



## **TCSO 2015 PREA Annual Report**

### **Background**

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed by Congress and signed into federal law by President George W. Bush in 2003 to prevent, detect and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment occurring in confinement settings. The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission developed national standards which apply to adult prisons and jails, juvenile facilities, lockups and community confinement facilities.

### **Travis County Sheriff's Office Zero Tolerance Policy**

The Travis County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) has ZERO TOLERANCE for all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment within its jail facilities. It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to respond to, and administratively and/or criminally investigate all alleged incidents of a sexual nature. Every reported incident of a sexual nature will be taken seriously, investigated fully, and appropriate action will be taken as warranted. Procedures are in place to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual misconduct in accordance with federal PREA standards.

TCSO has a designated agency-wide PREA Coordinator, who coordinates all PREA efforts, as well as PREA Compliance Managers who guide staff in their duties. Other efforts to comply with the PREA standards include, but are not limited to:

- Training for all staff, volunteers, contractors and inmates
- Specialized investigative, medical and mental health training
- Collaboration with the Travis County Victim Services Unit
- Collaboration with SafePlace (rape crisis counseling, forensic exams and victim services)
- Implementation of internal reporting hotline
- Implementation of confidential support services hotline to SafePlace
- Development of education materials to be provided to inmates
- Assessment for risk of victimization during initial intake
- Deployment of video monitoring systems
- Appropriate staffing and maintaining minimum staffing levels
- Hiring and promotion standards
- Appropriate classification and housing of all inmates
- Coordinated response to all incidents by first responders, medical and mental health practitioners, investigators and facility leadership
- Thorough investigations of all complaints of sexual misconduct

## **PREA Statistics**

TCSO collects data in accordance with PREA standard 115.87 in order to assess and improve the effectiveness of its sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response policies, practices and training. Each year, the information collected for this report will be used to identify problem areas and to take corrective action on an ongoing basis.

### **2015 Survey of Sexual Violence**

Each year, TCSO reports PREA data to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. The reported statistics for 2015 were:

#### **Inmate on Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts:**

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	2
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	3

#### **Inmate on Inmate Abusive Sexual Contact:**

Substantiated	4
Unsubstantiated	9
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	17

#### **Inmate on Inmate Sexual Harassment:**

Substantiated	10
Unsubstantiated	49
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>14</u>
Total	73

#### **Staff Sexual Misconduct:**

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	3
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>19</u>
Total	22

#### **Staff Sexual Harassment:**

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	4
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	15

## **Effectiveness of PREA Efforts**

In comparison to previous years, the data looks good. Although the total number of complaints went up (130 in 2015 vs. 88 in 2014), the number of substantiated cases remained the same (14 in 2015 vs. 14 in 2014). The rise in the total number of complaints can be attributed to:

- Continued training of all staff, volunteers, contractors and inmates
- Heightened awareness by all of sexual behavior
- PREA Hotline
- Improved inmate education
- Weekly showing of PREA videos to inmates

Therefore, the rise in total reports is not only expected but, in conjunction with the number of substantiated cases remaining stable, is a sign that our continued efforts are effective in addressing sexual misconduct.

## **Problem Areas and Corrective Action**

Moving forward, we still have work to do in order to become PREA certified, but we made much progress in 2015. Some of standards we will be working on include:

- 115.14 (Separation of youthful inmates {under 18} from those 18 and over)
- 115.17e (Criminal records checks every 5 years for all staff)
- 115.42f (Transgender/intersex inmates shower separately)
- 115.67c (Monitor for retaliation)
- 115.86 (Sexual abuse incident reviews)
- Policy revisions

TCSO has been selected by the US Department of Justice to be a host site for their PREA Auditor Field Training Program in April of 2016. DOJ and PREA Resource Center experts will bring new auditors to our jail facility in Del Valle, The Travis County Correctional Complex, to perform a training audit. This training audit will give us a great understanding of where we are and what else we need to do to become PREA certified. It is our belief that we can make the necessary improvements and become PREA certified by the end of 2016.

## **Conclusion:**

The Travis County Sheriff's Office is making great progress in becoming PREA certified, keeping inmates safe and maintaining zero tolerance for all forms of sexual abuse and harassment.

