

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)

Passed in 2003, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) is the first federal civil statute focused specifically on addressing sexual violence in juvenile facilities. PREA established the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission, which held hearings about sexual misconduct in custody, issued reports on the problem of sexual victimization in secure facilities, and proposed standards for the prevention, detection, and response to sexual misconduct in criminal and juvenile justice settings. The law provided for data collection, technical assistance, and periodic reviews of facilities with high and low rates of victimization.

All juvenile facilities covered under the PREA standards must be audited at least every three years to be considered compliant with the PREA standards. Audits will be conducted using an instrument developed by the PREA Resource Center in conjunction with the Department of Justice. The Youth Center was audited in the spring of 2014. The successful audit resulted in the Youth Center becoming the first PREA certified secure detention center in the state of Pennsylvania. In 2017, the Youth Center underwent our second PREA audit and received a 100% compliance score.

The Youth Center has zero tolerance for any form of sexual abuse of youth under BCYC jurisdiction. Our policies establish standards in the area of prevention, detection and response to such matters. Our policies also address the screening and dorm assignment procedures for youth who may be potential victims or perpetrators of sexual abuse. Each youth is made aware of their rights under PREA during a review of the resident rights form at the time of admission.

During 2019, the Youth Center dealt with three PREA related incidents. All three of the incidents were resident to resident. The incidents were handled internally through an administrative review and did not rise to the level of requiring criminal investigation.