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WI Department of Corrections Awarded Grant to Assist Counties and Law Enforcement Agencies Eliminate Inmate Sexual Assault

Federal Grant of Nearly \$400,000 will Fund Two-Year Education Program

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) has been awarded a nearly \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance to help four counties, a tribal nation, and three police departments eliminate sexual abuse among inmates and staff sexual misconduct.

The Wisconsin DOC has been a national leader in enforcing a zero-tolerance standard for prison sexual abuse and sexual harassment and implementing the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards. DOC recognizes the need to promote and implement strategies at the local level to ensure the safety of those in county jails, juvenile detention facilities, municipal lockups and tribal facilities.

Five adult jails, including one tribal facility, three juvenile detention facilities and three municipal lockups will take part in the program. The facilities are in Dane, Forest, La Crosse and Waukesha counties, along with the Menominee Tribal Nation. The City of Waukesha, Muskego, and New Berlin police departments are also involved in the program.

The two-year program will allow DOC to assist these agencies to develop PREA related policies and procedures; training for staff; provide awareness and produce educational materials for those incarcerated, and to develop a data collection system and database to monitor and track sexual abuse.

Recent surveys conducted regarding sexual assault of inmates found that:

- Nationally, an estimated 9.6 percent of former state prisoners reported one or more incidents of sexual victimization during the most recent period of incarceration in jail, prison, and post release community-treatment facility.
- In five Wisconsin jails that took part in a national inmate survey, 1.9 percent and 5.2 percent of the inmate population reporting being sexually victimized in the past 12 months or admission to the facility (if shorter).
- The national inmate survey found that 3.1 percent of jail inmates reported sexual victimization, with Wisconsin falling into that range.

“The safety of all citizens is our top priority and that holds true for those under our supervision,” said Dane County Sheriff Dave Mahoney. “We are committed to keeping those under our watch

protected and this partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections will allow us to best adhere to PREA standards so we can keep everyone safe.”