

Cumberland County
POSITION PAPER FOR AGENDA ITEM

TO:	Board of County Commissioners
FROM:	DA's Office
DATE:	August 5, 2024
SUBJECT:	Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Grant Award from Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

Requested Action: Approve

Background & Purpose of Request: Historically in Maine, and all across the country, only a very small percentage of sexual assault kits were tested. The reasons varied, but we now know the best practice is to test all non-anonymous ('reported') kits as often there is evidence in the kits that links up to other crimes and serial perpetrators. Primary activities proposed include the inventory, tracking, and testing of sexual assault kits that are currently stored within Cumberland County. Central to this work would be organizing a multi-disciplinary team to work together to address systemic change and to prevent future kit backlogs. This grant also funds investigation and prosecution of cases connected from the inventorying and processing of the stored kits. It is anticipated that approximately 500 sexual assault examination kits currently stored in Cumberland County at various law enforcement departments will be transported for testing out of state during the three-year grant period. If there is evidence found or charges that could be found, these cases will be moved forward through the criminal process to the extent possible. Partners: Maine State Police (MSP) Crime Lab, Cumberland County Sheriff's Office, Portland Police Department, Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSMM), and the Office of the Attorney General. Staff proposed:

In DA's office/Cumberland County: 1. Site Manager/Prosecutor 2. CCSO SA Kit Investigator

At MSP Crime Lab: 1. Funds for DNA analyst time for uploads.

At Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine (SARSSM) 1. Half-time advocate for victim advocacy and notification regarding tested kits.

Funding Amount and Source: \$2,496,072.00 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) within the U. S. Department of Justice.

No Match Required

Effective Date: 10/1/24 – 9/30/27

Attachments:

End the Backlog: Serial Rapist Fact Sheet

End the Backlog: Testing Rape Kits Saves Communities Millions of Dollars

Map of Reform Efforts