

Sexual Assault and Rape in Utah What we Know from Statistics and Research Studies

SCOPE of the problem:

Index Crime Statistics in Utah, per 100,000 (2012-2013), FBI/UCR

	Location	Murder & nonnegligent manslaughter	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Violent Crime Index
2013	Utah	1.7	34.3	42.8	130.4	224.0
	USA	4.5	25.2	109.1	229.1	367.9
2012	Utah	1.8	33.0	38.5	132.5	205.8
	USA	4.7	27.1	113.1	242.8	387.8

(Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2013)

In Utah, rape is the only violent crime index higher than the national average.

Rape in Utah 2007 Study by Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice:

- 1 in 3 Utah Women experience sexual assault
- More than 1 in 6 Utah Women experience rape
(Mitchell & Peterson, 2008)

Reporting:

- Rape in Utah 2007 – 12% of victims reported the assault or sought medical care (Mitchell & Peterson, 2008)
- To increase reporting rates and support victims, Utah legislature voted to become a “Start by Believing” state in 2015. (End Violence Against Women International, 2016).

Criminal Justice System Response to Rape:

Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) Submission Rates:

At multiple sites in Utah, SAK submission rate for SAKs collected from 2010 to 2013 was found to be 22.8% within a year of the assault and 15.4% submitted past a year from the assault, to equal a total submission rate of 38.2% (Valentine et al., 2016). In other published articles reporting on SAK submission rates, the submission rates were close to 60% (Patterson & Campbell, 2012; Shaw & Campbell, 2013).

At the same sites in Utah, the submission rate for SAKs collected in 2014 increased to 75% indicating significant increase by law enforcement in choosing to submit SAKs. Yet, there remains large variability between Utah sites on submission rates (Valentine, Miles, & Mabey, 2017).

House Bill 200 mandating the submission and testing of all sexual assault kits throughout Utah passed in 2017.

Prosecution of Sexual Assault Cases:

In Salt Lake County from 2003 to 2011, 94% of sexual assault cases were not prosecuted, only 6% of sexual assault cases were prosecuted (Valentine, Shaw, Lark & Campbell, 2016). These were all rape cases with fully collected sexual assault kits and victims wanted to prosecute the case.

The Impact of Trauma-Informed Training with Law Enforcement:

West Valley City Police Department participated in a study with Dr. Julie Valentine in which their policies regarding adult sexual assault cases were changed to reflect a trauma-informed approach and detectives received training on the neurobiology of sexual assault trauma. In the sixty-four adult sexual assault cases in the study, the prosecution rate went from 6% to 22% prosecuted (Kelly & Valentine, 2017). Due to the impressive results, the study will be relaunched in April 2017 with West Valley City Police Departments and other law enforcement agencies.

Costs of Sexual Violence in Utah:

Sexual violence costs Utah 4.9 billion dollars annually, or \$1,700 per Utah resident per year (Cowan, 2016).

References

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