

## **Special Investigation Units**

### **SIU Program Description**

Special Investigation Units are established in each region of the State pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1940 to address the unique needs of victims and investigators in cases involving sexual offenses, domestic violence, and crimes against vulnerable persons. At the core of each SIU is a multi-disciplinary team of dedicated detectives, medical professionals, victim advocates, DCF workers, and DOC personnel – who collectively strive to provide a seamless support network for victims and a quality investigative result for criminal or family court action where appropriate. There are currently twelve SIUs around the State, serving areas roughly contiguous with county borders. Each SIU is an independent, non-profit entity. The SIUs are supported in substantial part by two types of grants funded by the State SIU budget: program support grants and law enforcement grants. The program support grants are intended to defray SIU operational costs. The law enforcement grants are intended to fund dedicated and specially-trained law enforcement officers who work out of the SIUs but are employees of a municipal or county police agency.

### **Key Budget Issues for FY20**

SIU funding remains at FY18 levels. Since FY18, the loss of grant funds from the National Children's Alliance has created a shortfall of funds for seven of the twelve SIUs. This represents a \$49,000 gap among the seven accredited programs. The remaining five SIUs have continued to develop and are finding that the need for full-time or nearly full-time staff positions is the norm. The executive director and an administrative/case manager (2 FTE) are the positions supported by SIU funding. In some instances, this staffing expense is also supported through funds from the Center for Crime Victims' Services. Although the funding streams are combined, the development of the units has required more staff hours than what were required several years ago. The increased demand for funding the program support grants will likely impact the law enforcement grants by requiring a reduction in the funding level of those awards, or a reduction of the total number of awarded law enforcement grants, as determined by the SIU Grants Board.