

*Department of State's Attorneys & Sheriffs*

# Annual Report Vermont - SIU Grants Program ~January 2016~

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

*Marc Metayer, SIU Grants Program Manager, VT Dept of State's Attorneys & Sheriffs*  
1/8/2016

## 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, Orange (x2), Orleans, Rutland, Windham, and Windsor counties receive this supplemental funding resource at the maximum funding level of \$60,000 per grant award. This funding supports the services of a full time investigator from a municipal or county law enforcement department. Caledonia County receives a reduced award amount (\$54,000) to support a combined investigator resource provided by two local police departments in the county (St. Johnsbury PD – ½ time/Hardwick PD – ¼ time). Effective January 1, 2016, Washington County has a reduced award (\$15,000) to support an investigator from the Barre City Police Department for the second half of FY16. 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.

**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.

**Forensic Interview at Trial** was conducted in June. This three-day session was held at the annual State's Attorneys' training conference in Jay.

**Peer Review for Forensic Interviewers** was a one-day workshop conducted in White River Jct. in September.

**Strategies for Justice** was conducted in November. The three-day class was held in Woodstock and was coordinated by the Vermont Children's Alliance with SIU support.

**CACs & the Law** was a one-day workshop coordinated by the Vermont Children's Alliance and conducted in Montpelier.

### **SCOPE OF REPORT**

This report covers major activity and current operational status for the Special Investigations Units in Vermont during the calendar year 2015.

Statistical reporting reflects activity during the State Fiscal Year 2015, which encompasses the time period of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

Grant Awards documented in this report are for FY16 award amounts (current fiscal year).

### **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. ***This enabling section was amended significantly during 2015 to provide more clear definition to the scope of responsibility for SIUs.***

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; Orange; Orleans; Rutland; Washington; Windham; 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.

### **TRAINING**

During 2015, 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 created the need for ongoing training offerings in this area.

May 2015: One session of ***Forensic Interviewing of Children*** was conducted in South Burlington. A total of 38 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 2015: One session of ***Advanced Forensic Interviewing*** was conducted in Rutland. A total of 24 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 2015: ***Forensic Interview at Trial*** was conducted in Jay during the State's Attorneys' annual training conference. This three-day session included instructors from the National Children's Advocacy Center and the National District Attorneys' Association. Teams of county based prosecutors and forensic interviewers participated in an intensive training designed to prepare for courtroom presentation of forensic interview testimony. Twelve of fourteen counties were represented in attendance for this specialized training.

September 2015: ***Peer Review for Forensic Interviewers*** was a one-day workshop designed to meet the specific needs of Vermont interviewers. Sixteen forensic interviewers from around the state gathered to develop the framework for a structured peer review process. The workshop was conducted in White River, Jct., by Linda Cordisco-Steele of the National Children's Advocacy Center, from Huntsville, Alabama. Ms. Steele has been the premiere instructor for the specialty discipline of forensic interviewing of children and has conducted the training sessions provided over the last several years.

November 2015: ***Strategies for Justice*** was conducted as a three-day event in Woodstock. This is an advanced multidisciplinary national training conference for prosecutors, law

enforcement, medical and mental health professionals, forensic interviewers, child advocates and allied professionals. Topics for this conference include a case review, sexually violent predators, the impact of toxic stress and exposure to animal cruelty on the developing brain, emerging trends in technology, false controversy in abusive head trauma cases, juvenile offenders, investigating high-tech crimes against children, grooming behaviors, emotional abuse, working with victims with physical and cognitive disabilities, and domestic minor trafficking and efforts to stop the justice system's revictimization of commercially exploited youth. The faculty for this conference is comprised of experienced prosecutors and child abuse professionals, as well as medical personnel and Ph.D. professionals. A total of 65 attendees participated in this specialized training coordinated by the Vermont Children's Alliance with support from the SIU Grants Program.

December 2015: ***CACs and the Law*** was a one-day workshop conducted by Andrew Agatston, an attorney from Marietta, Georgia. Mr. Agatston has been involved with management of CAC legal issues since 1998 and is a nationally recognized presenter on this topic. Twelve attendees, representing nine of the twelve SIUs, participated in this interactive discussion on legal vulnerabilities specific to the CAC/SIU operational functions. The presentation was coordinated by the Vermont Children's Alliance.

**Grant Award Summary - FY16**

<b>County</b>	<b>Program Support</b>	<b>Law Enforcement</b>	<b>Total Grant Awards</b>
<b>Addison</b>	<b>\$72,438</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$132,438</b>
<b>Bennington</b>	<b>\$89,446</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$149,446</b>
<b>Caledonia</b>	<b>\$61,584</b>	<b>\$54,000</b>	<b>\$115,584</b>
<b>Chittenden</b>	<b>\$79,526</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$79,526</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$20,000*</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Franklin</b>	<b>\$91,426</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$91,426</b>
<b>Grand Isle</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$20,000*</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Lamoille</b>	<b>\$83,638</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$83,638</b>
<b>Orange</b>	<b>\$81,993</b>	<b>\$120,000**</b>	<b>\$201,993</b>
<b>Orleans</b>	<b>\$52,256</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$112,256</b>
<b>Rutland</b>	<b>\$108,788</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$168,788</b>
<b>Washington</b>	<b>\$89,248</b>	<b>\$15,000***</b>	<b>\$104,248</b>
<b>Windham</b>	<b>\$97,082</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$157,082</b>
<b>Windsor</b>	<b>\$111,160</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$171,160</b>
<b>Total Awards</b>	<b>\$1,018,585</b>	<b>\$589,000</b>	<b>\$1,607,585</b>

**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 in lieu of an assigned VSP investigator.

\*\*\* Washington County received a partial award to support efforts in the second half of FY16

<b><u>SIU/CAC by County - 2015</u></b>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Addison County</u></b>  Addison County Unit for  Special Investigations  Fred Saar  Executive Director  35 Court Street  Middlebury, VT 05753  802-274-5724  <a href="mailto:Fred.saar@partner.vermont.gov">Fred.saar@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: Associate member February 2014</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Bennington County</u></b>  Bennington County Child  Advocacy Center/ SIU  Joy Kitchell  Executive Director  P.O. Box 163  129 Elm Street  Bennington VT 05201  (802) 442-5107  <a href="mailto:Joy.Kitchell@partner.vermont.gov">Joy.Kitchell@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: Fully accredited 2008; reaccredited 2014</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Caledonia and Southern Essex Counties</u></b>  Caledonia Children’s Advocacy  Center  Fred Saar  Executive Director  PO Box 272  Saint Johnsbury, VT 05819-0272  (802) 274-5724  <a href="mailto:fred.saar@partner.vermont.gov">fred.saar@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: Associate member December 2013</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Chittenden County</u></b>  The Child Advocacy Center  at CUSI/ CUSI  Veronica Rathgeb    Executive Director  50 Cherry Street, Suite 102  Burlington, VT 05401  (802) 652-0991  <a href="mailto:vrathegb@bpdvt.org">vrathegb@bpdvt.org</a></p> <p>NCA status: Fully accredited 2003; reaccredited 2009; reaccredited 2014</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Franklin &amp; Grand Isle Counties</u></b>  Northwest Unit for Special  Investigations NUSI/CAC  Robert White, Executive  Director  5 Lemnah Drive  St. Albans, VT 05478  (802) 524-7961  <a href="mailto:Robert.White@vermont.gov">Robert.White@vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: Fully accredited 2000; reaccredited 2005; reaccredited 2010</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Lamoille County</u></b>  Karen Garbarino  Executive Director  Lamoille County Special  Investigation Unit  P.O. Box 16  Hyde Park, VT 05655  (802)-888-0509  <a href="mailto:Karen.garbarino@partner.vermont.gov">Karen.garbarino@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: <i>Not recognized at this time</i></p>

<p><b><u>Orange County</u></b>  Orange County SIU/CAC  Monique Braman  Executive Director  354 VT Route 110  PO Box 254  Chelsea, VT 05038  (802) 685-4712  <a href="mailto:mbraman@orangecountyvt.gov">mbraman@orangecountyvt.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: Associate member October 2013</p>	<p><b><u>Orleans and Northern Essex Counties</u></b>  The Orleans County Child Advocacy Center  Joe Malgeri  Executive Director  PO Box 308  Newport, VT 05855  (802) 334-6002  (802) 225-8357  <a href="mailto:joseph.malgeri@partner.vermont.gov">joseph.malgeri@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: <i>Not recognized at this time</i></p>	<p><b><u>Rutland County</u></b>  Child First Advocacy Center/  Rutland Office for Special Investigations  Wendy Loomis  Executive Director  80 West Street  P.O. Box 6822  Rutland, VT 05702  (802) 747-0200  <a href="mailto:wendy@childfirstadvocacycenter.org">wendy@childfirstadvocacycenter.org</a>  <a href="mailto:wendy.loomis@partner.vermont.gov">wendy.loomis@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: Fully accredited 2004; reaccredited 2010; reaccreditation scheduled for 2015</p>
<p><b><u>Washington County</u></b>  OUR House of Central Vermont, Inc. CAC/SIU  Rebecca Duranleau  Executive Director  38 Summer Street  Barre, Vermont 05641  (802) 476-8825  <a href="mailto:ourhousebarredirector@gmail.com">ourhousebarredirector@gmail.com</a></p> <p>NCA status: Associate member 2012; currently Affiliate member</p>	<p><b><u>Windham County</u></b>  Windham County Safe Place CAC/ SUSI  Alyssa Todd  Executive Director  112 Hardwood Way  Brattleboro, VT 05301  (802) 579-1358  <a href="mailto:Alyssa.todd@partner.vermont.gov">Alyssa.todd@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>NCA status: Associate member September 2011; Application for full accreditation must be filed by 2016</p>	<p><b><u>Windsor County</u></b>  The CACs of the Family Place/  Windsor County SIU  Julie Gaudette  Director  319 US Route 5, South  Norwich, VT 05055  (802) 295-3882  <a href="mailto:julieg@the-family-place.org">julieg@the-family-place.org</a>  <a href="mailto:Julie.gaudette@partner.vermont.gov">Julie.gaudette@partner.vermont.gov</a></p> <p>2 Main Street  North Springfield, VT 05150  (802) 295-3882  <a href="mailto:julieg@the-family-place.org">julieg@the-family-place.org</a></p> <p>NCA status: Associate member February 2013</p>



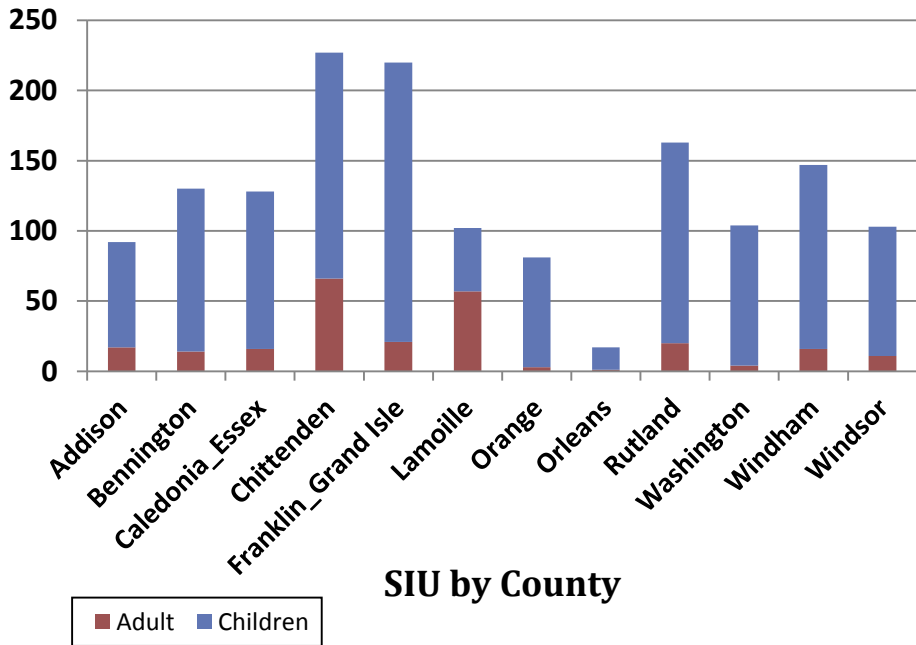
## **STATISTICAL OVERVIEW - FY15**

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.

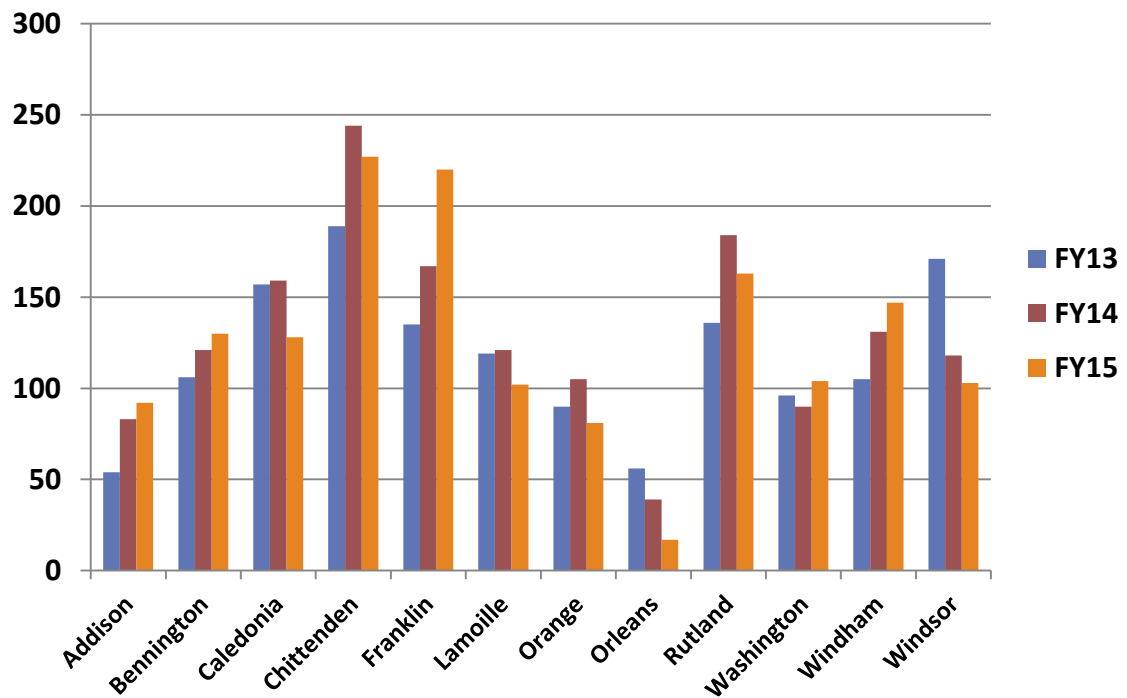
This section contains chart and graph depictions of the caseload and demographic makeup of victims and offenders that comprise the workload of the SIUs. Now, with the compilation of three full years' of data, it is possible to provide a glimpse of workload trend by county. Trend charts are provided to illustrate the client count by county and the relative provision of specialized services for those clients.

### FY15 SIU - New Cases by Victim Age Grouping

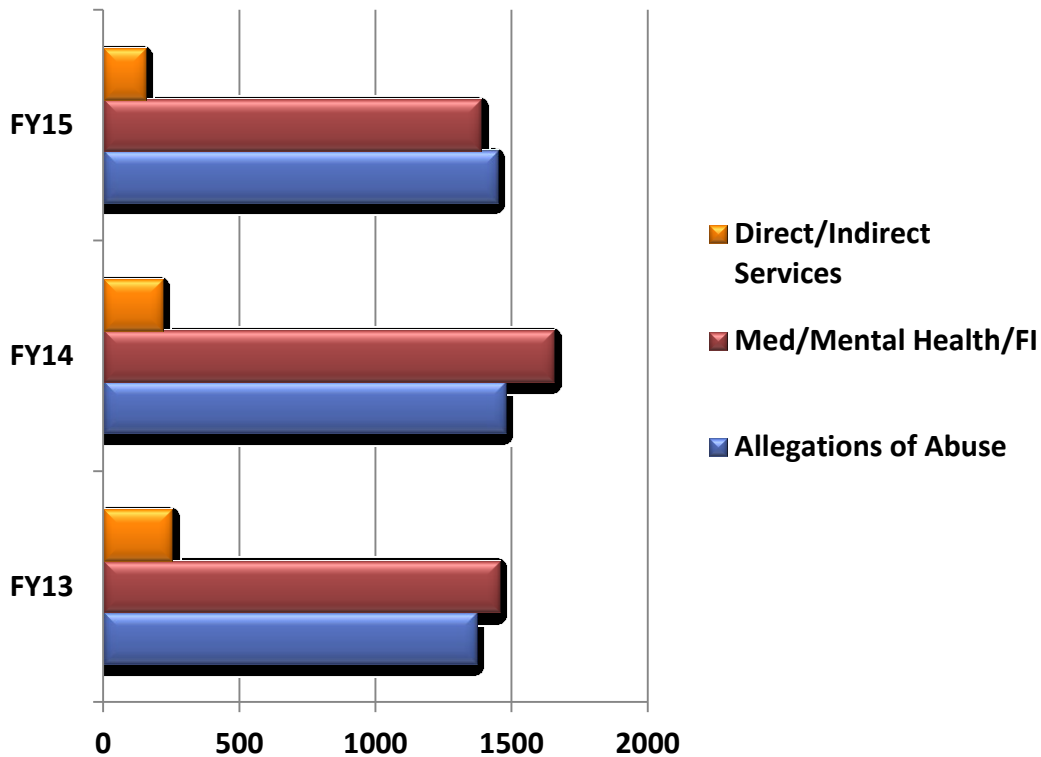


SIU by County

### SIU Client Count by County 3 - Year Trend



**Allegations of Abuse & Specialized Services Provided  
SIU - Combined Totals  
3- Year Trend**



**Direct Services** provided include forensic interviews of siblings, courtesy interviews conducted on behalf of other SIUs or agencies, and educational presentations. These are services which may, or may not, be related to an active case of the SIU, but involve direct services provided because of the expertise of SIU staff.

**Indirect Services** are primarily sex offender registry checks and violations, or child pornography cases which do not involve a locally identifiable victim.

**Medical Screening/Examinations; Mental Health Counseling/Referrals; and Forensic Interviews** are the specialized services which are provided or coordinated by the SIU/CAC in order to assist victims and non-offending family members. The need for these services can vary by individual circumstance, but the goal is to provide for the appropriate assistance in a timely and seamless manner.

The provision and coordination of these specialized services are at the heart of the mission of the SIU model.

**FACT: Emotional and mental health problems are often the first consequence and sign of child sexual abuse.**

- Children who are sexually abused are at significantly greater risk for later posttraumatic stress and other anxiety symptoms depression and suicide attempts.
- These psychological problems can lead to significant disruptions in normal development and often have a lasting impact, leading to dysfunction and distress well into adulthood.
- Behavioral problems, including physical aggression, non-compliance, and oppositionality occur frequently among sexually abused children and adolescents.
- Child sexual abuse has been linked to higher levels of risk behaviors.

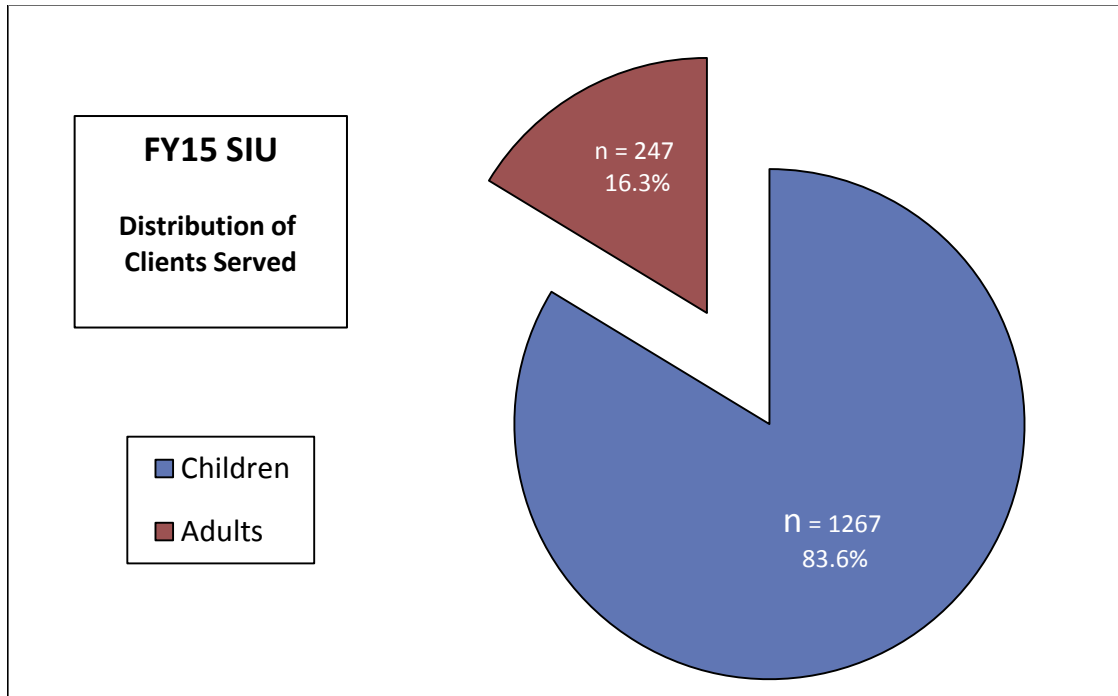
**FACT: Substance abuse problems beginning in childhood or adolescence are some of the most common consequences of child sexual abuse.**

- A number of studies have found that adolescents with a history of child sexual abuse demonstrate a three to fourfold increase in rates of substance abuse/dependence.
- Drug abuse is more common than alcohol abuse for adolescent child sexual abuse victims. Age of onset for non-experimental drug use was 14.4 years old for victims, compared to 15.1 years old for non-victimized youth.
- Adolescents were 2 to 3 times more likely to have an alcohol use/dependence problem than non-victims.

**FACT: Delinquency and crime, often stemming from substance abuse, are more prevalent in adolescents with a history of child sexual abuse.**

- Adolescents who were sexually abused have a 3 to 5-fold risk of delinquency.
- Behavioral problems, including physical aggression, non-compliance, and oppositionality occur frequently among sexually abused children and adolescents.
- These emotional and behavioral difficulties can lead to delinquency, poor school performance and dropping out of school.
- Adolescents that reported victimization (i.e., sexual abuse or physical abuse) were more likely to be arrested than their non-abused peers.
- Sexually abused children were nearly twice as likely to run away from home.

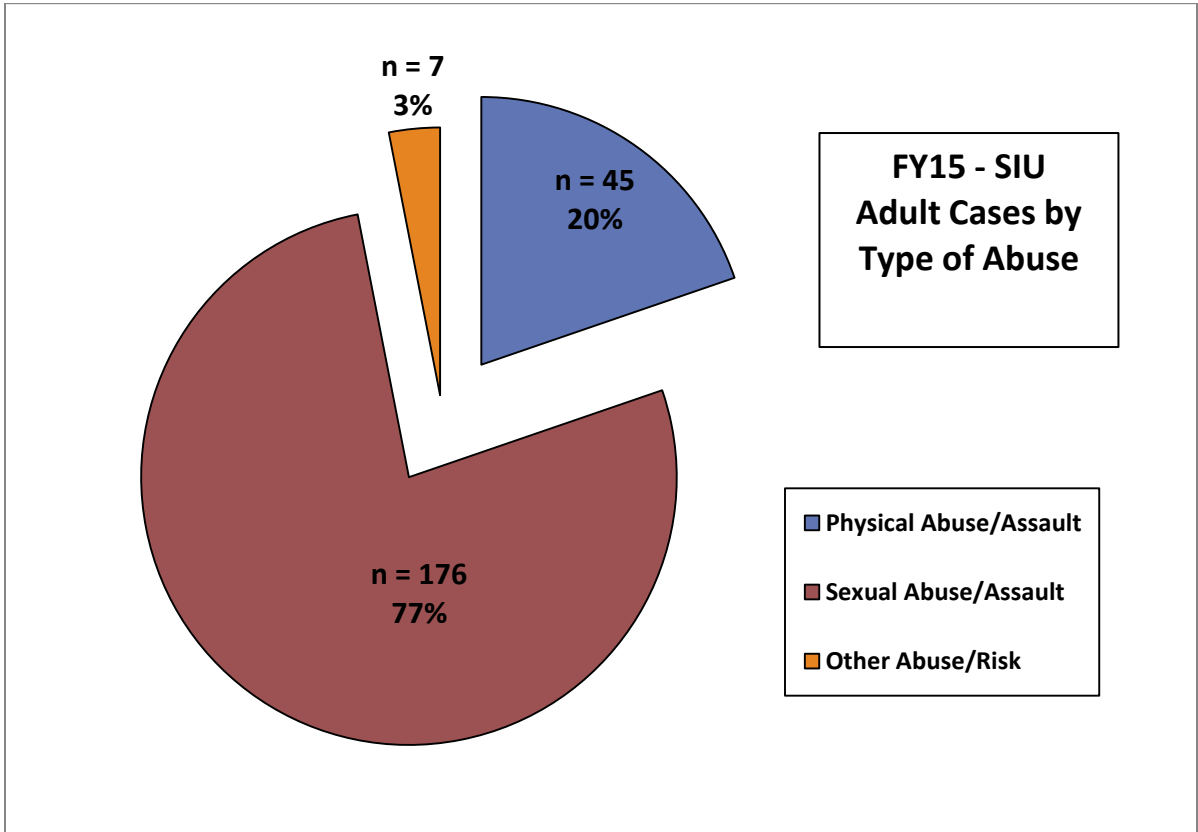
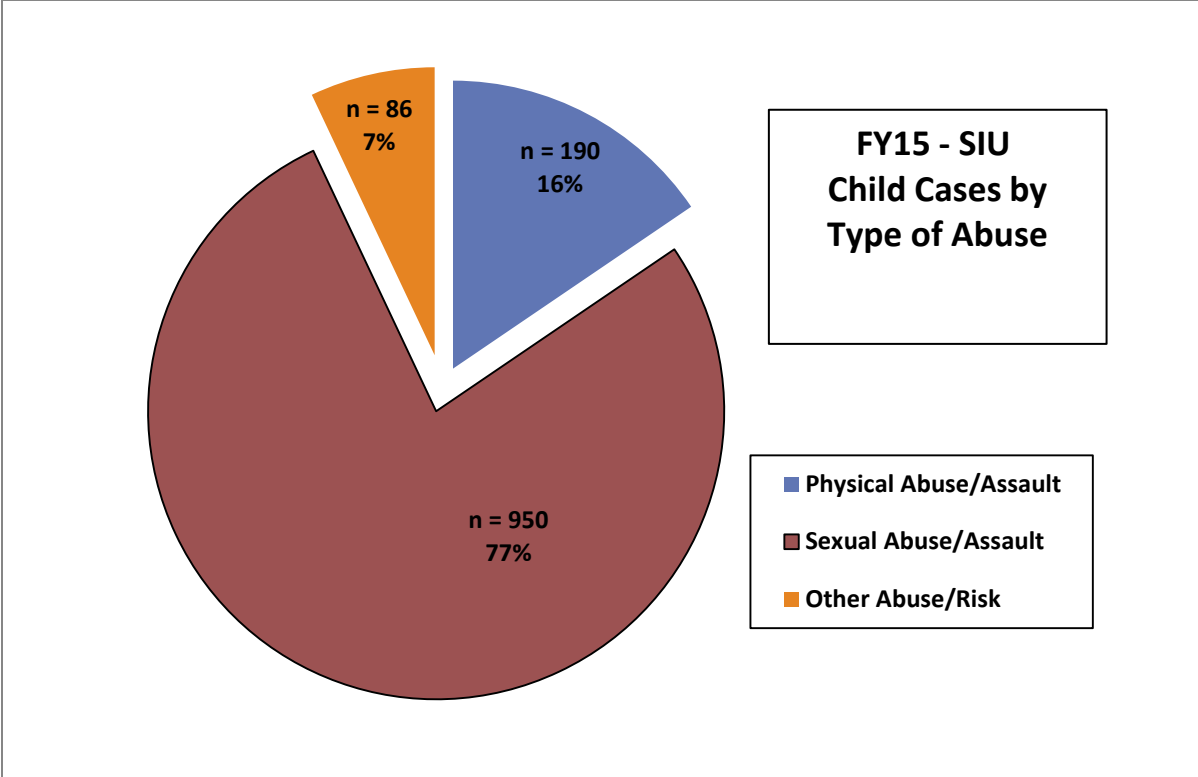
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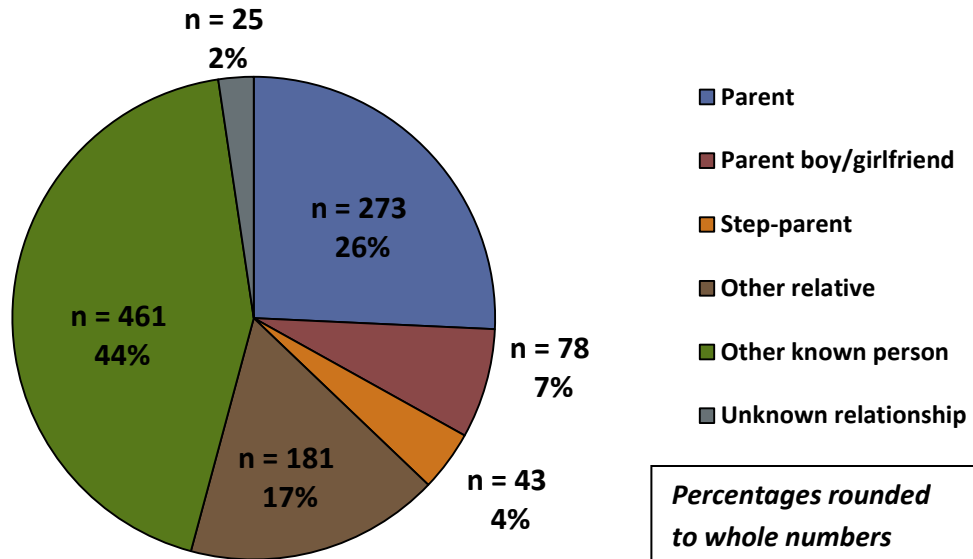
**FACT: Most people think of adult rape as a crime of great proportion and significance, and are unaware that children are victimized at a much higher rate than adults.**

- Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults (including assaults on adults) occur to children ages 17 and under.<sup>9,10</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup>
- 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.<sup>10,11</sup>

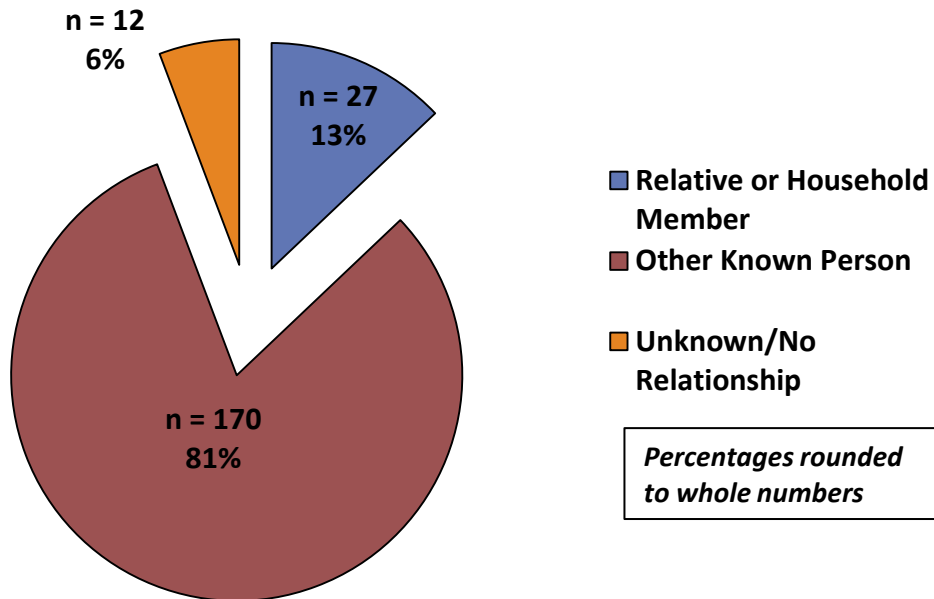
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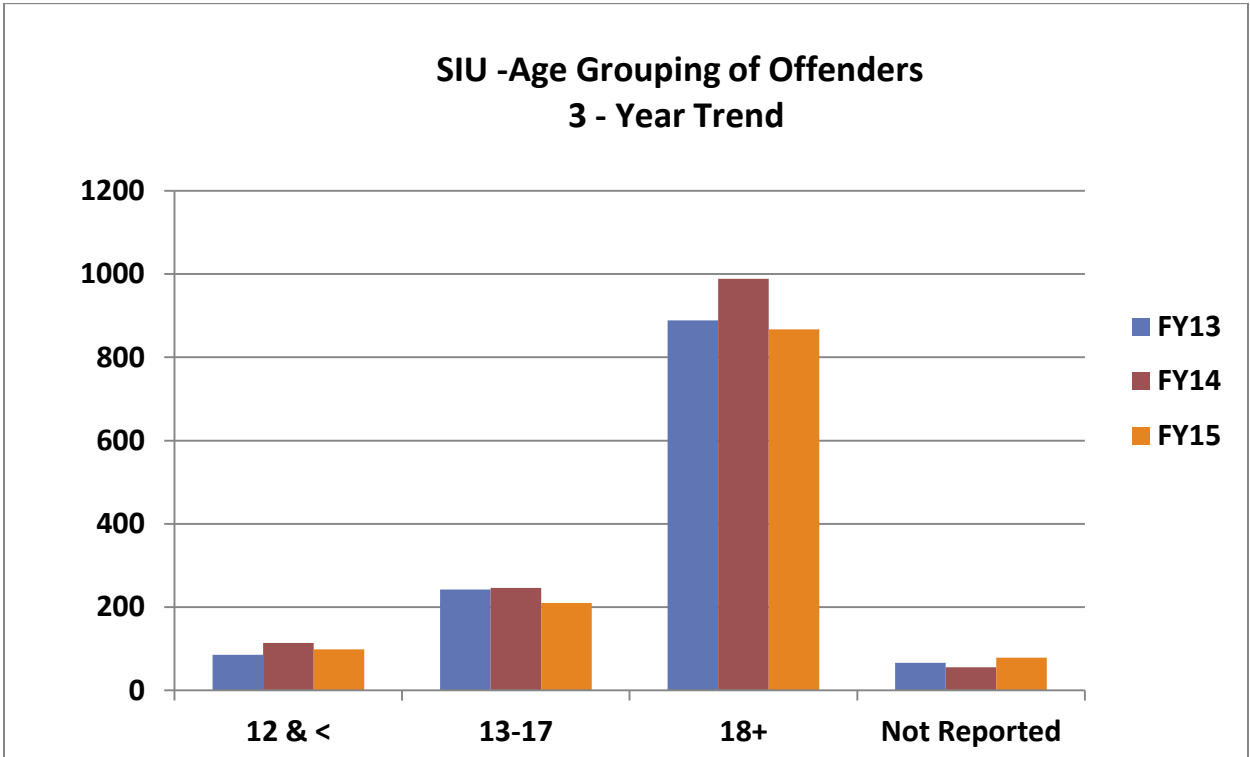
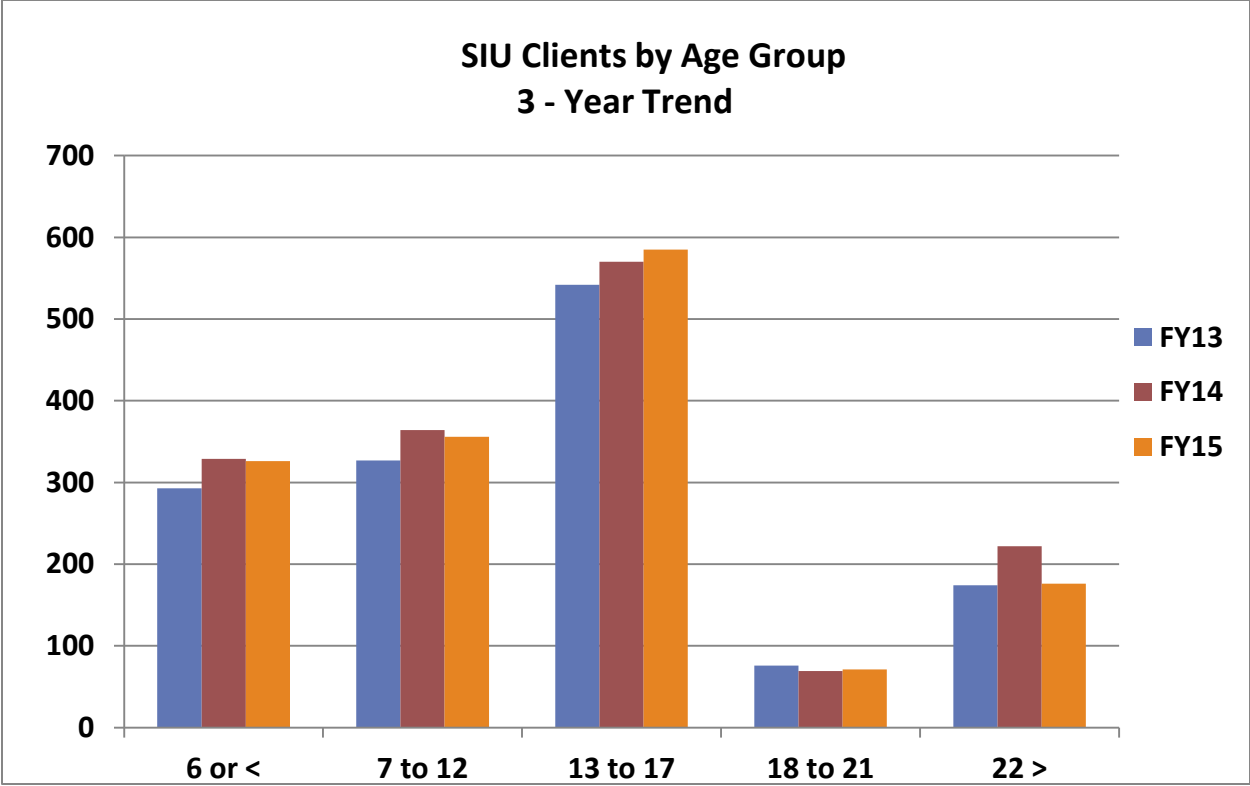


### FY15 SIU - Offender Relationship - Child Victims



### FY15 SIU - Offender Relationship - Adult Victims







## **SUMMARY**

Beginning in FY13, the Vermont SIU Grants Program adopted the use of a standardized records management system to provide for consistent data collection. As of 2015, the Program now has three years of accumulated statistical information with which to present trend data on clients served and services provided. Although the maturation of each SIU is still evolving, the citizens of the state have access to the specialized services offered by the SIU model, regardless of geographic location. The goal remains to strengthen the operations of each SIU for consistency throughout the state.

Early on, the SIU Grants Program paired SIU operations with existing Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) as a means of leveraging mutually beneficial aspects of each endeavor. One of the key aspects of that arrangement has been the CAC accreditation process. The National Children's Alliance (NCA) is a nationwide organization which provides for the objective review of CAC structure and operation. The multi-disciplinary team approach of the CAC organization is the very same model upon which the SIUs are based.

Vermont currently has five (5) fully accredited CACs (with active SIUs), with another five CACs (with active SIUs) having an associate level status denoting their ongoing efforts to achieve full accreditation. The two (2) remaining SIUs do not have a current status with NCA, but are actively working on applications for recognition by NCA. The goal of the accreditation process is to have an independent, objective review of unit operations to ensure appropriate structure and functionality. Access to this feature is possible due to the close working relationship between the SIU Grants Program and the Vermont Children's Alliance (which is the VT chapter sanctioned by the NCA). Accreditation status is one of the performance measures used to assess the functionality of each SIU.

Established SIUs provide a one-stop opportunity for victims and families to receive, or to access, specialized child interviewing techniques, medical and mental health services, and a variety of victim support services. Law enforcement, DCF, and prosecutors are active partners working within the SIUs to provide for the best possible victim support, even if court action is not possible.

The following link is provided as further background on the effectiveness of a multi-disciplinary approach to sex crime response:

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

With respect to this study, Vermont SIUs have ranged from the "Low Adopters" category up to the "High Adopters plus Evaluation" category. The effort to achieve NCA accreditation, as noted earlier, is in alignment with the study's observation of a greater level of effectiveness in programs categorized as high adopters plus evaluation.

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).

The specialized services provided by, or through, the SIUs (CACs) are also another significant performance measure for assessment. A main premise behind the establishment of the SIUs was to provide for a safe, victim-friendly environment that could provide for the needs of victims in a supportive manner. Adoption of the *Outcome Measurement System* (a feature available through NCA membership) will provide feedback from clients and SIU/CAC partners to measure this component. The Outcome Measurement System (OMS) was instituted in early 2015 and is still being implemented by the individual CACs.

Training efforts in 2015 focused on continued development of interviewing skills for investigators as well as improvement of prosecution skills in child victim casework. The SIU Grants Program and the Vermont Children's Alliance continue to work in close collaboration with other partners to strengthen the response to sexual and physical abuse in Vermont.