

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



PRESS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AWARDED GRANT TO IMPLEMENT NATIONAL PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA) STANDARDS

Washington, D.C. — The D.C. Department of Corrections (DCDOC) has been awarded a \$600,000 federal grant by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, to implement a national demonstration project that will establish a “zero tolerance” culture for sexual assaults in correctional facilities. The project partners with the D.C. Office of Justice Grants Administration and Victim Services (JGA/OVS) and follows the May 2012 adoption of national standards by the U.S. Attorney General for the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). PREA was enacted by Congress to address sexual abuse in correctional institutions throughout the United States. It applies to all public and private institutions that house adult or juvenile offenders and addresses both inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse and staff sexual misconduct.

Under the leadership of DCDOC Director Tom Faust, the Department is committed to further advancing the intent of PREA in the areas of recognizing, preventing, reporting, investigating and adjudicating incidents of sexual abuse, sexual assault or sexual misconduct against inmates who are confined in DCDOC facilities.

According to Director Faust, “while there is currently a zero tolerance standard for inmate sexual assaults and sexual misconduct within DCDOC facilities, we must continue our commitment to enhanced sexual safety at all levels.” Director Faust states that “this unique opportunity enables DCDOC to work with both local and federal law enforcement and other agencies across the District to enhance safety and a PREA reporting culture to meet all PREA standards, and further improve data collection methods.”

In collaboration with The Moss Group (TMG), a D.C. based PREA national expert, DCDOC over the two year grant period will use the federal funds for comprehensive programming that involves a number of key elements including:

- Sexual safety assessments that look at existing policies and procedures and organizational culture
- Formalized offender education
- Strategic planning to promote compliance, increased sexual safety, and a reporting culture
- Development of an enhanced training curriculum that institutionalizes PREA protocols
- Development of a data collection and performance tracking system that supports informed decision making by DOC/PREA team leaders

DCDOC will also share lessons learned during the demonstration project to advance the intent of PREA standards nationally. Director Faust says that "the DCDOC team is elated to be partnering with TMG and fully expects to come out of this project prepared to move forward proactively with PREA compliance and become a national model for correctional facilities."

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