



Pennsylvania
**Commission on Crime
and Delinquency**

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Shapiro-Davis Administration Receives \$2.5 Million Federal Award to Establish New Statewide Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System

Last year, Governor Shapiro signed SB 920, authorizing the implementation of a statewide rape kit tracking system for the Commonwealth.



Harrisburg, PA — Today, **Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis** joined a bipartisan group of legislators and advocates to announce a new \$2.5 million federal award from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) awarded to the **Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)** to improve the Commonwealth's ability to support survivors of sexual violence and increase accountability and transparency through a new statewide sexual assault kit tracking system.

“Rape and sexual assault is about power – attackers want to take away their victims’ power and dignity, their feeling of safety and security,” said **Davis, who serves as chair of PCCD**. “As leaders, we need to do everything we can to help victims feel safe and whole again. If a victim is able to summon the strength to go through the process of

getting a sexual assault examination and file a police report, they deserve to know their rape kit is being handled with care and attention, that their case is a priority. Here in Pennsylvania, we're reducing the backlog of processing rape kits, but there's much more work to be done. Now that we've passed Senate Bill 920, Governor Shapiro has signed it into law and with this federal funding, we can create a statewide tracking system that keeps victims informed and helps them get their power back."

The federal award announced today furthers recent legislation, Senate Bill 920, sponsored by **Senator Langerholc** and signed into law by **Governor Shapiro** in October 2024 as [Act 122 of 2024](#). The new law requires the establishment of an electronic statewide sexual assault evidence tracking system, enabling survivors to monitor the status of their rape kits throughout the testing process. The bill also enhances the rights of sexual assault victims and mandates reporting by the Pennsylvania State Police.

"The implementation of this statewide tracking system for sexual assault kits underscores our commitment to enhancing public service and fostering transparency," said **PA State Police Commissioner Colonel Christopher Paris**. "Every victim of crime deserves respect, dignity, and the assurance that their case will be handled with professionalism and compassion, with a steadfast pursuit of justice."

"Act 122 reinforces the Commonwealth's dedication to supporting survivors and ensuring offenders are held accountable. This rape kit tracking system will allow sexual assault survivors to track the progress of their kits throughout an investigation," **Langerholc said**. "The \$2.5 million federal grant from the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative will help launch the system sooner, ensuring faster access for survivors."

For survivors who choose to report an incident of sexual assault to police, preserving DNA and other evidence is crucial to investigate and prosecute those responsible. Sexual assault forensic exams, or "rape kits," performed by specially trained staff at hospitals and health facilities are vital tools in the fight to increase transparency, improve public safety, and ensure that survivors of sexual assault are supported, given a voice, and achieve justice.

"Implementing a rape kit tracking system in Pennsylvania has been a longtime initiative for the Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect (PCAR) and we are thrilled to celebrate this achievement and the NSAKI award," said **Gabriella Romeo, Public Policy Director for PCAR**. "This system provides survivors with transparency and accountability as well as advances Pennsylvania as a leader in supporting sexual assault survivors. It takes courage to come forward and get a forensic exam. Survivors having the option and ability to check on the status of their evidence may be very empowering and can be a step toward healing by helping survivors feel more in control."

Sexual assault kit testing can be a lengthy process, often leading to significant backlogs in crime labs. Automated sexual assault kit tracking systems allow survivors to know where their sexual assault kit is throughout the testing process and prompt efficient

processing to prevent backlogs and delays, which in turn can speed up the criminal justice process and prevent future assaults.

“If we can track Amazon packages, airline flights, and Starlink satellites, there should be no issue with ensuring survivors can access and track the status of their sexual assault evidence kits and give them control in their fight for justice,” **Senator Katie Muth** said. “Today’s announcement of federal grant funding to finally establish a statewide rape kit tracking system in Pennsylvania is a sign of progress and a sign that the voices of survivors and their advocates are being heard in Harrisburg. I appreciate the continued work of PCCD and PCAR to fight for survivors and to advocate for programs and funding that can make a difference in the lives of Pennsylvanians.”

With this new federal funding, PCCD, along with its partners at the Pennsylvania State Police and Pennsylvania Department of Health, will take a multi-phased approach to reduce the number of unsubmitted and partially tested sexual assault kits in the Commonwealth. Funds will be used to establish a new statewide tracking system as well as training and technical assistance support provided to rape crisis programs, hospitals, law enforcement, and other key stakeholders through a subaward to PCAR.

In addition, a portion of grant funds will help establish a state-level multidisciplinary team led by PCCD and comprised of key stakeholders, building on PA’s existing collaborative efforts related to sexual assault evidence collection and other system-wide reforms.

View photos/video from today’s press conference at [PAcast.com](https://www.pacast.com).

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