



U.S. Department of Justice

Washington, D.C. 20530

March 5, 2015

Dear Governor:

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed in 2003 with unanimous support from both parties in Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush. Eliminating prison rape remains a high priority of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) because sexual abuse is a crime, and should not be the punishment for a crime. The National PREA Standards, which address both sexual abuse and sexual harassment and are found at 28 C.F.R. Part 115, took effect on August 20, 2012, and apply to DOJ, State, and local confinement facilities (including adult prisons and jails, juvenile facilities, lockups, and community confinement facilities). To assist States and localities with the implementation of the National PREA Standards, DOJ, through the Bureau of Justice Assistance, funded the National PREA Resource Center to provide training and technical assistance, as well as to serve as a single-stop resource for contemporary research and tools for those in the field working to come into compliance with the standards.

We are pleased to report that PREA implementation activities are underway across the nation, and there have been PREA audits conducted in most states. By March 2015, we anticipate there will be more than 600 DOJ-certified PREA auditors, and DOJ, through the PREA Resource Center, will conduct additional auditor trainings in 2015.

As you may know, PREA contains mandates that may affect grant funding your State receives from DOJ in Fiscal Year 2015. The statute provides that, if a Governor is not able to certify to DOJ that the State is in full compliance with the National PREA Standards, the Governor has the option to submit an assurance to DOJ that not less than five percent of certain DOJ grant funds will be used solely for the purpose of enabling the State to achieve and certify full compliance with the standards in future years. 42 U.S.C. § 15607(e)(2). If the Governor is not able to certify to DOJ that the State is in full compliance with the standards and elects not to submit an assurance to DOJ, the State will be subject to the loss of five percent of certain DOJ grant funds that it would otherwise receive.

Attached you will find a PREA Standards Certification form and a PREA Standards Assurance form. May 15, 2015 is the deadline for one of these two forms, signed by the Governor, to be received by the PREA Management Office, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 810 Seventh Street NW, Washington, D.C., 20531. Executed forms may be e-mailed to PREACompliance@usdoj.gov. If the PREA Management Office does not receive a signed copy of either form from you by May 15, 2015, your State will be subject to a loss of five percent of each of the FY 2015 covered grant funds referenced immediately below as required under 42 U.S.C. § 15607(e)(2).

In Fiscal Year 2015, there are three DOJ grant programs (or portions thereof) subject to this statutory provision. Two are administered by the Office of Justice Programs: (1) the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, and (2) the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Formula Grant Program. The third grant program is administered by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW): the STOP (Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program.

You should note that legal restrictions on the uses of OJJDP Formula Grant and STOP Grant funds may make them unavailable to the State for addressing certain areas of noncompliance with the PREA standards. If a State is in full compliance with the standards as they apply to the State's juvenile facilities, and out of compliance only with regard to adult facilities, it could not lawfully spend OJJDP Formula Grant funds to come into compliance. Because it would be impossible to use this money to come into compliance, the State would not be subject to the five-percent reduction in OJJDP Formula Grant funding. Likewise, STOP Grant funds are limited in that they cannot be used for new construction, even if that is necessary to bring a State into full compliance with the PREA standards. If a state is in full compliance except for a deficiency that requires new construction, it could not lawfully spend STOP Grant funding to come into compliance, and the State therefore would not be subject to the five percent reduction in STOP Grant funds. The PREA Standards Assurance form requires you to indicate whether either or both of these circumstances apply to your State.

A Governor's PREA Certification of full compliance with the National PREA Standards "shall apply to all facilities in the State under the operational control of the State's executive branch, including facilities operated by private entities on behalf of the State's executive branch." 28 C.F.R. § 115.501(b). In determining whether the State is in full compliance, "the Governor shall consider the results of the most recent agency audits." 28 C.F.R. § 115.501(a).

DOJ requests that, in addition to submitting either a signed Certification or Assurance form by May 15, 2015, each Governor also provide a list of confinement facilities in their state that are considered to be under the operational control of the State's executive branch, including facilities operated by private entities on behalf of the State's executive branch. The list should be categorized by one of the four confinement facility types included in the National PREA Standards, which include jails and prisons, community confinement facilities, lockups, and juvenile facilities. For more information about the Certification and Assurance, including the meaning of "operational control," please see the FAQ page of the PREA Resource Center website at www.prearesourcecenter.org/faq.

The National PREA Standards provide that all confinement facilities subject to the standards must be audited by a DOJ-certified auditor at least once every three years, with one-third of each facility type operated by an agency, or private organization on behalf of an agency, to be audited each year. The first audit cycle began on August 20, 2013. DOJ intends audits to be a primary, but not the only, factor in determining whether a State is in full compliance. Neither the PREA statute nor the National PREA Standards restrict the sources of information that Governors may use in deciding whether to certify whether a State is in full compliance with the National PREA Standards.

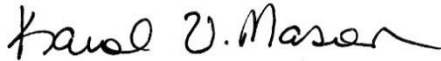
If you have any questions concerning PREA implementation or the attached forms, please send inquiries to the PREA Management Office at PREACompliance@usdoj.gov. Requests for PREA implementation training or technical assistance may be directed to the PREA Resource Center at www.prearesourcecenter.org/training-technical-assistance/request-for-assistance.

As described above, the following is a list of the requested materials to be submitted by **May 15, 2015**:

- PREA Standards Certification form or PREA Standards Assurance form
- List of confinement facilities under the operational control of the State's executive branch

DOJ looks forward to continuing to collaborate with you as we work together to implement the National PREA Standards and combat sexual abuse in confinement facilities. Thank you for your continued commitment to this important issue, and for your efforts in your state to promote and support implementation of the standards.

Sincerely,



Karol Mason
Assistant Attorney General
Office of Justice Programs



Bea Hanson
Principal Deputy Director
Office on Violence Against Women

Attachment

cc: State Administering Authorities for OJP and OVW grant programs

Governors' Criminal Justice Policy Advisors

Robert L. Listenbee
Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Denise E. O'Donnell
Director
Bureau of Justice Assistance