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SAKI Training and Technical Assistance

SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT ASSESSMENT REPORT

West Valley City
Police Department (UT)

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1. Sexual Assault Unit Assessment Overview

1.1 Introduction

Law enforcement is at the front line in addressing the crime of sexual assault. The justice system's ability to investigate sexual assault crimes, leverage evidence, and work with multidisciplinary partners impacts how effectively it can deliver justice for a victim and prevent future crimes. Statistically, rape is one of the most under-reported crimes in the United States (Lonsway & Archambault, 2012). The factors that lead to under-reporting are varied and complex and include a victim's expectations of law enforcement's response and fear of reprisal. Due to this and other factors, sexual assault cases are among the most difficult for a law enforcement agency to pursue. Despite these challenges, creating a comprehensive and sustainable process for sexual assault investigations can benefit not only individual victims, but also the communities that law enforcement agencies serve. Ultimately, a law enforcement organization's responsibility is to give its best effort to ensure community safety, while addressing crimes in a victim-centered way that follows current national standards and promising practices.

The National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) is a Bureau of Justice Assistance program that assists jurisdictions with addressing unsubmitted sexual assault kits (SAKs). The SAKI Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Sexual Assault Unit (SAU) assessment provides a comprehensive review of the sexual assault investigative process, within and outside the law enforcement agency's domain. Utah is one of a growing number of states nationwide that are actively addressing their unsubmitted SAKs, while also reviewing the process by which they respond to, investigate, and prosecute sexual assault cases.

Over the past several years the West Valley City Police Department (WVCPD) has reviewed and made intentional efforts to improve the agency's response to sexual assault. The department adopted a trauma-informed, victim-centered approach to respond to all reports of sexual assault. Personnel from WVCPD received comprehensive training on conducting a trauma-informed victim interview. WVCPD partnered with a forensic nursing professor to conduct the trainings and assess its impact. The results revealed that the trainings improved the quality of interviews, surveys with victims reflected high levels of satisfaction, and an analysis showed an increase in the number of sexual assault cases prosecuted (McBride, 2016). The agency has continued to conduct trainings and collaborate with partners on Salt Lake County's sexual assault response team (SART) (Kelly & Valentine, forthcoming). In 2015, WVCPD partnered with the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice/Utah Department of Public Safety to address the backlog of previously unsubmitted SAKs in West Valley City and other law enforcement agencies in Utah.

This report details the main findings and observations from the SAU Assessment for WVCPD, conducted from March to July 2018. The report also includes recommendations and

identifies available resources and trainings to address specific needs for the agency. As appropriate, the report integrates recommendations from the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act Working Group, a group sponsored by the National Institute of Justice that developed best practices and protocols for the collection and processing of DNA evidence in sexual assault cases (National Institute of Justice, n.d.).

The SAKI TTA program, led by RTI International, supports jurisdictions as they establish effective and sustainable practices for collecting and processing sexual assault evidence, investigating and prosecuting sexual assault cases, and supporting survivors of sexual assault. The SAKI TTA project team has expertise in sexual assault investigations, forensic nursing and evidence collection, forensic analysis, prosecution, victim advocacy and engagement, and research and evaluation.

1.2 Scope of the Assessment

WVCPD worked in collaboration with the SAKI TTA SAU Assessment Team (referred to hereafter as the “Assessment Team”) throughout the assessment process to ensure a full review of the department’s current sexual assault response procedures. The assessment included a review of department policies and procedures, interviews with key personnel, and a case review. This report provides WVCPD with a foundation to help recognize its strengths, identify areas for improvement, and provide agency direction that will lead to the implementation of practices to improve how the agency handles adult sexual violence cases.

For purposes of this assessment, the Assessment Team used the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI’s) definition of rape to determine which sexual assault case files to review. The FBI defines rape as “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim” (FBI, 2014). The Assessment Team reviewed case files from a 2-year period—2016 to 2017—that met the FBI’s definition of rape.

2. Assessment Methods

The Assessment Team consisted of four subject matter experts: one research criminologist with over 15 years of experience working with law enforcement agencies on their response to sexual assault and other violent crimes; two retired police officers with nearly 75 years of collective experience in law enforcement including sexual assault investigations; and one research analyst with expertise in qualitative analysis, sexual violence, and policing research. The team carried out the assessment in three stages:

1. Review relevant policies and procedures related to sexual assault response.
2. Hold in-person interviews with key staff, within and outside the law enforcement SAU.
3. Conduct a systematic review of sexual assault cases.

The Assessment Team developed specific processes for each stage to ensure that similar questions and metrics were obtained. The Assessment Team reviewed and agreed upon key findings to establish validity and recommendations.

The Assessment Team also linked recommendations to standards in the *National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach* report written by the SAFER Act Working Group (National Institute of Justice, n.d.). The National Institute of Justice-sponsored SAFER Act Working Group “was directed to address issues relating to evidence collection; prioritization of evidence and time periods for collection; evidence inventory, tracking, and auditing technology solutions; communication strategies; and victim engagement and notification.” (National Institute of Justice, n.d.). The SAFER Act Working Group identified 35 recommended best practices for jurisdictions to consider when addressing sexual assault and unsubmitted SAKs.

2.1 Policy Review

WVCPD provided the Assessment Team with copies of all written policies and procedures relevant to sexual assault response and investigations. This review assessed current WVCPD policy and compared it with national standards and best practices to identify potential strengths and gaps. As a guide for this sexual assault policy review, the team considered the following questions:

- Does the policy fall within the agency’s mission and resource capabilities?
- Does the policy incorporate best and current practices for responding to sexual assault?
- Has the policy been reviewed and updated within the past 5 years?

- Does the policy provide information on understanding victimization to include trauma-informed interviewing, victim-centered approaches, and offender characteristics?
- Does the policy address a comprehensive approach to sexual assault investigations which includes guidance for dispatchers, first responders, investigators, and supervisors?
- Does the policy outline specific roles and responsibilities of personnel who respond to or conduct investigations into sexual assault?
- Does the policy provide standards for investigators who are assigned to an investigative unit?
- Does the policy provide review and oversight guidelines for all supervisors?
- Does the policy provide case management standards for investigators that outline and describe how and when cases will be assigned, when follow-up will be completed, and how cases will be documented and supplemented?
- Does the policy provide standards for comprehensive training and continuing education in sexual assault?
- Does the policy provide guidance on the investigation of crime scenes and the handling of evidence in sexual assaults, including the transfer and laboratory submission of SAKs?
- Does the policy provide clear guidance on the clearing and closing of investigations, including a definition of “unfounded”?

2.2 Personnel Interviews

The Assessment Team aimed to interview all staff who commonly work on adult sexual assault cases or who support victims of sexual assault, including those who work within the law enforcement agency, as well as those who have county or community support positions. Over 2 days, the Assessment Team interviewed WPCPD Special Victims Unit (SVU) personnel (i.e., patrol officers, detectives, supervisors, victim advocates, and agency leadership) and other key personnel in West Valley City and Salt Lake County. WPCPD’s dedicated SAU—the SVU—falls under the Investigative Bureau—Major Crimes Division. The SVU sections are overseen by Sgt. Brandon Christiansen who supervises 6.5 SVU detectives. The crime laboratory, sexual assault nurse examiners, victim advocates, and prosecutors are external partners of the SVU.

The Assessment Team split into two-person teams to conduct the interviews using semi-scripted interview questions (see **Appendix A**). The interviews typically lasted 30 to 60 minutes. The Assessment Team then compiled and reviewed their notes to identify key themes and recommendations.

Table 2-1. Assessment Interviews

Agency Affiliation	Role	Number
West Valley City Police Department	Sexual Victims Unit detectives	7
West Valley City Police Department	Patrol officers	3
West Valley City Police Department	Line supervisors	1
West Valley City Police Department	Command staff	2
West Valley City Police Department	Victim advocates	2
Salt Lake County District Attorney’s Office	Line prosecutors	3
Utah Department of Safety Bureau of Forensic Services	Supervisor	2
Wasatch Forensic Nurses	Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner	1

2.3 Case Review

Reviewing investigative case files was a critical component of this project because it allowed the Assessment Team to review investigative procedures and department response in practice along with case outcomes. The Assessment Team reviewed all reported sexual assaults in the calendar years 2016 and 2017 that met the FBI’s summary definition of rape. The WVCPD provided the Assessment Team with case files that included incident numbers, dates, offense type, evidence log, suspect and victim information, original and supplemental reports, and case management notes.

The Assessment Team randomly selected and assigned case files for review. The team reviewed cases using a predetermined set of data metrics (see **Appendix B** for a list of data variables and definitions) and collected assessment measures that were discussed with WVCPD and agreed upon during the pre-site planning process. This information included the timeliness of the investigation, indications of victim-centered interactions with victims, use of standard investigative techniques, coordination with other jurisdiction resources, and completeness of documentation. During the case file review and data gathering, the team noted areas where information was missing or not documented in the original or supplemental police reports. The team relied on the agency case management notes to supplement information contained in the police reports when available.

To ensure confidentiality, the information recorded in the case file review did not include names, addresses, or other personal identifying information. All researchers associated with this project signed a confidentiality and nondisclosure agreement that ensures confidential information will not be shared outside of the research team. This methodology was reviewed and approved by the RTI Institutional Review Board, which protects human subjects in research.

3. Assessment Policies and Procedures

A strong and effective response to sexual assault can be directly reflected in an agency's policies and procedures. The standard for sexual assault policies should include a specialized policy that provides direction on how to respond to and investigate sexual assault cases. Policies should address the complexities of sexual assault cases and include—at a minimum—effective trauma-informed and victim-centered response methods; how to support victim advocacy, how to approach interviewing of victims and offenders; how to work as a SART; and how to coordinate the sexual assault forensic exam, evidence collection, storage, and laboratory submission. Written policies that dictate the response and follow-through of the sexual assault investigation process are critical to providing uniformity, sustainability, and accountability with the SVU and other agency staff, including patrol officers.

The Assessment Team reviewed the WVCPD's Policy/Operating Procedures related to the investigation of sexual assault. The Policy/Operating Procedures provide guidelines for how investigations should be conducted from the initial response of patrol through detective follow-up, evidence collection, and submission of evidence for forensic analysis. At the time of this assessment, the WVCPD was making changes to departmentwide policies and procedures, so the policies reviewed were either incomplete or in draft form. It is possible that there are or will be additional policies established that could expand upon or clarify the policies provided. However, that information was not available to the Assessment Team and as such the policy assessment cannot be considered comprehensive. The policy review aimed to (1) assess if the WVCPD's sexual assault response policies could independently guide a detective through the WVCPD sexual assault investigation process; (2) determine whether detectives trained in sexual assault investigations could successfully investigate a sexual assault within the stated guidelines; and (3) assess whether the policies and procedures are in line with known best practices, promising practices, and national standards in adult sexual assault investigations. The following WVCPD Policy/Operating Procedures were reviewed:

- Sex Offense Investigation Policy
- WVCPD Policy 804.7.2 Preservation of Biological Evidence
- WVCPD Policy 600 Investigation and Prosecution
- Special Victim Unit Expectation
- WVCPD Policy 602 Sexual Assault Victims' Rights
- WVC Victim Services Pamphlet

The Assessment Team's key finding is that the WVCPD should develop a comprehensive, written sexual assault policy for responding to and investigating sexual assaults. An

independent, written, and detailed policy for adult sexual assault cases would provide clear guidance to officers and establish sustainable practices in the department. Although strengths in WVCPD practices will be identified in following sections, strengths in WVCPD policy cannot be identified at this time because a full, written policy does not exist, and the policies reviewed are in development.

In addition, the Assessment Team identified the following key areas to strengthen within the existing policies or to include in new policies:

- **Sex Offense Investigation Policy: Introduction.** The policy begins with a statement that has negative implications for victims of sexual violence. It states that victims “may be unwilling or unable to assist in an investigation.”
 - **Recommendation:** Although the Assessment Team acknowledges that some victims do not wish to pursue sexual assault investigations, this is not the desire of most victims. Including this statement at the introduction to the policy may set a precedent that sexual assault cases will not move forward or create an expectation that sets victims of sexual violence on a predetermined path. This statement should be replaced or explored with more context in a different area of the policy.
- **Sex Offense Investigation Policy: Initial Officer Response.** The policy states, “if a victim desires, a victim advocate should be contacted.”
 - **Recommendation:** The policy should be revised to reflect national best practices, which suggest that an advocate should be contacted on all cases involving sexual assault. Victims will typically accept the services of an advocate; however, when simply asked whether they desire advocacy services, some victims will refuse services as their knowledge of what a victim advocate can provide them is limited or unknown. Also, the contact information for the WVCPD’s Victim Services and/or Rape Recovery Center should be included in the policy.
- **Sex Offense Investigation Policy: Initial Officer Response.** This policy references how the initial responding officer should contact a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) to respond to the hospital to meet the victim.
 - **Recommendation:** The policy does not contain reference to the partnership between the WVCPD and the Wasatch Forensic Nurses or provide their contact information. This information should be included to assist uniformed patrol officers unfamiliar with the handling of sexual assault investigations so that they can effectively respond.
- **Sex Offense Investigation Policy: Evidence Collection Procedures.** The policy states that the forensic nurse “will” document the victim’s injuries in the report.
 - **Recommendation:** The policy should be changed to “may” and direct officers to also note any observed injuries in their reports and include photographs as appropriate. Redundancy in this area shows a proactive approach and ensures that the documentation of injuries would be easily and permanently accessible within WVCPD’s Report Management System (RMS). The Assessment Team considers injury documentation within the incident report as one of the most effective forms of communicating and memorializing the assault.

- **Sex Offense Investigation Policy: Protecting the Victim.** This policy references how victims should be provided information about the State of Utah’s Crime Victims’ Rights.
 - **Recommendation:** The rights that victims should be advised of are not spelled out in this policy; however, the Assessment Team was able to locate these statutory rights in WVCPD Policy 602 Sexual Assault Victims' Rights. Some departments nationwide have combined victims’ rights into pamphlets for victims of crimes. Because such a pamphlet already exists in the agency, WVCPD could modify the pamphlet to list these rights and give them to officers to have in their possession. WVCPD could then add a check-box in the RMS to ensure that compliance checks or audits could be accomplished via a computer query.
- **Sex Offense Investigation Policy: Investigative Strategy.** This policy provides guidelines for contacting victims within 24 hours after the detectives receive the case assignment.
 - **Recommendation:** This policy is problematic because factors such as duty hours, manpower, and RMS delays may increase the length of time between the initial report and detective assignment. The timeframe between the initial statement to a patrol officer and the victim’s first contact with a detective plays an important role in the success of the investigation. Longer delays in this process can lower the chances that victims will proceed with cases. The Assessment Team understands that some situations may arise that will delay contact beyond 24 hours. However, it is considered national best practice to have detective contact with the victim *within 24 hours after the reported incident*. The Assessment Team recommends daily RMS queries or email notification be used to alert the SVU of possible cases, eliminating any delay in victim notification.
- **Sexual Offense Investigation Policy: Restricted Reports of Sexual Assault and Sexual Assault Code-R Kits.** The policy lays out four situations that an officer could encounter with a possible victim of a sex crime. It describes what a victim can and cannot do when making a sexual assault report. This is in line with best practices. However, the policy does not provide guidance about the type of report that should be prepared in each instance.
 - **Recommendation:** The policy should be expanded to list the type of report that should be written for restricted reports/non-investigative reports, particularly those that involve cases in which a Code-R kit is collected without a formal interview with law enforcement. Currently it is understood that WVCPD prepared a crime report in these cases. This practice places the onus of deciding if a crime has been committed on the SANE. To maintain the integrity of the RMS and crime reports, these reports could be written as an informational report, recovered article, or other type of non-criminal report until which time the victim wishes to make a formal report. In these instances, it is important that no information identifying a specific victim is included in these documents.
- **WVCPD Policy 600 Investigation and Prosecution.** This policy covers custodial interrogations and exculpatory evidence.
 - **Recommendation:** A policy for Investigation and Prosecution should be written to include typical situations that arise during the interview of victims, witnesses, and suspects; the arrest; or the formal booking and warrant screening. These topics are not covered in policies reviewed by the Assessment Team.

- **Special Victims Unit Expectations: Miscellaneous Paperwork.** This section references adding names to incident reports when that information was not entered previously.
 - **Recommendation:** During the case review, the Assessment Team observed that descriptor or demographic information was either missing or incomplete in officer and detective reports. To maintain RMS integrity, this policy should provide guidelines for detectives to review the reports and modify/update the name fields to ensure the entry of complete and accurate information. A quality assurance process should be implemented which would allow SVU investigators and supervisors to identify missing information and implement actions to complete entries.
- **Special Victims Unit Expectations: Victim Advocates.** The policy contains some information regarding the use of victim advocates on cases.
 - **Recommendation:** Consider adding guidelines about the use of victim advocates during trauma-informed victim interviews. This practice was observed within the case review, but it is not currently documented in policy.
- **Sexual Assault Victims' Rights: WVC Victim Services Pamphlet.** This pamphlet provides necessary information and resources to victims of crime.
 - **Recommendation:** The use of this pamphlet should be mandated by policy and the RMS should be amended to ensure compliance. A review of this pamphlet shows that it could easily be modified to add the State of Utah statutory requirements related to sexual assault victims.

4. Case Review Findings

The WVCPD investigative case file review included a sample of 98 sexual assault cases that were randomly selected across calendar years 2016 through 2017. The Assessment Team collected and extracted case information from WVCPD’s sexual assault investigative files. In some instances, the Assessment Team conducted follow-up interviews with WVCPD staff to collect additional information (e.g., updates for pending cases) or to address specific questions. **Table 4-1** displays a summary of case characteristics from the sexual assault cases that WVCPD investigated from 2016 to 2017.

Table 4-1. West Valley City Police Department Case Review Results

Sexual Assault Case Review	Results	Sexual Assault Case Review	Results
Number of Cases	98 100%	Interview recorded by patrol or detective	66 67%
Incident Location		Investigative Follow-up	
Victim’s Residence	31 32%	Witnesses Identified	63 64%
Suspect’s Residence	30 31%	Witnesses interviewed	35 36%
Residence unspecified	1 1%	Advocate Contacted	45 46%
Vehicle	10 10%	Suspect identified	80 82%
Outdoors/Alley/Public	6 6%	Suspect located	54 55%
Business/Hotel	5 5%	Suspect interviewed by detective	47 47%
Other	6 6%	Crime Scene Identified	77 79%
Unknown	9 9%	Crime scene located	49 50%
Case Characteristics		Crime scene processed	26 27%
Suspect known to victim	85 87%	Sexual Assault Evidence Collection	
Alcohol used by suspect	30 31%	Sexual assault exams completed/Sexual Assault Kit collected	69 70%
Alcohol used by victim	37 38%	Cases Submitted to Prosecutor	56 57%
Drugs used by suspect	11 11%	Arrests	21 21%
Drugs used by victim	12 12%		
Victim reported incapacitation	24 24%		
Investigation Process			
Case forwarded to detective for interview	73 74%		
Unfounded reports	3 3%		
Victim contacted by detectives after initial report	81 83%		
Interview Type			
Comprehensive detective interview completed	61 62%		
Phone contact only	5 5%		

5. Assessment Findings

The following section details the core findings from the WVCPD SAKI TTA SAU Assessment, including information gathered from the personnel interviews and investigative case file review. The Assessment Team identified processes that are working effectively, along with opportunities, response gaps, and department needs. Their observations also inform recommendations for improvement and can assist in the development of sustainable practices for those involved in WVCPD sexual assault response that can remain in place through staff turnover.

The findings are organized by the response stage, beginning with the initial response to the reported crime (by patrol and detectives) to the closure of the investigation. This report also addresses key findings related to the involvement of the key multidisciplinary partners associated with sexual assault response in West Valley City.

5.1 Initial Response to the Reported Crime

The Assessment Team found the WVCPD's initial response to reports of sexual assault to be timely, well-organized, and largely victim-centered. Generally, victims received the appropriate level of service and care. Initial interviews appeared to show a high degree of compassion and interest from WVCPD patrol officers and detectives who displayed an understanding of the importance of providing a victim-centered response, including the critical role of effective trauma-informed communication with the victim. External partners shared this same approach when they interacted and responded with the WVCPD on a report of a sexual assault. Although the initial response of WVCPD patrol officers and detectives was relatively strong, the Assessment Team identified opportunities to improve the overall agency response, as outlined in the next section.

5.1.1 Initial Response by Patrol Officers and Detectives

Initial patrol response at an early stage by an experienced sex crimes detective can help support positive case outcomes. This is supported by research on homicide cases that has shown that the timely response by detectives to the crime scene is one of the key predictors of case clearance (Wellford & Cronin, 2000). In the WVCPD investigative case file review, the Assessment Team identified that responding patrol officers notified sex crimes detectives 47% of the time at the initial report. Case files indicated that detectives ultimately responded in 20% of those cases. When detectives were notified, patrol officers advised them of the details of the case and requested guidance on additional necessary steps. There appeared to be a lack of consistency in both the notification of and response by the sex crime detective. At the time of the assessment, WVCPD was establishing a procedure to ensure that a sex crime detective is on call at all times. However, the

Assessment Team was unaware of any written WVCPD policy that guides how a sex crimes detective should be notified and what types of cases they should respond to.

Although there is no formal written department policy on patrol or detective response, Assessment Team interviews with both patrol officers and sex crimes detectives revealed a general understanding of their roles in the initial response. This was reflected in the case file reviews. Key aspects of a sound initial response were completed, which includes determining the scope of the crime, interviewing the victim, identifying potential witnesses, identifying the crime scene, coordinating any medical examinations, and identifying and locating the suspect(s). Procedures currently in practice, including how and when to offer a forensic sexual assault exam, could be better defined by creating a clear, written policy.

Documenting the Initial Response

Patrol officers documented that they limited their interview, questioning, and interaction with the victim to obtaining the essential facts needed to establish a criminal act. There were very few notable instances documented in which the officers used interviewing tactics that blamed or questioned the victim's actions. Officers frequently indicated that they had employed a trauma-informed victim interview. This finding validates the effectiveness of WVCPD's recent efforts to improve victim-centered, trauma-informed practices.

The time and effort of follow-up completed and subsequently documented by the initial responding patrol officer significantly varied from officer to officer. In case files reviewed by the Assessment Team, some patrol officers documented that they simply completed an initial victim interview, notified detectives, and assisted in facilitating a medical exam for the victim. In other cases, patrol officers made a concerted effort to locate a crime scene and routinely would make attempts to contact and interview the suspect. Some of the patrol actions may be extremely beneficial in the investigation; however, others, such as contacting a suspect early on, may prove to have a negative impact on the investigation strategy. Officers interviewed by the Assessment Team provided different perspectives as to their role in sexual assault response, which reflects the variance of responses observed in the case file review.

In most cases, patrol officers documented that they identified witnesses. However, clear documentation and necessary details about witnesses was inconsistently reported, witnesses were randomly mentioned, and information was sometimes incomplete. Rarely was witness information included in the pre-narrative sections of WVCPD's RMS. The reports often did not clearly articulate a witness' role in the case and many were never contacted or interviewed. A review of data indicated that in 64% of the cases witnesses were identified, only 36% of those were interviewed.

Responding patrol officers generally wrote the original investigative report, and when detectives did not respond to the original scene, the report was forwarded to the SVU via

the WVCPD RMS. The case file review indicates that the length of time it took RMS cases to be assigned to detectives varied. It took an average of approximately 4 days for RMS cases to be assigned to detectives after the initial report. The time to assignment ranged from 0 days to 44 days, with several instances of delays that lasted longer than 10 days. Efficient documentation and assignment of cases for follow-up investigation is a critical measure of the effectiveness of an investigative unit. Delays in this process can have adverse impacts on victim participation, evidence collection, and suspect location.

5.1.2 Victim Contact and Interviewing

Initial victim contact, provision of ongoing support, and victim and law enforcement interactions are some of the most critical aspects of the sexual assault response process. Delayed or poor initial interactions by law enforcement may contribute to victims choosing to not participate in the investigative process and may increase negative psychological effects for the victim. Research has shown that positive interactions with police can improve a victim's confidence in their ability to participate in the legal process (Patterson & Campbell, 2010). A victim-centered agency response should entail understanding, empathy, and support for victims at these initial stages and in gathering statements about the assault.

The case file review revealed that victim statements had been completed by both the initial patrol responder and, when appropriate, by the detective. Victim interviews documented in the written police reports appeared to be conducted in a trauma-informed and victim-centered manner. In many instances both patrol officers and detectives indicated in their reports that they had employed a trauma informed victim interview technique when speaking with the victim. During personnel interviews, most officers reported having received formal departmental training in trauma-informed victim interviewing. As a testament to this training, there were only isolated exceptions in which a patrol officer or detective questioned a victim in a way that could be construed as victim blaming.

Obtaining relevant information in an investigation is a core practice for any detective or officer. To accomplish this, the law enforcement officer conducts interviews with victims, witnesses, and suspects. In some of the case files that the Assessment Team reviewed, there were clear opportunities to gain additional information from the victim during and post interview. One patrol officer indicated during that some patrol officers may not continue to ask the victim for information because they fear asking or doing something that may adversely affect the case or the victim. However, what should be avoided instead is unnecessarily interrupting or halting a victim interview when the individual is providing important information. If agencies have clear patrol expectations and specific training for these exchanges, they may help alleviate this concern and improve the quality and quantity of relevant information.

West Valley City has a large Latino population. The Assessment Team observed in case file reviews that Spanish-speaking patrol officers or detectives from other units were brought in to assist with Spanish-language interviews with victim, witnesses, and suspects with limited English proficiency. Having bilingual investigators on staff in the SVU would help decrease response time in these scenarios and would improve the unit's ability to investigate cases. WVCPD should include a preference for fluency in Spanish in their assignment considerations for new detectives in the SVU.

A thorough investigation must include accurate and detailed documentation of the victim's statement, as it is a crucial element in a police report. To improve accuracy, officers may record statements made by victims, witnesses, and suspects. The assessment revealed that WVCPD patrol officers did record some victims' initial statements with video or audio devices. Most investigative files also indicated that the officer and/or detective utilized their body-worn camera to record their interaction with the victim. Overall, 67% of cases documented patrol and/or detective recording or videotaping the victim statement. Current WVCPD policy does not provide specific guidance on the recording of victim statements in sexual assault cases. When the Assessment Team interviewed personnel, there was not a clear understanding of whether officers could or should record statements. In addition, privacy concerns need to be considered when interviewing a victim in a hospital or medical setting. The agency should provide consistent and clear direction on recording interviews to enhance the investigative process and accurate documentation of cases. Recording victim interviews is accepted as a national best practice (Archambault & Lonsway, 2008), but one should also be aware of the potential impact that recording may have on a sexual assault victim's privacy.

The Assessment Team also noted several cases in which patrol officers or detectives asked the victim to complete a written statement on an agency form. When this request was made it occurred either during the initial patrol response or at the detective follow-up interviews. In one case, the victim was waiting at the hospital room for a forensic examination when the patrol officer asked her to complete the written statement. The Assessment Team did not have access to these written statements and they were not included in the case files. Although beneficial in specific circumstances, there is unclear rationale for having a sexual assault victim write a statement as a matter of practice, particularly considering that the interviews are generally recorded. In fact, it may have an adverse impact on the victim and the investigation. If the written statement is collected immediately after the assault, the impact of psychological trauma may make it difficult for the victim to recall the exact chronology of events or other important details. In these instances, such statements could be used by defense attorneys to impeach victims. (see http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/file/Projects_SART_LE_Written-Law-Enforcement-Statements.pdf).

Making a victim feel at ease and comfortable during initial contact is critical to the success of a sexual assault case. A patrol officer can facilitate a successful interview by choosing an appropriate and private location to talk. The case file review revealed that where the first responder interviewed victims varied and was, at times, situationally dependent. In general, patrol officers conducted interviews at the location where the victim called to report the assault or where police responded. In some cases, the patrol officer asked the victim to relocate to a more private area to conduct the initial interview or even stopped the interview if the victim seemed to be unable to complete the interview. Both examples reflect that the officer utilized a trauma-informed interview technique. There were isolated instances in which patrol officers conducted the victim interviews in open public areas where other individuals, including potential witnesses or even those not involved in the investigation, were present. The agency could effectively address this potentially ineffective or harmful approach on a case-by-case basis by providing and reinforcing ongoing training. All personnel should use supportive and private interview locations when speaking with sexual assault victims. By offering a safe and conducive environment for the victim to speak, a law enforcement official provides the greatest opportunity for continued engagement with the criminal justice system.

5.1.3 Detective Assignment and Victim Follow-Up Practices

Conducting timely and appropriate follow-up interviews with the victim by law enforcement is critical and has been shown to have a positive impact on a victim's continued participation in a case. Among the case files the Assessment Team reviewed, approximately 25% (n=25) indicated that the victim was "unable" to follow up with the officer or detective or was "uncooperative", essentially "dropping out" of the process. However, the officer seldom documented information that helped explain why this may have occurred. Whether the interaction with officers may have been played a factor in the victim's response to not engage is unclear, and further examination into this area would be beneficial to the SVU.

Among all the sexual assault cases the Assessment Team reviewed (n=98), 95 (97%) were assigned to a detective for follow-up. In general, cases had been assigned in a timely manner. However, the current process dictates that a patrol officer must write the report and a data entry specialist then records it in the RMS. These steps occur before the case is assigned to a detective for follow-up. This multi-step process may cause undue delay in case assignment and prevent efficient follow-up. At the time of this assessment, there is no written and operational WVCPD policy for case management, in particular the logistics of when, how, and who is responsible for assigning cases from patrol to detectives. Having a standing department policy that outlines this activity would ensure timeliness, direction, accountability, oversight, and the institutionalization of best practices.

Across the WVCPD cases, detectives successfully followed-up and contacted the victim 83% of the time. Approximately 40% of these victims were contacted by detectives within 48

hours or less. During team interviews, detectives did not relate any specific timeline for initiating follow-up contact and indicated there was no specific policy on when and how victim follow-up contact should be made. They reported that they would attempt to contact the victim as soon as was practical, which based on this review occurred within an average of 7 days, with a median time of 1 day from assignment to contact. WVCPD does not have a specific operational procedure for investigative contact with sexual assault victims.

When the Assessment Team examined detective-victim interaction in the case files, the team found that the majority (62%) included an in-person detective interview with the victim (which we also define as a follow-up or comprehensive detective interview). Conducting a second, more comprehensive interview of the victim can be a critical step to progressing the case and establishing a stronger tie between the detective and victim. WVCPD patrol officers indicated they operate under the premise that they will complete a cursory initial interview, and detectives will initiate a second more comprehensive interview, when appropriate. In many cases, the assigned detective requested that the victim appear in person at WVCPD main headquarters for a private follow-up interview (although WVCPD does not have a written standard policy detailing this requirement). Detectives should be aware that there are times when victims cannot or do not want to come to a police facility or when transportation is an issue, and that they should consider interview options for the victim. When it was difficult for detectives to locate victims, they did demonstrate effort by utilizing the WVCPD Crime Analysis Unit for assistance.

Re-contacting and re-interviewing the victim can further enhance the case by obtaining additional information, clarifying statements, and allowing the victim time and space to engage in the process. This practice also provides the opportunity for the victim to obtain resources and information, victim advocacy support, and a variety of services. When detectives could not locate victims or interview them or did not return phone calls, their cases were often suspended or closed. The WVCPD does not appear to have a clear policy or procedures for detectives to reference when following up with the victim, including what information should be recorded in the investigative supplement. For example, there were limited instances in which detectives were able to obtain new investigative information or statement clarification. Results of any type were not consistently documented to any detail (see Section 5.2, Case File Documentation). It is generally accepted as investigative practice that as new information germane to the case is obtained, investigative action should be taken.

Finally, the Assessment Team observed relatively little documentation of further contact between the detective and the victim beyond the follow-up interview. It is possible that detectives are making further contact but not documenting details in reports or case management notes or that victim advocates from WVCPD are keeping victims informed about their case (see Section 5.1.4).

5.1.4 Utilization of Victim Advocates and Follow-Up With Victims

A key action to take to ensure a victim-centered response is connecting the victim with advocacy support, both in the initial stages after reporting and throughout the investigation. WVCPD does not have any formal written policy that addresses the use of victim advocacy during a sexual assault response. WVCPD does have a Victim Advocates Office within the agency and recently began employing a victim advocate on many sexual assault cases. They were able to provide the Assessment Team with information about guidelines and response to sexual assault victims. The victim advocates appeared positive and enthusiastic about the collaborative partnership with the WVCPD officers and investigators and expressed their strong desire to continue this partnership. They expressed their preference to be the representative who re-contacts sexual assault victims, who schedules and takes part in the in-person trauma-informed interviews, and who provides follow-up progress reports to the victims. Community-based and agency-based advocates were described as having different responsibilities. The community-based advocates were responsible in general for crisis intervention with sexual assault victims at the hospitals. Detectives advised that they often employ the WVCPD advocate to conduct the first follow-up contact with victims and to schedule and be present for the in-person interview. In a small number of the cases the Assessment Team reviewed, a patrol officer or detective contacted a WVCPD system-based advocate to participate in the initial response to provide support to a victim. Several detectives reported having more successful contact with victims when a WVCPD advocate was involved. Detectives and patrol officers did not mention significant levels of interaction with community-based advocates but noted that these advocates were typically present at the hospital for forensic exams.

The Assessment Team found it challenging to evaluate the use of victim advocates in WVCPD sexual assault cases because there was inconsistent and minimal documentation of advocacy involvement within the investigative case files. It was difficult to ascertain whether advocates were notified during the initial response. Within the case files the Assessment Team found documentation of any response activity by an advocate in only 46% of cases. The case files in which there was clear documentation that an advocate had contacted the victim were mainly focused on the presence of the advocate during the interview. Whether the information contained in the files accurately reflects the services that the Victim Advocates Office provides is unclear. The Assessment Team requested to meet with the community advocacy group to explore this aspect of response but did not receive a response. Having advocacy response information available in the written report would assist in future investigative follow-up and contact with the sexual assault victim.

5.2 Case File Documentation

5.2.1 Accuracy and Consistency in Documentation

Complete, accurate, and consistent documentation of sexual assault cases from initial report through case closure is essential to investigations. This includes the terms used to describe actions or language used to record a victim's, suspect's, or witness' statement. In addition, documentation should include justification for engaging (or not) in certain activities, as well as updates on victim contact and follow-through, any outcomes (e.g., did the prosecutors file the case?), or case closure. More comprehensive documentation and outcome justification may help guide any subsequent reviews or assessment, including a cold case review, if the case remains unsolved. Accurate and consistent documentation is also crucial for informing agency-level leadership when addressing needs in policy and for identifying opportunities and gaps in the current victim response process. The agency must consider the amount of burden and workload that this may present to officers in their call for more robust and detailed documentation.

The case file review demonstrated that for WVCPD sexual assault cases, the level of detail and type of information entered by patrol officers and investigators varied considerably from report to report. This may be due in part to the data fields available in the current RMS and how they are utilized. The pre-narrative sections of the RMS contain limited structured fields for inputting standardized data. Having robust pre-narrative fields may support capturing more detailed and accurate documentation. More important, the RMS does not appear to provide a mechanism for conducting more detailed intelligence analysis of sexual assault cases (i.e., linking less severe or more serious cases, connecting persons between cases, or identifying common features regarding suspect patterns and behaviors). The Assessment Team also found that much of the critical demographical data for victims and suspects in the pre-narrative was missing or incorrect. This also hampers the effort to analyze sexual assault response. Adding a quality assurance oversight function and practice to current RMS audit would be beneficial to ensure complete and accurate crime reporting.

In general, the patrol officers and detectives included most data and case information in the narrative section of the report. Because law enforcement officials may utilize this free-text narrative section differently, there is a lack of consistency in current reports, with some information present in some reports but not in others. Examples of this inconsistency were observed by the Assessment Team in the documentation of notification of advocates, statements of the incident by the victim, suspect descriptions, identification and response to potential crime scenes and evidence, and witness discovery. Although this type of data was documented in some instances, it was not consistently present, did not provide clear details and information (e.g., important witness biographical information), and was at times missing altogether. Other case details, including case disposition documentation, lacked a standardized method for indicating how and why an official changed a case's status to

inactivated, closed, or investigation suspended (pending status). Currently, there appears to be no current agency policy or procedure to help provide investigative guidance (see Section 5.2.3, Case Resolution and Disposition).

5.2.2 Language Employed and Descriptive Content

The first impression and contact that the victim has with law enforcement can set the stage for further engagement in the investigation and impact healing and recovery for the victim. Positive interaction and verbal communication with the victim in the initial response and subsequent contacts can increase the likelihood of gathering additional accurate investigative information. Equally important is how these initial conversations are documented, as the language used can set the tone—positively or negatively—for an agency’s overall community reputation and citizen response.

The Assessment Team evaluated the language and description within the individual case file reports and found that officials routinely documented the victim statements using appropriate terminology and descriptors. Only on rare occasions did officials use words such as “alleged” or “claimed” to describe a victim’s statement.

During the interview process, most officers were appropriate in their description of sexual assault victims and generally avoided the use of victim-blaming language. The direction and course of questioning in a particular case may reveal that an officer took an inappropriate approach to victim interviewing. Officers should ensure language that used during investigations with victims who are LGBTQ+ is free from bias. In one case with a victim who had a female partner, the officer’s narrative report focused in several places on whether the victim still had sex with men; however, the officer was justified in asking when the victim last had sex to establish the probative value of any semen found in the kit. These questions did not appear to have much—if any—relevance to the investigation. Although this case was an exception, officers should take care to avoid language that may be perceived as discriminatory.

With the exception of some of the examples noted earlier, WVCPD sexual assault cases were documented in an unbiased and objective manner. Overall, most detectives refrained from documenting their opinion of the victim or the assault circumstances. In multiple instances, detectives explained that they understood if the victim could not remember details and to take their time, even if it meant delaying a comprehensive interview. Although event details are an important aspect of these cases, phrasing and language in written reports can negatively impact the victim, the agency, and the detective’s ability to build victim trust and rapport while obtaining accurate investigative information.

5.2.3 Case Resolution and Disposition

How an agency resolves sexual assault cases, including how it categorizes final disposition, directly reflects on the quality of the agency’s response to sexual assault. In reviewing the

case files, the Assessment Team noted that current case status, final disposition, or the closing of an investigation was generally documented in some manner, and 69% of cases had some indication of final closer. However, there appeared to be a wide and inconsistent range of documentation practices when the investigation was closed, and many case files lacked supporting justification and the rationale for why the case was suspended or closed. When a justification was provided (69 of the cases), the rationale included the victim not cooperating/or not wanting to prosecute (25%), case does not meet prosecution standards (13%), or lack of evidence (8%). In one example of a case closure, the detective wrote there was not enough evidence to indicate a crime was committed but provided nothing to support what led them to this conclusion.

Classification of cases as “unfounded” for sexual assault cases has been scrutinized and became a part of a greater discussion across the country about how sexual assault case are investigated. The Assessment Team identified within WVCPD a small number of cases closed as unfounded (no crime committed). Out of the 98 case files the team reviewed, approximately 3% were unfounded sexual assault reports. National research indicates that between 2% and 8% of rape cases fall into this category (Lonsway, Archambault, & Lisak, 2009); Therefore, WVCPD unfounded cases fall within this generally accepted area (PERF, 2013). The team deemed the use of the unfounded disposition in these cases as appropriate, given the case facts as documented by the investigator. One example noted that a case was unfounded after the victim had called the detective and stated that the sexual contact had been consensual.

5.3 Investigative and Crime Scene Follow-Up

After the initial contact and interview of the victim, investigative follow-up and crime scene investigation, are critical components of a high-quality sexual assault response. Follow-up practices should involve inquiries into information obtained that is relevant to the investigation. This encompasses identifying and processing a crime scene and potential physical evidence (see Section 5.3.5, Locating and Processing Crime Scenes), interviewing relevant witnesses, obtaining information on social media, conducting confrontational or controlled calls with the suspect (see Section 5.3.3, Conducting Confrontational or Controlled Calls), and contacting and interviewing the suspect. These activities constitute a thorough investigation and contribute to successful case outcomes.

During the case file review, the Assessment Team noted consistent missed opportunities for investigative follow-up. If they had been taken, these investigative steps may have helped alter the case outcome. The following common missed investigative opportunities were noted in many of the WVCPD cases reviewed:

- No attempt to identify or locate several potential witnesses named in the report
- Incomplete follow-up victim interviews that may have yielded additional information

- Not obtaining, reviewing, and documenting medical records from victim treatment at the hospital to identify additional corroborating information
- Not following up on a potential crime location or documenting the location
- Not following up on a potential sexual assault suspect/s mentioned in the original police reports

One case file example report contained information about two unknown but potential suspects in a home intrusion case. There was information that would have aided in identification, and with minimal follow-up, these individuals may have been identified, included, or eliminated as suspects. The case file did not include information about any additional investigative effort made by officials to seek out these individuals.

5.3.1 Follow-Up With Witnesses

Identifying, locating, and interviewing all persons with information about a crime is a core and accepted investigative standard. In 64% of the sampled case file reports, officers and detectives indicated there were additional witnesses or other persons with information about the crime. Of these potential witnesses, WVCPD investigators followed up with all potential witnesses for interviews in 36% of cases according to documentation in the case file. Names of potential witnesses were observed in the written case files; however, this information was not consistently documented and was almost exclusively contained in the narrative of the report. This approach inhibits effective crime analysis in a case. In addition, this information generally appeared in the form of a name with no supporting documentation of their relationship to the crime or contact information. Witness information rarely appeared in the pre-narrative section of the RMS, the most appropriate area to consistently document and analyze this information.

5.3.2 Interviewing Suspects

Obtaining a suspect statement is a critical and valuable step in the investigation of a sexual assault case. The detective must carefully plan this process, including determining when and how to interview a suspect and being sure to use the requisite interviewing skills. All attempts should be made to legally and professionally conduct suspect interviews in every case. Standard practice should be to conduct an interview in cases in which a suspect is named and identified during the law enforcement response.

Through the Assessment Team's WVCPD file review, the team concluded that a suspect was named or identified in 82% of sexual assault cases. Among these cases with an identified suspect, 55% included documentation that the suspect was located by a patrol officer or a detective, and the detective interviewed the suspect in 47% of these cases. As with any investigation, there are factors that influence the decision and ability to conduct an interview (e.g., no probable cause to arrest and suspect refused to be interviewed, potential threat to victim as suspect is current or former partner, or the location of the suspect is

unknown). In several cases, the suspect interview took place over the phone. Although this may be the only opportunity to interview a suspect, it should not inhibit the detective from completing legal steps to facilitate an in-person interview. Conducting a phone interview is an acceptable practice for gathering facts on a new criminal incident; however, it is not acceptable to use a telephone interview in lieu of a formal interview. Telephone interviews and noncustodial interviews should be followed by a custodial interview.

Understanding the dynamics of sexual assault and suspects in these cases is important to developing an effective interview strategy. For the most part, when the Assessment Team reviewed the case file report, they were unable to determine the quality and type of interviews that were conducted. In most suspect interviews conducted by both officers and investigators, it appeared that the questioning was approached as simply a step needed to complete the case. No clear strategy emerged in their review of these interviews and many times officials simply asked the suspect if they had assaulted the victim. Overwhelmingly, when questioned, suspects did not make any admissions. However, they did provide information with potential investigative follow-up opportunities. Upon completion of the interview, case follow-up was limited; there was no indication of any concerted effort to do so. It was rare that a suspect was interviewed a second time even when the detective discovered new investigative information. This may be a function of limited investigative time, training, or experience in interviewing. WVCPD currently has no written policy on suspect contact and follow-up.

Interviews with potential suspects may also provide detectives with the opportunity to legally collect forensic evidence from the suspect. Based on the case file documentation, in only 19% of cases in which a suspect was contacted, officials attempted to collect any forensic evidence from the suspect. Several factors may inhibit evidence collection. When a collection was possible but not completed, good standard practice is to articulate any rationale in the written report.

Keeping key investigative information confidential allows the detective to conduct an investigation with minimal risk of leaking or compromising valuable case information to a suspect or witness. Occasionally during the case file review, the team found that the investigative follow-up strategies employed may have compromised the case. There were instances when case detectives were unable to locate a suspect, and they left a message with a relative or friend of the suspect.

On several occasions, detectives and patrol officers contacted and interviewed suspects prematurely—before the victim and key witnesses had been comprehensively interviewed. At this point, officials had only collected limited statements and basic case facts and information (see Section 5.3.3). Having as much information about an assault prior to the suspect interview greatly improves the opportunity to employ key interview strategies. In some cases, the Assessment Team noted that detectives waited several weeks or months

before interviewing suspects. Although it is important to avoid interviewing the suspect prematurely in an investigation, the team determined that the delay in interview was not related to an investigative strategy. Such delays may increase the opportunity for a suspect to hear information that may compromise the success of the interview.

5.3.3 Conducting Confrontational or Control Calls

Sexual assaults are one of the most difficult types of cases to investigate for several reasons. Consequently, sexual assault detectives must have experience and knowledge in using a variety of investigative tools to help resolve cases. One tool available is the “controlled” or “confrontational” call with a suspect, which is completed by the victim but under the guidance of the investigator. This tool requires the victim to be willing and emotionally able to participate in a monitored phone call with their suspect using the element of surprise. This investigative method can be compromised if the suspect is “notified” of the investigation or contacted by officers early on in the process, which occurred on multiple occasions in WVCPD cases. The call, if successful, could provide valuable information and assist in moving a case forward toward a resolution.

5.3.4 Accessing and Searching Electronic or Social Media Data

Electronic evidence in sexual assault cases may provide valuable information on suspect or victim relationships and activities, corroborate information, or identify witnesses or associates not previously known. Electronic evidence includes data from cell phones (e.g., texts, call logs, and Global Positioning System [GPS] locations) and information from social media (e.g., emails and posts on sites such as Instagram and Facebook). Currently, WVCPD has no established written policy or protocol for obtaining, documenting, and preserving this type of data. During the case file review, the Assessment Team found that electronic information was sought and accessed in only a small number of cases (i.e., 22% cellphone data; 12% social media). It was unclear and not documented whether legal or other restrictions limited this number. However, in cases indicating that a mobile device had been a part of the victim-suspect interaction, there was not sufficient documentation as to (1) whether data from the mobile devices was accessed, and (2) what information—if obtained—was collected and utilized in the investigation. Providing additional guidelines and training in this area may help clarify and develop this type of investigative practice for case follow-up.

5.3.5 Locating and Processing Crime Scenes

Crime scene examination is another important avenue that can lead detectives to identify important investigative information. It can also corroborate the victim’s and witness’ statements and assist in analyzing the suspect’s statement. Identifying and collecting items of evidentiary value beyond the SAK is a critical component of an effective sexual assault response. This evidence may be physical, forensic, electronic, or video. The ability to

process a crime scene is contingent on searching for and successfully identifying the location in question. WVCPD does have a general, agency-wide policy in place that gives direction for the identification, collection, and storage of evidence contained in relation to crimes, including crime scene processing.

In 79% of the reports, the narrative identified a potential crime scene. Of those reports approximately 50% documented that the crime scene was located. Of those crime scenes located, around half were processed in some fashion (i.e., examined, processed, and evidence collected).

In some reports, patrol officers indicated that they completed an initial scene follow-up investigation prior to submitting their written report. Patrol officer crime scene follow-up generally consisted of arranging transportation for the victim to a sexual assault medical exam, or—in some cases—impounding a limited number of evidentiary items. In several cases, the crime scene was located; however, no investigative steps or actions were taken, and, therefore, no potential key additional evidence was documented or collected.

Having an experienced and knowledgeable detective on a crime scene can also greatly enhance the investigative opportunities and potential for case resolution. Patrol officers at a potential crime scene sometimes asked for assistance and notified the on-call SVU detective. SVU or on-call detectives responded to the scene in 20% of the cases the team reviewed. Physical response by SVU was varied which may be a result of a variety of criteria, although there is no written WVCPD policy that identifies criteria for a detective's on-scene response.

Case files also showed that additional probative evidence was identified and/or impounded in 26% of the case file reports. This evidence included, but was not limited to, crime scene photographs, text and emails, and physical evidence such as victim clothing and bedding. T case file review also indicated that when most crime scenes were located they were investigated by a patrol officer. The handling, collection, and subsequent laboratory testing of evidence is crucial in an effective and thorough investigation; however, the majority of crime scenes in these cases were processed by patrol officers—not trained forensic evidence technicians. Having an agency policy and practice in place and that ensures that personnel are trained properly or that appropriate staff are dispatched to evaluate a crime scene would help establish a sound foundation for sexual assault response.

5.4 Physical Evidence and Laboratory Analysis

A complete forensic medical evaluation and the collection of a SAK have many benefits for victim recovery and investigative success after an assault. It can also provide critical forensic evidence to identify the elements of a crime, the suspect, and investigative leads. In 70% of the sexual assaults reported to WVCPD, the victim had a sexual assault examination and a SAK was completed. In the case file review, the Assessment Team found

documentation that included the victim's willingness to participate in the sexual assault medical examination. Documenting this type of information can assist detectives in assessing the case and developing an investigative strategy, identifying suspects, and providing support for the victim.

Patrol officers occasionally noted in the case files that they helped transport victims to the hospital for a medical examination, facilitating the completion of a medical exam and SAK, and also the increasing the likelihood of communication between law enforcement officers and medical personnel. However, there did not appear to be clear guidance for patrol officers to provide hospital transport for victims if this need was identified. For example, in one case the responding patrol officer gave the victim information on the hospital location "if she desired to have an exam." Having a clear response protocol and policy for patrol officers and detectives to follow for hospital transport would help support victims and eliminate confusion and potential missed opportunities.

The Utah Department of Public Safety Bureau of Forensic Services provides a full spectrum of forensic services to law enforcement agencies across Utah. In interviews with state laboratory personnel, staff indicated that communicating with law enforcement agencies across the state can be challenging due to a lack of internal resources and the lack of an effective communication mechanism targeted to law enforcement. The submission of evidence, requests for analysis, and testing results are generally communicated in a statewide electronic format. It was not possible to determine the average timeframe of SAK submission because the information was generally not documented in the case file reports. Similarly, information regarding laboratory testing turnaround times or analysis results was not included in the vast majority of case file reports. Accurate and consistent documentation of laboratory testing results are important when evaluating the overall sexual assault response and identifying potential gaps and opportunities between the laboratory and investigators.

Finally, notification to law enforcement of DNA results from the National Combined DNA Index System (CODIS, which is administered by the Utah laboratory CODIS administrator) is sent by standard mail to the submitting detective at the submitting agency. This method was sometimes described as unreliable or inefficient, as the detectives who submitted original requests may have moved to other positions or to other agencies. There is no uniform way for SVU supervisors to monitor DNA results through the current DNA CODIS hit notification system. It would be helpful to explore the possibility of creating a new more efficient CODIS notification process moving forward (e.g., establishing an email account or electronic "mailbox" that certain officials within a law enforcement agency could access).

5.5 Case Submission to the Prosecutor

The district attorney's office has a designated sexual crimes prosecution unit that reviews, charges, and prosecutes sexual assaults. WVCPD also participates in a standardized case submission process in which WVCPD detectives electronically submit the entire case file to the district attorney's office. Once the case is submitted, the assigned detective and reviewing prosecutor complete an in-person case review. The concept behind this process is to enhance communications and expedite the formal review of WVCPD sexual assault cases.

The case submission process was discussed during the personnel interviews with both WVCPD investigators and staff with the Salt Lake County District Attorney's Office (SLCDAO). Staff from both agencies indicated that, at times, case submission was a point of frustration. Based on the case files reviewed, 57% of WVCPD sexual assault cases were formally submitted to the prosecutor. Case submissions and filing dispositions were documented within most case files. Accurate and consistent documentation of this type of information would increase the quality of an assessment of an agency's sexual assault response and their relationship with the prosecuting attorney.

Within the case files, the team found no documentation indicating if a case had been submitted for review. Many case files also lacked the supporting rationale for the ultimate submission decision and investigative discretion appears to be a factor in the decision-making process. Personnel at WVCPD verbally indicated that detectives are expected to screen all cases with a cooperating victim. The Assessment Team noted that multiple investigations were submitted to the prosecutor prior to the completion of additional investigative steps and follow-up opportunities. WVCPD currently has no written standards for submitting a case to the prosecutor and the subsequent review process. WVCPD supervisor approval is not required to submit a case to a prosecutor. Having a standard policy would ensure consistency across investigations and provide guidance for detectives. It may also address communication challenges between WVCPD and the SLCDAO.

5.6 Special Victims Unit Resources and Workload

One goal of the assessment was to examine the size of the SVU staff, their roles within the agency, and the availability of other support personnel to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the collective sexual assault response.

5.6.1 *Special Victims Unit: Detective Caseload?*

At the time of this assessment, the WVCPD SVU maintained six full-time detectives and one half-time detective who also managed the agency's sex offender registry. The department was supervised by one detective sergeant. Based on information provided by the SVU supervisor, for 2017, the 6.5 SVU detectives were assigned a combined total of 613 sexual assault cases. This averaged to approximately 94 sexual assault cases per detective/per year, or about eight cases per detective/per month.

Although there is very limited rigorous research that addresses staffing and caseloads for SVUs, previous reports estimate the optimal detective caseload to be two to eight cases per month. However, there are several additional factors that must be considered. In addition to sexual assault cases, the WVCPD SVU detectives continue to investigate other types of cases, including nonviolent and/or non-penetrative sex crimes. This additional work impacts a detective's ability to concentrate their time on sexual assault cases including their capacity to incorporate many of the investigative follow-up activities recommended in this type of case. Achieving an appropriate victim-centered response requires more time spent per case as well as additional staff resources. Furthermore, during staff interviews, the WVCPD detectives reported that fatigue and burnout within the unit had been a significant issue.

The Assessment Team recommends that WVCPD leadership strongly consider adding a minimum of one to two SVU investigators and taking other steps to enhance resources that could free up investigator time (see Section 5.6.5, Support Staff). The agency should also consider adding a full-time cold case investigator to the SVU. The Assessment Team identified other opportunities of improvement including formalizing a process for identifying and recruiting the most suitable candidates for SVU investigative positions and developing guidelines and qualifications for SVU detectives and supervisors (see Section 5.6.4).

5.6.2 Agency Advocates: Do They Have Enough Staff?

In the interviews conducted with internal agency staff and external partners, the Assessment Team also noted that WVCPD's SVU has only one agency-based victim advocate currently supporting adult sexual assaults as well as a supervisor which also provides some level of support to the unit. Given the WVCPD's sexual assault caseload, current policies, and recommended policies, the Assessment Team recommends an increase of at least one additional victim advocate to support the unit. This would ultimately save time for the detectives in the unit and improve the unit's ability to serve victims throughout the entire sexual assault investigation and victim engagement process.

5.6.3 Training and Experience of Special Victims Unit Staff

Most personnel reported that they had received a limited amount of training but had received training in trauma-informed victim interviewing. The type and amount of training experience varied across officers and detectives. They were not aware of any organized effort to specifically provide training to key personnel. All personnel expressed a desire to receive additional and ongoing training in sexual assault response and investigations. They believed this training would be helpful in improving their response to victims and the quality of their investigations. Several personnel requested additional crime scene and evidence collection training. The team sees a critical need for the WVCPD to review, assess, and mandate specialized sexual assault training at the agency.

5.6.4 Mentorship and Supervision Opportunities

Appropriate assignment and personnel selection are pivotal to running an effective SVU. WVCPD currently has no operational procedures or standards for identifying and selecting investigative and supervisory personnel to the sexual assault unit. Recruiting and retaining at all SVU positions sets the foundation for a sustainable response to sexual assault cases. WVCPD would benefit from implementing an effective job qualification and transfer process exclusively for sexual crimes detectives and supervisory positions. This action would help communicate the importance of these cases to WVCPD department leadership and demonstrate their commitment to improve their response to victims of sexual assault in West Valley City.

5.6.5 Support Staff

A final staffing component to consider is utilizing support staff for the SVU to assist detectives through supportive activities such as data collection, case and offender crime analysis, case tracking, data entry, data management, filing, answering phones, and other clerical activities. Personnel interviewed did on routine basis access the WVCPD Crime Analysis Unit staff, but they also believed that additional support personnel would allow them more investigative follow-up time and relieve them of some occasional administrative duties. WVCPD should also assess and consider establishing an SVU-dedicated crime analysis position. Across a growing number of U.S. jurisdictions, new information is emerging on the prevalence of serial sexual assaults and crossover offenses with other types of crime (Lovell et al., 2017). Developing a process for identifying these offenders through crime analysis and forensic evidence is a critical aspect of conducting strong sexual assault investigations.

5.7 Multi-Agency Communication and Collaboration

Research has shown that working collaboratively as a multidisciplinary team in the response to sexual assault is advantageous for communities (Greeson & Campbell, 2013). A multidisciplinary team can foster sharing of resources and expertise, improve identification of successful response strategies, and provide a seamless response to victims of sexual assault. Within the West Valley City community, the Assessment Team spoke with SANEs, victim advocates, prosecutors, and crime laboratory personnel—all key disciplines for establishing a model, holistic, sexual assault response.

5.7.1 Forensic Medical Providers

The Wasatch Forensic Nursing program is a well-established and organized forensic nursing program that supports victims of sexual assault in Salt Lake County. The group has dedicated special liaisons who work with the WVCPD and other law enforcement agencies and provide training for their staff. Based on interviews with staff from the Wasatch Forensic Nursing program and the WVCPD the Assessment Team determined that there was positive

coordination and communication between agencies. However, the case file review revealed limited documentation about forensic medical exam results or documentation of communication with the SANE about victim statements. This conclusion was supported by interviews in which the SANE reported generally having limited contact with the responding patrol officer.

Establishing a written policy that defines when and how to contact the Wasatch Forensic Nurses would be beneficial for a number of reasons. Contacting the forensic nurse as quickly as possible after the 911 call would facilitate a faster arrival at the hospital and could lead to a greater chance of recovering forensic evidence and increase the likelihood of interaction between the patrol officer and the SANE. Among cases in which the victim did receive a medical forensic exam and have a SAK collected, only 11% of case files indicated that the kits were submitted to the Utah Department of Public Safety Bureau of Forensic Services for analysis. Utah legislation requires the submission of all rape kits to the crime laboratory for analysis. Based on the file review, it is not clear whether this process is not being followed or not being properly documented and warrants further investigation. Similarly, based on the case files, only 6% of cases reviewed had language that indicated that the laboratory had completed DNA analysis.

5.7.2 Prosecution

Members of the SLCDAO expressed their commitment to pursuing cases of sexual assault, improving the system response, and facilitating open communication with the WVCPCD and their investigators. Sexual assault prosecutors participate in regular meetings and joint case review, and encourage investigators to contact them at any phase of the investigative process. SLCDAO prosecutors commented that they would like to increase staffing and resources for sexual assault cases, and believe this would improve the prosecution response to cases. The prosecutors also indicated that conducting more robust WVCPCD investigations and including thorough documentation in the cases submitted to their office would greatly improve their ability to file and prosecute more cases. These changes could be made and supported by the WCVOD by establishing a consistent review process and requiring case file approval by the WVCPCD SAU supervisor prior to case submission to prosecutors.

Another beneficial change would be to educate detectives on the specific details required in the case file for SLCDAO to effectively prosecute a case. For example, prosecutors reported that they were planning to prepare a sexual assault prosecution checklist to help guide investigators on standards. Joint case review was generally reported as positive but was sometimes hampered by extended delays when prosecutors needed to provide additional case follow-up guidance to investigators. SLCDAO also indicated that they have had to manage a heavy prosecution caseload with a shortage of internal resources and legal support staff. Despite these challenges, SLCDAO staff reinforced their commitment to

working with WVCPD and other law enforcement agencies to improve all aspects of the sexual violence response.

5.7.3 Crime Laboratory

The crime laboratory plays a significant role in the WVCPD’s response to sexual assault. The laboratory provides forensic services to the agency including testing SAKs and other forensic evidence. Members of the Utah Department of Public Safety Bureau of Forensic Services expressed their support for the WVCPD and working with all law enforcement in Utah as they address sexual assault crimes. Their ability to provide timely and important forensic testing in cases of sexual assault is greatly affected by their access to available resources. Their current lack of resources limits their ability to communicate broadly with law enforcement agencies across the state including SARTs or sexual assault multidisciplinary teams. Nevertheless, the crime laboratory is committed to providing excellent service to its partners.

In interviews with the crime laboratory staff, the Assessment Team discussed communication and resources including how CODIS hits are sent to notify case detectives.. As described previously in this report, there is not an effective notification system nor a check-and-balance system in place to ensure essential communication and feedback from the laboratory to law enforcement, and vice versa. Improving communication is a priority for both the crime laboratory and the WVCPD SVU and both expressed their commitment to continuing this effort.

6. Recommendations and Opportunities

Having a high-functioning coordinated trauma-informed and victim-centered response to sexual assault is the goal of any police agency. The WVCPD has many components in place that establish the foundation for a strong response to sexual assault. Using trauma-informed approaches, WVCPD has ensured that their officers investigate sexual assaults and interact with victims by focusing on their well-being and ultimately holding offenders accountable. Patrol officers and detectives carry out their responsibilities in these investigations in a professional and informed way. Specialized investigators are utilized to ensure that cases of sexual assault are efficiently and effectively investigated. WVCPD communicates regularly with their partners to address gaps and challenges while providing a best practice response.

WVCPD displays and employs many positive and promising practices in their handling of sexual assault cases. However, as with all organizations, there is a need to address gaps and challenges to accomplish their goal of continuously improving their response to adult sexual assault cases. Outlined below are the key strengths of the WVCPD and recommendations based on the comprehensive agency review conducted by the Assessment Team.

The Assessment Team's recommendations are linked to recommendations from SAFER Act Working Group, where appropriate (National Institute of Justice, n.d.). For support for these recommendations, visit www.SAKITTA.org. The Assessment Team offers briefs, virtual technical assistance, and online coursework to support these recommendations in the form of online training via SAKI TTA webinars, the SAKI TTA Toolkit, and the SAKI TTA Virtual Academy. Opportunities for in-person training are also available.

6.1 Strengths

The following strengths were identified during the assessment and can serve as foundations for continued improvement:

- The department has established a solid foundation for victim-centered response. Responding patrol officers and investigative detectives had received training and put into practice a trauma-informed, victim-centered approach when responding to sexual assault victims. Victim interviews were conducted in a nonconfrontational, trauma-informed manner.
- All reports of sexual assault were documented in an official police report by the responding officer. These initial patrol reports were consistently reviewed by supervisory patrol staff and assigned to a specialized sexual assault detective unit for follow-up investigation.
- A standardized response process is in place to give sexual assault victims the opportunity to receive medical care, including a forensic examination by a trained SANE.

- There is a regular and standardized communication process with the district attorney's office to submit and review sexual assault investigations to consider if charges should be filed.
- Supervisors and detectives assigned to the SAU are committed to providing a high-quality response and continued support to victims of sexual assault. Their commitment is demonstrated by their request for this assessment and cooperation throughout the process.

6.2 Gaps, Needs, and Recommendations

As with any organization, there are opportunities to identify and address areas that require improvement. The intent of this list of recommendations is to build on the already strong foundation that is in place. The Assessment Team identified the following overarching opportunities for improvement or enhancement in WVCPD's policies, procedures, and training:

6.2.1 *Develop a comprehensive written sexual assault policy for responding to and investigating sexual assaults.*

A written and detailed policy for sexual assault response can provide sustainability as supervisors and staff change as well as a level of consistency in the understanding and implementation of departmental policies and practices.

This recommendation is in alignment with the broader *SAFER Recommendation 21*: Law enforcement agencies should establish a system of accountability to ensure the timely follow-up on CODIS hits.

SAFER Recommendation 19: Law enforcement agencies should perform an annual audit verifying that all SAKs in the property room are present and in their specified location.

SAFER Recommendation 35: Mandatory training for those responding to sexual assault should be incorporated into every agency's strategic plan.

6.2.2 *Establish case follow-up and closure procedures.*

All sexual assault investigations should follow an accepted investigative procedure for officials to follow from case assignment, to follow-up, to case closure to ensure consistency and efficiency, and thorough investigation.

This recommendation is in alignment with the broader *SAFER Recommendation 15*: SAKs should be received by the local law enforcement agency from the hospital or clinic as soon as possible, ideally, no later than three (3) business days from the collection of the kit, or as specified by statute.

SAFER Recommendation 16: Law enforcement agencies should submit the SAK to the laboratory for analysis as soon as possible, ideally, no later than seven (7) business days from the collection of the SAK, or as specified by statute.

SAFER Recommendation 21: Law enforcement agencies should establish a system of accountability to ensure the timely follow-up on CODIS hits.

SAFER Recommendation 23: Law enforcement agencies should implement electronic records management systems that incorporate investigative workflows to improve case investigations and communication.

6.2.3 Establish policy for entering cases in the RMS.

Ensuring that written sexual assault reports and subsequent documentation are entered into the RMS in a detailed and complete manner will benefit the agency. Such practices will provide the ability to improve the outcomes for specific cases and also create additional opportunities for case review and quality control across all sexual assault cases and investigations.

This recommendation is in alignment with the *SAFER Recommendation 23:* Law enforcement agencies should implement electronic records management systems that incorporate investigative workflows to improve case investigations and communication.

6.2.4 Establish RMS automated supervisory report and case review function.

More consistent supervisor review and approval of cases within the RMS will help ensure that recognized standards for investigation documentation are being upheld and will promote the completeness, accuracy, and consistency of all WPCPD sexual assault reports. It also will provide accountability and direction in identifying and addressing gaps or opportunities in sexual assault response.

This recommendation is in alignment with the *SAFER Recommendation 23:* Law enforcement agencies should implement electronic records management systems that incorporate investigative workflows to improve case investigations and communication.

6.2.5 Provide adequate staffing and resources.

Staffing and other resources should be appropriated to address the volume of sexual assault cases in the agency. This will ensure that detectives are given the opportunity and means to fully investigate and resolve assigned cases.

This recommendation is in alignment with the broader *SAFER Recommendation 22*: All law enforcement personnel involved in sexual assault investigations should receive training in the neurobiology of trauma and specialized skills for interviewing sexual assault victims.

SAFER Recommendation 35: Mandatory training for those responding to sexual assault should be incorporated into every agency’s strategic plan.

SAFER Recommendation 3: Agencies should collaborate and involve victim advocates early in the process to create a more victim-centered approach to the criminal justice process.

6.2.6 Establish procedures for the submission and review of completed sexual assault investigations with the district attorney’s office.

Having an established and agreed-upon case submission and review process will improve communication and assist in expediting cases.

6.2.7 Implement a comprehensive training program for sexual assault response.

Provide increased direction and support for implementing mandatory and reoccurring training for sexual assault detectives. This training can assist with ensuring standardized processes are in place for supervisors to assess and evaluate the response and performance of investigators in the SVU.

This recommendation is in alignment with the broader *SAFER Recommendation 22*: All law enforcement personnel involved in sexual assault investigations should receive training in the neurobiology of trauma and specialized skills for interviewing sexual assault victims.

SAFER Recommendation 2: Sexual assault responders should use a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach, when engaging with victims of sexual assault.

SAFER Recommendation 35: Mandatory training for those responding to sexual assault should be incorporated into every agency’s strategic plan.

6.2.8 Evaluate the effectiveness of the department’s responses to cases of sexual assault.

Develop processes for assessing how the department is performing. This should include an annual community-based survey with questions about victimization not reported to the police and perceptions about trust and confidence in the police department (e.g., are victims more likely to cooperate with the police).

This recommendation is in alignment with the broader application of *SAFER Recommendation 35*: Mandatory training for those responding to sexual assault should be incorporated into every agency’s strategic plan.

SAFER Recommendation 4: The multidisciplinary approach should seek out and include voices from underserved or vulnerable populations in the community’s response to sexual assault cases.

SAFER Recommendation 34: Jurisdictions should develop a communication strategy to increase transparency and accountability to stakeholders within their communities regarding the response to sexual assault.

SAFER Recommendation 19: Law enforcement agencies should perform an annual audit verifying that all SAKs in the property room are present and in their specified location.

6.3 Full List of Recommendations

Based on the analysis of assessment findings, a full list of recommendation were identified for the WVCPD in **Table 6-1**.

Table 6-1. Full List of Sexual Assault Unit Assessment Recommendations

Initial Response by Patrol Officers and Detectives
Establish procedures and written policies to guide how SVU detectives will be notified and called to respond on scene to sexual assaults.
Clearly define how and when a forensic sexual assault exam should be offered in a written policy and ensure that patrol officers and detectives are aware of the policy.
Documenting the Initial Response
Establish procedures to ensure that witness information is consistently and accurately documented and recommend that detectives follow up with all witnesses who may have information germane to the case.
Victim Contact and Interviewing
Ensure that patrol officers receive basic training on how to respond to cases involving sexual assault and their role in the initial response. Consider establishing a program within patrol units with specially trained patrol officers who will be called to all cases involving a sexual assault when available.
Consider Spanish fluency when hiring detectives for the SVU. If possible, hire at least one detective who can conduct interviews in Spanish.
Establish a policy that outlines when written statements should or should not be taken from sexual assault victims.
Detective Assignment and Victim Follow-Up Practices
Improve the efficiency of the process by which detectives are assigned cases to ensure victim contact within 24 hours of the reported incident and decrease delays.
Ensure that detectives maintain engagement with the victim throughout the investigative process and/or ensure that such activity is documented within reports or case management notes.
Involve a victim advocate on all adult sex crimes cases and make sure that the information contained in case files accurately reflects services provided by the victim advocate unit.
Accuracy and Consistency in Documentation
Ensure that victim, suspect, and witness demographical data is accurately entered into the pre-narrative portions of the RMS for every case.
Explore options to enhance the RMS to include a mechanism for conducting more detailed intelligence analyses of sexual assault cases. Such features could facilitate linking less severe and more severe cases, connecting persons between cases, or identifying common features regarding suspect patterns and behaviors.
Ensure that case disposition and supporting justification for case closure is documented in all reports.
Investigative and Crime Scene Follow-Up
Provide training to detectives on investigative strategies for sexual assault cases to decrease missed opportunities to identify or follow up on case leads.
Establish standards for witness interviews to ensure that detectives follow up with all key witnesses in cases and that all contact information is properly documented in the RMS.

Interviewing Suspects
Provide training for detectives on interview strategies that can be used in suspect interviews. Establish standards that ensure that detectives pursue investigative leads that emerge from suspect interviews.
Conducting Confrontational or Control Calls
Consider increasing the use of confrontational or control calls on appropriate cases and providing training in the use of such calls.
Accessing and Searching Electronic or Social Media Data
Provide additional guidelines and training on accessing and searching electronic or social media data to further develop this type of investigative practice for case follow-up.
Locating and Processing Crime Scenes
Provide additional guidelines and training that would increase the number of located crime scenes that are processed.
Physical Evidence and Laboratory Analysis
Provide additional guidelines and training to encourage detectives to increase communication with SANEs about additional facts that may have been discovered or to determine if statements were made to the SANE that could have been helpful in the investigation.
Improve accurate and consistent documentation of laboratory testing results in police reports.
Explore the possibility of creating a new, more efficient CODIS notification process that would allow supervisory staff in the WVCPD to review all forensic results and CODIS hits.
Case Submission to the Prosecutor
Establish a standard policy for submitting cases to the prosecutor and the subsequent review process. The policy should provide guidelines that ensure consistency across investigations and provide guidance for detectives. The policy should be mutually agreed upon by the WVCPD and the District Attorney's Office.
Special Victims Unit: Detective Caseload
WVCPD should closely evaluate the need for additional SVU detectives and consider adding a full-time cold case investigator to the SVU.
Victim Advocacy and Support Staff
Add at least one additional victim advocate to support the SVU on adult sex crimes.
Consider establishing a crime analyst position dedicated full time or part time to the SVU.
Training for Special Victims Unit Staff
Review the training provided to SVU detectives and mandate the provision of new and continued specialized sexual assault training (up to 40 hours) for officers and detectives including but not limited to comprehensive sexual assault training addressing the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Victim dynamics and trauma, to include continuing TIVI (officers/detectives) ▪ Evidence in sexual assault (i.e., identifying, documenting, processing of crime scenes) (officers/detectives) ▪ Suspect behavior to include effective interviewing and interrogations (detectives) ▪ SANE essentials for law enforcement (officers/detectives) ▪ Investigative follow-up strategies (detectives) ▪ Report writing and case documentation (officers/detectives) ▪ Case preparation, submittal, and prosecution (detectives)

- DNA and crime laboratory capabilities (officers/detectives)

Mentorship and Supervision Opportunities

Supervisory staff should formalize a process for identifying and recruiting the most suitable candidates for detective work in the SVU.

Implement an effective job qualification process exclusively for transitioning personnel to supervisory positions.

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Appendix A: Interview Guides

Law Enforcement Stakeholder Interviews

Question for SAU Detective Interviews

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Rank:

Total years of L.E. experience:

Total years in Investigation Division:

1. Describe your job duties as a detective
 - a. What is your role in investigating sexual assaults?
 - b. At what point do you become involved in a reported sexual assault?
 - c. Do you record interviews for sexual assault cases?
2. Are there written agency guidelines specifically addressing sexual assault investigations?
3. What types of training and education have you received in the investigation of sexual assault cases?
 - a. How often do you receive training specific to sexual assault response?
4. Describe the case management process.
 - a. What is the case assignment process?
 - b. What is your monthly caseload? (estimates are acceptable)
 - c. How are cases supplemented?
 - d. How are cases closed?
 - e. How are cases submitted to the prosecutor?
5. How are evidence/crime scenes in sexual assault cases handled?
 - a. Is there a specific policy for handling sexual assault evidence and/or crime scenes?
 - b. What is your policy for impounding and submitting sexual assault kits?
6. Do you communicate with other disciplines outside of your agency (e.g., advocates, SANEs, prosecution)?
7. Does your agency participate in a SART or MDT? If so, how often do you meet?
8. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
9. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for SAU Detective Sergeant

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Rank:

Badge:

Total years of L.E. experience:

Total years as Supervisor in Investigation Division:

Total years throughout your career in the Investigation Division:

1. Describe your role or job duties as a Detective Sgt. in sexual assault cases?
 - a. At what point in a reported sexual assault investigation do you become involved?
2. What types of training and education have you received in the investigation of sexual assault cases?

- a. How often do you receive training specific to sexual assault response?
3. Are there written agency guidelines specifically addressing sexual assault investigations?
4. Describe the case management process.
 - a. What is the case assignment process?
 - b. What is your monthly caseload? (estimates are acceptable)
 - c. What types of cases do you investigate?
 - d. How are cases supplemented?
 - e. How are cases reviewed and closed?
5. What is your agency's selection process for supervisors and detectives in the sexual assault unit?
 - a. How do you measure and evaluate your detectives' performance?
6. Do you communicate with other disciplines outside of your agency (e.g., advocates, SANEs, prosecution)?
7. Does your agency participate in a SART or MDT? If so, how often do you meet?
8. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
9. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for SAU Lieutenant

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Rank:

Total years of L.E. experience:

Total years as Supervisor in Investigation Division:

Total years throughout your career in the Investigation Division:

1. Describe your job duties as a SAU lieutenant when responding to sexual assault calls.
 - a. At what point in the sexual assault investigation do you become involved?
 - b. Is there a sexual assault response policy? Does it include protocols for after-hours response?
2. What is your agency's selection process for supervisors and detectives in the sexual assault unit?
 - a. How do you measure and evaluate your detectives' performance?
3. What types of training and education have you received in the investigation of sexual assault cases?
 - a. How often do you receive training specific to sexual assault response?
4. Describe the case management process.
 - a. What is the case assignment process?
 - b. What is your monthly caseload? (estimates are acceptable)
 - c. What types of cases do you investigate?
 - d. How are cases supplemented?
 - e. How are cases reviewed and closed?
5. How are evidence/crime scenes in sexual assault cases handled?
6. Describe your process for the review and crime lab submission of sexual assault evidence.
7. What are the case submission standards for sending cases to the prosecutor?
8. Do you communicate with other disciplines outside of your agency (e.g., advocates, SANEs, prosecution)?
9. Does your agency participate in a SART or MDT? If so, how often do you meet?
10. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
11. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for Patrol Officer

Assessor/s: _____ Date: _____
Name: _____
Position: _____
Rank: _____
Total years of L.E. experience: _____
Total years in Patrol Division: _____
Total years throughout your career in the Patrol Division: _____

1. Describe your job duties as a patrol officer when responding to sexual assault calls?
 - a. Do you record interviews for sexual assault calls?
 - b. What is your role in processing, collecting and impounding sexual assault evidence?
2. Does your agency sexual assault response policy/protocol clearly outline the role of patrol officers when responding to sexual assault calls?
3. Are you responsible for any follow up activities when responding to a sexual assault?
 - a. What are your duties at a sexual assault crime scene?
 - b. Do you contact the Detectives, SANE, or victim advocate?
 - c. Do you write a report?
4. What is your involvement in the sexual assault medical examination?
5. Do you communicate or interact with detectives in the sexual assault unit after the initial call/report?
6. What type of training have you received in sexual assault response?
 - a. How often do you receive training specific to sexual assault response?
7. What would be helpful in assisting you in your response to sexual assault?

Question for Patrol Sergeant

Assessor/s: _____ Date: _____
Name: _____
Position: _____
Rank: _____
Total years of L.E. experience: _____
Total years in Patrol Division: _____
Total years throughout your career in the Patrol Division: _____

1. Describe your job duties as a patrol sergeant when responding to sexual assault calls?
 - a. Do you respond to the scene?
2. Are you responsible for any follow up activities when responding to a sexual assault?
 - a. What are your duties at a sexual assault crime scene?
 - b. Do you contact the Detectives, SANE, or victim advocate?
3. Does your agency sexual assault response policy/protocol clearly outline the role of patrol officers when responding to sexual assault calls?
4. Do you communicate or interact with detectives in the sexual assault unit after the initial call/report?
5. What type of training have you received in sexual assault response?
 - a. How often do you receive training specific to sexual assault response?
6. What would be helpful in assisting you in your response to sexual assault?

Question for SAU Major Crimes/Assistant Chief/Commander

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Rank:

Total years of L.E. experience:

Total years as Supervisor in Investigation Division:

Total years throughout your career in the Investigation Division:

1. Describe your role in responding to and investigating sexual assaults.
 - a. At what point in the sexual assault investigation do you become involved?
2. Describe your agency's sexual assault response policy.
3. On average, how many sexual assault investigations does your agency conduct in a year?
4. What is your agency's selection process for supervisors and detectives in the sexual assault unit?
 - a. How do you measure and evaluate your detectives' performance?
5. What types of training and education does your agency provide for responding to sexual assault cases?
 - a. How often does your agency conduct training specific to sexual assault response?
6. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
7. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for Victim Advocate (Agency/System-Based)

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Rank:

Total years of L.E. experience:

Total years in Crime Scene:

1. Describe your job duties as a system-based advocate in the sexual assault investigation process.
 - a. At what point in the sexual assault investigation do you become involved?
 - b. Do you have a policy to describe your role in sexual assault investigations?
2. What types of sexual assault cases do you respond to?
3. What sexual assault training did you receive prior to becoming an agency advocate?
 - a. How often do you receive continuing education?
4. How often do you communicate with detectives about sexual assault cases?
5. Do you communicate with other disciplines outside of your agency (e.g., advocates, SANEs, prosecution)?
 - a. Do you participate in SART or MDT meetings?
6. Describe your relationship with community-based advocates.
7. Are you involved in the victim notification process?
 - a. If so, what is your agency's protocol for victim notification?
 - b. Are you involved with victim notification in cold case sexual assaults?
8. What are of improvement can be made to better serve sexual assault survivors [not specifically for advocate improvements only]
9. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
10. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for Crime Scene/Evidence Technician

Assessor/s: _____ Date: _____
Name: _____
Position: _____
Rank: _____
Total years of L.E. experience: _____
Total years in Crime Scene: _____

1. What is your role in responding to sexual assaults?
 - a. How are you notified of sexual assault calls?
 - b. Do you follow a written policy when responding to a sexual assault call?
2. What type of training and education have you received in crime scene processing?
 - a. Have you received training specifically on collecting sexual assault evidence?
3. Describe your follow up activities for sexual assault cases after your initial response.
4. How often do you communicate with detectives in the SAU?
5. What is your role in impounding and submitting sexual assault evidence to the crime laboratory?
6. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
7. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for Prosecutor(s)

Assessor/s: _____ Date: _____
Name: _____
Position and agency: _____
Total years of experience as a prosecutor: _____
Total years of experience in sexual assault prosecutions: _____

1. Describe your role in sexual assault cases?
 - a. At what point in the police investigation do you become involved sexual assault cases?
 - b. How are sexual assault cases submitted to your office?
2. Does your office have a specialized sexual assault unit?
 - a. Is there a dedicated code case prosecutor?
3. What type of specialized training have you received in sexual assault?
4. What types of cases do you prosecute?
 - a. What is your monthly caseload?
5. Describe your communication with law enforcement—specifically the sexual assault unit and/or with detectives.
 - a. Does your office train on sexual assault with law enforcement?
 - b. Are there submission standards or requirements for sexual assault cases?
6. Does your agency participate in the SART or MDT?
7. Do you respond on scene to assist on LE sexual assault investigations?
8. Does your office have specific procedures or policies that you follow when reviewing, charging, prosecuting a sexual assault investigation?
9. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
10. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for Victim Advocate (Community-based)

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Rank:

Total years of L.E. experience:

Total years in Crime Scene:

1. Describe your job duties as a community-based advocate in the sexual assault investigation process.
 - a. At what point in the sexual assault investigation do you become involved?
 - b. Do you have a policy to describe your role in sexual assault investigations?
2. What sexual assault training did you receive prior to becoming an agency advocate?
 - a. How often do you receive continuing education?
3. How often do you communicate with law enforcement/agency victim advocates about sexual assault cases?
4. Describe your relationship with other community partners regarding sexual assault investigations.
 - a. How often do you communicate with SANEs?
 - b. How often do you communicate with prosecutors?
5. Do you participate in SART or MDT meetings?
6. Are you involved in the victim notification process?
 - a. If so, what is your agency's protocol for victim notification?
 - b. Are you involved with victim notification in cold case sexual assaults?
7. What area of improvement can be made to better serve sexual assault survivors [not specifically for advocate improvements only]
8. How do you feel you could be better utilized in the criminal justice system?
9. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
10. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE)

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position and agency:

Total years of experience:

Total years of experience in sexual assault examinations:

1. Describe your role in sexual assault response?
 - a. What is the process for notifying you of an assault?
 - b. Describe the process after the initial call.
 - c. Do you have a SANE on call 24/7?
2. Is there a timeframe for which a sexual assault exam is completed following the assault?
 - a. Do you offer to do a forensic medical exam without law enforcement?
 - b. What happens to the SAK after the exam?
3. Is an advocate called and when does this happen?
 - a. Who is responsible for calling or notifying the advocate?
4. What communications do you have with law enforcement prior to, during, or after the exam?
5. Do meet regularly with other partners (law enforcement, prosecutors, advocates, crime laboratory) as part of sexual assault investigations?
6. Do you participate in the SART or MDT?

7. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
8. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Question for the Crime Laboratory

Assessor/s:

Date:

Name:

Position and agency:

Total years of experience:

Total years of experience in sexual assault examinations:

1. Describe your process for handling and processing sexual assault evidence.
2. Describe your communication process with sexual assault detectives.
 - a. Do you communicate law enforcement on the submission of evidence?
 - b. Are you involved in the evidence submission conversation?
 - c. How are the testing results communicated to detectives?
3. Do you have an opportunity to provide feedback to the quality of evidence collection to SANEs or crime scene technicians?
4. Do you have a submission or prioritization policy for testing sexual assault kit evidence?
 - a. Are there any reasons a sexual assault kit would be declined for testing in the laboratory?
5. How are CODIS hits communicated to partners?
6. Do you participate in the SART or MDT?
7. Is there any training you can recommend to sexual assault investigators, SANEs or prosecutors?
8. What type of internal support or resources would be helpful in your current position?
9. What type of external support would be helpful in your current position?

Appendix B: Database Variables and Definitions

SABiR Data Fields
Number of cases in this report
Cases assigned to detectives
Number of victim initiated reports
*Most common location (apt/house/outdoors)
Cases where the suspect was known (e.g., friend/acquaintance/coworker)
Cases where the suspect was a student
Cases where the victim was a student
Cases where alcohol was used by the suspect
Cases where alcohol was used by the victim
Cases where DFSA is suspected
Victim reported incapacitation
Cases where prosecution asked by patrol
*Attempts where detective tried to contact victim
Average days detective to contact victim
Victims interviewed by follow up detective
Reports unfounded false/baseless
*Interview type—Comprehensive completed
*Interview type—No Additional Information Documented
*Interview type—Phone Contact Only
Interview was recorded
Documented advocate contacts
Cases submitted to prosecutor
Sexual Assault Exams/Kits completed
Sexual Assault Kits submitted to crime lab
Sexual Assault Kit collection to submission
Sexual Assault Kits completed by crime lab
Crime scenes located/processed
Other evidence was collected
Suspect/I.L. identified (named)/contacted
Arrests
Case witness/es identified
Witness/es interviewed