

Orange County Corrections Prison Rape Elimination Act Annual Report



2024

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History

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was established in 2003 by the United States Congress in order 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 Orange County Corrections Department 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, to ensure the dignity and respect for the inmates in our custody is maintained.

Purpose:

Pursuant to Prison Rape Elimination Act Standards, this report serves as an annual review required to assess and improve the effectiveness of the Orange County Corrections Department policies, procedures and training as it relates 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 in order 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 on-going basis; and
- Preparing an annual report of its findings and corrective actions.

(b) 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.

(c) The agency's report shall be approved by the agency head and made readily available to the public through its website or, if it does not have one, through other means.

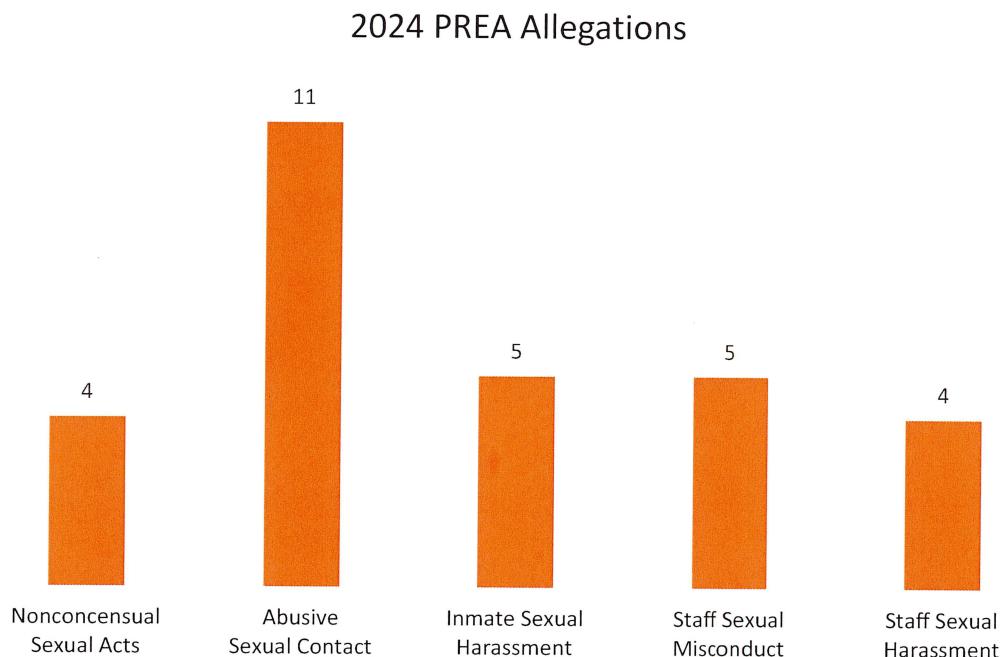
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Collected Data

2024 Allegations of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment:

The Orange County Corrections Department collects data from reports of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, to include both inmate and staff assailants. All allegations are referred to the PREA Compliance Managers and / or the Internal Affairs Unit to be investigated and the outcome of these investigations is included in the data that is collected and reported.

The following graph indicates a breakdown of the sexual abuse and sexual harassment allegations that were reported from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024, which includes a total of twenty-nine (29) incidents. (See Attachment "A" Definitions)

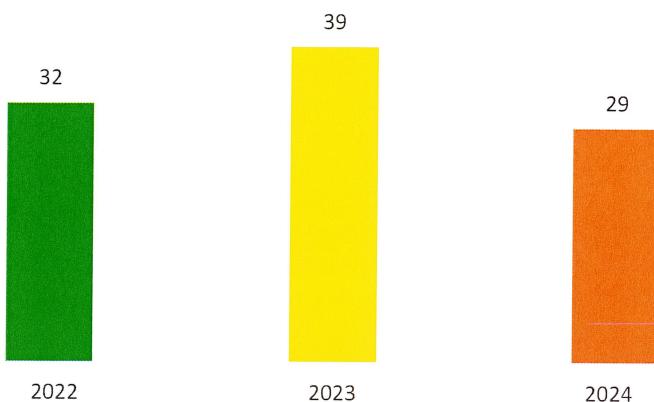


Comparison of Reported PREA Allegations 2022-2024:

The following graph indicates a comparison of total sexual abuse and sexual harassment allegations from 2022-2024:

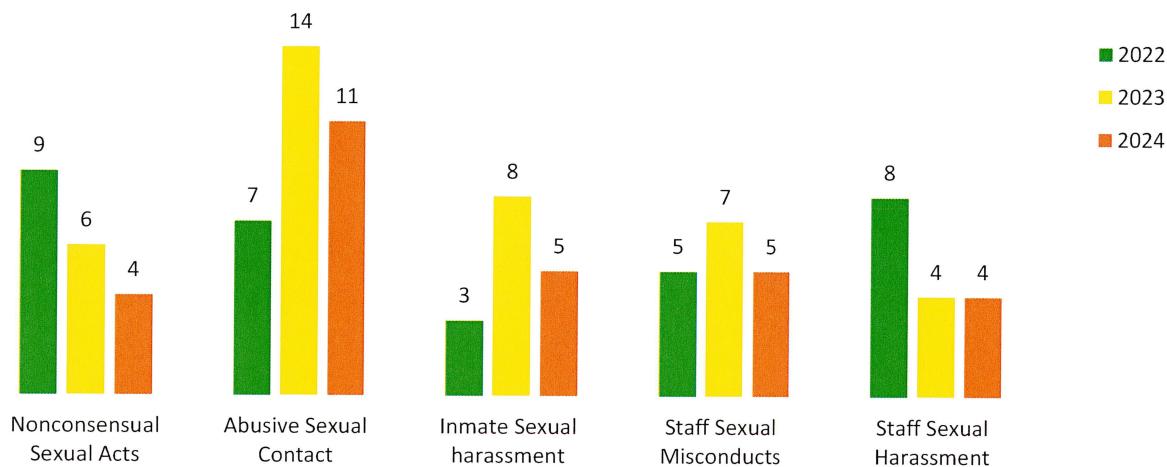
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2022 - 2024 Total PREA Allegations



The following graph compares the total number of reported incidents from 2022 (32), 2023 (39) and 2024 (29) by the type of allegation.

Total PREA Allegations 2022 - 2024



The Average Daily Population:

2022 = 2357

2023 = 2706

2024 = 3111

In comparison to previous years, the inmate population increased in 2024. In an effort to uphold the Department's commitment to the PREA standards, staff receive continuous education on sexual abuse prevention, detection and response. Additionally, the inmate population is educated on the various methods of reporting a PREA allegation.

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Incident Findings:

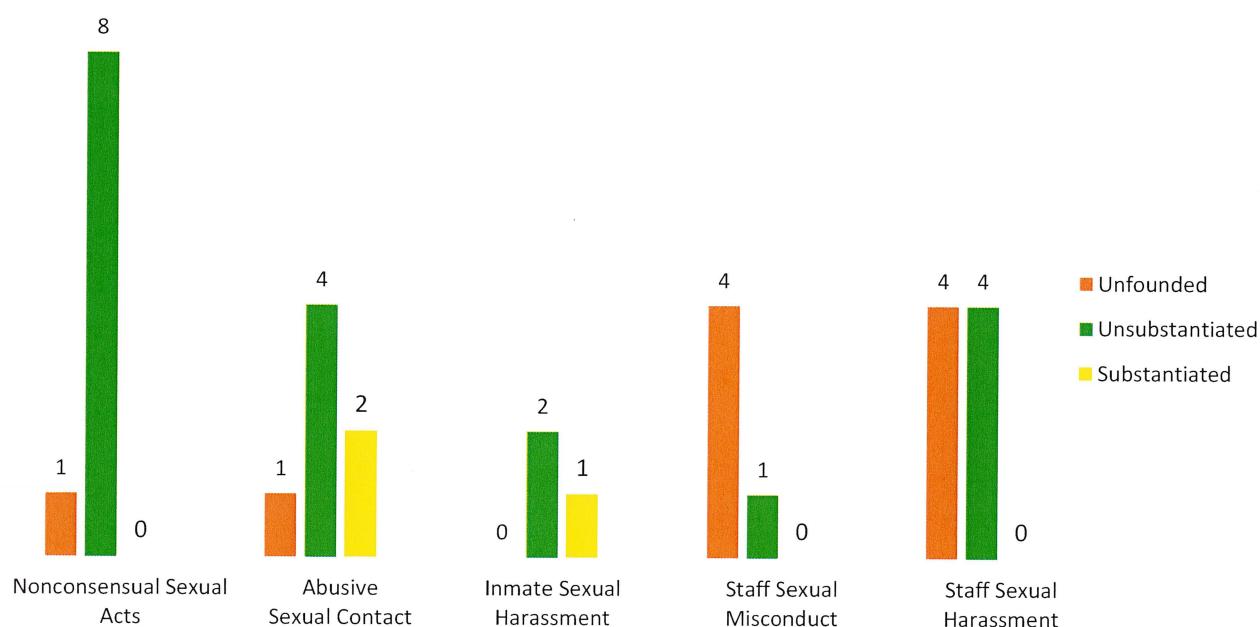
At the conclusion of an investigation, a finding is determined based on the facts of the case. The incident findings as defined in the PREA Standards are as follows:

- 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:

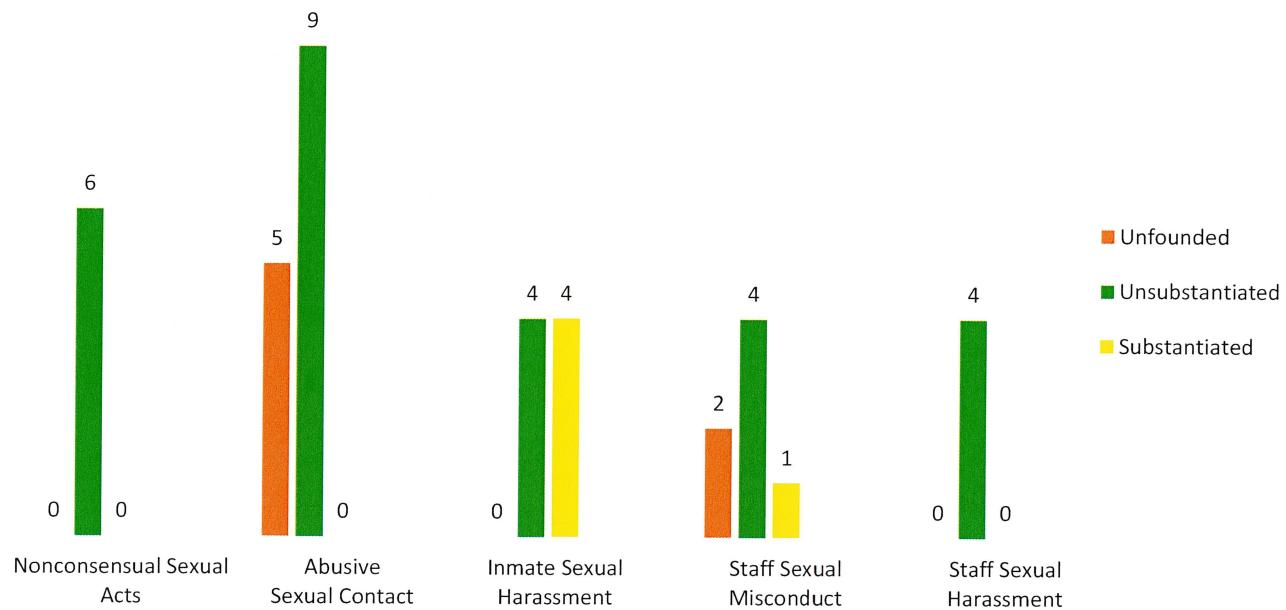
The following three (3) graphs represent a comparison of reported incidents of sexual abuse and sexual harassment from 2022, 2023 and 2024 by final disposition.

2022 PREA Allegations Outcomes

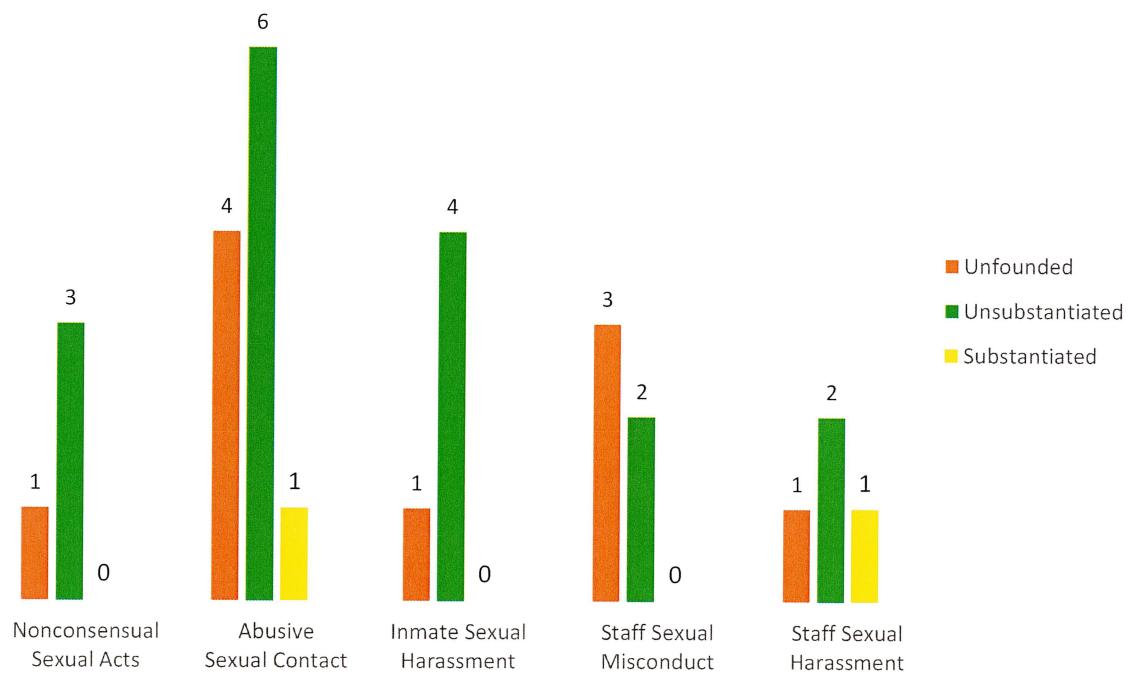


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2023 PREA Allegations Outcomes



2024 PREA Allegations Outcomes



2024 Substantiated Incidents

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There were (2) substantiated allegations in 2024. The incidents involved one (1) volunteer, and one (1) inmate. There were no identified patterns of abuse regarding location or inmate identifiers.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement Inmates (ICE)

In 2024, there were no ICE detainees involved in PREA-related allegations.

Ongoing Efforts

Sexual Abuse Incident Reviews:

The Orange County Corrections Department conducts Incident Reviews on all substantiated or unsubstantiated investigations regarding inmate sexual abuse or staff sexual misconduct, as required by PREA Standard 115.86. These reviews are conducted by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of the appropriate PREA Compliance Manager (Facility Captain), a line supervisor, an Internal Affairs Investigator, Health Services staff and the PREA Coordinator. This review team evaluates the circumstances of each incident and makes recommendations for changes 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 the monitoring technology; and determines if there were physical barriers in the area that enabled the abuse. The Sexual Abuse Incident reviews that were conducted in 2024, did not indicate patterns or motivations involving abuse. In addition, staffing and monitoring technology were deemed to be both appropriate and adequate.

Risk Assessment and Screening:

The Department continues to review and enhance the risk assessment process of identifying potentially vulnerable and potentially aggressive inmates in order to keep them separate in general population. The screening process will continue to be monitored so improvements can be made as necessary. This will ensure the information is utilized to keep inmates at high risk of being sexually victimized separated from those at high risk of being sexually abusive, in accordance with the PREA Standards.

Training and Education:

Training and education are critical components to the prevention of sexual abuse. A computer-based training on PREA is mandatory for all staff to complete on an annual basis and includes information on the Department's zero tolerance policy and staff's responsibilities regarding the prevention, detection, reporting, and response to sexual abuse and sexual harassment. An overview of this information is also provided in the New Employee Orientation, which is mandatory for all newly hired staff. 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 Department.

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The PREA Coordinator and designated Department staff completed PREA training courses to further educate Department personnel on their roles and responsibilities in relation to PREA compliance.

Improvements and Policy Development:

The Department is undergoing a capital improvement project involving camera and software upgrades. These upgrades will improve camera clarity while monitoring and ensuring inmate dignity via privacy masking throughout the facilities.

The Department continues to focus on policy development and enhancement of procedures for protecting inmates in our custody from sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

Goals and Objectives:

The Orange County Corrections Department will continue to identify opportunities to provide additional training and education to ensure staff understand their role in protecting inmates from sexual abuse and sexual harassment. In addition, the Department will remain dedicated to finding ways to enhance our efforts in providing a safe correctional system for inmates committed to our custody.

Department of Justice PREA Audit

The Department successfully completed its third Department of Justice PREA Audit in September 2023. All standards were successfully met with two (2) standards exceeded.

Conclusion

In an effort to maintain compliance with the requirements established by the Department of Justice, the Orange County Corrections Department remains firmly committed to adhering to the PREA Standards and making necessary adjustments on a continuous basis.



Louis A. Quiñones, Jr.
Chief of Corrections
Orange County Corrections Department



Date

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Attachment A

Sexual Abuse Definitions

Allegations of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment: For the purposes of reporting allegations and outcomes, Department of Justice terminology is used to define the below categories:

Abusive Sexual Contact: Sexual contact of any person without his or her consent, or of a person who is unable to consent or refuse; and intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person. Exclude Incidents in which the contact was incidental to a physical altercation.

Inmate Sexual Harassment: Repeated and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal comments, gestures, or actions of a derogatory or offensive sexual nature by one inmate directed toward another.

Nonconsensual Sexual Acts: Sexual contact of any person without his or her consent, or of a person who is unable to consent or refuse; and contact between the penis and the vulva or the penis and the anus including penetration, however slight; or contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, or anus; or penetration of the annual or genital opening of another person, however slight, by a hand, finger, object, or other instrument.

Staff Sexual Harassment: Repeated verbal statements, comments or gestures of a sexual nature to an inmate by an employee, volunteer, contractor, official visitor, or other agency representative (exclude family, friends, or other visitor). Include: Demeaning references to gender; or sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing; or repeated profane or obscene language or gestures.

Staff Sexual Misconduct: Any behavior or act of a sexual nature directed toward an inmate by an employee, volunteer, contractor, official visitor or other agency representative (exclude family, friends or other visitors.) Sexual relationships of a romantic nature between staff and inmates are included in this definition. Consensual or nonconsensual sexual acts include intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks that is unrelated to official duties or with the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire; or completed, attempted, threatened, or requested sexual acts; or occurrences of indecent exposure, invasion of privacy, or staff voyeurism for reasons unrelated to official duties or for sexual gratification.