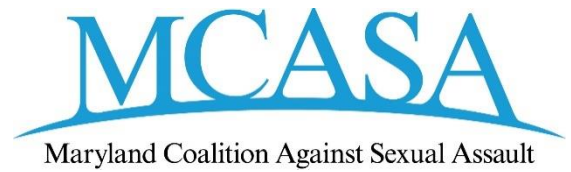


# Economic Costs of Sexual Violence



## Introduction

Survivors of sexual assault pay for sexual violence out of their own pockets, and the public pays through provision of services to them and their significant others. Businesses lose money through employee absences and sexual harassment suits. The cost for offenders' incarceration, probation, treatment, and other offender services adds to the total cost of sexual assault.

*Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, "By the Numbers: Sexual Violence Statistics Manual," 2007*

- Rape costs victims more than any other crime, with total estimated costs of \$127 billion per year. *National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, "The Costs and Consequences of Sexual Violence and Cost-Effective Solutions," 2011 citing National Institute of Justice 1996*
- Research has estimated that each rape costs between \$87,000 and \$240,776. *The White House Council on Women and Girls, "Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action," 2014*
- The immediate medical costs for victims who seek care is \$2,084 on average. *Farris, Schell, & Tanielian, The RAND Corporation, "Enemy Within: Military Sexual Assault Inflicts Physical, Psychological, Financial Pain," 2013*
- Each year, victims of intimate partner rape lose an estimated 1.1 million days of paid and household activity. Average daily earnings lost by intimate partner rape victims is \$69. *Centers for Disease Control, "Cost of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States," 2003.*
- Fourteen percent of rape and sexual assault survivors lost time from work as a result of their victimization; 28% of those survivors lost 6-10 days. *Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey. Tables 87, 89, 2002*
- The total cost of sexual assault to survivors was \$18 million in 2002. *Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey. Tables 82, 2002*

## Long-term costs

- Women who experienced physical or psychological abuse more than 4 years ago had health care costs 19% higher than women who were never abused, according to one study. *Futures Without Violence, "The Health Care Costs of Domestic and Sexual Violence," 2010 citing Bonomi et al, "Health Care Utilization and Costs Associated with Physical and Nonphysical-Only Intimate Partner Violence," 2009*
- Survivors who were sexually assaulted during adolescence have been found to have reduced income as adults, with an estimated lifetime income loss of \$241, 600. *The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, "The Costs and Consequences of Sexual Violence and Cost-Effective Solutions," 2011 citing MacMillan, R. "Adolescent victimization and income deficits in adulthood: Rethinking the costs of criminal violence from a life-course perspective," 2000*

# Economic Costs of Sexual Violence Continued



- One cause of reduced lifetime income is related to reduced education. A study found that women who had survived sexual abuse had a 3 times greater chance of not completing high school, compared to women reporting no sexual abuse.  
*New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, "The Cost of Inaction: Social and Economic Consequences of Untreated Sexual Violence in NYC"*
- Short-term time lost from work is not the only work-related consequence of sexual assault. One study found that 50% of sexual assault victims quit or were forced to leave their jobs in the year after their assault, as a result of their severe reactions to their assault.  
*The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, "The Costs and Consequences of Sexual Violence and Cost-Effective Solutions," 2011 citing Ellis, E. M., Atkeson, B. M., & Calhoun, K. S. "An assessment of long term reaction to rape," 1993*
- If an abusive relationship causes a survivor to leave his or her household, he or she suffers economic consequences from losing the economies of scale that come from a shared household.  
United Nations, "The economic costs of violence against women: An evaluation of the literature," 2005

## Why Cost Estimates of Sexual Violence Are Low

Estimates are typically based on statistics that measure incidence or prevalence of rape identified through cases reported to law enforcement or through victimization surveys. Consider that:

- Sexual violence is one of the most underreported crimes in our society. Recent data suggests that fewer than one in six women report sexual violence to the police.
- Surveys that capture statistics use questions that measure sexual violence in different ways. While some include instances of oral and anal penetration, for instance, some include only vaginal penetration.
- Some surveys capture rape experienced through force as well as rape that occurred during incapacity, other surveys do not.
- Estimates may not include the range of sexual violence perpetrated against victims other than acts that involve penetration of some kind.  
*Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice, "Workplaces Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center," 2011*

## Interventions help cut costs

- The 1994 Violence Against Women Act has been estimated to have a net benefit of \$16.4 billion, including \$14.8 billion in averted costs for survivors; it only costs \$1.6 billion to implement. Individually, VAWA saves \$159 per woman in averted victim costs and costs \$15.50 per woman.  
*WHO, "The economic dimensions of interpersonal violence," 2004; The National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, "The Costs and Consequences of Sexual Violence and Cost-Effective Solutions," 2011*
- One study found that the presence of advocates in the legal and medical proceedings after rape result in victims experiencing less psychological and physical health struggles. This makes rape crisis center advocacy a cost-saving approach.  
*National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, "Where we stand: Costs, consequences and solutions," 2013*