



Attached

This is the Androscoggin County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) annual report of data collected and aggregated pursuant to Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standard 115.88 – PREA Annual Report. The purpose of this report is to assess and improve the effectiveness of the agency's sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response policies, practices, and training. This report presents data collection findings and corrective actions for the Androscoggin County Jail (ACJ).

Background

The Prison Rape Elimination Act was established in 2003 to address the problem of sexual abuse and sexual harassment of persons in the custody of U.S. correctional agencies. Pursuant to PREA policy requirements, each agency shall report their data annually. This report focuses on the year 2021 incidents. ACJ completed its first PREA Audit, the complete report will be posted as soon as auditor Jack Fitzgerald has finalized all documentation. ACJ adopted a zero-tolerance policy on issues pertaining to sexual abuse and sexual harassment involving offenders and has implemented new policies, training requirements, and standards for the detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of prison rape. Reporting data collected and aggregated provides important information to assist in improving processes. The goal of this report is to identify all problem areas, find solutions to these issues, and explain the findings in a comprehensive manner.

General Jail Information

ACSO serves the residents of Androscoggin County, Maine. The Corrections Division is made up of fifty-four sworn Officers, three unsworn civilian staff and medical staff. Corrections Personnel are responsible for the care and custody of offenders. The Corrections Division is currently made up of six divisions, Security, Transportation, Classifications, Programs, Training/ Compliance, and Civilian Support Service (Medical and Food services). All staff are committed to lowering offender recidivism, providing impactful programming, and ensuring the safety of the public and offender.

PREA Disposition Types

Substantiated: An allegation that was investigated and determined to have occurred. Unsubstantiated: An allegation that was investigated and the investigation produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination as to whether the event occurred. Unfounded: An allegation that was investigated and determined not to have occurred. Pending/Investigation ongoing: Investigation has not been completed.

Number of Incidents

Twenty-five incidents occurring between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, and were identified as a PREA incidents to offenders. Of the twenty-five incidents, twenty were unfounded, four were unsubstantiated and one was substantiated and investigated by Sheriff's Office Detectives. Of these, twenty-four were filed for sexual harassment and one was for sexual misconduct. Of the twenty-four allegations for sexual harassment twenty-three were considered unfounded/unsubstantiated. The one allegation of sexual misconduct was unfounded. The allegation of sexual harassment between offenders that was substantiated was forwarded to the detectives. The alleged perpetrator was charged by detectives with Indecent Conduct. This matter is awaiting judicial review.

In Comparison

Tracking of PREA incidents started in the year 2020, during the 2021-year ACJ also completed our first audit under the direction of auditor Jack Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Correctional Counseling LLC. This year ACJ noticed an increase of fifteen reports of PREA Incidents, sexual harassment complaints increased by five and sexual misconduct complaints increased by ten. During the 2022-year ACJ also had three in-house disciplinary write ups for manipulating the PREA system. Of the write ups all three were found guilty and disciplined in-house. During the 2023-year ACJ had one incident of in-house disciplinary write ups for a consensual relationship, the write ups were filed due to the inmates leaving our custody before being seen by disciplinary board.

Reporting

Offenders are provided education on PREA at all stages of their custody, from booking to housing. PREA incidents may be reported by several sources including arrestees, inmates, jail staff, medical personnel, outside family/contacts, and other outside sources. The corrections staff PREA investigators reviews each case and investigates accordingly. The PREA Coordinator collects the case files and examines the information to make a final determination. If necessary, a case may be reviewed through the Jail Administrators, sent for further investigation to Internal Affairs or to Criminal Investigation division for criminal charges.

PREA Review Committee

The ACSO PREA Review Committee reviews cases of sexual abuse that are substantiated or unsubstantiated within 30 days from the conclusion of the investigation. The Committee is comprised of the Facility Administrator, PREA Manager, Medical Staff and/or Mental Health Staff, the investigator, and a shift supervisor. The committee reviews the reports and evaluates the following areas for corrective action:

- Whether the allegation or investigation indicates a need to change policy or practice to better prevent, detect, or respond to sexual abuse.
- Whether the incident or allegation was motivated by race; ethnicity; gender identity; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex identification status, or perceived status; gang affiliation; or other group dynamics at the facility.
- The area in the facility where the incident allegedly occurred to assess whether physical barriers in the area may enable abuse.
- Adequacy of staffing levels in that area during different shifts.
- Whether monitoring technology should be deployed or augmented to supplement supervision by staff. The PREA Review Committee documents their findings and any recommended improvements. Their report is submitted to the Jail Administrator and the facility either implements the recommendations and documents completion or documents the reasons for not implementing the recommendations.

Areas of Improvement

ACJ staff are pleased to become PREA Certified. We have made significant improvements on the following:

- Staff training on detection, prevention, and investigation.
- Offender training on prevention and reporting.
- Sexual assault hotline for offenders and members of the public to make a complaint.
- Outside victim advocates for offenders involved in a PREA incident.
- New policy and procedures.
- Tracking of incidents and grievances to evaluate for future change.
- Risk screening for potential victim or aggressor.
- Follow up evaluations to all offenders for potential risk of being a victim or aggressor.
- Implementation of a review board of allegations that are substantiated or unsubstantiated.
- Implementation of a review board to monitor retaliation of any inmate associate with a PREA Incident.


Sheriff or Jail Administrator


Date