

# Economic Costs of Sexual Violence

## Introduction

Survivors of sexual assault pay for sexual violence out of their own pockets, and the public pays through provision of services to them and their significant others. Businesses lose money through employee absences and sexual harassment suits. The cost for offenders' incarceration, probation, treatment, and other offender services adds to the total cost of sexual assault.

*Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault, "By the Numbers: Sexual Violence Statistics Manual," 2007*

- According to the National Institute of Justice rape costs our country more than any other crime, followed by assault (\$93 billion); murder (\$71 billion); and drunk driving, including fatalities (\$61 billion).  
*National Institute of Justice, "Victim Cost and Consequence: A New Look," T. Miller, et al., 1996*
- Each year, victims of intimate partner rape lose an estimated 1.1 million day of activity. Mean daily earnings lost by intimate partner rape victims is \$69.  
*Centers for Disease Control, "Cost of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in the United States," 2003.*
- Fourteen percent of rape and sexual assault victims lost time from work as a result of their victimization; 28% of them lost 6-10 days.  
*Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey. Tables 87, 89, 2002*
- The total cost of sexual assault to victims was \$18 million in 2002.  
*Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey. Tables 82, 2002*

## Why Cost Estimates of Sexual Violence Are Low

Estimates are typically based on statistics that measure incidence or prevalence of rape identified through cases reported to law enforcement or through victimization surveys. Consider that:

- Sexual violence is one of the most underreported crimes in our society. Recent data suggests that fewer than one in six women report sexual violence to the police.
- Surveys that capture statistics use questions that measure sexual violence in different ways. While some include instances of oral and anal penetration, for instance, some include only vaginal penetration.
- Some surveys capture rape experienced through force as well as rape that occurred during incapacity, other surveys do not.
- Estimates may not include the range of sexual violence perpetrated against victims other than acts that involve penetration of some kind.  
*Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice, "Workplaces Respond to Domestic & Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center," 2011*