



# Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003

## Sexual Abuse Annual Report 2023-2024

## Introduction

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NCDAC employees supervise offenders in institutions, community confinement facilities, and in communities for those on probation, parole, and post release. The vision of the agency is that all divisions of the Department of Adult Correction will work collaboratively to create a safer North Carolina. The core values to be successful in meeting this mission and vision are Integrity, Transparency, and Professionalism.

“Our mission is to **ensure public safety through protection, innovation, and rehabilitation**, and our strategic plan supports that mission through goals and objectives related to our workforce and employees, safety and security, infrastructure and technology, and offender rehabilitation.

Specifically, our strategic goals are to:

1. Grow our workforce.
2. Support our employees.
3. Strengthen safety and security.
4. Upgrade infrastructure and technology.
5. Modernize and improve our healthcare system.
6. Reduce recidivism.

The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA) was enacted by Congress to address the problem of sexual abuse and sexual harassment of persons in the custody of U.S. correctional agencies. The Act applies to all public and private institutions that house adult offenders, residents or juvenile offenders and is also relevant to community-based agencies. The PREA National Standards were promulgated in August 2012. These standards established nationwide consistency in practices covering the areas of detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of prison rape in confinement facilities.

NCDAC maintains a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual misconduct between staff and offenders or residents. We are steadfast in our commitment to delivering professional, ethical, and appropriate services to those in our custody, while supporting our staff in fulfilling these responsibilities.

PREA aligns seamlessly with our mission. Every employee plays a critical role in preventing and detecting sexual abuse, thereby protecting the individuals in our care and enhancing the safety of our communities.



In accordance with PREA National Standards §§115.88, and 115.288, this report presents a comprehensive review of data and corrective actions taken across our facilities. It summarizes and compares the agency’s progress and accomplishments during calendar years 2023 and 2024.



## Message from the Secretary

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Sexual abuse and sexual harassment within correctional environments have profound and lasting impacts—not only on the individuals directly affected, but also on the integrity of the criminal justice system and the safety of our communities. The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003 was enacted in recognition of the serious physical and psychological harm experienced by victims, which can significantly hinder their ability to successfully reintegrate into society upon release.

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction (NCDAC) remains steadfast in its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse and harassment. We maintain a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, detection, response, investigation, prosecution, and tracking of all incidents. In accordance with PREA National Standards §115.88, and §115.288, this annual report provides a summary of substantiated incidents of sexual abuse in confinement for calendar years 2023 and 2024, along with the corrective actions taken in response. It also includes an assessment of the Department’s progress in addressing these issues over the past year.

Our ongoing focus is to ensure the prevention of sexual violence within all facilities under our operational control. We view corrective action not as a punitive measure, but as an opportunity to implement long-term, meaningful changes that strengthen our systems and safeguard those in our care.

NCDAC takes pride in being proactive and prevention-focused, upholding the highest standards of correctional and rehabilitative practice. We recognize that achieving our zero-tolerance goal requires collaboration, and we welcome the continued support of our community partners and stakeholders in this critical effort.

Together, we can foster a safer, more just correctional environment for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leslie Dismukes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Leslie Dismukes

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## Overview: North Carolina Department of Adult Correction

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The NC Department of Adult Correction (NCDAC) was established in November 2021 via Session Law 2021-180, Section 19.1, which separated NCDAC from the NC Department of Public Safety (NCDPS). NCDAC officially started operations on January 1, 2023 and its employees have the responsibility for the rehabilitation, care, custody and supervision of around 32,000 individuals in prison and more than 81,000 people on probation, post-release, or parole in our communities. NCDAC operates across the state with an annual budget of just over \$2 billion.

NCDAC oversees the operation of 55 prison facilities in three custody levels (minimum, medium, and close), as well as two Confinement in Response to Violation centers and two substance use disorder treatment facilities. NCDAC also manages Community Supervision Judicial District offices in 100 North Carolina counties. NCDAC's operational divisions and sections include Institutions, Community Supervision, Comprehensive Health Services, Education Services, Rehabilitation and Reentry Services, Special Operations and Intelligence, and Correction Enterprises.

Key support elements include Workforce Management, Professional Standards, Engineering/Construction and Maintenance, Internal Audit, and the employee mental health and peer support program known as S.H.I.E.L.D. (Support. Hope. Inclusion. Empowerment. Dedication.). The department has more than 18,700 total allocated positions.

All NCDAC goals have been aligned to NC Governor Josh Stein's six North Star Priorities, which are the state's key priority areas for the immediate future. They include economic opportunity, excellent public schools, healthier people, safe and engaged communities, Helene recovery, and quality services.

## Mission

All divisions of the Department of Adult Correction are to ensure public safety through protection, innovation, and rehabilitation.

## Vision

All divisions will work collaboratively to create a safer North Carolina.

## Core Values

Integrity, Transparency, and Professionalism.

## NCDAC Strategic Plan in the PREA Program

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The Division of Institution Administration, Programs and Standards: PREA Office strives to meet the strategic plan by addressing the goals and objectives indicated below:

1. Support Our Employees
  - a. Meeting training needs to develop a high-performing and effective workforce.
  - b. Holding employees accountable for their actions when the PREA policy and agency's zero tolerance standard is violated.
  - c. By supporting the well-being of employees by providing technical assistance and finding more efficient and effective ways of meeting duties as assigned.
2. Strengthen Safety and Security at All NCDAC Locations
  - a. Identify sustainable renovations and updated technology to enhance safety and security.
  - b. Prepare employees to adequately respond to emergencies through the development of a coordinated response plan.
  - c. Develop a statewide plan to increase safety and security while meeting privacy mandates under the national standards in bathroom areas within institutions.

To review the complete agency's strategic plan, please visit: <https://www.dac.nc.gov/strategic-plan>.

## Departmental Accomplishments

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### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

#### Program Administration

In support of the Department's ongoing commitment to PREA compliance and the prevention of sexual violence, the PREA Office undertook the following key administrative initiatives during the reporting period:

1. National Engagement and Knowledge Sharing Participated in the 2024 National PREA Coordinators' Conference in Buffalo, NY. This event provided valuable opportunities to learn about emerging trends, share best practices, and strengthen national collaboration on PREA implementation, compliance strategies, and the prevention of sexual violence.
2. Enhancement of Data Management Systems Implemented structural improvements to the program's data management framework to increase efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of PREA-related data. These changes support more effective tracking, analysis, and reporting of incidents and compliance efforts.

### PREVENTION

The PREA Office continues to implement proactive measures to prevent sexual abuse and harassment in alignment with federal standards. Key prevention efforts during the reporting period include:

#### Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusion

In accordance with §115.16, which addresses the needs of offenders with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency, the PREA Office undertook the following initiatives:

1. Participated in and organized meetings focused on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance efforts.
2. Distributed educational posters statewide to raise awareness and promote inclusivity.

#### Promoting Privacy and Dignity

In response to §115.15, which limits cross-gender viewing and searches, the agency collaborated with Central Engineering, Facility Maintenance, and PREA staff to develop an operational plan. This plan addresses the installation of shower curtains in facilities where additional privacy measures were identified as necessary, while maintaining safety and security standards.

## Facility Staffing Analysis Reviews

A total of fifty-five staffing analysis reviews were completed in accordance with PREA standards. These reviews are essential to ensuring adequate staffing levels and supervision practices that support a safe and secure environment for both offenders and staff. Completed a comprehensive staffing plan analysis for every facility across the state, in accordance with PREA National Standards, to ensure adequate supervision and safety.

## RESPONSE

The PREA Office continues to strengthen the Department's response to sexual abuse and harassment through coordinated efforts, internal assessments, and strategic planning. Key activities during the reporting period include:

1. Quarterly Regional Leadership Meetings - Participated in quarterly meetings with Institutional Regional Directors to review facility-level program status, analyze regional statistical data, enhance program management, and ensure continued compliance with agency policy and PREA National Standards.
2. Institutional Assessments - Conducted internal assessments across correctional institutions to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Department's PREA program.
3. Enhanced Screening Protocols - Improved existing screening procedures to better identify individuals at high risk of victimization. These protocols support informed decisions regarding housing, bed assignments, work placements, education, and program participation.
4. Conducted weekly compliance reviews after hiring temporary staff in late 2024.
5. Corrective Action Planning and Communication - Provided facility leadership with critical updates and corrective action plans during regional meetings. Attendees included Regional Directors, Regional Security Coordinators, Wardens, and Associate Wardens.
6. Virtual Institutional Engagement - Held meetings with leadership to address PREA-related concerns and provide updates to Facility Management, PREA Investigators, PREA Compliance Managers, Support Staff, and Regional Staff.
7. PREA Compliance Manager Collaboration - Conducted targeted meetings with PREA Compliance Managers to review and align corrective action plans, ensuring consistency and accountability across all facilities.
8. Management of External Allegations - Continued oversight of offender-reported allegations of sexual abuse and harassment external to the agency through the Project Offender Reporting Sexual Abuse (O.R.S.A.) initiative.

## Training and Education

The PREA Office remains committed to equipping staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to uphold the highest standards of the prevention of sexual violence and compliance. Key training and education initiatives during the reporting period included:

1. Ongoing Virtual Support - Conducted virtual meetings with PREA Compliance Managers-69 trained, PREA Support Staff, and PREA Investigators to provide continuous guidance and technical assistance.
2. Collaboration with Internal Affairs - Delivered PREA-compliant training in partnership with the NCDAC Office of Internal Affairs (OIA) to ensure investigative practices align with national standards.
3. National Leadership and Conference - Planning as an active member of the National PREA Coordinators Working Group, the PREA Director contributed to the planning and coordination of the 2024 National PREA Coordinators Conference.
4. Facility-Based SART Engagement - Held on-site meetings with Sexual Abuse Response Teams (SART)—including Wardens, PREA Compliance Managers, Investigators, and Support Persons—to reinforce PREA compliance and deepen understanding of the standards.
5. Contract Facility Monitoring - Implemented a monitoring process to ensure PREA compliance at all contracted facilities housing NCDAC offenders.
6. Specialized Screening Training for Case Analysts to fifteen Diagnostic Staff, focusing on effective screening practices for identifying high-risk individuals.
7. eLearning Certification Maintenance - Maintained and updated eLearning certification courses for PREA Compliance Managers, PREA Support Services, and Sexual Abuse Investigators.

# Definitions Related to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment

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## SEXUAL ABUSE

For purposes of this report and statistical data, sexual abuse includes:

1. Sexual abuse of an inmate, detainee, or resident by another inmate, detainee, or resident;  
and
2. Sexual abuse of an inmate, detainee, or resident by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer.

*Sexual abuse of an inmate, detainee, or resident by another offender, detainee, or resident includes any of the following acts, if the victim does not consent, is coerced into such act by overt or implied threats of violence, or is unable to consent or refuse:*

1. Contact between the penis and the vulva or the penis and the anus, including penetration, however slight;
2. Contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, or anus;
3. Penetration of the anal or genital opening of another person, however slight, by a hand, finger, object, or other instrument; and
4. Any other intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or the buttocks of another person, excluding contact incidental to a physical altercation.

*Sexual abuse of an inmate, detainee, or resident by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer*

1. Contact between the penis and the vulva or the penis and the anus, including penetration, however slight;
2. Contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, or anus;
3. Contact between the mouth and any body part where the staff member, contractor, or volunteer has the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire;
4. Penetration of the anal or genital opening, however slight, by a hand, finger, object, or other instrument, that is unrelated to official duties or where the staff member, contractor, or volunteer has the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire;

5. Any other intentional contact, either directly or through the clothing, of or with the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or the buttocks, that is unrelated to official duties or where the staff member, contractor, or volunteer has the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire;
6. Any attempt, threat, or request by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer to engage in the activities described in items (1)-(5) of this section;
7. Any display by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer of his or her uncovered genitalia, buttocks, or breast in the presence of an inmate, detainee, or resident, and;
8. Voyeurism by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer. Voyeurism by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer means an invasion of privacy of an inmate, detainee, or resident by staff for reasons unrelated to official duties, such as peering at an inmate who is using a toilet in his or her cell to perform bodily functions; requiring an inmate to expose his or her buttocks, genitals, or breasts; or taking images of all or part of an inmate's naked body or of an inmate performing bodily functions.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Repeated and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal comments, gestures, or actions of a derogatory or offensive sexual nature by one inmate, detainee, or resident directed toward another; and
2. Repeated verbal comments or gestures of a sexual nature to an inmate, detainee, or resident by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer, including demeaning references to gender, sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing, or obscene language or gestures.

## Definitions for Validity Types

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1. **Substantiated allegation** means an allegation that was investigated and determined to have occurred.
2. **Unfounded allegation** means an allegation that was investigated and determined not to have occurred.
3. **Unsubstantiated allegation** means an allegation that was investigated and the investigation produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination as to whether or not the event occurred.

## Comparative Data

### 2024: The Department's Year in Review

During the 2024 calendar year, NCDAC received a total of **749** offender and resident sexual abuse and sexual harassment allegations. The following outlines the total number of incidents reported and the outcome of investigations in 2024. This represents a **<1% increase** in allegations received and a **34% decrease** in substantiated allegations since 2023.

2024					
Incident Type	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Unfounded	Ongoing	Total
Offender on Offender Sexual Abuse	12	145	52	0	209
Offender on Offender Sexual Harassment	9	226	24	0	259
Staff on Offender Sexual Abuse	13	63	77	0	153
Staff on Offender Sexual Harassment	4	68	56	0	128
<b>Total Allegations Received</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>749</b>

**Table 1: 2024 Incident Reports and Outcomes thru December 31, 2024.** New reports and annual data validation received from allegations in previous years may affect data collection. This chart was updated based on current data for completion of investigations and validation in 2024. In 2024, the Bureau of Justice Statistics revised definitions for data collection to coincide with the definitions in standards. Offender-on-Offender Nonconsensual Sex Act and Abusive Sexual Contact (see 2023 below) was combined to one incident type defined as Offender on Offender Sexual Abuse.

### 2023: The Department's Year in Review

During the 2023 calendar year, NCDAC received a total of **746** offender sexual abuse and sexual harassment allegations. The following outlines the total number of incidents reported and the outcome of investigations in 2023.



2023					
Incident Type	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Unfounded	Ongoing	Total
Offender on Offender Abusive Sexual Contact	12	123	38	0	173
Offender on Offender Nonconsensual Sexual Acts	1	11	3	0	15
Offender on Offender Sexual Harassment	21	148	39	0	208
Staff on Offender Sexual Abuse	17	80	126	0	223
Staff on Offender Sexual Harassment	3	73	51	0	127
<b>Total Allegations Received</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>746</b>

**Table 2: 2023 Incident Reports and Outcomes thru December 31, 2023. New reports received from allegations in previous years may affect data collection.**

## Previous Years in Review

Year	Total Allegations	Substantiated	Substantiation Rate
2022	766	45	5.9%
2023	746	54	7.2%
2024	749	38	5.1%

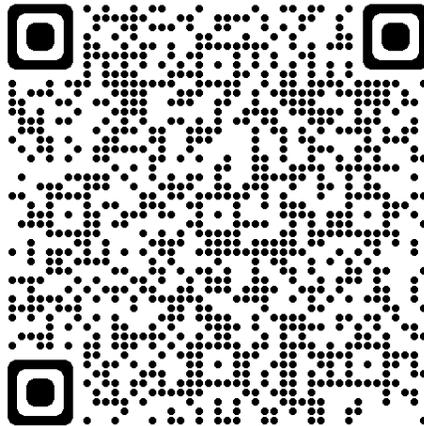
## Audit Findings

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The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction conducted federal compliance audits during audit Cycle IV from August 20, 2022, to August 19, 2025.

- Year 1: August 20, 2022- August 19, 2023,
- Year 2: August 20, 2023- August 19, 2024, and
- Year 3 is August 20, 2024- August 19, 2025.

Findings from these audits and previous audits for audit Cycle I-III are available on the agency's website. This information can be accessed by visiting (click here:) [Prison Rape Elimination Act \(PREA\) Office | NC DAC](#):



## Conclusion

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The 2023–2024 Annual Report reflects the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction's ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of zero tolerance and transparent reporting. Through a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, detection, response, investigation, data collection, and analysis, the Department continues to strengthen its efforts to eliminate sexual abuse and sexual harassment within its facilities.

In calendar year 2024, NCDAC received 749 allegations of offender and resident sexual abuse and sexual harassment. This reflects a slight increase of less than 1% compared to the 746 allegations reported in 2023.

Despite the marginal rise in total allegations, there was a significant 34% decrease in substantiated cases from the previous year. This trend suggests that while reporting remains



consistent, investigative outcomes indicate fewer verified incidents, which may reflect improved preventive measures, enhanced reporting accuracy, or changes in investigative standards.

Overall, the data demonstrates stability in allegation volume with a notable decline in confirmed cases, highlighting progress in mitigating substantiated incidents within facilities.

NCDAC remains dedicated to thoroughly, objectively, and promptly investigating every allegation reported. As a result of sustained education and awareness efforts—reinforced by consistent response protocols, investigative planning, and feedback gathered during federal audits—offenders and residents have expressed that they feel safer in our facilities and are more comfortable reporting incidents of sexual abuse and harassment.

The Department’s robust training programs have contributed to a measurable improvement in the culture of zero tolerance, as well as increased staff engagement in prevention, detection, and response efforts. These cultural and procedural improvements have led to a rise in reported allegations, which the Department views as a positive indicator of increased trust in the system and greater awareness among both staff and offenders.

NCDAC is proud of the progress made in enhancing facility culture, strengthening policies and procedures, and advancing its mission to eliminate sexual abuse and harassment in confinement settings.



For more information about this Annual Report, please contact the PREA Office at:

## Agency Information

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