



Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) 2020 Annual Report

Winnebago County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff John Matz

Lt. Michael Lichtensteiger, PREA Coordinator

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing a safe, secure, and humane environment for persons requiring detention or supervision in the Winnebago County Jail. In support of these tenets, the Sheriff's Office strives to meet the safeguards afforded by the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003.

This report is a summary of the Agency's efforts to meet PREA compliance standards.



Purpose

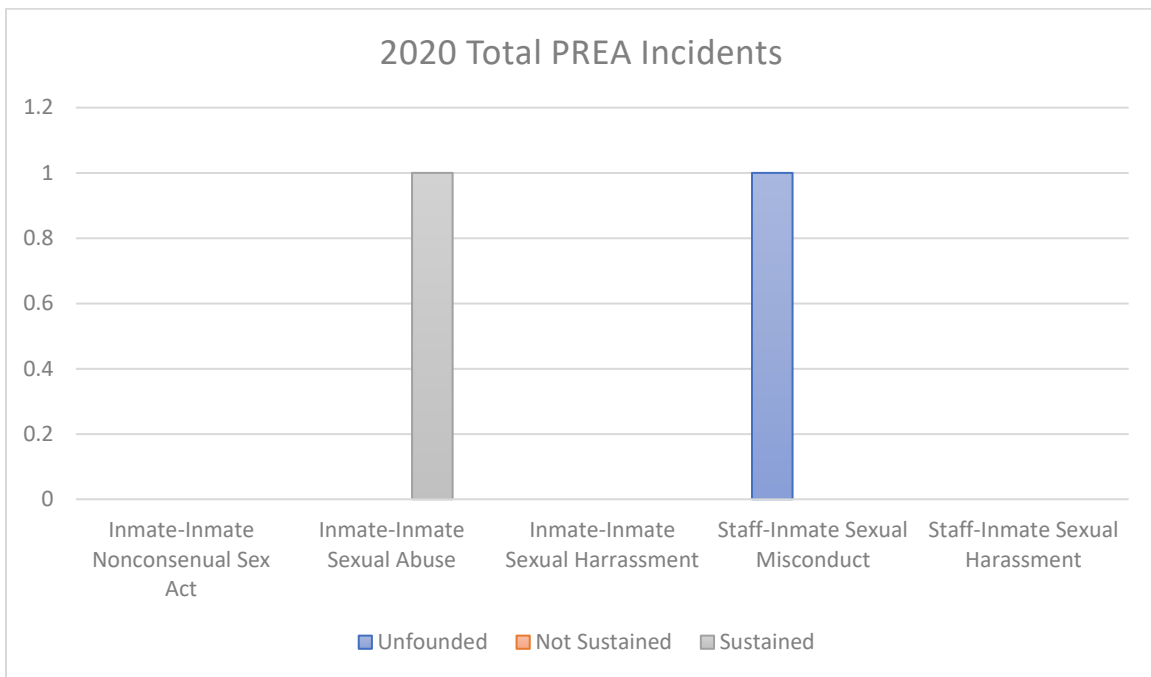
Pursuant to §115.88 and §115.89 of the US Department of Justice PREA standards, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office conducts an annual review to assess and improve the effectiveness of sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response policies, practices, and training. Specifically, the standards require the Agency to:

1. Annually review aggregate incident-based sexual abuse data in order to improve the effectiveness of sexual abuse prevention, detection and response policies, practices and training to include:
 - A. Identifying problem areas
 - B. Taking corrective action on an on-going basis
 - C. Preparing an annual report of its findings
2. Compare the current year's data and corrective actions with those from prior years, and provide an assessment of the agency's progress in addressing sexual abuse.
3. Publish the annual report of its findings and corrective actions on the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office website for the agency as a whole.

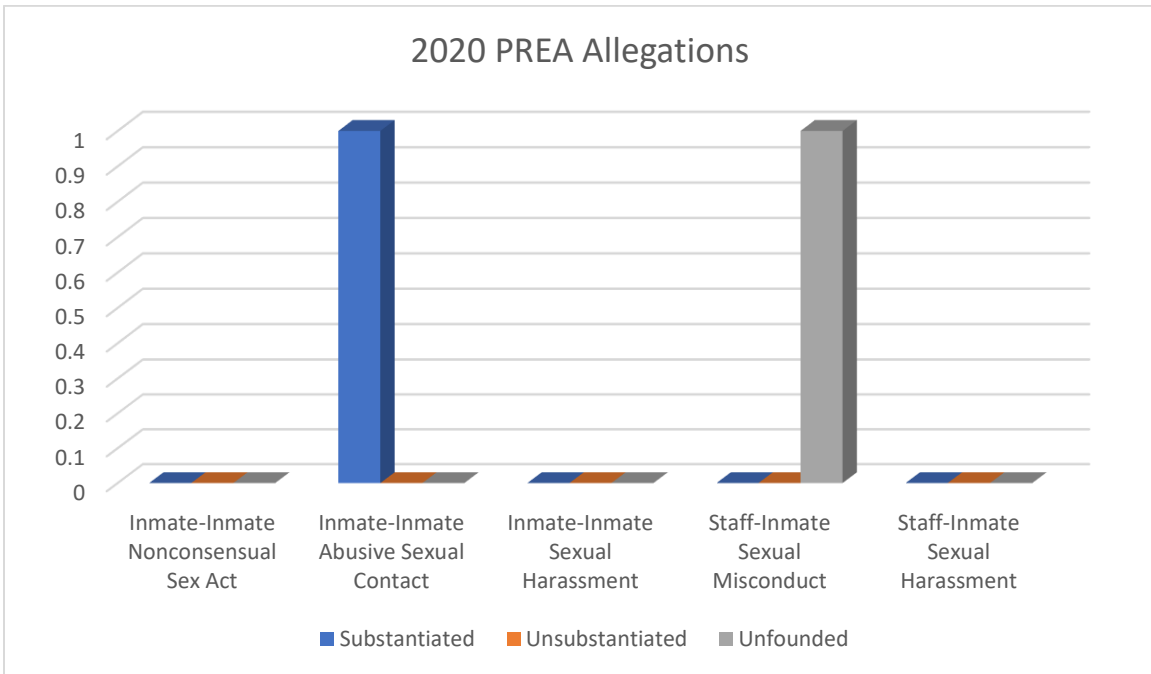
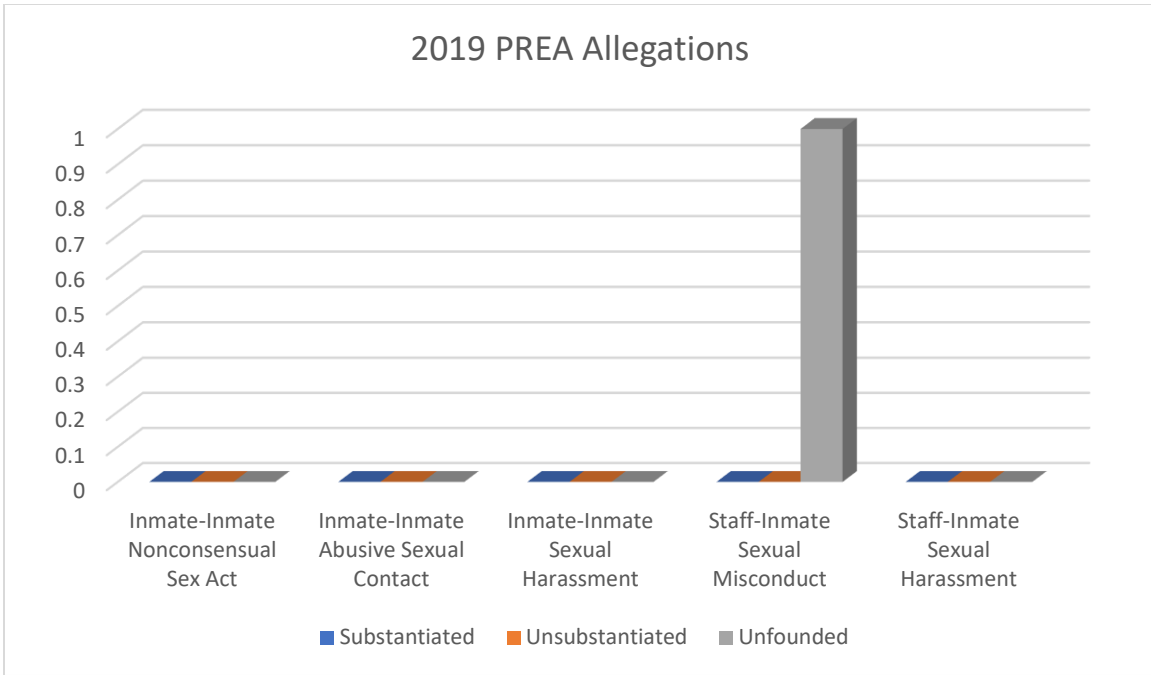
Aggregate Data

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office collects data from the investigations of sexual abuse/misconduct and sexual harassment. Data includes both inmate-on-inmate and staff-on-inmate reports. This section contains the aggregate data for the calendar year of 2020.

The following graph depicts a breakdown of the 2020 sexual abuse/misconduct and sexual harassment data by type; referencing both Inmate-Inmate and Staff-Inmate. This data includes all reported allegations in the Winnebago County Jail for 2020. A total of two allegations were reported during this time period. The Staff-Inmate sexual misconduct allegation was determined to be Unfounded and the Inmate-Inmate sexual abuse was determined to be Sustained.



The two following graphs represent a comparison between Calendar Year 2019 and Calendar Year 2020. These totals include all reports received irrespective of their case dispositions. In 2019 one incident was reported, and in 2020 there were two reported incidents.



Comparative Data Analysis

In 2020, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office proactively made changes to its security operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes were enacted to reduce the likelihood of infection to both inmates and staff, and to limit spread of the virus should a person become infected. New procedures required that all new intakes quarantine for a period of 14-days before entering general population. While under quarantine, inmates spent a short period each day out of their cells but remained isolated from others. From a statistical analysis standpoint, these changes did not affect the reporting rate of PREA allegations within the Winnebago County Jail.

The Sheriff's Office investigates all reported PREA allegations. In 2019, the one reported PREA allegation was unfounded. In 2020, one out of the two was found to be unfounded. The finding of unfounded requires either conclusive evidence that the allegation was false or conclusive evidence that the inmate who submitted the allegation was untruthful. The ability to clearly identify that an allegation is false is a credit to the investigative process and the diligence of our facility investigators. Notification to inmates regarding the outcome of the investigation is provided and helps reinforce that false accusations for the purposes of manipulation will not be tolerated.

Frequently, due to the lack of evidence, it is difficult for investigators to determine if an allegation of sexual abuse or sexual harassment has merit. The lack of available witnesses to either support or disprove allegations is not uncommon. Additionally, the location of the incident within the facility plays a significant role as some areas like showers, bathrooms, and inside individual cells are by design not captured by surveillance cameras. In these instances, the lack of evidence could certainly cause an investigator to render a finding of not sustained, when the accused outright denies the allegation. In 2019 and 2020, there were no cases that were classified as not sustained.

If the investigation proves that an allegation of abuse or harassment has occurred, the allegation is determined to be substantiated. In 2019 there were zero substantiated determinations and in 2020 there was one substantiated determination.

Following a comprehensive review, there were no indicators from the allegations reported in 2020 identifying any patterns of abuse specific to male or female inmates. Also, there were no indicators that abuse was occurring, or alleged to have occurred, in any specific areas of the facility. As a result, the Sheriff's Office has not identified the need to make any changes to current policy regarding the housing of inmates or deployment of staff and supervision.

Corrective Actions

The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office has a Sexual Abuse Incident Review Team that continuously monitors the safety of inmates by reviewing reported PREA incidents in the jail.

Each reported incident, regardless of the outcome, will be reviewed by the team to determine:

1. Whether the allegation indicates a need to change any policy or practice
2. Whether the incident was motivated by significant factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, or gang affiliation
3. Whether physical barriers in the location where the incident occurred were a factor
4. Adequacy of staffing levels at the time of the incident
5. Whether monitoring technology should be deployed or augmented in the involved area

These reviews will allow the Sheriff's Office to act swiftly and make any necessary changes to ensure the safety of all inmates. Agency leadership is committed to on-going monitoring and will take the corrective action needed in order to achieve full PREA compliance.

The Sheriff's Office has not identified any patterns of allegations or behavior based on the reports of abuse in 2020. Therefore, no changes were made regarding the housing of inmates or deployment of staff and supervision.

In April 2021, the Agency completed an upgrade to the Winnebago County Jail's video monitoring system. This robust platform provides the best opportunity to supplement direct monitoring of inmates housed within the facility by correctional deputies. Because video monitoring enhances the safety for all inmates and staff, the Sheriff's Office has purchased body cameras for all correctional deputies to wear and record any inmate contact. By the end of 2021, all deputies and supervisors in the facility will be required to wear a body camera throughout their assigned shift.

The Sheriff's Office will continue to provide annual training for all staff, volunteers, and contractors to reinforce the Agency's commitment to the prevention, detection, and response to allegations of sexual abuse.