

THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

SEX TRAFFICKING OF MINORS IN NEW YORK

INCREASING PREVENTION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

JULY 2012

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“ I just needed somebody to talk to, somebody who coulda helped me find another way. I never heard of any other options, or I wouldn’t be here. Kids like me, we don’t know nothin’ but the streets. We need to know there’s something else out there – but we just don’t. ”

– A CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR

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PREFACE

For 25 years, The New York Women’s Foundation has partnered with New York City based nonprofits and programs to advance economic security and justice, eliminate gender-based violence, and secure sexual rights and reproductive justice for women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals. The Foundation’s funding in the area of Anti-Violence and Safety has helped us to better understand the issues and challenges of poverty and gender-based violence that women and girls have had to overcome.¹ Sex Trafficking of Minors – the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a minor for sexual purposes and profit— is one such critical issue and challenge that occurs when youth are denied valid and viable opportunities to achieve economic security, live violence-free lives, and secure sexual rights and reproductive justice.

The New York Women’s Foundation considers sex trafficking of minors to be a violation of basic human rights. With this in mind, The Foundation’s staff, under the leadership of President and CEO Ana Oliveira, began a two year journey to determine how The Foundation can and should respond to sex trafficking of minors—not as an issue occurring far from our shores but rather as an issue that happens right here, daily, in New York. We sought to engage with diverse and multiple stakeholders working on the issue in an effort to improve services, change policy, convene a cross-sector collaborative of stakeholders, and mobilize the general public to ensure freedom from sexual exploitation and trafficking for minors.

This report—Sex Trafficking of Minors in New York: Increasing Prevention and Collective Action—is the

culmination of this two-year assessment. The report provides a panoramic view of the services, policies and awareness campaigns that currently exist to address sex trafficking of minors in New York, as well as highlights places where these initiatives fall short. Throughout the report, we examine the following dimensions of this complex issue: 1) the delivery of various social services to trafficked youth and their impact on how victims and survivors are treated; 2) existing policies that seek to address sex trafficking of minors and curb demand from a criminal justice and legislative perspective; 3) state and city-wide efforts to raise public awareness in New York State; and 4) how youth- and community-based approaches can prevent sex trafficking of minors and increase awareness of the issue.

We respectfully acknowledge that in each category, a decade or more of hard work has already gone into developing the existing range of responses – some of it by our own grantee partners. Yet our analysis shows that significant gaps in services, policy measures, and public awareness efforts remain – due in part to chronic underfunding of invested organizations, bureaucratic red tape, and a variety of difficulties in achieving strategic alignment among the multiple stakeholders essential to combatting this issue.

The Foundation is committed to understanding how these efforts affect the lives of victims/survivors, and how we might collectively act — and allocate resources — to accelerate the elimination of and prevent sex trafficking of minors before it begins.²

¹ The Foundation’s former and current grantee partners addressing sex trafficking of minors include Asian American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Equality Now, Girls Educational and Mentoring Services, Mount Sinai Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program, Sanctuary for Families, and Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center.

² In our view, there is a third piece to this puzzle, and it focuses on ending demand for the sex trafficking of minors on the part of “Johns” and “pimps.” That work is essential, and we call on partner organizations with expertise on men and boys, and their relationships to the commercial promotion and purchase of sex, to join us on this journey.

Alongside many of our allies and partners, The New York Women’s Foundation stands against sex trafficking of minors. We believe that child sex trafficking erodes the very fabric of communities and limits opportunities for our children to live full, vibrant lives. So in 2012, The Foundation will launch a five-year initiative to establish a “zero tolerance” policy toward sex trafficking of minors in New York, with a particular focus on prevention. Lessons learned from this work and perspectives of our grantee partners, allies and supporters will help refine The Foundation’s grantmaking, advocacy and policy initiatives moving forward.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2010, The New York Women’s Foundation began an investigation of how sex trafficking of minors plays out in New York State – not as an issue occurring far from our shores but rather as an issue that happens right here, daily, in New York. This report is the product of that investigation, which draws upon the voice and experience of child sex trafficking victims and survivors as well as experts from multiple disciplines to reveal the complexity of sex trafficking of minors across New York State. It highlights the difficulty in addressing child sex trafficking in New York and describes the multiple factors that place girls, boys and transgender youth at risk for sex trafficking. The report also identifies the significant accomplishments on behalf of victims of sex trafficking obtained by a fierce network of nonprofit service providers, law enforcement, medical, legal and policy professionals in New York State. And, it documents the resources currently being leveraged across the State to address the needs of girls, boys, and transgender youth coerced into the sex trade. Yet, in spite of significant accomplishments, this report indicates and experts agree, that much more remains to be done to combat sex trafficking of minors.

METHODOLOGY

The content and findings of this report comprise an informed overview of the opinions and perspectives of movement experts and survivors, and a review of relevant research in the field. To gather this information, the report’s authors conducted interviews with 22 individuals working to combat sex trafficking of minors in New York State, across a variety of sectors. They included experts from advocacy organizations, direct service providers, criminal justice experts from both the defense and prosecutorial sides of the aisle, government officials, researchers, and funders. The vast majority of those interviewed had at least a decade of experience working on this issue, and shared with us their critical perspectives on the scope of sex

trafficking of minors in New York State – as well as their opinions on what is required to effect positive change in the lives of involved youth.

The report’s authors also spoke directly to survivors of minor sex trafficking, each of whom shared harrowing tales of their experiences before, during and after their trafficking involvement – and gave anecdotal support to statistical research on the power of risk factors (such as prior history of sexual abuse, poverty, child services involvement, etc.), in leading children to involvement in commercial sex markets.

In addition, our research was guided by a comprehensive review of existing literature on the commercial sexual exploitation of children and trafficking of minors in New York State. A complete listing of those documents, compiled with input from NYWF and experts in the field, can be found in Appendix B.

Finally, with regard to estimates of the total size of the population of minors trafficked for sex in New York State, this report relies heavily on the findings of two particular prevalence studies: one produced by the Center for Court Innovation and John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2009; the other by the New York State Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS) in 2007. Among a very small group of extant, relevant studies of this population, these two reports were identified as reliable by the range of experts interviewed, and thus form the backbone of our understanding of the size of the sex trafficking of minors population in New York.

TERMINOLOGY

The Federal Trafficking Victims Protections Act of 2000 defines sex trafficking of minors, as, “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.’ . . . and “in which the person induced to perform such act has

not attained 18 years of age.”³ Today, a growing number of movement advocates laud the definition’s ability to “[assign] meaning to what minor victims are dealing with, helping give rise to an understanding of the need for services, rather than punishment.”⁴

In New York State, while there is no specific terminology for sex trafficked minor in the 2007 Human Trafficking Act, much of the large-scale research conducted on this topic to date has come under the umbrella of the Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act in which the terminology used for sex trafficked minors is the commercial sexual exploitation of children (or CSEC). This law defines a commercially sexually exploited child as “someone under the age of 18⁵ who may be subject to sexual exploitation because they engaged or agreed or offered to engage in sexual conduct in return for a fee, food, clothing or a place to stay.”⁶

For this report and our work in this area, The Foundation uses the term sex trafficking of minors to refer to trafficked youth born and raised in the U.S. as well as youth trafficked into the U.S. The Foundation seeks to respond to the challenges faced by both sets of youth as they are confronted with sex trafficking while in New York City and State. Therefore, for The Foundation, the term sex trafficking of minors is inclusive of and interchangeable with Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). Throughout this report the latter two terms are used primarily when quoting from texts in which they originally appeared.

FINDINGS

THE REPORT’S KEY FINDINGS ARE:

- **The risk factors for sex trafficking of minors are known.** Trafficked youth do not spring out of the ether. Experiences of sexual abuse and domestic

violence, homelessness, foster care placement and Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) petitions, school absence/truancy, drug abuse and gang participation all overlap with sex trafficking of minors; according to one study, 85 percent of trafficked youth had prior child welfare involvement.⁷ This knowledge should govern the identification of trafficked youth and referral procedures of all government protective workers and New York State institutions that serve children in high-risk communities; meanwhile, a clinical assessment tool remains desperately needed in the field.

- **The population of trafficked youth is diverse.** One statewide prevalence report suggested that across New York State, 22 percent of trafficked youth are boys. A citywide evaluation put the population of boys and transgender youth at 53 percent. Yet there are currently no minor sex trafficking-specific referral protocols, residential opportunities, or treatment modalities for boys and transgender youth in New York State. This was a gap raised by a number of the experts interviewed and will require fast attention from movement leaders if the goal of ending sex trafficking of minors is to be achieved.
- **Schools must be proactive.** By definition of their minor status, nearly all trafficked youth should be enrolled in school. Yet New York schools have no protocols in place to identify trafficked youth, refer them for services, or educate students and parents about the risk factors and dangers of minor sex trafficking. Getting schools involved in identifying and preventing sex trafficking of minors will be critical to effecting change on the issue.
- **Community involvement is essential.** It’s not just schools, but entire communities that need to be trained to understand risk factors for sex trafficking

³ 22 USC Chapter 78, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (TVPA) of 2000, Sections 103 (8) and (9)

⁴ Karen M. Andolina Scott, “Buffalo/Erie County Assessment: Identification of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Victims and Their Access to Services” (Arlington, VA: Shared Hope International, 2008) iv.

⁵ The age of majority in New York State is 18.

⁶ “Assembly Passes ‘Safe Harbour’ Legislation,” New York State Assembly press release, 19 June 2008. <http://assembly.state.ny.us/Press/20080619/>

⁷ Frances Gragg, Ian Petta, et al, “New York Prevalence Study of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children: Final Report” (Rensselaer, NY: New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2007) ii

of minors and empowered with information so that they can intervene where necessary. Training on this issue is particularly necessary for foster care families, guidance counselors, truancy officers and ER hospital workers – along with those in other non-social service government organizations that deal with children living on the margins of society.

- ***There is a significant need for additional residential housing options to treat youth who are trafficked.*** This was the single most important need identified by each of the experts interviewed for this report. Whether it is short-term/crisis housing or long-term residential beds, movement leaders were unanimous in calling for an increase in the housing stock dedicated to trafficked youth. With fewer than 50 beds in New York City and an estimated population in the thousands, it is easy to understand why. Lack of funding was the challenge most often cited as an impediment to building more beds, though bureaucratic red tape and lack of political will were also mentioned as factors.
- ***Additional research and resources are needed to end demand.*** A number of strategies to address demand, such as prosecution of “Johns”⁸, advocacy and public education campaigns have taken hold in past years. While some of these strategies are debated, it remains clear that investment in additional research and innovative strategies is needed to address the sex trafficking of minors in a holistic way.
- ***Recovery is difficult. Recidivism is high. Prevention is critical.*** It is simply beyond question that preventing youth from falling victim to sex trafficking is preferable to having to treat the aftermath. Recovery, experts agree, is both difficult and uncertain; trafficked youth typically require many interventions, through very flexible services, before they are equipped to make consistently healthy choices for their lives. A focus on prevention, and on the conditions that leave youth vulnerable to victimization, offers the possibility of sparing more children from the horrors of sex

trafficking. Investments in the development of such approaches will be a critical piece of this puzzle.

THE NEW YORK WOMEN'S FOUNDATION RESPONDS

This report also introduces The Foundation's five-year, \$5,000,000 NYWF Initiative Against Sex Trafficking of Minors—a commitment which will focus on prevention and:

- (1) **Increase funding for NYC based direct service and advocacy nonprofit organizations addressing sex trafficking of minors.**
- (2) **Increase public awareness and involvement in combatting sex trafficking of minors.**
- (3) **Increase systemic responses that create a “zero tolerance” policy environment toward sex trafficking of minors in NYC.**
- (4) **Improve data collection and documentation of the scope and magnitude of the issue.**
- (5) **Increase investment in Girls' Leadership.**

The NYWF will also convene a series of stakeholder groups to address the systemic nature of sex trafficking of minors, and encourage collaborative thinking about the strategic advancement of the movement. We also plan to launch a large-scale public education campaign that will highlight the realities of the sex trafficking of minors statewide – and empower our communities to stop it.

To continue to advance our mission, The Foundation prioritizes the elimination of gender-based violence in the lives of women, girls and gender non-conforming individuals and stands against the sexual exploitation and trafficking of youth. Through our Initiative Against Sex Trafficking of Minors, we will focus our efforts on improving the lives of victims/survivors, and on how we might collectively act and allocate resources to prevent sex trafficking of minors before it begins.

⁸ “Johns” is the colloquial term used to define buyers of commercial sex.

I. INTRODUCTION

“ I had to lose everything to get to something.”

– Minor Sex Trafficking Survivor

Just nine years old when she watched her mother overdose on drugs and die, Tiffani Jones’s (*not her real name*) life began to unravel early. At 10, she was hospitalized for serious depression. By 12, she had run away from her substance-abusing family – as well as court-mandated group homes – numerous times. By 13 she was stripping; by 15, she’d been raped.

That same year she gave birth to her oldest son – alone, in a bathtub, and just hours after finishing practice with her high school basketball team. No one knew she was pregnant.

Terrified and overwhelmed, Tiffani left her newborn son in the care of relatives and struck out again, on her own. Soon enough, she would be homeless and hungry on the streets of New York City – looking for any way to get by.

Left with few options, but an undeniable will to survive, Tiffani made a choice that seemed to her the least terrible alternative in a set of patently horrible ones. (Starve. Die. Go back to foster care). At 15 years old – with no one left to call and not a dime to her name – Tiffani took a man she met in Port Authority up on his offer: he would give her the food, shelter, money and comfort she needed – all, in exchange for sex.

Tiffani is not alone. On any given night in New York State, more than 4,000⁹ underage youth are the victims of sex trafficking – bought, sold and trafficked for sexual purposes and profit. They are children of

all kinds: Black, White and Latino; Gay and Straight; female, male and transgender. They live in cities, in the suburbs and in rural communities – and their entry into the world of sex trafficking is almost always the result of the systemic poverty, violence, abuse and neglect that circumscribe life in America’s most marginalized communities, and beyond.

Alongside many of our allies and partners, The New York Women’s Foundation considers sex trafficking of minors to be a violation of basic human rights. Because we believe that sex trafficking of minors erodes the very fabric of communities – and limits opportunities for our children to live full, vibrant lives – in 2012, The Foundation will launch a multi-year initiative to establish a “zero tolerance” policy toward the sex trafficking of minors in New York State, with a particular focus on the domestic population.¹⁰

As we support strategies that foster individual transformation, community engagement and mobilization and systemic change, The Foundation will join hands with those in the field to raise awareness and understanding of the sex trafficking of minors among general and specific publics, and deepen financial investment in organizations working in this field across New York State – with a particular focus on prevention, or stopping sex trafficking of minors before it begins.

This focus on prevention is not incidental. The existing research on the population of trafficked youth in New York tells us much about the

⁹ There is significant debate among movement experts about whether this number represents an accurate, or rather conservative, estimate of the size of the problem. See Chapter III for demographic information.

¹⁰ As a local funder, our focus is on youth in New York City. We have chosen to discuss sex trafficking of minors in the statewide context in the hopes of offering statewide funders relevant information on the issue.

solutions we need to address this problem – including the fact that the risk factors for sex trafficking of minors are known. Child welfare involvement and childhood sexual abuse lead the pack when it comes to indicators for eventual trafficking involvement; homelessness, drug abuse and mental illness follow not far behind.

We also know that the paths walked by trafficked youth typically take numerous twists and turns that bring them into contact with individuals and systems that could – and should – play a role in preventing sex trafficking of minors from occurring. From foster care, to the mental health facility she was placed in, to the schools she should have been attending but wasn't, Tiffani Jones was in almost constant touch with systems and agencies that should have been able to identify her as a youth particularly at-risk for being trafficked – but didn't, or couldn't.

Our goal is make sure that children like Tiffani – children who've met with horrible circumstances – stop falling through these systemic cracks. Our aim is to intervene before the bend in the path where youth fall victim to sex trafficking, while also providing support to organizations that treat youth once they have been trafficked and aid in their recovery, however recovery may be defined. And we seek to disrupt the pipeline that leads youth so relentlessly from poverty to prostitution, by helping to develop models that expand options for youth – well before they find themselves trapped in impossible situations.

This report represents the first step in our enhanced commitment to achieving those ends.

II. RISK FACTORS & DEMOGRAPHICS AMONG SEX TRAFFICKED YOUTH

Among a very small group of extant, relevant studies of this population, two reports were identified as reliable by the range of experts interviewed and thus form the backbone of this chapter of our report. The two studies were produced by the Center for Court Innovation and John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2009 and the other by the New York State Office for Children and Family Services.

According to the prevalence study conducted by the New York State Office for Children and Family Services OCFS in 2007, the size of the DMST/CSEC population in New York rests at about 2,562 individuals, statewide. A report out of The Center for Court Innovation and John Jay College of Criminal Justice, done just two years later, suggests that the number may be significantly higher: registering at somewhere between 3,769 to 3,946 minors – in New York City alone.

That's thousands of children, every night, with options so limited they barely register as options at all.

Thanks to the hard work of movement advocates, however, there is increasing awareness – in the media and among the general public – that sex trafficking of minors is a problem not just on foreign shores, but here in the United States as well. Yet even as attention turns to the existence of the problem here in the U.S., far too little consideration continues to be given to examining the underlying, systemic conditions that leave children vulnerable to sex trafficking.

These conditions – which include (among others) poverty; prior histories of sexual abuse and foster care placement; homelessness; truancy and drug abuse – are nothing less than the building blocks for a future at-risk. Understanding these factors – along with some key demographic information

about who trafficked youth really are – is essential to crafting solutions that do more than place a band-aid over this complex issue.

RISK FACTORS

“They’ve made these choices because they had no other choices. It seems dishonest to pretend otherwise.”

– Youth Homelessness Service Provider

As most experts agree – and as the data confirms – the girls, boys and transgender youth who find themselves trafficked for sex almost always share a set of life experiences that are the direct outgrowth of poverty, violence, abuse and neglect. “I’ve never looked at a girl sitting in my office and, after hearing her story, wondered how this happened to her,” said one advocate for trafficked youth interviewed for this report. “There’s always a reason. None of them had great family lives. There’s always something that lead them here.”

That “something” is usually one or more among a series of risk factors long understood by service providers to make children highly vulnerable to sex trafficking. Experiences of sexual abuse and domestic violence; homelessness; foster care placement and Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) petitions; school absence/truancy, drug abuse and gang participation all overlap with sex trafficking of minors as the OCFS study makes clear:

“The data analysis revealed that the overwhelming majority of CSEC (at least 85 percent), regardless of geographic area, had

prior child welfare involvement—typically in the form of child abuse and neglect allegations/investigations (69 percent of the NYC CSEC and 54 percent of those Upstate) and/or a foster care placement (75 percent of the NYC CSEC and 49 percent Upstate). A substantial proportion (over half of the NYC CSEC and 44 percent of those Upstate) had a prior juvenile justice placement, although secure placements were more common among the NYC children.”¹¹

The leading risk factors for sex trafficking of minors are as follows:

- Abuse:** Prior histories of child abuse register remarkably high rates of co-existence with sex trafficking of minor cases. In the OCFS study, 95% of girls from the NYC sample, and 85% of girls from the rest of the state had experienced some kind of abuse – either physical or sexual – prior to becoming involved in DMST/CSEC.¹²
- Homelessness:** Lack of shelter remains one of the top predictors of engagement in sex trafficking of minors. According to one expert who works with homeless youth in NYC, 70 – 80 percent of their clients have traded sex for money, food, shelter or drugs, while the Department of Homeless Services estimates that somewhere between 25 and 47% of homeless youth in NYC find themselves in the commercial sex industry.
- Drug Use:** OCFS found that 73 percent of girls in NYC and 100 percent of girls in the rest of the state reported histories of drug use¹³; the CCI/John Jay study found that nearly 80 percent of the youth they interviewed freely admitted to using a range of drugs (including alcohol).¹⁴ Whether
- Mental Illness:** 91 percent of NYC girls and 100 percent of those outside the city had prior reported histories of mental health treatment on file, according to the OCFS study. Many of these youth were known to be suffering from depression, while many others indicated that grief – usually the result of separation from one or more family members – was the impetus for their mental treatment.
- Truancy/School Absence:** Truancy/school absence is regularly acknowledged in relevant literature as closely linked to sex trafficking of minors, and represents one of the leading charges on which minors engaged in sex trafficking tend to be arrested in New York and beyond.¹⁵ According to a report from Shared Hope International on DMST in Buffalo, charges for truancy, curfew violation and the like are known to “mask DMST” – but, with proper training of the courts, could also be used to “assist in highlighting minors at high risk for such victimization.”¹⁶
- Gang Participation:** Membership in a gang is another documented risk factor, as in some cases male gang members regularly “force female members to have sex in order to gain the protection of the gang or to have sex in exchange for money/drugs/weapons.”¹⁷

So who is at risk for becoming a trafficked/commercially sexually exploited youth? Simply put, the children who are already living at the margins of society. More often than not, they are children for whom abuse, neglect and abandonment are more common daily factors than love, safety and care.

¹¹ Gragg, p. ii

¹² Gragg, p. 52

¹³ Gragg, p. 53.

¹⁴ CCI/John Jay, p. 97

¹⁵ <http://www.sharedhope.org/Portals/0/Documents/VirginiaRA.pdf> p. 2

¹⁶ http://www.sharedhope.org/Portals/0/Documents/Buffalo_PrinterFriendly.pdf, p. 23

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 36.

They are children who have no economic cushion to support them when they find themselves in terrible situations and without appropriate adult guidance. They're the children whose options in life have been steadily eroded by poverty and violence – and who often are making the best decisions they know how, given the short spectrum of truly terribly choices left to them.

WHO ARE TRAFFICKED YOUTH?

NEW YORK CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

With a population of more than 8 million people, New York City is not only the most densely populated area in New York State (total population, 19 million), but also, unsurprisingly, the hub of sex trafficking of minors' activity statewide.

Indeed, research by OCFS suggests that the vast majority of trafficked youth circulate within the five boroughs of New York City – representing “over five times the number [of cases identified in] seven Upstate counties (2,253 identified in NYC versus 399 Upstate).”¹⁸

The CCI/John Jay report of 2009, which focused specifically on the population of youth in NYC, reveals the following demographic information about trafficked minors living in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.

- **Origins:** According to CCI/John Jay findings, 71% of CSE youth in NYC were born in this state or its immediate environs – most them within the 5 boroughs of New York City (55.8%). Among the boroughs, Manhattan leads in terms of birthplace of CSE youth (20.1%), followed by the Bronx (14.1%), Brooklyn (12.9%), Queens (6.0%), and Staten Island (2.8%). It is worth noting that girls were much more likely to be natives of New York

City, with 68.9% of female respondents indicating that they were born within the five boroughs of New York City. As noted above, the OCFS report does not address birthplace of CSE youth; however, the data shows that NYC accounts for 84% of CSE youth.

- **Ethnicity:** Though whites make up 33% of the overall population of New York City¹⁹, just 24% of the CSEC population interviewed by the CCI/John Jay report identified as Caucasian. The other 76% of CSE youth identify as a racial minority, with a majority of those identifying as African-American. In other words, just over three-quarters of the youth trafficked for sex in New York City are youth of color.

Similarly, the OCFS report indicated that two-thirds (or 67%) of CSE youth identified by agencies were for Black/African Americans. However, the numbers were significantly lower for Whites at 6%; 16% were identified as “Other”, 7% Unknown, and 3% Multi-racial. With respect to ethnicity, 18% identified as Hispanic/Latino while ethnicity was Other/Unknown for 81% of CSE youth in NYC.

- **Gender:** Both the CCI/John Jay and the OCFS report indicate that girls, boys and transgender youth are impacted by sex trafficking of minors. The CCI/John Jay study reports that 47% of CSE youth in New York City are girls, 45% are boys and 8% are transgender youth. The OCFS statewide study reports that 22% of CSE youth identified by agencies were boys, 1% transgender. The Foundation believes that services for youth involved in sex trafficking should be inclusive and must be informed by the lens of gender-based violence and gender competence.
- **Education:** The CCI/John Jay report found that just 19.5% of CSE youth had a 12th grade educa-

¹⁸ Gragg, p. ii.

¹⁹ Sam Roberts, “New York City’s Population Barely Rose in the Last Decade, the Census Finds,” *New York Times* 25 March 2011: A23. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/25/nyregion/25census.html>)

tion – indicating that more than 80% of victimized children had dropped out of, or otherwise gone missing from, school. School administrations have a critical role to play in both the identification and prevention of this problem. The OCFS study did not provide information on education levels of CSE youth; however the agencies reporting indicated that 8% of NYC's exploited youth required "educational services" from them as a type of specialized service.

- **Age of first involvement:** According to the CCI/John Jay report, girls as young as 10 and 11 years old fall victim to CSE with the vast majority of youth in NYC experience their first exposure to CSE between the ages of 14 and 17 years of age. The average age of entry for boys and girls was roughly equal (15.15 years for girls, 15.28 years for boys), while transgender youth "tended to start out later in their teens (16.16 years) than either girls or boys."²⁰ The OCFS report did not provide any data on the average age of entry; however researchers found that "running away particularly affects entrance into prostitution for children under 15 years of age."²¹
- **Role of Pimps:** According to researchers on the CCI/John Jay report, just 16% of CSE youth reported being lured into the life by a pimp, or being controlled by one at the time of interview. Meanwhile, nearly half of the youth – 47% – reported that "friends" were responsible for initiating them in the CSEC market²² compared to the following data reported by the NYC agencies responding to the 2007 OCFS survey: 24% CSE youth in NYC exploited by an "Adult: friend or acquaintance" (and 1% for Minor: friend or acquaintance) while 75% were exploited by an "adult stranger." All of these revelations remain a point of much discussion in the field.

- **Economics:** The researchers from CCI/John Jay found that for 95% of the youth they interviewed, "the principal motivating factor for entering and remaining in the CSEC market was economic necessity."²³ Though other items such as shelter, food and drugs were also regularly reported (including in the OCFS report of 2007) as being exchanged for sex, money remains – by a margin as wide as 80% – the primary means of payment for commercial sexual acts within this population.²⁴

WHO ARE TRAFFICKED YOUTH? STATEWIDE DEMOGRAPHICS

To our knowledge, the only (relatively) current data on the statewide prevalence of CSEC comes out of the report released by the New York State Office of Children and Family services in 2007.

The OCFS study found three notable demographic differences between NYC and "Upstate" CSE youth: 1) average age of youth involved, 2) sexuality and gender identification, and 3) racial affiliation.

- While 59 percent of involved children in NYC were 16 or 17 years old, Upstate, "children were... younger: only 36 percent [of identified children] were 16 to 17 years old and 28 percent... were 13 or younger."
- NYC had the "majority" of LGBTQ youth, and all of the transgender youth; outside of NYC, just two percent of youth identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning, and none were transgender."

²⁰ CCI/John Jay, p. 46.

²¹ OCFS, p. 4.

²² CCI/John Jay, Volume I, p. 77.

²³ CCI/John Jay, p. 49.

²⁴ CCI/John Jay, p. 66.

- In NYC, the OCFS report identified 67 percent of impacted youth as African-American. Upstate, the single largest racial group was white, at 47 percent of the CSEC population.²⁵

Like the CCI/John Jay study of youth in NYC, the OCFS study also reported an unexpected but nonetheless significant population of male CSE youth. Interestingly, however, their analysis showed that the proportion of male CSE youth was actually higher outside of NYC than it is within the city itself (22% Upstate, versus 15% citywide in their data).²⁶

Additionally, the OCFS report found a number of other “distinct differences in the characteristics of... commercial sexual exploitation between NYC and the Upstate counties.” For example:

“In NYC, the exploitation most often occurred in a hotel (44 percent versus 9 percent Upstate) or outside (30 percent versus 2 percent Upstate). Upstate it typically occurred in the child’s home (52 percent versus 7 percent in NYC). In NYC, the exploiter was most likely an adult stranger (75 percent versus 28 percent Upstate), while Upstate, the exploiter was most likely an adult friend or acquaintance (58 percent versus 24 percent in NYC). In NYC, force was used in 58 percent of the cases, compared with 32 percent in the Upstate counties.”²⁷

More research is certainly warranted to verify these findings, but regional differences suggest further evidence of the complex and multi-dimensional aspects of the sex trafficking of minors as it exists in New York State.

Helping these children build lives filled with a range of healthy, safe choices – is no small task. In New York, the work of developing treatment programs and other resources to support minor victims of sex trafficking has already begun, to varying degree and effect, throughout the state. A look at what types of resources now exist to support these children, and the significant gaps in services that remain, will add another vital dimension to our view of the current state of the field.

²⁵ OCFS, p. 45.

²⁶ Gragg, p. ii.

²⁷ Gragg, p. ii.

III. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR TRAFFICKED YOUTH

The following sections provide a brief overview of how minor victims of sex trafficking in New York State are identified and referred to services; their options for treatment; and offer a bird's eye view of what their recovery process can look like.

IDENTIFICATION

“The main obstacle to measuring human trafficking is that victims, the primary information source, comprise what researchers call a “hard-to-reach” or “hidden” population. Typically involved in illegal or stigmatized behavior, members of such populations are generally reluctant to participate in research studies or other activities that may require their identification... More often than not, it is professionals in relevant service provider and law enforcement agencies who end up identifying victims and initiating reporting, not the victims themselves.”

– Vera Institute of Justice, 2008²⁸

In interviews with experts, many different opinions were shared about how to end sex trafficking of minors – about what treatment approaches work, and what policies need to be improved. And though their opinions on these issues spanned a spectrum, there was one fact upon which they seemed to agree: minor victims of sex trafficking are notoriously hard to identify.

It's a point that the quote above makes clear: because of the stigma associated with sex trafficking, children who are part of this population tend to be exceptionally hesitant to reveal their participation in these markets. They fear being judged – or jailed

– if they tell the truth about their activities, and according to some experts they have good reason to be so guarded.

“The label of [DMST] can be difficult for kids because some social workers judge harshly, and there are other repercussions,” noted one criminal justice expert interviewed. Families may turn them away. Shelters may refuse them service. “There's seemingly no incentive for them to disclose,” this expert pointed out.

In addition to the shame and stigma that keep many youth from self-identifying as trafficking victims, there are other factors that contribute to keeping sex trafficking of minors hidden in plain sight. They include:

- **Youth masking under-age status:** Because being identified as a minor requires much more contact with social services agencies than many youth are comfortable with, they often go to great lengths to hide their true age. This in turn makes it difficult to get a firm grasp on how many minors are actually engaged in the commercial sex markets at any given time.
- **Reluctance on the part of victims to participate in treatment/research:** Convincing youth to participate in studies of trafficked populations and other treatment programs specifically targeted at DMST/CSE youth is a challenge that has been catalogued in reports from the Vera Institute, CCI/John Jay, and beyond. Fear of discovery by traffickers, fear of repercussions in social service setting, and a desire to remain “independent” all work to keep kids from entering programs without resistance – again, keeping the available numbers rather small.

²⁸ Neil A. Weiner and Nicole Hala, “Measuring Human Trafficking: Lessons from New York City” (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, August 2008) vii.

- **Reluctance on the part of service providers to identify children as trafficked:** Among providers who are not already working in the DMST field, there may be significant hesitation to label kids as trafficked – in part because they may not be aware of clear avenues for treatment and referral. As a 2011 article from the New York Times points out, “Studies reveal that doctors are reluctant to inquire about issues – domestic violence, for example – when they feel powerless to intervene.”²⁹ Without training and knowledge of resources to help youth, the same could be said of individuals dealing with potentially trafficked minors.

As a result of these and other factors that keep the problem hidden, many trafficked youth who come into contact with service providers and the legal system do so under cover of a variety of issues other than sex trafficking. Arrests for drug possession, truancy and Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) petitions are frequently seen among trafficked minors; homelessness, runaway status and domestic violence are other common factors that lead involved youth into the care of social service agencies.

This, of course, leaves the onus of identification largely on the shoulders of service providers and law enforcement agencies – a practice that has serious limitations in the current social service context.

In the first place, the field currently lacks any diagnostic/assessment tool that would allow clinical/intake staff at government agencies and social service institutions to more easily and consistently identify minors trafficked for sex among the children they treat.³⁰ Schools, too, do not have protocols that would enable them to link truancy and other “warning signs” (provocative dressing, signs of abuse, etc.) to the possibility of involvement with sex trafficking.

Furthermore, too few staff members at agencies that come into regular contact with youth have the training they need to “see” sex trafficking of minors when it occurs. Though a key provision of New York’s Safe Harbor Law – passed in 2008 to ensure that minor victims of sex trafficking are routed through family (rather than criminal) courts – required training for all child protective workers, workers at agencies outside of child protective services are still not trained to identify sex trafficking of minors when it exists.

This means, for example, neither the Department of Homeless Services nor the Department of Youth and Community Development train staff to identify sex trafficking of minors. Nor does the Department of Education require such training for teachers and administrators.³¹

Foster care families are not required to participate in such training, even though they could be taught to identify “suspicious” teen behaviors – like excessive spending, unexplained new clothes, and new, mysterious boyfriend – as possible signs of trafficking involvement. Employees at job centers and unemployment agencies, which also come into regular contact with youth, are not required to either. Meanwhile, hospitals in New York City – many of which now have a question on their intake form about domestic violence – still have no protocol for inquiring about sex trafficking of minors.³²

Yet even in agencies where workers are ostensibly trained, serious fissures are evident in the system. A case in point on this front comes from NYC’s Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). Each year, ACS deals with approximately 60,000 cases of PINS, runaways, sexual abuse, domestic violence, immigration and substance abuse in NYC alone. According to the agency’s testimony before the New York

²⁹ David Bornstein “Treating the Cause, Not the Illness” New York Times 28 July 2011: <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/07/28/treating-the-cause-not-the-illness/>

³⁰ The Vera Institute of Justice is, however, currently working to produce one, in coordination with the NYC Trafficking Assessment Program (NYCTAP).

³¹ From testimony before the New York City Council, “Combating Sexual Exploitation in New York City: Examining Available Social Services.” New York City Council, Human Services and Governmental Affairs Division: Committee on General Welfare/ Committee on Women’s Issues. (New York, NY: 27 Jun 2011).

³² Ibid.

City Council in 2011, however, of those 60,000 cases, ACS was able to identify just five cases of CSEC after youth had entered the system – not all of which qualified as “commercial” (i.e., some may have been instances of intra-familial sexual exploitation, without the exchange of goods for services).³³

In the city’s Family Justice Centers, the process of identifying trafficked youth functions no better: of the approximately 11,000 children that visit all Centers annually, only 30 cases of DMST were reported in 2010, from all five boroughs – the majority of these cases involved youth not born in the U.S.³⁴ And according to one legal expert interviewed for this report, over a recent 12 month period, just five cases of DMST were documented in Family Courts – across all five boroughs.

It is critical to note that most of the experts interviewed agreed that the small number of trafficked youth identified by these systems is not an indication that trafficking does not exist. Rather, most felt that these numbers reflect the failure of the systems themselves. Because if any of the research on risk factors and their overlap with sex trafficking of minors is accurate, it is only reasonable to conclude that thousands of children who are coming into contact with ACS, law enforcement and the court system simply aren’t being accurately identified as trafficked minors. They are slipping through the cracks.

According to some experts, this is a particular problem among the population of trafficked boys and transgender youth, who do not fit the profile for “trafficked minors” most individuals carry in their minds. For example, in the CCI/John Jay study, boys reported “significantly more encounters with police than girls, especially for charges like disorderly conduct, drug possession, jumping the turnstile...or trespassing.” But girls notably surpassed boys in just two categories of arrest: loitering for prostitution, and prostitution.³⁵

Though there could be various reasons for this imbalance, at least one of them may be a lack of willingness or ability on the part of law enforcement to see these young men as victims of commercial sex markets. That so many (75 percent) of these self-identified, trafficked males would report being arrested at least once, and yet so few (just 3 percent) were ever arrested on charges related to prostitution offers at least one indication of how unprepared law enforcement, and others, are to identify sex trafficking among boys where it exists, and to route them to any services that might help them improve their lives.³⁶

Finally, a few experts from different sectors suggested that identification of sex trafficking of minors could be helped along tremendously by an increase in the investigative capacity of law enforcement throughout the state. Currently, there are just 54 Special Victims staff in borough offices available to consult on thousands of complex cases of domestic violence, substance abuse, sexual violence and trauma handled annually.³⁷ Utilizing more individuals who already have specialized training on the law enforcement front (i.e., retired Special Victims officers and the like) is seen by some as essential to improving both identification and the referral process going forward.

REFERRAL & PLACEMENT

According to our research and conversations with those in the field, victims are referred to service providers through the following channels:

- **Law enforcement**
- **The Courts**
- **Peers**
- **Outreach**

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ CCI/John Jay, p. 89

³⁶ CCI/John Jay, p. 89, p. 120

³⁷ New York City Council hearings, 27 June 2011; ACS Testimony

As a result of The Safe Harbor Act of 2008, and its requirement that minors arrested for prostitution related offenses be handled by the family courts – and referred to appropriate services – many trafficked youth who once would have served prison time are now being mandated into court-approved treatment programs instead. According to the OCFS study, 28 percent of the CSEC cases in NYC accounted for in their report were connected to service agencies by the courts – the largest single percentage among all sources for referrals.³⁸ This more active referral role on the part of the judicial system is largely seen by experts as a good development – however, some concerns remain about how the referral process operates overall, and who it best serves within this diverse population.

One issue raised by experts interviewed relates to the consistency of judicial decision making, and how it impacts the possibility of youth being referred out for services. Though Safe Harbor mandates a family court referral process, that mandate only pertains to the youth's first arrest on prostitution related charges. If they are arrested again, judges can choose to prosecute them criminally.

"Kids only have to be referred for services their first time through," noted one leader of an advocacy organization. "After that, there can be criminal action taken. That shouldn't be the case."

And in some cases, it isn't the case. Judges are at liberty to choose how to handle repeat offenders (i.e., keep them in family court or turn them over to criminal court) – which in turn leads to inconsistencies in how youth are treated, and who among them is offered the benefit of rehabilitation more than once.

Further complicating matters is the fact that the Safe Harbor Act only applies to arrests of minors for prostitution; if youth are arrested for other crimes, the protections of Safe Harbor may not

apply. According to one governmental official interviewed, there's not yet a clear sense in the criminal justice system about who is ultimately responsible for making the determination about when Safe Harbor does apply – which has led some prosecutors with little faith in the idea of rehabilitation to "get kids nailed for other crimes so that they don't qualify for Safe Harbor."

Beyond Safe Harbor, the signature problem with the referral process as it currently exists appears to stem from its overall lack of formal structure outside of the judicial system. Emergency sheltering, in particular, tends to work on a very informal basis, through the personal connections and relationships forged by key service providers.

For instance, if a trafficked minor over the age of 15 is identified (by law enforcement or another agency) and needs an immediate place to stay, a call is often made to one or another service provider to try to cobble together a temporary solution.³⁹ As one legal expert explained, "The effectiveness of placement depends on the knowledge and quality of the social workers and others doing placement." There is no official protocol to manage this process.

Some experts insist that they are "almost always" able to find an emergency placement for girls via the current method, while those who work with boys and transgender youth report that they are forced to turn kids away "every day." This speaks to the particular difficulty in referring and placing trafficked youth who are not female; in fact, there was no evidence found of an existing referral process for boys/transgender youth, no placement options specifically geared toward trafficked male or transgender youth, and no documented discussion of differing treatment approaches for this population.

Another crack in the system is visible in relation to what happens to youth as they reach the age of

³⁸ Gragg, p 34.

³⁹ If a victim is under the age of 15, state law prevents placement in non-secure child protective placements or shelters

majority if they are not already known to the courts or foster care. Youth already in the foster care system have the benefit of access to (adult) service referrals up until age 21. But for those who do not come into contact with foster care before age 18, the only option for referral is self-referral. This means that youth who have managed to avoid “the system” during their childhood have no real path to service referral as they enter adulthood; the social safety net, for them, is practically non-existent.

Though much is yet missing from the referral puzzle, there have been suggestions that, in NYC at least, agencies have begun to recognize how important collaboration among those working with this population can be. In hearings before the New York City Council in 2011, agency representatives suggested that there is now “great communication between law enforcement, Vice, Special Victims and city services co-located in the City’s Family Justice Centers” on cases of sex trafficking of minors. If true, this represents a welcome shift from earlier days⁴⁰ – and is crucial to ensuring that trafficked youth are identified and referred to appropriate agencies citywide.⁴¹

TREATMENT & RECOVERY

TREATMENT OPTIONS: NEW YORK CITY

Commensurate with the higher numbers of trafficked youth found in the New York metropolitan area, the vast majority of programs serving minor victims and survivors in New York State are located in and around the New York City area.

In NYC, these services range from residential, long- and short-term treatment programs to non-residential options that offer an array of therapeutic and case management services. Many take a holistic approach to service provision, actively striving to treat the “whole person” rather than simply “the problem.”

This means taking into account the host of psychological, social, environmental, economic and physical factors that may have led youth into sex trafficking and kept them there, often for years on end.

Among the residential treatment options, here are a few examples of the kinds of long- and short-term safe housing facilities that currently exist for victims of sex trafficking under 18 years-of-age:

- Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (aka, GEMS):** GEMS, a former grantee partner of NYWF, offers its Transitional Independent Living (TIL) Program to commercially sexually exploited young women ages 16-21 as part of an array of holistic services including comprehensive case management, mental health support, court advocacy (within both family and criminal courts), employment and educational assistance, as well as their award-winning leadership and empowerment programs. Their goal is to provide “a supportive environment in which young people can build self-sufficiency and lasting independent living skills.” TIL is equipped to provide secure housing to as many as 13 young women for up to 18 months.
- The Gateways Program:** Run by the Jewish Child Care Association and located in Westchester County, the Gateways Program is an “intensive, specialized residential program for 14 girls aged 12-16 who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking.” Working in partnership with GEMS, the program works to help young women gain the skills they need to return to their communities as “productive, independent young adults.” Gateways provides residents with a range of services including assessment and treatment, medical care, education, recreational therapy, and aftercare (including referrals to group homes). An expansion of residential facilities – to include 24 beds – is expected to be finalized this year.

⁴⁰ In 2005, the Operation Guardian demonstration project in the Queens County DA’s office catalogued notable difficulties in cross-agency collaboration and coordination of services. Whether those problems have truly been solved remains up for debate.

⁴¹ City Council Hearings, 27 June 2011.

- **Safe Horizon/Streetwork:** Along with a host of non-residential services offered through its two Manhattan drop-in centers, Streetwork – a program of Safe Horizon – operates two short-term, residential housing facilities with a total of 24 beds. These beds are available on an emergency basis only, and are open to all homeless youth in New York City under the age of 21 (i.e., no sex trafficking of minor identification required). Among other services, Streetwork provides homeless youth up to age 24 with hot meals, showers and clothing; medical services, including HIV prevention and assistance obtaining Medicaid; individual and group counseling; and legal assistance – all in a non-judgmental environment.

In addition to these programs, residential opportunities are also available from organizations and agencies such as the Department of Youth and Community Development (which runs short-term crisis shelters for the city’s homeless youth). The approach to treating youth in these programs varies from organization to organization, but all, in their own way, are striving to provide supportive environments that provide trafficked and other homeless youth effective avenues to “recovery” – however it may be defined.

Along with these admittedly limited residential opportunities, trafficked youth in NYC also have access to a number of organizations that offer non-residential treatment, referral and case management solutions.⁴² Among others, they are:

- **Sanctuary for Families:** Serving more than 10,000 victims of domestic violence, sex trafficking, and their children annually, Sanctuary for Families, a current NYWF grantee partner, is one of New York’s leading nonprofit agencies. In 2007, Sanctuary launched an Anti-Trafficking Initiative, which provides “targeted outreach and specialized services to victims of sex traffick-

ing.” The Anti-Trafficking Initiative offers clients legal representation on immigration, family law and public benefits; clinical counseling as well as trauma-specialized psychiatric services; comprehensive case management; community outreach and education. In addition, it provides training/technical assistance to legal, social service, and other professional disciplines.

- **Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI) at Mount Sinai School of Medicine:** Founded in 1984 as the Rape Crisis Intervention Program (RCIP), SAVI, a current NYWF grantee partner, provides free services that address the needs of survivors of rape, sexual assault and domestic violence – as well as those who are survivors of sex trafficking. They provide immediate crisis intervention in hospital emergency rooms; psychotherapy, counseling and information for past and present survivors and their families and friends; and work to educate the public and professionals regarding services and issues of sexual and domestic violence. Though most of their clientele is over 18 years old, many of the women SAVI treats entered sex markets when they were still minors.
- **The Door:** The Door’s mission is to empower young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth development services in a diverse and caring environment. Serving more than 11,000 young people aged 12-21 each year, The Door offers youth access to a wide range of services including: health care, GED and English language classes, tutoring and homework help, college preparation classes, job placement, and legal services. They also operate a drop-in center that provides youth with daily meals, referrals to NYC shelters and other services like counseling, health and dental care, education and job training programs and creative arts activities.

⁴² The New York City Mayor’s Office has compiled a resource guide for the victims of human trafficking, including CSE youth. To access this comprehensive list of services, please visit: www.nyc.gov/humantrafficking

In a field with a growing list of players, these six organizations stood out among experts for the quality of their services, and the depth of their knowledge of the field.

TREATMENT OPTIONS: STATEWIDE

Beyond the borders of New York City, treatment options for trafficked youth are limited at best. Though there are shelters and direct service organizations throughout the state that serve homeless youth, victims of domestic violence, and non-US born victims of trafficking, our research unearthed no programs outside of NYC that deal specifically with domestic-born victims of CSEC/DMST.⁴³

Further complicating the problem is the fact that many of the organizations outside of NYC that serve related or overlapping populations regularly refuse to handle US-born victims of trafficking. “Many shelters and service providers won’t treat these [young] women because of the problems they bring with them – mental health, drugs, sexual abuse – and because they present themselves in a difficult manner,” says one law-enforcement expert in Western New York.

“It’s a particular problem with domestic girls, who don’t present themselves as scared little victims; they present as hard core street girls. People don’t have compassion for them. They don’t look like girls who need help.”

Prevailing stereotypes about the kinds of youth who are trafficked (i.e. “bad kids”), and lack of awareness about the existence of the problem doesn’t help matters. “Working on this issue is very difficult in these [geographic] areas,” the same expert notes. “There’s absolute disbelief among community members that the problem exists in their area.”

As a result, there has been relatively little impetus to build the kind of programs needed to serve trafficked youth outside of New York City. “Where do you take these girls when you find them?” one law enforcement expert interviewed asked, not entirely rhetorically. “What do you do with them?”

* * *

Though boys and transgender trafficked youth present a particular challenge in terms of placement and housing across the entire state (i.e., none exists for those specific populations), among the girl population, too, housing options are limited. While experts are often able to find temporary, short-term housing solutions for the trafficked girls they interact with, long-term housing solutions are few in number, and always full, according to those interviewed.

The number of residential beds in New York City specifically for trafficked female minors is under 50 by our count – for a population estimated to be in the thousands. Though minor victims of sex trafficking may have access to residential solutions that are not specifically geared to the population, these beds, too, are in short supply. (For example: there are just 200 beds for homeless youth in New York, to serve an estimated nightly population of 3800 homeless minors.)⁴⁴

It is worth noting that this shortage of housing options for trafficked youth was mentioned by every expert interviewed for this report as the most pressing need of service providers in the field. It was also a key finding of both the CCI/John Jay report and OCFS reports.

In addition to the simple lack of beds for placement, the safety of those placements remains a serious source of concern. Scandals in the 1990s revealed that in some cases, victims were being cared for in facilities rife with exploitation; today,

⁴³ Some options do, however, exist for foreign nationals who are victims of human trafficking. In Western New York, the International Institute of Buffalo runs a Human Trafficking Victim Service to provide comprehensive support for victims of sex and labor slavery, including minors. Catholic Charities of Syracuse and of Rockville Centre (Long Island) also offer legal and other services to foreign-born victims of trafficking.

⁴⁴ http://www.citylimits.org/images_pdfs/pdfs/HomelessYouth.pdf

well-known, large group homes can serve as recruitment centers for pimps – who know all too well that the children living within those walls are likely to be particularly vulnerable to their advances. Pimps are also known to loiter near these facilities in search of youth formerly under their control, in efforts to reclaim them.

One solution to this problem has been to suggest that residential facilities be moved out of New York City, into suburban and rural areas less accessible to exploiters (see the Gateways Program). However, some experts felt that removing youth to these remote areas was just another way of “locking them up” – denying them independence in much the same way their exploiters did.

However complicated the issue, the perceived need for an increased number of safe residential beds to serve New York’s trafficked youth population cannot be overstated. In addition to the anecdotal evidence gathered on this point via expert interviews, an analysis of Operation Guardian – a pilot project run out of the Queens County District Attorney’s office which aimed, in part, to improve identification of and collaboration on exploitation cases involving minors – led to the same conclusion. Among those experts interviewed, there was a clear preference for small residential communities over large group homes; lack of funding was seen as the main challenge to increasing available beds – though others also noted a lack of political and public will to get the job done.

WHAT DOES RECOVERY LOOK LIKE?

The majority of the practitioners and experts interviewed for this report who work directly with trafficked youth shared a common conviction

that “recovery” in this context is not always easy to define.

Trafficked youth arrive at treatment with a variety of issues to address, from drug abuse to post-traumatic stress disorder, brain injuries to gynecological issues to simply needing to get their government issued identification in order, so they can actually get a job. Putting together the pieces of this inherently complex puzzle is a time-intensive and extremely sensitive process, one filled with many bumps along the way – bumps that trafficked youth have often been rendered ill-equipped to handle.

Whether they treat based on a harm reduction model or a strict prevention approach, experts were clear to note that recidivism among this population is extremely high. “Much like victims of domestic violence, they go back many times,” said one victim’s services provider. “This is all about repeated interventions.”

Given the harsh realities of the lives they are attempting to leave behind, that shouldn’t be surprising. For highly-controlled, pimped girls, issues of power and control are central. After living for months or years in isolation and under the control of an abusive, usually male, adult they’ve often lost their ability to function in the outside world.⁴⁵ And whether they’re pimped or not, building the skills needed to lead an independent life (learning to navigate the city on your own; finding a job; finding a home) is hard and scary work – making it not at all unexpected that these youth should be prone to seek refuge, time and again, in the “safety” of the only world they really know how to navigate.

“Most of our girls don’t know how to interact appropriately with people in the outside world.

⁴⁵ Pimped girls often also have to struggle through the trauma of leaving their “families” behind. Pimps are typically seen as “Daddies,” and other girls in the stable known as “wives-in-law.” These titles are more than simply nomenclature; they define a set of relationships, however abusive, that provide pimped girls with the kind of family structure many have never before experienced. Leaving those relationships behind can be exceptionally difficult.

They wear their shame on their sleeve and it pushes them out of society over and over again," another service provider told us. "They don't have a great sense of boundaries about what to share and what not to. We call it "trauma Aspergers" – they get confused by the systems of interaction that we take for granted."

The first task in a treatment setting is to establish trust – a key issue for children who have suffered from repeated abuse. Once that foundation has been built, many providers rely on a combination of talk therapy and behavior modification, along with concrete life skills training and case management support, to help steer youth towards healthier choices. The focus is on "corrective experience tasks that master the environment," according to one victim's services provider.

"Success," as another service provider in New York City put it, "comes as people define their own goals – and there's a whole range, from going to college to using clean needles. We want kids to be in a place where they can make informed and healthy decisions, not dictate to them what their goals should be. Giving kids options – of a range – is really the goal."

There are also clear financial realities that must be addressed as youth move out of the life. Among participants in the CCI/John Jay study, 60 percent identified "stable employment" as being necessary for them to leave the commercial sex industry, with education ranked next, at 51 percent.⁴⁶

Most of these youth struggle to imagine how they will make ends meet once they have left the life – and they are right to wonder. With unemployment in some communities as high as 16 percent nationally, and a current teenage unemployment rate of over 24 percent, there are evidently few jobs available for those in need.⁴⁷ Devising solutions that move the

ongoing economic security of these youth closer to the center of discussion will be critical to expanding options for these vulnerable youth.

Again, lack of funding appears to present a significant problem among services providers looking to provide a range of holistic services. Drug abuse treatment, health care, job training, education, independent housing, living stipends and child care are all services providers listed as being necessary supports to recovery for which there is too little funding currently. In addition, some see a need for increased funding of more flexible services – those that appreciate that multiple interventions and high recidivism are part and parcel of the recovery process for trafficked minors.

Recovery for this population, experts concede, is both difficult to achieve and expensive. There is simply no fast track to undoing the years of trauma and abuse suffered by these youth; their needs are many, and the resources to support them limited. Investments in programs that support treatment and recovery are much needed – as is an increased focus on prevention within the movement.

⁴⁶ CCI/John Jay, Volume I, p. 103.

⁴⁷ <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/06/04/eveningnews/main20069017.shtml>

IV. POLICY, LAW ENFORCEMENT & PROSECUTION RESPONSES

On the policy front, New York State has taken significant strides to bring an end to sex trafficking of minors within its borders. The state has acted not only to improve its response to those children already involved in sex trafficking, but also to curtail the demand for commercial sex with minors.

Following is a summary of the major legislative and administrative initiatives undertaken by the state to address sex trafficking of minors and related issues. Experts in the field have wide-ranging viewpoints on the efficacy and implementation of these initiatives, which it is beyond the purview of this report to explore. Our goal is simply to provide an overview of recent action, so that stakeholders may have a baseline understanding of the policy landscape as it now exists.

- **Safe Harbor Act:** In 2008, the state legislature passed the Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act, which seeks to decriminalize children in prostitution by “[removing] minor victims of commercial sexual exploitation from the jurisdiction of the criminal justice and juvenile delinquency systems.”⁴⁸

Rather than prosecuting these youth as criminals, the Safe Harbor Act mandates that prostitution cases involving children 17 and under be routed through the family courts – a means of ensuring that youth and their families receive the support and services they need to safely exit the commercial sex economy (which experts agree the juvenile justice system is ill-equipped to provide).

- **New York State Trafficking Act:** Prior to the passage of Safe Harbor, in 2007 the State also passed

anti-trafficking legislation which, for the first time, defined sex and labor trafficking as crimes within the New York State penal code and classifies sex trafficking as a Class B felony, with a maximum sentence of 25 years.

Passed to “accelerate the investigation of trafficking by local and state police, to enhance their identification of the victims of these crimes, and to provide a mechanism to provide services to eligible trafficking victims,” the law also inspired the establishment of The New York State Response to Human Trafficking Program (RHTP), overseen by the State’s Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

RHTP is designed to provide “a coordinated community based approach and comprehensive case management” to eligible trafficking victims in eight regions across New York State, helping victims of human trafficking connect with the myriad services they need to begin rebuilding their lives.⁴⁹

- **The Coalition to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Children (CASEC):** In New York City, the Mayor’s Office has taken a particular interest in addressing sex trafficking of minors over the past decade. During that time, the administration has made various attempts to improve both the criminal justice response to this problem, and to streamline the process by which governmental agencies and others working on sex trafficking of minors interact.

One attempt to address the issue came in the formation of CASEC: the Coalition to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Children. Formed in 2002, the initiative was intended to “expand and bolster the

⁴⁸ The Polaris Project, fact sheet. http://www.polarisproject.org/storage/documents/policy_documents/model%20laws/model%20safe%20harbor%20law%20overview%20final-1.pdf

⁴⁹ <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/programs/bria/documents/trafficking-NYS-Response.pdf>

collaborative efforts among government agencies and service providers and work to develop short- and long-term strategies to prevent and respond to CSEC in New York City.”⁵⁰

- **NYC’s Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force:** In 2006, the Mayor’s Office created a citywide Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, to help coordinate the efforts of the different entities that work to fight human trafficking in its many forms. The Task Force, which is still in operation, brings together experts from several disciplines – state and federal law enforcement, city and state government agencies, service providers, advocacy groups, and other community-based organizations – to discuss the challenges inherent in working to combat human trafficking.⁵¹
- **Judge Lippman’s Proposal:** In September of 2011, Judge Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York and Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, put forth a proposal to shift the adjudication of non-violent offenses among 16 and 17 year olds to family court – with rehabilitation, rather than punishment, being the ultimate goal. (Presently, non-violent offenses committed by individuals aged 16 and above are tried in criminal court in New York State.)

The proposal is significant because it has the potential to close a dangerous hole in the Safe Harbor legislation: though that policy shifts youth who have been arrested on prostitution charges into the hands of the family courts, if other charges against the youth exist – say, fraud, drug possession, trespass – their cases are still tried in a criminal court, cutting these youth off from the referrals family court makes to much needed intervention services. Under Judge Lippman’s plan, if the offenders were 16 or 17 years old, that would no longer be the case; as long as their

offenses were non-violent, they would be handled by the family courts.

The policy change will require the state to provide additional funding for both social services and the family courts themselves, and has already received initial support from the New York City Mayor’s office.⁵²

- **New York City Council Hearings:** In June of 2011, the Committee on Women’s Issues of the New York City Council hosted a public hearing on sex trafficking. “Combating Sexual Exploitation in NYC: Examining Available Social Services” brought together leading advocates and service providers to share their testimony on the state of social services in NYC as relates to DMST/CSEC. This was followed in October of 2011 by another hearing – “Combating Sex Trafficking in New York City: Examining Law Enforcement Efforts – Prevention and Prosecution” – which featured testimony from the NYPD; district attorneys from Queens, Brooklyn, and Manhattan; advocates; and legal and social service providers.

LAW ENFORCEMENT & PROSECUTION RESPONSES

Along with policies that seek to improve the identification and treatment of youth once they have become victims of sex trafficking, there is also, in some quarters, much thinking being done about how to deter buyers of sex, i.e., the demand, from victimizing minors in the first place. There is a burgeoning movement of advocates, policy makers and others who believe that focusing attention on, increasing arrests of and raising penalties against solicitors will put a stop to sex trafficking of minors.

⁵⁰ CCI/John Jay, Volume 2, p. 2.

⁵¹ http://www.nyc.gov/html/endht/downloads/pdf/dm_robles.pdf

⁵² Mosi Secret, “New York Judge Seeks New System for Juveniles” The New York Times 21 September 2011: A22.

In New York, “John Schools” are one such effort to put some of the onus for solving this problem on the buyers, rather than on victims alone. Operation Guardian, which was intended to improve coordination among police and in the Queens District Attorney’s Office to heighten prosecution of exploiters, was another.

- **“John” Schools:** In New York City, court-mandated “John Schools,” seek to end demand by building empathy among those who purchase sex (“Johns”), and raising their awareness of the violence and abuse often experienced by the individuals they are paying for services.

Attendees at John Schools (all of whom have been arrested for soliciting prostitution from an undercover police officer) hear from prosecutors and police, community activists and survivors, about the horrors of the life, and the prevalence of underage youth in the population. The results are surprisingly effective: studies of recidivism rates in NYC and beyond show significant decreases in the number of re-arrests for solicitation among attendees.⁵³

- **Operation Guardian:** One well-known outgrowth of the CASEC initiative was a pilot project called Operation Guardian, launched in 2005 and run through the Queens County District Attorney’s office.

The project sought to “improve the identification and screening of exploitation cases at the point of intake; to improve communication between the police and prosecutors; and, with the use of dedicated assistant district attorneys, to improve

the consistency of how the cases were handled throughout the evidence collection and prosecution phase,”⁵⁴ and is acknowledged to have met with some limited success.⁵⁵

While every expert interviewed for this report concurred that criminalizing victims is a practice to be moved away from, there was notable disagreement about whether focusing on Johns is actually an effective means of addressing this problem. This skepticism is mirrored by the CCI/John Jay report of 2009, which found that “arresting solicitors was not seen as a way to stop the problem of CSEC” – because of the intensive resources required to make these arrests (undercover police work), the difficulty prosecutors have securing convictions on these charges, and because coordination of efforts between law enforcement, prosecutors and service providers proved exceptionally problematic.⁵⁶

Other options suggested include class action civil suits on the part of victims against their traffickers – as well as against companies that aid and abet sex trafficking of minors (i.e., credit card companies, hotels, etc.)⁵⁷ One expert interviewed even suggested that youth ought to be able to sue foster care for placing them in housing situations known to be exploitative – acts of negligence that exposed already vulnerable youth to further victimization.

One action vis-à-vis Johns that stirred strong emotions was the idea of requiring individuals convicted of purchasing sex from minors to register as sex offenders.⁵⁸ Though civil libertarians tend to be against the practice, a number of experts see this as useful tactic – particularly given that research compiled by the nonprofit Prostitution

⁵³ SF: http://www.caase.org/pdf/resources-research/Johns_school_report.pdf. NYC: <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=4488623&page=1>

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵⁵ For a full accounting of the effectiveness, achievements and obstacles faced by CASEC and Operation Guardian, please refer to “The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in New York City: Volume Two.” (CCI/John Jay)

⁵⁶ CCI/John Jay, Volume 2, p. 19.

⁵⁷ ECPAT has launched a campaign to encourage major hotel chains to adopt a “Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.” For more information visit: www.ecpat.net

⁵⁸ This would require a change to the New York State penal code. Johns would have to be convicted of being sex offenders – which currently requires that an illegal “sex act” takes place, not just solicitation of the same.

Research & Education (PRE) indicates that such a threat ranks as the most effective deterrent to buying sex among respondents (sex-buyers and non-sex buyers alike).

These significant policy efforts across the state make it clear that sex trafficking of minors is an issue New York takes seriously. But amassing the political and public will to improve upon these initiatives, and ensure that they are implemented effectively, will require that funders, services providers and advocates continue to shine a light on the problem of sex trafficking of minors – encouraging legislators, government agencies and the courts to better understand the realities trafficked youth face, and to treat them with the compassion they deserve.

V. PREVENTION

Though incremental steps are being taken, in New York State and elsewhere, to address the problem of sex trafficking of minors once it occurs, our research reveals that precious little is currently being done to prevent children from falling victim to sex trafficking before it begins – or to highlight the systemic conditions that render youth vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Herewith, a look at what is needed to improve prevention efforts among specific publics (parents, at-risk communities, et al) and bolster understanding of the problem in the public at-large.

YOUTH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS

Since the vast majority of the minors trafficked for sex should be attending school, it would seem self-evident that schools should be playing a leading role in the prevention and identification of this problem. Training school personnel – and the communities they serve – to understand the risk factors that lead to youth being trafficked for sex has long-since been acknowledged as essential to addressing this problem.

Yet in New York State, there is no mandated curriculum that would raise awareness about sex trafficking of minors among students, teachers, administrators and families – nor are school administrators and counselors specifically trained to identify or refer out cases of minors who are trafficked for sex when they are suspected. Even mental health professionals working in schools in at-risk communities are unlikely to have the training they need to deliver culturally sensitive messages on this issue.

Another opportunity for creative collaboration could come in partnership with the Mayor’s Office on Domestic Violence, which currently runs NYC’s Healthy Relationship Training Program. H RTP offers more than 1000 workshops a year on the topics of dating violence and healthy relationships for adolescents, young adults and parents. Discussions in these workshops explore issues of power, control and gender-based violence – and offer a clear opening for conversations about the dangers of sex trafficking of minors as it exists in our communities.

Beyond the school doors, most advocates agreed, parents, youth and communities at-large must be made more aware of the risk factors and the services that exist to help children teetering on the edge. One legal expert interviewed suggested that a version of Atlanta’s “Dear John” public awareness campaign be targeted at NYC public schools,⁵⁹ while a number of other experts suggested that youth should be empowered to take the lead in educating peers on sex trafficking of minors.

Some experts lifted up the need for specialized training among families with child welfare involvement, group home facilitators and potential foster care parents – to ensure that they are prepared to provide the supports vulnerable children need to keep them out of the life. Still others suggested that ending youth homelessness is the surest way to prevent sex trafficking of minors from taking place, given the high numbers of homeless youth who are known to be part of the minor sex trafficked population. And it is without question that opportunities for economic stability and advancement must be expanded in order to obviate the financial motivation that leads so many at-risk youth to the life – and keeps them there, as a means of survival.

⁵⁹ Atlanta’s “Dear John” public education campaign has targeted Johns with harsh messages about the impact sex trafficking of minors has on children and communities. For more information visit: www.atlantaga.gov/mayor/dearjohn_111006.aspx

What is clear is that there is no shortage of support for the idea that more must be done to provide at-risk youth with better care, understanding and education than they're currently receiving. Providing them with the information and support they need may turn out to be the most effective method available to prevent their victimization in the first place.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

There is little doubt that public awareness of trafficking issue is on the rise. From CNN to Newsweek, the New York Times to "Dateline NBC" there is no shortage of stories to be found about youth who have been trafficked and who have paid a heavy price for their involvement.

Advocacy organizations, too, have led the way in making "human trafficking" a household word. Organizations like ECPAT International, The Polaris Project and Equality Now have launched significant and effective global campaigns to raise awareness about the violence, psychological abuse and isolation suffered by women and children who are victims of sex trafficking, and to curb the behavior that allows the problem to persist.⁶⁰

In terms of public awareness efforts specifically geared to "ending demand," New York State currently appears to trail other states leading the movement. Unlike both Georgia and Illinois⁶¹ – where "end demand" campaigns have long-since become a powerful force in shifting law enforcement's attention to sex traffickers and people who buy sex (and away from the girls and women who are being bought) – New York's single, stand-alone campaign to target the (largely male) population of individuals who purchase sex from minors is still, arguably, in its nascent stages. (The national organization A Call To Men recently launched a petition on Change.org call-

ing on the NYPD to help end demand in New York City by "holding sex industry buyers accountable.") To our knowledge, no state-wide campaign yet exists.

The citywide campaign – "End Demand NYC" – which is being spearheaded by Sanctuary for Families, presently features a video on sex trafficking, available online, as well as a petition to shut down the adult-services section of Backpage.com – an online portal connecting traffickers, Johns and trafficked youth. To help support the campaign's launch, in March of 2011 Sanctuary hosted a forum on Sex Trafficking in New York City, which was attended by more than 500 guests, including City Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

It is worth noting, however, that such campaigns are not always embraced by everyone in the field. In fact, a number of experts questioned the effectiveness of campaigns that target the demand side of this particular equation, noting that they see these efforts as both a waste of time and resources – as well as a distraction from the real issues that lead children into sex trafficking.

Notwithstanding the varied opinions advocates may have on this issue, it remains clear that we must invest additional resources in examining demand as a key component in efforts to end sex trafficking of minors.

* * *

Here in New York efforts are also being made to address the problem head on. In addition to the "End Demand NYC" campaign, in 2010 the New York City Mayor's Office launched its own citywide public education campaign to combat human trafficking. "Let's Call an End to Human Trafficking" is a collaborative effort between private sector partners, non-governmental organizations and

⁶⁰ These campaign messages are often targeted to, or trickle down to, the New York marketplace – both because many of these organizations make their homes here, and because New York City continues to be a major hub for sex trafficking in the United States.

⁶¹ End Demand Illinois has already scored two legislative wins as a result of their work: The Illinois Safe Children Act (which renders minors immune from prosecution for prostitution), and the Justice for Victims of Sex Trafficking Crimes Act (which offers survivors of sex trafficking the opportunity to have prostitution convictions removed from their records).

City agencies to raise awareness of the problem of both international and domestic human trafficking in NYC. The campaign has run in print ads, on NYC TV, in the City's taxis, and on the City's website (NYC.gov), and offers individuals, communities and professionals the tools they need to identify and report suspected cases of human trafficking (including sex trafficking of minors) to the proper agencies.

These are all excellent signs of progress – but in almost all of these cases, the story of trafficked youth gets picked up at some point after trafficking has already occurred. Few of these initiatives attempt to address the problem before it has happened, or spend time lifting up the conditions known to lead some youth into sex trafficking.

As a result, few people outside of those who work in the field have an accurate sense of who sex trafficked minors really are. Because risk factors largely remain hidden from the public, especially for sex trafficked minors born in the U.S., it is difficult for many to see the systemic failures that impact youth long before they become victims of trafficking. Consequently, outdated stereotypes about “bad girls” proliferate, while the media focus on unlikely “girl next door” abduction narratives, and the experiences of boys and transgender youth are once again completely elided.

On a positive note, this lack of attention to the root causes of sex trafficking of minors means, according to some experts, that ample space remains on the public awareness landscape to reframe this issue with a focus on trafficked youth – and to address, publicly, the systemic issues (including abuse, violence and poverty) that leave them vulnerable

to sex trafficking in the first place. Creating campaigns and educating the media and others about the linkages between our nation's leading social ills and the incidence of minor sex trafficking will be essential to any approach that seeks to protect our nation's children from trafficking.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Though we have enumerated a long list of policies, programs and gaps in the sex trafficking of minors landscape over the course of this report, there are five major conclusions we deem essential knowledge to advance the movement to end sex trafficking of minors where it exists and to prevent it from taking place where it is most likely to occur.

- **Recovery is difficult. Recidivism is high. Prevention is critical.**

No matter what direction you approach this problem from (moral, economic, political) it is obviously preferable to prevent victimization than to treat survivors. Recovery from minor sex trafficking is a long and uncertain road, filled with multiple setbacks. Sparing children the horrors of the life, and the difficulty of trying to escape it, is not just strategically astute – it is our moral duty. A focus on prevention, and on addressing the systemic failures that render youth vulnerable to sex trafficking, is simply essential if we hope to develop viable solutions to this problem.

- **The risk factors for sex trafficking of minors are known.**

This knowledge should govern the identification and referral procedures of all government protective workers and New York State institutions that serve children in high-risk communities. Schools must be engaged in educating students and parents on the dangers of sex trafficking of minors; meanwhile, researchers should move to put a clinical assessment tool in place in the field.

- **Community training is key.**

Beyond schools, communities and community-based organizations must be trained to recognize the signs of sex trafficking of minors, and empowered with information about where to get effective help directly (i.e., from direct service providers like GEMS and Sanctuary for Families).

Training is also essential for foster care families, guidance counselors, truancy officers and ER hospital workers – along with other non-social service government organizations that deal with children on the margins of society.

- **New investments in residential services are needed.**

This was identified as the area of greatest need by experts we interviewed, no matter what sector of the field they worked in. Though short-term/crisis housing solutions can be and are cobbled-together for girls on an ad hoc basis, they are still considered to be in short supply. Long-term residential options are even more limited. Boys and transgender trafficked youth have no specific housing options of any kind. Small residential communities are typically preferred to large group institutions; lack of funding remains the main challenge to increasing the number of available beds.

- **More resources are required to effectively address demand.**

A number of strategies to address demand, such as prosecution of “Johns”, advocacy and public education campaigns have been deployed in past years. While some of these strategies are debated, it remains clear that investment in additional research and innovative strategies is needed to address sex trafficking of minors in a holistic way.

VII. NEXT STEPS

After 24 months of assessing the Sex Trafficking of Minors landscape in New York and based on the findings of this report, The Foundation announces the launch of a five-year, \$5,000,000 Initiative Against Sex Trafficking of Minors.

The Initiative's goal is to establish zero tolerance towards the sexual exploitation of minors, with specific focus on sex trafficking of minors. The Initiative seeks to identify and support strategies that foster individual transformation, community engagement and mobilization and systemic change. In so doing, this Initiative will prioritize the lives of NYC youth, strengthen efforts that eliminate the sexual exploitation of girls, boys, and transgender youth in NYC, disrupt a pipeline to the sex industry, and build shared ground for collective action against sex trafficking of minors.

By seizing the imperative to combat sex trafficking of minors in New York City, The New York Women's Foundation will catalyze partnerships and leverage human and financial capital to establish an integrated, multi-disciplinary, mutually reinforcing network of preventive and supportive services and policies that place high value on the lives of New York City youth. It is to them that we unflinchingly commit to build a City safe and free from all forms of violence and to provide viable options to leading productive lives.

Over the next 5 years, the NYWF's Initiative Against Sex Trafficking of Minors will focus specifically on minors trafficked for sex in New York City and will seek philanthropic, nonprofit, public and private sector partners to:

(1) Increase funding for NYC based direct service and advocacy nonprofit organizations addressing sex trafficking of minors.

The New York Women's Foundation's resources will be targeted to services for girls and transgender youth. We will prioritize early intervention and prevention services and will dedicate the majority of our grantmaking funds to these activities. The Foundation will also engage our grantee partners, funded through this Initiative, in learning communities to deepen understanding of what works when addressing sex trafficking of minors at the individual and system levels. Further, we will help build their organizational and management capacities to ensure their sustainability beyond our increased investment over the next 5 years.

(2) Increase public awareness and involvement in combatting sex trafficking of minors.

The Foundation will host forums, conferences, symposia throughout the five-year Initiative period to educate the public at large about the challenges facing youth at risk for sex trafficking and those who are sex trafficking victims. In addition, The Foundation will seek media partners to launch a multi-year media campaign to combat sex trafficking of minors in NYC.

(3) Increase systemic responses that create a zero tolerance policy environment toward sex trafficking of minors in NYC.

NYWF's Initiative Against the Sex Trafficking of Minors will be a collaborative effort. It will build on existing efforts and help create an ever-growing multi-disciplinary and integrated network of philanthropic, nonprofit, law enforcement, legal, faith-based, medical, public and private institutions, sex trafficking survivors and community advocates

that responsibly and persistently drive holistic and systemic responses to this issue while compassionately responding to the needs of individual youth trapped by sex trafficking.

(4) Improve data collection and documentation of the scope and magnitude of the issue.

One of the major challenges in the effort to combat sex trafficking of minors is that the issue is, by its nature, hidden and mobile. These two qualities complicate the identification of victims, the provision of services, and also make it extremely difficult to document the dimensions of the problem. Through the NYWF Initiative Against Sex Trafficking of Minors, we will work with our collaborative network to unearth effective evaluation approaches to document the dimensions of the issue as well as the impact of interventions supported through the Initiative.

(5) Increase Investment in Girls' Leadership

To help create viable opportunities to economic security, violence free and healthy lives and to ensure sexual rights and reproductive justice for girls and gender non-conforming youth, The Foundation will expand its Girls' Leadership Day Program and launch its Girls-in-Grantmaking Program and a Girls' Internship Initiative. Our goal is to offer girls and young women the opportunity to join in creating solutions to the problems and inequalities affecting their lives and in helping our communities grow strong. In this way, they too can directly foster individual transformation, community engagement and systemic change.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

Note: All interview subjects are not included in the list below as some subjects requested anonymity. Institutional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only. Titles reflect positions held at the time of the interview.

1. **Abadi, Rita.** Program Manager, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI)
2. **Dolan, Sarah.** Advocate Counselor, Services to Access Resources and Safety (STARS) Program, Sanctuary for Families
3. **Eisner, Laurel.** Executive Director, Sanctuary for Families
4. **Fildes, Elizabeth.** Erie County Sheriff's Deputy; head of the Western New York Human Trafficking Alliance
5. **Fleischauer, Amy.** Director of Victim Services, International Institute of Buffalo
6. **Goswami, Samir.** Director of Corporate Responsibility, LexisNexis; founder & former Director, End Demand, Illinois Campaign
7. **Hawley, Lynn Frederick.** Executive Director, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention (SAVI) Program
8. **Hoeflinger, Monique.** Senior Program Officer, The Ms. Foundation for Women
9. **Hollibaugh, Amber.** Co-Executive Director, Queers for Economic Justice
10. **Iskowitz, Lori.** Bronx Deputy Borough Chief, Family Court, Law Department of the City of New York
11. **Labriola, Melissa.** Associate Director of Research, Center for Court Innovation
12. **Mullen, Katherine (Cait).** Attorney, Juvenile Rights Practice, Legal Aid Society
13. **Renovitch, Sheila McGinley.** Executive Director, Liz Claiborne Foundation
14. **Silverman-Yam, Beth.** Clinical Director, Sanctuary for Families
15. **Smolenski, Carol.** Executive Director & Co-founder. ECPAT-USA (Ending Child Prostitution and Trafficking)
16. **Tomatore, Suzanne.** Director, Immigrant Women and Children Project, New York City Bar Association
17. **West, Laurel Parker.** Executive Director, Long Island Fund for Women & Girls

APPENDIX B

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The New York Women's Foundation is a voice for women and a force for change. We are a cross-cultural alliance of women catalyzing partnerships and leveraging human and financial capital to achieve sustained economic security and justice for women and girls. With fierce determination, we mobilize hearts, minds and resources to create an equitable and just future for women, families and communities in New York City.



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