

Response to Questions from the Public Safety Commission and the Commission for Women

April 1, 2019

Public Safety Commission, March 4, 2019

What is the age for adult victims? >12 or > 17?

Adult cases are defined as cases involving victims 17 years of age and older. These cases are handled by the Austin Police Department Sex Crimes Unit. Cases involving victims under the age of 17 are handled by the Child Abuse Unit.

Is the District Attorney aware of the resolution and will they agree to fully participate?

The Travis County D.A. is not only aware of the resolution, but wrote a letter in support, which is attached. The D.A.'s Office will certainly participate to the extent possible without impacting pending litigation or investigations.

How else can the Commission participate in the selection of the consultant? Can a member of the Commission sit on the interview/selection panel?

The City Manager's Office is working with the Purchasing Office and the City Clerk's Office on the appropriate manner to enlist participation from a Commission member in the development of the final contract.

Can the Commission receive the final written report in advance of a Commission meeting and 30 days in advance of a Council presentation so that the Commission can prepare a resolution/recommendation regarding the findings of the evaluation?

Yes, when the final report is prepared, staff will work with the Chairs of the PSC and the Commission for Women to receive a presentation from the consultant at least 30 days prior to a presentation to Council.

Commission for Women March 13, 2019

Why only focus on adult victims

Cases involving victims under the age of 17 are handled by the Child Abuse Unit. Cases with victims 17 and older are handled by the Sex Crimes Unit. The community feels that cases involving children are already handled appropriately and are provided sufficient resources.

Can the Human Affairs Commission also received a presentation of the final report?

Yes, staff will work with the Chair of the Human Affairs Commission to accommodate this request.

How are the members of the evaluation team selected?

The City Manager's Office will take Commission input into account as the members of the evaluation team are selected.

Would the City consider using the services of a coordinator to assist during the evaluation process and can make sure that the project is progressing as the resolution requires.

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The Assistant City Manager will be responsible for ensuring the selected consultant conduct the evaluation in accordance with the resolution.

At what point would a consultant indicate whether they have a conflict of interest

From the Purchasing Office's perspective, a conflict of interest generally refers to a financial conflict. In order to address the Commission's concern, the solicitation can include a request to report any previous or current work with the Austin Police Department or the Travis County District Attorney's Office, or the Sexual Assault Response and Resource Teams (SARRT).



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January 29, 2019

Mayor Steve Adler
Councilwoman Alison Alter
City of Austin
P. O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Mayor Adler and Councilwoman Alter:

I write in support of your and Chief Manley's call for a review of the handling of sexual assault cases by the Austin Police Department. I am committed, like you, to ensuring our very best efforts in meeting both the needs of the survivors of sexual assaults and the demands of our criminal justice responsibilities.

I have worked very closely with the Chief from the beginning of my term to identify the best way for us to work together on these most difficult issues. His belief that this review will benefit APD is commendable, as is your willingness to fund it. I would also note this study has the potential to benefit not only the Austin Police Department, but other agencies handling sexual assault cases. I am hopeful that this examination of APD's practices will provide *all* of us valuable information to shape our policies and resource allocations going forward.

In the meantime, please know that during my two years as District Attorney this Office has devoted more resources to support these investigations and bring to trial more cases. This Office works with all the law enforcement agencies in Travis County, and I can assure you that we are united in our determination to meet the expectations of this community. In that vein, I note the formation by Travis County Judge Sarah Eckhardt and former State Senator Wendy Davis of a work group to address sexual assault prevention and healing. I believe very strongly in this important initiative, because we should not be focusing only on the criminal justice system, but our over-all community response. These efforts are complementary and should work together toward our commonly-held goals.

As collaboration among the agencies in Travis County continues, our base of knowledge grows. It should be good news to the residents of the City of Austin and Travis County as a whole that the commitment is consistent county-wide.

Thank you for undertaking this most important review.

Sincerely,


Margaret Moore