

JUDICIARY INTERIM COMMITTEE VICTIM SERVICES REPORT – Sept 18, 2024

In the beginning, Utah Legislature first established victim rights in 1987 and then reaffirmed through constitutional legislation in 1994. For decades, Utah legislators have championed for victims to be treated with dignity and respect. Victims and survivors in Utah thank you!

REPORTS and Data Resources:

2024 Update: Victim Services Commission victim services assessment study - as of 9/16/2024 the winning contract has been finalized and sent for signature. The contract currently remains under confidentiality mandate, but the winner to be announced shortly.

2022 Utah Criminal Justice Center Victim Needs Assessment - a survey and interviews conducted by the University of Utah to victims and service providers.

See at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UaR7p3CFbNtECjkWucRd9YIAIYs0jQ4K/view?usp=sharing>

2022 Summary of Victim Services Listening Sessions - a UOVC project and report of additional input regarding the UCJC Victims Needs Assessment.

See at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/12E3lj7_fNa-W0dxAvqEglFg022wi_sTV/view?usp=sharing

2022 Utah Victim Services Overview Report - an information gathering report from a collaborative effort by the state coalitions, DHHS, CJC, UOVC, etc.

See at: <http://le.utah.gov/interim/2022/pdf/00003946.pdf>

2021 Utah's Victims Services: Developing a Well-defined and Meaningful Evaluation Framework- a project commissioned by UOVC with the University of Utah Economic Evaluation Unit to produce research for a more evidence based framework with guidelines for investment decisions and service delivery.

See at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dEDJ2lwjZ9dmlo5A2oOrenorVhA-KNEN/view?usp=sharing>

2017 Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative Final Report -The Sexual Assault Demonstration Initiative (SADI) was funded by the Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) to enhance sexual assault outreach, services, and community partnerships in dual/multi-service programs.

See at: <https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2017-09/sadi-finalreportfinal508.pdf>

CHALLENGES in Supporting Survivors with State and Federal Funding

1. Short time frame to plan, allocate, and award funds
 2. Funding formulas vs. competitive awards
 3. Multiple funding sources with multiple requirements
 4. Challenges specific to sexual assault funding
 5. Reporting and receiving outcomes
 6. Unpredictability of award amounts
 7. One-time vs. ongoing funding
 8. Administrative responsibilities
 9. Funding restrictions
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STANDARDS OF CARE - Rape Crisis Programs

1. 24-hour crisis hotline
2. Crisis intervention
3. Accompaniment to hospitals, law enforcement agencies, prosecution offices, and court hearings
4. Advocacy
5. Public education

RESOURCES for Additional Victim Services Best Practices

1. Core Services for State Funded Criminal Justice Advocates
See at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/156JoabYxKNmB67nr443nYlXYcFmBeEpg/view>
 2. Trauma Informed Care Justice Provisions – HB177(2018), HB53(2019)
 3. Criminal justice agency policy for response to victim rights complaints – HB308(2024)
 4. Best practice policy for sexual assault investigations: POST/VSC input – HB322(2024)
 5. Domestic Violence Shelters Core Services
 6. Victim Advocate Core Training requirements
 7. Children’s Justice Centers – Standards of Care
 8. Prosecution Best Practice Guidelines – See at: <https://www.swap-ut.org/best-practices.php>
 9. Creation of Victim Services Commission – HB244(2023)
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GAPS in the Availability of Sexual Assault Survivor Services

1. Lack of funding for prevention and awareness efforts
 2. Lack of funding for ongoing support for sexual assault survivor services – this equates to less advocates, less information sharing, etc. and survivors flounder in the system and the trauma.
 3. Lack of access to Sexual Assault Helpline
 4. Lack of resources for survivors including counseling, housing, legal assistance, emergency funds, etc.
 5. Limited access to services based on programs and advocates having overwhelming caseloads
 6. Programs unable to focus on collaboration and communication with community/system partners due to overwhelming numbers of survivors needing services and support
 7. Barriers for underserved populations including eligibility requirements, funding, gatekeeping, language translation, outreach, etc.
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OPPORTUNITIES for Improving the Efficiency of Serving Survivors

1. Fund the Sexual Assault Helpline
 2. Fund FEMR program
 3. Fund prevention efforts
 4. Fund Victim Rights Committee Coordinator position to support committees and collect data as to failings in the system and inform need for change
 5. Incorporate Standards of Care on a statewide level
 6. Incentivize programs to evaluate effectiveness and implement improvements
 7. Fund development of centralized reporting system for victim service programs with a public facing dashboard to demonstrate resources and funding allocation
 8. Incentivize better collaboration and communication between agencies
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“If not us, then who? If not now, then when?” ~ Former Congressman John Lewis