

# **IMPLEMENTING THE PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA) IN NEW MEXICO JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS**

**FACILITY TOOLKIT- *August 2014***



## INTRODUCTION

In response to concern over the prevalence of sexual violence in prisons and jails, Congress passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) in 2003. The Act created the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (NPREC) to study sexual abuse and sexual harassment in jails, prisons, juvenile facilities, and other custodial settings. It also required the U.S. Justice Department to issue national standards for custody settings and provided funding and training to assist with compliance with the PREA standards.

The overall goal of PREA is to eliminate sexual violence in custodial settings through prevention, detection and response to sexual misconduct. The PREA standards, which were issued in June 2012, cover a wide range of facility operations. In 2013, Bernalillo, Chaves, San Juan and Taos counties together with the New Mexico Association of Counties successfully applied for a federal grant to support implementation of PREA standards in New Mexico juvenile detention facilities. Grant funds paid for consultants from the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP) in Washington DC, PREA part time coordinators for the four counties included in the grant, production of a youth orientation video, printing and supplies, and county travel expenses.

This New Mexico PREA Implementation Toolkit is the product of over 12 months of work by staff from the original four counties as well as staff from Curry, Luna, and McKinley counties, the New Mexico Association of Counties (NMAC), the NM Children Youth and Families Department (NMCYFD), and attorneys from CCLP. The work was accomplished through four multiday meetings in Bernalillo, Chaves, Taos and San Juan counties as well as numerous telephone conference calls and other independent work by the project partners.

The Toolkit is designed to assist New Mexico youth detention facilities in implementing the PREA standards. It has three parts: a binder with hard copy materials, a flash drive with



electronic copies of all of the documents as well as additional resources, and a youth education DVD. Toolkit materials include a comprehensive staff training that explains the history and goals of PREA, adolescent development and sexuality, and behaviors of youth survivors of sexual abuse.

The Toolkit also provides sample policies and youth orientation materials that will assist your facility with the implementation of PREA's requirements.

Perhaps less tangible but equally important, the grant funded work gave county staff who participated an opportunity to discuss and interact with the PREA standards on an in-depth level, creating local expertise that we hope will facilitate implementation of PREA standards throughout the state for years to come.

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