

**DIVISION OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
STATE OF MONTANA**

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**Montana DOJ Sexual Assault Kit Initiative
Training Report: Prosecuting Sexual Assault**

The Montana Department of Justice (DOJ) Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) and the Montana Prosecution Services Bureau hosted a three-day Prosecuting Sexual Assault Training. A total of forty-five Montana city and county attorneys attended the training. The first day and a half of the training was led by Patricia Powers, Senior Consultant for Aequitas. The outcomes of the training included:

- Targeted strategies to keep the focus on the offender in a sexual assault case.
- Educated prosecutors about the neurobiological effects of trauma.
- Highlighted how to set the tone and theme for voir dire of a sexual assault case.
- Identified methods to educate the jury about sexual assault through questioning.
- Effective use of experts.
- Impacts of trauma informed interviewing.
- Discussed past and future MT DOJ SAKI objectives, including kit testing and upcoming cold cases that may be presented to them for review over the course of the FY2023 DOJ SAKI grant.

On the latter portion of the second day, the training was led by Montana prosecutors with a focus on several priorities:

- Conducting roundtable discussions on sexual assault cases.
- Practicing voir dire techniques to enhance jury selection.
- Acquiring more specific knowledge and resources related to Montana cases.

After the training, participants completed a feedback form to help guide future training efforts. The participants emphasized the necessity for continuous training and access to resources, particularly in rural regions where prosecutors frequently cover multiple counties or work part-time within their community. In addition, multiple participants discussed the need for more sexual assault response education and support. The continued partnership with the Montana Attorney General's Prosecutor Services Bureau will be invaluable as MT DOJ SAKI works with local agencies to review cold cases, reengage survivors, and seek justice for Montana sexual assault survivors.