



## Child Welfare and Human Trafficking

The growing awareness of human trafficking in the United States and abroad requires government and human services agencies to rethink old policies and develop new ones for identifying and serving victims. Child welfare agencies are on the front lines of these changes: Children and youth involved with the child welfare system due to abuse or neglect and then placed in foster care or group homes—as well as youth who are involved with the justice system, are homeless, or have run away—are all at high risk of being trafficked. Often, the lack of stability in their living situation, physical distance from friends and family, and emotional vulnerability put them at risk for traffickers who are actively seeking children and teens to exploit.

This issue brief provides a broad overview of the crossover between the child welfare field and the work currently being done to prevent and respond to human trafficking of children and youth in the United States. There is a particular focus on sex trafficking of children and youth, because that trafficking type is more likely to affect the child welfare population. This issue brief provides basic background information, including highlights of Federal legislation, and then discusses the needs of victims and the ways that child welfare agencies can address the problem of the trafficking of children.

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## Definitions and Statistics

Background information on the definitions and extent of the trafficking of children and youth provides context for a discussion of the overlap with child welfare.

### Definitions of Trafficking

Both U.S. citizens and foreign national children and youth can be victims of sex and/or labor trafficking within the United States.

**Sex trafficking.** According to the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, all children under the age of 18 who are induced to engage in commercial sex are victims of sex trafficking (U.S. Department of State, 2000). Children cannot consent to trafficking, so there is no need to demonstrate “force, fraud, or coercion” as is necessary for labor trafficking.<sup>1</sup> However, there are some inconsistencies between the Federal definition and common practices in the States. Many States still prosecute minors for prostitution, despite State laws and the contradiction of charging children with an act for which they are too young to consent, rather than approaching them as victims of sex trafficking (Broughton, 2012). In addition, working definitions of sex trafficking may differ for child welfare and law enforcement professionals.

Many States have also established their own definitions of commercial sexual exploitation and sexually exploited children. These definitions impact how these children are treated (as victims or as delinquents), the involvement of child welfare, and their eligibility for services. Examples of commercial sex trafficking that may involve minors include prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism.

**Labor trafficking.** The definition of *labor* trafficking does not distinguish between children and adults. The use of “force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” has to be present for children to be defined as

<sup>1</sup> Force generally refers to physical violence or restraint, while fraud refers to deception or lies that the trafficker may tell to dupe the victim; coercion generally refers to threats against the victim or the victim’s loved ones.

victims of labor trafficking (U.S. Department of State, 2000). Examples of labor trafficking include agricultural or domestic service workers who are underpaid or not paid at all, physically abusive traveling sales crews that force children to sell legal items (e.g., magazines) or illegal items (e.g., drugs) or to beg, and workers in restaurants and hair and nail salons who are abused, confined, and/or not paid.

### Numbers of Children and Youth Who Are Trafficked

There are a number of sources that estimate trafficking statistics, but none provides a complete picture:

- In 2014, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC), operated by the Polaris Project, was contacted 24,062 times by persons of all ages seeking help or reporting possible instances of trafficking, and 5,042 incidents of potential trafficking were reported. Of these, 3,598 were instances of sex trafficking, 818 were instances of labor trafficking, and the remainder were either combinations of sex and labor trafficking or unspecified (NHTRC, 2015).
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) estimated that one in six endangered runaways were likely sex trafficking victims in 2014. This is an increase from one in seven endangered runaways in 2013 (NCMEC, 2014).
- A 2011 bulletin from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) cites an earlier estimate (Estes & Weiner, 2001) that 293,000 youth are at risk for being trafficked in North America because they live on the streets or in particularly vulnerable situations (Walker-Rodriguez & Hill).

While the true prevalence of sex and labor trafficking is unknown, most service providers believe that these statistics are underestimated. Challenges in identifying victims, collecting and cross-referencing data, and deciding on common definitions contribute to a lack of accurate statistics. In addition, many youth do not see themselves as victims or they may be reluctant to admit to victimization due to fears of deportation, jail, and sometimes deadly retribution

from traffickers. The trauma caused by trafficking and the overall drive for survival also serve as strong deterrents to self-identification as a trafficking victim.

## Crossover With Child Welfare

Children and youth in out-of-home care, who have been removed from their homes because of child abuse or neglect, are at particularly high risk of being trafficked. Their background of abuse and trauma—coupled with the impermanence of foster care or congregate care—can make them especially vulnerable. Research has documented a high percentage of trafficked children and youth who spent time in foster care before being exploited, and some have gone so far as to argue that the majority of trafficked youth have experienced some child welfare involvement (Human Rights Project for Girls, 2013).

A number of research and newspaper articles have pointed to the fact that traffickers target youth in foster care because of their increased vulnerability (see, for example, Menzel, 2013). Traffickers exploit the fact that youth in foster care—or those who have run away from care—may have unmet needs for family and emotional relationships. The traffickers promise to meet those needs, even using psychological manipulation and financial incentives to woo them, and then violence or physical control to hold on to the youth and exploit them (Innocence Lost Working Group, 2010).

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families, (ACYF), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families, (ACF), cited a number of alarming statistics in a 2013 document, including several studies showing that 50 to more than 90 percent of children and youth victims of child sex trafficking had been involved with child welfare services (ACYF, 2013). These numbers are echoed in other estimates of both national and State incidences of crossover between trafficking and child welfare, for instance:

- In testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, John Ryan, CEO of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, noted that

60 percent of runaways who are victims of sex trafficking had been in the custody of social services or in foster care (Ryan, 2013).

- Statistics from a California organization indicate that between 50 and 80 percent of commercially sexually exploited children in California in 2012 had been involved with the child welfare system (California Against Slavery Research and Education, 2015).

## Federal Legislation and Initiatives on Trafficking and Child Welfare

All branches of the Federal Government are involved in combating human trafficking. The following is a brief look at some of those efforts.

### Federal Legislation

The public and legislative focus on the connection between child welfare involvement and trafficking is relatively recent. The newest legislation, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, P.L. 113-183, was signed into law in September 2014 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4980/text>). The act requires title IV-E agencies to develop policies and procedures to identify, document, and determine appropriate services for children under the placement, care, or supervision of a child welfare agency and who are at risk of becoming sex trafficking victims or who are victims of sex trafficking.

Among other requirements, the act requires title IV-E agencies to:

- Demonstrate, by September 29, 2015, that they have (1) consulted with other agencies having experience with youth at risk of becoming a sex trafficking victim and (2) developed policies and procedures to identify, document, and determine appropriate services for these at-risk children and youth.
- Develop and implement, by September 29, 2015, protocols to locate children missing from foster care; determine the factors that led to the child being absent from foster care, and, to the greatest extent possible, address those factors in subsequent placements; determine the child's experiences while absent from care, including whether the child fell

victim to sex trafficking; and report related information as required by HHS.

- Report to law enforcement, within 24 hours, children or youth described under the law's definition whom the title IV-E agency identifies as being a victim of sex trafficking. Implementation of this provision is required by September 29, 2016.
- Report to HHS, within 3 years of the law's enactment (September 29, 2017) and annually thereafter, the total number of children and youth described under the law's definition who are victims of sex trafficking. Within 4 years of the law's enactment (by September 29, 2018), HHS must report to Congress the number of children and youth reported by title IV-E agencies as victims of sex trafficking.

The Children's Bureau's Capacity Building Center for States, part of its Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative, has compiled a list of resources to help child welfare agencies implement these provisions. *Resources to Support Implementation of the Sex Trafficking Provision of PL 113-183*, and other resources from the National Convening on Trafficking and Child Welfare, available at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/trafficking/convening>.

The Federal Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, first authorized in 2000 (see <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/61124.htm>), provides the foundation for combatting trafficking and helping victims both in the United States and abroad. Provisions include:

- The establishment of definitions of trafficking and of trafficking as a Federal crime
- The creation of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking
- Restitution for victims
- Programs to prevent trafficking and to protect and assist victims
- Strengthened prosecution and punishment of traffickers

The act was most recently reauthorized in 2013. ACF's *Family Room Blog* (Chon, 2013) noted the key features of the reauthorization as they pertained to ACF's anti-trafficking initiatives:

- Enhancing youth safety (Section 302)
- Strengthening safety and justice for Native American women (Sections 901 and 902)
- Reducing sexual abuse in custodial settings (Section 1101)
- Unifying Federal Government hotline outreach (Section 1203)
- Assisting domestic minor sex trafficking victims (Section 1241)
- Strengthening the child advocate program for unaccompanied children (Section 1262)
- Providing benefits to certain holders of U visas (Section 1263)

The Polaris Project tracks pending Federal and State legislation on trafficking at <http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/all-pending-legislation>. (State legislation is discussed later.)

## White House

In 2012, President Obama called for increased efforts to combat human trafficking, directing his Cabinet to strengthen its commitment, establishing an interagency task force, and introducing a number of new initiatives (White House, 2012). Some of those new activities called for by the President included increased training, enhanced technology, and an emphasis on identifying programs that work and replicating them (White House, 2013). The White House has also emphasized the importance of collaboration, both among Federal Government agencies and in public-private partnerships.

## A Coordinated Approach

The White House has led the charge to ensure that the various government departments and agencies work together to serve victims of trafficking. This partnership approach is outlined in a comprehensive document

published in 2013, *Coordination, Collaboration, Capacity: Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States, 2013–2017* (<http://www.ovc.gov/pubs/FederalHumanTraffickingStrategicPlan.pdf>). The plan outlines how the different agencies will align efforts to improve understanding, expand access to services, and improve overall outcomes. Some of the current Federal partnerships include the following:

- The President’s Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons includes the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services, Transportation, Education, and Homeland Security, as well as the Office of Management and Budget, the National Security Council, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Domestic Policy Council, the FBI, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The members coordinate Federal policies that combat trafficking and address law enforcement, victim protection, public awareness, research, and international diplomacy. Read about the task force at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/response/usg/>.
- The Children’s Bureau and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) jointly developed an Information Memorandum that provides guidance on services for youth under age 18 who run away from foster care and come in contact with runaway and homeless youth programs. States reported in 2013 that approximately 4,550 youth in foster care had run away from their placements (Children’s Bureau, 2014). The IM is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/fysb-im1401>.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched the Blue Campaign in 2010 in order to bring together the components of public awareness, training, victim assistance, and law enforcement investigations. Agencies within DHS (e.g., U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, etc.) partner with each other and collaborate with other U.S. government agencies, international governments, law enforcement, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to protect victims from being trafficked both within the

United States and around the world. Learn more about the Blue Campaign at <http://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>.

- Since 2003, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has conducted the Innocence Lost National Initiative, a collaboration among the FBI, the DOJ Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Innocence Lost is aimed at the domestic sex trafficking of children. Since its inception, more than 3,400 children have been rescued, and nearly 1,500 adults who exploited children through prostitution have been convicted (FBI, n.d.). More information about this initiative is available on the FBI website at [http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc\\_majorthefts/cac/innocencelost](http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc_majorthefts/cac/innocencelost).

(Information on and examples of State and local collaboration are found in the later section on State and Local Efforts to Help Victims.)

In addition to the collaborative efforts described above, Cabinet-level departments address trafficking with programs that reflect each department’s focus. A selection of these programs is described below.

## Department of Health and Human Services

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) addresses human trafficking through its Administration for Children and Families (ACF), which created the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) in June 2015 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/endtrafficking> and <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/office-on-trafficking-in-persons-frequently-asked-questions>). OTIP brings together many efforts previously housed in the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the Family and Youth Services Bureau, and elsewhere in ACF. OTIP has three main goals (Greenberg, 2015):

- Establish a cohesive national human trafficking victim service delivery system to serve victims of all forms of human trafficking, be guided by core standards of care, and include coverage for nonurban communities

- Develop a culture of data-informed anti-trafficking programming and policymaking, including the launch of a pilot national human trafficking victim service count, the incorporation of evaluation and standardized data collection in all anti-trafficking grants, and an increased number of quality reports and publications
- Integrate anti-trafficking efforts into existing and new HHS prevention strategies, including creating targeted awareness and public health messages for populations at highest risk for human trafficking and addressing the demand for human trafficking

OTIP is responsible for the Trafficking Victim Assistance Program and the Rescue & Restore campaign, which focuses on educating health-care providers, social services workers, law enforcement, and others who may come into contact with victims but not recognize them as human trafficking victims. The Rescue & Restore campaign created the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/national-human-trafficking-hotline/the-nhtrc/overview>), which is operated by a nongovernmental organization. OTIP also has responsibility for domestic trafficking grants. Three agencies within ACF established a number of anti-trafficking efforts and will continue to coordinate and collaborate with OTIP: the Office of Refugee Resettlement (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr>), the Family and Youth Services Bureau (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb>), and the Children's Bureau (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>).

## The Children's Bureau and Child Trafficking

The Children's Bureau, within ACF, partners with Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies to improve the overall health and well-being of our nation's children and families.

In June 2015, the Children's Bureau and the White House hosted the National Convening on Trafficking and Child Welfare, which brought together representatives from 52 States and jurisdictions to support their implementation of new mandates under the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014. State teams made up of court, law enforcement, child welfare, and other professionals heard from anti-trafficking experts about proven strategies that could be introduced in their States for the prevention and protection of children and youth at risk or already victims of sex trafficking. Over 2 days, the State teams worked on action plans to address the new anti-trafficking mandates. More information about the Convening is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/purpose-statement-national-convening-on-trafficking-and-child-welfare>.

In July 2014, Joo Yeun Chang, the Associate Commissioner of the Children's Bureau, testified before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families, Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, noting the Bureau's commitment to providing information to States and service programs to build greater awareness and better response to the problem of child trafficking. Her testimony is available at <http://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Chang.pdf>. The Children's Bureau also awarded funding to nine demonstration grants to help child welfare agencies respond to human trafficking through multisystem approaches.

Also in 2014, the Children's Bureau released an Information Memorandum (IM) on human sex trafficking that informs States and Tribes of new Federal legislation and its connection to child welfare. The IM provides basic information on the new law, including title IV-E plan changes, new case plan requirements and definitions, additions to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), modifications to the Family Connection grants and Chafee program, and reauthorization of the Adoption and Guardianship Incentive Program. The IM is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/im1403>.

## Department of Homeland Security

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) investigates human trafficking, arrests traffickers, and protects victims. DHS also processes immigration relief through Continued Presence (CP), T visas, and U visas to victims of human trafficking and other designated crimes. More information about these visa types and DHS resources for victims of trafficking and other crimes is available on the DHS website at <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-human-trafficking-other-crimes>. Information on DHS's Blue Campaign to end human trafficking is available at <http://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>.

## Department of Justice

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is significantly involved in combating human trafficking. For instance, the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office of Victims of Crime support Anti-Human Trafficking Task Forces, composed of State and local law enforcement, investigators, victim service providers, and other key stakeholders. The members work together to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases and provide comprehensive victim services (Office of Justice Programs, 2011). Also, the Office for Victims of Crimes Training and Technical Assistance Center developed a comprehensive *Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide* that includes information on multisystem efforts to address trafficking and help victims, available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide>. The Office for Victims of Crimes' webpage on human trafficking provides information for victims, service providers, law enforcement, and allied professionals at <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/humantrafficking/index.html>. The agency also runs a public awareness campaign to educate the public about human trafficking and the diversity of the survivors.

## Department of State

The U.S. Department of State runs the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and is especially concerned with trafficking overseas and across borders. This office was created as a result of the original Victims

of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 and is responsible for diplomacy, targeted foreign assistance, and public engagement on this issue of modern slavery. It partners with foreign governments and civil society to develop and implement effective counter-trafficking strategies. In July 2015, this office released the annual *Trafficking in Persons* (TIP) report, which rates every country in the world—including the United States—on its efforts to prevent and combat trafficking. (See the TIP report at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/index.htm>.) The Department of State also chairs the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons as well as the Senior Policy Operating Group (see <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/response/usg>).

## Victims and Their Needs

Victims of trafficking are often difficult to identify, and their needs can be myriad—ranging from medical care and mental health services to legal advocacy and help in finding family members. As cross-agency coordination grows and child welfare agencies have increasing involvement with victims of trafficking, it becomes imperative that child welfare workers receive the training and resources necessary to help them identify children and youth who have been or are being trafficked—and that workers have access to the services and resources children and youth need in order to recover.

## Identifying Victims

Some child and youth victims of trafficking enter the child welfare system with a known trafficking history because they have been referred through law enforcement or there is other evidence of trafficking. In other cases, a child or youth who is receiving child welfare services may have a less visible history of being trafficked. Clearly, there are many children being trafficked today who are invisible to the child welfare system and society in general.

Child victims of trafficking may be difficult to locate and identify for a variety of reasons, including the following:

- They often do not view themselves as victims and may not believe that their trafficker has done anything wrong. This is especially true in cases where pimps/traffickers simulate romantic or familial relationships. Law enforcement reports indicate that girls usually believe they are in love and feel compelled to return to their traffickers, out of this perceived love or out of fear of retribution (Clawson & Grace, 2007).
- Traffickers may control victims by threatening a victim's family members or by threatening to turn the victim over to authorities unless the victim cooperates, which effectively keeps them from seeking help.
- Victims may suffer from shame, guilt, and a lack of self-worth that keeps them from looking for a way to be rescued. If they were abused or neglected as children, the entry into trafficking may seem a likely consequence to them.
- Over time, the exploitation—including the physical and sexual abuse and psychological manipulation—may come to seem “normal” in a victim's mind, which reduces the likelihood that he or she will self-identify as a trafficking victim (Polaris, 2010).
- The public may have preconceived ideas about who child trafficking victims are or stereotypical notions about what child trafficking victims look like. Often, teenage girls may look older and may be told to lie about their age. Also, the public may view 16–17 year olds as being old enough to be complicit in prostitution or other illegal activities and may (erroneously) perceive such activity as a free choice on the part of the teen.
- Youth in the juvenile justice system may be misidentified and treated as criminals charged with prostitution, truancy, or petty theft when, in actuality, they are being controlled by a trafficker.
- Boys may not be identified as victims because they do not necessarily fit a stereotype of a sex trafficking victim. Also, boys may not be asked the same screening questions as girls, and they may be even more reluctant than girls to share information.

- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) youth, who make up a significant portion of the runaway youth population, have usually experienced rejection and ostracism, making them particularly reluctant to self-identify as victims of trafficking to any adults or authority figures.
- Foreign nationals who are trafficked, including teens, are often kept isolated from much of the outside world. Victims may have little opportunity to escape or to seek help, especially if they are moved to a strange city and their identification documents are confiscated by the trafficker. Their trafficker may not allow them to have any money, which limits their opportunity for outside contact.

Child welfare, law enforcement, health care, and other professionals—in fact, everyone—should become familiar with the signs that a child or teen is a victim of sex trafficking, which include the following (Innocence Lost Working Group, 2010):

- History of emotional, sexual, or other physical abuse
- Signs of current physical abuse and/or sexually transmitted diseases
- History of running away or current status as a runaway
- Inexplicable appearance of expensive gifts, clothing, cell phones, tattoos, or other costly items
- Presence of an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Drug addiction
- Withdrawal or lack of interest in previous activities
- Gang involvement

Signs of labor trafficking, as noted by the Polaris Project (<http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/recognizing-the-signs>), include the following:

- No freedom to leave or come and go as desired
- No or very little pay, or payment only through tips
- Excessive and/or unusual work hours
- No breaks at work
- A large debt that cannot be paid off
- Recruitment through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of the work



- High security measures in the work and/or living locations
- Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or lost sense of time

The presence of some of these signs or the lack of some indicators is not conclusive evidence of trafficking, but further inquiry should take place. The Office for Victims of Crimes' *Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide* also includes a list of indicators and circumstances at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/1-understanding-human-trafficking/12-recognizing-the-crime>.

Children and youth who are victims of trafficking can often be distinguished from other children who receive child welfare services due to the following differences:

- Children and youth who are identified as victims of trafficking generally enter the child welfare system alone because their parents or family may not be nearby or even known to the child welfare agency.
- They may have more complex trauma due to initial abuse or conflict in the home that caused them to run away or come under the influence of a trafficker, and this is compounded by the exploitation they experienced while being trafficked.
- They may have been in the child welfare system in the past and, because of conflict or abuse experiences, they ran away from their foster home or group home. Children and youth with bad child welfare experiences or bad experiences with law enforcement or other government agencies will be especially reluctant to trust again.

Not all children and youth who are trafficked have previous child welfare involvement. Some youth run away from home or leave for a short period of time and then return home after being exploited. This can complicate the identification and provision of services in States that will not accept child abuse reports for trafficking if the trafficker is not in a caregiver role. Advocates also report

that some youth may be involved in trafficking in order to help support their family—turning over large sums of money to a parent or caregiver who does not know about the trafficking and who is not the trafficker.

## Screening Victims

Special screening and assessment instruments can help child welfare workers identify trafficking victims who come to the attention of the system. Examples include the following:

- HHS, through its Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), contracted with the Urban Institute to develop a screening tool to be pilot-tested through interviews with youth in the child welfare and runaway and homeless youth populations. The tool will be tested with 600 youth between the ages of 12 and 24 in three geographic areas. Researchers will examine feasibility, reliability, and validity of the screening tool in a variety of settings. A final report is due in 2016.
- Loyola University Chicago developed *Building Child Welfare Response to Child Trafficking*, a manual that includes screening instruments (for both rapid and more comprehensive screening), case management tools, legal advocacy information, and resources (see <http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/chrc/pdfs/BCWRHandbook2011.pdf>). Loyola's rapid screening tool consists of a series of yes/no questions, and the comprehensive screening tool includes more open-ended questions, as well as space for the interviewer's notes.
- The Office of Refugee Resettlement's Rescue and Restore program offers a list of screening questions at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/screening\\_questions\\_to\\_assess\\_whether\\_a\\_person\\_is\\_a\\_trafficking\\_victim\\_1.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/screening_questions_to_assess_whether_a_person_is_a_trafficking_victim_1.pdf).
- The Vera Institute of Justice has also developed a tool for the identifying victims of trafficking, although this tool is not specific to children. The Trafficking Victim Identification Tool is a 30-item questionnaire, available in English and Spanish, that can be administered by trained victim services providers to

help identify victims of labor or sex trafficking. The tool is available at <http://www.vera.org/pubs/special/human-trafficking-identification-tool>.

The Children's Bureau recommends that all children and youth who receive child welfare services undergo early screening for trauma and for social-emotional functioning (Children's Bureau, 2012). Universal screening for trauma can help identify trauma symptoms as well as children who require more extensive screening. Examples of trauma screening tools include the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Trauma Version (Kisiel et al., 2013) and the Pediatric Emotional Distress Scale (Saylor, 2002).

In addition to formal screening and assessment with tools, professionals trained in recognizing the signs and indicators of trafficking will be better able to recognize possible victims and take additional steps to determine if a child is experiencing commercial sexual exploitation.

## Training for Service Providers

A number of organizations offer training for social workers and other service providers. Some of these include:

- ACF and the HHS Office on Women's Health launched a pilot initiative in 2013 to train health-care workers on human trafficking issues. The SOAR (Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond) to Health and Wellness Training is designed to help health-care workers identify and care for victims of trafficking. For more information, contact [rochelle.rollins@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:rochelle.rollins@acf.hhs.gov).
- The National Human Trafficking Resource Center offers online trainings on such topics as public outreach, domestic servitude, trafficking in a health-care setting, and more at <http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/material-type/online-trainings>.
- The Department of State offers Trafficking in Persons (TIP) 101 online training at <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/training/>.
- The Department of Justice offers a directory of different types of training in trafficking at [https://www.ovcttac.gov/downloads/TTADirectory/HT\\_TTA\\_Directory\\_508c\\_12-5-12\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ovcttac.gov/downloads/TTADirectory/HT_TTA_Directory_508c_12-5-12_FINAL.pdf).
- The Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign offers training resources and online training for a number of different professionals at <http://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/awareness-training>.
- Shared Hope offers a variety of audience-specific materials to boost prevention and treatment efforts across multiple fields. For more information, visit the Human Trafficking Training section of the Shared Hope website at <http://sharedhope.org/what-we-do/prevent/training/>.
- Girls' Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS) is a survivor-led organization that offers customized training and technical assistance on the commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking of children and youth. For more information, visit <http://www.gems-girls.org/get-trained>.

## The Needs of Children and Youth Who Have Been Trafficked

Children and youth who have been victims of trafficking have many needs similar to those of children who enter the child welfare system because of substantiated abuse or neglect by their parents. For instance, children who have been trafficked need health care, mental health services, a safe place to live, help with education, and facilitated reconnections with family members. These are discussed below, along with some of the aspects that distinguish trafficking victims' needs from those of other children receiving child welfare services.

**Physical health.** Children or youth who have been trafficked often have experienced physical abuse, neglect (including medical neglect), emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. Associated with this abuse, they may suffer from broken bones and other untreated internal and external injuries; sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV; and malnutrition. They may be addicted to drugs or alcohol, either as the result of being forced to use substances by their trafficker or as a coping mechanism (Clawson & Grace, 2007). Their overall health may show the consequences of long periods of poor or no medical or dental care. Child welfare workers can help by ensuring that victims have access to medical screenings and treatment to address both immediate and long-term concerns. Connecting with a sympathetic health-care provider who has experience with victims of trafficking may also provide reassurance to victims who may be reluctant to seek care.

**Mental health and trauma.** It is hard to overstate the complex mental health needs of a child or youth who has been trafficked. The traumatic experiences of being trafficked, which may have included regular beatings, rapes, and other acts of violence, have often come at the expense of the youth's childhood. Severe abuse experiences like these may cause alterations in brain development, as the child or youth learns to operate from a "survival" mode (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015). In addition, the child or youth may not have experienced a secure and trusting relationship with a parent or other caretaker, which makes it difficult

to build other relationships. In extreme maltreatment cases, such as being trafficked, a child or youth may experience posttraumatic stress syndrome.

Clawson and Grace (2007) studied young girls who had been trafficked, and they identified a number of mental health symptoms associated with trafficking, including extreme anxiety, an inability to trust, self-destructive behaviors, profound shame or guilt, and despair and hopelessness. Thus, most children who have been trafficked have a need for long-term, intensive mental/behavioral health services that can help them move forward into a new, healthier life. Screening by qualified mental health providers who have experience with youth who have been trafficked can be the first step to getting help. Research has also suggested the benefits of cognitive-behavioral therapy for children who have been trafficked (Williamson, Dutch, & Clawson, 2010). Screening can help determine the type of therapy that might be most useful, and child welfare workers can facilitate access to treatment providers.

**Housing.** Youth who have been trafficked and come into the care of child welfare almost always have an immediate need for a safe place to live. Their background may make them a poor fit for traditional foster care, and many foster families may feel unprepared to parent a child who has been trafficked. There are several examples of shelters and group homes set up specifically for youth who have been trafficked. These congregate-care settings are prepared to address the trauma experienced by youth who have been trafficked. As more youth who have been trafficked come into the child welfare system, agencies will need to consider ways to provide safe housing at short notice.

A national survey published in 2013 found 33 residential programs in 16 States and the District of Columbia that were exclusive to trafficking victims (Reichert & Sylwestrzak, 2013). The full report, *National Survey of Residential Programs for Victims of Sex Trafficking*, and its list of programs are available at [http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/pdf/ResearchReports/NSRHVST\\_101813.pdf](http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/pdf/ResearchReports/NSRHVST_101813.pdf).

**Education.** Children and youth who have been trafficked will likely require educational screening and may also require remedial services. While some youth may feel comfortable in a traditional school, others may prefer more nontraditional education options. Child welfare workers can help by collecting records, exploring education options, and facilitating enrollment.

**Legal services.** There are a number of circumstances that might require the child or youth who has been trafficked to hire or otherwise secure legal help. Youth and children need lawyers if they are charged with prostitution or other crimes. They may also need legal counsel to protect themselves from their pimps or traffickers or to establish their legal identity. Some children or youth involved with the justice system may require an attorney for victim advocacy, while children or youth who are not citizens may require an immigration attorney.

**Other needs.** Youth who have been trafficked will often need help with basic life skills (e.g., opening a bank account, keeping medical records), as well as training for a job and basic job skills. For many, having a mentor or someone who is willing and available to provide guidance over the long term is essential to ensure that the youth is able to pursue a life away from trafficking.

## State and Local Efforts to Help Victims

States and other jurisdictions, taking their lead from the Federal Government, have begun to address human trafficking through new legislation, policies, and practices, with an emphasis on collaboration across systems and agencies.

### State “Safe Harbor” Legislation on Trafficking

A growing number of States have passed “Safe Harbor” laws that decriminalize the acts of children who are exploited for commercial sex, while providing them important legal protections and access to services. The legislation generally attempts to treat children and youth as victims rather than criminals, to divert them from the justice system and to the child welfare or other system

where they can receive services, and to punish traffickers and those who seek out children for sex. Safe Harbor legislation and its protections vary widely across States, and the legislation is not without controversy, often because some States’ legislation is viewed as not going far enough to fund and establish efforts to combat trafficking (see, for example, Jekowsky, 2014). Lack of funding for Safe Harbor has prompted jurisdictions to seek funds elsewhere for their anti-trafficking efforts. For instance, Washington, DC, not yet a Safe Harbor jurisdiction, has a longstanding relationship with the U.S. Department of Justice and has received grants to support its Human Trafficking Task Force.

Both the Polaris Project (<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/national-policy/state-ratings-on-human-trafficking-laws>) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/human-trafficking-overview.aspx>) provide information on States’ Safe Harbor laws. Polaris also rates States’ anti-trafficking efforts using a four-tier system.

Minnesota enacted its Safe Harbor law in 2011 with full implementation in 2014 to ensure that sexually exploited youth are treated as victims rather than as criminals by the justice system. The State also allocated funds for training law enforcement on trafficking of youth, funded housing for victims, and created regional coordinators of services for commercially sexually exploited youth (O’Connell, 2014). A guidebook from Minnesota’s Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs provides information on this emerging approach to working with victims of trafficking. *No Wrong Door: A Comprehensive Approach to Safe Harbor for Minnesota’s Sexually Exploited Youth* is available at <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/forms-documents/Documents/12012%20Safe%20Harbor%20Report%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>.

## State Child Welfare Efforts to Address Trafficking

State and local child welfare agencies are developing programs and processes to address trafficking and to work with other agencies in these efforts. Many of these programs include collaboration across systems and multidisciplinary responses to identify and help youth victims of trafficking. A few examples are offered:

- A multidisciplinary effort in Los Angeles, CA, grew out of the county's realization that they had a significant problem with young girls as victims of sex trafficking. In 2011, the local FBI Innocence Lost task force worked with the Probation Department, the Department of Child and Family Services, the Los Angeles Police Department, and the District Attorney's office to create a new emergency anti-trafficking response team. The team helped victims receive services and developed long-term plans for their recovery. To improve identification of victims, the Probation Department systematically collected data and reviewed cases in the system, looking for indicators of trafficking. A Federal grant helped with funding for resources for victims, as well as the creation of a collaborative court specifically designed for child victims of sex trafficking. For more information, see [http://file.lacounty.gov/probation/cms1\\_202731.pdf](http://file.lacounty.gov/probation/cms1_202731.pdf) and well as Epstein & Edelman, 2013.
- Florida created a Human Trafficking Task Force that developed a statewide plan to address trafficking, followed by an implementation report. Both emphasized the need to collect data, involve multiple agencies, increase public awareness, punish traffickers, and create and enhance services for victims. Florida legislators have supported victim services by providing \$3 million in 2014 for safe houses and other rehabilitative services. Read more about Florida's programs and access resources at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/human-trafficking> and [http://www.cahr.fsu.edu/sub\\_category/Florida\\_StrategicPlanonHumanTrafficking.html](http://www.cahr.fsu.edu/sub_category/Florida_StrategicPlanonHumanTrafficking.html).
- In 2008, the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS) partnered with the International Organization for Adolescents on the Building Child Welfare Response to Child Trafficking Project, which involved training child welfare professionals to better identify and serve child victims. The training covered identifying, screening, and providing services to trafficked children and youth encountered in child welfare work, as well as partnering with law enforcement. The IDCFS also made changes to the State's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) so that statistics on children identified as trafficked could be tracked. Read more about the Illinois project at <http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/chrc/pdfs/BCWRHandbook2011.pdf>.
- At the State level, Massachusetts created its Interagency Human Trafficking Task Force, chaired by the State attorney general and made up of members from many backgrounds, including survivors and community agencies. The task force is charged with creating policies on service development, demand reduction, system change, public awareness, and training (see <http://www.mass.gov/ago/about-the-attorney-generals-office/community-programs/anti-human-trafficking/human-trafficking-task-force>). At the county level, the Children's Advocacy Center in Suffolk County, MA, has brought together more than 35 public and private agencies to form the Support to End Exploitation Now Coalition (SEEN Coalition) to combat sex trafficking of children. The SEEN Coalition works to address trafficking through case coordination and multidisciplinary response, outreach and education, professional training, tracking of referrals and outcomes, and prevention. Read more at <http://www.suffolkcac.org/programs/seen>.
- New York State passed its Safe Harbor legislation in 2008 and began to fund projects in 2012 to help child welfare agencies in specific counties prevent and address child trafficking. This effort, labeled "Child Right: New York," supports pilot studies in eight counties and one Indian reservation. Counties submitted descriptions of their proposals, including recent statistics on child and youth sex trafficking, ways

to identify and provide services (e.g., counseling, shelter, health care, life skills training, aftercare), as well as how the agency would staff its program and train staff. Read more about New York State's Child Right project at <http://anysyb.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ChildRight-New-York-Factsheet-Phase-II-Final.pdf>.

## Children's Bureau Grants to Address Trafficking at State and Local Levels

In FY 2014, the Children's Bureau awarded funding to nine demonstration grants to help child welfare agencies respond to human trafficking through infrastructure building and multisystem approaches with local law enforcement, juvenile justice, courts systems, runaway and homeless youth programs, Children's Justice Act grantees, child advocacy centers, and other necessary service providers. Awards were made to the following organizations:

- King County Superior Court, Seattle, WA
- Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Inc., Miami, FL
- Arizona Board of Regents on behalf of Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC
- California Department of Social Services, Sacramento, CA
- Healing Place Serve, Baton Rouge, LA
- University of Maryland, Baltimore, Baltimore, MD
- State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Hartford, CT
- Justice Resource Institute, Needham, MA

These grantees will aim to build greater awareness and a better response to child trafficking within the child welfare population. Grantees will document the prevalence of trafficking among children and youth and create an infrastructure to provide services to victims. These funded programs will also help to grow the research base within the field and will aid systems and service providers as they enhance their practices in the context of limited resources. The work of these

nine grantees is in the early stages; however, materials and updates will be provided through the Children's Bureau website as they become available. A full list of FY 2014 discretionary grant awards also is available on the Children's Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/discretionary-grant-awards-2014>.

## Resources

There are many useful resources to help survivors and the agencies, organizations, and programs that work with survivors, such as:

- National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1.888.373.7888; Text INFO or HELP to BeFree (233733) (to report instances of trafficking)
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Cyber Tipline: <http://www.missingkids.com/CyberTipline> or 1.800.843.5678 (to report tips of suspected child sex trafficking)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Welfare Information Gateway: Human Trafficking (at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/trafficking/> to share multiple resources with programs working with children)
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crimes Training and Technical Assistance Center's *Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide* that includes information on multisystem efforts to address trafficking and help victims and is available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide>.
- *Services Available to Victims of Human Trafficking: A Guide for Social Service Providers* was developed in 2012 by the Office of Refugee Resettlement and outlines both Federal and some State programs and services for victims at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/trafficking\\_services\\_0.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/trafficking_services_0.pdf).
- Shared Hope, an international organization, offers its "Chosen" resources through the website at <http://sharedhope.org>.
- Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS), a survivor-led group, offers information and resources at <http://www.gems-girls.org>.

The annual prevention Resource Guide, produced as part of the Children’s Bureau’s National Child Abuse Prevention Month initiative, supports service providers in their work with parents, caregivers, and their children to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect. While this resource is aimed at child welfare professionals, its helpful tip sheets for parents and caregivers address a number of parenting issues. The *2015 Prevention Resource Guide: Making Meaningful Connections* includes information on human trafficking, lists some of the signs and symptoms, and offers tips for being aware of recruiting tactics and where to report suspected trafficking. The guide, including the tip sheet “Human Trafficking: Protecting Our Youth,” is available on Child Welfare Information Gateway’s website at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/resource-guide/>.

### Resources on Identifying Victims

- How to Identify a Human Trafficking Victim (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops): <http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/identifying-trafficking-victims.cfm>
- Human Trafficking of Children Indicator Tool (Florida Department of Children and Families): [http://partnershipforchildhealth.org/Newsletters/Human\\_Trafficking\\_of\\_Children\\_Indicator\\_Tool.pdf](http://partnershipforchildhealth.org/Newsletters/Human_Trafficking_of_Children_Indicator_Tool.pdf)
- Recognizing the Signs (Polaris Project): <http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/recognizing-the-signs>
- The Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crimes Training and Technical Assistance Center’s Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide: <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide>

### Programs

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare lists programs that it has evaluated for evidence of best practice. The list can be found at <http://www.cebc4cw.org/topic/commercial-sexual-exploitation-of-children-and-adolescents-services-for-victims/>.

### Other Resources

- Connecticut’s Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) recommends several curricula for use with youth victims of trafficking at <http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=4743&Q=562298>, including My Life My Choice (information available at <http://www.fightingexploitation.org/>)
- The June 2012 issue of *Practice Notes*, a newsletter produced by the North Carolina Division of Social Services (NC DSS) and the Family and Children’s Resource Program, offers information for child welfare workers on identifying and responding to victims of human trafficking. “Human Trafficking: What Child Welfare Workers Should Know,” *Practice Notes*, 17(3), is available at <http://www.practicenotes.org/v17n3/trafficking.htm>.
- The Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs published *Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Trafficking of Children and Youth: A Prevention and Intervention Resource Guide for Educators, Parents and Community Members* that is available at <http://www.k12.wa.us/safetycenter/CSEC/pubdocs/Sexual-Exploitation-and-Trafficking-of-Children-and-Youth.pdf>.
- The National Center for Homeless Education offers an informational webpage with resources on human trafficking targeted toward unaccompanied homeless youth and youth leaving foster care. The webpage, <http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/trafficking.php>, includes a factsheet on recognizing and addressing human trafficking written specifically for educators.

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### Suggested citation:

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2015). *Child welfare and human trafficking*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
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