

Hernando County Sheriff's Office



Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA):

2023 Annual Report

Purpose

Each year, an annual review is conducted to assess and improve the effectiveness of sexual abuse prevention, detection and response policies, practices, and training for the Hernando County Detention Center.

115.88 Data Review for Corrective Action

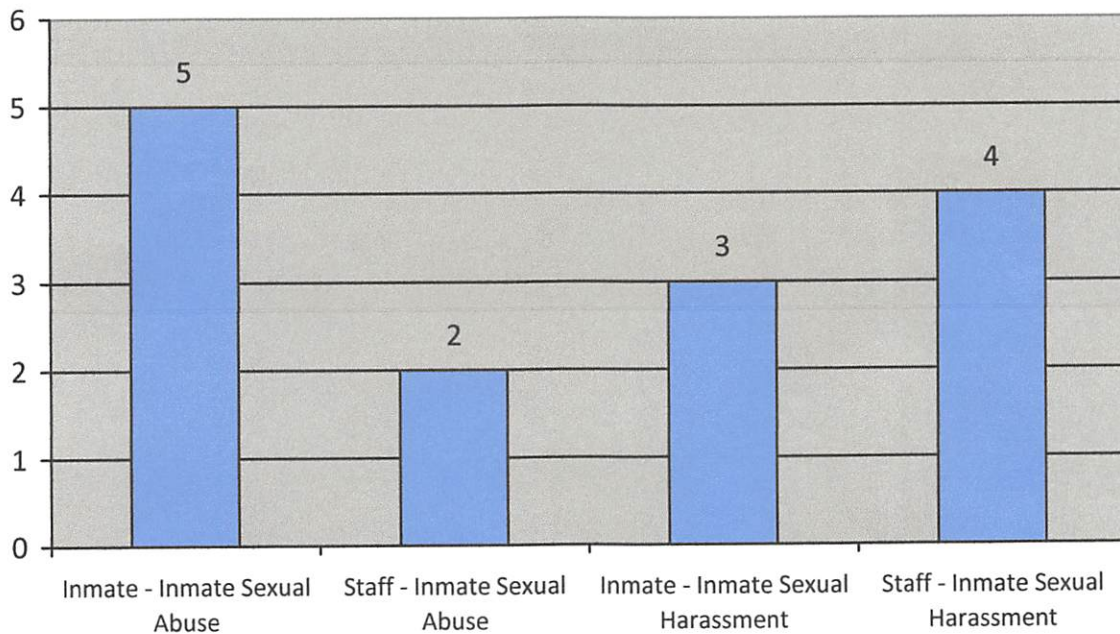
1. The agency shall review data collected and aggregated pursuant to § 115.87 in order to assess and improve the effectiveness of its sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response policies, practices, and training, including by:
 - a. Identifying problem areas;
 - b. Taking corrective action on an on-going basis; and
 - c. Preparing an annual report of its findings and corrective actions.
2. Such report shall include a comparison of the current year's data and corrective actions with those from prior years and shall provide an assessment of the agency's progress in addressing sexual abuse.
3. The agency's report shall be approved by the agency head and made readily available to the public through its website

Aggregate Data

The Hernando County Detention Center collects data from reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment; both inmate-on-inmate and staff-on-inmate. All allegations are referred to the PREA Inspector for investigation.

The following graph depicts a breakdown of the sexual abuse and sexual harassment allegations that were reported from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023, which includes a total of fourteen (14) incidents.

2023 Total PREA Incidents



Incident Findings

At the conclusion of an investigation, a finding is determined based on the facts of the case. The incident findings as defined in the PREA Standards are as follows:

Substantiated: The allegation was investigated and determined to have occurred.

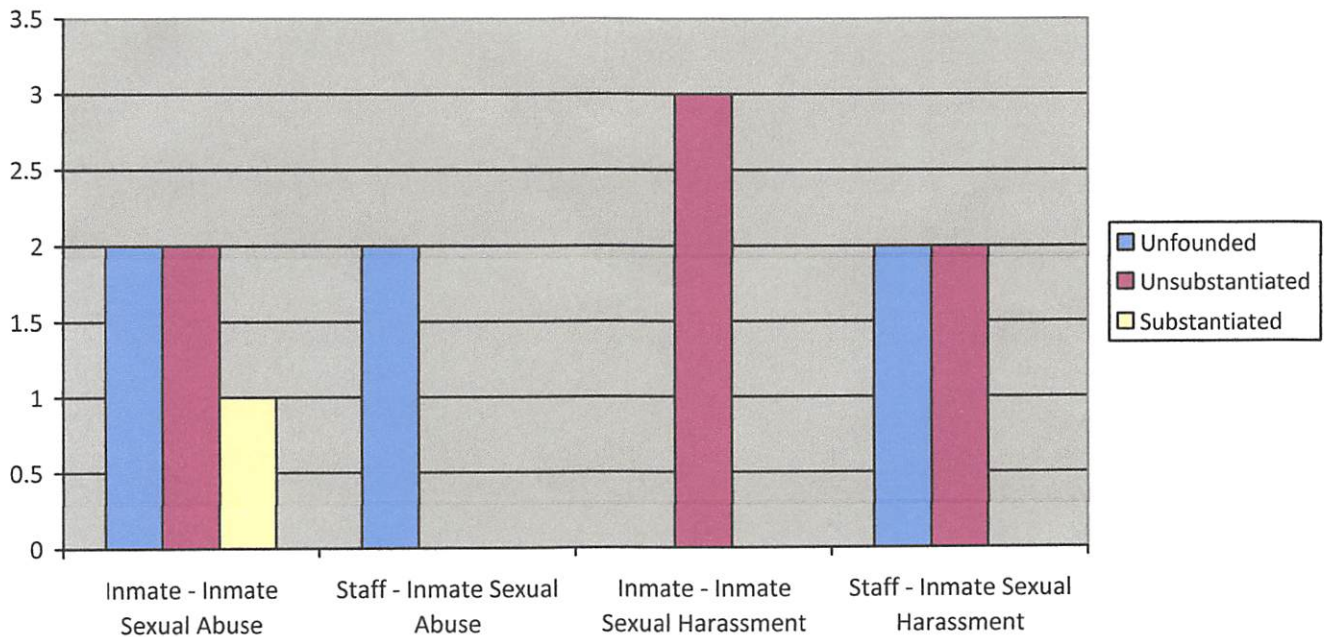
Unsubstantiated: The allegation was investigated and the investigation produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination as to whether or not the event occurred.

Unfounded: The allegation was investigated and determined not to have occurred.

PREA Allegation Outcomes

The following graph depicts the final disposition of reported incidents of sexual abuse and sexual harassment for Calendar Year 2023.

2023 Allegation Outcomes



2022 Assessment

Calendar Year 2022 had a total of six allegations investigated; however, they did not meet PREA definitions for sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

2023 Assessment

Of the allegations made, it should be noted that the one substantiated inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse did result in the arrest of the suspect, and the two allegations of sexual abuse made against staff were unfounded. Both of the allegations made against staff were in reference to pat and strip searches, which were found to be done properly and within policy.

Sexual Abuse Incident Reviews

The Hernando County Detention Center conducts Incident Reviews on all substituted and unsubstantiated investigations regarding sexual abuse allegations. These reviews are conducted by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of the PREA Coordinator, upper level management officials, line supervisors, investigators, medical, and mental health care professions. This review team evaluates the circumstances of each incident and make recommendations for changed to either policy or practice in order to better prevent, detect, or respond to sexual abuse. The team also evaluates staffing levels at the time of the incident; whether or not the incident was motivated by any group dynamics; reviews the adequacy of monitoring technology; and determines if there were physical barriers in the area that enabled the abuse.

There were eight (8) Sexual Abuse Incident Reviews conducted in 2023. There was no indication of patterns or motivations involving abuse. In addition, staffing and monitoring technology were deemed to be both appropriate and adequate.

Training and Education

Training and education are critical components to the prevention of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. A computer based training on PREA is mandatory for all staff to complete on an annual basis and includes information on the agency's zero tolerance policy and staff's responsibilities regarding the prevention, detection, reporting, and response to sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The computer based training is also mandatory for new employees to complete during orientation training. Additional training opportunities will continue to be evaluated, as it is imperative for staff to understand the important role they play in ensuring inmates sexual safety within the agency.

Goals and Objectives

The Hernando County Detention Center will continue to identify opportunities to provide additional training and education to ensure staff, volunteers, and contractors understand their role in protecting inmates from sexual abuse and sexual harassment.



Sheriff, Al Nienhuis

