



## POSITION STATEMENT

Adopted by NPJS Board of Directors ~ October 18, 2011

# SEXUAL ABUSE IN JUVENILE CONFINEMENT FACILITIES / PREA

### STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Although the problem of sexual abuse of incarcerated individuals is not new, the recognition of the duty to protect those individuals from harm is a relatively recent development. The United States Congress affirmed the duty to protect incarcerated individuals from sexual abuse by unanimously enacting the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003.

### NATURE OF THE ISSUE

- Juveniles in confinement are “much more likely than incarcerated adults to be sexually abused, and they are particularly at risk when confined with adults.” (*National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (NPREC) Report*, June, 2009)
- Certain individuals are more at risk of sexual abuse than others. Factors such as age, gender, stature, lack of experience, mental illness and sexual orientation may contribute to a person’s vulnerability. These factors are inherent in the population served by juvenile facilities.
- The NPREC reported that a large number of sexual abuse incidents in juvenile facilities were staff-on-resident acts.
- Sexual abuse contributes to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and has been shown to increase suicide risk, exacerbate pre-existing psychiatric disorders, hasten or cause the development of anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Rape Trauma Disorder or other psychological or psychiatric conditions.
- In many cases, juvenile services staff have not been adequately trained to properly prevent, detect, or respond to reports or incidents of sexual abuse.
- Juveniles need to be educated regarding their right to be free from sexual abuse and how to report sexual abuse incidents.

### POSITION STATEMENT

The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS) fully supports the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 and compliance with the “National Standards To Prevent, Detect and Respond to Prison Rape”. The NPJS also supports quality pre-service and on-going training and education, in accordance with PREA standards. The NPJS further supports the implementation of effective policies and procedures that help to prevent, detect, respond to and investigate sexual abuse incidents.