

Department of State's Attorneys & Sheriffs

Annual Report
Vermont SIU Grants Program
January 2020

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

Prepared by: Marc Metayer, SIU Grants Program Manager
VT Dept. of State's Attorneys & Sheriffs
1/30/2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Current Status: 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. 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. All the SIUs are co-located 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 eleven (11) law enforcement investigators around the state. Addison, Bennington, Orange (x2), Orleans, Rutland, Washington, 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). Lamoille County receives a \$60,000 grant award which is divided among three law enforcement agencies within the county (Lamoille Sheriff's Department/Morristown PD/Stowe PD). 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: In April, Bennington SIU/CAC sponsored three, one-day workshops of a presentation from Cory Jewell Jensen entitled ***Sex Offenders: Understanding and Responding to Crimes Against Children***. The workshops were conducted in Bennington, Burlington, and Norwich.

A one-day seminar entitled ***Rural Project: Regional MDT Collaboration Event*** was conducted in April specifically for the Lamoille, Washington, Orleans, Caledonia, and Essex counties. The event was held at Northern VT University – Lyndon and was coordinated by DCF and the Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

NCAC Forensic Interview trainings (Basic & Advanced) were conducted in two sessions during May.

Additionally, a three-day session on ***Extended Forensic Interviews*** was conducted in Burlington as an open registration event by NCAC. Although not sponsored by the SIU Grant Program, Vermont attendees were SIU team members.

A three-day session entitled ***Mobile Device Investigations*** was presented at the Annual Conference of the State’s Attorneys in Woodstock.

SCOPE OF REPORT

This report covers major activity and current operational status for the Special Investigations Units in Vermont during the calendar year 2019.

Statistical reporting reflects activity during the State Fiscal Year 2019, which encompasses the period of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

Grant Awards documented in this report are for FY20 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.

In collaboration with the Vermont Children's Alliance, all 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/ncas-standards-for-accredited-members/>

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 implementation of NCA's 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 twelve counties (Addison; Bennington; Caledonia; Essex; Grand Isle; Lamoille; Orange; Orleans; Rutland; Washington; Windham; and Windsor). Eleven 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 provided for by statute.

TRAINING

During 2019, a continued focus of training effort was in the development of forensic interview skills. Turnover for law enforcement and DCF partners working with the SIUs has sustained the demand for ongoing training offerings in this area.

April 2019: Three, one-day workshops were conducted around the state on the topic of ***Sex Offenders: Understanding and Responding to Crimes Against Children***. Bennington, Burlington, and Norwich were host sites for each session. This series was coordinated by the Bennington SIU/CAC. The presenter was Cory Jewell Jensen, M.S., co-director of the Center for Behavioral Intervention in Oregon.

May 2019: One, three-day session of ***Forensic Interviewing of Children*** was conducted in Rutland. A total of 36 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: <https://www.nationalcac.org/forensic-interviewing-of-children-training/>

May 2019: One, three-day session of ***Advanced Forensic Interviewing*** was conducted in South Burlington. 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: <https://www.nationalcac.org/advanced-forensic-interviewing-training/>

June 2019: A three-day class on ***The NCAC Extended Forensic Interview Model*** was conducted in Burlington as an open registration event. While not sponsored by SIU funding, SIU team members from Vermont did attend this advanced interviewing class. <https://www.nationalcac.org/extended-forensic-interview-training/>

June 2019: A three-day session entitled ***Mobile Device Investigations*** was presented at the Annual Conference of the State's Attorneys in Woodstock. Instructors from the National Criminal Justice Training Center presented in-depth information on current investigative resources and techniques for investigators and prosecutors managing cases involving the analysis of modern communication devices. <https://ncjtc.fvtc.edu/training/details/TR00006557/mobile-device-investigations>

Grant Award Summary - FY20

County	Program Support	Law Enforcement	Total Grant Awards
Addison	\$75,012	\$60,000	\$135,012
Bennington	\$100,221	\$60,000	\$160,221
Caledonia	\$86,571	\$54,000	\$140,571
Chittenden	\$129,726	n/a	\$129,726
Essex	n/a	\$7,500*	\$7,500
Franklin	\$97,863	n/a	\$97,863
Grand Isle	n/a	\$7,500*	\$7,500
Lamoille	\$100,956	\$60,000	\$160,956
Orange	\$132,052	\$120,000**	\$252,052
Orleans	\$106,753	\$30,000	\$136,753
Rutland	\$128,959	\$60,000	\$188,959
Washington	\$108,991	\$60,000	\$168,991
Windham	\$101,164	\$60,000	\$161,164
Windsor	\$113,383	\$60,000	\$173,383
Total Awards	\$1,281,651	\$639,000	\$1,920,651

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). For FY20, these awards were limited to \$7,500 each. 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.

<u>SIU/CAC by County - 2019</u>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Addison County</u> Addison County Unit for Special Investigations Fred Saar Executive Director 35 Court Street Middlebury, VT 05753 802-274-5724 Fred.saar@partner.vermont.gov</p> <p>NCA status: Associate member 2014</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Bennington County</u> Bennington County Child Advocacy Center/ SIU Joy Kitchell Executive Director P.O. Box 163 129 Elm Street Bennington VT 05201 (802) 442-5107 Joy.Kitchell@partner.vermont.gov</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2008; reaccredited 2014;2019</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Caledonia and Southern Essex Counties</u> Caledonia Children’s Advocacy Center/SIU Christopher St Cyr Executive Director PO Box 272 Saint Johnsbury, VT 05819-0272 (802) 274-5724 Christopher.StCyr@partner.vermont.gov</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2019</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Chittenden County</u> Chittenden Children’s Advocacy Center/CUSI Veronica Rathgeb Executive Director 50 Cherry Street, Suite 102 Burlington, VT 05401 (802) 652-0991 vrathgeb@bpdvt.org</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2003; reaccredited 2009; 2014; 2019</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Franklin & Grand Isle Counties</u> Northwest Unit for Special Investigations NUSI/CAC Robert White Executive Director 5 Lemnah Drive St. Albans, VT 05478 (802) 524-7961 Robert.White@vermont.gov</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2000; reaccredited 2005; 2010; 2015</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lamoille County</u> Lamoille County Special Investigation Unit/CAC Tracy Patnoe Executive Director P.O. Box 16 Hyde Park, VT 05655 (802)-851-8116 tpatnoe@lamoillesiu.org</p> <p>NCA status: Associate member 2016</p>

<p><u>Orange County</u> Orange County SIU/CAC Ferron Wambold Executive Director 354 VT Route 110 PO Box 254 Chelsea, VT 05038 (802) 685-4712 fwambold@orangecountysheriff.com</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2019</p>	<p><u>Orleans and Northern Essex Counties</u> The Orleans County Child Advocacy Center/SIU Dawn Kelly Executive Director PO Box 1133 Newport, VT 05855 (802) 334-6002 Dawn.kelly@partner.vermont.gov</p> <p>NCA status: Associate member 2017</p>	<p><u>Rutland County</u> Child First Advocacy Center/ Rutland Unit for Special Investigations Wendy Loomis Executive Director P.O. Box 6822 Rutland, VT 05702 (802) 747-0200 wendy.loomis@partner.vermont.gov</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2004; reaccredited 2010; 2015</p>
<p><u>Washington County</u> OUR House of Central Vermont, Inc. CAC/SIU Rebecca Duranleau Executive Director 38 Summer Street Barre, Vermont 05641 (802) 476-8825 ourhousebarredirector@gmail.com</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2016</p>	<p><u>Windham County</u> Windham County Safe Place CAC/ SUSI Joy Kitchell Interim Director 112 Hardwood Way Brattleboro, VT 05301 (802) 579-1358 Joy.Kitchell@partner.vermont.gov</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2016</p>	<p><u>Windsor County</u> The CACs of the Family Place/ Windsor County SIU Julie Gaudette Director 319 US Route 5, South Norwich, VT 05055 (802) 295-3882 julieg@the-family-place.org</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2001; reaccredited 2006; 2012; 2017</p> <p>2 Main Street North Springfield, VT 05150 (802) 295-3882 julieg@the-family-place.org</p> <p>NCA status: ACCREDITED 2016</p>

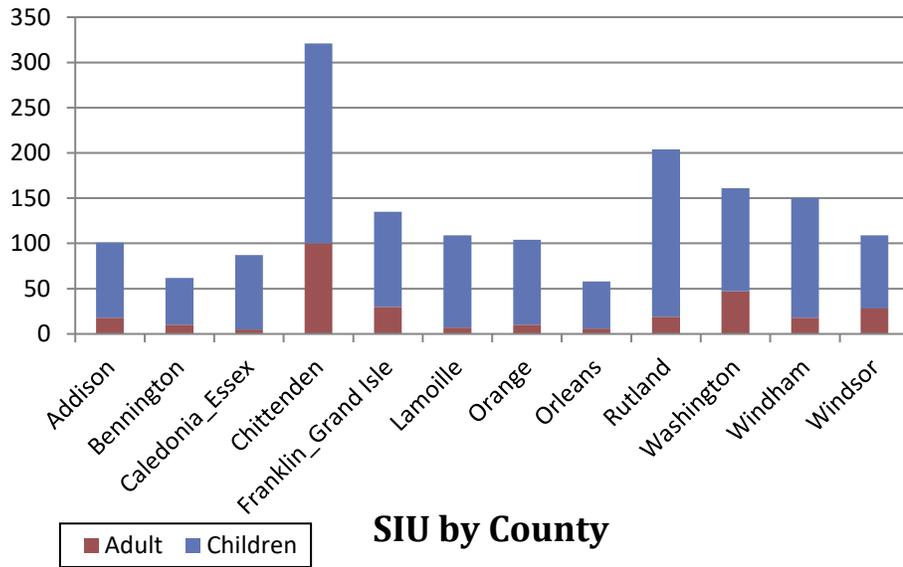
STATISTICAL OVERVIEW - FY19

Program, financial, and statistical reporting from the SIUs are required on a quarterly basis throughout each fiscal year. Beginning in 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 as 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.

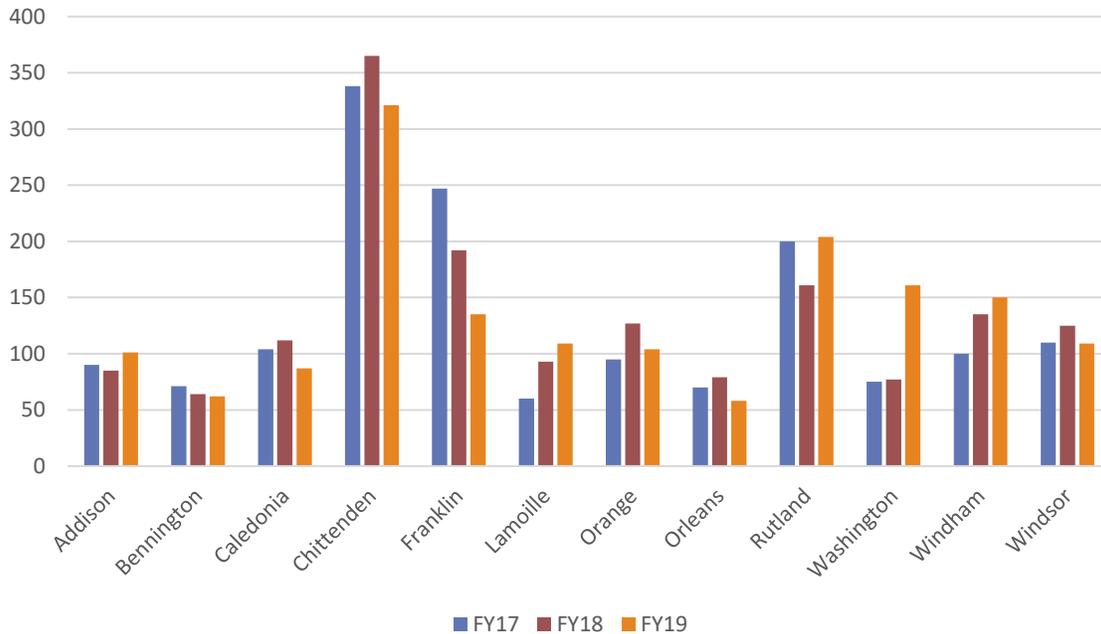
This section contains chart and graph depictions of the caseload and demographic makeup of victims and offenders that comprise the workload of the SIUs. Now, with the compilation of data over multiple years, it is possible to provide a glimpse of workload trend by county. Trend charts for the most recent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

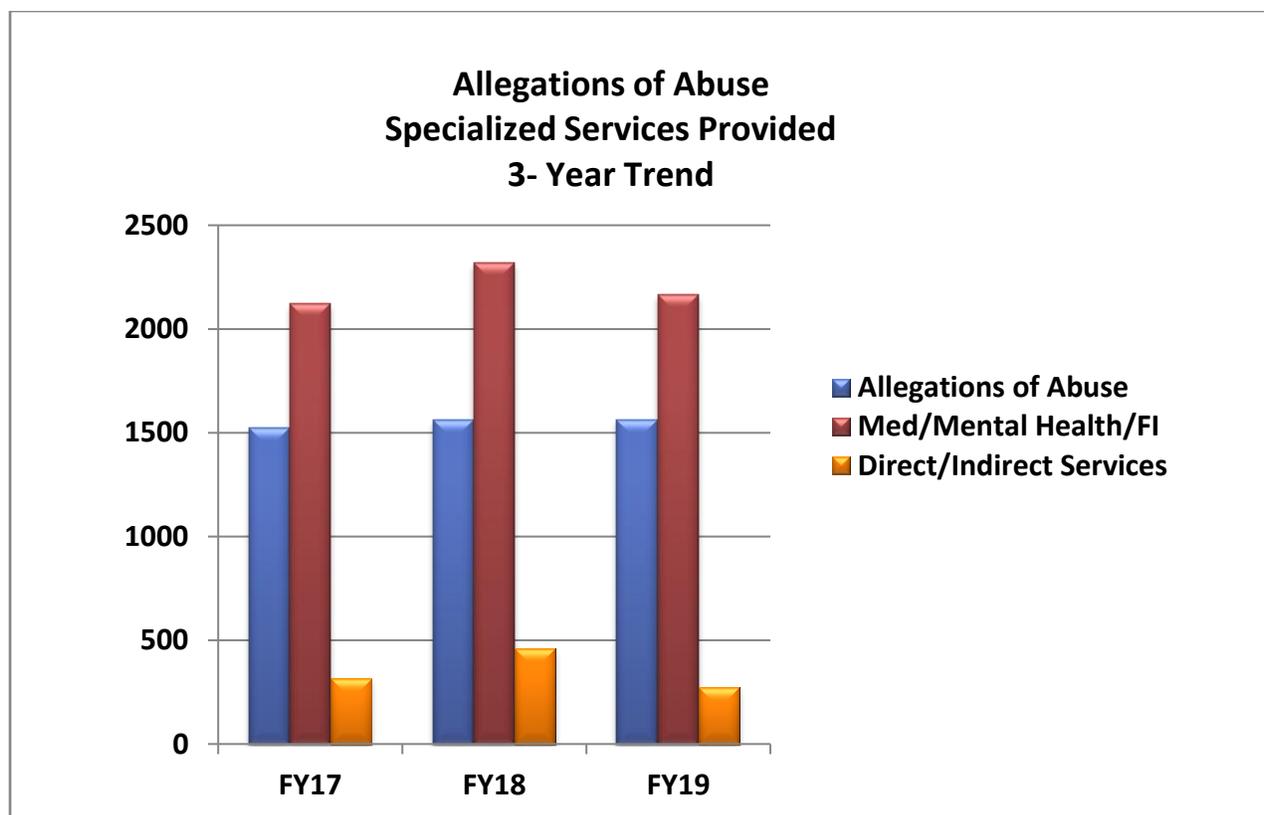
FY19 SIU - New Cases by Victim Age Grouping



SIU by County

SIU Client Count 3 - Year Trend



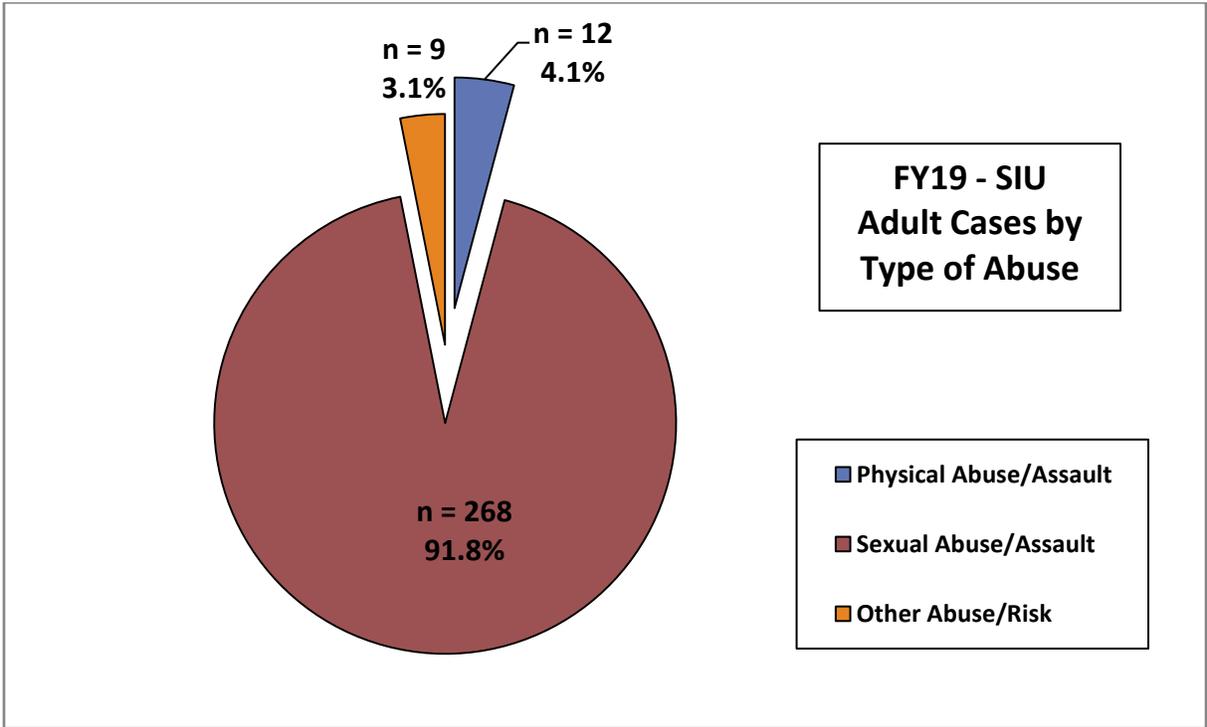
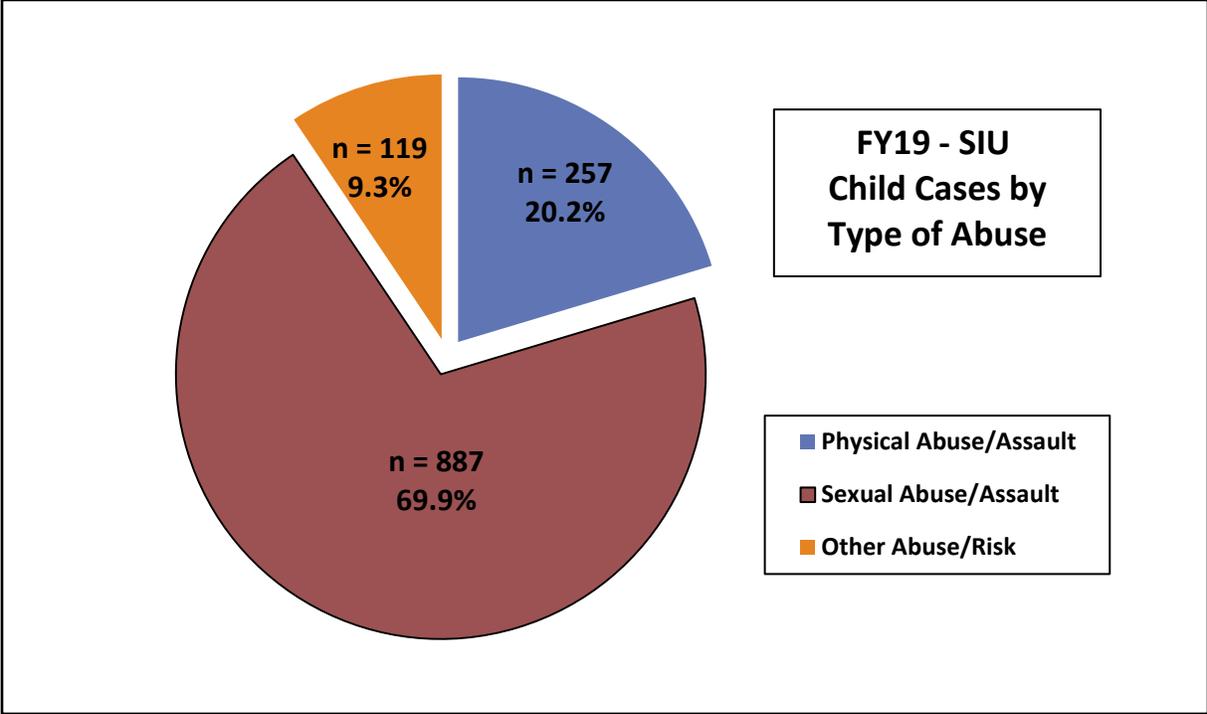


In managing the referred ***Allegations of Abuse***, specialized services can vary according to the needs of the individual client(s). The provision and coordination of these specialized services are at the heart of the mission of the SIU model.

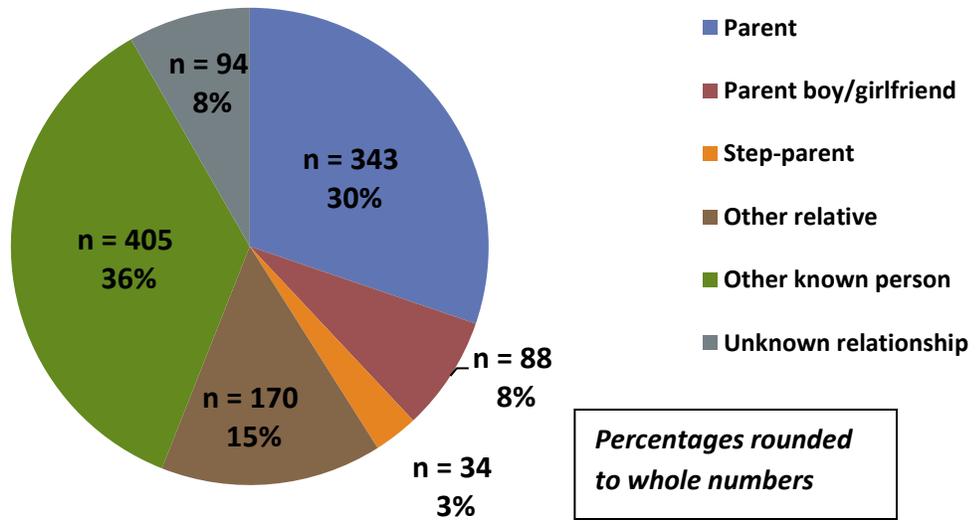
Medical Screening/Examinations; Mental Health Counseling/Referrals; and Forensic Interviews are the specialized services which are provided or coordinated by the SIU/CAC to assist victims and non-offending family members. The need for these services can vary by individual circumstance, but the goal is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

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.

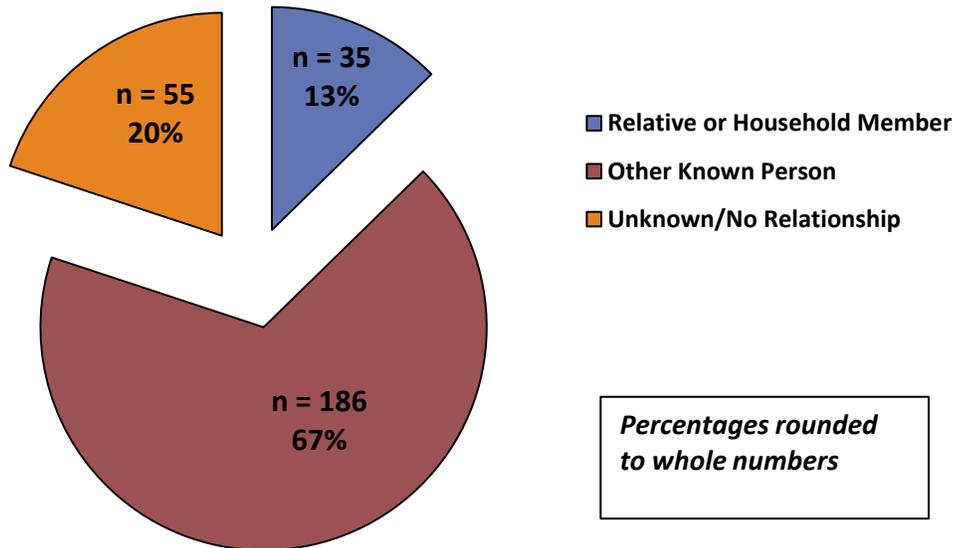
Indirect Services are primarily sex offender registry checks and violations, child pornography cases which do not involve a locally identifiable victim, and review of DCF intakes that are not accepted for further action by DCF. In addition, public information and community awareness presentations fall in this category. A few SIUs also provide technical support for evidence retrieval from electronic devices, a service shared with neighboring law enforcement agencies.

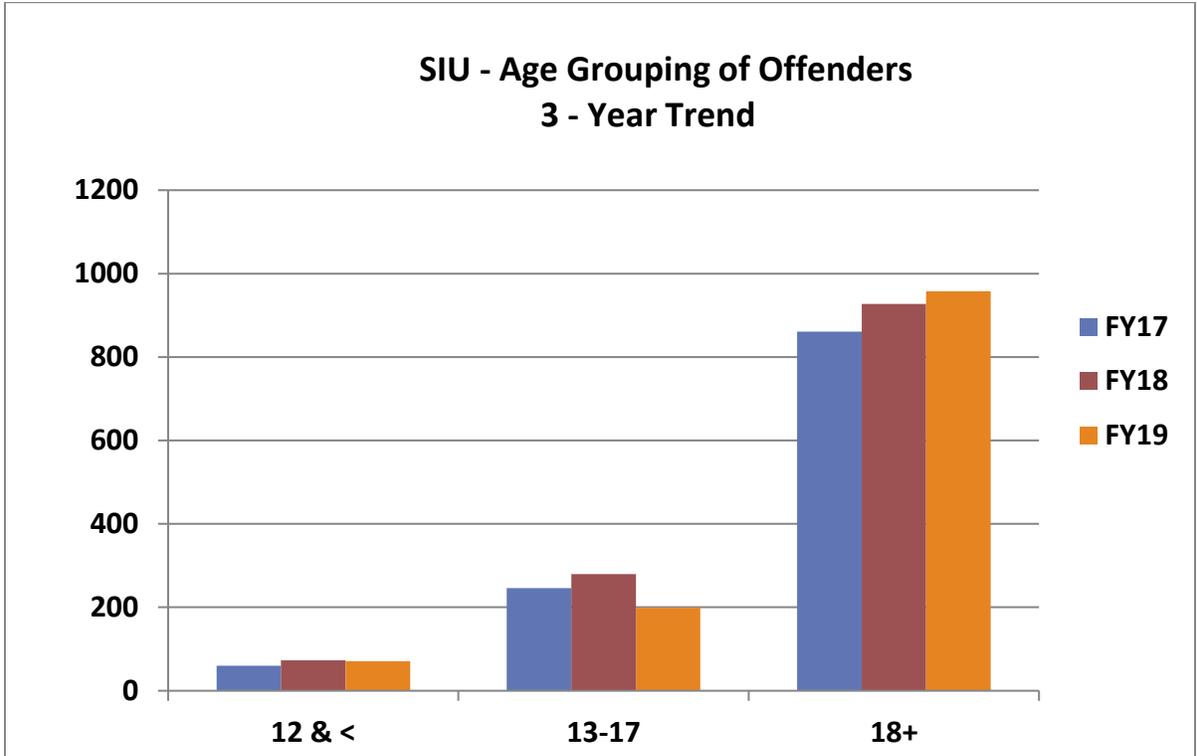
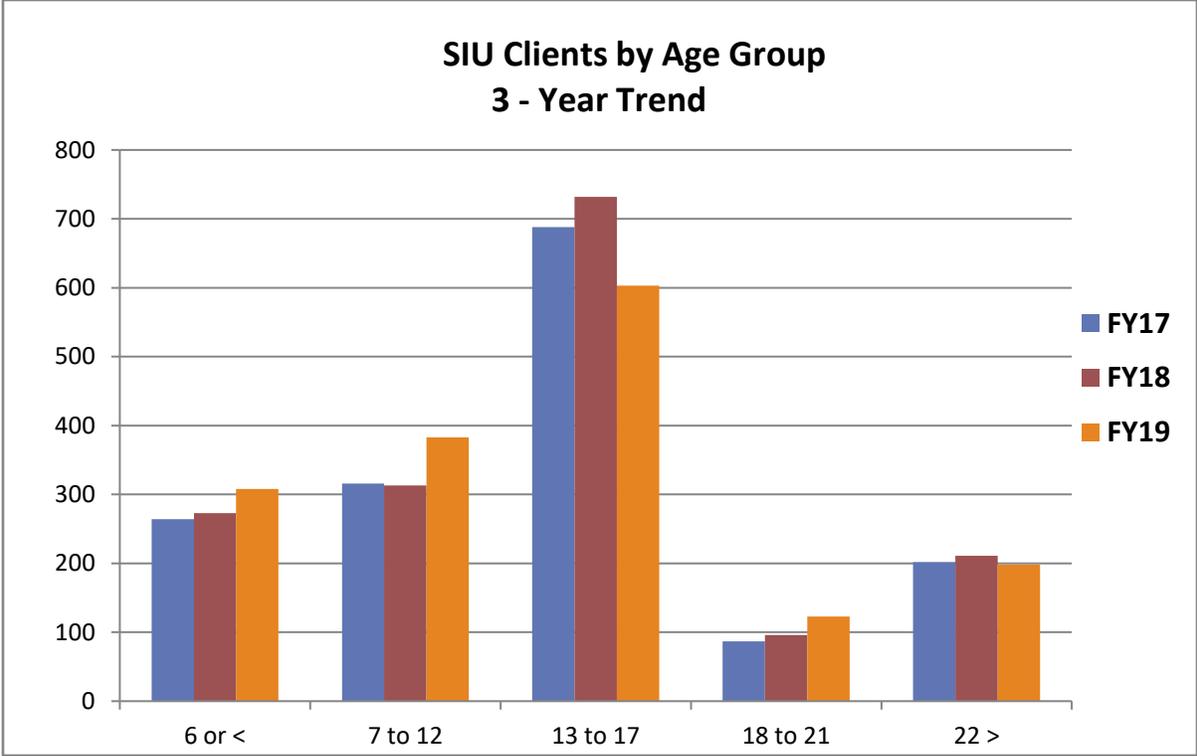


FY19 SIU- Offender Relationship - Child Victims



FY19 - Offender Relationship - Adult Victims





SUMMARY

Although the maturation of each SIU continues to evolve, 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 partnered 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 ten (10) fully accredited CACs (9 with active SIUs; Windsor has two accredited CACs within the county but only the single SIU designation). Another three (3) CACs (with active SIUs) have an associate level status denoting their ongoing efforts to achieve full accreditation. 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 process 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.

Law enforcement participation is still dependent upon continued grant funding to support the presence of a SIU-dedicated investigator from local or county police agencies. Current funding supports eleven grant awards which provide investigators in ten 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). For now, Chittenden County and Franklin County are the only two counties not reliant upon SIU Grant funding for law enforcement investigators.

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) provides feedback from clients and SIU/CAC partners to measure this component. The Outcome Measurement System (OMS) was instituted in early 2015 and is now adopted by each of the units. Results of the survey of SIU/CAC partners consistently show high marks for team collaboration, mutual respect, and providing benefits to clients served by the multi-disciplinary model. Client feedback continues to be limited and sporadic, making evaluation of client impact difficult to assess.

Training efforts in 2019 focused on continued development of interviewing skills for investigators as well as specialized training for all members of the SIU teams. The SIU Grants Program, in collaboration with the Vermont Children's Alliance, continues to work in close collaboration with other partners to strengthen the response to sexual and physical abuse in Vermont.

The Department of State's Attorneys provides administrative support for the SIU Grants Program. A contracted grants manager provides administrative support to the SIU Grants Board and to the SIU grant recipients, while also providing technical assistance as necessary. The model of administration continues to minimize administrative expense while providing timely guidance and support to program partners.