

# Hernando County Sheriff's Office



## Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA): 2025 Annual Report

Submitted by: Detective James Smith, PREA Coordinator  
*June 2026*

## History

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was established in 2003 by the United States Congress to address the problem of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in correctional facilities. The major provisions of the PREA Standards include:

- Adherence to a zero-tolerance policy;
- Development of standards for detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of prison rape; and
- Collection and dissemination of information involving alleged incidents of sexual harassment or sexual abuse in correctional facilities.

The mission of the Hernando County Sheriff's Office is to ensure alignment with PREA Standards. The department is committed to operating a safe and secure correctional facility while delivering quality programs and services through dedicated partnerships, ensuring that the dignity and respect of the inmates in our custody are maintained.

## Purpose

Pursuant to Prison Rape Elimination Act Standards, this report serves as an annual review to assess and improve the effectiveness of the Hernando County Sheriff's Office policies, procedures, and training as they relate to sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response.

## §115.88 Data Review for Corrective Action

(a) The agency shall review data collected pursuant to PREA Standard §115.87 to assess and improve the effectiveness of its sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response policies, practices, and training, including by:

- Identifying problem areas.
- Taking corrective action on an ongoing basis.
- Preparing an annual report of its findings and corrective actions.

(b) Such a 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.

(c) The agency's report shall be approved by the agency head and made readily available to the public through its website.

## 2023–2025 Comparative Data & Progress Assessment

As required by §115.88(b), the table below compares Calendar Year 2025 data and corrective actions with those from the two preceding years, followed by an assessment of the agency's progress in addressing sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

| Metric                          | 2023 | 2024     | 2025 |
|---------------------------------|------|----------|------|
| Total Allegations Investigated  | 14   | 16       | 15   |
| Substantiated Cases             | 1    | 1        | 3    |
| PREA Incident Reviews Conducted | 8    | 6        | 4    |
| DOJ PREA Audit Result           | —    | 100% Met | —    |

Total allegations investigated have held relatively stable over the three-year period: 14 in 2023, 16 in 2024, and 15 in 2025. Substantiated cases increased from 1 in each of 2023 and 2024 to 3 in 2025; two involved inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse and one involved inmate-on-inmate sexual harassment. A fourth inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse incident reviewed in 2025 originated while the subject inmate was housed at a Louisiana facility; per PREA reporting guidelines, that case is attributed to the Louisiana agency's 2025 totals and is not counted among Hernando County's

substantiated cases, though the agency conducted a full incident review of the matter (see note below).

PREA Incident Reviews conducted have declined steadily, from 8 in 2023 to 6 in 2024 and 4 in 2025. Across all three years, review teams identified no systemic patterns or motivations involving abuse and consistently found staffing levels and monitoring technology to be appropriate and adequate. The agency's corrective action efforts during this period centered on sustaining mandatory annual and new-hire PREA training, which remained unchanged across all three years, and culminated in the Department of Justice PREA Audit completed in June 2024, in which 100% of applicable standards were met — an independent validation of the agency's policies and practices.

In light of the out-of-state case handled in 2025, the agency has identified strengthening interdepartmental coordination for inter-jurisdictional case handoffs as a corrective action priority for 2026 (see Goals and Objectives, below). No deficiencies in staffing, monitoring technology, or facility design were identified as contributing factors in any reviewed incident during the three-year period, and the agency assesses its overall PREA compliance posture as continuing to progress positively.

## HERNANDO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

### Detention Center

# Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) 2025 Annual Report

ZERO TOLERANCE

TRANSPARENCY

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Submitted by:

**Detective James Smith***PREA Coordinator*

June 2026

*Sheriff Al Nienhuis | Hernando County Sheriff's Office*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hernando County Detention Center is committed to maintaining a safe, humane environment free from sexual abuse and harassment for all individuals in its custody. This report summarizes PREA-related activity for Calendar Year 2025, covering the period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

|                                |                                      |                       |                              |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>15</b>                      | <b>3</b>                             | <b>4</b>              | <b>100%</b>                  |
| Total Allegations Investigated | Substantiated Inmate-on-Inmate Cases | PREA Incident Reviews | DOJ PREA Audit Standards Met |

*Note: No staff-related sexual abuse allegations were reported/investigated for calendar year 2025.*

### AGGREGATE INCIDENT DATA

The Hernando County Detention Center collects data on all reports of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and voyeurism, including both inmate-on-inmate and staff-on-inmate incidents. All allegations are referred to the PREA Coordinator and Detention Inspector for investigation.

#### 2025 Incident Summary by Category

| Incident Category                  | Reported  | Substantiated |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Inmate-on-Inmate Sexual Abuse      | 2         | 2             |
| Staff-on-Inmate Sexual Abuse       | 0         | 0             |
| Inmate-on-Inmate Sexual Harassment | 12        | 1             |
| Staff-on-Inmate Sexual Harassment  | 1         | 0             |
| Voyeurism                          | 0         | 0             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                       | <b>15</b> | <b>3</b>      |

### ALLEGATION OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of each investigation, a determination is made based on the facts of the case. PREA Standards define three possible findings:

- **Substantiated** — The allegation was investigated and determined to have occurred.
- **Unsubstantiated** — The allegation was investigated but produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination.
- **Unfounded** — The allegation was investigated and determined not to have occurred.

### Outcomes by Category (2025)

| Incident Category                  | Substantiated | Unsubstantiated | Unfounded |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Inmate-on-Inmate Sexual Abuse      | 2             | 0               | 0         |
| Staff-on-Inmate Sexual Abuse       | 0             | 0               | 0         |
| Inmate-on-Inmate Sexual Harassment | 1             | 2               | 9         |
| Staff-on-Inmate Sexual Harassment  | 0             | 0               | 1         |
| Voyeurism                          | 0             | 0               | 0         |

### 2025 ASSESSMENT

Calendar Year 2025 had a total of fifteen (15) allegations investigated. Key findings:

- Two (2) inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse cases were substantiated, both of which occurred within the Hernando County Detention Center. One resulted in an arrest. A third inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse incident, which originated while the subject inmate was housed in the state of Louisiana, was fully reviewed by this agency but is attributed to Louisiana's 2025 totals in accordance with PREA reporting guidelines (see note below).
- One (1) of the inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse cases was determined to be consensual in nature but was still reviewed and documented in accordance with PREA standards.
- Twelve (12) inmate-on-inmate sexual harassment allegations were investigated. One (1) was substantiated, two (2) were unsubstantiated, and nine (9) were determined to be unfounded.
- One (1) staff-on-inmate sexual harassment allegation was investigated and determined to be unfounded following a thorough investigation.
- There were zero (0) staff-on-inmate sexual abuse allegations in 2025.
- All allegations involving staff were found to be within policy and did not meet PREA standards for Sexual Abuse or Sexual Harassment.

**NOTE: OUT-OF-STATE INCIDENT REVIEW — LOUISIANA**

One of the four PREA Incident Reviews conducted in 2025 involved an inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse incident that originated while the subject inmate was housed in the state of Louisiana, prior to his transfer to the Hernando County Detention Center. Because the investigative determination and case closure occurred after the inmate's arrival at this facility, the Hernando County Detention Center conducted a full Incident Review of the matter in accordance with PREA Standard 115.86. However, per federal PREA reporting guidelines, sexual abuse incidents are counted in the annual totals of the agency with jurisdiction over the location where the abuse occurred. Accordingly, this case is reflected in the Louisiana facility's 2025 annual totals and is not included among the Hernando County Detention Center's substantiated inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse case count, though it is counted among the facility's incident reviews conducted. The Hernando County Sheriff's Office coordinated directly with the Louisiana agency's PREA Coordinator to confirm proper attribution of this case.

**PREA INCIDENT REVIEWS**

The Hernando County Detention Center conducts Incident Reviews on all substantiated and unsubstantiated investigations regarding sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and voyeurism allegations, as required by PREA Standard 115.86.

These reviews are conducted by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of:

- PREA Coordinator
- Upper-level management officials
- Line supervisors and investigators
- Medical and mental health care professionals

The review team evaluates the circumstances of each incident and makes recommendations for changes to policy or practice to better prevent, detect, or respond to sexual abuse. The team also evaluates staffing levels, group dynamics, monitoring technology adequacy, and whether physical barriers contributed to the incident.

In 2025, four (4) PREA Incident Reviews were conducted. Findings indicated no systemic patterns or motivations involving abuse. Staffing levels and monitoring technology were deemed appropriate and adequate.

**TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

Training and education remain critical pillars of the agency's sexual abuse prevention strategy. The Hernando County Detention Center requires:

- Annual mandatory computer-based PREA training for all staff, covering the agency's zero tolerance policy and staff responsibilities for prevention, detection, reporting, and response to sexual abuse and harassment.
- PREA training as a mandatory component of new employee orientation, ensuring all incoming personnel are prepared from day one.
- Ongoing evaluation of supplemental training opportunities to reinforce staff awareness, accountability, and trauma-informed response practices.

Every staff member plays a vital role in upholding the safety and dignity of those in our custody. The agency remains committed to ensuring that role is clearly understood and consistently fulfilled.

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE PREA AUDIT**

The Hernando County Sheriff's Office successfully completed its Department of Justice PREA Audit in June 2024. All applicable PREA standards were reviewed and successfully met.

This audit represents an independent, external validation of the Detention Center's ongoing compliance with federal PREA requirements and reflects the agency's steadfast commitment to inmate safety and staff accountability.

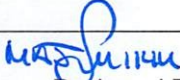
**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2026**

Building on the progress made in 2025, the Hernando County Detention Center has identified the following priorities for the coming year:

- Expand training opportunities for all staff, volunteers, and contractors to ensure comprehensive, up-to-date understanding of PREA standards and trauma-informed response protocols.
- Maintain an unwavering zero-tolerance posture toward sexual abuse and harassment through consistent policy enforcement, documentation, and staff accountability measures.
- Continue reviewing and enhancing monitoring technology, housing configurations, and physical plant layouts to proactively minimize identified risk factors.
- Strengthen interdepartmental coordination and information-sharing protocols to ensure timely and complete responses to all allegations, including those involving out-of-state or inter-jurisdictional circumstances.
- Sustain ongoing PREA compliance readiness in preparation for future Department of Justice audits and ensure all standards continue to be met or exceeded.

**CONCLUSION**

In an effort to maintain compliance with the requirements established by the Department of Justice, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office remains firmly committed to adhering to the PREA Standards and making necessary adjustments on a continuous basis. The data reflected in this report demonstrates the agency's diligence in investigating all allegations thoroughly, responding appropriately, and taking every reasonable measure to protect the safety and dignity of individuals in its custody.

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| Major Shaun Klucznik <br>Hernando County Sheriff's Office — Reviewed By | Date 7/7/26 |
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| Al Nienhuis, Sheriff <br>Hernando County Sheriff's Office — Approved By, Agency Head | Date 7/8/26 |
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