



## **Research and Information-Gathering**

The Commission is charged with gathering information from a wide range of sources in order to prepare its report and recommendations. Commissioners and staff are working through a broad and transparent process to research and evaluate best practices and to draft standards with the help of leading experts and diverse organizations in the criminal justice community.

The Commission is committed to a complete and comprehensive information-gathering process, including the following:

### **Public Hearings and Meetings:**

- Initial Public Meeting, held at Notre Dame University Law School. March 31, 2005, Notre Dame, Indiana.
- “The Cost of Victimization: Why Our Nation Must Confront Prison Rape.” June 14, 2005, Washington, D.C.
- “At Risk: Sexual Abuse and Vulnerable Groups Behind Bars.” August 19, 2005, San Francisco, California.
- “Elimination of Prison Rape: The Corrections Perspective.” March 23, 2006, Miami, Florida.
- “Elimination of Prison Rape: Focus on Juveniles.” June 1, 2006, Boston, Massachusetts.
- “Reporting, Investigating, and Prosecuting Prison Rape: What is Needed to Make the Process Work?” August 3, 2006, Detroit, Michigan.
- “The Elimination of Prison Rape: Immigration Facilities and Personnel/Staffing/Labor Relations.” December 13-14, 2006, Los Angeles, California.
- “Lockups, Native American Detention Facilities, and Conditions in Texas Penal and Youth Institutions.” March 26-27, 2007, Austin, Texas.

The Commission will hold its next public hearing in New Orleans on December 5-6, 2007. Topics will include medical and mental health care, community corrections, and oversight.

### **Research:**

- In-house research. Commission staff and consultants are conducting comprehensive and ongoing surveys of existing research on rape and sexual violence in facilities, existing standards from other standard-setting bodies that are relevant to the issue of preventing and responding to prison rape, and other relevant information.

- Contracted research. The Commission has issued RFPs for original research in four areas:
  - Inmate Perpetrator Characteristics
  - Staff Sexual Misconduct Characteristics
  - Economic Impact of Prison Sexual Violence
  - Labor Contracts
- Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) research. The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) charges the Bureau of Justice Statistics in the U.S. Department of Justice with conducting an annual statistical review and analysis of incidence and effects of prison rape, with a particular focus on identifying common characteristics of both victims and perpetrators of prison rape, common characteristics of prisons and prison systems with a high incidence of prison rape, and common characteristics of prisons and prison systems that appear to have been successful in deterring prison rape. The Commission will consider the outcome of this BJS work in preparing its report and recommended standards.
- Department of Justice (DOJ) grants. PREA authorizes DOJ to award grants to states providing funds for personnel, training, technical assistance, data collection, and equipment to prevent and prosecute prisoner rape. The Commission will consider the experiences of these grantees in identifying promising practices for the detection, prevention, and prosecution of prison rape and in preparing its report and recommended standards.
- Other information from federal or state agencies. The Commission is authorized to request any information it considers necessary to its work directly from federal, state, or local agencies.

**Consultation with Experts and Interested Stakeholders:**

- Expert Committees. Expert committees have been established to guide the development of draft standards in subject areas including: Classification and Technology, Confidential Reporting and Data Collection, Investigations and Staff Sexual Misconduct, Medical and Mental Health, Training, Juvenile Facilities, and Immigration Detention Facilities, with separate committees for juvenile standards and immigration detention standards. Committee members include leaders in corrections, former prisoners and their advocates, scholars, law enforcement representatives, and others committed to the goals of PREA.
- Visits to correctional and detention facilities. Commissioners, Commission staff, and Commission consultants are visiting facilities and working with corrections staff and experts to learn about on-the-ground needs and concerns, promising practices for preventing and addressing prison rape, and the feasibility of potential recommendations and standards.
- Individual and small group roundtable discussions. Commissioners, Commission staff, and Commission consultants are conducting an extensive series of individual meetings and small group roundtable discussions with representatives from a broad range of interested parties, including but not limited to corrections, law enforcement, prisoner advocates, inmate victims and their families, and service providers.
- Public comment period for draft standards. Prior to the finalization of recommended standards, the Commission will elicit public response to its draft standards. This public comment period is expected to take place in mid-2008, and will include organizing several public hearings on relevant issues and accepting written comments from individuals and organizations. Public feedback will be incorporated prior to the finalization and release of the Commission's report and recommendations.