

Special Victims Unit



CITY & COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Police Department

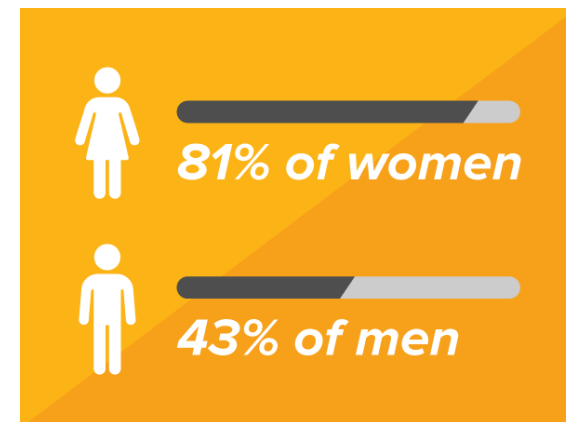
National Statistics on Sexual Assault



1 in 5 women have experienced a completed or attempted rape in their lifetime.



1 in 4 men will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime.



81% of women and 43% of men reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetime.



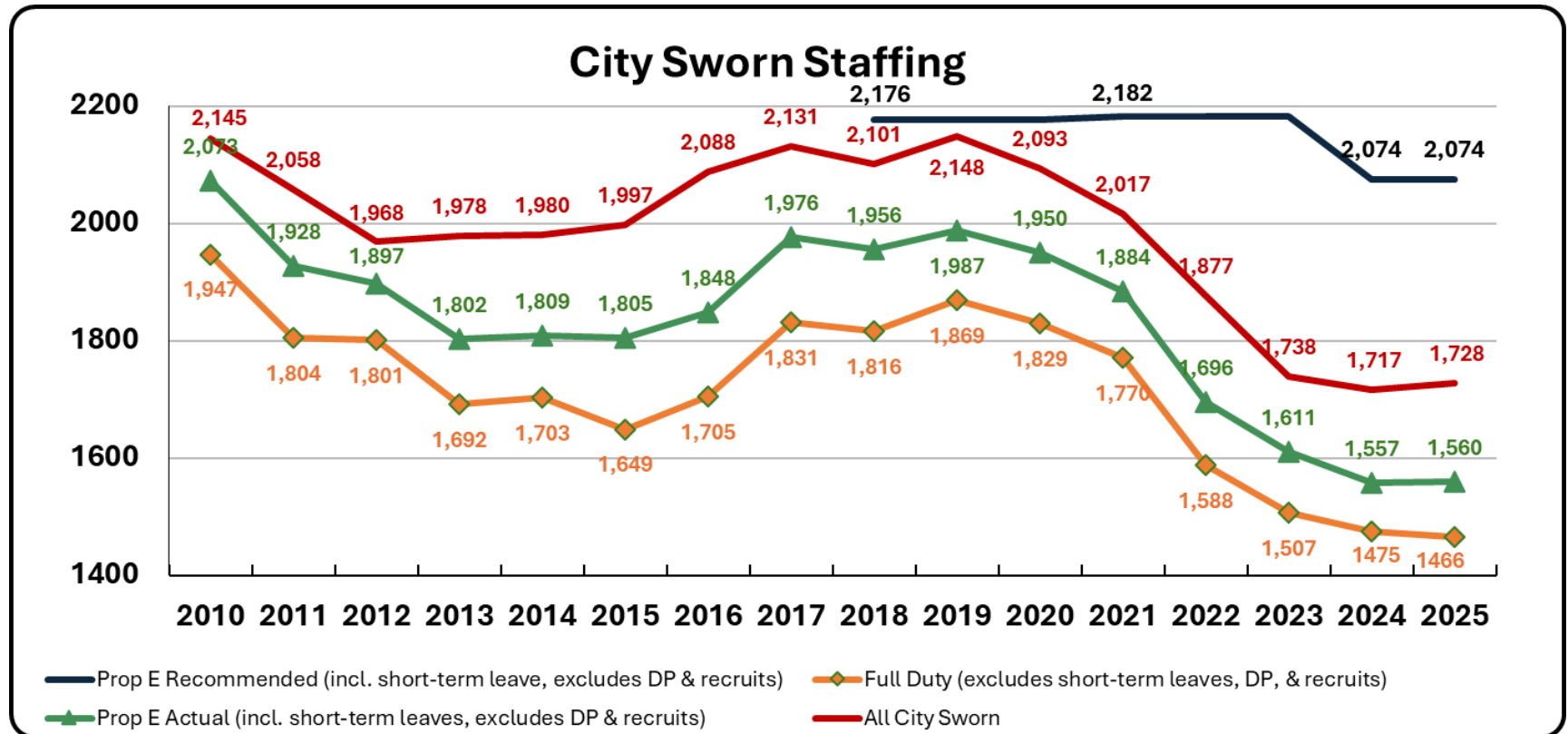
*Data Sources:

- National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
- The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)

Mission of the SFPD Special Victims Unit (SVU)

The mission of the Special Victims Unit (SVU) is dedicated to investigating and addressing crimes involving some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Our SVU Sergeants are highly specialized in handling cases related to domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking, elder abuse internet crimes against children (ICAC), stalking, cold cases, and 290 sex offender compliancy within the City and County of San Francisco. Their primary objective is to support survivors/victims and ensure justice, while holding perpetrators accountable.

Current Overall Staffing Situation at SFPD



Current Staffing of the Special Victims Unit

Currently, Special Victims Unit is staffed with:

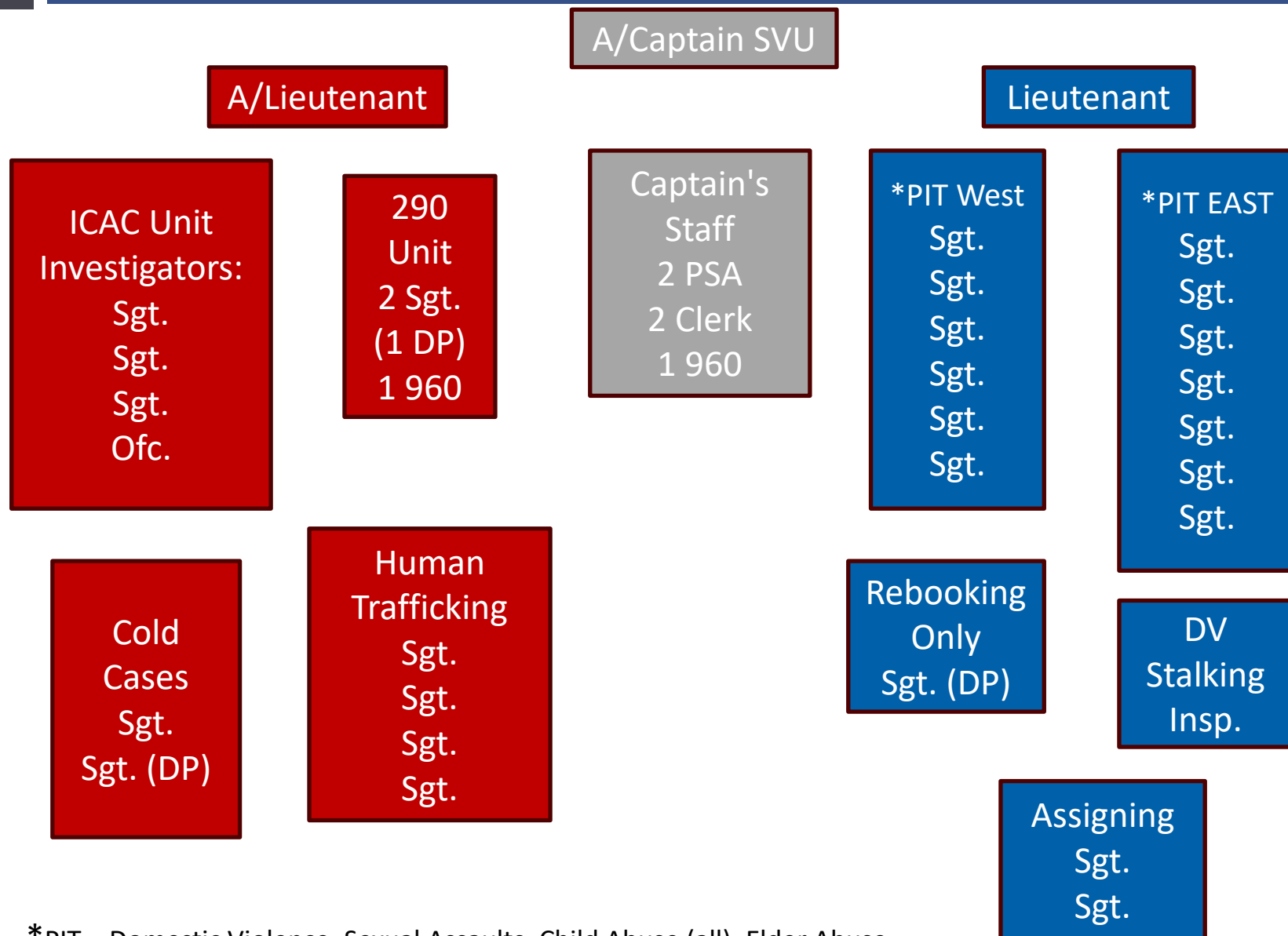
- 29 Investigators
- 1 Modified Duty Officer (Front Desk)
- 1 Acting Captain
- 1 Lieutenant
- 1 Acting Lieutenant
- 2 Civilian Police Service Aides
- 2 Civilian Clerks
- 2 960s Retired Officers (290 Unit, Captain Staff)

The Special Victims Unit is managing a personnel deficit that runs parallel with the wider personnel deficit within the SFPD.

**Promotions will net investigators to SVU*

Safety with Respect

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*PIT – Domestic Violence, Sexual Assaults, Child Abuse (all), Elder Abuse.

Community Partners of SVU

SVU maintains a substantial list of working relationships with other agencies, groups and organizations around the city, some of which include:

- Cooperative Restraining Order Clinic
- UCSF Trauma Recovery Center
- La Casa De Las Madres
- Children's Advocacy Center
- Huckleberry House
- Larkin Street Youth Services
- Domestic Violence Consortium
- WOMEN Inc.
- Department on the Status of Women
- SF District Attorney's Victim Services Division
- Family Child Services (CPS)
- Adult Protective Services
- Department of Homeland Security
 - * ICAC & HT Cases Only
- Federal Bureau of Investigations
- Department of Public Health
- Office of the City Attorney
- California Department of Justice

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Case Loads and Assignment

- The total number of investigators in SVU have fallen from approximately 50 in 2021 to 29 in April 2025.
- In 2024, the total amount of cases regarding domestic violence stood at 3021 in addition to 1011 sexual assault cases.
- Assigning criteria for cases is as follows:
 - SVU assigning officers review all incoming reports daily, they assess each report for the presence of a criminal act, the existence of probable cause and/or corroborating evidence, victim cooperation, statute of limitations, and other special circumstances.
- After Review, all reports are forwarded to the Officer in Charge (OIC) for daily review. OIC has authority to assign an investigator or place it in a pending folder for future assignment or to not assign it.

Operational Adjustments Amid Staffing Challenges

- *When cases involve children as the victims or witnesses, the assigning officer will determine if a multidisciplinary interview (MDI) is needed for the case to move forward. The assigning officer will schedule an MDI prior to assigning the case to an investigator. This has triaged and streamlined the expediency of a case being assigned to an investigator.*
- *The Department has moved missing persons and financial crimes investigations out of the umbrella of SVU. This allows SVU to narrow it's focus and caseload.*
- *The human trafficking team has been conducting monthly operations in the Mission District since the beginning of the year, incorporating undercover officers with the assistance of Mission Station.*

Additional Adjustments and Triumphs

- *We've reinvigorated our 290 unit. We have 290 liaison officers at each district station and are conducting citywide enforcement operations.*
- *8 out of the 13 investigators (PIT), have over six years of experience.*
- *Cooperation and outstanding working environment with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office to prosecute cases. We have a fluid partnership and open dialogue with SFDA.*
- *Despite the low staffing, SVU is managing cases effectively and with efficiency.*

Short Term Solutions

- Have temporary modified duty sworn staff work the front desk at SVU to allow restraining order violations reports to be taken at the unit.
- Advocates have access to the SVU on-call Lieutenant nights and weekends who will make contact with patrol and district stations in order to direct a survivor/victim where to go to make a report if needed.
- More interns to help with general office support.
- Roll call training at stations for taking Sexual Assault Reports utilizing trauma informed techniques (Dr. Sarah Metz, Dr. Gina Rodriguez).
- DGO 6.16: Sexual Assault is going through concurrence for distribution throughout the department.
- Review SVU's website to make it more survivor/victim friendly.
- Giving SVU a budget or credit card to provide support to survivors/victims, such as hotel rooms, food, aid, etc.
 - The Card can be monitored and itemized to ensure it is being used for necessary aid for survivors/victims .

Long Terms Solutions

- Continued recruitment and retention to fully staff our department, which includes investigations.
- We continue to cross train investigators in other disciplines within SVU to manage demand.
- Strategize with the city to incentivize the hiring of non-sworn/civilian staff (PSA's, 960s) to support SVU.
 - Civilian staff can be used to follow up with survivors/victims and provide additional support to sworn members.
- Continue collaboration with community partners, including the opportunity to house them within SVU.
- Staying current on best investigative practices, technology, training and grant procurement.
- Incentivize college recruitment within educational disciplines that relate to SVU's focus to include trauma informed strategies.

Recruitment/Retention Incentives for SVU

- Recognition of investigators (Police Department, Board of Supervisors, stakeholders).
- Take home rental vehicles for each member within SVU (possibility of outside funding).
- Increase staffing to limit the amount of on-call each investigator has to cycle through.
- Increase training opportunities that are not mandatory i.e.: domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, human trafficking, elder abuse, internet crimes against children and sex offender conferences.
 - Only mandatory training is approved currently.
- Giving investigators the tools to perform their jobs to the best of their ability (workspace, technology, training, resources).
- Supporting mental health wellness for investigators (considerations: overtime, number of cases, years within the unit, sufficient time off, access to gym facilities, peer support).

Any questions?

Thank you.

