

Sexual Violence in Idaho, 2024

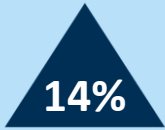
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KEY FINDINGS

Between 2016 and 2024



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

- Expanded services in rural areas
- Training for all sectors of the justice system
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs)

According to data collected from state and local law enforcement agencies, the rate of sexual violence victimization fell to a six-year low in 2023, then increased slightly in 2024. 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

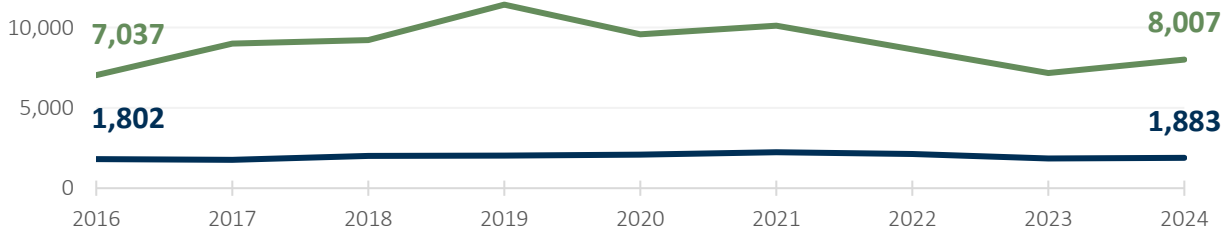
Idaho Incident-Based Reporting System

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 2024, 1,883 victims of sexual assault were known to law enforcement, a 4.5% increase since 2016 (1,802), and a 2.3% increase from 2023 (1,841). The victimization rate was 0.98 victims per 1,000 Idaho residents, down 8% from 2016, and down 23% from a nine-year high of 1.27 in 2021. Sexual assault victims accounted for 10% of all victims of crimes against persons in 2024. See Figure 2 for 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, Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), STOP Violence Against Women Act (STOP), and Sexual Assault Services Formula Program (SASP) federal grants. In 2024, these funds enabled victim service providers to serve 8,007 sexual assault victims, up 14% from 2016 but down 30% from a high of 11,424 in 2019. In 2024, the number of sexual assault victims who accessed services via programs funded with federal dollars was nearly four times higher than the number of sexual assault victims known to law enforcement (4.3 times higher; down from a nine-year high of 5.6 times higher in 2019).

Figure 1. The number of sexual assault victims who received grant-funded services was more than four times higher than the number known to law enforcement in 2024.



Law Enforcement Data for Historically Underserved Populations

Hispanic/Latino Victims

Individuals who identify as Hispanic/Latino reported being victimized to law enforcement at lower rates than the general population in 2024, according to IIBRS data. While Hispanics/Latinos accounted for 13.6% of Idaho's population in 2024, they accounted for 9.6% of sexual assault victims reported to law enforcement. The rate of reported sexual assault among Idaho's Hispanic/Latino population was 0.65 per 1,000 Hispanic/Latino residents, compared to 0.98 overall. Historically, Hispanic/Latino victims are less likely to report their victimization to law enforcement, meaning the true victimization rate among the Hispanic/Latino population could be higher than IIBRS data suggests. Data from the 2024 National Crime Victimization Survey indicates that Hispanic/Latino victims reported sexual assault to law enforcement at a slightly lower rate than white victims in 2024, but the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant and the sample size was small enough to warrant caution when comparing those two groups.¹ Hispanic/Latino victims known to law enforcement were largely 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

Individuals who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) reported being victimized to law enforcement at lower rates than the general population in 2024, according to IIBRS data. While American Indians/Alaska Natives accounted for 2.9% of Idaho's population in 2024, they accounted for 0.4% of Idaho's sexual assault victims reported to law enforcement with a victimization rate of 0.16. 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 have experienced sexual assault within the previous year.² Idaho's AI/AN victims known to law enforcement were located in seven counties that overlap with a reservation or are 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 (SAA) for the STOP and SASP grants. Additionally, in 2024, the Idaho Statistical Analysis Center (ISAC; a component of PGR) surveyed victim service providers as part of a larger criminal justice system stakeholder survey.³ Three needs most commonly identified by victim service agencies are discussed below.

Resources for Expanding Services in Rural Areas

In 2024, there were 20 counties in Idaho that did not have a federally funded victim service program physically located within their boundaries. This means that sexual violence victims who seek services must find a way to obtain those services from an agency that is not local to them. As a result, about two-thirds (66%) 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. 43% of respondents said their agency's staff can

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2026, March 9). *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 Rodgers, K., & Strauss, T. (2024, October). *2024 Idaho justice system stakeholder survey*. Retrieved from <https://isp.idaho.gov/pgr/isac/>

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travel to provide services, and 25% said they can provide services via telehealth or another online platform. However, 40% still reported that at least some clients travel to them from other counties. More than half of agencies that receive STOP and/or SASP funding noted in their 2024 annual reports that being located in a rural area was creating barriers for victims they serve.

“There is a pressing need to reach victims in underserved areas and populations. Much of Idaho is rural or remote, requiring additional funding to provide critical services. Transportation remains a significant barrier, as public transit is available only in a few metropolitan areas, where it is still limited and inadequate. In many rural regions, victims must travel several hours to access services, which can be impossible when roads are impassable during colder months.”

Training for All Sectors of the Justice System and Public

In their 2024 annual reports, eight agencies mentioned improving or enhancing training for law enforcement, six mentioned increasing trauma-informed training and five specifically mentioned decreasing stigma surrounding sexual violence more broadly. Respondents noted that additional training for those who come into contact or work directly with sexual assault victims would both improve existing services, expand the justice system’s capacity to work with victims, and reduce the stigmatization of sexual violence victims that contributes to low reporting rates.

“Easing the shame that is so often connected to sexual violence is a struggle and an endeavor worthy of effort. Within our rural community not only does the survivor experience this shame but it also translates to family, friends and the community at large. The deep-seated tradition of “we keep things to ourselves” and “that doesn’t happen here” is alive and well. Better communication between stakeholders, enhance awareness to community members and continued direct access to trained SA advocates can replace the shame with hope.”

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs)

In 2024, Idaho State Police Forensic Services announced that it had trained over 250 sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) since 2017.⁴ Despite this achievement, 85% of respondents to ISAC’s 2024 survey who work in victim service agencies said that access to SANE programs locally remains a “high” or “moderate” need. Some STOP and SASP recipients echoed that sentiment in their 2024 annual reports.

“...our community continues to struggle with access to Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE). The current shortage has resulted in survivors being transported over an hour away for forensic exams, creating additional trauma and barriers to justice. More SANE nurses at our local hospital are critical to ensuring timely, trauma-informed care for survivors of sexual assault.”

Conclusion

Both law enforcement and victim services data show that the number of sexual assault victims in Idaho increased from 2016 to high points in 2019 (victim services) and 2021 (law enforcement) before declining

⁴ Idaho State Police. (2024, October 29). *Idaho State Police announces milestone of 250 trained SANE nurses*. Retrieved from <https://isp.idaho.gov/idaho-state-police-announces-milestone-of-250-trained-sane-nurses/>

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through 2023. In 2024, these numbers both rose slightly. While these data sets cannot tell us on their own why those patterns emerged, some other data can add additional context.

First, many victim service agencies that received STOP and/or SASP funding noted in their 2024 annual reports that an area of significant need continues to be training for everyone who works with sexual assault victims that helps them approach those interactions in a trauma-informed way and reduces the stigma that comes with experiencing sexual violence. It is thought that this will reduce the stigma that many sexual assault survivors still feel following an assault, as well as improve their experience as their case moves through the justice system and will encourage more victims to report to law enforcement, which will ultimately improve offender accountability and long-term outcomes for victims.


Second, recent ISAC research shows that although the number of sexual assault victims has persistently been about four times higher than the number that report to law enforcement, the actual number of victims in Idaho is larger still. Data from the 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey estimates the number of adult Idahoans who had experienced sexual assault within the 12 months prior to taking the survey to be 13,112 (95% confidence interval: 7,895 – 18,329), a number more than three times higher than the number of sexual assault victims served through federally funded programs in 2021 (4,191).⁵

Finally, the amount of federal grant funds available to support the provision of direct services seems to have an impact on capacity to provide those services to sexual assault victims. Although federal funding for victim services increased 87% between 2017 and 2021 to a high point of \$16 million, funding has fallen 29% since then to \$11.4 million in 2024. Meanwhile, the number of sexual assault victims served by federally funded programs increased 43% between 2017 and 2021 but then fell 29% between 2021 and 2023. This indicates that the increase in funding from 2017 to 2021 aided Idaho’s victim service agencies in ramping up their capacity to serve larger numbers of victims, but that capacity was scaled back as the amount of available grant funding decreases. However, the 12% increase in victims served in 2024 is something to watch moving forward to determine if 2024 was an anomaly, or if service providers have made adjustments to the declines in federal funding. The administrators of these funds (including, but not limited to, the state SAAs for VOCA, FVPSA, STOP, and SASP) should be aware of these issues and work to allocate resources as efficiently as possible to ensure that all Idahoans have access to effective services when they need them.

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Contact Us

Idaho Statistical Analysis Center
Pass-Through Grants and Research
Idaho State Police

 isp.idaho.gov/pgr/isac

 pgr@isp.idaho.gov

Thomas Strauss, MPA
ISAC Director & Principal Research Analyst

 (208) 884 – 7040

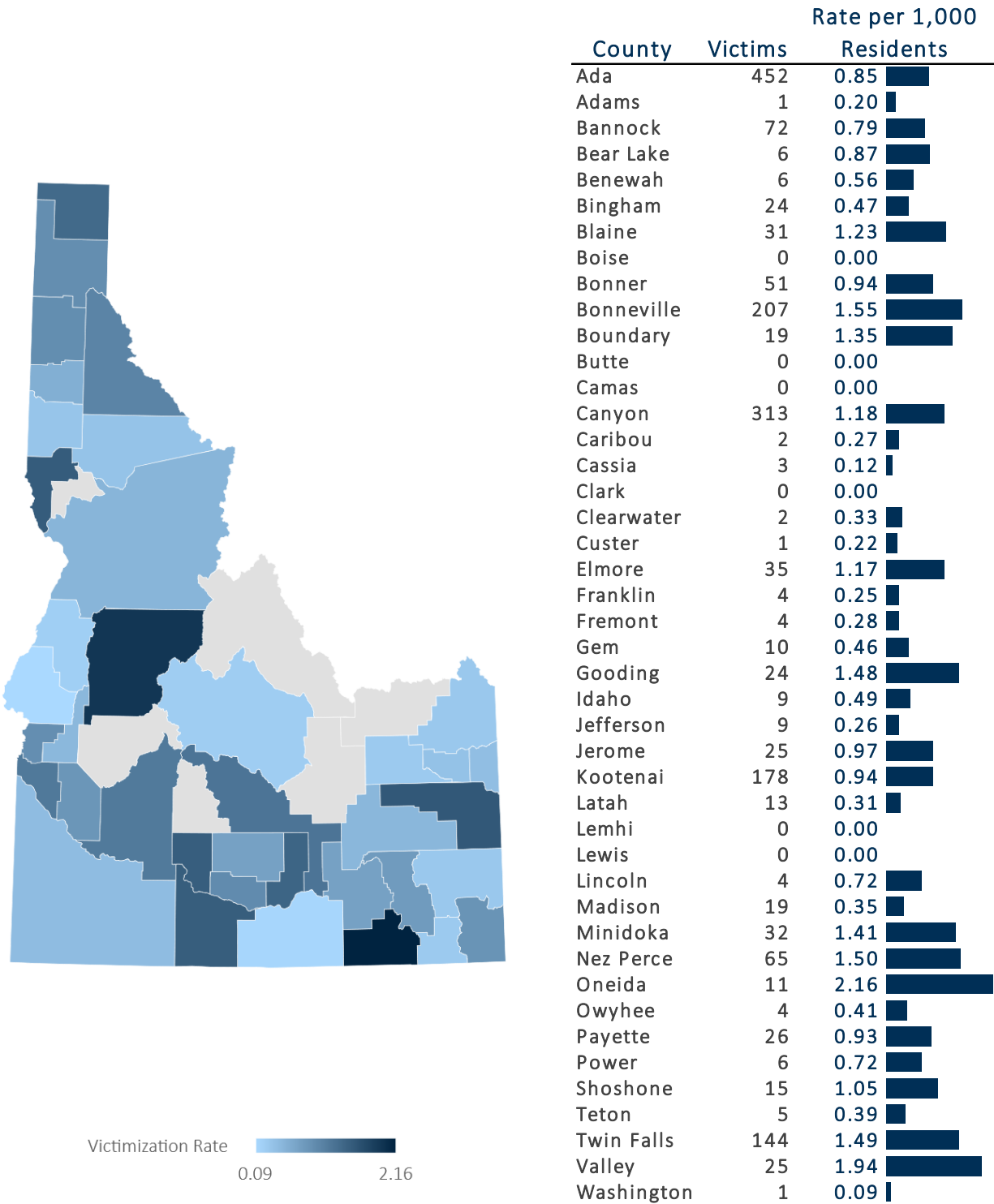
⁵ Idaho Statistical Analysis Center. (2024, November). *Sexual violence in Idaho: Prevalence and health impacts*. Retrieved from <https://isp.idaho.gov/pgr/isac/>

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Figure 2. Total Victims of Sexual Assault Known to Law Enforcement, 2024

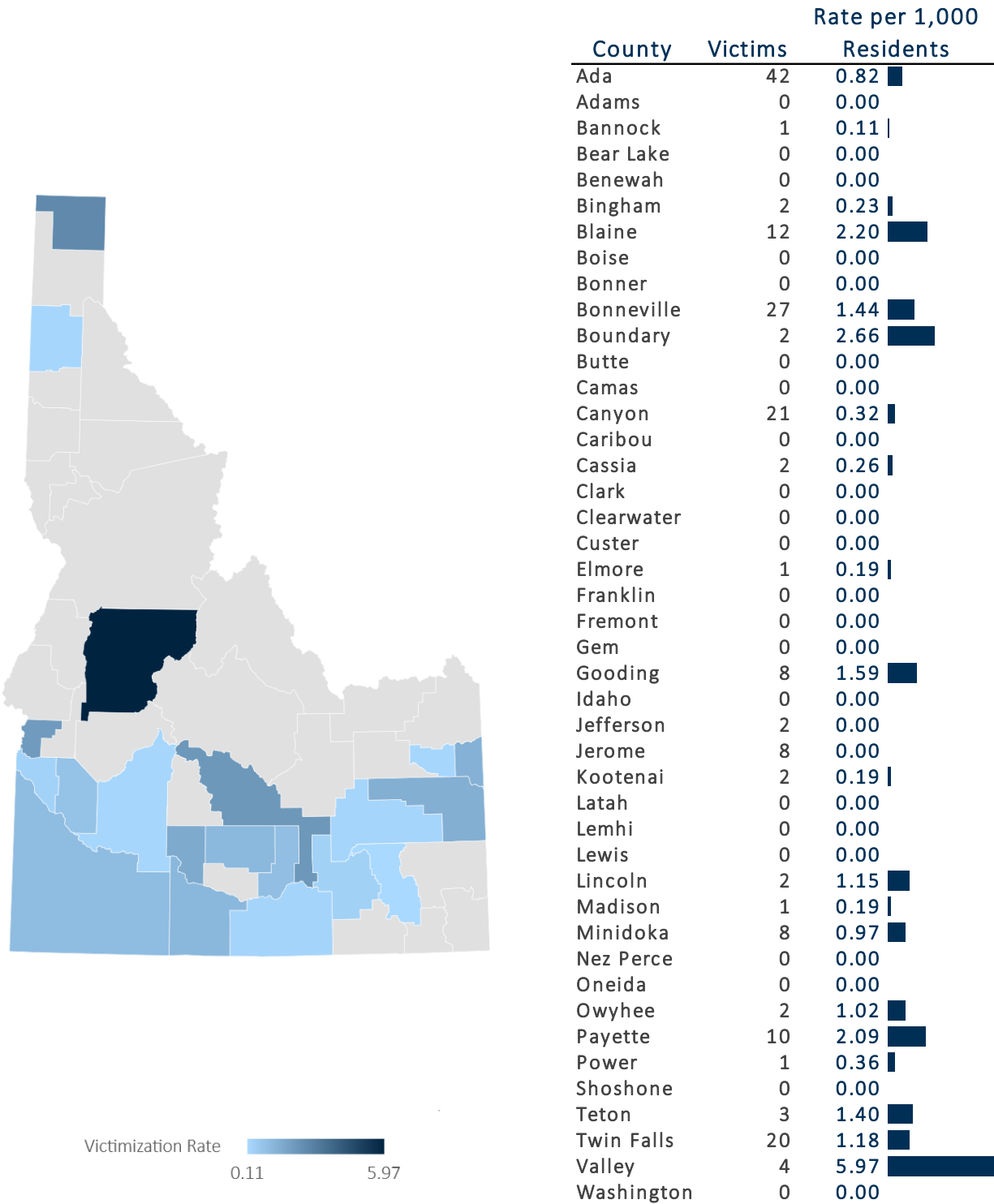


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Figure 3. Hispanic/Latino Victims of Sexual Assault Known to Law Enforcement, 2024



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Figure 4. American Indian Victims of Sexual Assault Known to Law Enforcement, 2024

