

SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAMINATION (SAFE) COMMISSION

September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted by:

**WV Division of Administrative Services
Justice and Community Services Section
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Purpose of the Commission:

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Commission was created under West Virginia Code Chapter 15-§9B-1, §9B-2 and §9B-3 and first met on August 8, 2014. Its purpose is to establish, manage, and monitor a statewide system to facilitate the timely and efficient collection of forensic evidence in sexual assault cases. Duties of the Commission include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Establish mandatory statewide protocols for conducting sexual assault forensic examinations, including designating locations and providers to perform examinations, establishing minimum qualifications and procedures for their performance, and establishing protocols to assure the proper collection of evidence;
- (2) Facilitate the recruitment and retention of qualified health care providers that are properly qualified to conduct forensic examinations;
- (3) Authorize minimum training requirements for providers conducting exams and establish a basic standard of care for victims of sexual assault;
- (4) Support county prosecutors in establishing sexual assault forensic examination boards, set forth minimum requirements for local plans developed by county or regional boards, and approve local plans for each area of the state on a county or regional basis; and
- (5) Propose rules for legislative approval.

Executive Summary:

SAFE Commission efforts resulted in the following outcomes in the past year:

- ❖ The 2024 emergency legislative rule outlining the training standards and qualifications for sexual assault forensic examiners was approved during the 2025 legislative session. Effective 4/23/2025, the rule also established a 1/1/2026 compliance date for hospitals to finalize and submit plans to the SAFE Commission regarding the provision of medical forensic exams to both adult and pediatric victims.
- ❖ All of the state's counties have now submitted plans for how and where medical forensic services will be accessed. The number of counties with approved plans increased from 21 in 2023-2024 to 46 during 2024-25. Technical assistance was provided to assist counties in completing their county plans and obtaining memoranda of understanding with their selected hospitals. See the attached maps on pages 12-13 for maps of plan submission by county.
- ❖ Protocols were established and forms created to assist the hospitals in developing treatment/transfer plans for victims of sexual assault. Clinical logs were developed for the completion of required competencies for nurses following the completion of the didactic portion of the SANE training and a SANE application created to practice

- in WV. A total of 66 adult/adolescent SANEs were approved for practice and 19 pediatric/adolescent SANEs approved.
- ❖ 329 SAECK Quality Reviews of collected kits were completed in the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System from September 01, 2024 through August 5, 2025
 - ❖ The WV SANE Coordinator and the West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services (WVFRIS) coordinated 10 SANE clinical skills courses with 109 participants. This compares to 5 trainings held in 2023-2024 with 58 attendees. Additionally, 12 SANE practicum skills courses were held with 136 participants.
 - ❖ Mini-grants for equipment (such as cameras and locked storage carts) to assist in jumpstarting SANE programs were provided through WVFRIS to 23 hospitals.
 - ❖ A basic website for the SAFE Commission was launched to host the county plans, SANE, and Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) information.
 - ❖ The SAFE Commission was selected for a legislative audit review as an entity supported with state funds. The review provided the opportunity to outline and showcase the work of the Commission, which will be presented to the legislature's review committee in late 2025.

SAFE Commission Subcommittees:

Standards Subcommittee:

Role: Facilitate the development of county plans through the creation of: service standards definitions, county plan template, plan review process, plan dissemination method, and assessment of plan implementation process.

A work group of the Standards Subcommittee, with staff support from West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services, focused this year on getting the county plans completed. The work group met a record 30 times, had numerous meetings with prosecutors and county teams, met with all of the rape crisis center directors, with the following results:

- All of the state's counties have now submitted plans for how and where medical forensic services will be accessed. The number of counties with approved plans increased from 21 in 2023-2024 to 46 during 2024-25. All 55 county plans received have now been converted to a standard format.
- Five counties with approved plans submitted updated plans: Berkeley, Cabell, Greenbrier, Logan, and Marshall.
- Template Memoranda of Understanding between hospitals and prosecutors were developed with WVU Medicine Hospital, Marshall Health, Vandalia Health systems, and 10 individual facilities within those networks.
- Information was submitted to the SANE-SAKI Website Development work group for the SAFE County Plan section of the SAFE Commission's website.

Data Collection Subcommittee:

Role: Identify and implement a system to track sexual assault kits, enhance feedback system to hospitals/medical personnel regarding the quality of the kits being collected, and utilize data to guide training needs.

The Data Subcommittee did not meet this reporting period, but the sexual assault kit tracking application continued to supply reports to hospitals on the quality of kits collected.

The following information was obtained from the WV SAECK Information System from data entered between September 1, 2024 to August 5, 2025:

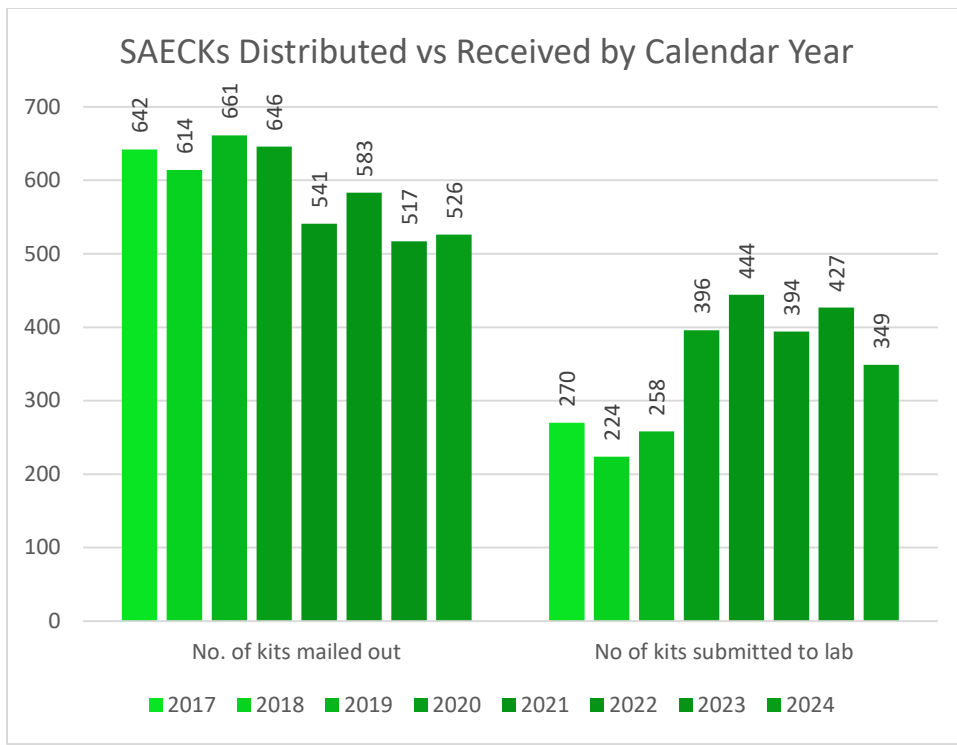
| | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Total SAECKs distributed | 550 | 520 | 516 | 607 |
| - Tracked to Law Enforcement / WVSPFL | 368 | 234 | 213 | 243 |
| - Forwarded to another facility | 4 | 8 | 4 | 0 |
| - To MUFSC (Non-Reports) | 41 | 30 | 20 | 25 |
| - Not used/destroyed | 9 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| - Used for training | 11 | 4 | 65 | 120 |
| - Not tracked since mailed | 114 | 242 | 209 | 315 |
| - Activated non-reports | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

SAECK usage as documented in the SAECK Information System.

607 SAECKs were distributed to facilities in WV, OH, and VA from September 01, 2024 to August 5, 2025. Of the 243 SAECKs collected and reported to law enforcement, 25 were sent out-of-state to agencies in Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The increased number of SAECKs used for training was expected due to work being performed by the WV SANE Coordinator/WVFRIS and continued efforts to train and prepare for CSR Title 149-11 Legislative Rule.

| Qualification | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| APRN | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| DO | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| MD | 21 | 16 | 8 | 3 |
| PA | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| FNP-BC | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| RN | 107 | 128 | 107 | 97 |
| SANE | 194 | 242 | 199 | 225 |
| Unknown | 4 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 334 | 402 | 320 | 329 |

329 SAECK Quality Reviews were completed in the SAK System from September 01, 2024 through August 5, 2025



Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits distributed to facilities by calendar year compared to the number received at the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory. The increase in received cases beginning in 2020 corresponds with the passage of HB4476 on February 18, 2020.

Training Subcommittee:

Role: Review West Virginia Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training curriculum materials and make recommendations to the SAFE Commission about training requirements for medical personnel (e.g., RNs, APRNs, PAs, DOs, and MDs) conducting medical forensic examinations; identify options for assisting SANEs in completing the clinical requirements; and make recommendations for developing and sustaining SANE programs in WV.

Accomplishments:

The full training committee met three times. In addition to researching teleSANE programs that provide expert forensic nursing consultation during acute sexual assault examinations, the committee worked closely with the SANE Project Coordinator to develop, review, and approve

documents that support the hospitals in meeting the standards and guidelines as outlined in the legislative rule. These included:

- Templates to assist the hospitals in developing treatment/transfer plans for victims of sexual assault
- Clinical logs for the completion of required competencies for nurses following the completion of the didactic portion of the SANE training
- SANE application to practice in WV
- SANE renewal application
- Evidence-based collection sheet
- Information documents for patients per legislative rule
 - FAQs about the Medical Forensic Exam
 - Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault Patient Flyer
 - Patient discharge informational sheet

The training committee created 2 sub-committees to work on specific needs during this reporting period:

- **SANE-SAKI Website Development.** This work group was tasked by the SAFE Commission to explore the creation of a website where information, resources, and documents specific to the work of the SAFE Commission would be housed and easily accessible. The committee met five times with two staff from the WV Department of Homeland Security, Division of Administrative Services, Justice and Community Services, Office of Research and Strategic Planning to develop the outline for the website, along with needed content and documents. The site is under development on the WV Division of Administrative Services, Justice and Community Services' website at [SAFE Commission](#).
- **Pediatric Sexual Assault/Abuse Workgroup.** This work group was tasked by the SAFE Commission to recommend training requirements for conducting pediatric/adolescent examinations. The committee finalized those recommendations and assisted with definitions for the legislative rule. The committee examined potential training opportunities to ensure examiner competency, given the limited access to preceptors in the state; the possibility of building a peer review process; and the need for a pediatric clinical skills training curriculum that includes mock exams and case studies. Outcomes included finalized training requirements adopted by the SAFE Commission as well as two initiatives involving the WV SANE Coordinator: a partnership led by the WV Child Advocacy Network to increase pediatric exam access through the child advocacy centers and the creation of a pediatric clinical skills training through the WV Foundation for Rape Information and Services.

WV SANE Coordinator's Annual Report Executive Summary

The first full year of having West Virginia SANE Coordinator Brittany DeCrease, supported through state legislative funds and embedded with the WV Foundation for Rape Information and Services (WVFRIS), enabled the work of the SAFE Commission to move forward exponentially. In addition to working with a consultant hired through WVFRIS on the creation of a 35-module online pediatric SANE course, with the WV Child Advocacy Network in developing a pilot project to increase pediatric examiners and preceptors, and with the SAFE Commission's training committee in creating a compliance process to implement the legislative rule, the WV SANE Coordinator completed the following activities:

Adult/Adolescent Trainings Facilitated:

- Clinical Skills Courses Held: 10 / Total Participants: 109
- Practicum Courses Held: 12 / Total Participants: 136

Technical Assistance (TA) / Support Provided:

- Hospitals
 - Direct Hospital TA requests: 111
 - Webinar on legislative rule compliance: 61 participants/22 recording views
 - Established treatment/transfer plan process and database for hospitals
 - Reviewed 34 hospital treatment/transfer plans
 - 24 hospitals represented at trainings
 - 23 mini-grants provided equipment to expand SANE services
 - Documents created (checklists, flyers, guidance, protocols): 10
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners
 - Direct SANE TA requests: 86+
 - Peer Reviews completed: 9
 - Established application process and database for SANE practice in WV
 - SANE Application Approvals:
 - AA-SANE: 66
 - PA-SANE: 19

2025 Legislative Overview:

A legislative rule passed in the 2025 legislative session will finalize the infrastructure necessary to establish training standards for forensic examiners and identify exam access sites in the State.

- ↳ The 2024 legislature rule outlining the training standards and qualifications for sexual assault forensic examiners was modified through an emergency legislative rule that was approved in the 2025 legislative session. The rule primarily extended the compliance dates for hospitals to 1/1/2026 to have examiners or transfer plans in place so that the sites for sexual assault forensic exams can be determined and the minimum training requirements for examiners met.

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Grant:

The first full year with WV SAKI Site Coordinator, Larry Hasley, and fulltime investigator, Karl Streyle saw significant progress in implementing the investigative phase of the project, with 112 WV SAKI cases now closed (including 1 cleared by an active arrest warrant, 17 arrests, 9 guilty pleas and 20 convictions). Contacts have been made with 20 counties that collectively have 233 CODIS hits (99 with unknown suspects). Fifteen of those counties are actively investigating cases, with one county having closed out all of its cases. The project has resulted in 26 arrests to date, with several serial rapists indicted on cases going back to 1976. The project had its first conviction in December 2024.

The project continued to build investigative infrastructure with the creation of the West Virginia State Police (WVSP) Violent Crime Task Force to support the work on WVSP & local law enforcement agencies on WWSAKI Cases, in addition to other violence crime cases. This included the assignment of three investigators to WWSAKI cases in March 2025 and 7 troopers in July 2025.

To date with the SAKI project, 2,664 DNA profiles have been processed. Of those profiles, 1,111 were identified and entered into CODIS; 446 have had hits (this includes 8 new hits during the past year), with 136 of those 446 being cold hits (meaning 136 cases where the perpetrator was previously unidentified, an increase of 5 more cases this year).

ATTACHMENTS

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|---|
| SAFE Commission Members |
| Subcommittee Members |
| County Plan Submission/Completion Maps |

SAFE Commission Members

Required members:

1. WV Prosecuting Attorney's Association - Gabriella Mucciola
2. WV Association of Counties - Jonathan Adler
3. Commissioner of the Bureau for Public Health or designee - Designee- John McComas
4. WV State Police Forensic Laboratory - David Miller
5. WV Child Advocacy Network - Tracy Shroyer-Carlyle
6. President of the WV Hospital Association or designee - Designee - Hallie Morgan
7. WVFRIS - Nancy Hoffman, Debbie Lopez-Bonasso
8. WV University Forensic and Investigative Sciences Program – Tiffany Edwards
9. Marshall University Forensic Science Program - Dr. Terry Fenger

Additional Members Appointed by the Administrative Services Director:

10. An emergency room physician -Dr. Christopher Goode
11. Victim Advocate for a rape crisis center – Katie Spriggs
12. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner - Angelita Nixon, APRN, CNM
13. Law Enforcement officer with experience in sexual assault investigation – Larry Hasley
14. Health Care Provider with pediatric and child abuse expertise - Dr. Joan Phillips
15. Director of a Child Advocacy Center - Beth Cook

Subcommittee Members

Standards Subcommittee:

1. Nancy Hoffman - WVFRIS
2. Debbie Lopez-Bonasso - WVFRIS
3. Dr. Chris Goode - WVU School of Medicine, Medical Director & Chief, UHC ED
4. Larry Hasley – WWSAKI Project
5. Carol Blankenship - WVJCS- Justice Program Specialist

Data Collection Subcommittee:

1. David Miller - WV State Police Lab
2. Debbie Lopez-Bonasso - WVFRIS
3. Hallie Morgan - WV Hospital Association
4. Erica Turley- WVJCS Research Specialist
5. Carol Blankenship - WVJCS- Justice Program Specialist

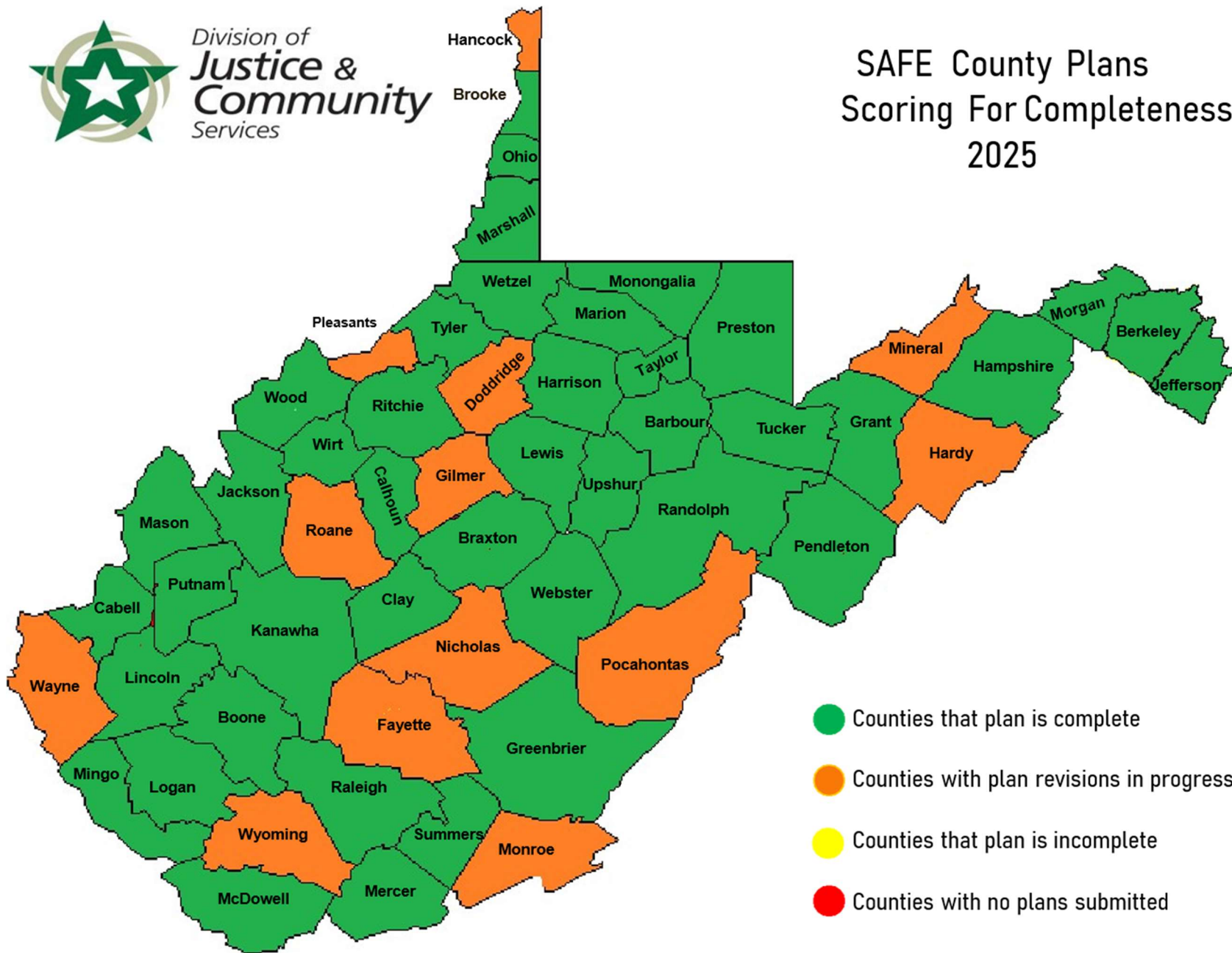
Training Requirements Subcommittee:

1. David Miller - WV State Police Lab
2. Debbie Lopez-Bonasso – WVFRIS
3. Tiffany Edwards, WVU Forensic and Investigative Sciences Program
4. Dr. Terry Fenger - Marshall University Forensic Science Program
5. Dr. Chris Goode - WVU School of Medicine, Medical Director & Chief, UHC ED
6. Hallie Morgan – WV Hospital Association
7. Angelita Nixon- CNM/SANE
8. Dr. Joan Phillips - MD, Child Advocacy Center at Women’s & Children’s Hospital
9. Tracy Shroyer-Carlyle - WVCAN



Division of
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Services

SAFE County Plans Scoring For Completeness 2025



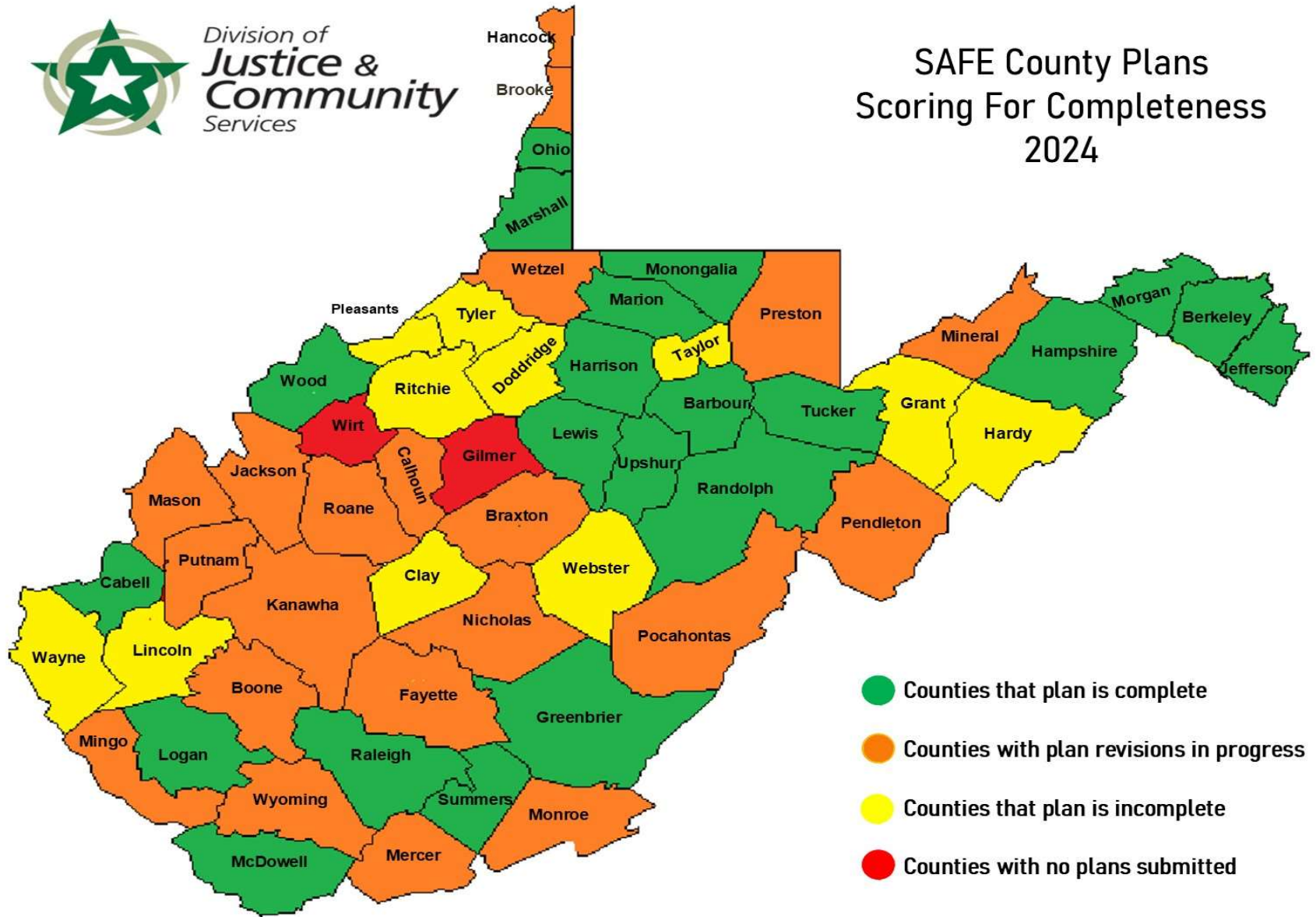
- Counties that plan is complete
- Counties with plan revisions in progress
- Counties that plan is incomplete
- Counties with no plans submitted

SAFE County Plans are legislatively mandated to outline protocols for sexual violence victim advocacy, transportation and forensic exams.



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SAFE County Plans Scoring For Completeness 2024



SAFE County Plans are legislatively mandated to outline protocols for domestic violence victim advocacy, transportation and forensic exams.