

### Sexual Assault Response in Louisiana

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Audit Control # 40250025  
Performance Audit Services • June 2026

#### Why We Conducted This Audit

This report provides information on how Louisiana addresses sexual assault and provides services to survivors of sexual assault. We conducted this review in response to Act 289 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session which instructed the Louisiana Legislative Auditor to conduct an audit of sexual assault advocacy services, sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) programs, sexual assault response (SAR) plans, the availability of sexual assault forensic medical exams (FMEs), and sexual assault services funding in this state.

#### What We Found

Overall, we found that Louisiana has established laws that support survivors of sexual assault. However, the state could do more to ensure that survivors across the state have access to consistent care. We found:

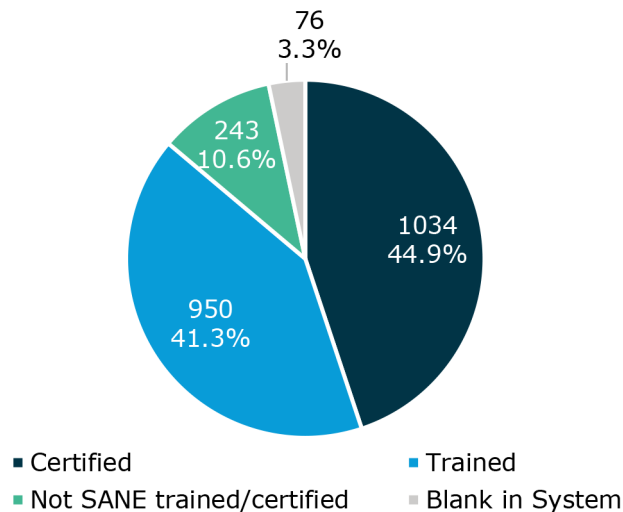
- **Louisiana state law requires SAR plans to foster collaboration among stakeholders and standardize survivor care and services. However, we identified instances where the SAR plans do not comply with state law and could be improved to better respond to survivors of sexual assault.** Many entities are involved in the response to survivors which results in a fragmented, or siloed, system of care, where coordination is challenging despite shared goals. SAR plans are designed to foster collaboration and standardize survivor care and services.
- **Louisiana could improve its response to survivors of sexual assault by incorporating best practices, such as a trauma-informed response and evaluating outcomes, and by establishing clear statutory authority and defined responsibilities at the state level.** For example, SAR plans and protocols should specify how SAR team members will interact with survivors and coordinate with stakeholders within their region, and SAR plans should incorporate evaluation procedures to improve outcomes for survivors. Responsibilities could include reviewing and approving SAR plans to ensure they meet statutory requirements and incorporate best practices, and monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the response.
- **As of February 2026, Louisiana had at least 77 practicing SANEs, resulting in the state having the lowest number of SANEs per 1,000 residents compared to the eight other states we researched.** While 1,984 (86.1%) of 2,303 FMEs conducted in Louisiana were performed by a certified or trained SANE during July 2024 through February 2026, a survivor may not always have access to an FME conducted by a SANE in their parish or hospital of choice, as shown on the following page.

*Continued on next page*

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## What We Found (Cont.)

Number and Percent of FMEs Performed by SANEs  
July 2024 through February 2026



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System and information provided by SANE programs.

- **SANE programs face challenges in ensuring that survivors have consistent access to FMEs conducted by a SANE, including funding, recruiting, and retaining qualified SANEs, as well as providing training and certification.** Staffing was consistently noted as a challenge to ensure that survivors have consistent access to FMEs by a SANE. For example, eight (61.5%) of 13 SANE programs that responded to our survey indicated that recruiting qualified nurses and retaining qualified nurses were challenges.
- **Louisiana could benefit from centralizing support for SANEs, which could include training and certification.** Effective August 2025, state law requires the Attorney General's (AG) Office to provide for statewide coordination of SANEs, and effective August 2026, the position of Statewide SANE Coordinator is created within the AG's Office.
- **During calendar year 2025, Louisiana had 11 accredited sexual assault advocacy centers that provided services to at least 1,733 survivors. State law mandates survivors have access to advocacy services; however, gaps and challenges limit survivors' access to services. For example, as of May 2026 four parishes were not served by an advocacy center.** In addition, survivors did not always have access to a sexual assault advocate during an FME.
- **Louisiana, unlike some other states, does not consistently dedicate state general funds to provide services for survivors of sexual assault or for the implementation of SAR plans.** Funding for sexual assault services comes from various sources, such as federal grants and local government funding which vary year to year.
- **FMEs are primarily funded through the Crime Victims Reparation (CVR) program, with \$5.4 million paid for FMEs during fiscal years 2023 through 2025.** The CVR fund balance has increased \$3.6 million (52.2%) from \$6.9 million in fiscal year 2023 to \$10.5 million in 2025, and more unclaimed gaming revenue has been received than expended for sexual assault claims and FMEs.

We made six matters for legislative consideration.

View the full report at [www.lla.la.gov](http://www.lla.la.gov).