

**KASAP's Role in Supporting PREA Implementation:**  
**An Interview with Executive Director Eileen Recktenwald**  
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The [Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs](#) (KASAP) signed a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Kentucky Department of Corrections on behalf of the state's 13 rape crisis centers in April 2013 (attached). The MOU, which covers all state confinement facilities but not local jails, says that rape crisis centers will provide advocacy, response to the crisis line for inmates, and up to three crisis counseling sessions in-person or on the phone. Each one of the rape crisis center covers at least one facility and most of them cover more than one. Substance abuse treatment facilities where someone is confined are also included in the MOU as are private facilities with state contracts. Eileen Recktenwald, Executive Director of KASAP, points out that most of the advocates at the centers are primarily funded by VOCA which has historically disallowed services to incarcerated victims (the Office of Victims of Crime is currently contemplating a change in their regulations related to this issue) so many of them are using their SASP funds, which have no such restriction, to serve this population. KASAP is the pass-through for SASP formula funds in Kentucky, and the funding is divided equally among the centers.

The PREA Coordinator in Kentucky is a former warden, and he reached out to Eileen in January 2013 soon after his appointment to collaborate, and they have been working closely together ever since. They coordinate cross-training, the information that is distributed in the prisons, and figuring out how the crisis line should work including confidentiality issues. Eileen held firm that crisis calls couldn't be recorded or listened to, and they were able to work that out. Eileen says, "Our work together has been very incremental—we take it one step at a time. We are very much feeling our way through this." She's careful to make sure to get their agreements in writing, and uses the Advocacy Committee of KASAP's board of directors to get feedback directly from the centers' on the partnership as well.

So far, cross-training efforts have focused primarily on advocates learning more about the facilities. Eileen points out, "Advocates weren't familiar with the facilities and how to access folks. They would get a letter or call that the prison wanted someone to come in, but they didn't really know how to do that." They've asked for one advocate at each center to be the point person for services to incarcerated victims. That's not all that person does, but it helps to make sure one advocate has an understanding of the system.

Soon, they will be providing training for the prisons too and cover the role of the advocate and the perspective of rape crisis centers. Although other groups have roles with DOC in terms of helping them come into compliance with PREA, Eileen believes the advocacy role of KASAP is unique and essential.

“The philosophy, the values, the language is all a learning process—we’re willing to learn theirs and they’re willing to learn ours. They are assuming that most things are going to be false reports—that they’re reporting because they want to move. We’ve explained to them that even if that’s the case, but they have been a victim of sexual assault at some point, we still want to provide the services. We are talking to them about advocacy language and what you can expect from a rape crisis center.”

One advocacy challenge for Eileen and the centers is knowing that three sessions, the maximum number they provide given limited funding and capacity, isn’t sufficient for most survivors. They’ve struggled with this ethical concern, and as a result have worked with the mental health professionals in the facilities to be a single point of contact for referrals if more care is needed. She points out the advocacy in prisons is similar to other systems advocacy that rape crisis centers have traditionally engaged in: “Relationship building is so important and has to be ongoing because of turnover.” The next step for them is developing an evaluation checklist to use after each visit with a survivor.

Eileen has recently written a grant to fund a full-time PREA Coordinator at KASAP believing the work needs this level of attention. She has purposefully centered KASAP in the midst Kentucky’s PREA work, asking to be invited to any tables where they might have been initially excluded and helping “drive the train” to help Kentucky come into PREA compliance.