
Proposal for Implementation of Standardized Presentence Investigation and Sex Offense-Specific Evaluation Protocol

Submitted May 2026 to AZSOMB by the Adult Standards and Guidelines Subcommittee

Purpose

This proposal establishes a standardized, statewide protocol for Presentence Investigations (PSIs) to include a sex offense-specific evaluation (psychosexual evaluation or PSE). The purpose of the PSI is to provide the court with relevant, comprehensive information upon which to base sentencing decisions. The inclusion of a PSE ensures a consistent, evidence-based approach to identifying an offender's risk and protective factors, treatment needs, and amenability to treatment, consistent with guidance from the Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse (ATSA) and the Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative (SOMAPI).

Scope of Application

Each individual convicted of a sexual offense shall be the subject of a PSI that includes a PSE. Individuals serving longer sentences may undergo a sex-offense specific evaluation upon their release to the community to ensure accurate and updated information is acquired.

Purpose of Sex Offense-Specific Evaluation

The sex offense-specific evaluation is designed to:

- Establish a baseline assessment of risk and protective factors
- Determine the individual's need for treatment and the appropriate type of intervention
- Assess amenability and responsiveness to treatment
- Identify additional criminogenic and behavioral health needs
- Inform recommendations regarding community supervision, when appropriate
- Address the possibility of reunification, when appropriate

These functions align with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model as developed by Donald Andrews and James Bonta, which is widely endorsed in correctional best practices.

Evaluation Process and Standards

Evaluations (PSEs) shall be conducted using validated, empirically supported assessment tools and structured professional judgment, consistent with ATSA Practice Guidelines (2017; updated editions) and SOMAPI recommendations. The PSI shall be completed by a pre-sentence investigator who is specially trained in sex offender management.

The completed PSI report, including the PSE, shall:

- Be submitted to the court in accordance with judicial timelines

- Be provided by the Probation Department to the Department of Corrections when applicable
- Follow the individual throughout placements within the criminal justice system to ensure continuity of care and supervision (SOMAPI, 2017; ATSA, 2017)

Referral and Required Documentation

When referring an individual for a PSE, the referral packet may include, but is not limited to:

- Police reports
- Victim impact statements
- Child protection reports
- Criminal history records
- Available risk assessment summaries
- Prior evaluations and treatment reports
- Prior supervision records
- Signed releases of information
- Any additional materials requested by the evaluator

Comprehensive data collection is consistent with structured professional judgment models and best practices outlined by American Psychological Association forensic guidelines.

Pre-Plea Evaluations

Sex offense-specific evaluations conducted prior to an admission or adjudication of guilt (pre-plea) may not meet the requirements of these standards (ATSA, 2017). If a PSI writer receives a pre-plea evaluation that is incomplete or noncompliant:

- The PSI writer may notify the court
- Recommendations may be provided upon request of the court
- The PSI writer may seek supplemental information from the evaluator to address deficiencies and ensure compliance

Funding Structure

The cost of the sex offense-specific evaluation shall be the responsibility of the individual being evaluated. However, to promote equitable access:

- Financial assistance may be provided based on demonstrated financial need

This approach is consistent with access-to-services considerations noted in SOMAPI (2017).

Cost Determination

The cost of the PSE will be established through a comprehensive national and statewide financial analysis to ensure:

- Reasonable and consistent pricing
- Alignment with professional standards and comparable services
- Sustainability for providers while maintaining accessibility

Conclusion

The integration of sex offense-specific evaluations with standardized PSIs strengthens sentencing accuracy, enhances public safety, and promotes consistency across jurisdictions. By aligning with nationally recognized best practices, including those from ATSA and SOMAPI this proposal supports a balanced approach to accountability, rehabilitation, and community protection.

References (Best Practice Guidelines)

- Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse. (2017). *Practice Guidelines for the Assessment, Treatment, and Management of Male Adult Sexual Abusers* (and subsequent updates).
- Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative. (2017). *Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative Report*. U.S. Department of Justice.
- American Psychological Association. (2013). *Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology*.
- Donald Andrews, & James Bonta. (2010). *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*.
- Colorado Sex Offender Management Board: Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment, Evaluation, Treatment, and Behavioral Monitoring of Adult Sex Offenders (2025)