

## Question:

You asked whether any states require Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) to be established.

## Our Response:

Through a policy review, Education Commission of the States identified examples of states that require the creation of sexual assault response teams (SARTs), whether at the state, county or college campus level. Based on our review, Connecticut was the only state that requires institutions of higher education to establish SARTs, although several individual campuses across the country appear to have created such response teams. ECS' response begins with background information on SARTs and then provides state examples from California, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Oregon and Virginia.

### **Resources on Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs)**

#### **National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)**

A NSVRC [project](#) on Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) is intended to provide best practices for the development of multidisciplinary response to sexual violence and offers several resources. The [SART History](#) page provides a map and snapshot of when and where SARTs started across the country, how and why they formed and their accomplishments.

#### **End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI)**

According to a SARRTs [resource page](#), communities across the country face the following challenges to improving their response to sexual assault:

- Social norms that tolerate or support sexual violence
- Little public awareness about sexual assault and what to do if an assault occurs
- Few community services for victims and difficulty accessing those that are available
- Reluctance of victims to use existing services and report to law enforcement
- Inadequate interventions and prevention efforts
- Fragmentation of responses across agencies to disclosures/reports of sexual assault.

In response to these challenges, EVAWI indicates that several communities have implemented a Sexual Assault Response and/or Resource Team (referred to as a SART or SARRT). In the 2006 Report on the National Needs Assessment of SARTs by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, a SART is defined as: "A collection of professional service providers and officials that respond essentially as a group, and in a timely fashion, to the various needs of rape victims."

In addition to community-wide SARRTs, some coordinating councils also exist on the state, territory or regional level to encourage consistent responses to sexual assault. Other SARRTs have been developed to oversee the specialized response to sexual assault in specific communities such as military bases, school campuses and tribes.

## State Examples of Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs)

### California

Enacted in 2015, [Assembly Bill 1475](#) authorizes each county to establish an interagency sexual assault response team (SART) program to provide a forum for interagency cooperation and coordination to effectively address sexual assault. The members of the team must be representatives of specified public and private agencies and organizations. The bill requires each SART to evaluate the effectiveness of individual agency and interagency protocols and systems by conducting case reviews involving sexual assault.

### Connecticut

In 2014, lawmakers enacted [House Bill 5029](#) (Public Act No. 14-11) that requires higher education institutions to establish campus resource teams. The resource teams must consist of individuals selected by the institution's president, including, but not limited to, the Title IX coordinator and chief student affairs officer; not less than one member from its administration, counseling services office, health services office, women's center, special police force, campus police force or campus safety personnel, faculty, senior and mid-level staff, student body, residential life office, and judicial hearing board; and any other individuals designated by the president. The measure indicates other possible members of the resource teams and requires institutions to ensure resource team members are educated on several issues related to campus sexual violence.

### Indiana

Indiana statute ([Ind. Code Ann. 16-21-8-1.5](#)) indicates that prosecuting attorneys must appoint a sexual assault response team in their county, or the county must join with one or more other counties to create a regional team, to comply with duties assigned to sexual assault response teams.

### Kentucky

Under [Ky. Rev. Stat. 403.707](#), the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is required to create a Sexual Assault Response Team Advisory Committee. The Committee is to be co-chaired by the executive director of the Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs and the commissioner of the Department of Kentucky State Police or the commissioner's designee. The statute lists the membership and duties of the Committee.

### Oregon

Oregon statute, [Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. 147.401](#), requires the district attorney in each county to organize a sexual assault response team to develop and adopt protocols addressing the response to adult and adolescent sexual assault victims. The statute indicates the members of the response team.

### Virginia

#### [\*Sexual Assault Response Team: A Model Protocol for Virginia\*](#)

In 2004, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation stating that “the Department of Criminal Justice Services shall promote the use of local and regional sexual assault response team policy and protocol, established pursuant to subdivision 46 of §9.1-102 of the Code of Virginia, as an integral part of an effective coordinated community response to sexual assault” (Virginia Acts of Assembly, Chapter 980). The Code directs that DCJS shall “establish training standards and publish a model policy and protocols for local and regional sexual assault response teams” (§9.1-102). Legislation enacted in 2009 codified the creation of SARTs in Virginia. Starting July 1, 2009, Commonwealth's Attorneys have the responsibility to coordinate a multi-disciplinary response to sexual violence in their communities which is consistent with the guidelines established by DCJS.