

Sexual Assault Investigations

Austin Police Department Victim Services Unit

Joseph Chacon, Police Chief

Victim Services Manager

- The Victim Services Manager reports directly to the Chief of Police and will attend Executive Staff meetings on a weekly basis.
- The Victim Services Manager has direct access to the Chief and does not need to wait for a meeting; instead, he or she can contact the Chief whenever necessary.



APD Sex Crimes Unit Changes

- The Austin Police Department's Sex Crimes Unit has undergone changes. While we have not yet received the final report of the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), the Austin Police Department Sex Crimes Unit has been proactive in response to the preliminary recommendations made by PERF.



APD Sex Crimes Unit Changes

- PERF audit of cases involving sex crimes
- Sex Crimes Cold Case Unit - protocol and guidelines development
- Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team (SARRT) monthly meeting participation



APD Sex Crimes Unit Changes

- Increases in the number of Sex Crimes investigators
 - June 2017 – Four (4) Detectives
 - October 2019 – Two (2) Detectives
 - March 2019 – One (1) Sergeant
 - January 2021 – One (1) Detective
- Retired APD personnel
- APD Increased the number of Victim Service counselors available to assist survivors.
 - The Sex Crimes Unit has five (5) full-time Victim Service Counselors.
 - The Domestic Violence Unit has eight (8) full-time Victim Service Counselors.
 - The Crisis Team has 17 Victim Service Counselors assigned to it.



APD Sex Crimes Unit Changes

- June 2019 - A new protocol was implemented in which Victim Services Crisis Response Team Counselors are dispatched to Sex Crime calls alongside Officers.
 - The goal of this protocol is to enhance support given to victims during their initial outcry to law enforcement, to lessen the number of times the victim needs to describe the assault, and to move towards a coordinated response of both law enforcement and counseling support for victims of Sexual Assault.
- Victim Services coordinated the training of over 120 Community Therapists in the trauma focused therapeutic technique of EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing).
 - 50 Community Therapists are solely dedicated to serving survivors of sexual assault.
 - In exchange for this training, the therapists are providing pro bono counseling sessions to victims/survivors of crime.
- Survivor Notification Protocol



APD Sex Crimes Unit Changes

- November 2019 - The Sex Crimes Unit partnered with Project Beloved to redesign the six Sex Crimes interview rooms, creating a more welcoming and survivor-centered environment for Sex Crimes survivors.
- A new APD policy was approved and mandated that any victim who came to provide a statement to the Sex Crimes or Family Violence unit be given the option of having a counselor sit with them during their interview.



APD Sex Crimes Unit Training

- Violence Against Women (VAWA) conference
- Alcohol-Facilitated Sexual Assaults
- TAASA (Texas Association Against Sexual Assault) Law Enforcement Sexual Assault Training Conference
- Digital evidence online training
- Trauma Informed Interview training covering Neurobiology of Trauma and Effect on the Brain and Trauma Informed Interviewing – taking place in November 2021



Additional APD Sex Crimes Unit Questions

- Experience level in the unit
- Formalized training for new Sex Crimes Detectives
- Training Academy Curriculum related to Sex Crimes investigations



Questions?

APD Sex Crimes Unit