



Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota  
2025 Annual PREA Report

In September of 2003, President Bush signed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). Starting in 2012, at the direction of the South Dakota Department of Corrections PREA standards were implemented in three juvenile facilities operated by LSS of SD. Staff in these facilities have taken action to prevent, detect, reduce, and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

This report summarizes LSS of SD's commitment to protecting youth in our facilities and meeting the national PREA standards. LSS has a zero tolerance policy for sexual assault and harassment of youth.

All staff is trained in how to prevent, identify, and respond to sexual abuse and harassment. All staff attend training in regards to these items during orientation and annually.

**LSS PREA Coordinator:** The Quality Assurance Coordinator operates as the agency PREA coordinator. This individual is responsible for policies and procedures pertaining to PREA and the associated PREA standards. The Coordinator oversees policy development, implementation, staff training, investigator training, and PREA documentation for the agency.

**LSS PREA Compliance Manager:** Each of the LSS residential facility Program Directors or Associate Director serve as compliance managers for their program.

**LSS PREA Investigators:** Each facility has at least one PREA investigator assigned – this person manages administrative investigations.

### **Training:**

1. Orientation for all new staff includes the following training requirements:
2. The zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse and harassment;
3. How to fulfill their responsibilities under agency sexual abuse and sexual harassment prevention, detection, reporting, and response policies and procedures;
4. Resident's right to be free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment;
5. The right of residents and employees to be free from retaliation for reporting cases of sexual abuse and sexual harassment;
6. The dynamics of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in juvenile facilities;
7. How to detect and respond to signs of threatened and actual sexual abuse;
8. How to communicate effectively and professionally with residents, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or gender nonconforming residents;
9. The common reactions of victims of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in juvenile victims;
10. How to avoid inappropriate relationships with residents; and
11. How to comply with relevant laws related to mandatory reporting.

**Policies:** In this reporting period there were no new PREA policies implemented at LSS.

**Supportive Services:** Pursuant to PREA standard 115.321 Evidence Protocol and Forensic Examinations and 115.353 Access to outside confidential Support Services, LSS has maintained Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the following local victim advocate groups to provide services to LSS of SD residents who were victims of sexual abuse.

1. The Compass Center (Sioux Falls)
2. Working Against Violence, Inc. (Rapid City)

## **Audits:**

Arise East had an audit performed during this reporting period. Arise Youth Center/West had a satisfactory audit completed in the fall of 2024.

An audit will be completed at Arise Youth Center/West in Fall 2027. Arise Youth Center/East will have its next audit in Fall 2028.

## **General Definitions:**

**Substantiated allegation:** an allegation that was investigated and determined to have occurred.

**Unfounded allegation:** an allegation that was investigated and determined not to have occurred.

**Unsubstantiated allegation:** an allegation that was investigated and the investigation produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination as to whether the event occurred.

## **Data Review:**

During 2025, no substantiated incidents of staff-on-resident sexual abuse, sexual touching, or sexual harassment were identified. All reported allegations involved resident-on-resident behavior. This continued absence of staff-on-resident substantiated incidents reflects effective staff training, supervision practices, and enforcement of professional boundaries.

At Arise Youth Center/East, a limited number of resident-on-resident sexual abuse allegations were reported, with findings including both substantiated and unsubstantiated determinations. Additionally, resident-on-resident sexual harassment incidents accounted for the majority of reports at this location. These incidents were investigated thoroughly, and determinations were made based on available evidence.

At Arise Youth Center/West, a higher volume of resident-on-resident allegations was reported, primarily related to sexual harassment. While several allegations were substantiated, a significant portion were determined to be unsubstantiated, indicating consistent application of investigative standards and evidentiary thresholds. Resident-on-resident sexual touching incidents were not reported at either location during 2025.

The presence of unsubstantiated and unfounded findings across both programs demonstrates investigative neutrality and confirms that allegations are neither minimized nor substantiated without sufficient evidence. Variations in incident volume between programs appear related to resident population dynamics and supervision environments rather than systemic concerns.

## **2023-2025 Comparison:**

A review of PREA data from 2023 through 2025 demonstrates consistent compliance with PREA standards across Arise Youth Center/East and West. Across all three years, no substantiated staff-on-resident sexual abuse, sexual touching, or sexual harassment incidents were reported. All allegations involved resident-on-resident behavior and were investigated in accordance with PREA requirements.

Incident volume was highest in 2023, particularly at Arise Youth Center/West, and decreased in 2024 before moderately increasing in 2025. Variations were primarily driven by resident-on-resident sexual harassment, which remained the most frequently reported category.

A review of PREA-related data for calendar year 2025 indicates continued compliance with the Prison

Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards across all Arise Youth Center programs. All allegations reported during the year were promptly documented, investigated, and classified in accordance with established PREA definitions and procedures

Incidents have declined over time, and substantiated sexual abuse allegations remained limited. The presence of unsubstantiated and unfounded findings across all years reflects consistent investigative rigor and appropriate application of evidentiary standards. Differences between East and West programs appear related to population dynamics rather than systemic deficiencies.

Overall, the three-year comparison indicates a stable reporting culture, effective prevention strategies, and sustained adherence to PREA requirements, supporting the organization's continued commitment to resident safety and accountability.

**Corrective Actions:**

LSS has revised its operation procedures to prevent staff from entering a youth's room without another staff member present. This change was implemented to ensure the safety of both residents and staff members.

Additionally, the number of unannounced visits conducted by supervisory personnel covering all shifts has been increased from three per month to four. This change was implemented to have more leadership presence on the wings and ensure the safety of staff and youth.

LSS conducts two PREA trainings per year, one in person with the PREA Coordinator and an online training via Relias.

Arise Youth Center/East	Resident on Resident Sexual Abuse	Resident on Resident Sexual Touching	Resident on resident sexual harassment	Staff on Resident Sexual Abuse	Staff on Resident Sexual Touching	Staff on Resident Sexual Harassment
Substantiated	0	0	2	0	0	0
Unsubstantiated	0	0	4	0	0	0
Unfounded	0	0	1	1	0	0
Total Incidents:	0	0	7	1	0	0

Arise Youth Center/West	Resident on Resident Sexual Abuse	Resident on Resident Sexual Touching	Resident on resident sexual harassment	Staff on Resident Sexual Abuse	Staff on Resident Sexual Touching	Staff on Resident Sexual Harassment
Substantiated	2	0	4	0	0	0
Unsubstantiated	6	0	3	0	0	0
Unfounded	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Incidents:	8	0	7	0	0	0