

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Annual Report

Pennsylvania Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services

2024

Introduction

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) aims at eliminating sexual abuse in confinement. All confinement facilities covered under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards must be audited. The PREA Standards were enacted on August 20, 2012.

The Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services (BJJS) is committed to fostering a therapeutic learning environment in which its residents can flourish. BJJS began preparing for future PREA audits before the final standards were enacted because of its overriding concern for its residents' safety and security, which includes their sexual safety.

To ensure that the facilities were in alignment with the act, BJJS:

- Reworded and strengthened the existing policies to reflect practices, specific language and documentation prescribed in the act and
- Created and conducted staff training for all BJJS's Youth Development Centers and Youth Forestry Camps' (YDC/YFC) staff.

To demonstrate compliance with PREA, agencies such as BJJS, which operate more than one facility, must have at least one-third of its facilities audited during each year of a three-year audit cycle. When the PREA was enacted, BJJS operated six facilities. The first year of the audit cycle began on August 20, 2013. During the 1st three-year audit cycle, which ended on August 19, 2016, all the facilities operated by BJJS were audited for compliance. Cresson Secure Treatment Unit (CSTU), and Youth Forestry Camp #2 (YFC #2), were audited in 2014, and Loysville Youth Development Center (LYDC) and Youth Forestry Camp #3 (YFC #3) were audited in 2015. North Central Secure Treatment Unit (NCSTU) and South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit (SMSTU) were audited in 2016. During Audit Cycle 2 (August 20, 2016 – August 19, 2019) and Audit Cycle 4, year 2 (August 20, 2019 – August 19, 2024) BJJS operated 5 facilities. All audits conducted at BJJS facilities have confirmed that BJJS is in full compliance with the PREA Standards.

BJJS collects data on every allegation of sexual abuse and sexual harassment at its facilities. Each allegation is reported to either ChildLine or the Pennsylvania State Police, or both. Following the outcome of the investigation, BJJS and facility leadership conduct a Sexual Abuse Incident Review (SAIR). The SAIR's purpose is to determine if any change is needed in policy or practice to better prevent, detect and/or respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

Each year, BJJS aggregates all the data collected and reports it to the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The reports made to BJS are available at: [PREA \(pa.gov\)](https://www.bjs.gov/Pages/PREA.aspx)

Definitions

The Department of Justice 2023 Survey of Sexual Victimization defines sexual victimization as:

Youth on youth sexual abuse -

Sexual abuse of a youth, detainee, or resident by another youth, detainee, or resident includes any of the following acts, if the victim does not consent, is coerced into such act by overt or implied threats of violence, or is unable to consent or refuse:

- Contact between the penis and the vulva or the penis and the anus, including penetration, however slight
- Contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, or anus
- Penetration of the anal or genital opening of another person, however slight, by a hand, finger, object, or other instrument; and
- Any other intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or the buttocks of another person, excluding contact incidental to a physical altercation.

Youth on youth sexual harassment - Repeated and unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favors, or verbal comments, gestures, or actions of a derogatory or offensive sexual nature by one youth directed toward another.

Staff sexual misconduct - Any behavior or act of a sexual nature directed toward a youth by an employee, volunteer, contractor, official visitor, or other agency representative (exclude family, friend, or other visitors). Sexual relationships of a romantic nature between staff and youths are included in this definition. Consensual or non-consensual sexual acts include:

- Intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks that is unrelated to official duties or with the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire
- Completed, attempted, threatened, or requested sexual acts
- Occurrences of indecent exposure, invasion of privacy, or staff voyeurism for reasons unrelated to official duties or for sexual gratification

Staff sexual harassment - Repeated verbal statements, comments, or gestures of a sexual nature to a youth by an employee, volunteer, contractor, official visitor, or other agency representative (This excludes family, friends, or other visitors). This includes:

- Demeaning references to gender, or sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing
- Repeated profane or obscene language or gestures

Substantiated allegation – An allegation that was investigated and determined to have occurred.

Unsubstantiated allegation – An allegation that was investigated and produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination as to whether the event occurred.

Unfounded allegation – An allegation that was investigated and determined not to have occurred.

Youth-on-Youth Sexual Abuse

In 2023, there was one allegation of youth-on-youth sexual abuse. That allegation was unfounded. This compares to 7 allegations in 2022.

Youth-on-Youth Sexual Abuse	2022	2023
Total Allegations	7	1
Substantiated	5	0
Unsubstantiated	0	0
Unfounded	2	1
Investigation Ongoing	0	0

Youth-on-Youth Sexual Harassment

In 2023, there were 5 reports of youth-on-youth sexual harassment. Three allegations were unsubstantiated and 2 were unfounded. This compares to 3 allegations in 2022.

Youth-on-Youth Sexual Harassment	2022	2023
Total Allegations	3	5
Substantiated	0	0
Unsubstantiated	2	3
Unfounded	1	2
Investigation Ongoing	0	0

Staff Sexual Misconduct

In 2023, there were 11 allegations of staff sexual misconduct. One allegation was substantiated, two were unsubstantiated, and 8 were unfounded. The substantiated allegation involved a staff writing letters to a resident that were of a sexual nature. That staff member was terminated and referred to law enforcement.

Staff on Youth Sexual Misconduct	2022	2023
Total Allegations	5	11
Substantiated	0	1
Unsubstantiated	1	2
Unfounded	4	8
Investigation Ongoing	0	0

Staff Sexual Harassment

In 2023, there were two report of staff sexual harassment. Both of those allegations were unsubstantiated.

Staff on Youth Sexual Harassment	2022	2023
Total Allegations	1	2
Substantiated	1	0
Unsubstantiated	0	2
Unfounded	0	0
Investigation Ongoing	0	0

Allegations of Youth-on-Youth Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment by Institution and Investigation Outcome 2023

Facility	Total Allegations	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Unfounded	Investigation Ongoing
Loysville Youth Development Center	1	0	1	0	0
North Central Secure Treatment Unit	4	0	3	1	0
South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit	0	0	0	1	0
North East Secure Treatment Unit	1	0	0	0	0
Youth Forestry Camp #3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	0	4	2	0

Allegations of Staff on Youth Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment by Institution and Investigation Outcome 2023

Facility	Total Allegations	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Unfounded	Investigation Ongoing
Loysville Youth Development Center	4	0	0	4	0
North Central Secure Treatment Unit	3	0	1	2	0
South Mountain Secure Treatment Unit	5	1	2	2	0
North East Secure Treatment Unit	1	0	1	0	0
Youth Forestry Camp #3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13	1	4	8	0

Conclusion

BJJS continually strives to ensure the sexual safety of all residents. In order to provide safer facilities, BJJS reports and thoroughly investigates any allegation of sexual victimization. All BJJS facilities have cameras installed. Camera systems are regularly assessed for placement, operation, and effectiveness. Cameras are used as an investigatory tool at BJJS facilities. Another change has been the installation of motion detectors. Motion detectors have been installed in the sleeping areas of the large dorm-style rooms at some facilities. The motion detectors alert staff members if a resident leaves his or her bed area, which will help detect and deter sexual incidents between residents.

Anyone who suspects a resident at a BJJS facility is being sexually abused or sexually harassed is urged to contact ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. At ChildLine, a confidential report can be made to authorities who will ensure an investigation occurs.

Any questions or concerns regarding the PREA at BJJS facilities should be directed to the Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services PREA Coordinator: 717-787-9532.