

Reports of Child Sex Trafficking Allegations & Substantiations to Child Protective Services

December 2018



Prepared by the Division of Safety and Permanence

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Executive Summary

Effective May 29, 2017, Wisconsin statutes require that suspected cases of sex trafficking of a child under the age of 18 must be reported to local child welfare agencies or local law enforcement in Wisconsin. Under federal law, sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age (22 USC § 7102). Under [Wis. Stat. 940.302\(1\)\(a\)](#), a commercial sex act includes the following acts for which anything of value is given to, promised, or received, directly or indirectly, by any person: sexual contact; sexual intercourse; sexually explicit performance; and, any other conduct done for the purpose of sexual humiliation, degradation, arousal, or gratification.

A child maltreatment allegation is an assertion of one type of child abuse or neglect involving one or more alleged maltreater(s) for a single alleged victim. Allegations are ‘screened in’ by a child welfare agency when the allegation of child maltreatment has been deemed as rising to the level of maltreatment or threat of maltreatment, as defined by Wisconsin Statutes, and therefore must be assessed. Such allegations are then subject to further assessment by the child welfare agency to determine whether the allegation is substantiated or not, meaning there is a preponderance of evidence that the maltreatment allegation has occurred.

This report summarizes data from the Wisconsin child welfare information system regarding allegations and substantiations of child sex trafficking during the 15-month period from June 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018. During this 15-month period, there were 422 allegations of child sex trafficking across Wisconsin. This figure represents 354 unique individuals with a child sex trafficking allegation, as some youth had multiple allegations. Of the 422 allegations, 178, representing 42.2 percent, occurred in Milwaukee County and the remaining 244, representing 57.8 percent, occurred in non-Milwaukee “balance of state” (BOS) counties. During the period covered by the report, June 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018, there were 99 substantiated allegations of child sex trafficking, of which 49, representing 49.5 percent, were in Milwaukee County and the remaining 50, representing 50.5 percent, were in BOS counties. The 99 substantiated allegations involved 86 unique individuals.

In collaboration with local and state level partners, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) has undertaken a number of significant efforts to create awareness, education, prevention, and service initiatives to address the issue of child sex trafficking across Wisconsin. DCF continues to collaborate with a broad array of people, organizations, and state agencies, including the Departments of Justice, Public Instruction, Health Services, physical and mental health providers, counties, other service providers, and members of the public who are all important stakeholders in combatting child sex trafficking in Wisconsin.

Introduction

Child Protective Services (CPS) is a key component of the child welfare system. CPS intervention is warranted whenever there is a report that a child may be unsafe, abused or neglected, or at risk of maltreatment. This report focuses on a subset of CPS response as it relates to allegations and substantiations of child sex trafficking. Due to recently enacted laws, this report covers a 15-month period from June 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018. Future reports will be issued on an annual basis. A comprehensive report on the entirety of the child welfare system, including an overview of the CPS process and key terms such as Initial Assessments and Access Reports, can be found in the annual [Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report](#).

Passage of the federal [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act \(Pub. L. 113-183\)](#) and [Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act \(Pub. L. 114-22\)](#) added child sex trafficking as a form of child abuse to the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). These Acts also required child welfare agencies to screen referrals of suspected child sex trafficking, even if a parent or primary caregiver was not the suspected trafficker. As a result of these federal law changes, [2015 Wisconsin Act 367](#) went into effect in Wisconsin on May 29, 2017. Act 367 requires that suspected cases of sex trafficking of a child under the age of 18 must be reported to local child welfare agencies or local law enforcement in Wisconsin. Under Wisconsin statute, child welfare agencies must report these cases to law enforcement, and law enforcement must report any suspected or alleged cases involving a minor to child welfare.

Under federal law, sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age (22 USC § 7102). Under [Wis. Stat. 940.302\(1\)\(a\)](#), a commercial sex act includes the following acts for which anything of value is given to, promised, or received, directly or indirectly, by any person: sexual contact; sexual intercourse; sexually explicit performance; and, any other conduct done for the purpose of sexual humiliation, degradation, arousal, or gratification.

Language in this Report

The Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (Task Force) was created in December 2015 to develop a coordinated and comprehensive trauma-informed, culturally competent, and survivor-centered response and service system for minors who are trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked. The Task Force was co-chaired by the DCF Secretary and the Wisconsin Attorney General and led by the DCF Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator. It was comprised of 37 appointed members representing several state agencies, county child welfare agencies,

leaders of community organizations, advocacy groups, and survivors. The Task Force held quarterly meetings through December 2017.

Among other deliverables, the Task Force adopted a set of Guiding Principles. These principles support the use of person-first language, such as “youth being sex trafficked” or “individual at risk of sex trafficking”. Throughout this report, the word “victim” is used sparingly. The word “prostitute” is *never* used to refer to children who have experienced sex trafficking. The Task Force acknowledged that there are times when the word “victim” is appropriate, such as discussing the crime of sex trafficking and its victims; however, children may not want to be thought of or referred to as a victim. All individuals who work with young people and discuss these difficult issue in the public sphere are strongly encouraged to use judgement-free, person-first language when talking to children about their experiences. The [Guiding Principles](#) are included as an appendix to this document.

Wisconsin Data on Child Sex Trafficking

This report represents the first time child welfare data on child sex trafficking has been available and analyzed in Wisconsin. Data for this report come from eWiSACWIS, Wisconsin’s Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, a comprehensive automated case management tool that supports child welfare practice. Wisconsin counties use this system to document information for all child abuse and neglect referrals, allegations, and substantiations made to their jurisdictions. While some counties had informal processes for tracking suspected child sex trafficking cases, 2015 Wisconsin Act 367 formalized the requirements for the child welfare response to child sex trafficking. Any data collected, analyzed, or reported prior to the Act’s effective date of May 29, 2017, are not based on current state guidance or policy. Thus, readers are cautioned against making direct comparisons to previous reports issued on this topic by entities other than the DCF and/or reports that utilize older data. Such reports may have applied different definitions and/or methodologies than those recommended and used by the DCF in this report.

Additionally, DCF has undertaken extensive education and awareness efforts, both immediately prior to and after Act 367 went into effect; this affected the child welfare response to child sex trafficking in Wisconsin and collection of reliable administrative data in eWiSACWIS. These efforts provided training to CPS workers on identifying and understanding child sex trafficking and guidance on how to screen and assess suspected cases. However, DCF acknowledges that the information presented here likely still represents underreporting of cases. The child welfare system relies on individuals making a report of child abuse. As awareness of the problem and possible indicators of child sex trafficking grows, so too will the reports to authorities who are in a position to respond and intervene.

In May 2017, DCF issued guidance to counties on responding to sex trafficking cases in Appendix 9 of [Child Protective Services Access and Initial Assessment Standards](#). In Wisconsin, sex trafficking of a child falls under the definition of sexual abuse. When entering an Access Report, the maltreatment allegation is sexual abuse with a descriptor of sex trafficking in eWiSACWIS. A few cases in this report also involved an allegation of neglect with a descriptor of sex trafficking by the primary caretaker for not providing sufficient protection to the child in his/her care. For ease of discussion, the term “child sex trafficking” is used in this report to refer to all of these allegations.

This report utilizes eWiSACWIS data on child sex trafficking allegations and substantiations from June 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018. Tables provide information by Milwaukee County, Balance of State, and the total for Wisconsin’s 72 counties. Balance of State refers to the 71 counties in Wisconsin other than Milwaukee County. While these data provide important information about Wisconsin’s child welfare cases, it is important to note that an unsubstantiated finding does not necessarily mean that a child did not experience sex trafficking. For some cases, it could be that the responding child welfare agency did not have the preponderance of evidence available at the time of the investigation. There are many reasons that this can occur, including child welfare and/or law enforcement not being able to interview the alleged maltreater/trafficker, which is a requirement of standards to make a substantiated finding. Additionally, a child may still be served in the child welfare system even if there was not a substantiation. This would occur if there was a safety determination made on the case that resulted in services being offered to the child and family.

Child Sex Trafficking Allegations

A child maltreatment allegation is an assertion of one type of child abuse or neglect involving one or more alleged maltreater(s) for a single alleged victim. Allegations are ‘screened in’ when the allegation of child maltreatment in the Access referral has been deemed as rising to the level of maltreatment or threat of maltreatment, as defined by Wisconsin Statutes, and therefore must be assessed. Such allegations are then subject to further assessment to determine whether the allegation is substantiated or not, meaning there is a preponderance of evidence that the maltreatment allegation has occurred.

In the 15-month period covered by this report, there were 422 allegations of child sex trafficking across Wisconsin. This figure represents 354 unique individuals with a child sex trafficking allegation, as some youth had multiple allegations. Of the 422 allegations, 178 occurred in Milwaukee County, representing 42.2 percent of all child sex trafficking allegations statewide. Tables 1 and 2 below show representation of allegations by Hispanic ethnicity and primary race.

Table 1

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State, by Hispanic Ethnicity
June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Hispanic Ethnicity	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total in Wisconsin	Total Percentage by Ethnicity
Hispanic	5	4	9	2.1%
Not Hispanic or Not Documented	173	240	413	97.9%
Total	178	244	422	100%
Total Percentage by Location	42.2%	57.8%	100%	

Table 2

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State, by Primary Race
June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Primary Race	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total in Wisconsin	Total Percentage by Primary Race
White	40	157	197	46.7%
African American	132	49	181	42.9%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	3	17	20	4.7%
Asian	1	12	13	3.1%
Unable to Determine / Not Documented	2	9	11	2.6%
Total	178	244	422	100%

Across Wisconsin, 46.7 percent of allegations of sex trafficking involved a child identified as White, 42.9 percent involved a child identified as African American, 4.7 percent involved a child identified as American Indian / Alaskan Native, and 3.1 percent involved a child identified as Asian. According to the data available, approximately two percent of allegations statewide involved a child of known Hispanic origin; however, a significant number of cases did not document ethnicity, so this information may not fully represent the population.

Of the allegations made in Milwaukee County, 74.2 percent of them involved a child identified as African American and 22.5 percent involved a child identified as White. In the Balance of State, 64.3 percent of the allegations involved a child identified as White and 20.1 percent involved a child identified as African American.

As shown in Table 3 below, nearly all child sex trafficking allegations involved females (92.2 percent) across the state. Males represented a higher percentage of allegations in Balance of State (9.8 percent) compared to Milwaukee (5.1 percent).

Table 3

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State, by Gender
June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Gender	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total in Wisconsin	Total percentage by gender
Female	169	220	389	92.2%
Male	9	24	33	7.8%
Total	178	244	422	100%

Table 4 shows child sex trafficking allegations by age group. Nearly 82 percent of allegations statewide involved a child between the ages of 14-17. In Milwaukee, this age group represented 88.8 percent of all allegations. In the Balance of State, this age group represented 76.6 percent of all allegations. It is important to note that while these data represent unique child sex trafficking allegations, they do not reflect whether this was the first allegation of child sex trafficking for a particular individual.

Table 4

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State, by Child Age at Report
June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Age	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total in Wisconsin	Total Percentage by Age
<1 - 5 years old	4	12	16	3.8%
6 - 9 years old	0	7	7	1.7%
10 - 12 years old	9	15	24	5.7%
13 years old	7	21	28	6.6%
14 years old	35	33	68	16.1%
15 years old	40	48	88	20.9%
16 years old	47	61	108	25.6%
17 years old	36	45	81	19.2%
Unknown	0	2	2	0.47%
Total	178	244	422	100% ¹

¹ Does not add exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Child Sex Trafficking Substantiations

A CPS Initial Assessment is the comprehensive assessment conducted on screened-in reports of alleged child maltreatment. In order to substantiate an allegation, the information gathered during the CPS Initial Assessment must provide a preponderance of evidence (that is, the proof shows that the fact sought to be proved is more probable than not) that the maltreatment allegation made in the CPS report or identified during a CPS Initial Assessment has occurred. In general, a known maltreater is substantiated for the allegation of child abuse or neglect; however, an allegation can also be substantiated when the maltreater is unknown or not identified. For child sex trafficking allegations, the maltreater/trafficker can be someone other than the child's parent or primary caregiver.

There were 99 substantiated allegations of child sex trafficking statewide between June 1, 2017 and August 31, 2018, representing 86 unique individuals. Tables referencing substantiated allegations are presented in Tables 5 through 8, while tables referencing unique individuals with one or more substantiated allegations are presented in Tables 9 and 10. While there have been anecdotal reports that it is more difficult to substantiate child sex trafficking allegations than other types of child maltreatment cases, this represents a 23.5 percent substantiation rate for child sex trafficking allegations statewide. Comparatively, the statewide rate of substantiation was 13.6 percent for *all* child abuse and neglect allegations and 20.4 percent for all *sexual abuse* allegations in CY2017.

Tables 5 and 6 below show the breakdown of child sex trafficking substantiations by Hispanic ethnicity and primary race.

Table 5

**Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Substantiated Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State,
by Hispanic Ethnicity**

June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Hispanic Ethnicity	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total in Wisconsin	Total Percentage by Ethnicity
Hispanic	2	1	3	3.0%
Not Hispanic or Not Documented	47	49	96	97.0%
Total	49	50	99	100%
Total Percentage by Location	49.5%	50.5%	100%	

Table 6

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Substantiated Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State, by Primary Race

June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total in Wisconsin	Total Percentage by Primary Race
White	16	36	52	52.5%
African American	32	10	42	42.4%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	0	2	2	2.0%
Asian	1	1	2	2.0%
Unable to Determine / Not Documented	0	1	1	1.0%
Total	49	50	99	100% ²

There were relatively few allegations of child sex trafficking for children of known Hispanic origin. Across Wisconsin, 52.5 percent of substantiated child sex trafficking allegations involved a child identified as White, 42.4 percent involved a child identified as African American, 2 percent involved a child identified as American Indian / Alaskan Native, and 2 percent involved a child identified as Asian. Comparatively, as of 2017, the racial composition of the total population of Wisconsin children is 83 percent White, 11 percent African American, 1.9 percent American Indian / Alaskan Native, and 4.1 percent Asian.

Table 7

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Substantiated Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State, by Gender

June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Gender	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total	Total Percentage by Gender
Female	49	42	91	91.9%
Male	0	8	8	8.1%
Total	49	50	99	100%

² Does not add exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Table 8

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Substantiated Allegations, by Milwaukee and Balance of State, by Child Age at Report
June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Age	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total	Total Percentage by Age
<1 – 5 years old	0	4	4	4.0%
6 – 9 years old	0	4	4	4.0%
10 – 12 years old	2	2	4	4.0%
13 years old	0	3	3	3.0%
14 years old	10	3	13	13.1%
15 years old	11	13	24	24.2%
16 years old	20	14	34	34.3%
17 years old	6	7	13	13.1%
Total	49	50	99	100%³

As noted in Table 7, Milwaukee did not substantiate any allegations of child sex trafficking for males. Male children accounted for 16 percent of all substantiated allegations of child sex trafficking in the Balance of State and 8.1 percent of all substantiated allegations of child sex trafficking statewide.

Table 8 shows information of substantiated allegations by age group. Statewide, 84.8 percent of all child sex trafficking substantiated allegations involved a child between the ages of 14-17. In Milwaukee, this age group represented 95.9 percent of all substantiations, while in the Balance of State, this age group represented 74 percent of all substantiations.

It is important to distinguish the number of substantiated sex trafficking allegations from the number of *unique children* with a substantiated sex trafficking allegation. Tables 9 and 10 below show the number of children who had at least one substantiation of child sex trafficking, by gender and age. Of the 86 unique children with a substantiation, 53.5 percent occurred in the Balance of State. Most of these substantiations involved female youth and youth between the ages of 14-17.

³ Does not add exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Table 9

**Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Substantiated Unique Children, by Milwaukee and Balance of State,
by Child's Gender**

June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Gender	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total	Total Percentage by Gender
Female	40	38	78	90.7%
Male	0	8	8	9.3%
Total	40	46	86	100%
Total Percentage by Location	46.5%	53.5%	100%	

Table 10

**Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking Substantiated Unique Children, by Milwaukee and Balance of State,
by Child Age at Report**

June 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Age	Milwaukee	Balance of State	Total	Total Percentage by Age
<1 – 5 years old	0	4	4	4.7%
6 – 9 years old	0	4	4	4.7%
10 – 12 years old	2	2	4	4.7%
13 years old	0	3	3	3.5%
14 years old	8	3	11	12.8%
15 years old	10	9	19	22.1%
16 years old	14	14	28	32.6%
17 years old	6	7	13	15.1%
Total	40	46	86	100%⁴

DCF Efforts to Reduce Child Sex Trafficking

The findings presented in this report offer an opportunity to understand better the scope of child sex trafficking referred to Child Protective Services in Wisconsin, based on ethnic, racial, gender, and age demographics. They are the result of training provided to the child welfare workforce on how to recognize and screen reports of child sex trafficking. Online training modules became available through the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) in May 2017. These modules cover important information on the dynamics of child sex trafficking, factors that increase a child's vulnerability, indicators that trafficking

⁴ Does not add exactly to 100% due to rounding.

may be occurring, and the process of helping to remove a child from a sex trafficking situation (also referred to as “the life”). CPS staff and supervisors responsible for Access or Initial Assessment functions were expected to participate in this online training.

More recently, DCF made a similar version of this training available to professionals other than child welfare caseworkers who work with children and youth. As of August 2018, all staff employed in all licensed, congregate care facilities in Wisconsin, including group homes, residential care centers (RCCs), shelter care facilities, and private Child Placing Agencies, are required to take this training. To DCF’s knowledge, Wisconsin is the first state to require a standardized, online training for this purpose. This training utilizes competencies approved by the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (Task Force) as being necessary for serving children who have been sex trafficked in a trauma-informed, person-centered, and culturally competent manner; a list of these [competencies](#) are included in the appendix. The training is also available on a discretionary basis to runaway and homeless youth providers, domestic violence grantees, and organizations contracted to oversee Wisconsin’s independent living regions.

As part of its training recommendations for professionals, the Task Force also approved the [Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Indicator and Response Guide](#). DCF released this guide in May 2017 and has since distributed several thousand copies at trainings, conferences, and meetings. This guide was created to assist mandated reporters and other professionals who work with children gain an understanding of potential warning signs and indicators that might warrant a report to child welfare or law enforcement for suspected child sex trafficking. Child welfare and law enforcement officials utilize other protocols and statutory requirements for responding to, investigating, and making decisions about suspected child abuse and neglect.

In addition to training professionals, DCF undertook a statewide public awareness campaign from June to August 2018. The [WI, We Need to Talk](#) campaign brings awareness to adult members of the public that child sex trafficking is an issue happening across the state, including both urban and rural areas. Through a combination of print and digital billboards, mass transit stops, indoor advertising, digital ads, posters, and media interviews, the campaign garnered over 26 million online and print impressions among Wisconsin residents. DCF also partnered with 211 Wisconsin to promote the 2-1-1 number on campaign materials and collaborate on a protocol for responding to suspected human trafficking calls. To date, over 14,000 campaign posters in English and Spanish have been distributed to communities across Wisconsin, allowing the campaign to continue.

DCF will also be releasing a documentary film in 2019 that gives voices to Wisconsin residents who have been directly impacted by sex trafficking. This film will be used in educational settings, particularly with youth, to help prevent future sex trafficking cases from occurring. Additional content will also be developed to train professionals and foster parents who are likely to work with this population, to educate them about the complex and repeated traumas faced by those who have been trafficked.

We expect that as more professionals and members of the public participate in these free trainings and other educational activities, allegations and substantiations of child sex trafficking may also rise over time. Many of these educational and awareness activities went into effect towards the end of the reporting period covered by this report or will be implemented in the near future. Thus, an increase in sex trafficking allegations and substantiations in future years may not mean that the problem of sex trafficking is growing. Rather, it will likely indicate that our state has been successful at educating more members of the public who are empowered to identify sex trafficking in their communities and professionals who are in a position to respond to the problem. It is also important to note that DCF is just one entity in a broader set of people, organizations, and state agencies with a central role in this work. The Departments of Justice, Public Instruction, Health Services, physical and mental health providers, counties, other service providers, and members of the public are all important stakeholders in combatting child sex trafficking in Wisconsin.

Individuals wanting to know about DCF's efforts on the topic of trafficking should visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/aht/toolkit>.

Appendices



Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Guiding Principles



Trauma- Informed

- Systems responses should prioritize meeting the health, safety, and survival needs of individuals who have been trafficked.
- Systems responses should ensure services are accessible, culturally appropriate, and inclusive of urban, rural, and tribal populations.
- Individuals who have been trafficked should be treated with dignity, sensitivity, and respect for their privacy.
- Systems responses should include the provision of information about victims' statutory rights, service options and the full range of choices available to individuals who have been trafficked.
- Non-native English speakers should have the option of accessing translators and interpreters when receiving services. Family members, acquaintances, and children should not be used to translate or interpret for individuals who have been trafficked.
- Shocking or depersonalizing imagery will not be used in task force materials to depict individuals who have been trafficked. Task force materials will be evaluated with sensitivity toward how language and terminology can engage or alienate individuals who have been trafficked.
- Service providers should collaborate with individuals who have been trafficked (and their family members when and if appropriate) to identify and pursue strategies and services to promote long-term stability, financial security and independence to make choices for a safe and healthy future.

Coordinated

- Task force materials will be developed to be easily modified to be functional across different disciplines, agencies, and systems.
- Task force recommendations and educational materials will be shared widely and should respect, and connect to, existing local and regional efforts.
- Training and public awareness materials will be trauma-informed with a consistent core message that can be modified and enhanced for culturally appropriate delivery to different audiences.
- The task force will facilitate unprecedented collaboration among state agencies, private and public organizations, and advocates to transform the response to individuals who have been trafficked.

Quality

- State and national models and best practices will inform recommendations.
- The impact of task force recommendations should be lasting and scalable and will incorporate tenets of primary prevention when applicable.
- Statistics will only be used when from a reputable source. The primary source of statistics will be cited in task force materials.
- Subject matter experts, including individuals who have been trafficked, will be consulted during the development of strategies and recommendations.



WISCONSIN ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE



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The Placement and Services Workgroup was charged with developing competencies needed for service providers to serve sex trafficked minors in a trauma-informed, victim-centered, and culturally competent manner.

The workgroup concluded that two separate categories of competencies are necessary. Core Competencies shall guide the service and work of all agencies, organizations, and providers that interact with and serve *any* child or youth. In addition, Advanced Core Competencies shall guide agencies, organizations, and providers that specialize in serving children and youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking.

The following Core Competencies are adapted from “Core Competencies for Serving Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)”, developed by the Child Welfare Council (CSEC) Action Team in partnership with the California Department of Social Services.

Core Competencies

Targeted Audience: Agencies, organizations, and service providers that serve and interact with children and youth.

I. Core Knowledge

Competency 1: Working knowledge of the issue of sex trafficking, including but not limited to risk factors, indicators, and dynamics at the individual, family, and community levels that make children and youth vulnerable to sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Competency 2: Working knowledge of child-serving systems, such as child welfare, mental health, education, youth justice, law enforcement, and how various agencies and multi-disciplinary teams intersect to identify, screen, and serve children, youth, and families.

II. *Impact and Dynamics of Abuse, Neglect, and Trauma*

Competency 3: Working knowledge of the causes, associated consequences, and mandatory reporting requirements of child abuse and neglect and how they apply to children and youth who have experienced sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Competency 4: Working knowledge and understanding of complex trauma, polyvictimization, and toxic stress, and how these factors impact children and youth who have experienced sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Competency 5: Employment policies that reflect an understanding of how vicarious trauma affects employees working with youth who have experienced sexual exploitation or trafficking.

III. *Informed Application of Skills*

Competency 6: Applying evidence-based skills used with children and youth who have experienced trauma to children and youth who have experienced sexual exploitation or trafficking.

Specific Skills:

- i. Rapport-building: focus on establishing a foundation of trust through youth engagement
- ii. Trauma-awareness: employ a trauma-informed approach to avoid re-traumatizing the child or youth
- iii. Individual-focused: engage the child or youth in developing their individualized safety and case plans, to the extent possible, so they feel empowered throughout the process
- iv. Strengths-based: build on the individual's strengths while also addressing the individual's needs
- v. Social support: understand the importance of engaging the individual's social support networks, including family, peer, and cultural networks, and building capacity when it is lacking
- vi. Clear communication about healthy relationships and sexuality: discuss healthy relationships and sexuality openly with youth, acknowledging and affirming each child's sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) without bias or judgment
- vii. Flexibility/adaptability: be flexible when developing an individualized treatment plan, to allow the child or youth to progress at their own pace in a way that does not overwhelm or lead to disengagement from treatment
- viii. Cultural humility: exhibit openness and emphasize an understanding and support of the child or youth from within their own worldview, as informed by their personal identities and experiences with culture, race, ethnicity, class, gender, faith, and SOGIE
- ix. Recognition of implicit bias: identify and act against implicit biases to avoid drawing conclusions or defining case planning based on stereotypes of a child's culture, race, ethnicity, class, gender, faith, and/or SOGIE
- x. Commitment to self-care: seek supervisory and/or personal support to prevent or cope with compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma
- xi. Demand awareness: Have a working understanding of the demand that exists in local communities and society as a whole that leads to sexual exploitation and trafficking of individuals

Advanced Core Competencies

Targeted Audience: Agencies, organizations, and service providers that specialize in serving and working with children and youth who have experienced or are at-risk of experiencing commercial sexual exploitation or sex trafficking.

1. Specialized Working Knowledge

Advanced Competency 1: Working knowledge of strategies to engage and effectively communicate with youth who have been sex trafficked.

Advanced Competency 2: Working knowledge of the terms and definitions common to different forms of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, including terms used by youth.

Advanced Competency 3: Working knowledge and understanding of the multiple entry points to commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, which includes recruitment by pimps or bottoms, getting survival needs met, encouragement by peers, and solicitation by adults for sexual contact.

Advanced Competency 4: Working knowledge of youth experiences while sexually exploited and sex trafficked, including experiencing repeated traumatic events and day-to-day realities.

Advanced Competency 5: Working knowledge on the varied experiences and forms of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of youth.

Advanced Competency 6: Working knowledge of the exit process for youth who are or have been commercially sexually exploited and sex trafficked.

Advanced Competency 7: Working knowledge on reducing stigma and judgment of staff towards youth being served by programs, in addition to helping youth handle potential stigma from family, friends, and the community.

Advanced Competency 8: Working knowledge of common family reactions to commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking and how to provide support and education to family members.

Advanced Competency 9: Working knowledge of safety planning and harm reduction, including but not limited to assistance in terminating or managing relationships with people who have or could harm them.

Advanced Competency 10: Working knowledge of the importance to keep program details and location private and safe, in addition to active plans that abide by this working knowledge.

Advanced Competency 11: Working knowledge in the prevention of youth running away from home or placements.

Advanced Competency 12: Working knowledge of recruitment methods utilized and a specific plan to interrupt recruitment within programs, placements, or other services.