



## CGIS Embedded Agent Program

Due to the Coast Guard's structure and national footprint, every CGIS office is expected to respond to sexual assault investigations; accordingly CGIS embraces the philosophy that every single special agent must be an expert on sexual assault investigations. Thus, every agent gets advanced training in this field.

Early on CGIS recognized, that the number of sexual assault cases varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction; some offices receive these cases regularly, while others may only get a few per year. In an effort to expose every agent to the best practices for investigating all types of sex crimes, as well as to an adequate number of actual cases, CGIS implemented the Embedded Agent Program in 2013, where CGIS agents were placed in busy sexual assault units in police departments across the country. A number of large police departments were identified, each with a recognized best practice in sexual assault response. For example, the Austin, TX, PD was the first police department to embrace the "believe" philosophy while the Philadelphia PD uses outside rape crisis center personnel to review their cases, to audit their cases, and provide investigative suggestions. The embedded agent program allows a CGIS agent to "shadow" sex crimes/family violence criminal investigators from these metropolitan police departments for up to two weeks. In this fashion, CGIS agents are exposed to both a high volume of cases in a short period of time as well as the best practices employed by the various police departments.

CGIS strives to put all new agents into the embedded agent program during their first year of field service. CGIS also embeds new supervisors in the program with their main focus on the supervision and management of these difficult cases.

Field agents participating in this program observe best practices and innovation related to, but not limited to: case management; suspension and tracking; evidence collection; sequencing of investigative steps; interviewing of subjects and witnesses; trauma-informed approaches for interviewing victims; working with crime victim advocates, use of polygraph; use of physical evidence during interviews; use of pre-text phone calls; and other special methods.

In addition, CGIS agents also observe the relationship and interaction between local law enforcement and prosecutors which includes, when and how often the two entities meet for briefings and/or case updates; filing standards; victim/witness preparation; plea bargains and victim impact statements; and considerations at trial.