**Training for Volunteers and Contractors**

Under the PREA standards, all volunteers and contractors who have contact with youth must be trained on their responsibilities under the agency’s sexual misconduct prevention, detection and response policy. See 28 C.F.R. § 115.332. The level and type of training can vary depending on the type of services that an individual provides and his or her level of contact with youth. However, at a minimum everyone needs to be notified about the facility’s zero tolerance policy and how to report sexual misconduct. Additionally, facilities must maintain documentation that volunteers and contractors understand the training that they receive.

The PREA standards define the term “volunteer” as “an individual who donates time and effort on a recurring basis to enhance the activities and programs of the agency.” See 28 C.F.R. § 115.5. The definition of “contractor,” which is similar, is “a person who provides services on a recurring basis pursuant to a contractual agreement with the agency.” These relatively broad definitions can apply to a wide range of individuals who have contact with youth in the facility. Because PREA defines “volunteer” and “contractor” as an individual who has a “recurring” engagement with the facility, individuals who have contact with youth only once, for example, to provide a one-time performance or to repair a piece of equipment in a single visit, are not required to receive any training. However, facilities may still want to ask one-time volunteers and contractors to review a summary of the facility’s zero-tolerance policy and methods of reporting and sign an acknowledgement form. This step, while not required by the PREA standards, ensures that all individuals have some basic knowledge of how to report if they observe something or if a youth discloses to them.

Because the PREA standards do not dictate the extent or format of training that volunteers and contractors must receive, facility administrators must make two decisions: (1) How much training does an individual require? and (2) What topics should the training cover?

**How much training?**

When determining how much training a volunteer or contractor should receive, officials should consider a few questions:

* *Will the person always be supervised by staff when meeting with youth, or is it possible that the person will meet youth without staff supervision? Will the staff member be listening or just providing visual supervision?* A volunteer or contractor who may be outside the supervision of staff will require more information about policies and procedures for handling incidents of sexual misconduct because they may not always be with a trained staff member who knows the facility’s rules.
* *Will the person always meet with a group of youth or might there be some one-on-one interaction?*

Individuals who have private interactions may be more likely to receive a disclosure of sexual misconduct than individuals who work with youth in groups. Accordingly, they may require more in-depth training on what to do if a youth makes such a disclosure.

* *Will the person come back repeatedly or is he or she visiting the facility just once?*

Individuals who have repeated contact with a facility may be in a position of building relationships of trust with youth. This may lead youth to confide in them about problems at the facility. These volunteers and contractors may also benefit from additional information about appropriate boundaries with youth.

Accordingly, a visitor from a local college sports team who meets with a group of youth two times over the course of a football season while being supervised by staff would not require the same level of training as a chaplain who regularly visits the facility and frequently meets privately with youth.

**Which topics to cover in training?**

Once facility administrators have assessed the extent of an individual or group’s interaction with youth, the next step is to decide which training topics are appropriate for those individuals. At a minimum, volunteers and contractors must be notified about the facility’s zero tolerance policy and how to report sexual misconduct. Administrators should consider the responsibilities and skills that volunteers and contractors have at the facility when deciding on additional appropriate content. Facilities should also consider how much training that they can realistically expect volunteers to attend. Requiring individuals to attend lengthy or multiple training sessions may deter some people from being willing to volunteer their time.

For example, an administrator may decide that for infrequent visitors who are always supervised by facility staff, it is adequate for visitors to have a 5 to 10 minute conversation with a senior staff person, reviewing and signing a form that outlines key policy elements (e.g., the agency’s prohibition on sexual misconduct, how to report, ways that youth can obtain help). However, a chaplain who is at the facility on a regular basis and meets one-on-one with youth may require a training that is similar to what facility staff receive. In these situations, administrators should consider how to adapt their staff training curriculum to be appropriate for these individuals. By way of illustration, a chaplain does not need to practice doing pat searches, but he or she could benefit from knowing what a proper search looks like in order to know whether something that a youth discloses seems to have crossed the line into sexual misconduct.

Finally, the PREA standards contain special training considerations for medical and mental health practitioners. The PREA standards state that medical and mental health practitioners must either receive the training mandated for employees or the training mandated for contractors and volunteers, depending on their status at the agency. See 28 C.F.R. § 115.335. However, medical and mental health practitioners must also receive specialized training on a number of topics if they work regularly in the facility. Given these particular considerations, administrators should develop training for medical and mental health professionals separately from the training for staff, volunteers and other contractors.

The attached sample acknowledgement form contains the type of topics that a facility may include in its volunteer and contractor training curricula. Facility administrators can edit and adapt the content of this document to match actual policies and procedures, as well as add detail to reflect the volunteer or contractor’s level of involvement with youth and staff in the facility.

**Sample Volunteer and Contractor Information Outline**

**and Acknowledgement Form**

Our goal at [*Facility name*] is to keep everyone safe. Part of achieving that goal is making sure everyone understands how to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual misconduct. We want to make sure that you understand the rules of the facility and how to report a problem or issue in the unlikely event that something happens while you are here.

**Important Rules to Know**

At [*Facility name*], no one is ever allowed to engage in sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct includes any kind of sexual contact, regardless of whether the other party agreed to the contact or not. However, it also includes sexual harassment: saying sexual things, saying things about someone’s body, talking about who someone likes to date, or making offensive gestures or comments. We prohibit staff, youth, and other adults in the facility from doing any of these things at all times.

We also maintain appropriate boundaries here. Staff, contractors, and volunteers are prohibited from having any kind of romantic relationship with youth. Youth can never consent to sexual activity with an adult at the facility. We also prohibit staff, contractors, and volunteers from sharing personal details, such as their personal contact information, except in order to carry out their professional responsibilities. Similarly, staff, volunteers, and contractors are prohibited from making contact with youth outside of the facility through any means (e.g., in-person meetings, texting, Facebook, Twitter), except in order to carry out their professional responsibilities.

[*Fill in any other rules appropriate to volunteers and contractors here.*]

**How We Keep Everyone Safe**

At [*Facility Name*], we do a number of things to keep everyone safe, including:

* Educating youth to be free about their right to be free from sexual misconduct
* Conducting background checks of the individuals who we hire and training staff on our policies on preventing, detecting, and responding to sexual misconduct
* Maintaining appropriate supervision of youth and adults at the facility
* Offering a number of ways that youth and others can report problems at the facility
* Taking seriously and fully investigating all allegations of sexual misconduct, including making referrals to law enforcement when appropriate
* Providing services and supports to youth who allege that they have been sexually abused
* Protecting youth and staff from retaliation for reporting problems or helping with an investigation

**What to Do If You See or Suspect Sexual Misconduct, or if a Youth Reports a Problem to You**

Although we do a number of things to keep everyone safe, we want you to know what to do if you see something that looks like a problem or if a youth reports a problem to you.

* **If you see or suspect an incident of sexual misconduct,** you must report it immediately by [*Fill in best avenue(s) for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct*].
* **If a youth discloses something that suggests an incident of sexual misconduct has occurred**, stay calm, listen to what the youth is saying, take the report seriously, and convey a message of support (e.g., “I’m glad that you were strong enough to come to me”). Let the youth know that you are going to report the incident to make sure that someone investigates and makes sure that the youth is safe, but that you will not share his or her report beyond those who need to know to fix the problem. At that point, make sure the youth is in a safe place and then report the incident immediately by [*Fill in best avenue(s) for reporting incidents of sexual misconduct*].
* **If a youth wants to tell you something but asks that you not repeat what they are going to tell you**, let the youth know about your limits of confidentiality, including whether you have to report certain behaviors by law. You are required by law to report if you have knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected. However, you can convey this message in a way that is supportive of youth. For example, you might say, “I am glad that you came to me and I can understand why you would not want me to tell anyone. If it is about someone hurting or harassing or threatening you or not taking care of you, I am required to report it. I respect your decision if you don’t want to tell me as a result. But if you tell me, I can work with you to get help.”

**Questions?**

If you have questions about the facility rules, your responsibilities while you are here, or anything else, you may contact [*fill in appropriate contacts*].

**By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received information about and understand my responsibilities under [*Facility name*]’s sexual misconduct prevention, detection, and response policies and procedures.**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name