

# Division of Criminal Justice Services

Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center  
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety  
State of West Virginia

## Sexual Assault Victims

September 2000

It is generally accepted that only one-third of sexual assaults in the United States are reported to the police annually. In West Virginia, 914 incidents were reported in 1999. If these represent only one-third of the incidents, sexual assault incidents may have actually totaled 2,742. In fact, The West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services (FRIS) served 1,587 new victims in 1999. Each victim may have suffered more than one sexual assault incident and not all victims seek assistance from FRIS, therefore, the actual number of incidents is likely to

be much greater than 1,587.

Victims of sexual assault frequently fear reprisal from the offender or others, believe the assault was not serious, or wish to maintain their privacy. These concerns often prevent them from contacting the police.

In light of these facts, it is important to examine multiple sources of sexual violence data to understand the true extent of the problem.

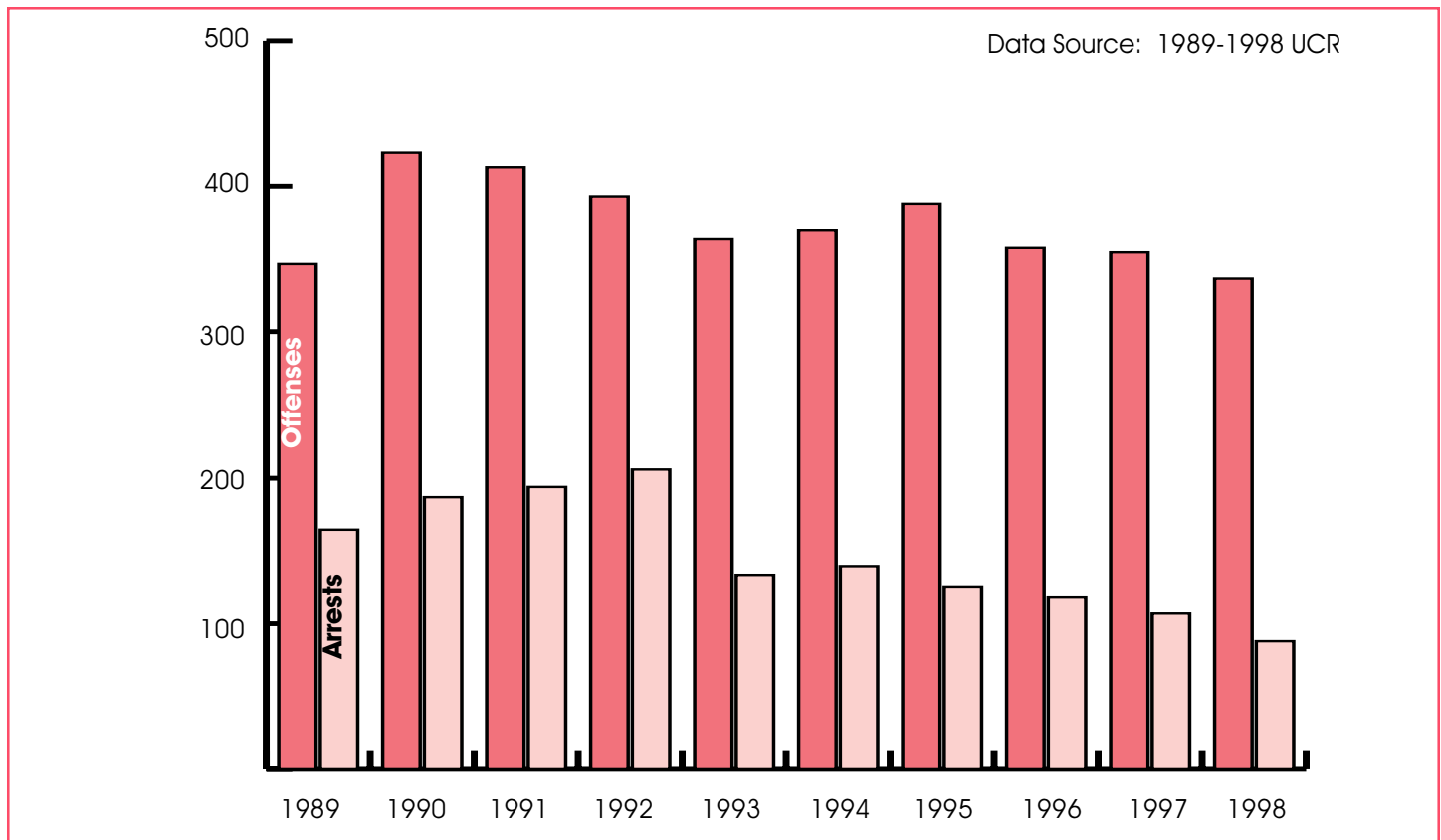
This report describes sexual violence in West Virginia by examining data reported to law enforcement as well as data from victim service providers.

## 1989 - 1998 UCR Data

Statewide, forcible rape offenses were at their highest in 1990 with 423 offenses reported in the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) (see Graph 1). Since 1989 forcible rape offenses have averaged 375 per year. Arrests for forcible rape reported in the UCR fell to their lowest level (88) in ten years during 1998. Since 1989, the average number of arrests per year was 146.

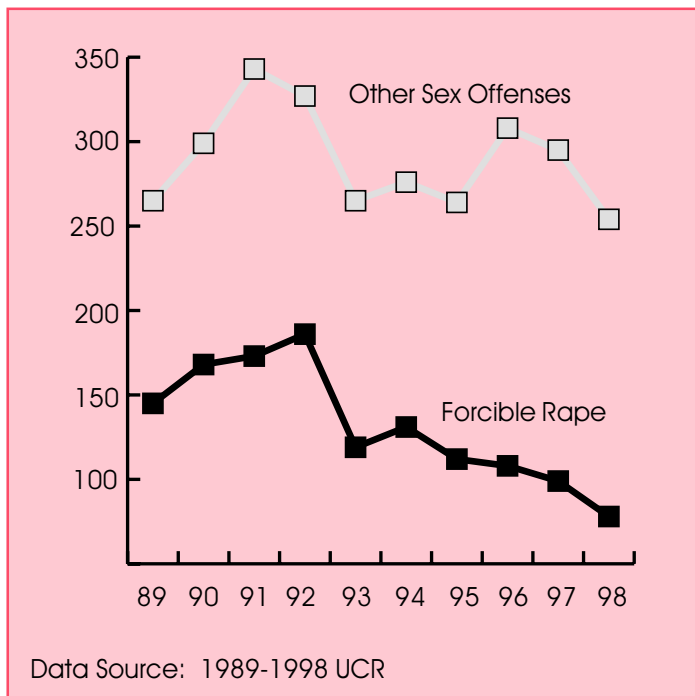
The greatest percentage of reported forcible rape offenses resulting in arrest occurred during 1992, 52.4% (or 206 arrests out of 393 offenses). The arrest rate has since dropped to its lowest level

**Graph 1** Forcible Rape Offenses and Arrests



## Graph 2

### Forcible Rape and Other Sex Offenses by Adults



in ten years to 26.1% (or 88 arrests out of 337 offenses) in 1998.

Juvenile arrests accounted for 9.7% of the total forcible rape arrests and 9.5% of the total arrests for other Part II sex offenses from 1989 to 1998. Graphs 2 and 3 show the ten year history of forcible rape arrests and other Part II sex offense arrests for adults and juveniles, respectively.

## National Crime Victimization Survey - 1998 Data

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) consists of data collected through interviews of a national sample of persons age 12 and older concerning crimes committed against them. Even though NCVS data are not specific to the State of West Virginia, they provide a context for understanding victims of sexual assault.

In 1998, victims were less likely to report rape or sexual assault to the police (32%) than any other violent crime. No significant\* change in the reported rate of rape or sexual assault was evident from 1997 to 1998. However, between 1993 and 1998 the rape or sexual assault rate per 1,000 persons surveyed decreased by 40%.

Demographically, victims of rape or sexual assault were 14 times more likely to be female than male. Rates of victimization did not vary significantly between blacks (2 per 1,000) and whites (1.5 per 1,000). Victims of rape or sexual assault were most often under the age of 24 with 16-19 year olds having the highest rate (5 per 1,000).

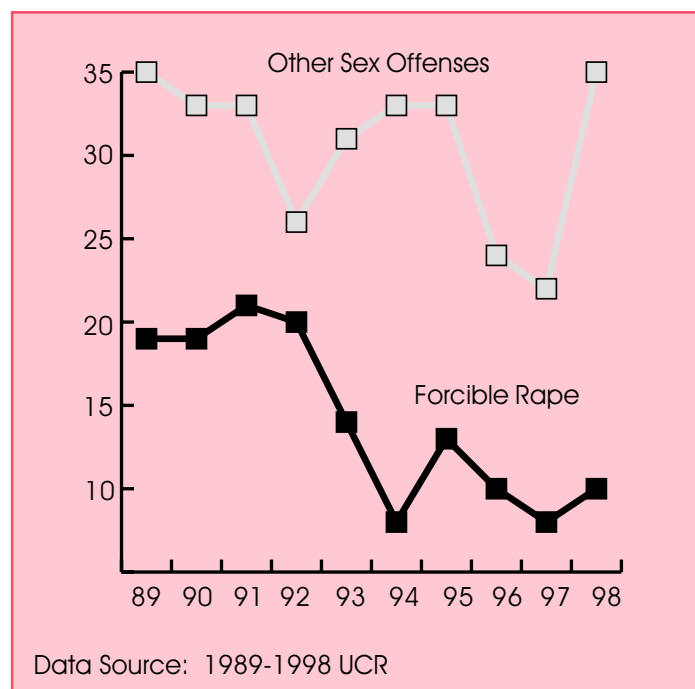
Over 7 in 10 rape or sexual assault victims knew their attacker.

Fewer than 1 in 10 rape or sexual assault victims faced a weapon.

*\*Significance tests conducted by NCVS.*

## Graph 3

### Forcible Rape and Other Sex Offenses by Juveniles



## 1999 WVIBRS Data

Beginning in January 1999, West Virginia converted from a summary UCR system to an Incident Based Reporting System (WVIBRS). About 80-85% of law enforcement agencies are currently reporting WVIBRS data.

This new system provides greater detail about offenses reported to law enforcement. Previously, the only type of sexual assault included in the summary UCR data was forcible rape.

As of April 2000, the WVIBRS data file contained 914 incidents involving a total of 978 sexual assault offenses committed against victims in 1999. The sexual assaults included in this section are forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, incest and statutory rape.

### Victims

The victims of sexual assault in 1999 were predominately white (94%), female (85%) and most often juveniles (67%). The average victim age was 17 while the most frequently reported age was 15. Forty-one percent (41%) of the victims were between the ages of 10 and 17, while 26% were under 10 years of age.

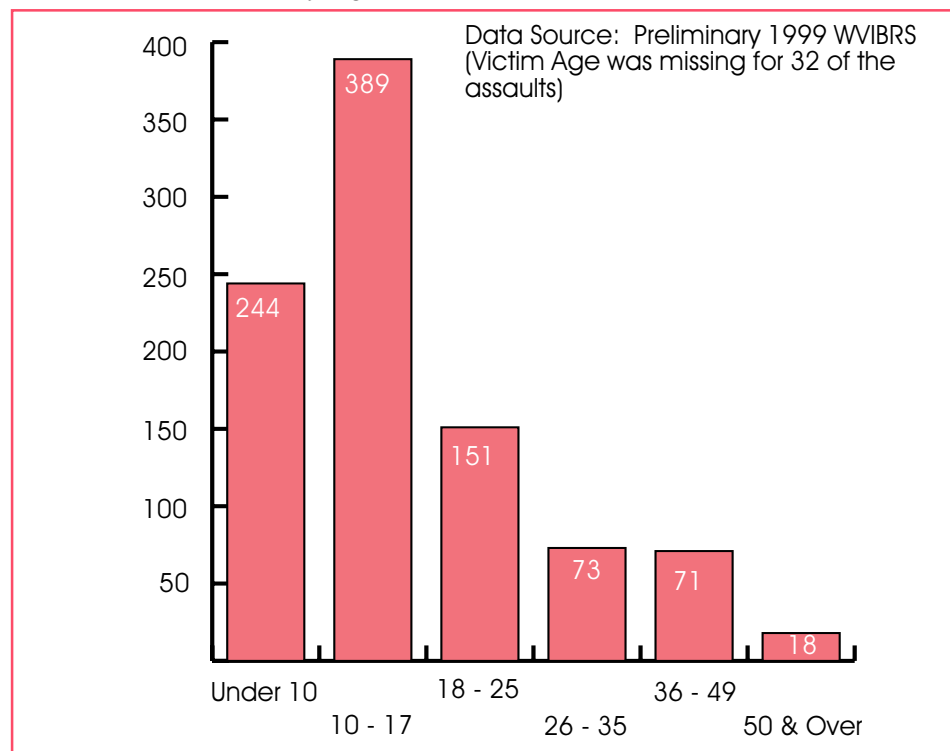
The victim was the complainant in 95 (41%) of the 233 incidents for which this information was reported.

The most frequent type of sexual assault was forcible fondling (39%). Of those offenses, 279 involved juvenile victims and 102 involved adult victims. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of sexual assaults were forcible rape (124 juveniles and 145 adults).

Forty-three percent (43%) of the juvenile victims suffered forcible fondling. However, among adult victims, the most common offense was forcible rape (45%) (see Graph 5).

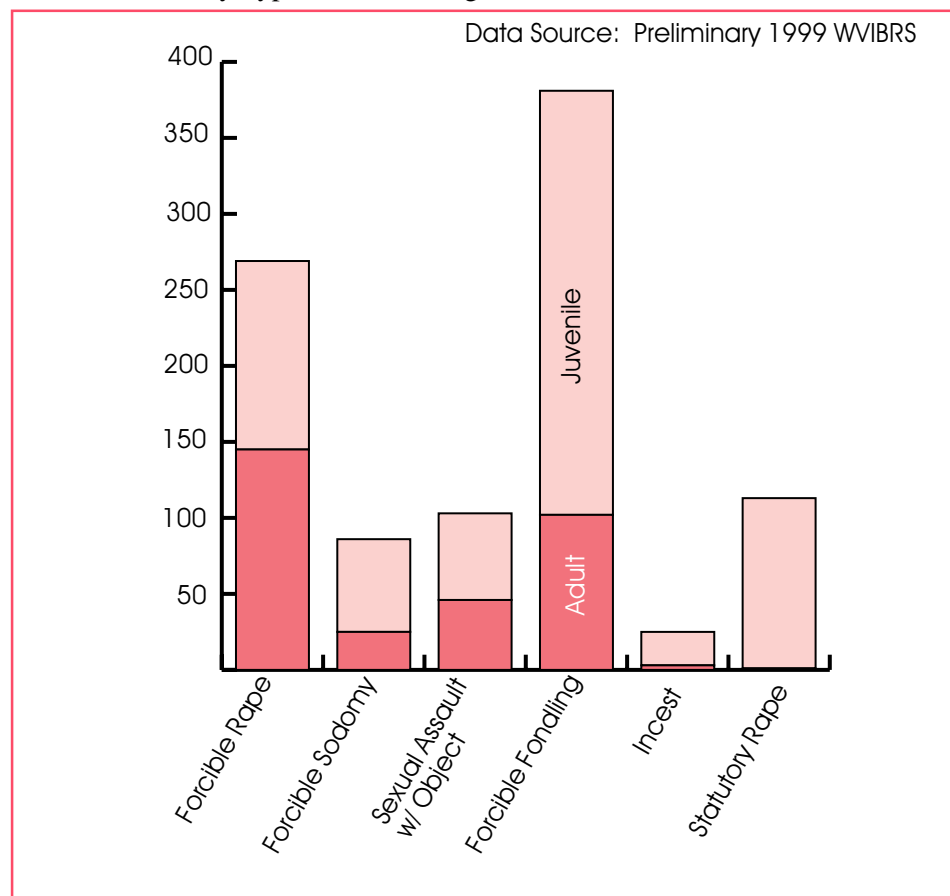
**Graph 4**

Sexual Assault Victims by Age



**Graph 5**

Sexual Assaults by Type and Victim Age



Only 8 incidents in 1999 were reported to involve an active protective order. Protective orders were filed following 25 of the incidents in 1999.

### Offenders

Offenders in sexual assault incidents in 1999 were overwhelmingly male (97%).

Data on offenders' race was available for 838 of the offenses. Of those, 732 (87%) were white, 104 (12%) were black, 1 (.1%) was Asian/Pacific Islander and 1 (.1%) was American Indian/Alaska Native.

The average offender age was 30; however, the most frequently reported offender age was 18. Sexual assault offenders were most likely to be 18 to 25 years of age (29%). This group was followed closely by 26 to 35 year olds (26%). Juveniles accounted for 109 (15%) of the offenders.

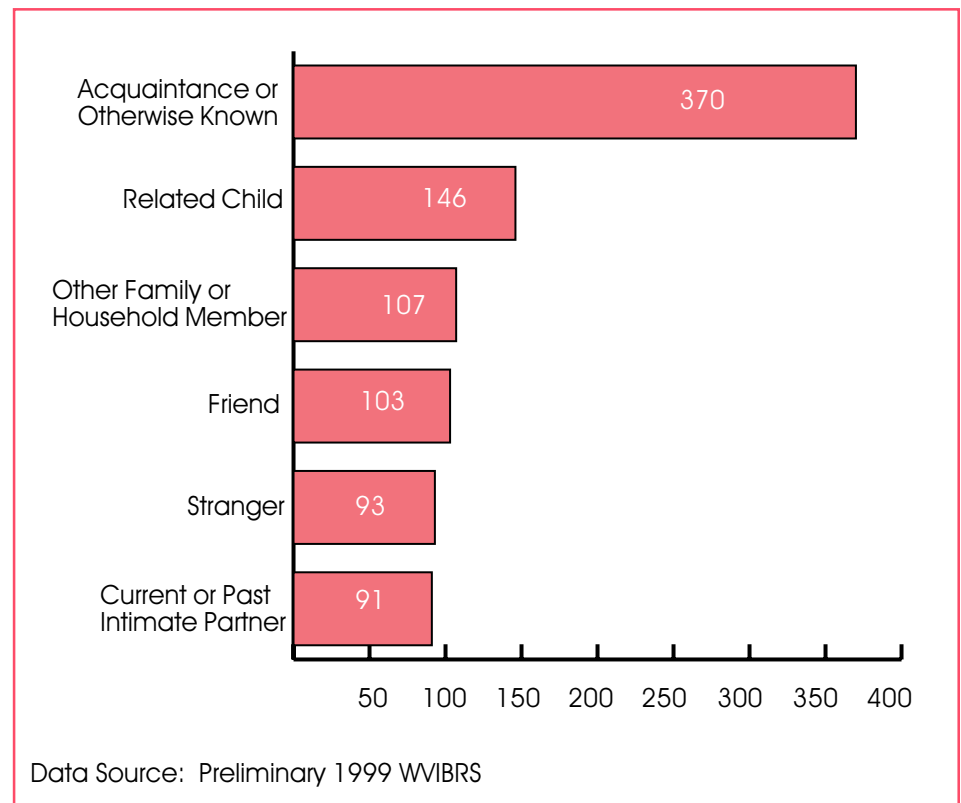
### Victim-Offender Relationships

The victim segment of the WVIBRS data describes the relationship of each victim to each offender in an incident. An incident can have more than one victim and/or offender, therefore, 910 relationship data elements existed in 1999.

Most victims were acquaintances of their offender (41%). Sixteen percent (16%) of the victims were children related to the offender, while another 12% were other family or household members. Eleven percent (11%) of victims were friends with their offender. Ten percent (10%) of victims and offenders were current or past intimate partners (spouse, boy/girlfriend, etc.). Only 10% of the victims and offenders were strangers.

### Graph 6

Victim's Relationship to Their Offender



### Incidents

Sexual assaults were reported to have occurred at a residence or home (71.4%) far more often than any other place during 1999. Other locations reported were a highway/road/alley (6.2%), a field/woods (2.7%), a school/college/university (2.4%) and a parking lot/garage (2.1%).

During 1999, the greatest number of sexual assault incidents were reported to have occurred during July (105). The fewest number of incidents were recorded in December (52).

Most incidents of sexual assault in 1999 occurred in Kanawha County (175), based on the reporting agency (see Table 1). The county with the second highest number of incidents was Wood (88), followed by Raleigh (58), Ohio (48) and Putnam (45).

When county population was taken into consideration, Wirt County was first with a rate of 1 incident of sexual assault for every 412 residents. Pendleton County experienced 1 incident of sexual assault per 804 residents while Tyler County had 1 per 810 residents. Only 21 incidents of sexual assault were reported for Cabell County, the second largest county in the state. However, agencies in this county and others were improving their reporting levels to the new IBR system.

Weapons were involved in 381 of the incidents. Personal weapons, such as the offender's hands or fists, were most often used (338 incidents). Knives (12), firearms/handguns (6), drugs (2) and other weapons (23) were also reported.

Of the 914 incidents involving sex offenses in 1999, 98% were indicated as completed. Only 2% were attempted.

**Table 1**

Number of Sexual Assault Incidents  
and Percent of Population by County

County	Number	%Population
Wirt	14	.24%
Pendleton	10	.12%
Tyler	12	.12%
Wood	88	.10%
Ohio	48	.10%
Kanawha	175	.09%
Putnam	45	.09%
Gilmer	6	.08%
Raleigh	58	.07%
Wetzel	13	.07%
Tucker	5	.07%
Morgan	9	.06%
Randolph	18	.06%
Monongalia	44	.06%
Harrison	40	.06%
Mercer	36	.06%
Marion	31	.06%
Nicholas	15	.05%
Pleasants	4	.05%
Roane	8	.05%
Lewis	9	.05%
Mason	13	.05%
Ritchie	5	.05%
Braxton	6	.05%
Fayette	19	.04%
Doddridge	3	.04%
Hancock	13	.04%
Mineral	10	.04%
Boone	9	.03%
Barbour	5	.03%
Greenbrier	11	.03%
Brooke	8	.03%
Berkeley	22	.03%
Webster	3	.03%
Grant	3	.03%
Lincoln	6	.03%
Taylor	4	.03%
Hampshire	5	.03%
Upshur	6	.03%
Calhoun	2	.03%
Cabell	21	.02%
Summers	3	.02%
Jefferson	9	.02%
Clay	2	.02%
Jackson	5	.02%
Preston	5	.02%
Wayne	7	.02%
Hardy	2	.02%
Monroe	2	.02%
Wyoming	4	.01%
McDowell	4	.01%
Mingo	3	.01%
Marshall	3	.01%
Logan	3	.01%
Pocahontas	0	.00%
<b>Total WV</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>.05%</b>

**Table 2**

FRIS Victim Distribution

	1999 Female	Male	1998 Female	Male
Sexual Assault	775	59	682	83
Incest	186	59	136	39
Survivor Child*	229	45	278	45
<i>*Adult victim who is a survivor of sexual assault as a child.</i>				
	1999 Victims		1998 Victims	
Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence	188		209	
Multiple Categories	46		18	
<i>Domestic Violence and Multiple category victim numbers are not broken down by gender.</i>				

## Victim Services Data

Victim service providers, such as advocates with rape crisis and domestic violence programs, serve victims of sexual assault. Some of these victims have not and may never contact the police. The following sections summarize the data from these programs.

## FRIS Data

The West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services (FRIS) is a non-profit network comprised of nine rape crisis programs that support and advocate for those affected by sexual violence. Thirty-three of West Virginia's 55 counties are served by FRIS centers. Reports from 1998 and 1999 summarizing victim data from the nine FRIS centers were analyzed for this report.

During 1998, services were provided to 1,490 new victims of sexual violence. Of those, 74% were female victims.

The number of clients increased slightly from 1998 to 1999 by 6.5% to 1,587. Females made up 75% of the victims served.

Table 2 shows a complete breakdown of FRIS clients for 1998 and 1999 by type of offense and gender. Non-victims, family members and collateral contacts are not included in these data. Victims were counted as new clients from July to June, thus some duplication may occur in the calendar year totals.

The sexual assault and incest numbers also included whether the victims were adults or children. Female sexual assault victims were most often adults (60% in 1998 and 66% in 1999). Male victims of sexual assault, however, were more likely to be children (83% in 1998 and 71% in 1999).

Incest predominately affects child victims. Seventy-one percent (71%) of female incest victims in 1998 were children. This number rose slightly to 79% in 1999. Nearly all male incest victims were children, 90% in 1998 and 93% in 1999.

The FRIS data also shows the type of services provided to all new and continuing clients as well as collateral contacts. Person-to-person counseling comprised the greatest portion (41% in 1998 and 44% in 1999) of services

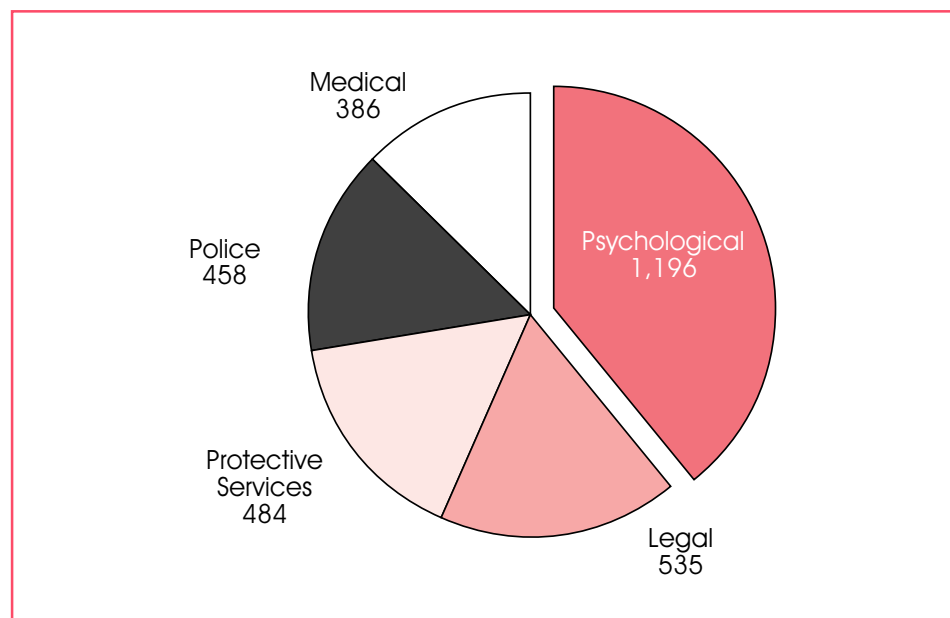
provided. Telephone counseling was second with 30% of services in 1998 and 31% in 1999. Group, legal, court, medical, police and protective services were also provided.

Graph 7 shows the distribution of total referrals made by FRIS in 1998 and 1999 combined. Forty percent (40%) of all referrals were for psychological services. Only 386 medical referrals were made during these two years. However, medical referrals did increase by 51% between 1998 and 1999.

FRIS centers assisted victims in filing 202 complaints against offenders in 1998 while 228 complaints were filed in 1999. This includes not only sexual assault complaints but restraining orders as well.

## Graph 7

1998-1999 FRIS Referrals



## WVCADV Data

The West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CADV) is a statewide coalition of licensed domestic violence programs and other agencies which provide services to victims of domestic and family violence. The Coalition's Central Service Office in Charleston began collecting the information used for this report from the thirteen licensed domestic violence programs in a database format in July of 1999. The database includes information about the victim, the abuser and the incident.

The statistics included in this section are based on 2,029 contacts selected from the six months of data currently available in the CADV database. A contact could be the victim, a family member or any person needing services. Contacts were selected if sexual abuse was indicated as a reason for service. About half (1,007) of the contacts were new clients. Continuing clients were also included in this report.

It should be noted that six of the programs included in the CADV database also report to FRIS. Thus information from these programs is counted in both data sets.

The 1,007 new clients receiving services from coalition programs between July 1, 1999 and December 31, 1999 were demographically similar to those of the other data used in this report. The new clients were predominately female (93%) and white (78%). The average age was, however, slightly higher for this group (26 years of age) than the victim age observed in the WVIBRS data.

The greatest number of contacts receiving services from CADV programs were from Greenbrier County (294). There were 204 contacts from Monongalia County and 199 from Raleigh County. The programs located in these counties are 3 of the 6 that report to both FRIS and the CADV and are specifically funded to provide sexual violence services.

Only 95 contacts were from Kanawha County between July and December of 1999. However, a FRIS Center which is not part of the Coalition

### Coalition Against Domestic Violence Contacts 7/1/99 - 12/31/99

**2,029** contacts for services for sexual abuse

**1,007** new clients

**1,022** continuing clients

**934 (93%)** females **73 (7%)** males



is also located in Kanawha County (see map on page 8). WVIBRS data indicated that the greatest number of sexual assaults occurred in Kanawha County in 1999.

In addition to sexual abuse, contacts also reported emotional abuse (70%) and physical abuse (56%) as reasons for seeking program services. Stalking (7%), neglect (5%) and homicide (.2%) were also indicated to a lesser extent.

Of the 2,029 included contacts, 25% were reported to the police. Forty percent (40%) of the contacts indicated a history of domestic violence as an adult. A history as a child victim or witness was also reported for 40% of the contacts.

The abuser demographics, based on all 2,029 contacts, indicate that 81% were male and 5% were female. The remaining 14% of the cases were missing abuser gender data. The average age of the abuser was 36.

Race or ethnicity was available for 2,001 of the reported abusers. The majority were white (67%).

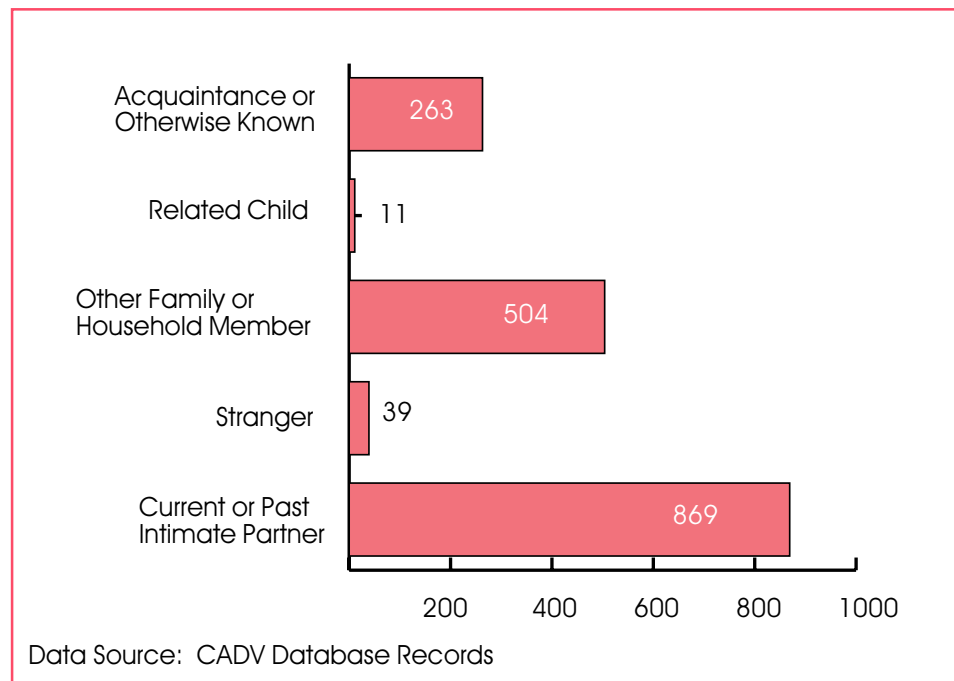
The relationship of the abuser was available for 1,686 of the contacts. Abusers were most likely to be a current or past intimate partner (52%) with their victim. Graph 8 shows a complete breakdown of the relationship type.

Weapons threatened or used against a victim during an incident of violence included fists (395), firearms (135), knives (91) and clubs (76).

A history of abuse (554) was the most often cited contributing factor to an incident of violence. Other factors include alcohol or drugs (418), stress (101) and unemployment (63).

## Graph 8

### Abuser's Relationship to Their Offender



## Acknowledgments

This report is the work of the Division of Criminal Justice Services, Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center. Funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics' State Justice Statistics Grant Program, grant #99-MU-MU-K013. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice or the State of West Virginia.

### Data Sources:

"Crime in West Virginia"  
18th - 27th Editions, 1989-1998  
Preliminary 1999 WVIBRS Data  
West Virginia State Police UCR Section

"Criminal Victimization 1998  
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FRIS 1998-1999 Summary Sheets  
Nancy Hoffman, WVFRIS  
and Debbie Bonasso, WVFRIS

CADV Database Records  
7/99 - 12/99  
Diane Reese, WVCADV  
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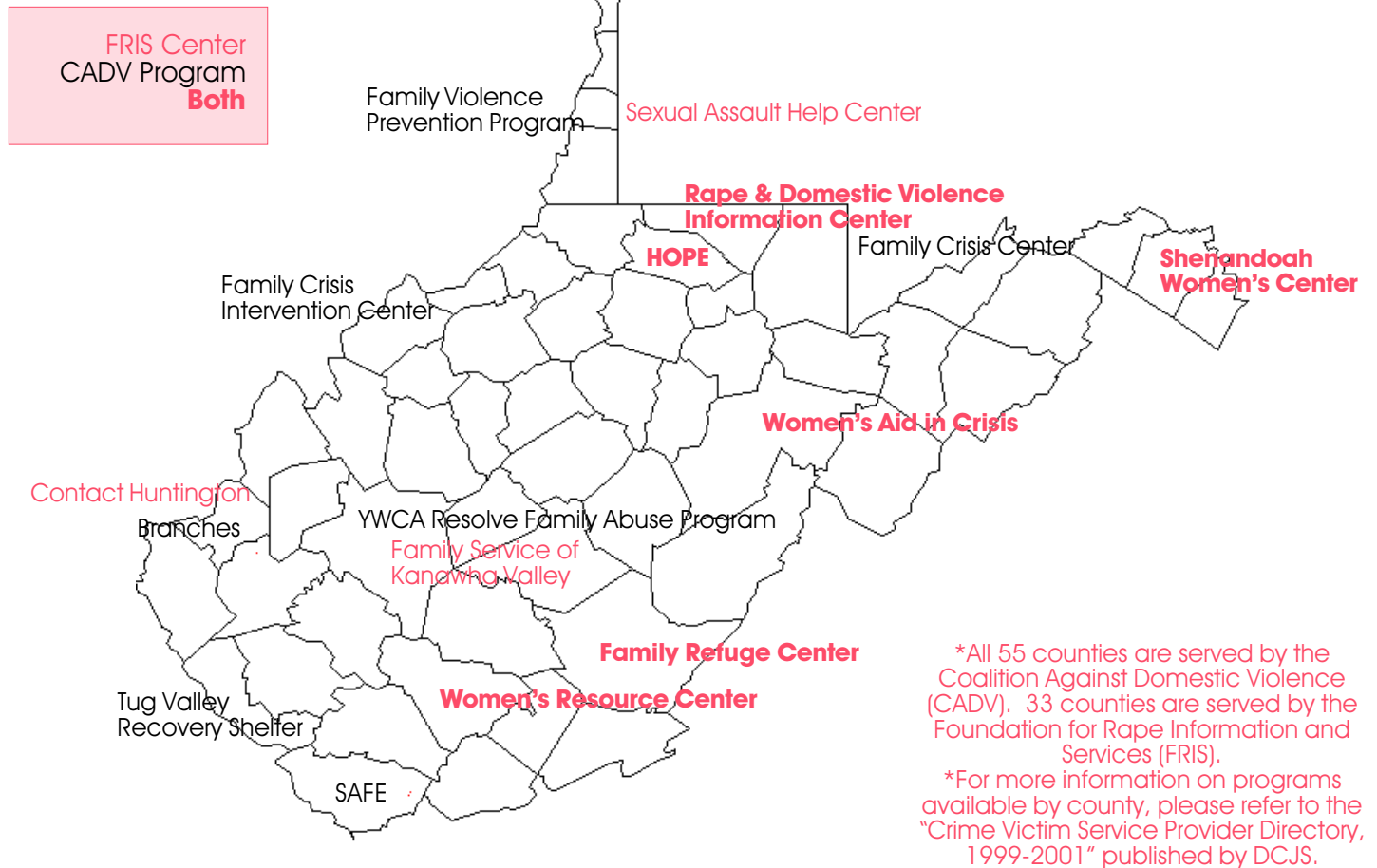
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