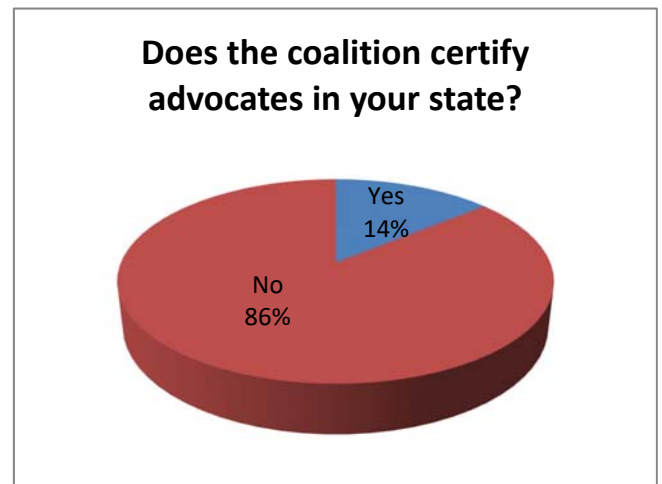
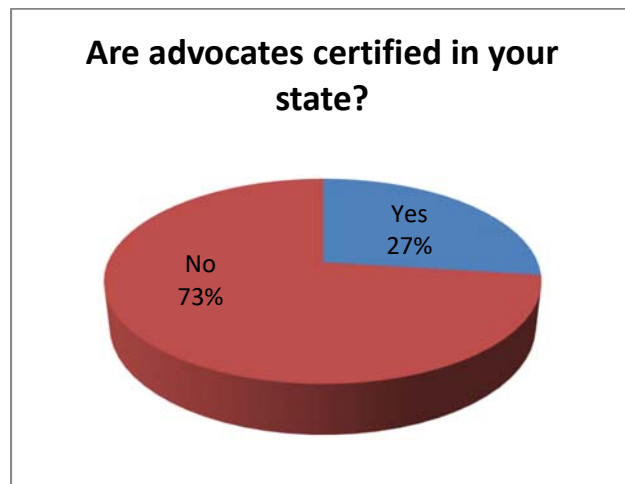




Advocate Certification

Fifty-one coalitions responded to an RSP survey regarding advocate certification and training, conducted 2011-2014. For states that provide advocate certification, there is great variation but the process is generally a recognition of completed requirements set forth to assure survivors and the community that advocates and volunteers have the required training and expertise to provide non-judgmental, empowering intervention for victims, their families, and significant others. Twenty-seven percent of coalitions had certification processes in their state (14 of 51); 73% did not have a certification process (37 of 51). Fourteen percent of coalitions oversee advocate certification (7 of 49) while 86% do not (42 of 49). Where the coalition does not oversee advocate certification, it is most often member programs or a state/territory office such as the Attorney General who oversees certification.



In the 1999 survey, seven coalitions out of 47 (15%) indicated that their states certified sexual assault advocates. In the 2006 survey, seven coalitions again (not all the same coalitions as in 1999) reported they or another entity in their states certified advocates.

Certification is generally obtained through training or a combination of training and supervised service. Duration of supervised service varies, with some mandating up to 6 months' supervised service. A few states administer certification tests, and one noted that programs must write a letter of recommendation for individuals' certification. In some states/territories, certification must be maintained over time, such as in this state's requirements: "A Certified SA Counselor is any person who works for a sexual assault crisis center who has successfully completed a minimum of 30 hours of training; receives at least 4 hours of advanced training annually; is certified by the center which has provided the training; is under the direct supervision of staff at the sexual assault crisis center; and their primary purpose is to provide advocacy, support, information, referrals, crisis counseling and other types of assistance to victims of sexual assault."

Certification of individuals is often tied to or combined with certification of member programs, as this coalition explained: "Applicant must be an employed staff member or volunteer of [coalition] member agency meeting our minimum standards; must have passed a criminal background check; at least 21 years of age; if survivor, at least one year beyond assault; agency's E.D. signs off that applicant has met training requirements; we approve/ask questions and send certificate."

Several coalitions described training requirements for advocates before they work with clients, though they do not call this training certification. Many of the requirements were "tied directly to ensuring that advocate/victim communication is protected," as one coalition stated.

Other coalitions are developing certification procedures. One explained, "We are just beginning a movement-controlled certification process that will focus primarily on who does the training and supervising of local advocates and who trains the trainers."

Another said, "Our coalition is in the process of updating standards and working towards developing certification for RCC's (rape crisis centers) in the state. Although many agencies provide SA advocacy training, this is not required in our state and there is no certification process at this time."