



# **Sexual Assault Response Services** *of Southern Maine*

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## **Economic Costs of Sexual Assault**

*This information was derived from the 1994 report titled "The Costs of Crime to Victims" by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics & the 1991 report titled "Overview of Crime and Victimization in America" by the National Victim Center.*

In 1992, crime victims lost \$17.6 billion in direct costs as a result of the crime. These costs include medical expenses and lost pay due to missed work as a result of injury or activities related to the crime, among others. Rape victims suffered losses of \$33 million in 1992 meaning the average rape victim incurred a \$234 loss as a result of the crime. In addition, 8% of all victims lost time from work in 1992 as a result of the crime and 68,070 rape victims sought medical treatment. The costs for these medical services - including emergency medical care, pregnancy testing, HIV testing, testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and sometimes abortion - are not always calculated into the total costs to the victim.

Also, this data only includes economic losses within 6 months of the rape. Therefore, it is impossible to estimate the total economic loss of rape victims. Not included in these figures are continuing medical costs after the crime, psychological counseling, increases in insurance premiums, decreased productivity at work, moving costs as a result of the victimization, intangible costs of pain & suffering, and other similar costs. In short, it is impossible to assess the total economic toll of sexual violence upon a victim.

It is also impossible to estimate the total economic cost to society as a whole. Public & private funds are spent on mental health services, medical treatment, and criminal justices services. Workdays are lost because of injury and illness. Tax dollars are spent through provision of services to offenders, victims, and victim's significant others. Almost one-third of sexual assault victims suffer rape trauma syndrome at some point in their lives. Symptoms of rape trauma syndrome may include major depression, suicide attempts, and drug and alcohol abuse. Victims may seek treatment at rape crisis centers, mental health centers, hospitals, and substance abuse centers. It is impossible to estimate the cost of this treatment to victims and the public.

Criminal justice funds spent due to sexual violence include: law enforcement expenses, court costs, criminal justice personnel, public education, and incarceration of the offender. Sexual violence reported to authorities accounted for .7% of crime in the U.S. In 1990, governmental spending at all levels (federal, state, local) for criminal justice activities totaled \$74 billion - an increase of 635 since 1985. For 1990, the average cost of justice per U.S. resident was \$299.00.

***Help, Hope, and Healing***