

NSVRC National Strengths and Needs Assessment 2021: Background and Methodology



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National Sexual Violence
Resource Center

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NSVRC National Strengths and Needs Assessment Background



History

The movement to end sexual abuse, assault, and harassment has grown and adapted over many decades. The goal has always been to stop sexual violence before it starts, while also supporting the healing of the people that have experienced harm. Between 2009 and 2012, NSVRC conducted assessments with state/territory sexual assault and dual (sexual assault and domestic violence) coalitions, Rape Prevention Education (RPE) coordinators at departments of health, and local rape crisis programs about how to best support primary prevention efforts. Through that process, NSVRC identified [needs](#) (NSVRC, 2010), [strengths, accomplishments](#) (NSVRC, 2012b), and [promising innovations](#) (NSVRC, 2012a).

A New Vision for 2021

Almost a decade later, as the [Rape Prevention and Education Program](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022) began to focus more on community, institutional, and societal approaches to prevent sexual violence, NSVRC embarked on an updated multi-year assessment process. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed how the field approached prevention activities and NSVRC wanted to capture those stories. NSVRC contracted with an evaluation consultant, Dr. Sharon Wasco, to update the NSVRC National Strengths and Needs Assessment.

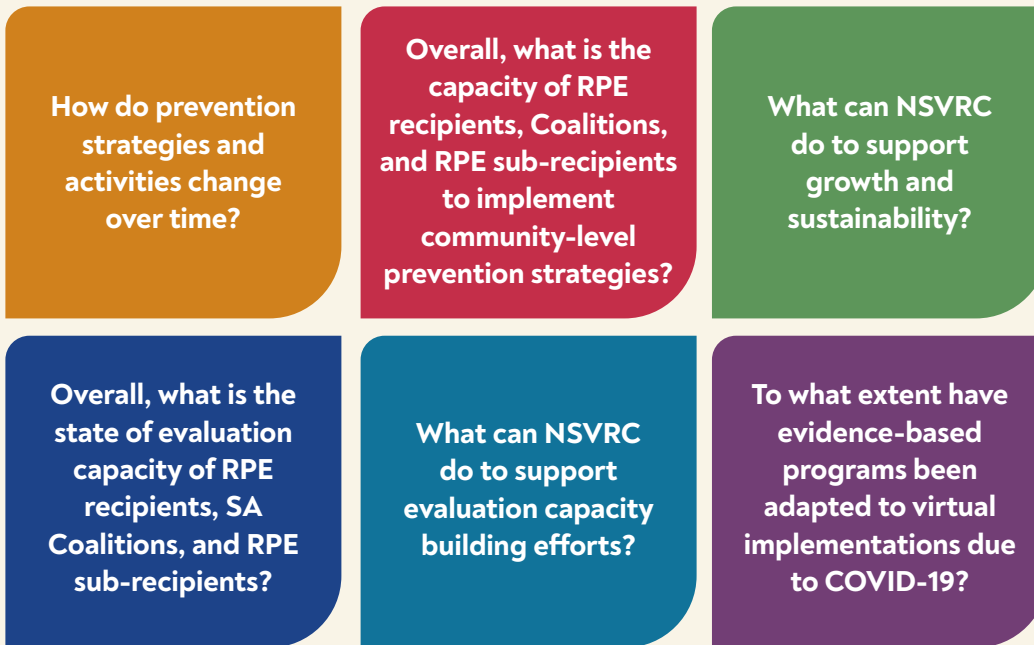
Updates to the assessment surveys included a greater focus on community-level prevention and evaluation capacity as well as social media use by prevention programs, especially in the context of COVID-19. The updated national assessment was designed with two purposes:

- 1) To understand current strengths and needs (including how prevention activities have been adapted during the COVID-19 pandemic) to guide NSVRC program development
- 2) To collect baseline data on capacity and resource use in order to evaluate NSVRC's prevention support services during the 2019-2024 project period.

A follow-up survey will be administered in 2024 to assess changes over time.

About the 2021 Survey

The 2021 National Strengths and Needs Assessment sought to answer the following questions:



Survey Development

The survey instruments were developed collaboratively between NSVRC, CDC and Dr. Wasco. Two separate but similar surveys were developed to tailor the questions: one for state and territory-level RPE programs, state/territory sexual assault and dual coalitions, and a second for local-level RPE-funded programs. Contact the NSVRC Prevention Team at prevention@nsvrc-respecttogether.org for copies of the survey instruments.

While many questions included in the surveys were replicated or adapted from the first *National Prevention Assessment (2010-2012)* (NSVRC, 2010), others were newly created for the 2021 survey. A combination of open-ended and forced-choice questions about the following topics were included:

- ◆ Prevention activities with a focus on community-level strategies
- ◆ Use of social media to support prevention efforts, especially in the context of COVID-19
- ◆ Success and challenges, especially in the context of COVID-19
- ◆ Evaluation of prevention efforts
- ◆ Building capacity for prevention efforts (states/territories only)
- ◆ Sharing prevention successes
- ◆ Use of NSVRC services and support
- ◆ Organizational background

Focus on Organizational Capacity

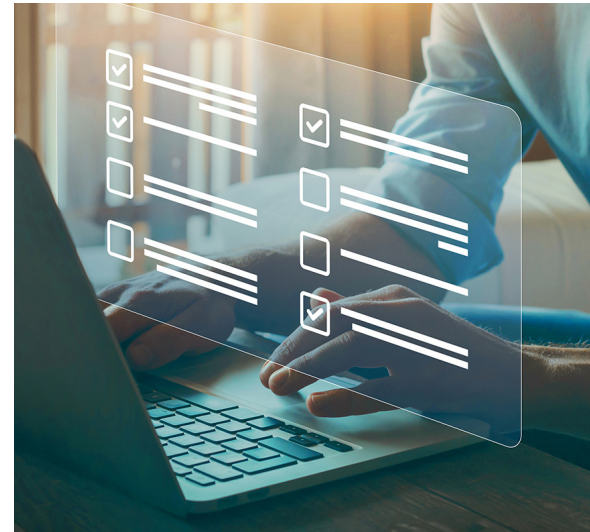
The unit of analysis for this assessment was at the organizational level. At the state/territory level, the primary RPE recipients were state health departments. In most states, RPE funds were additionally distributed to the sexual assault or dual sexual assault/domestic violence coalitions to support statewide prevention initiatives and/or provide technical assistance to local programs. At the local level, the organizations receiving RPE funds to implement prevention activities (i.e., RPE sub-recipients) were more varied and included stand-alone rape crisis centers, multi-service agencies, culturally specific programs, educational settings, and youth-serving organizations. Using a key informant approach, a single survey was completed for each organization receiving the survey. RPE directors and/or prevention coordinators were selected as the individuals likely to have the broadest knowledge about prevention programming and were asked to complete the survey on behalf of their state/territory agency or community organization.

Survey Sample

The population of interest for this assessment included a finite number of health departments and coalitions in 55 locales: all 50 US states, 5 U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and a finite number of local-level RPE sub-recipients in communities across the nation. NSVRC maintains a list of RPE and Prevention contact names and email addresses from each health department, coalition, or other state-level recipient of RPE funds. The state/territory level sampling frame included 117 organizations. To create the local level sampling frame, the NSVRC evaluation coordinator worked with the key informants identified in each state to then obtain a list of names and email addresses of program coordinators at every funded prevention program within their state/territory. The number of sub-recipients in each state or territory ranged significantly, with a total of 331 organizations included in the sampling frame. Each organization included on the sampling frame was invited to participate in the *2021 National Strengths and Needs Assessment*.

Data Collection Procedures

The online platform that was formerly SurveyMonkey, now branded as Momentive, was used to collect and store anonymous survey data. Momentive meets industry standards for security, including the publishing of a regularly-updated security statement. All data at rest in their data centers are secured using AES 256 based encryption. The products, services, websites and apps used in this assessment were HIPAA-compliant and ISO 27001 certified; and all survey responses were sent over a secure, encrypted connection. No names, IP addresses, phone numbers, or other personally identifiable information was recorded as part of the survey responses. The survey included questions about organizational characteristics



on these anonymous surveys. The intention of these questions was to gain additional insight into the data through breakouts by categories such as state or organization type (e.g., dual coalition, health department, stand-alone rape crisis center). The survey was formatted so that questions could be skipped, except where a response was required to activate branching logic, in which case a “prefer not to answer” question was included.

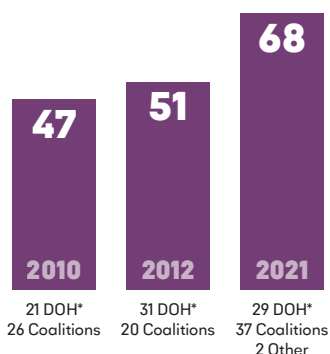
Email invitation collectors were used to recruit and track participation of each organization included in the sampling frames. The first name, last name, and email address of key informants were entered into NSVRC’s password-protected Momentive account, which generated a unique link to the survey for each key informant. Only the NSVRC evaluation

coordinator and the evaluation consultant were able to see whether invited participants had opened the email, started, and completed the survey, allowing for tailored follow-up communications such as reminders and thank you emails. Participation data was kept confidential. Data from a single organization was never examined, and all analysis and reporting data used was in aggregate form.

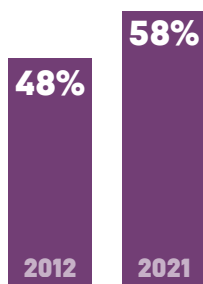
TABLE 1

State and Territory Participation / Data Collection Indicators

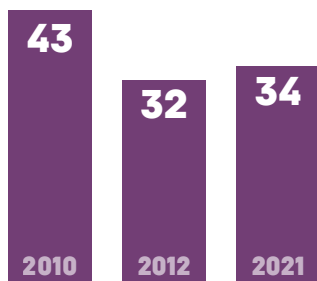
State/Territory Sample Size



State/Territory Response Rate



State/Territories Represented



*DOH includes the state departments of health and other state government agency recipients

Recruitment and Participation

Prior to sending the survey, the NSVRC evaluation coordinator explained the purpose and timeline of the assessment via email communication (see Appendix A) with all organizations included in the sampling frames. A PDF document (see Appendix B) that contained the verbatim text of the survey questions was included with the emails to provide key informants a chance to prepare for the questions. Key informants were advised that only one survey per organization could be completed, and they were invited to consult with others in their organization, if desired, to provide the best response.

Surveys were administered between February and April of 2021. Participants for the local-level assessment survey were offered a \$25 incentive for participation. Upon completing the survey, after the key informant clicked the “Done” button, the browser redirected to a new incentive claims form where the respondent provided mailing information so that the incentive could be mailed to them via USPS mail. This information remained confidential, as only the NSVRC evaluation coordinator had access to that data.

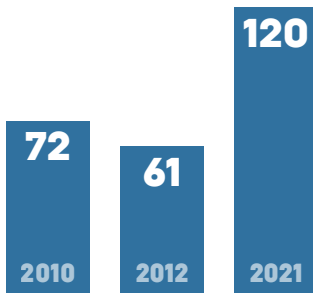
Several key informants reported not receiving their invitations in their inbox and were unable to locate the survey invitation. As a backup solution for this participation barrier, anonymous weblinks to the survey were distributed to those who could not locate their survey.

NSVRC set a variety of participation goals to ensure the credibility and utility of the data. NSVRC collaborated with leaders in the field and

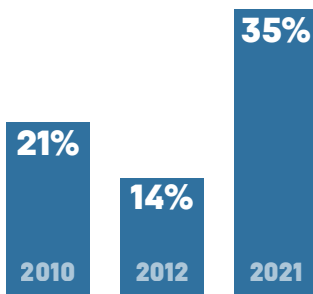
TABLE 2

**Local Participation /
Data Collection Indicators**

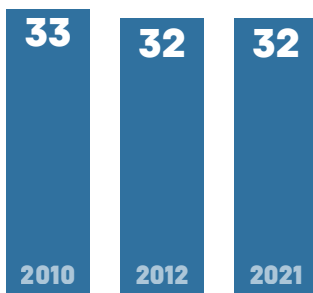
Local Sample Size



Local Response Rate



State/Territories Represented



provided repeat reminders to participate to achieve those goals. Note that all questions in the survey were optional or included a “Prefer not to answer” option. Approximately 34% (n=23) of the key informants in the 2021 state/territory survey, and 41% (n=49) of the key informants in the 2021 local survey did not provide an answer to the question that asked them to identify the state or territory in which their program was located.

Data Analysis

All responses from both surveys were downloaded from the survey platform data collectors and aggregated into a single SPSS data editor. A variable was created to indicate if the data came from a state or local organization. Most survey questions were closed-ended resulting in quantitative data, but some questions were asked in an open-ended manner resulting in qualitative data. IBM SPSS Base Statistics Subscription Build 28 was used to conduct analyses of the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, means and standard deviations, and percentages and confidence intervals were calculated to make relative comparisons within any one data source. It also calculated comparisons between groups (e.g., local programs to state agencies) and over time (e.g., local programs in 2012 to local programs in 2021). No specialized software was used for analysis of the qualitative data. Open-ended survey responses were analyzed qualitatively using conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Member-checking sessions, where NSVRC staff provided initial results, clarified overall meaning and messaging options with respondents at the state and territory level between December 2021 and April 2022.

Available Results

NSVRC released the following briefs on initial results:

- › [Adapting in the midst of COVID-19: Strengths and Challenges in the Rape Prevention and Education Program](#)
- › [Connecting the Dots Between Health Equity and Anti-Oppression Work: Strengths and Challenges in the Rape Prevention and Education Program](#)
- › Building RPE Capacity to tell our Nation’s Prevention Story: Rape Prevention and Education Program Strengths and Challenges coming in 2024

A final report will be published in 2024 after the follow-up survey is completed to assess changes over time.



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- Laskey, S. J., & Wasco, S. M., (2023). *Connecting the dots between health equity and anti-oppression work: Strengths and challenges in the Rape Prevention and Education Program*. National Sexual Violence Resource Center. <https://www.nsvrc.org/resource/2500/connecting-dots-between-health-equity-and-anti-oppression-work-strengths-and>

Appendices



Appendix A: Outreach Email State/Territory

Dear Prevention Partners,

NSVRC is conducting a national strengths and needs assessment to help us better coordinate efforts at the national level and support local programs, state/territory coalitions, and Rape Prevention Education (RPE) coordinating agencies. We will be sharing results back with you later this year.

The survey will arrive by email next week. We wanted to answer some questions you might have about the assessment so that it is easier for you to participate.

Who: We are asking RPE Directors and Coalition Prevention Staff from all states and territories to participate in this survey. A separate survey will be sent to local RPE sub-recipients next month.

What: This national strengths and needs assessment is an update to NSVRC's 2013 Assessment, and results of this online survey will serve as baseline data for the RPE funding cycle that started in February of 2019.

Why: The prevention landscape has changed significantly since NSVRC first conducted a national needs assessment almost ten year ago. This assessment will help us to create a snapshot of prevention capacity around the country as it looks today. This information will help the NSVRC better support your prevention work. Our hope is that results from this survey will also be helpful to you in your planning.

When: You will receive an email with a link to the survey on February 10, 2021. This survey will take about 30 minutes to complete, and can be completed any time before February 26, 2021.

Where: This survey will arrive in your inbox on February 10, 2021. It will:

- Be from: slaskey@nsvrc.org via SurveyMonkey
- Include the subject line: NSVRC National Strengths and Needs Assessment Survey Link

How: This survey is both anonymous and confidential. Your responses will be anonymous because no identifying information such as individual names, job titles, IP addresses, or agency/organization names will be collected. It will not be possible to match any survey response to a specific person. The survey is also confidential because the only people who will see individual responses are the independent evaluator who has been contracted by the NSVRC to support this effort, Dr. Sharon M. Wasco, and the NSVRC evaluation

coordinator, Sally J. Laskey. Prior to reporting results, all data will be aggregated and summarized. Any potentially identifying information you provide in the survey will be removed before sharing findings; and funders will not be provided information on which agencies or organizations completed the survey. The results will be posted to the NSVRC website and sent out to all participants later in 2021.

Some Tips:

- › Add SurveyMonkey to your allow list in your email system to make sure that you receive the survey.
- › Only one survey should be completed for each agency/organization. We recommend that you consult with your colleagues and/or your written prevention plans in order to fill this out accurately. Some of the questions ask how the COVID-19 pandemic altered your prevention activities, and may require revisiting a plan written months ago. Attached to this email, we have provided a list of the survey questions you will be asked, so that you can gather the information needed to complete the questions.
- › Contact Sally Laskey, NSVRC Evaluation Coordinator if you have any questions: slaskey@nsvrc.org.

Your time is valuable and your input on these issues is vital. We hope that you will share your experiences via this survey, and we thank you for the important work that you do.

Sincerely,
Sally J. Laskey
she/her/hers
Evaluation Coordinator

National Sexual Violence Resource Center

2101 N. Front Street
Governor's Plaza North, Bldg. #2
Harrisburg, PA 17110
slaskey@nsvrc.org



Appendix B: Outreach Email Local Sub-Recipients

Dear Prevention Partners,

NSVRC is conducting a national strengths and needs assessment to help us better support local Rape Prevention and Education sub-recipients. You might know us from our coordination of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, co-hosting the National Sexual Assault Conference, or using some of our resources. We really want to hear from you!

The survey will arrive by email next week – in the meantime, here is some helpful info:

- › **You were specifically recommended as a key contact for your RPE work.** You are likely the person that best knows about your organization's prevention capacity. The survey will be emailed to you on March 1, 2021, and will be automatically generated by SurveyMonkey using the following email address (slaskey@nsvrc.org). The subject will be NSVRC National Strengths and Needs Assessment Survey Link.
- › **Get help from your co-workers if needed.** The survey questions are attached, so that you can gather any information needed to answer the questions. Some questions ask how COVID-19 altered your prevention activities, so revisiting your plans might also help.
- › **Your privacy is important to us.** The survey is anonymous and confidential. This means no identifying information such as individual names, job titles, IP addresses, or agency/organization names will be collected. It will not be possible to match any survey response to a specific person. The survey is also confidential because the only people who will see individual responses are the independent evaluator who has been contracted by the NSVRC to support this effort, Dr. Sharon M. Wasco, and NSVRC's evaluation coordinator, Sally J. Laskey. Any potentially identifying information you provide in the survey will be removed before sharing summary findings; and funders will not be provided information on which agencies or organizations completed the survey. The results will be posted to the NSVRC website and sent out to all participants later in 2021.
- › **Your time is valuable,** so we are providing \$25.00 for those that participate. More information about this is included in the survey.
- › **Have questions?** Contact Sally Laskey, NSVRC Evaluation Coordinator if you have any questions: slaskey@nsvrc.org.

We hope that you will share your experiences via this survey, and we thank you for the important work that you do.

Sincerely,
Sally J. Laskey
she/her/hers
Evaluation Coordinator
National Sexual Violence Resource Center

respect together

United to end sexual abuse,
assault, and harassment

nsvrc

National Sexual Violence
Resource Center

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