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SAKI Training and Technical Assistance

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

Connecticut Department of Emergency
Services and Public Protection

Project Team

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1. Background and Purpose

1.1 Purpose Area 5 Defined

In 2022, the Bureau for Justice Assistance (BJA) released Purpose Area 5: Developing and Implementing a Sustainability Plan (PA5) as part of the National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI). As SAKI grantees near the completion of testing, investigating, and prosecuting their cases, this purpose area solicits existing or previous SAKI grantees that have addressed their unsubmitted sexual assault kits (SAKs, including partially tested kits) and the downstream case activities for most of their resulting cases for a final SAKI project focused on sustainability of the key components of the SAKI model. The key components of the SAKI model include developing a comprehensive and victim-centered approach to sexual assault cases, building jurisdictional capacity to prevent high numbers of unsubmitted SAKs in the future, and supporting the investigation and prosecution of cases. The SAKI Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) PA5 Assessment Team will work with these grantees to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the processes and procedures in place for implementing sustainable policies and procedures within each SAKI site's respective state or local jurisdiction.

1.2 Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection SAKI Experience

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, Connecticut's Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) was awarded a \$1.2 million grant to develop and implement a sustainability plan for PA5 in the state. DESPP is using this funding to develop an Annual SAK Inventory Policy to ensure timely submission of SAKs for testing, develop potential legislative changes, enhance existing sexual assault response policies, establish mandatory training for law enforcement personnel, and require regular convening of multidisciplinary working groups in local jurisdictions.

Previously, DESPP received four SAKI awards under Purpose Area 1: Comprehensive Approach to Unsubmitted SAKs (PA1). Funding for PA1 is administered to larger jurisdictions and agencies to (1) conduct an inventory of all unsubmitted SAKs in the jurisdiction's possession; (2) create a multidisciplinary working group that convenes regularly to address and identify individual, organizational, and systemic factors that lead to high numbers of unsubmitted SAKs; and (3) to support law enforcement with the investigation of future cases, new, active cases, and old, inactive cases. In FY2015, DESPP received a PA1 award to achieve several goals and milestones, including testing 70% of jurisdictions' identified SAKs. This testing yielded 259 DNA profiles eligible for the FBI's Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) and 75 CODIS hits. In FY2017, DESPP received another PA1 award, which funded analyzing its workflow and helping design policies and procedures that improve SAK handling across the state—including investigation, prosecution, and victim notification. The

additional funding also allowed DESPP to investigate and prosecute more cases in which SAKs had been only partially tested. In FY2019, DESPP received a PA1 award that was used to conduct additional testing on secondary evidence in sexual assault cases; fund victim notification coordinator and site coordinator positions; and fund the purchase of SAK tracking software, overtime pay, and outsourcing of cases. In FY2021, DESPP received an additional PA1 grant to fund an upgrade of its evidence tracking software, increase the capacity of its laboratory's DNA section, and continue to fund its victim notification coordinator position.

1.3 PA5 Sustainability Assessment

To effectively guide the grantee through sustainability planning, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team conducted a comprehensive assessment of the site's current procedures in comparison to their stated PA5 goals as well as the overall goals and objectives of the SAKI model. Assessment activities included review of all relevant policies, procedures, and legislation; virtual training and workshop sessions; data and systems analysis; review of the current multidisciplinary team (MDT) activities and agreements; and review of materials submitted by the grantee under previous SAKI grants. Finally, the sustainability assessment culminated in an in-person site visit for the purposes of developing a formal sustainability plan. All information gathered during the assessment activities—which are outlined in greater detail below—was gathered collaboratively with the grantee. Lastly, each assessment activity revealed strengths as well as areas for improvement for DESPP, all of which informed sustainability planning recommendations and which will be discussed in later sections of this report.

Policy review. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team reviewed and evaluated current policies, state mandates, and legislation related to SAK submission and chain of custody, evidence tracking and retention, victim notification, and training materials for law enforcement on sexually motivated crimes.

Virtual training and workshops. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team held two virtual workshops with the grantee. The content of the first workshop provided the grantee with a definition of sustainability planning as well as a presentation of the high-level findings from the completed assessment activities. This presentation of findings also included identified gaps in sustainable practices. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team then worked with the grantee at the conclusion of that workshop to begin forming an action plan based on the recommendations and findings presented. The second workshop facilitated by the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team centered on potential resources that DESPP believed would be needed for sustainability to take place, both within their jurisdiction and also across all SAKI sites.

Data and systems analysis. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team reviewed involvement and relevancy of STACS Casework and Track-Kit Laboratory Information Management System DNA modules.

MDT activities. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team assessed how DESPP was using the state-level MDT to develop, implement, and maintain best practices for sexual assault victim-survivors. Furthermore, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team assessed staffing capacity across relevant state-level law enforcement, prosecution, victim advocacy, sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs), crime laboratory agencies, and other partnerships organizations, all of which play key roles in SAKI's sustainability.

Previously submitted materials. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team reviewed materials previously submitted by the grantee under past SAKI grants. This included reports, follow-up action plans, project narratives and timelines, and other relevant materials that the site sent to the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team.

In-person site visit. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team concluded the assessment process with a 1.5-day, in-person site visit. During this site visit, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team and representatives from DESPP, as well as key partners and external stakeholders, worked to formalize goals and objectives for the remainder of their PA5 award. Each goal and objective had corresponding action steps, responsible personnel or agencies, and an anticipated timeline for completion.

2. Findings

The RTI SAKI TTA Team identified key successes DESPP accomplished throughout the FY2015, FY2017, FY2019, and FY2021 awards and gaps for DESPP to prioritize in the PA5 grant. The section provides the findings from the sustainability assessment, including these successes and identified gaps.

2.1 DESPP Successes

Connecticut has made significant strides in improving its response to sexual assault through various initiatives funded by the SAKI over several fiscal years. Starting with FY2015, efforts focused on addressing traditional unsubmitted SAKs. In FY2017, the focus shifted to partially tested SAKs and in FY2019, the initiative expanded to include reviewing cases for secondary evidence testing, addressing remaining partially tested SAKs, and supporting some forensic genetic genealogy testing. In FY2021, the emphasis was on the purchase and implementation of the STACS Casework and Track-Kit systems, now known as Invita Health.

To date, 100% of SAKI cases in Connecticut have been addressed. Out of 2,350 cases identified, 2,145 have been tested. The remaining 205 cases were either anonymous or deemed not to require additional testing.

Several legislative measures have been enacted to support the improved response to sexual assault. **Table A-1: Sexual Assault Response Legislation** in **Appendix A** displays a table of all legislation passed by Connecticut related to sexual assault response. These include the creation of the Commission on Standardization of Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations, which developed standardized SAKs and forms and adopted the State of Connecticut Technical Guidelines for Health Care Response to Victims of Sexual Assault, which is reviewed annually.¹ Legislation now mandates that all SAKs must be submitted by law enforcement to the DESPP state crime lab, with testing completed within 60 days of evidence collection.² Additionally, Connecticut legislation mandates SAKs are tracked from manufacturing to final disposition, including retaining evidence from reported cases until court proceedings are concluded, or for 5 years for nonreported cases.³ The Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) Advisory Committee was also established to recommend policies and procedures, which included changes to the statute of limitations.⁴

Victims' rights have also improved from DESPP's efforts. Victims now have the right to access information regarding their SAKs, including testing dates, CODIS entries, and hits. Connecticut is in the process of transitioning from using the UPS Trackpad for SAK tracking to the Track-Kit system, which offers improvements such as better tracking of SAKs, including those transferred out of state or to federal agencies, and enhanced sharing of SAK results among authorized users. Connecticut offers a range of reporting options for victims. Reported SAKs are processed through the usual channels of testing, investigation, and prosecution. Anonymous SAKs, which lack identifying information and a police report, are not tested but are held at the lab for 5 years before being returned to the agency. Identified SAKs, which include the victim's name, are tested regardless of whether a police report is present. Victims with identified SAKs benefit from access to SAK results through Track-Kit, potentially aiding their decision to engage with the criminal justice system.

Although there are a few legislative issues still being addressed, Connecticut provides a comprehensive range of options for victims while allowing them time to make informed decisions about reporting. This includes options related to SANE services, local victim advocacy programming, and safety planning opportunities through the State of Connecticut's address confidentiality program. Additionally, the state has implemented

¹ Connecticut General Assembly, (1988), *Public Act 88-210, Substitute Senate Bill No. 318: An act concerning the collection of evidence; in sex offense crimes*, <https://portal.ct.gov/dcj/19a-112a-evidence-commission/commission-home-page/public-act-88-210>

² Connecticut General Assembly, (2015), *Public Act No. 15-207, Substitute House Bill No. 6498: An act concerning evidence in sexual assault cases*, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/act/pa/pdf/2015PA-00207-R00HB-06498-PA.pdf>

³ Connecticut General Assembly, (2018), *Public Act No. 18-83, Substitute Senate Bill No. 17: An act concerning procedures related to collecting and processing sexual assault evidence collection kits*, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/act/pa/pdf/2018PA-00083-R00SB-00017-PA.pdf>

⁴ Connecticut General Assembly, (2019), *Public Act No. 19-114, Substitute Senate Bill No. 796: An act concerning sexual assault forensic examiners*, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/act/pa/pdf/2019PA-00114-R00SB-00796-PA.pdf>

semiannual SANE training and established statewide SANE positions, although additional training needs were identified during recent reviews and interviews.

Most recently, Connecticut passed Substitute House Bill No. 5399, Public Act No. 24-127, that establishes comprehensive measures to enhance the handling of sexual assault cases, focusing on improving victim support and evidence management. Key provisions include mandates for timely submission and testing of SAKs, ensuring that all SAKs are processed efficiently and that results are made available to victims. The act also requires the tracking of SAKs throughout the investigative process and outlines specific procedures for evidence retention as well as improved training and education for criminal justice stakeholders. Additionally, it strengthens victims' rights by guaranteeing access to information regarding the status and results of their SAKs.

2.2 Identified Gaps from Sustainability Assessment

To ensure sustainability, potential gaps identified via both provided materials and interviews must be addressed. These gaps should be monitored for progress and ultimate resolution.

MDT. Communication is a vital aspect of maintaining the effectiveness and sustainability of the SAKI model. The SAKI model promotes a cohesive team approach, with support and purpose. To support the SAKI model across disciplines after its implementation, it is crucial for DESPP to ensure that consistent and accurate information is shared among all involved parties through the maintenance of an MDT and sexual assault response teams (SARTs), whether statewide or regional. The MDT and SARTs can facilitate the continuous dissemination of relevant information to all disciplines, enabling a unified approach to addressing sexual assault cases. Beyond the state-level MDT and multidisciplinary working groups, it is essential to ensure that individuals across Connecticut are informed about the project, its goals, and the progress made. It is important to identify who is responsible for teaching those who are not on the MDT but are impacted by decisions, laws, or guidance, such as law enforcement, prosecution, advocates, and SANEs. Understanding their roles and needs will facilitate better communication and support.

Policy & procedure development. Policy and procedure development plays a significant role in supporting responses to sexual assault. While Connecticut has developed legislation to address sexual assault response, there are policies and procedures that will need to be developed and reevaluated over the years. Clear definitions, such as the meaning of "anonymous SAKs," must be established and communicated. Additionally, developing comprehensive policies and procedures is essential for guiding the response to sexual assault and ensuring that all protocols are followed correctly.

Funding. Funding is another critical component to ensuring success in sustaining effective response to sexual assaults. Adequate funding is needed to support various aspects of the SAKI model, including training opportunities for professionals, ongoing support and

maintenance of Track-Kit systems, and the establishment of a SAK tracking coordinator position. This funding will ensure that necessary resources are available to sustain and enhance SAKI's effectiveness. Equipment and programs, such as Track-Kit, have been purchased through grant funding. However, ongoing costs for maintenance and upgrades—such as those for law enforcement and medical personnel, victim, and prosecutor portals—need to be addressed.

Training. Training is integral to implementing the SAKI model effectively. Training should be trauma-informed and victim-centered, particularly for law enforcement agencies. It should also address the diverse needs of the various disciplines which use Track-Kit and provide clarification on the process for handling anonymous SAKs. Ensuring that all relevant personnel are well-trained is essential for the success of the SAKI model because the model emphasizes building jurisdictional capacity to prevent the backlog of unsubmitted SAKs and supports the investigation and prosecution of cases. Special attention should be given to where disciplines overlap, such as between law enforcement and prosecution or between the lab and SANE. Training on best practices is also crucial, including practices for evidence collection at SANE and crime scenes, tracking system requirements, handling anonymous SAKs, timely CODIS hit follow-up, trauma-informed victim interviews, and the development of safe interview rooms. With Connecticut's Substitute House Bill No. 5399, Public Act No. 24-127, DESPP must ensure training developed for this legislation addresses gaps in trauma-informed and victim-centered response to sexual assault cases. Finally, it is crucial to determine who provides training around sexual assault response and to identify any barriers to people obtaining or participating in training. Alternatives to in-person training, such as virtual trainings, should also be considered to ensure accessibility and effectiveness.

3. Recommended Goals for Sustainability Plan

The following section contains recommendations for sustainability based on the goals identified by the grantee during the TTA and site visit processes. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of recommendations, but it does address the most acute needs and gaps and attempt to establish a foundation from which the site can continue to build upon its accomplishments under this SAKI award. Four core recommendations for sustained progress are *MDT development, policies and procedures, funding considerations, and training*. Lastly, the TTA team from RTI has included additional resources and materials in **Table A-2: Recommendations Resources** in Appendix A to further support the site in its sustainability efforts.

3.1 MDT Development

To develop and maintain a cohesive response to sexual assault that is both trauma-informed and victim-centered, the importance of consistent and open communication between partner agencies cannot be overstated. This communication can take place in a

variety of settings, both formal and informal. Therefore, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends the site develop and implement an MDT, such as a SART, to open the lines of communication to effectively address the other sustainability recommendations outlined in the remainder of this section.

The development of a SART would be the natural progression of the SAKI working group that is currently in place, especially because this group is anchored by so many committed partners. The initial mission of the SART must center around familiarizing newly engaged partners, such as law enforcement, to the accomplishments made under the SAKI award. The team could then focus on strategic planning to implement the goals outlined by the site during their sustainability assessment. The added benefit of having these conversations around the meeting table is that it will allow for a realistic understanding of the resource and response landscape, especially if all disciplines (e.g., law enforcement, SANEs, advocacy, prosecution) are represented during team meetings. Furthermore, these teams often establish buy-in among participating agencies where there had otherwise been a lack of engagement. Lastly, having a SART will allow for a more streamlined implementation of any model policies, legislative changes, or services provided.

It is worth noting that there are several SART models that could be used in this setting. A state the size of Connecticut could follow a statewide or regional team model. Considerations around funding for staffing or operational elements of a statewide SART are addressed in the section on funding recommendations.

3.2 Policy and Procedure Development

Policies and procedures are an integral component for creating and sustaining system-wide responses that are not only victim-centered and trauma-informed, but also culturally sensitive and procedurally just. Policies and procedures can establish parameters for agency responses across disciplines, clarify expectations around personnel roles, as well as provide guidance around victim-survivor's rights as they interact with different elements of the criminal justice and judicial systems. Furthermore, policies and procedures can address specific subjects that might need further guidance or clarification, such as the categorization of sexual assault forensic exam kits.

Due to discussions between DESPP and the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team, the following list is intended to give the site a starting place for future policy and procedure development. Again, this list is not intended to be exhaustive. Nor is it intended to be a one-time event. But rather, the policies and procedures developed should be considered dynamic and ongoing in terms of development and document improvement. Lastly, the SAKI TTA Assessment PA5 Team recommends that these policies and procedures be developed by the newly formed SART to coalesce the team around the same response posture for sexual

assault. It will also streamline the workload and disperse it equitably among the team rather than falling to one to two personnel within each agency.

3.2.1 Recommended policies and procedures

- **Memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the SART.** The purpose of this document is providing all participating agencies with the purpose of the SART, the roles and responsibilities of the entities and personnel involved, confidentiality considerations, actions and obligations of those involved, and guidance around the annual review of both the team’s performance and the MOU document itself. An example of a SART MOU can be found linked in Table A-2: Recommendations Resources in Appendix A.
- **Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the SART.** The SOPs for the SART builds upon what was established with the SART and provides further direction on the activities of the SART and its members. It defines roles and responsibilities, team operations, case review considerations (if the team reviews cases), as well as commonly understood terms and topics so that new team members can understand the work of the team upon joining the group. Furthermore, the SOPs should provide in-depth guidance around confidentiality, data collection, and documentation practices. Lastly, the SOPs should address the roles and responsibilities for victim notification and communications procedures, such as in the instance of a CODIS hit follow-up. Resources related to the operations of a SART can be found linked in Table A-2 in Appendix A.
- **Sample policy for investigative practices for sexual assault investigations.** This policy should be developed by the SART as an example of how law enforcement agencies could incorporate trauma-informed and victim-centered principles into their policies around sexual assault response. Resources that will support the development of such a policy can be found linked in Table A-2 in Appendix A.
- **Sample policy for prosecutorial practices for sexual assault prosecutions.** This policy should be developed by the SART as an example of how law enforcement agencies could incorporate trauma-informed and victim-centered principles into prosecutorial policies around sexual assault response. Resources that will support the development of such a policy can be found linked in Table A-2 in Appendix A.
- **Sample policy for advocacy practices for sexual assault advocacy.** This policy should be developed by the SART as an example of how DESPP could incorporate trauma-informed and victim-centered principles into advocacy policies around sexual assault response. Resources that will support the development of such a policy can be found linked in Table A-2 in Appendix A.

- **Policy for victim notification procedures.** The site identified that it needs to develop this policy about notifying victim-survivors of evidence processing and potential CODIS-related matches. It is worth noting that the term “victim notification” can mean different things based on the response discipline (e.g., lab professionals, prosecution, law enforcement). As such, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that the SART members work collectively to establish trauma-informed and victim-centered notification and communications practices, which will include informing victim-survivors of CODIS matches and case related updates, court proceedings, and advocacy services. Examples around notifications procedures can be found linked in Table A-2 in Appendix A.
- **Legislative clarity for SAK categorization.** This is a specific topical issue identified by DESPP during the sustainability assessment. Different disciplines have different interpretations of how reported, nonreported, and anonymous classifications are defined as related to the testing of evidence from the sexual assault forensic exam kits. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that the site request interpretation assistance from the Office of the Attorney General because it often provides legislative interpretation as a service to its constituency. Once the team has received a final interpretation, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that the team capture this definition in SART documents, such as the SOPs, and for each participating agency to also capture these definitions in their agency-specific policies and procedures.

3.3 Funding

Funding is often cited by agencies and departments as a potential barrier in maintaining the progress made by a grant project or programmatic endeavor. For the purposes of this section of the recommendations, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team will address two specific funding components: (1) the day-to-day operations of the budget line items currently funded by SAKI and (2) future expansion of the work done by SAKI, such as staffing a statewide SART coordinator.

The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that DESPP identify ways to maintain the costs being funded by the SAKI award through other agency means. The first step is to identify those costs and brainstorm alternate fund sources. For example, if the current funds are being used to fund staff positions and purchase allowable supplies, how will this be maintained after the award? If site personnel have not had budgetary conversations with their line of supervision already, it would help to begin those discussions imminently to not interrupt any of the workflow progress on evidence testing and ensure investigative procedures are not negatively impacted.

In addition to currently funded budget line items, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that DESPP collaborate with agencies to identify funding for a statewide SART

coordinator. There are several ways to fund a position of this nature: for example, through a specific agency's annual budget, through cost-sharing efforts between agencies, or additional grant funding. After identifying an agency that could take on a SART coordinator position and the agency creating the position, widely advertising the new position could signal to the community at large that this position and more specifically sexual assault response is of the utmost importance. Benefits to utilizing an agency's annual budget would include great quality-control measures over staffing, training, and other personnel functions. Furthermore, agency-specific funding is a bit more reliable than other funding streams, such as grants. Potential challenges with agency funding could be internal competition for resources and need for a significant initial commitment on the funding agency's behalf. However, it is possible to overcome those potential challenges. An example of an agency-funded, statewide SART coordinator position can be found linked in Table A-2: Recommendations Resources in the annex.

The next funding option would be for a cost-sharing model between participating agencies. This takes place when two or more agencies collaborate to pay the costs associated with hiring a statewide SART coordinator. For example, this could be accomplished between the state crime lab and the State Police because both are under the auspices of DESPP. The benefit of this model is that it greatly reduces costs assigned to one agency. The scope of services and networking reach of personnel can also be increased when shared between two agencies, as under this funding model. However, potential challenges include that a lead agency must be identified, which can lead to difficult but necessary conversations about authority upfront. Other challenges would be cross-agency communication, information sharing, and proper personnel supervision. These challenges are not insurmountable, but worth considering during the planning stages.

Lastly, another funding model could be utilizing additional grant funding from other sources. These could be municipal, state, or federally funded grant programs. The benefits to pursuing this funding model are that it is not going to financially burden any agency but rather bring revenue "in." However, a potential challenge could be that the funding, if awarded, is also time-sensitive and would need to be secured again in the future. Additionally, there might be competition, or at least the perception of competition, between participating agencies for grant funding, which could potentially impact future partnerships and overall team cohesion. If this site pursues future grant funding, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends being strategic in the awards that it applies for and considering that awards often have multiple priority areas. As such, two (or more) agencies could still apply for the same grant awards under different purposes areas to benefit their own agencies and the team.

3.4 Training

DESPP has made significant strides in identifying opportunities for future training. This is evidenced by the passage of Substitute House Bill No. 5399, Public Act No. 24-127, which was a collaborative effort between service providers and legislators. The SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that the grantee site not only create and implement a 40-hour course on sexual assault investigations, but also consider all the avenues in which trauma-informed and victim-centered training can occur. This is another task that a SART could readily take on. During the site assessment, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team identified both formal and informal opportunities for cross-training between disciplines. For example, personnel at the state crime lab discussed how to train advocates on the forensic evidence testing process and ways that they could explain SAK tracking to the victim-survivors that they engage with. As another example, telecommunications personnel discussed holding trainings for law enforcement agencies to learn what the call-taking and dispatching process is like for sexual assault calls. All these cross-training opportunities will increase empathy and understanding between the service providers while also educating the diverse personnel in the parameters and roles of their fellow teammates. Ultimately, the benefactors of increased understanding and knowledge among service providers will be the victim-survivors.

In addition to local and statewide cross-training opportunities, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that the newly formed SART explore national training opportunities, which often provide teams with the chance to travel together and network with other service providers. These can take place at national-level conferences, many of which have scholarship opportunities for agencies with smaller training budgets. In addition to the benefits of national-level training, the exposure to other communities and response systems in those training settings can be invaluable. They can also provide the SART with much-needed resource linkage.

Finally, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team recommends that the SART conduct a gap analysis on training to further explore opportunities for cross-training and increasing knowledge across disciplines. For example, is there a way to begin training line-level officers and even police cadets on trauma-informed techniques for victim-survivor engagement? Is there an opportunity for advocates to receive an overview on criminal legal procedures to inform their understanding of law enforcement's constitutional guardrails during sexual assault investigations? The opportunities are endless when it comes to training and professional development. And the benefit of tackling this recommendation as a team is that the resources and personnel expenditures associated with fulfilling this goal can be shared equitably between the SART member agencies.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team found many strengths, promising practices, and accomplishments because of DESPP’s work under this and all preceding SAKI awards. These include revisions to legislation, the establishment of the SAFE Advisory Committee, streamlined workflow procedures within the state crime lab, and, most notably, the backlog for SAK testing having been completely addressed. Although this recommendations report has several items that will require work for progress to be sustained, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team believes that DESPP’s core working group, because of its commitment and unified vision, will be able to successfully and comprehensively address the points listed in this report. Lastly, the SAKI TTA PA5 Assessment Team remains committed to partnering with DESPP and its fellow service providers—both now, as DESPP begins to implement the recommendations provided, and also in future endeavors to serve and support victim-survivors of sexual assault in their pursuit of justice and healing.

Appendix A: Sexual Assault Response Legislation and Recommendations Resources

Table A-1. Sexual Assault Response Legislation in Connecticut

Policy	Description
Public Act 88-210	Created a commission on the standardization of the collection of evidence in sexual assault investigations.
Public Act 93-340	Outlines the response to sexual assault cases. The commission <i>shall annually review the protocol and</i> may <i>biennially</i> recommend changes to the protocol for adoption as regulations.
Public Act 15-207	Created a legal requirement for the submission of sexual assault kits (SAKs) by law enforcement to the laboratory and testing of SAKs by the laboratory to be completed within 60 days of evidence collection.
Public Act 18-83	Requires the tracking of all SAKs in Connecticut, from the manufacture of SAKs to their final disposition.
Public Act No. 19-114	Establish a Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) Advisory Committee to recommend policies and procedures for consideration.
Public Act 19-16	Eliminated or extended the criminal statute of limitations for various sexual assault and related crimes and extended the civil statute of limitations for sexual abuse or related conduct for victims under age 21.
Statute of Limitations 54-193	States in the case of the sexual abuse of a minor, 30 years from the date the victim reaches the age of majority or within 5 years from the date the victim notifies the police or state’s attorney office of the commission of the offenses. In cases of sexual assault for which DNA evidence is available, there is no limitation, as long as both (1) the victim notified the police or state’s attorney’s office within 5 years of the offense and (2) the identity of the perpetrator has been established through DNA collected.
State of Connecticut Technical Guidelines for Health Care Response to Patients Who Report a Sexual Assault (2021)	Established a standardized model for health care response to patients who report a sexual assault and for the collection of sexual assault evidence.

Table A-2. Recommendations Resources

Resource	Description
<p>Sample memorandum of understanding for a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) <i>Source: Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault</i></p>	<p>Sample of a memorandum of understanding for the participating agencies in a SART.</p>
<p>Sample SART Protocol/ Operating Procedures <i>Source: Wisconsin Office of Crime Victim Services</i></p>	<p>Example of policies, procedures, and a best practices manual for a SART.</p>
<p>Framework for Prosecutors to Strengthen Our National Response to Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Involving Adult Victims <i>Source: U.S. Department of Justice</i></p>	<p>Promising practices and prosecutorial considerations for effectively prosecuting sexual assault cases.</p>
<p>Developing a Sexual Assault Response Policy <i>Source: SAKI Training and Technical Assistance</i></p>	<p>Sample policy for victim-centered sexual assault response from sworn personnel, for both patrol-based responses and investigations.</p>
<p>Nevada Victim Advocate Model Protocols</p>	<p>Sample policy for victim advocates when responding to requests for support from victim-survivors of crime, including sexual assault.</p>
<p>National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach <i>Source: National Institute of Justice</i></p>	<p>Best practices resource; also includes victim notification considerations (see Appendix H of the document).</p>
<p>SART Toolkit <i>Source: National Sexual Violence Resource Center</i></p>	<p>The official SART Toolkit was made available through the Office for Victims of Crime and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.</p>