

Summary of Needs Assessment of CCTV/Recording Programs

This is the first national assessment of programs designed to record or transmit forensic interviews and testimony of child victims of sexual and physical abuse. The goals of this needs assessment were to: learn how many agencies are using technology to assist in child abuse cases; learn how the technology is used (including physical set up, communication, eligibility); obtain the agencies' perceptions of the technology; and gain insight into the types of training and technical assistance agencies want. Findings from this Needs Assessment are based on responses from 122 prosecutors (DA), 151 sheriffs, and 271 child advocacy centers (CAC).

Videotape Programs

- Most CACs report they have a program, while approximately three-fourths of sheriffs and prosecutors say they have a program.
- Most of the videotape programs were implemented in the past 10 years.
- The majority of respondents noted that three years old is the youngest victim they videotape, although some will videotape two-year-old victims. The upper age limit for videotaped child interviews is usually 18 years old, followed by 17 years old.
- The majority of videotape programs are designed to take testimony/interviews of child victims of either sexual or physical abuse. Programs designed only for victims of sexual assault are infrequent. Children who witness another child's sexual abuse are also eligible for videotaping, report three-fourths of respondents. Children who witness a child's physical abuse are often included in the programs as well.
- Almost all the respondents use a formal multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach to videotaping forensic interviews. Agencies represented in the MDTs most often were law enforcement and a child protective services (CPS) staff member. Other frequent participants in the MDT include CAC staff.
- Survey respondents reported the videotape equipment was located most often in the CAC. However, respondents said the equipment could also be housed in both the CAC and law enforcement offices, and in CPS offices as well.
- The CAC's forensic interviewer is the professional most likely to conduct the interview, although respondents reported that others likely to conduct the interview are: law enforcement's forensic interviewer, CPS's forensic interviewer, or several combinations. Respondents noted that it may depend on the situation; and several noted that it could be "someone not listed" who conducted the interview.

- Virtually all of the respondents report their videotape programs consist of an interviewing room and a monitoring room. Professionals who observe interviews in the monitoring rooms most often include CAC, DA, law enforcement, and CPS staff together. The most frequent method for observers to communicate with interviewers consists of the interviewer leaving the room during the interview, and going to the monitoring room and asking for any additional questions or clarifications. Some interviewers wear earpieces so they can hear questions without leaving the room.
- Overall, cameras and microphones in the interview room are more likely to be hidden from view, although two-thirds of CACs reported the equipment was visible. Cameras are more likely to be fixed than have a zoom-in feature, and usually do not provide a picture-in-picture view on the monitor. Many respondents report the recording equipment is being monitored during an interview, but fewer than half say someone is controlling the sound or zoom-in components.
- Most respondents rate their videotape equipment as either “okay” or “excellent.” Almost half rate the facilities where the videotape equipment is located as “excellent.” Most respondents rate the overall videotape program as either “okay” or “excellent.”
- The most frequent suggestions for improvement include: updating equipment, improving facilities, and improving the sound quality.
- Types of technical assistance requested most frequently include: improving an existing program; evaluating the program; conducting a needs assessment; and understanding the laws.

CCTV Programs

- Only a few jurisdictions report having a CCTV program.
- The agency in charge of the CCTV program most often identified was the prosecutor’s office, followed by the court.
- A few jurisdictions report using the equipment, but infrequently.
- Suggestions for improvement include updating equipment, training judges and prosecutors, adding equipment, and improving the facilities.
- Types of technical assistance requested most frequently include: conducting a needs assessment; understanding the legal requirements; planning a CCTV program; vendor selection; and evaluation.