

March 21, 2022

TN Department of Children's Services  
PREA Annual Report 2020

The Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) has embraced the principles associated with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and remains committed to ensuring that Youth Development Centers, contract providers, and juvenile detention facilities are compliant with PREA. DCS continues to take steps to help facilities educate both staff and youth in the areas of sexual abuse prevention and safety.

In 2020, the DCS PREA Coordinator worked with the training division and updated the PREA Computer Based Trainings and the PREA Risk Assessments. During this process, separate Safe Housing Assessment and Safe Housing Reassessment forms were developed and put into effect for all DCS facilities, contract providers, and juvenile detention facilities. In addition, the DCS PREA Policy was updated to reflect changes at the federal level and to improve guidance for providers to obtain PREA compliance. The DCS PREA Coordinator provided technical assistance, as needed, to support contract provider agencies in their efforts to maintain compliance with the PREA standards.

There were no DCS state operated facilities audited in 2020. The last audit for DCS occurred in 2018 at the Wilder Youth Development Center. That audit found the facility to be in full compliance with the PREA standards. The next audit for the facility is scheduled for June 2021. In addition, twenty-two (22) contract providers and nine (9) juvenile detention centers completed PREA audits as required with each being certified as fully compliant.

Pursuant to Standard 115.388, DCS tracks specific information related to reported incidents in its facilities. This includes time, location, age, race, as well as, alleged victims and alleged perpetrators, with special attention paid to repeat offenders and victims. This information allows DCS the opportunity to assess and improve the effectiveness of its sexual abuse prevention, detection, response policies, and

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practices. One identified area of need was in addition to the Special Investigations Unit, DCS needed a Prison Rape Elimination Act Investigator. DCS promptly assigned a staff member to investigate PREA allegations.

In compliance with Standard 115.367, protection measures are employed when a resident alleges abuse, including the removal of staff and/or resident abusers from the victim. All allegations of sexual misconduct are taken seriously by DCS. While some allegations may not rise to a level requiring involvement by Child Protective Services, DCS now has a dedicated PREA Investigator available to ensure that all allegations of sexual abuse, and sexual harassment as defined by Standard 115.367 of the Prison Rape Elimination Act Facility Standards are fully investigated.

DCS remains committed to fostering a culture of reporting and continues to explore all options for false reporting while seeking to minimize the impact on legitimate and valid incidents of sexual misconduct. DCS continues to provide PREA Investigation data to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) for its Youth Development Center and has done so each year since 2009.

In 2020, DCS conducted seventy-eight (78) PREA investigations at contracted provider facilities. Of those, thirty-seven (37) were for abuse and forty-one (41) were for harassment. There were eight (8) substantiated cases of sexual abuse, twenty-seven (27) unsubstantiated, and two (2) unfounded. There were seventeen (17) substantiated cases of sexual harassment, twenty (20) unsubstantiated, and four (4) unfounded cases. Compared to 2019, this showed a decrease of twenty-six (26) cases of sexual abuse and an increase of nine (9) cases of sexual harassment.

DCS conducted forty (40) investigations at Wilder Youth Development Center in 2020. There were twenty-nine (29) allegations for sexual abuse and eleven (11) allegations of sexual harassment. There were no substantiated abuse cases and one (1) substantiated harassment case. There were twenty-four (24) unsubstantiated and five (5) unfounded investigations of abuse. There were six (6) unsubstantiated and four (4) unfounded cases of harassment. Compared to 2019,

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this showed an increase of seventeen (17) sexual abuse cases and an increase of one (1) harassment case. There were no corrective action plans for any facilities or the agency as to PREA.

Approved by:



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Commissioner  
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JN/sc