

Colorado Jail Association PREA Survey Results



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For More Information

Colorado Jail Association (CJA) members can obtain additional project resources – including a PREA policy template, staff training materials, and inmate education curricula – on the CJA website. Non-members can contact JDI directly for these materials.

Just Detention International is a health and human rights organization that works to end sexual abuse in all forms of detention. For more information on this project or on the CJA survey, contact Just Detention International at info@justdetention.org or (213) 384-1400.

This document summarizes the findings from a survey that was offered to Colorado Jail Association (CJA) members in the fall of 2013. The purpose of the survey was to understand the needs and challenges of Colorado jail administrators in implementing comprehensive strategies to prevent and respond to sexual abuse in their facilities. Survey responses were anonymous.

This survey was conducted as part of a PREA demonstration project with Lincoln County Jail Administrator and CJA Vice President Capt. Clint Tweden and Pitkin County Jail Administrator Don Bird, in partnership with Just Detention International.

To view the survey, visit: www.surveymonkey.com/s/PXZTYVT.

Background Information

- Twenty-two jail administrators from throughout Colorado participated in the survey.
- The majority of respondents have been a jail administrator for five or more years.
- The vast majority of administrators operate one jail (19 out of 22).
- Nearly half of the administrators work in a small jail (10 out of 22); one-third work in a medium-sized jail (8 out of 22). Only three administrators operate large jails.
- More than two-thirds of jail administrators work in a rural jail (15 out of 22); four work in a suburban jail, and three work in an urban jail.

Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Information

- 1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you PRIORITIZE sexual abuse prevention and response in your jail(s)? 1 = lowest priority and 10 = the highest:**
 - All jail administrators responded to this question.
 - Half of the jail administrators rated sexual abuse prevention and response an eight or above, indicating this is a high priority (13 out of 22).
 - Five of the respondents rated sexual abuse prevention and response a four or below, indicating that it is a fairly low priority.
 - The jail administrators provided a variety of explanations for their responses:
 - Three cited the importance of prevention and training in their efforts to implement PREA.
 - Three wrote that sexual abuse is not an issue in their jail or that it does not happen in their jail.
 - Two said that there is zero tolerance for sexual abuse, one mentioned that this is a priority because inmates should be safe in custody, and another said this was a top priority because there was a previous sexual assault with a staff member in their jail.
- 2. From the following list of topics, please select the three (3) areas that are MOST CHALLENGING for your jail to implement regarding sexual abuse prevention and response:**
 - Twenty one jail administrators responded to this question.

- Inmate orientation and education was the area most commonly identified as a concern (9 out of 21); closely followed by PREA Coordinator (8 out of 21).
- Inmate reporting and screening of inmates were primary concerns of more than a quarter of the respondents (6 out of 21 and 5 out of 21, respectively).
- Third-party reporting, upgrades to facility and technology, procedures for reporting sexual abuse/sexual harassment, and medical and mental health services were all identified as challenges by 1 in 5 of the jail administrators (4 out of 21).
- Three jail administrators identified unannounced rounds and cross-gender viewing and searches/searches of transgender inmates as their primary challenges (3 out of 21).
- None of the respondents identified the following issues as their main challenges: zero tolerance policy, hiring and promotion practices, coordinated response to a report of an incident, immediate steps after receiving a report, investigation of incidents, or sanctions against sexual abusers.
- Reasons that were given for these challenges include:
 - Physical plant/space/housing issues (5 out of 21)
 - Budget issues (4 out of 21)
 - Staffing (3 out of 21)
 - Lack of training (1 out of 21)
 - Lack of qualified staff (1 out of 21)
 - Lack of mental health providers (1 out of 21)
 - Lack of support from the agency head (1 out of 21)

3. How would you describe your interactions or collaboration with OUTSIDE agencies to address sexual abuse within your jail?

- Twenty jail administrators responded to this question.
- Half of the respondents said that they had positive/strong interactions with outside agencies to address sexual abuse in their jail (10 out of 20). The majority of these respondents cited outside law enforcement agencies; very few mentioned victim advocacy groups (2 out of 20).
- One quarter of the respondents stated that they have minimal or no collaboration with outside agencies to address sexual abuse in their jail (5 out of 20). The most common reasons cited were that no outside agencies exist in their area or the jail does not need them.
- One wrote that the Colorado Department of Corrections provides major support to address sexual abuse. Another shared that the jail recently had their first coordinated response meeting to build a stronger collaboration with outside agencies.

4. What ADDITIONAL RESOURCES OR INFORMATION would assist your jail to implement sexual abuse prevention and response strategies?

- Twenty one jail administrators responded to this question.
- The vast majority requested a PREA policy template (12 out of 21).

- Nearly one third of respondents identified inmate education materials as a needed resource (6 out of 21); a few specifically requested inmate education videos.
- Three jail administrators asked for staff training materials; one specifically requested video or web-based training.
- Two respondents indicated that additional funding or resources would assist them.
- One jail administrator asked for any additional help or resources and another said that no help was needed since they have everything they need to address sexual abuse.

5. What are your jail's greatest ASSETS OR STRENGTHS when it comes to addressing sexual abuse against inmates?

- Twenty one jail administrators responded to this question.
- The vast majority of respondents cited a respectful jail environment and strong staff as their greatest assets in addressing sexual abuse (14 out of 21). Examples provided include: experienced staff, strong rules and follow-through, and operating a fair, firm, and consistent jail.
- One third of respondents claimed that the small size of the jail and/or a low inmate population were their greatest strengths in addressing sexual abuse (7 out of 21). Many respondents mentioned that the small size allows for greater communication with – and understanding of – the inmates.
- Strong collaboration with outside agencies was identified as the agency's greatest strength by five of the jail administrators. The most commonly cited community partners were victim advocates and mental health agencies.
- Two jail administrators responded that strong supervision and monitoring are their greatest assets to address sexual abuse.
- Other strengths that were identified by respondents include: open communication, multiple reporting methods, openness to new ideas/policies, the classification system, and high expectations of protecting inmates from all forms of abuse.

6. Additional comments:

- Three jail administrators provided additional comments. The responses include:
 - "This is another case of regular issues for some and rare for others creating more headaches for all."
 - "This is an important issue so the more we know the safer we can make the work environment and the safer the inmates are going to be."
 - "Need to convince the County Sheriffs that at a minimum, PREA is good corrections."