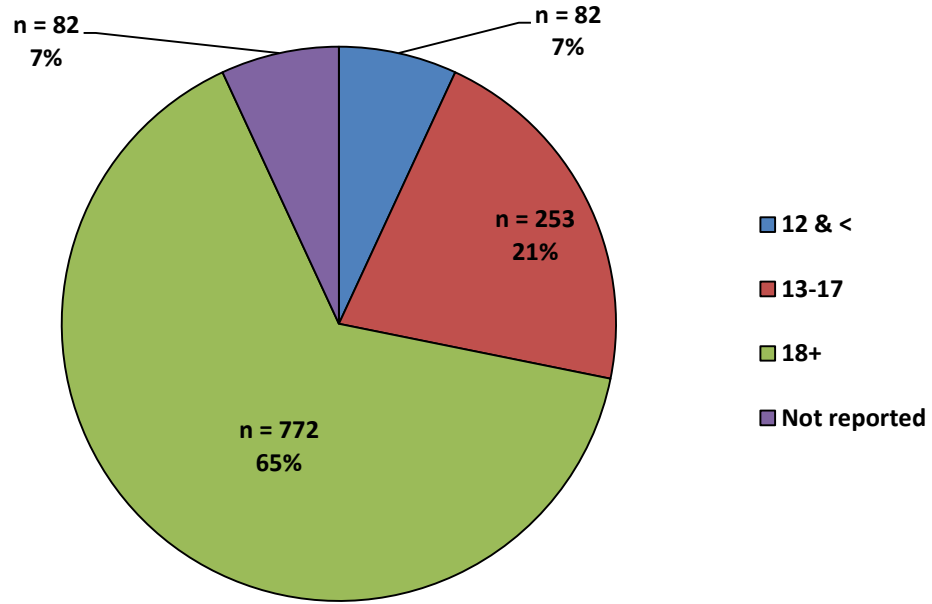


FY14 - Offender Relationship - Adult Victims

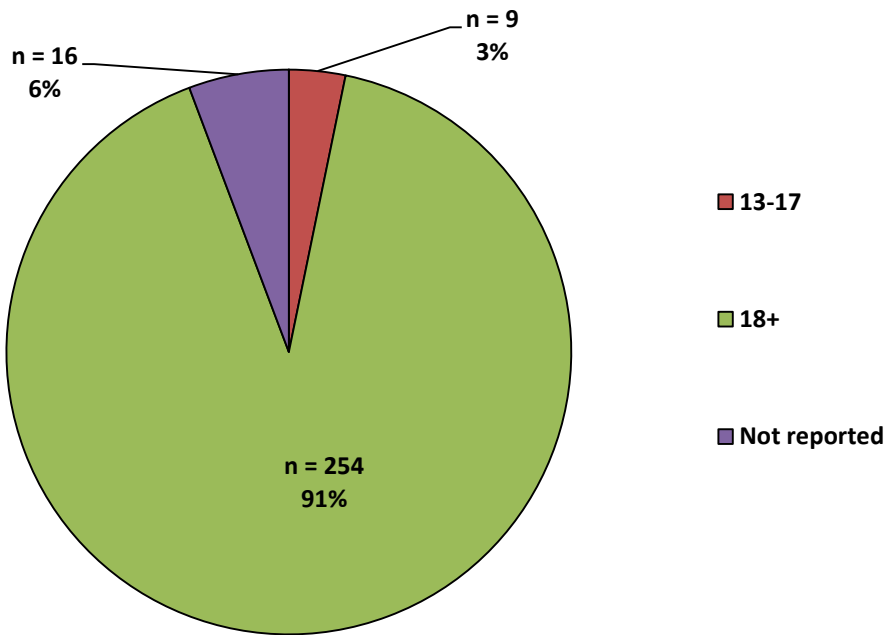




FY14 SIU - Age of Offender - Child Victims



FY14 - Age of Offender - Adult Victims



SUMMARY

During 2014, Vermont continued to see growth in the development of Special Investigations Units, but this was also a time of transition for a number of the units. Changeover in executive directors is taking place in Chittenden, Lamoille, Orleans, and Washington counties.

Law enforcement participation is still dependent upon continued grant funding to support the presence of an SIU-dedicated investigator from local or county police agencies. Current funding supports ten grant awards which provide investigators in nine counties. Two additional reimbursement based awards are provided to Essex County and Grand Isle County for investigative services provided by the Sheriff Departments in those counties (mandated in statute).

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. Orange County initiated the use of a shared time position of child interview specialist/case coordinator during the year. This format was modeled after the Windham County pilot. A survey evaluation of these projects is planned for 2015.

Training efforts in 2014 focused on continued development of interviewing skills for investigators. SIU investigators also attended two-day training at Champlain College which focused on the use of information technology during investigations and prosecutions. This course was supported by a grant from the Children's Justice Act and coordinated by the Caledonia SIU.

The SIU Grants Program is exploring Results Based Accountability (RBA) for future program evaluation. Components required for RBA are being developed and implemented at the time of this report. Future reporting is anticipated to follow the RBA format.

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.

Recommended study - <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/243829.pdf>