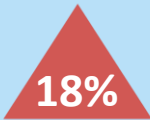


Sexual Violence in Idaho, 2022

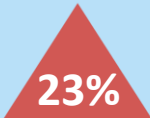
May 2024

KEY FINDINGS

Since 2016...



Increase in number of sexual assault victims known to law enforcement



Increase in number of sexual assault victims who received grant-funded services

Victim Service Agency Needs

- Resources to expand services in rural areas
- Training for all sectors of the justice system
- Housing/shelter for victims

According to data collected from state and local law enforcement agencies, the rate of sexual violence victimization had been slowly increasing nearly every year since 2016, but suddenly dropped to a 5-year low in 2022. This research brief examines recent trends in sexual violence victimization, as well as the needs of non-profit agencies that provide services to victims of sexual violence.

Measures of Victimization

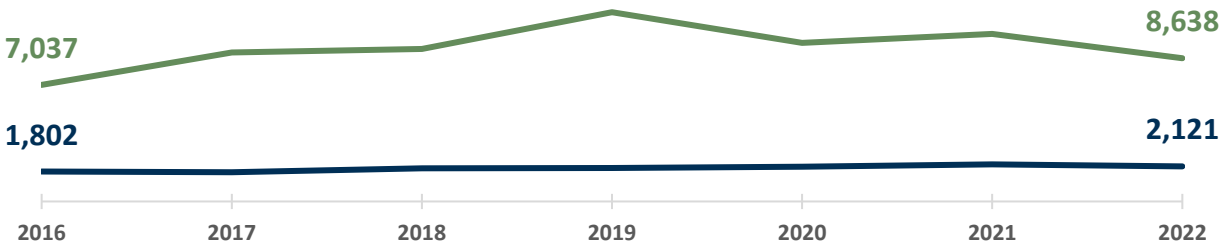
Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System

State and local law enforcement agencies report data on criminal incidents to the Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System (IIBRS), housed at the Idaho State Police. In 2022, 2,121 victims of sexual assault were known to law enforcement, a 18% increase since 2016, but a slight drop from 2021 (2,239). The victimization rate was 1.14 victims per 1,000 Idaho residents, up 7% from 2016, but down from 1.27 in 2021. Sexual assault victims accounted for 11% of all victims of crimes against persons in 2022. See Figure 2 county-level victimization rates.

Grant-Funded Victim Services

The State of Idaho manages multiple federal grant programs that provide funding to agencies serving victims of crime. These include the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance, STOP Violence Against Women Act (STOP), and Sexual Assault Services Formula Program (SASP) federal grants. In 2022, these funds enabled victim service providers to serve 8,638 sexual assault victims, up 23% from 2016, but down from 10,122 in 2021. In 2022, the number of sexual assault victims who accessed services via programs funded with federal dollars was four times higher than the number of sexual assault victims known to law enforcement (up from 3.9 times higher in 2016, but down from 5.6 times higher in 2019).

Figure 1. The number of sexual assault victims who received grant-funded services was four times higher than the number known to law enforcement in 2022.



Law Enforcement Data for Historically Underserved Populations

Hispanic/Latino Victims

Hispanics/Latinos reported being victimized to law enforcement at lower rates than the general population in 2022, according to IIBRS data. While Hispanics/Latinos accounted for 13.0% of Idaho's population in 2022, they accounted for 8.9% of sexual assault victims reported to law enforcement. However, data from the 2022 National Crime Victimization Survey indicates that Hispanic/Latino victims were less likely to report sexual assaults to law enforcement relative to White victims, so the true victimization rate is likely to be higher.¹ Hispanic/Latino victims known to law enforcement were concentrated in southern Idaho, where they make up a larger share of the population due to their significant presence in the agricultural labor force (see Figure 3).

American Indian/Alaska Native Victims

American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) reported being victimized to law enforcement at lower rates than the general population in 2022, according to IIBRS data. While American Indians/Alaska Natives accounted for 2.8% of Idaho's population in 2022, they accounted for 0.8% of Idaho's sexual assault victims reported to law enforcement. This runs counter to national-level survey data, which shows that AI/AN women are nearly twice as likely as non-Hispanic White women to experience sexual assault within the previous year.² Idaho's AI/AN victims known to law enforcement tended to be concentrated in counties that overlap with a reservation and in urban areas, where they make up a larger share of the overall population (see Figure 4).

Victim Service Agency Needs

Victim service agencies are regularly provided opportunities to communicate agency needs to the Pass-Through Grants and Research (PGR) Department of the Idaho State Police, which serves as the State Administering Agency for the STOP VAWA and SASP grants. Additionally, in 2019, the Idaho Statistical Analysis Center (ISAC; a component of PGR) surveyed victim service providers as part of a larger criminal justice system needs assessment.³ Three of the most commonly cited needs by victim service agencies are discussed below.

Resources to Expand Services in Rural Areas

62% of respondents to ISAC's survey who work in victim service agencies indicated that their agency serves clients from a county outside where the agency is located, with 45% saying their clients come to them and only 33% saying their staff can travel to meet their clients. Two agencies that receive STOP funding noted in their 2022 annual reports that the need for additional services in rural areas was a "significant area of remaining need".

"The most significant area of need is local resources. Victims have to travel about an hour or more to access resources in the Boise/Nampa area."

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2022). *NCVS dashboard: Single-year comparison characteristic*. [Web tool]. Retrieved from <https://ncvs.bjs.ojp.gov/single-year-comparison/characteristic>

² Rosay, A. B. (2016, May). *Violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men: 2010 findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey*. Retrieved from <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>

³ Strauss, T., Swerin, D., & Kifer, M.M. (2020, May). *Idaho criminal justice needs assessment: A survey of criminal justice practitioners and community leaders*. Retrieved from <https://isp.idaho.gov/pgr/sac/library/>

Training for All Sectors of the Justice System

In their 2022 annual reports, seven agencies that receive STOP funding reported that additional and improved training for all parts of the justice system on how to work with sexual assault victims in a trauma-informed manner is a significant need. This includes law enforcement, prosecution, judges, medical professionals such as SANEs, and counselors/therapists. Respondents noted that additional training for those who come into contact or work directly with sexual assault victims would both improve existing services and expand the justice system's capacity to work with victims.

"We still believe that the most significant areas of remaining need with regard to improving services to victims, increasing safety and enhancing community response is leaders in law enforcement and prosecution take a stronger stance and change/increase training requirements and the culture around the response to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. There needs to more training at the entry level (POST) and ongoing training in these areas offered by and required by law enforcement and prosecutors. Court staff and judges are to be included in this group. We have to be assertive and reach out to law enforcement in our community regularly to orient and train new law enforcement officers on our policies and procedures around victim confidentiality and educate the officers on the federal rules that we are required to follow. If we do not reach out, the training is not provided by the various departments and we run into problems with new officers showing up at our client service center making demands that we cannot meet and it can cause a lot of tension and damage relationships. We would be thrilled if law enforcement was required by rule or statute or the like to orient and train all officers who want to hold a badge on the local domestic violence and sexual assault program policies and procedures."

Housing/Shelter for Sexual Assault Victims

Idaho's population growth in recent years has put a strain on all residents, and that strain is magnified for victims of sexual assault. 97% of respondents to ISAC's 2019 survey who work in victim service agencies said that housing/shelter for victims was a "moderate" or "high" need. STOP and SASP recipients echoed that sentiment in their 2022 annual reports.

"Housing is a problem in our community. Most of our victims are very low income or no income and finding housing for them is extremely hard. Our community has 2 low income apartments that are usually filled. Some of our victims don't fall in the guidelines that they can even get into these apartments. Rent is extremely high for our area and even though we can help our victims get into the apartments or houses. Most of them are unable to pay the rent after a couple of months."

Conclusion


Although both the law enforcement and victim services sectors saw lower numbers of sexual assault victims come through their doors in 2022 than in 2021, the disproportionate impact of sexual violence on underserved communities continues to be an issue in Idaho. Specifically, current resource levels are not sufficient to meet demand for victim services in rural areas, requiring victims to travel long distances to get those services. Additionally, programs in both rural and urban areas are struggling to provide victims with safe housing and a trauma-informed approach to the criminal justice system that ensures that all elements of the system (law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim services) are pulling in the same direction and connecting victims with the services they need.

Considering the declining availability of grant funding (2022 was the first year to see a decline in grant funding disbursed since ISAC began tracking grant funding for direct victim services in 2016, mostly due to a \$2.4 million drop in disbursed VOCA funds), resources will need to be carefully targeted to ensure that all victims of sexual assault in Idaho have access to effective services. Resources to address the needs highlighted in this report should remain a priority for funders, including Idaho’s VOCA, STOP, and SASP administrators. Additionally, funding for culturally relevant services for Hispanic/Latino and American Indian/Alaska Native victims should be directed to the areas of the state where those populations are most prevalent, as those areas also include a large share of Idaho’s rural communities.

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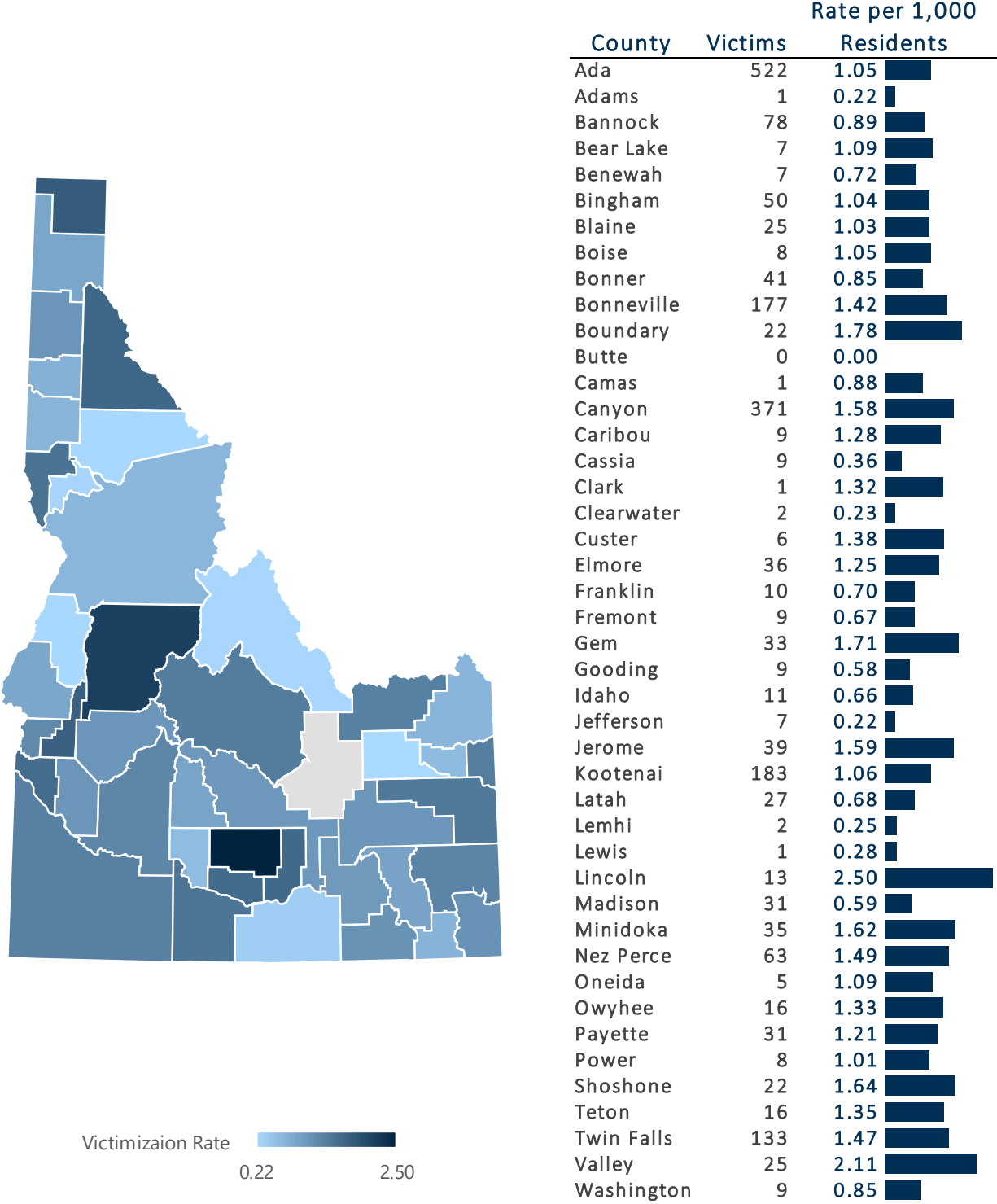
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Sexual Violence in Idaho, 2022 **May 2024**

Figure 2. Total Victims of Sexual Assault Known to Law Enforcement, 2022

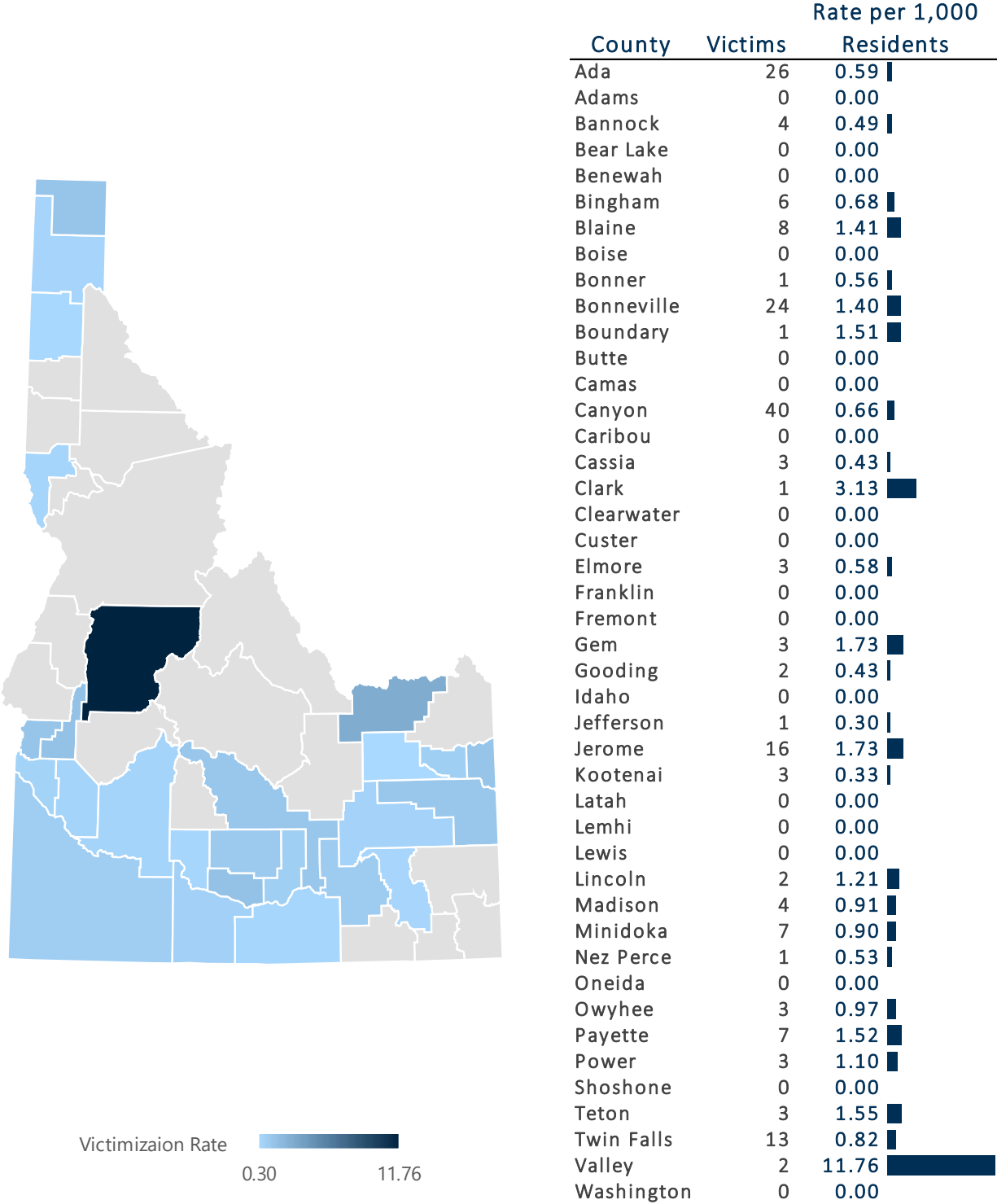


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Figure 3. Hispanic/Latino Victims of Sexual Assault Known to Law Enforcement, 2022



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Figure 4. American Indian Victims of Sexual Assault Known to Law Enforcement, 2022

