



# CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEYS: SUPPORTING PREVENTION & RESPONSE

## USE THIS RESOURCE TO

BRING CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEYS TO YOUR SCHOOL TO HELP IDENTIFY THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF YOUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP A MORE ACCURATE RESPONSE

## RESEARCH & DATA

[The First Report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault](#) explains the urgency and need for all schools to participate in yearly campus climate surveys.

[The Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) outlines reasons survivors often do not report their assault to the police in this document.

[Climate Survey Pilot Program Fact Sheet](#): This is a fact sheet on a pilot program conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics with nine schools to test the use of climate surveys and ways to increase relevance and participation.

The Office on Violence Against Women has also developed an [Administrator Information Packet](#) to guide college and university administrators through the process of developing and implementing a campus climate survey on campus sexual assault.

## SURVEY TOOLS

[Sample Campus Climate Survey](#): The Bureau of Justice Statistics, RTI International, and the Office on Violence Against Women developed and tested this survey instrument. The tool is free to use.

[Administrator's Action Packet](#): Developed by the Office on Violence Against Women, this packet contains information to help college and university administrators navigate the complexities of conducting a campus climate survey on sexual assault at their own college or university.

## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource contains tips for pitching the idea of conducting a climate survey to administrators, ways to personalize surveys for your specific campus, and options for reducing the cost of conducting the surveys if needed.

## WHY ARE CLIMATE SURVEYS CRITICAL TO PREVENTION?

You cannot solve a problem if you do not know what it is and the extent of it. Police reports and crime logs do not provide an accurate perception of the problem or its scope. A recent survey conducted at nine colleges and universities showed that only 4.3% of sexual battery and 12.5% of rape incidents were reported to anyone other than a friend/relative and that reasons for not reporting included concerns about confidentiality and being treated poorly, blamed, or punished.

Campus climate surveys are essential for colleges and universities committed to preventing campus sexual assault. They generate valuable school-level data about the nature and extent of sexual assault on individual campuses so that schools can create campus-specific prevention and response efforts.

An effective campus climate survey is:

- Brief (less than 20 minutes) and available on a variety of electronic devices
- Administered towards the end of the academic year and remain available to participants for at least one month, but preferably two
- Inclusive of multiple follow-up reminders for non-respondents
- Personalized for potential respondents and messages should be customized to engage men and increase participation



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## KEY TALKING POINTS

**Campus climate surveys are essential to prevent and respond to incidents of campus sexual assault.**

- Campus climate surveys can help schools: (1) uncover gaps in existing institutional responses to campus sexual assault, (2) show whether sexual assault is more likely to occur during certain times of year or to coincide with certain campus events, (3) demonstrate whether students feel comfortable reporting incidents of sexual assault to school officials, and (4) show the level of knowledge that students have about campus resources.

**The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recommends that schools conduct campus climate surveys.**

- OCR recommends that Title IX coordinators help develop a method to survey the campus climate, evaluate whether any discriminatory attitudes pervade the school culture, and determine whether any harassment or other problematic behaviors are occurring, where they happen, which students are responsible, which students are targeted, and how those conditions may be best remedied. Since 2013, climate surveys have been a [standard requirement](#) in resolution agreements OCR enters into with schools to resolve Title IX complaints.

**Campus climate surveys have been identified as a best practice to combat sexual assault by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault.**

- In their [first report](#), the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault characterizes regular climate surveys as "a best-practice response to campus sexual assault" and recommends that schools use them to "examine the prevalence and incidence of sexual assault on campus and assess students' perceptions of a university's response to sexual assault."

**Best practices for conducting campus climate surveys have now been established and are freely available to any school.**

- In 2015 the Justice Department successfully developed, tested, and validated a campus climate survey. The report is called the [Campus Climate Survey Validation Study](#) (CCSVS). The CCSVS successfully demonstrated best practices for campus climate survey research and every campus climate survey should meet these standards to be considered valid.

**Campus climate surveys conducted according to established best practices are necessary to provide an accurate picture of sexual assault as it exists on individual campuses.**

- The nature and extent of sexual violence on campuses can differ greatly from school to school. A 2015 [Association of American Universities Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct](#) revealed a wide variation of rates of sexual assault across participating colleges and universities.

**Campus Climate Surveys can help schools direct resources where they are needed most and are most effective when they serve as the foundation of a comprehensive campus sexual assault action plan.**

- When schools understand the specific obstacles students are facing on their campus, they can focus on providing funding or resources where they are needed most - to raise awareness about policies, resources, or counseling services, to develop targeted prevention efforts, or increase outreach to student populations most at risk for campus sexual assault.

**It is possible to conduct a cost-effective scientifically valid campus climate survey.**

- The [survey instrument and methodology](#) tested in the Campus Climate Survey Validation Study (CCSVS) is freely available for any school to use.