

**Domestic Human Trafficking of Children and Youth  
Initial Findings Brief**

*Prepared for the Family and Youth Services Bureau  
by the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth*

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[Overview](#) ..... 1  
[Demographics](#) ..... 2  
[Legislation](#) ..... 5  
[Prevention and Intervention](#) ..... 8  
[Research](#) ..... 10  
[Definitions](#) ..... 12  
[Federal Programs and Initiatives To Combat Human Trafficking](#) ..... 13  
[Nongovernmental Advocacy Organizations](#) ..... 14  
[References and Further Reading](#) ..... 15  
[Web Resources](#) ..... 17  
[Periodicals](#) ..... 17

**Overview**

Advocates and policymakers concerned with human trafficking—a crime in which victims are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor—have, until recently, focused primarily on the problem of international trafficking, or trafficking of persons across international borders. U.S. legislative efforts, such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (or TVPA, reauthorized in 2003), have emphasized aiding foreign victims in the United States. However, more recently, some U.S. policymakers and advocates have drawn attention to trafficking of American citizens and residents within National borders.

According to experts in the field, commercial sexual exploitation, as opposed to labor trafficking, appears to be the prevalent form of U.S. domestic trafficking of children and youth. Experts say that psychological dysfunction at home is one of the main reasons children enter into the sex industry. Many children, looking for emotional connection, may be susceptible to a potential trafficker showing affection toward them. Many times the trafficker will offer food, clothing, and a place to stay to a child in need, most often a runaway or throwaway youth (a youth under 18 who either is abandoned or forced to leave homes by parents or guardians), until the child becomes financially indebted and emotionally tied to the trafficker ([The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico](#), 2001).

Beyond psychological dysfunction, a 1994 National Institute of Justice report (cited in [Who Is There To Help Us? How the System Fails Sexually Exploited Girls in the U.S.](#), 2005) claims that sexually abused children are 28 times more likely to be arrested for prostitution at some point in their lives than peers who do not suffer abuse.

Until recently, U.S. children and youth exploited for commercial sex have been seen as perpetrators of prostitution rather than as victims of domestic human trafficking. That view is beginning to change as awareness of the trafficking problem grows and legislators and advocates attempt to broaden legal protections for child and youth prostitutes, decriminalize their actions, and offer them better, more comprehensive services. (See "[Introduction of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005](#)." The reauthorization act was passed in the House of Representatives on December 14, 2005, and in the Senate on December 22, 2005.)

Under the TVPA, a child under the age of 18 used for a commercial sex act is considered a victim of trafficking with no further criteria required. However, a person 18 or over used for a commercial sex act is not considered a victim of trafficking unless force, fraud, or coercion is used. (For definitions of force, see [Hiding in Plain Sight: A Practical Guide to Identifying Victims of Trafficking in the U.S.](#), 2003). This makes it more difficult to protect youth 18 or older.

Research shows that most American victims of commercial sexual exploitation are runaway or throwaway youth who live on the streets and become victims of prostitution; commercial sex becomes a way for them to support themselves financially or to get things they want or need ("[Domestic Sex Trafficking of Minors](#)," 2005). Other young people are recruited into prostitution through forced abduction, pressure from parents, or deceptive agreements between parents and traffickers. Once these children become involved in prostitution, they are often forced to travel far from their homes; some are kidnapped, others are isolated from their friends and family in order for the trafficker to gain more control over them, and still others are transported across State lines, which further isolates and disorients them.

The growing problem of domestic commercial sexual exploitation of children is fueled by poverty, prior history of sexual abuse and assault, the presence of large numbers of transient males in communities, membership in girl gangs, and recruitment of children by organized crime units.

## **Demographics**

Concrete numbers on the victims of domestic commercial sexual exploitation are scarce because those involved in the underground sex economy are difficult to track. Girls are hidden behind closed doors in motels and hotels and in escort services, massage parlors, and dance clubs where sex is bought and sold.

When victims are identified, they are often reluctant to reveal information because either they believe that they are in love with their pimps or they fear retaliation. Aware of the sensitivities surrounding sexual abuse and exploitation and of the need for confidentiality, many youth agencies do not include questions about prostitution in their intake questionnaires or interviews. In addition, many researchers attempting to quantify the number of victims of commercial sexual exploitation of children have focused on international trafficking and failed to realize the extent of the domestic commercial sexual exploitation of youth.

Estimates on the number of victims vary widely, and the inability to effectively track this population inhibits more specific and comprehensive legislation. Advocates and law enforcement agencies concur that there is limited data on the number of children and youth under 18 who are involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

The most comprehensive research to date—the 2001 report by Richard J. Estes and Neil Alan Weiner entitled [\*The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico\*](#)—estimates that “at least” 250,000 U.S. children are victims of sexual exploitation each year. In the study’s *Working Guide to the Empirical Literature*, Estes cites a “conservative” range of between 300,000 and 500,000.

The report has been more successful at gaining concrete demographics and characteristics for children *at risk* for commercial sexual exploitation. The report reveals demographics based on research over a 27-month period with focus groups, statistical surveys, and interviews with child victims of commercial sex trafficking, traffickers, and customers in 27 cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The research reveals that approximately 244,000-325,000 U.S. youth are at risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation.

All sources agree that the problem and extent of commercial sexual exploitation of children is increasing.

#### Demographics and Characteristics of Victims

The average age at which girls first become victims of prostitution is 12-14. For boys and transgender youth, the average age of entry into prostitution is 11-13. (Some experts put the age as young as 10). According to many law enforcement officers, girls often lie about their age and pass themselves off as 18 years old, and so are not identified as children ([\*Who Is There To Help Us?\*](#)).

Most experts agree that juveniles from every race and social class are entangled in sex work, though the majority of those arrested come from poor families. The National Incidence Studies of Missing Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children estimate that one out of every three teens on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.

Approximately 55 percent of street girls engage in formal prostitution, and of that number about 75 percent work for a pimp. About one-fifth of these children become entangled in nationally organized crime networks and are trafficked nationally ([\*The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico\*](#)).

Children most likely at risk for child sexual exploitation include:

- Youth who run away from home
- Youth who run away from juvenile detentions and other institutions
- Thrownaway youth
- Homeless children (not counted elsewhere)
- Children ages 10-17 living in public housing

- Female gang members
- Transgender youth
- Foreign children ages 10-17 brought into the United States legally (and illegally)
- Unaccompanied minors entering the United States on their own
- Nonimmigrant Canadian and Mexican children ages 10-17
- U.S. youth ages 13-17 living within driving distance of a Mexican or Canadian city
- Nonimmigrant U.S. youth ages 13-17 trafficked from the United States to other countries for sexual purposes

*[\(The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico\)](#)*

Estes and Weiner's study states that 30 percent of shelter youth and 70 percent of street youth are victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States. One in three persons involved in street-level prostitution in the United States is under 18 years of age and one in two persons involved in off-street prostitution in the United States is under 18 years of age.

Nearly all—about 95 percent—of the domestic children trafficked for sexual purposes who were studied in *[The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico](#)* were girls. Trafficked girls, in particular, can experience severe disorientation and isolation. They are unable to connect to friends or family and may be severely punished by their pimps for even picking up the phone to make contact.

Estes and Weiner's report mentions that boys may be as affected by child sexual exploitation as girls, but are hidden away and less well-served by human service and law-enforcement systems because of the widespread belief that boys are better able than girls to fend for themselves.

Little information is available on transgender youth involved in the sex trade, though Estes and Weiner note that transgender individuals are excluded from so many areas of social and economic life that prostitution becomes one of the very few options for economic survival. It has been widely observed that, as a consequence of discrimination and vulnerability to violence within families and communities, a disproportionate percentage of runaway or abandoned youth are transgender, lesbian, bisexual, and gay, though viable numbers are not recorded.

According to experts, the following regions of the country are used as domestic trafficking gateways—points where children are held before moving them to a State where it will be harder for them to be noticed—and final destination points (not in any specific order):

- Honolulu, Hawaii
- New Orleans, Louisiana
- Chicago, Illinois
- New York, New York
- San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Jose, California
- Seattle, Washington
- Berkeley and Anaheim, California
- Detroit, Michigan
- Miami, Homestead, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- El Paso, Texas
- Las Vegas, Nevada
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Portland, Oregon
- Phoenix, Arizona
- Atlanta, Georgia

### Demographics and Characteristics of Traffickers

Sexual exploiters of children may include pedophiles; transient males including members of the military, truck drivers, seasonal workers, conventioners, and sex tourists; and opportunistic exploiters, or persons who will sexually abuse whoever is available for sex. Women are often used as recruiters, targeting children, befriending them when they are at their neediest, only to later introduce them to the world of prostitution.

Characteristics of traffickers include the following:

- Most pimps manage only one to three girls at a time.
- Approximately 50 percent of pimps operate strictly on the local level and are not part of larger criminal networks.
- Approximately 25 percent are tied to city-wide crime rings.
- Approximately 15 percent are tied into regional or nationwide networks.
- Approximately 10 percent are tied into international sex crime networks.

*([The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico](#))*

The last group (international sex crime networks) participates actively in the international trafficking of children—including American children and children who are nationals of other countries. Typically they are also connected to international drug networks and frequently use children as “mules” in moving drugs into and across the United States. Children and youth older than 12 years old are prime targets for sexual exploitation by organized crime units. Crime networks tend not to be involved with children younger than 9 years old because they are “too difficult.” Many times the babies of girls who become pregnant are removed and raised by members of the organized crime ring and are used to exert greater control over the prostituted youth.

### **Legislation**

Advocates say the central issue facing the justice system is whether it views and treats prostituted girls as victims or offenders. The groundbreaking TVPA indicates the government’s commitment to treat trafficked persons as victims who are eligible for services and to prosecute traffickers and their associates. All persons less than 18 years old involved in a commercial sex act are automatically defined as victims. Some advocates say the implementation of the TVPA has gone a long way in assisting foreign victims in the United States but has fallen short of aiding those born or raised in the United States.

In July 2004, at the first National Conference on Trafficking, President Bush spoke about proactive approaches to the growing problem of domestic human trafficking involving youth. Three days after the conference, the Senate approved a [resolution against human trafficking](#) authored by Texas Senator John Cornyn. Still, advocates critical of existing legislation noted that top government officials made little mention of American girls, focusing more on foreign victims.

In addition, trafficking is defined almost exclusively as a Federal crime to be handled by Federal authorities, with limited coordination between Federal and State law enforcement agencies. Advocates say that while the Trafficking Act has helped in the prosecution and investigation of cases, the job of providing basic social and legal services to survivors has largely fallen on the shoulders of nongovernmental organizations.

### Legislation on Human Trafficking

[The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005](#) was passed in the House on December 14, 2005, and in the Senate on December 22, 2005. The act authorizes appropriations for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 for the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. Sec. 203 provides for the protection of juvenile victims of trafficking in persons through the establishment of a pilot program, within the Department of Health and Human Services, to provide services to child and youth victims. Such services include shelter, psychological counseling, and assistance in developing independent living skills.

Other pending legislation is the **End Demand for Sex Trafficking Act of 2005**, which furthers previous legislation by targeting demand for commercial sex and reauthorizing appropriations for antitrafficking programs here and abroad. The act was introduced in both the [House](#) and [Senate](#) in April 2005.

In 2003, Congress passed the **Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools To End the Exploitation of Children Today Act** (the PROTECT Act). Under the act, it became a crime for any person to enter the United States to sexually abuse children. In addition, the act made it a crime for a U.S. citizen to travel abroad to sexually abuse children.

In 2002, President Bush signed the **National Security Presidential Directive 22**, which directs Federal agencies to coordinate on antitrafficking efforts.

**In 2000, the U.N. Protocol To Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children** stated that effective action to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, requires a comprehensive international approach in the countries of origin, transit, and destination that includes measures to prevent trafficking, punish the traffickers, and protect the victims of trafficking, including protecting their internationally recognized human rights.

**The TVPA (also referred to as the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000)** was enacted as the first comprehensive Federal law to penalize the range of offenses involved in trafficking. All persons under 18 years old involved in a commercial sex act are

automatically defined as victims no matter how “consensual” their participation. The law aids foreign victims by granting them permanent residency in the United States if they fall under the requirements of the TVPA.

States such as **Washington, Texas, California, Illinois, Louisiana, Arizona, Kansas, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Florida, Missouri, Alaska, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Maryland (pending)** have enacted their own antitrafficking laws. Advocates recommend that more States make trafficking a State felony offense. Criminalizing human trafficking brings State law into accord with the TVPA and enables local and State law enforcement to investigate and prosecute these crimes and work in partnership with Federal law enforcement.

### Legislation To Protect Children

**The 2003 FBI Initiative Operation Innocence Lost** gives priority to proactive cracking down on pimping, pandering, and interstate trafficking of children. The program, stimulated in part by the TVPA, ended the requirement that a perpetrator must take an underage prostitute across a State line to be prosecuted for a Federal crime. Operation Innocence Lost has led to more proactive investigations of child prostitution in all areas, including escort services and massage parlors.

**The Child On-Line Protection Act of 1998** requires the operator of any Web site or online service directed to children that collects personal information from children, or the operator of a Web site or online service that has actual knowledge that it is collecting personal information from a child, to provide notice on the Web site of what information is collected from children by the operator and to obtain verifiable parental consent for the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information from children.

**The 1997 Mann Act** makes it a crime to knowingly transport any individual, male or female, in interstate or foreign commerce or in any territory or possession of the United States for the purpose of prostitution or a sexual activity that is a criminal offense under the Federal or State statute or local ordinance. Section 2423 is concerned solely with the transportation of minors under the age of 18 years and provides for an enhanced penalty.

**The Amber Hagerman Child Protection Act of 1996** clearly provides for the death penalty in child sex abuse cases handled in the Federal courts, requires life imprisonment for repeat sex offenders when cases are heard in Federal court, and provides for a nationwide system, administered by the FBI, to track sex offenders (the Amber Alert System).

**The Child Privacy Protection and Parental Empowerment Act of 1996** ensures that personal information about a child cannot be bought or sold without a parent’s consent.

**The 1989 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child** requires ratifying nations to undertake to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, nations shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral, and multilateral measures to prevent (a) the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; (b)

the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; (c) the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

### Violence Against Women and Prostitution Laws

**The 1994 Violence Against Women Act (reauthorized in 2000, adding services for rural, older, and immigrant women and women with disabilities)** aids domestic violence programs aimed at prevention measures for children who witnessed violence in their home. The act was reauthorized by the House and Senate in December 2005 and, at the time of this writing, awaits signature by the President.

**Prostitution laws in most States** have traditionally focused on arresting the women involved, as opposed to arresting customers, traffickers, or pimps.

### **Prevention and Intervention**

Trafficking victims, whether young people or adults, are subjected to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. They may have been confined or made psychologically dependent on the trafficker. They may suffer from addiction to drugs or alcohol, posttraumatic stress disorder, or sexually transmitted diseases. They may fear retaliation if they leave the trafficker. Often, they have little education or job skills and low self-esteem.

Few U.S. organizations exist specifically to serve victims of international or domestic trafficking. However, many organizations with other missions serve youth and child victims of domestic human trafficking. These groups include community- and faith-based agencies dealing with victims of commercial sexual exploitation, child sexual abuse, runaway and homeless youth, domestic violence, victims advocacy, legal aid, and human rights. Healthcare providers, mental health counselors, law enforcement officials, and State and local antitrafficking task forces also deal with these young people.

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) already serves a large portion of the population of affected runaway and throwaway youth by providing funding for street outreach programs, transitional living programs, and basic center providers serving the population of homeless and runaway youth.

Child and youth victims of domestic human trafficking may require the following types of services:

- Victim advocacy
- Legal assistance
- Street outreach
- Shelter
- Food
- Protective services
- Drug and alcohol treatment
- Sexual abuse counseling

- Sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment
- Medical assistance
- Mental health services
- Translation services
- Help reuniting with parents or family
- Transportation home
- Education
- Employment
- Childcare

To link victims to law enforcement and social services, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services manages a trafficking hotline (888-3737-888) for callers who want to report a case of trafficking or get referred to services. The hotline is operated by Covenant House, a childcare agency based in New York.

Victims of severe forms of trafficking are eligible for services and benefits available to victims of Federal crimes. These services include information about protections from threat and intimidation and referrals to counseling and treatment providers. (See [Attorney General Guidelines for Victim and Witness Assistance](#), 2005.) In addition, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime administers a Federal grants program, authorized by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, to provide services to trafficking victims.

Barriers to adequately serving domestic trafficking victims include:

- Lack of funding
- Need for resources, such as housing and transportation
- Lack of coordinated services (e.g., linking mental health, medical care, legal assistance, and other services in one location or through a network of providers)
- Lack of training for professionals who deal with trafficking victims, including training on needs of sexually exploited children, legal issues, and victims' rights
- Need for more proactive measures to train law enforcement officers, particularly at the local level, to identify victims and forced labor operations and recognize and assist trafficking victims
- Safety concerns
- Criminalization of youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation
- Need for legislation that adequately addresses prevention of and intervention in cases of domestic sexual trafficking of children and youth

Advocates for sexually exploited children in the United States recommend the following improvements in services for young trafficking victims:

- Dedicated Federal funding for sexually exploited American children and youth
- Safe houses and transitional living facilities for sexually exploited children and youth
- Training programs for youth workers

- A holistic approach that addresses all the needs of child and youth victims of commercial sexual exploitation
- The establishment of model programs with formal, coordinated links between various service agencies and criminal justice departments, as well as networks of organizations and agencies concerned about sexually exploited children and youth
- The development of guidelines for services to prostituted children and youth for health organizations
- Identification of best practices in serving sexually exploited youth
- Better prevention by promoting awareness of sex trafficking of young people and addressing the reasons why adults sexually exploit children and youth
- Programs that reduce the demand for commercial sex in the United States
- Alternative income-generation strategies for youth at risk of sexual exploitation
- A Positive Youth Development approach that provides opportunities for youth to participate in decisionmaking, build self-esteem, and develop a sense of belonging

For a list of Federal Trafficking Victim Services grantees, go to [www1.salvationarmy.org/usn/geographiclisting.pdf](http://www1.salvationarmy.org/usn/geographiclisting.pdf). For lists of organizations that advocate for or serve victims of trafficking, go to [www.iaast.net](http://www.iaast.net) and [www.humantrafficking.org](http://www.humantrafficking.org).

The Protection Project, an antitrafficking research project at Johns Hopkins University, has in the past run training programs for service providers who work with victims of trafficking (no trainings are scheduled at the moment). The Protection Project also manages the [U.S. training and assistance Web site](#). The site includes a referral system that lists all service providers in the United States trained to work with victims of severe trafficking and a specialized resources library containing all relevant information needed by victims of severe trafficking, service providers, benefit-issuing agencies, and law enforcement officials.

## Research

Though much research has been done on international human trafficking, few studies have looked specifically at domestic trafficking of young people in the United States. However, the body of literature has grown significantly in the past 5 years or so. The following relevant reports and researchers are cited widely or seem to provide the most up-to-date information:

**The first major report on commercial sexual exploitation of children in the United States, [The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U. S., Canada and Mexico](#)**, was released in 2001 by Richard Estes and Neil Weiner of the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. Based on a 3-year study of sexual trafficking of children and youth in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, the report investigates the causes of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth, estimates the number of children and youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, looks at the United States' ability to serve sexually exploited young people, and recommends policies to reduce the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

**Donna Hughes, a women's studies professor at the University of Rhode Island**, has written a number of reports on sex trafficking and child trafficking, including "[Demand for Child](#)

[Victims](#),” [Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking](#), and [Hiding in Plain Sight: A Practical Guide to Identifying Victims of Trafficking in the United States](#). Hughes also writes *DIGNITY*, a daily e-mail newsletter about sexual exploitation. (dhughes@uri.edu)

[Out From the Shadows: Good Practices in Working With Sexually Exploited Youth](#), published in 2000 by Liza Goulet for Canadian Senator Landon Pearson and the Institute for Child Rights and Development at the University of Victoria, looks at the issue of sexual exploitation of youth and presents eight case studies of North and South American organizations working effectively with sexually exploited young people.

[Who Is There To Help Us? How the System Fails Sexually Exploited Girls in the United States](#), by Sara Ann Friedman for ECPAT-USA, looks specifically at the problem of domestic trafficking of girls under 18 in the United States. Based on 30 interviews with service providers, sexually exploited girls, law enforcement officers, government officials, and others in several U.S. cities, this 2005 report contends that the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, as put into practice to date, provides far greater protections for non-U.S. youth than for American adolescents.

[“Prostitution of Juveniles: Patterns from NIBRS”](#), published by David Finkelhor and Richard Ormrod in the June 2004 issue of *Juvenile Justice Bulletin* (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention), examines the prostitution of juveniles based on data from the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System. The authors provide a profile of juvenile prostitution, noting how it differs from adult prostitution.

[Needs Assessment for Service Providers and Trafficking Victims](#) is a report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice’s National Institute of Justice. Conducted by Caliber Associates, Inc., and completed in 2003, the study used telephone interviews and focus groups to assess the services available to trafficking victims in the United States, the extent to which victims’ needs are met, the barriers to service, and the support service providers need to effectively serve victims.

[Hidden Slaves: Forced Labor in the United States](#), published in 2004 by Free the Slaves, a nonprofit advocacy group, and the University of California, Berkeley’s Human Rights Center, is the first study since the TVPA was passed to examine the numbers, demographic characteristics, and origins of victims and perpetrators of trafficking. The study documents the nature and scope of forced labor in the United States between January 1998 and December 2003, finding that forced labor is prevalent in five sectors of the U.S. economy: prostitution and sex services (46 percent of forced labor), domestic service (27 percent), agriculture (10 percent), sweatshops (5 percent), and restaurant and hotel work (4 percent).

[Freedom Denied: Forced Labor in California](#), also by the Human Rights Center at Berkeley, looks at publicized forced labor cases in California (in which victims came from 18 countries, including the United States) between 1998 and 2003, and finds that the greatest number of victims were forced to work in prostitution.

In the conclusions to their research reports, several of the scholars mentioned here have called for additional research on commercial sexual exploitation of young people in the United States. Topics they recommend addressing include:

- Populations of children, youth, and adults at greatest risk of becoming victims and or perpetrators of sexual crimes against children and young people
- Societal and family factors that contribute to commercial sexual exploitation of children
- How male dominance over young women and girls promotes the commercial sexual exploitation of children
- Factors that lead adults to sexually, physically, or emotionally abuse children
- Best practices in preventing the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth and in intervening on behalf of victims
- The mental and physical impact that commercial sexual exploitation has on child and youth victims
- Data on child prostitution, such as numbers of child prostitutes, sex, ages, early histories, ethnic and economic backgrounds, entry into and length of time in prostitution, how and why they exited, what kind of help they need or receive
- Economic impact of health problems of sexually exploited children

## **Definitions**

The following are legal definitions of human trafficking or trafficking in persons:

### **From the United Nations' Protocol To Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children:**

“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

### **From U.S. Public Law 106-386, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000:**

The term “severe forms of trafficking in persons” means—(A) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or (B) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. ...

The term “sex trafficking” means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.

Other, more informal definitions include the following:

**From *Fact Sheet: Human Trafficking*, published by the Administration for Children and Families Campaign To Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking:**

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. Victims of human trafficking are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Victims are young children, teenagers, men and women.

**From *Be Smart, Be Safe ...*, published by the U.S. Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs:**

Trafficking is when someone moves you from one place to another with the promise of giving you a job or offering you marriage by using coercion, fraud, deception and force. It is modern-day slavery and traffickers will not hesitate to harm you and your family.

**From *Fact Sheet: Trafficking*, published by UNICEF:**

“Trafficking” refers to the illegal transport of human beings, in particular women and children, for the purpose of selling them or exploiting their labour.

**From “Trafficking of Children for Prostitution,” by Donna M. Hughes:**

Girls and boys are trafficked—meaning they are recruited, transported, and harbored—for the purpose of prostitution throughout the United States and around the world. We know that child prostitution is a local crime, but increasingly it is a transnational crime.

## **Federal Programs and Initiatives to Combat Human Trafficking**

**Department of Justice:** Prosecutes cases against traffickers and provides training regarding new antitrafficking laws. Their Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) offers victim support, protection services, prosecutorial and law enforcement strategies, and education resources to trafficking victims and victim service providers.

[www.usdoj.gov/whatwedo/whatwedo\\_ctip.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/whatwedo/whatwedo_ctip.html)

**Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):** Responsible for certifying that a person is a trafficking victim and therefore eligible for temporary housing, legal assistance, educational opportunities, mental health counseling, foster child care, and other benefits. HHS sponsors a hotline (888-373-7888) run by the Covenant House to advise callers who have encountered victims of human trafficking and to identify local resources available. HHS’s Administration for Children and Families runs the Campaign

To Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking, which helps identify and assist victims of human trafficking in the United States. ([www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking))

**Department of Homeland Security:** Responsible for the enforcement of Federal immigration laws and the investigation of human smuggling, trafficking in persons, and child exploitation offenses. ([www.ice.gov/graphics/index.htm](http://www.ice.gov/graphics/index.htm))

**Department of Labor:** After being certified by HHS, victims can access Department of Labor services such as job counseling, education and training, and referrals for transportation, childcare, and housing. The Department's Wage and Hour Division also investigates complaints of labor law violations. ([www.dol.gov/esa/whd](http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd))

**U.S. Department of State:** Responsible for coordinating international antitrafficking programs and efforts through its Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. ([www.state.gov/g/tip](http://www.state.gov/g/tip))

### **Nongovernmental Advocacy Organizations**

**ECPAT-USA** (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes-USA), [www.ecpatusa.org](http://www.ecpatusa.org)

**Initiative Against Sexual Trafficking** (spearheaded by The Salvation Army), [www.iast.net/](http://www.iast.net/)

**Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons** (part of the nonprofit group Global Rights), [www.globalrights.org/trafficking](http://www.globalrights.org/trafficking)

**Institute for Child Rights and Development** at the University of Victoria, Canada, [web.uvic.ca/iicrd](http://web.uvic.ca/iicrd)

**International Rescue Committee Anti-Trafficking Initiative**, [www.theirc.org/trafficking](http://www.theirc.org/trafficking)

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**, [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

**National Institute on State Policy on Trafficking of Women and Girls** at the Center for Women Policy Studies, [www.centerwomenpolicy.org](http://www.centerwomenpolicy.org)

**New York City Task Force Against Sexual Exploitation of Young People**, [www.ecpatusa.org/task\\_force.asp](http://www.ecpatusa.org/task_force.asp)

**The Protection Project**, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, [www.protectionproject.com](http://www.protectionproject.com)

**The Salvation Army**, [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)

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## Web Resources

- Campaign To Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking (Administration for Children and Families), [www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking)
- Child Trafficking Research Hub (UNICEF), [www.childtrafficking.org](http://www.childtrafficking.org)
- [HumanTrafficking.org](http://HumanTrafficking.org) (Academy for Educational Development)
- Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (U.S. Department of State), [www.state.gov/g/tip](http://www.state.gov/g/tip)
- The Protection Project U.S. Training and Assistance Web Site, [www.protectionproject.org/programs](http://www.protectionproject.org/programs)

## Periodicals

- *Anti-Trafficking News Bulletin* (published by the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division), [www.usdoj.gov/crt/antitraffic\\_bull.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/antitraffic_bull.html)
- *DIGNITY*, (Donna M. Hughes, University of Rhode Island), [dhughes@uri.edu](mailto:dhughes@uri.edu)
- *Revelations* (published by the Salvation Army), [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)
- *Trafficking Watch* (published by the International Rescue Committee), [www.theirc.org/trafficking](http://www.theirc.org/trafficking)