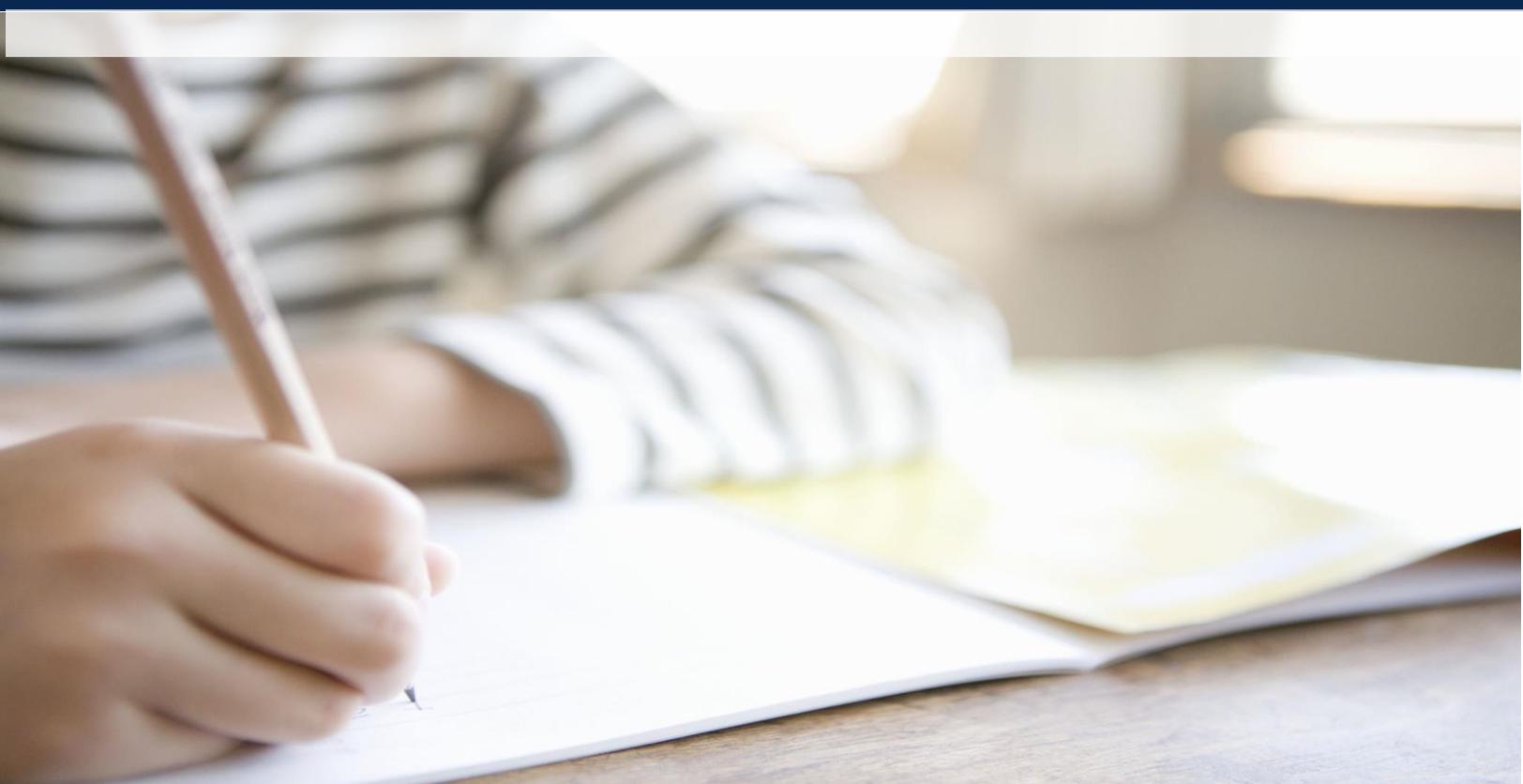# NATIONAL PREA RESOURCE CENTER

PREA Project Planning Guide

APRIL 2021

PREA Project Planning Guide

Introduction

Eliminating sexual abuse in confinement is a process that requires leadership, stakeholder collaboration, and deliberate and intentional planning. This guide is intended to support intentional planning by providing a step-by-step process to help plan a project related to implementing the PREA Standards within an agency or facility. It will help identify the goal and objectives for a PREA project plan and support efforts to successfully launch a project related to PREA compliance.

Please note: This guide is intended to be used by any staff person who works for an agency or a facility that wants to implement the PREA Standards. From PREA Coordinators to wardens to facility administrators, this guide can provide a variety of agency staff with a foundation for planning PREA compliance efforts. Remember: PREA-related projects do not just belong to the PREA Coordinator or PREA Compliance Manager; rather, successful PREA implementation requires input and participation from agency and facility leadership, mental health and medical care providers, classification and security staff members, and others. In short, a multidisciplinary team approach is recommended for planning PREA-related projects.

How to use this guide

This planning guide will help agencies develop a project team and organize their planning work. The planning guide provides a seven-step process for developing a PREA project plan. Each chapter contains information to help the project team complete a step before moving on to the next step. Each step covers ideas and questions to consider, examples and samples, definitions and descriptions, and exercises and suggestions related to the purpose of that step.

This guide will help you create a strong foundation for a PREA project plan and will cover, in detail, the following components of project planning:

- o **Project's overarching goal:** The project's overarching goal is a statement of what the project aims to achieve. The overarching goal can be broad, like *preparing for a PREA audit*, or narrow such as *compliance with a specific standard*.

- o **Project team:** The success of the project will depend on assembling a strong project team that is responsible for completing activities and meeting objectives. Successful PREA projects require a multi-disciplinary team composed of individuals across the agency and facility, including leadership.

- o **Objectives:** Objectives are statements that describe the results needed to achieve the overarching goal. Generally, it takes completion of several objectives to reach a goal. Completing these objectives helps the project team monitor progress.

o **Activities:** Activities are a defined set of specific steps or actions to meet an objective, such as an event.

o **Tasks:** Tasks are discrete work units. They are the building blocks of activities.

o **Designated responsible individual:** This individual either completes or ensures completion of an activity or task.

o **Timelines and due dates:** Timelines and due dates list scheduled activities and tasks, and their anticipated completion date.

o **Measuring success:** Evaluating completion of project objectives, activities, and tasks and achieving intended results are ways to measure success of a project.

o **Sustainability:** Sustainability is maintaining the progress and success of the project.

o **Partners:** Partners are members of your project team who will be doing the work.

o **Stakeholders:** Stakeholders may have opinions or thoughts on the process but may not necessarily be doing the work.

Step 1: Set the project's overarching goal

The cornerstone of an effective project plan is the **overarching goal, the overall purpose the project is trying to achieve.** Clearly stating the goal ensures that everyone working on the project understands the intended result. This will help the project team stay focused and provide a focal point for assessing all project activities.

Things to consider
- When brainstorming the goal, aim high.
- Goals are broad and ambitious, but attainable.
- Goals are measurable: meeting **objectives** indicates progress toward achieving the goal.
- What is the problem or issue the project is trying to solve through PREA implementation?
- What is the project striving to accomplish? What are the intended results?
- What specific PREA Standards are relevant to reaching this goal?

Examples of overarching goals:
- Increase sexual safety for inmates by establishing a way for inmates to report abuse or harassment to an entity that is not part of the agency.
- Improve facility response to sexual abuse by ensuring that transgender or intersex inmates have an opportunity to safely express their gender identity and have views about their own safety considered.

Exercise: identify reasons for selecting goal
To reach the overarching goal, the project team must understand and agree on its aims and objectives. This will help ensure the team is focused on the same priorities and keep everyone focused on the goal.

Things to consider
- Why is this goal a priority?
- Is the project team in agreement about this issue being a priority?
- Are the reasons clear and consistent with the project goal?

Connect to the PREA Standards
- While considering the reasons for selecting the goal, focus on relevant standards and align the activities with the provisions of those standards.

Our team's overarching goal is:

Step 2: Identify the people who need to be involved

To carry out a successful PREA implementation project and reach the overarching goal, it is important to identify the appropriate staff members and partners (both internal and external) who will need to be part of the project team. The most successful project teams will be multidisciplinary and include participation from every agency or organization necessary to reaching the goal. This may include local advocacy groups, staff from other units within the agency, or representatives from other parts of the local criminal justice system. Including a range of individuals in the project planning process will increase the facility's buy-in to implement the PREA Standards.

Things to consider
- Who will be doing the work?
- Who will be partners? Who will be stakeholders?
- Who will be a member of the project team?
- What skills and experience are needed to reach the goal?
- What skills and experience do members bring to the project team?
- *Let folks own their work.* When someone is assigned an activity, make sure they understand how their role is critical to the success of the project. Empowering people to take ownership of their work leads to better outcomes.

Possible team members
- Facility director
- PREA Compliance Manager
- Security supervisor
- Program managers
- Support staff
- Representative from a local advocacy group

The members of our team are:

Step 3: Describe how to reach the project's goal

After setting the goal, identifying the reasons behind the goal, and choosing project team members, the team will need to strategize how to reach their goal. This is, arguably, the most important part of the project plan; the project team should expect to spend a fair amount of time on this step and on describing how to reach the project goal.

The project plan describes how the team will reach its goal by first identifying objectives, then activities, tasks, time frames, who will complete the work, and the resources required to meet the objectives. The plan should include methods to measure success and strategies to sustain the project's achievements, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this guide.

Objectives

An objective is a *detailed statement that describes a specific strategy to achieve the overarching goal.* The project team will need to identify and achieve multiple objectives to reach the overarching goal. These objectives should be *specific, measurable, actionable or attainable, resourced, relevant, and timebound[1];* and completing them must help to reach the overarching goal.

Things to consider
- ***SPECIFIC:*** Objectives are narrower than the overarching goal and are clearly defined, identified, and understood by everyone.
- ***MEASURABLE:*** Objectives must be measurable; therefore, the project team should monitor progress toward the objective, and identify whether they have achieved the intended result. Additionally, measuring progress can identify challenges or barriers to meeting objectives and methods, helping to overcome challenges.
- ***ATTAINABLE and ACHIEVABLE***: Objectives represent a set of activities or actions that deliver identifiable results. *Are the objectives achievable with respect to scope, resources available, and timeline?*

---

[1] S.M.A.R.T. objectives from Drucker, P. F. (2007), *Management challenges for the 21st century, Routledge.*

- **RESOURCED:** Projects with access to resources are more likely to meet their objectives. *Does the project team have what it needs to successfully complete this objective? If there are barriers to accessing resources, how can the team overcome these barriers?*
- **RELEVANT:** Consider objectives that will have the biggest impact on meeting the project's goals with the resources available. *Do the selected objectives have the greatest and most immediate impact on sexual safety at the facility?*
- **TIMEBOUND:** The project team should estimate how much time is needed to complete an objective and identify the date of anticipated completion.

Connect to the PREA Standards
- Identify the PREA Standards that are related to the selected objectives and review the requirements within those standards. Discuss how the requirements will be reflected in the objectives and activities.
- Review the standards you identified as part of the overarching goal — are they still applicable? Do adjustments need to be made?

Example objectives
- Objective #1: Implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for transgender and intersex inmates within 12 months.
- Objective #2: Identify and make operational adjustments to ensure learning opportunities for facility staff to help increase their PREA knowledge, especially around issues related to transgender and intersex inmates.

Example: partial project plan

Objective #1: *Implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for transgender and intersex inmates by the end of 2021.*				
Activities	**DRI**	**Target date**	**Approval**	**Resources**

● **Activity 1**
Tasks:
    a. Task 1
    b. Task 2				

Identifying activities and tasks

Once the project team has described the project objectives, the team will need to identify the specific activities that must be completed to meet each objective, and the tasks to complete the activity.

Note: In some project planning methodology, activities are smaller components of tasks or the terms are used interchangeably. For this planning guide, activities are defined as: a set of specific steps or actions to meet an objective, such as an event. Tasks are discrete work units and are the building blocks of activities*.*

For example, in the guide's sample project plan, activity #1: *"Review current facility policy and practice to identify areas where protections for transgender and intersex inmates can be improved."* This activity is tied to objective #1: *"Implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for*

transgender and intersex inmates by the end of 2021.” This activity also helps to achieve objective #2: *“Identify and make operational adjustments to ensure learning opportunities for facility staff to increase their PREA knowledge, especially around issues related to transgender and intersex inmates.”* Therefore, the project plan should reflect when activities are part of multiple objectives.

Activities may run consecutively, sequentially, and/or concurrently; therefore, it is important to consider which activities are dependent on others and determine which activities may occur on their own and note this in the project plan. The more specific and detailed the activities and tasks are, the more prepared the project team will be to implement the plan and monitor its progress.

Things to consider
- Activity descriptions must be specific and provide enough information to complete the activity.
- Who will complete the tasks under each activity?
- Will more than one person complete tasks?
- Who will have overall responsibility for ensuring that each activity is completed as planned? Who will help or consult?
- Will the activity require approvals, and is there a plan and timeline for that?
- Are the activities achievable with respect to scope, resources available, and timeline?
- Will completing these activities contribute to meeting the objectives?

Example: partial project plan

Objective #1: *Implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for transgender and intersex inmates by the end of 2021.*				
Activities	**DRI**	**Target date**	**Approval**	**Resources**
Review current facility policy and practice to identify areas where protections for transgender and intersex inmates can be improved. Task 1: Assemble a facility-level team to review policy and practice related to transgender and intersex inmates. Task 2: Review PREA Standards and provisions relevant to transgender and intersex inmates.				

Assigning activities and tasks

In addition to articulating the specific activities for each objective and the tasks needed to complete each activity, the project plan should identify which individual or group of individuals will be responsible for completing each activity. In some cases, tasks may be completed by members of the project team or may involve people external to the team or even the agency. In addition, consider each team member's role on the team. There may be core team members who stay aboard for the length of the project, and others who participate for shorter periods, or until a particular segment of the plan is completed.

Every activity listed on the project plan should be assigned to a **designated responsible individual (DRI)** who is ultimately responsible for completing the activity or ensuring the activity is completed. The project plan should clearly indicate who will complete each activity and relevant tasks.

The project plan should indicate if any project activity or tasks require **approval.** Approvals may be needed from within the agency or facility or may be external. For example, the city or county attorney may need to sign off on a new policy, or the city council or county commissioner may need to approve an expenditure.

As with many aspects of PREA work, completing activities and meeting objectives depends on collaboration. In some cases, more than one team member may be completing parts of the project. In those cases, the project plan should identify an individual who will serve as the point person who will report on and monitor the completion of the activity.

Things to consider
- Although there may be one person responsible for leading a project, such as a PREA compliance manager, successful project planning incorporates individuals from across the facility. *Planning a training? Include your training manager. Revising security plans? Include your facility's security manager.*
- Assign activities and tasks based on the experience and interests of the project team members.
- *Assess staff availability*. Be realistic about staff resources early in project planning. This can help the project team establish the pace of the project and allocate appropriate time to activities.

Example: partial project plan

Objective #1: *Implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for transgender and intersex inmates by the end of 2021.*				
Activities	**DRI**	**Target date**	**Approval**	**Resources**
Review current facility policy and practice to identify areas where protections for transgender and intersex inmates can be improved. Task 1: Assemble a facility-level team to review policy and practice related to transgender and intersex inmates. Task 2: Review PREA Standards and provisions relevant to transgender and intersex inmates.	Sgt. Jones		Policy council	

Creating a project timeline and target due dates

When developing the project plan timeline, it is critical to consider how much time will be needed to complete each individual activity. Consider factors that are outside of your control and that could slow down progress on the project. For instance, gaining approval to complete certain activities may take several weeks to go through the proper channels. Be sure to include those items early in the timeline to allow for their completion (e.g., requesting approval for the purchase of equipment or materials.)

Things to consider
- Be realistic about the project team's capacity to complete activities.
- Consider outside events that can impact the project timeline (i.e., other scheduled events, training, or initiatives that could take priority).
- Identify a *target date* for each activity. This will help to establish the project timeline, ensure that activities are being completed on time, and serve as an indicator that the project may need more time and resources if it is failing to meet target dates.

Example: partial project plan

Objective #1: *Implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for transgender and intersex inmates by the end of 2021.*				
Activities	DRI	Target date	Approval	Resources
Review current facility policy and practice to identify areas where protections for transgender and intersex inmates can be improved. Task 1: Assemble a facility-level team to review policy and practice related to transgender and intersex inmates. Task 2: Review PREA Standards and provisions relevant to transgender and intersex inmates.	Sgt. Jones	2/23/21	Yes, from director	Staff time

Step 4: Overcome barriers or challenges

Every project plan will encounter barriers or challenges to getting the plan completed. This step focuses on identifying barriers or challenges that may inhibit the project team from completing tasks and activities. During this time, the project team should assess the facility's progress in implementing the PREA Standards and where it has room to grow. An assessment can help determine the strengths of the project team and determine realistic progress and identify high reaching but achievable goals.

Barriers and challenges

Barriers and challenges can crop-up at any time, so it is important to be alert throughout the length of your project. Identifying challenges and barriers and then overcoming these challenges is an ongoing process. The project team should spend time identifying barriers or challenges they may face in meeting objectives and the overarching goal. Once identified, the project team should spend time thinking about ways to overcome those barriers and challenges.

Things to consider
- What might keep us from success (meeting the goal)?
- Do we anticipate pushback or resistance from staff or others?
- What strategies can we use to counter the resistance?
- What resources do we need to achieve the goal?
- What existing resources can we leverage to meet the goal?

- Identifying barriers or challenges and methods to overcome them may impact the project plan timelines — and that's okay. Taking time to envision obstacles can increase the project's effectiveness and efficiency.

We will overcome barriers and challenges by:
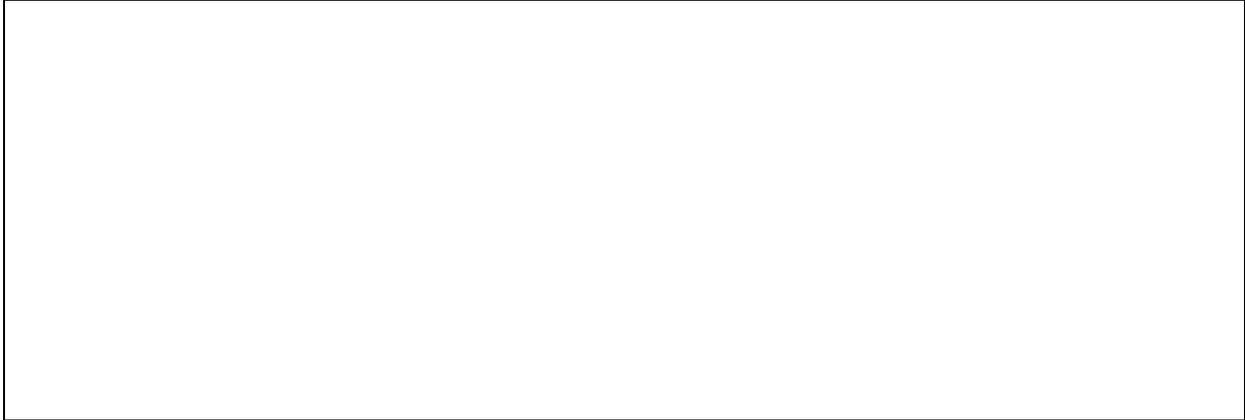
Step 5: Identify resources to achieve the project goal

Successful project planning requires the project team to identify resources needed to meet the project goal. When considering resources, identify which resources are available and which need to be acquired for the project. *Resources* is a large category that includes financial resources, but also includes:

Access to existing materials
Having access to and knowledge of what is currently in place at your agency or facility will better prepare the project team for PREA implementation; this can include materials such as current policies and procedures or training curriculums.

Physical space
Initiating a new project may require additional physical space for the project team to meet, or existing space may need to be repurposed. Physical space considerations should include space to hold meetings and train staff, or a reconfiguration to ensure confidentiality or safely house vulnerable inmates.

Staffing capacity
A new project will not only require the project team to take on additional responsibilities or tasks, but may also impact staffing at all levels, even of staff who are not directly involved in project implementation. Additional staff time may be required to participate in new training, or to ensure that new policies and procedures are correctly implemented and institutionalized.

Technology
The PREA project may require the use of new or enhanced technology. It is important to consider what equipment, devices, or software will be needed to complete the project.

Subject matter expertise and knowledge of promising practices
It is critical to learn from the work of others and to understand what information is already out there. Researching the project focus and acquainting yourself with current and reliable information can ensure that you are not "reinventing the wheel." The PREA Resource Center website has several resources to assist you with this.

Intangibles
Intangible resources are those that are important but more difficult to measure. They can include things such as the support of agency leadership, an understanding of facility culture, and history of other initiatives related to PREA implementation. Consider these as you plan and implement the project, and include staff with institutional knowledge or subject matter expertise.

Financial resources
A successful PREA project requires a detailed budget that describes how the project team will spend money on the project. The more detailed the budget, the better the project team will anticipate expenses. Some examples of costs that could be included in the project budget are:

- **Personnel and fringe**: *What staffing resources are needed for this project?* Even if some activities will only require internal staff resources, considering how much time a staff person may devote to an activity can help to accurately budget for personnel and ensure that the project has enough staffing to complete the project.

- **Travel**: *Is there travel associated with this activity?*
  A good way to budget for travel is to consider how many days of travel are required, the distance traveled, and if there are other expenses incurred. In the travel budget category, it is best to break down travel by activity and then by items such as mileage, hotel, airfare, car rental, and per diem.

- **Equipment**: *What equipment will be needed to meet the project goal?*

- **Supplies**: *Will the project team need any supplies to complete an activity?*
  This can include things like paper for printing a curriculum or posters.

- **Consultants**: *How many hours will it take consultants to complete their work? What is the estimated time for completion? What is the hourly rate? Will there be travel involved?* Reviewing these details will ensure the appropriate allocation of resources for the use of consultants.

- **Other items**: These are items that do not fall into any other budget categories but are an identified project expense, such as monthly software subscriptions, rent, or phone services.

Things to consider
- Be sure the project team can articulate more than just the financial resources required for a successful PREA project.
- Identify resources that must be funded versus those that are available at no cost (in the example below, resources having budgetary impacts are in bold).

- Complete an overall budget reflection. *Are priorities reflected in the budget?*
- Budgets should account for the duration of the project and may be broken down by years, 6 or 12-month spans, or project phases.

Example: partial project plan

Objective #1: *Implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for transgender and intersex inmates by the end of 2021.*				
Activities	**DRI**	**Target date**	**Approval**	**Resources**
Review current facility policy and practice to identify areas where protections for transgender and intersex inmates can be improved. Task 1: Assemble a facility-level team to review policy and practice related to transgender and intersex inmates. Task 2: Review PREA Standards and provisions relevant to transgender and intersex inmates.	Sgt. Jones	2/23/21	Yes, from director	**Staff time**; Policies and procedures; *PREA Standards in Focus;* Examples of innovative facility policies related to transgender and intersex inmates

Step 6: Define and measure success

Monitoring is the most basic way to measure a project's progress, and is an important part of reaching the overarching goal. The monitoring process should begin in the earliest stages of the project and continue until the overarching goal has been reached.

The project team should regularly discuss if progress toward objectives is helping the team meet the overarching goal. It may be necessary to adjust the project plan by rethinking tasks and activities, restating objectives, or modifying the overarching goal.

If tasks and activities are not completed, and objectives not achieved according to the established timeline, the project team will need to discuss the cause of the delay and work to remove it.

These discussion prompts can look like:

1. Are we seeing the results we hoped for as we complete activities and meet our objectives?

2. Although we completed our objectives and activities, did we meet our overarching goal? Did we see the change we intended to implement?

Using this guide's example, did *objective #1* — *"implement facility policies and procedures that ensure greater protections for transgender and intersex inmates by the end of 2021"* — lead to the overarching goal of "*improving facility response to sexual abuse by ensuring that transgender or intersex inmates have a chance to express and have considered their views about their own safety?"*

Things to consider
- *Start where you are*. Monitoring progress does not need to be overly complex. Articulating how to monitor success and how to discuss the project outcome is "half the battle," and any process for measuring success is helpful.
- *Reflect on how objectives and related activities and tasks directly connect to the overarching goal of the project*. This helps avoid completing objectives and activities without clearly articulating how they contribute to reaching the overarching goal.
- *Be patient and recognize progress*. Even with careful planning, projects will encounter unforeseen delays. Remember, completing tasks and activities and meeting objectives shows progress, and these are intermediate successes.
- *The end game.* How will we know when we have succeeded? Has reaching the overarching goal addressed the reasons this goal was set?

Connect to the PREA Standards
- Remember: The success of the PREA project is not necessarily measured by passing a PREA audit; any progress toward increased PREA compliance can be considered a success.

We will measure success by:

Step 7: Sustaining the PREA project

While drafting and finalizing the project plan, the project team should discuss how to sustain progress. This can be accomplished by sharing information about and outcomes from the PREA project, including facility-wide policies, procedures, and practices that incorporate PREA processes into daily operations, succession planning to continue the project, record-keeping, and written training curriculums.

Things to consider
- *How to maintain:*
  - Staffing positions that were created
  - New policies implemented
  - Practices that evolved
  - Trainings that were developed and implemented
  - New community relationships built
  - Equipment installed
- How to expand or build on the completed work?
- How to maintain institutional knowledge during staff and leadership changes?

- How can the project team maintain momentum from this project?

Putting it all together

By the end of this guide, you should have assembled a strong project team and a solid project plan. Now it is time for the project team to implement the PREA project plan. Remember to refer to this guide for planning future PREA projects.