

# Exploring Young Males' Vulnerability to the Sex Trafficking Industry in a Rural State

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16<sup>th</sup> Annual Posters-At-The-Capitol  
March 2, 2017, Frankfort, Kentucky

## Background

At the present time, there is a scarcity of information available pertaining to the experiences of young males victims of sex trafficking. Therefore, this project is exploring sex trafficking of homeless males in the state of Kentucky with the hopes of gaining a clearer understanding of the scope of the problem.

## Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of and vulnerability of males who fall victim to human trafficking. Qualitative interviews are being conducted with homeless young males, as they are a vulnerable population to being exploited. The purpose of these interviews will be to help to examine the pathways in and out of sex trafficking for homeless men, while also allowing for further exploration into other topics of concern such as trauma bonds, and the labeling of the male victims in the system.

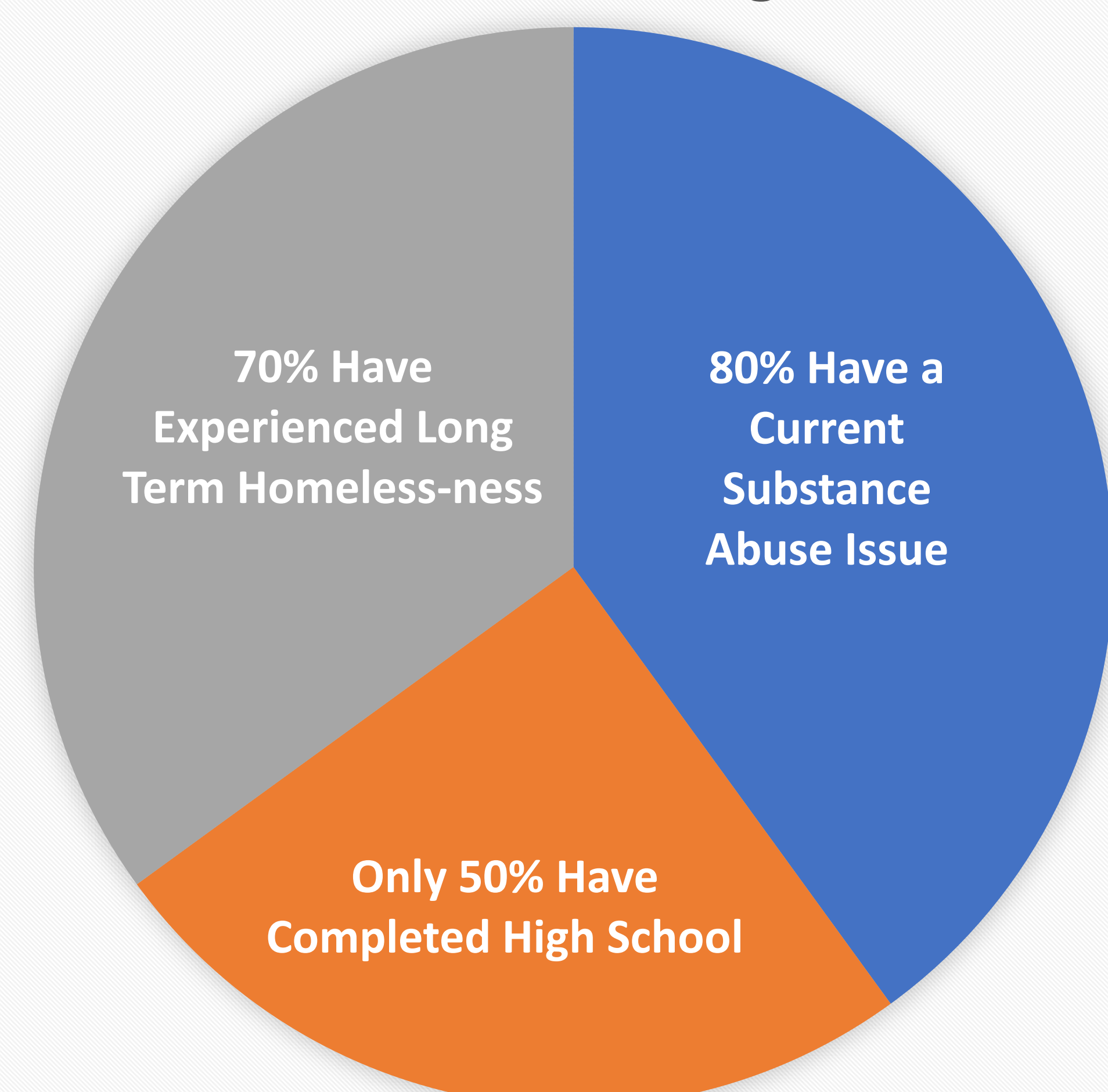
## Methods

Face-to-face interviews are currently being conducted with a study goal of 40 homeless males between the ages of 17-22. Participants were located via homeless outreach workers in Louisville. Participants are provided with "goody bags" containing hygiene products, a first aid kit, and some nonperishable food items for their participation. Interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes each, and were conducted in private interview rooms at a daytime drop-in center for homeless males located in Louisville, KY

## Preliminary Findings

This study explores the vulnerability of homeless males into the human trafficking industry. The results, findings and discussions presented here are preliminarily drawn conclusions, taken from a focused pilot study conducted. This was done in order to refine measurements and to begin identifying patterns and points of intersection, for which can be further explored.

### Potential Contributing Factors



## Pilot Study Results Discussion:

### Geographic

Of the sample size collected for this pilot study, nearly three quarters of the males experiencing at some point homelessness or exposure to the sex trafficking industry were transplanted. **They were often found to have originated from the outside**, of the study's selected city and state used for the purposes of this sample study.

### Environment

**90%** of the participants in this sample who had experienced either long term or short term homelessness, have been arrested at least one or more times. One participants commented, **"being homeless makes everything worse**, your forced into a world you don't want but have to do what you gotta do to survive and getting arrested comes with it, the streets can be mean if you are in the wrong area."

### Substance Abuse

The majority of the participants (80%) are currently struggling with substance abuse problems. For some of them, their introduction to substance use started very young age, including as young as **6 years of age**.

### A Sense of Hopelessness

When asked where do you see yourself in ten years?

One participant responded, **"Dead."**

When asked why, they responded, **"yeah sure there's programs, but none of them actually stop the hurt occurring out on the streets** and once your in, your in, and the drugs man it's the only way to get by."

