

**Commercially Sexually Exploited Children  
in Seattle/King County  
2019 Update**

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**Commissioned by**  
**Stolen Youth**  
**Seattle, Washington**  
<https://stolenyouth.org/>

## DEFINITIONS

### COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)

CSEC refers to a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of any person, or in exchange for anything of value (including monetary and non-monetary benefits) given or received by any person. Examples of crimes and acts that constitute CSEC include:

- child sex trafficking/the prostitution of children;
- child sex tourism involving commercial sexual activity;
- the commercial production of child pornography; or
- the online transmission of live video of a child engaged in sexual activity in exchange for anything of value.

CSEC also includes situations where a child, whether at the direction of any other person or not, engages in sexual activity in exchange for anything of value, which includes non-monetary things such as food, shelter, drugs, or protection from any person.

Depending on the specific circumstances, CSEC may also occur in the context of internet-based marriage brokering, early marriage, and children performing in sexual venues.<sup>1</sup>

### WASHINGTON STATE - COMMERCIAL SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR (CSAM) RCW 9.68A.100:

**(1)** A person is guilty of commercial sexual abuse of a minor if:

- (a)** He or she provides anything of value to a minor or a third person as compensation for a minor having engaged in sexual conduct with him or her;
- (b)** He or she provides or agrees to provide anything of value to a minor or a third person pursuant to an understanding that in return therefore such minor will engage in sexual conduct with him or her; or
- (c)** He or she solicits, offers, or requests to engage in sexual conduct with a minor in return for anything of value.

**(2)** Commercial sexual abuse of a minor is a class B felony punishable under chapter 9A.20 RCW.

...

**(4)** **Consent of a minor to the sexual conduct does not constitute a defense** to any offense listed in this section [emphasis added].

*“One of my clients threw herself in front of a car to escape her trafficker. After getting medical attention, she found her way to our services.”*  
Seattle Social Services Provider

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.  
[https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/csec\\_program.html](https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/csec_program.html)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Debra Boyer, PhD, is a Cultural Anthropologist who has devoted her career to understanding the cultural norms related to systematic violence against women and children. She has developed programs and policies leading to increased services and protection for commercially sexually exploited children and adults. Dr. Boyer has over 35 years' experience as the Principal Investigator of studies on runaway and homeless youth, and commercially sexually exploited youth and adults. She has conducted studies on the impact of abuse on adolescent pregnancy and women's reproductive health and has completed several studies using ethnographic methods to inform policy and practice, including studies on homeless street populations. She is the author of *Who Pays the Price: An Assessment of Youth Involvement in Prostitution in Seattle*. Dr. Boyer is also a co-founder of the Committee for Children, which develops and supports implementation of abuse prevention, and social and emotional learning curricula. These curricula are implemented in 25,000 school districts in the United States and in 26 countries. Dr. Boyer is an Adjunct Faculty member in the Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies at the University of Washington. She has also served as Research Director and Associate Director for YouthCare in Seattle, Washington. She joined the Organization for Prostitution Survivors as an organizational consultant in April 2013 and was the Executive Director for OPS from February 2014 – 2018. She currently operates her research practice, Boyer Research in Seattle, Washington.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The author would like to thank the organizations and staff who supported this project and gave their time to review files, extract data, and participate in interviews. Several individuals made themselves available to offer feedback and guidance in the final phases. Their efforts are deeply appreciated as is the very important work they do each day for commercially sexually exploited children. Participants are listed in the appendices. The author would also like to thank Jason Kovacs for his editing and insight.

## GLOSSARY

<b>BC</b>	<b>Bridge Collaborative</b>
<b>CPS</b>	<b>Child Protective Services (DCYF)</b>
<b>CSE</b>	<b>Commercial Sexual Exploitation</b>
<b>CSEC</b>	<b>Commercially Sexually Exploited Children</b>
<b>DCYF</b>	<b>Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families</b>
<b>FOY</b>	<b>Friends of Youth</b>
<b>KCPAO</b>	<b>King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office</b>
<b>KYFS</b>	<b>Kent Youth and Family Services</b>
<b>MDT</b>	<b>Multi-disciplinary Team</b>
<b>NCMEC</b>	<b>National Center on Missing and Exploited Children</b>
<b>Nexus</b>	<b>Nexus Youth and Families</b>
<b>OPS</b>	<b>Organization for Prostitution Survivors</b>
<b>REST</b>	<b>Real Escape from the Sex Trades</b>
<b>SAS</b>	<b>Seattle Against Slavery</b>
<b>YC</b>	<b>YouthCare</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

In 2007, the City of Seattle commissioned the author to assess the number of youth and young adults, aged 24 years and younger, who were victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the Seattle area. The final report, *Who Pays the Price: An Assessment of Youth Involvement in Prostitution in Seattle*, was completed in 2008.<sup>2</sup> Findings from this study included a service planning estimate of 300-500 youth involved in prostitution. A decade later, StolenYouth commissioned the author to update the earlier study and to re-examine the issue of CSEC and to answer these questions:

- How many CSEC are being served across agencies now?
- What are the characteristics of a local sample of CSEC?
- What should we be doing next to end commercial sexual exploitation of children?

### THE APPROACH

The author used a Rapid Assessment Procedure for evaluating CSEC. This procedure focuses ethnographic methods on answering specific questions about issues, programs, and policies to provide information and direction in a short period of time.<sup>3</sup>

### THE STUDY POPULATION

For this assessment the author evaluated commercially sexually exploited minors and young adults ages 24 years and younger, who had engaged with social and legal services in 2018.<sup>4</sup> The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention definition of CSEC was used: *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) refers to a “range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value (including monetary and non-monetary benefits) given or received by any person.”*

### DATA COLLECTION

Data collection for this evaluation included observation, key stakeholder interviews, agency surveys, case file reviews, case studies, document, and literature reviews. Agencies were identified to participate based on their known CSE services and programs in Seattle and King County, Washington.

- Over 55 representatives from 39 agencies, were interviewed.
- Agencies and programs were asked to provide two categories of quantitative information.

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<sup>2</sup> Boyer, Debra. (2008) *Who Pays the Price: Assessment of Youth Involvement in Prostitution*. City of Seattle, Department of Human Services, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Division. Available online: [http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/domesticviolence/Report\\_YouthInProstitution.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/domesticviolence/Report_YouthInProstitution.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Scrimshaw, Susan, C. (2018) *Ethnography, Rapid-Assessment*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea1465>  
Trotter, R. T., Needle, R. H., Goosby, E., Bates, C., & Singer, M. (2001). A Methodological Model for Rapid Assessment, Response, and Evaluation: The RARE Program in Public Health. *Field Methods*, 13(2), 137–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X0101300202>

<sup>4</sup> The author is experienced with human subjects' protection protocols in research. Although this project was not subject to a review process, data collection and research protocols did not present risk of harm to individuals represented in the quantitative or qualitative data collected. Surveys and interviews with community leaders and service providers focused on general policies, practices, services and emerging conditions and issues affecting CSEC. Only aggregated and non-identifiable demographic data were collected on the target population. There were no direct interactions or interventions with individuals represented by the case file data collect

- 21 agencies provided data on the total number of CSEC served (ages 24 years and younger) in 2018. The agency counts were combined to reach an incidence estimate for the year 2018.
- 10 agencies and programs provided detailed demographic and descriptive information on a local sample of CSEC from case files.

## LIMITATIONS

Obtaining an accurate count of CSEC is, as many researchers have noted, probably impossible. Because of the illegal dynamics involved with CSEC, a representative sample is also difficult to obtain. The estimates presented in this report rely on identified individuals receiving services from agencies in Seattle/King County with specialized CSE programs.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1: 2018 CSEC Incidence by Age Group (Reported by 21 Participating Agencies)**

AGE	18 YEARS OR LESS	AGES 19- 24 YEARS	TOTAL CSEC AGES 11-24YEARS
NUMBER CSEC	231	242	473

**Table 2: CSEC Service Planning Estimates**

CSEC Service Planning Estimate for ages 24 years and younger	500-700
CSEC Service Planning Estimate for subset of ages <18	300-400

The incidence estimate presented here is higher than that found in 2008. The higher number is not necessarily the result of an overall increase in the number of CSEC. The wider availability of services for CSEC has led to increased identification and access to services for that population. The 2019 incidence is at the higher range of the service planning estimate from 2008; 300-500. Given the higher number of identified CSEC (473 in 2019 versus 238 in 2008), policy planners and service providers should prepare for increased service needs, as a growing service base finds more exploited youth.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF THE LOCAL SAMPLE OF CSEC

10 Agencies provided data on 172 individual CSEC from case file information.

- 85% Female
- 40% Caucasian
- 31% African American
- 16.8 Mean Age at Intake for CSEC Services
- 14.4 Age at First CSE
- 69% Sexually Abused Prior To CSE
- 46% Living on the Street, In A Shelter, Or Hotel/Motel, 66% Faced Homelessness
- 90% Experienced Trauma/PTSD
- 55% Experienced Addiction
- 80% Experienced Mental Health Issues

## PATTERNS OF EXPLOITATION

(N=159-172)

- 70% known to have engaged in sexual conduct for exchange other than a fee
- 60% known to have been taken to clubs, hotels, residences by adults to engage in sexual conduct



- 54% known to have a third-party exploiter or acknowledged having one ever
- 41% known to have been abducted/imprisoned or moved around for sexual activity
- 38% known to have explicit sexual online profile or internet community sites that indicate CSE

**BUYERS** – There were an estimated **1,971 -2,475** buyers in one 24-hour period based on 2 underage-posing Chat Bots run by Seattle Against Slavery in June 2019.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Eliminate the Criminal Liability of Minors for Prostitution Related Offenses
2. Extend Non-Criminalization to Other Crimes Resulting from Sex Trafficking/Commercial Sexual Exploitation
3. Adopt a CSE Victim/Defendant Protocol for the Criminal Justice System for Survivors of CSE Charged with Related Crimes
4. Engage CSE Survivors to lead development of the CSE Victim/Defendant Protocol
5. Resolve Ambiguities in The Legal Status and Disposition Of CSEC
6. Augment Existing Services to Reach More CSEC and Effectively Engage Them in Services
7. Establish a CSEC Prevention Collaborative
8. Centralize Data Collection and Develop a Standardized CSEC Protocol

Now is the time to move forward with a unified commitment to focus on interrelated goals for the next phase of efforts to combat CSEC. Law enforcement concerns need to be addressed at once and it is time to act against the sources that feed the pipeline of vulnerable youth into CSE. The comprehensive service and policy infrastructure that is currently in place can support these efforts and has opened the door for coordinated prevention efforts that can be as consequential for improving our ability to prevent CSEC over the next decade as coordinated services have been for intervening in the last.

## INTRODUCTION

*Bea is 14 years old. At age 12, she was commercially sexually exploited while living away from her family. Her father and mother have been incarcerated. She often disappears, is known to have had multiple third-party exploiters, and has been picked up many times by the police. She has been prostituted in Auburn, Tacoma, and Seattle. Her CSEC advocate, who works closely with police, was able to connect with her safely at a transit center and helped her avoid a very dangerous situation with an exploiter. By age 14, she was already struggling with addiction, including IV drug use. Her future is still unclear, but her advocate was able to get her to a safer location with relatives. Her advocate, also a survivor, emphasizes how critical it is to respond immediately and to build trust. She still works with Bea.*

*Tony has been coming to the LGBT support center since he was 14. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade he “came out” and lost all his friends. So, he decided to lie, and told his friends he was not gay. He got back some of his friends, but then found himself lying about being heterosexual and decided to come out again in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. And, he lost all his friends. His parents rejected him and made him leave his home. He walked for miles from his home to reach the Lambert House support center. He disclosed to staff what he had done to survive; he was commercially sexually exploited. Staff put him on suicide watch several times. Tony, like many LGBT youth, suffered from family rejection and lived in constant fear. This center has been a safe space for youth since the 1980’s. For Tony, his only meal was at Lambert House.*

In 2007, a series of articles about minors arrested and charged with the crime of prostitution appeared in the Seattle press. A group of service providers, funders, and representatives of the criminal justice system began meeting to share information and discuss the community response to youth who were clearly victims, but also criminalized for their victimization. At that time, Terri Kimball was Director of the Division of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention for the City of Seattle Human Services Department. Terri came forward and posed these questions to the community: “If we don’t do something about this issue now, then when? ...And if it is not us, then who?”

The City of Seattle commissioned the author to complete an assessment of the number of youth and young adults, aged 24 years and younger, who were victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the Seattle area. The final report, *Who Pays the Price: An Assessment of Youth Involvement in Prostitution in Seattle*, was completed in 2008.<sup>5</sup> Findings from this study included a service planning estimate of 300-500 youth involved in prostitution, and analyses of these areas:

- Trends and patterns in adolescent commercial sexual exploitation;
- Service utilization and service gaps; and
- The response of community-based providers and criminal justice entities to CSEC.

Recommendations were made regarding CSEC service models and interventions. The study was used to inform future Requests for Investment by the City of Seattle, and to help facilitate a more coordinated community response to commercially sexually exploited youth.

In the 2008 study, several service gaps were identified:

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<sup>5</sup> Boyer, Debra. (2008) *Who Pays the Price: Assessment of Youth Involvement in Prostitution*. City of Seattle, Department of Human Services, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Division. Available online: [http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/domesticviolence/Report\\_YouthInProstitution.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/domesticviolence/Report_YouthInProstitution.pdf)

- Early intervention services were understaffed or often nonexistent,
- Service coordination and collaboration were sparse, with some agencies not recognizing they were serving CSEC,
- Key services directed toward at-risk youth acknowledged their need for training,
- Safe and secure housing for youth in prostitution, who required protection due to their affiliation with pimps and gangs, was not available in Seattle, or in Washington State,
- Youth in prostitution faced barriers to immediate placement at critical times, such as upon release from juvenile detention, and
- Reintegration, aftercare, and the intensive case management services necessary for prostitution recovery were limited and could not meet the need.

In the decade following the publication of *Who Pays the Price*, Seattle and King County have developed a CSEC response that is held up as a national model:

- Coordinated services have expanded, particularly through the publicly and privately funded Bridge Collaborative, which includes YouthCare, Friends of Youth, Kent Youth and Family Services, Nexus Youth and Families, and the Organization for Prostitution Survivors. This collaborative effort has resulted in increased identification of and access to services for CSEC.
- The King County CSEC Taskforce, and the statewide work of the Center for Children and Youth Justice has led to increased awareness, training, and services for CSEC in King County and Washington State.
- The King County Ending Exploitation Collaborative is implementing a statewide model to reduce demand and increase services for victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
- The Washington State Attorney General's Office provides centralized information about resources statewide and facilitates the CSEC Statewide Coordinating Committee.
- StolenYouth, a unique funding group focused on CSEC in Seattle/King County, supports a coalition of agencies to address CSEC on several fronts, including services, public awareness, education, training of businesses, data collection, and buyer education and disruption programs.
- The City of Seattle has made significant investments to address CSE/CSEC. The City of Seattle supports a range of programs on gender-based violence, which now includes CSEC/CSE services from the CEASE Network (Coordinated Efforts Against Sexual Exploitation).
- King County has recently provided support to build CSE collaborative services in high-need areas of the county outside of Seattle.
- The State of Washington, Office of Crime Victims Advocacy, has targeted funding to increase resources and services for victims of CSE.
- Policy advocates are engaged in ongoing legislative work on several fronts, including efforts to address the contradictory legal status of youth involved in prostitution.<sup>6</sup>
- Availability of and access to training on issues relating to CSEC has increased dramatically.
- Heightened awareness has led to transformational change in attitudes toward CSEC, which are evident in aggressive policies against sex buying instituted by local law enforcement and prosecutorial offices including the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Seattle City Attorney, Seattle Police Department, and other municipalities in King County.

A complete list of efforts by individual agencies and funders in the CSEC arena cannot be included here but can be found by visiting the websites listed in the footnotes.<sup>7</sup> Many agencies in Seattle have been

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<sup>6</sup> Boyer, Debra. (2013) A Case for Exempting Minors from Prosecution for Prostitution in Washington State. Lawyer, Washington State Bar Association, Vol. June: 22-25. Available online: [http://nwlawyer.wsba.org/nwlawyer/june\\_2013?pg=24#pg24](http://nwlawyer.wsba.org/nwlawyer/june_2013?pg=24#pg24)

<sup>7</sup> *Center for Children and Youth Justice* – <https://www.ccyj.org>

providing services to marginalized, at-risk, and sexually exploited youth for decades. The work of these agencies has been foundational for the change in the community response to commercial sexual exploitation of children. Seattle and King County have gained national recognition for a coordinated, collaborative, and multidisciplinary service system, protective legislation on sex trafficking, and innovative policies.<sup>8</sup> Washington State has consistently been given an “A” grade on Shared Hope’s Protected Innocence Legislative Framework.<sup>9</sup> Private and public sectors have successfully mobilized to support services and address the root causes of commercial sexual exploitation. These successes have combined with the efforts of anti-trafficking groups in the State of Washington, and at the national level. One particularly significant change from the past decade is that CSEC is now subject to mandatory reporting to Child Protective Services. Prior to this change, commercial sexual exploitation of children was viewed as a juvenile justice issue; prostituted minors were viewed as having committed the crime, rather than being victimized by it. CSEC training and intervention efforts continue to grow; all this work will not be captured in this report.

Two of the most meaningful measures of achievement in Seattle/King County over the past decade are:

1. The number of CSEC identified in services in 2018 is approximately equal to the service planning estimate from 2008; and
2. In 2008, 82 youth were arrested for prostitution and referred to Juvenile Court while, in 2018, no minors were arrested for prostitution.

A decade later, we must re-examine the current challenges of sustaining this long march against commercial sexual exploitation. Terri Kimball would ask: What do we need to know now? What do we need to do next?

- How many CSEC are being served across agencies now?
- What are the characteristics of a local sample of CSEC?
- What should we be doing next to end CSEC?

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*City of Seattle, Department of Human Services, Mayors Office on Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault -*

<http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/about-us/initiatives/responding-to-gender-based-violence>

*Ending Exploitation Collaborative -* <https://www.endingexploitation.com/partners.htm>

*King County CSEC Taskforce -* [www.kingcountycsec.org](http://www.kingcountycsec.org)

*StolenYouth -* <https://stolenyouth.org>

*StolenYouth Coalition Agencies: (not a complete list, refer to website)*

*BEST -* <https://www.bestalliance.org>

*Friends of Youth -* [www.friendsofyouth.org](http://www.friendsofyouth.org)

*Kent Youth and Family Services -* <https://kyfs.org/csec/>

*Nexus Youth and Families -* <https://www.nexus4kids.org>

*Organization for Prostitution Survivors –* <http://www.seattleops.org/>

*Seattle Against Slavery -* <https://www.seattleagainstsavery.org>

*YouthCare/Bridge Collaborative -* <https://youthcare.org/homeless-youth-services/leadership-initiatives/>

*Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN) -* <http://www.warn-trafficking.org/>

*State of Washington, Department of Commerce, Office of Crime Victims Advocacy -* <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/crime-victims-public-safety/office-of-crime-victims-advocacy/human-trafficking/>

*Washington State Office of the Attorney General -* <https://www.wattraffickinghelp.org/>

*YouthCare/Bridge Collaborative -* <https://youthcare.org/homeless-youth-services/leadership-initiatives/>

<sup>8</sup> Since 2002, the State of Washington has passed 40 state law related to different aspects of human trafficking. Commercially Sexually Exploited Children, Statewide Coordinating Committee. Report to the Legislature 2016. Available online:

[www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/2016-Final-CSEC-Committee-Report.pdf](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/2016-Final-CSEC-Committee-Report.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The Report Card is based on the Protected Innocence Challenge Legislative Framework, an analysis of state laws performed by Shared Hope International and sets a national standard of protection against domestic minor sex trafficking. Protected Innocence Challenge Legislative Framework Methodology and state Report Cards are available online: [www.sharedhope.org/reportcards](http://www.sharedhope.org/reportcards). Washington State’s Report Card is available online: [https://sharedhope.org/PICframe8/reportcards/PIC\\_RC\\_2018\\_WA.pdf](https://sharedhope.org/PICframe8/reportcards/PIC_RC_2018_WA.pdf)

## APPROACH

The approach used for this study is known as the Rapid Ethnographic or Rapid-Assessment Procedure, which focuses ethnographic methods on answering specific questions about issues, programs, and policies to provide information and direction in a short period of time.<sup>10</sup> This applied anthropology method is widely used in community participatory research models. The Rapid Ethnographic Assessment allows researchers to explore social conditions and issues in-depth, and to identify factors and relationships that may not be elicited through other methods. Ethnographic assessment methods generate data in a short time frame, provide a broad overview of a group or subculture, and offer insights that can inform or modify policies and programs.

The purpose of the assessment was to explore the current local dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation of minors and young adults, and to provide updated information in the following areas:

- Updated incidence and service planning estimates,
- Descriptive data on a local sample of CSEC,
- Assessment of the current issues regarding the community response to CSEC,
- Recommendations for data collection improvement, and
- Next steps for policy and service collaboration.

### *Study Population*

The study population for this assessment was commercially sexually exploited minors and young adults ages 24 years and younger, who had engaged with social and legal services in 2018. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention definition of CSEC was used: *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) refers to a “range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value (including monetary and non-monetary benefits) given or received by any person,”* Additionally, a CSEC checklist developed by the Center for Children and Youth Justice in Seattle, Washington was included in the Case File Review to verify CSEC status.

### *Methods*

Agencies were identified to take part in this study based on their known CSE services and programs in Seattle and King County, Washington. The King County CSEC Task Force, served as a primary resource for identifying agencies and contacts.

Data collection methods for this study included intensive techniques that combined qualitative and quantitative methods: observation, key stakeholder interviews, agency surveys, case file reviews, case studies, document, and literature reviews.

- Representatives from 39 agencies, including service providers, task forces, law enforcement, criminal justice, and public entities were interviewed. In all, 55+ individuals provided information, participated in structured interviews, and/or

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<sup>10</sup> Scrimshaw, Susan, C. (2018) Ethnography, Rapid-Assessment. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea1465>  
 Trotter, R. T., Needle, R. H., Goosby, E., Bates, C., & Singer, M. (2001). A Methodological Model for Rapid Assessment, Response, and Evaluation: The RARE Program in Public Health. *Field Methods*, 13(2), 137–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X0101300202>

completed the agency survey. An additional 5 agencies were contacted, but did not respond, or determined they did not serve the population of interest (See Appendix F).

- Agencies and programs were asked to provide two categories of quantitative information.
  - Agencies were first asked to provide the total number of CSEC served (ages 24 years and younger) in 2018. Measures were taken to avoid duplication in the count. The agency counts were combined to reach a known incidence estimate for the year 2018. Twenty-one (21) agencies provided data for the 2018 Known Incidence Count. Data from five agencies were included in the combined Bridge Collaborative data set.
  - To provide description of a local sample of current CSEC, agencies were asked to complete a Case File Review form on unique individual clients served in 2017, 2018, and 2019. The Case File Review instrument included 30 questions on demographics and CSEC status, but no individual identifying information. Not all agencies were able to provide these data. However, data were collected on a sample of 172 unique individuals engaged with services from 10 agencies and programs. The author and agency partners took steps to avoid duplication.
- Data were collected from several group meetings: The Attorney General’s Statewide CSEC Coordinating Committee, Safe Harbor meetings with legislative representatives, and the Center for Children and Youth Justice Project Respect Conference.
- Existing data sets were reviewed, including City of Seattle Client Profile Report data, Bridge Collaborative data, King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office reports on commercial sexual abuse of a minor (CSAM) cases, and state and local arrest data.
- Anonymous case studies were documented with the aid of staff from three agencies.
- Interviews with individual CSEC were not within the scope of this project and would have required human subjects’ protection protocols. However, adult CSE survivors were among the interview participants in their role as service providers.

### ***Limitations***

The primary limitation to the assessment was presented by the target characteristic of the group under study: commercially sexually exploited and sex trafficked minors and young adults. CSE is an illegal and hidden behavior, which operates in a variety of ways that are difficult and unsafe to access. CSEC are generally under the control of others as well. Obtaining an accurate count is, as many researchers have noted, probably impossible. Because of the illegal dynamics involved with CSEC, a representative sample is also difficult to identify or obtain. The estimates presented in this report rely on identified unique individuals receiving services from agencies in Seattle/King County with specialized programs, or in the case of law enforcement, legal responsibilities. Thus, CSEC not contacted by or engaged with services are uncounted.

A combined count of unique CSEC, across the number of participant agencies, has not been attempted before. The estimates presented here can be reasonably empirically supported and are helpful for informing programs and policies moving forward. Readers may assume that the estimates are overly conservative and very likely undercount the actual number of CSEC, which underscores the need for centralized data collection and expanded outreach. However, the intent of the study is to provide a local study that is focused on a clearly defined population.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tyldum, Buri (2010). Limitations in Research on Human Trafficking. Vol.48:5, 1-13. First published: 30 August 2010. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1111/J.1468-2435.2009.00597.X](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2009.00597.x)

Many aspects of youth sexual exploitation were beyond the scope of this report due to time, resource, and access limitations. The dynamics of CSEC among varying subgroups, and the services available to them, present another restraint on the scope of the assessment. For example, the reader will note a low number of males and non-binary individuals in the Case File Review section. Isolating factors make it difficult for service providers to access or identify subgroups of CSEC. As a result, they will unfortunately be undercounted. Services and access to services do not yet meet the need for many, including males and transgender persons. Although these individuals are not adequately represented in the case file review sample, training and services should be inclusive of these groups.

### ***Timeline***

The project was initiated in mid-March 2019 and completed in September. This is a very short timeframe to contact and engage participants, develop assessments tools, conduct interviews, and complete data analyses. Agencies had to dedicate staff time to fill out forms and review case files. The author would like to recognize the high level of participation and cooperation given to the study.

Comparisons with estimates from the 2008 study should be approached with caution. In the previous study, just 6 agencies and 16 programs within those agencies participated. For the current study, 21 discreet agencies provided data. The reader should keep in mind that although the age range for the target population in the previous study was also up to age 24 years, only 5 of the 16 participating programs served older youth. Thus, the earlier study undercounted older CSE youth, even within the context of a small sample size. The age group for this 2019 reassessment was also 24 years and younger; 5 agencies reported on minors only.

The reader should also note that far fewer services were available to CSEC in 2007-8. The different estimates are therefore not reliable indicators of an increase or decrease in the incidence of CSEC. As services increase, providers can reach more CSEC, and engage them in services. One might expect that, as the net is cast wider, these numbers will increase. As awareness and training increase, youth in subgroups who are particularly involved in hidden forms of exploitation, and who fear coming forward, may more easily find a path to help. At the same time, substantial increases in housing may, in turn, decrease the incidence of commercial sexual exploitation of homeless youth and young adults.

## **SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM**

National indicators of CSEC prevalence have been included in this section to provide context for the local CSEC study. However, reliable estimates of commercially sexually exploited children and adolescents are simply not available from a statewide or national standpoint, and many statistics proffered are notoriously inaccurate.<sup>12</sup> With that said, it is important to get some sense of the overall scope of the problem based on one of the more vulnerable groups: runaway and homeless adolescents. Below, are data from reliable and identifiable sources that shed light on the prevalence of CSEC nationally, to help interpret and understand the local problem.

### **CSEC PREVALENCE ESTIMATES - NATIONAL DATA SETS**

#### ***Connection Between CSEC And Runaway/Homeless Youth***

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<sup>12</sup> Finkelhor, D. (2008) How Many Juveniles are Involved in Prostitution. Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire, 126 Horton Social Science Center, Durham, NH 03824. Available online at: [http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/prostitution/Juvenile\\_Prostitution\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/prostitution/Juvenile_Prostitution_factsheet.pdf)

The largest known population of youth vulnerable to CSE are runaway and homeless youth. Annual counts of these youth have been tracked by several organizations for many decades. The risk estimates for CSE within this population range from 1:5 to 1:6, or 1:7, depending on sources.

**The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)** provides primary data originating from their national toll-free hotline.<sup>13</sup>

- The number of children reported missing to law enforcement and entered in the FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC) was **464,324** in 2017 and **424,066** in 2018.

**The National Runaway Switchboard** estimates there are approximately **1.3 million** homeless youth living unsupervised on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends or with strangers.

Estimates from the national government website for runaway and homeless youth, **www.youth.gov**, run as high as **2.8 million** runaway and homeless youth annually.

Applying the various ratios of homeless youth to those commercially sexually exploited, in combination with the range of estimates of the total U.S. population of homeless youth, gives a range of estimates of the national prevalence of CSEC, from **60,000 to 400,000**.

- Since 2016, the NCMEC has estimated that **one in six** endangered runaways were likely to be sex trafficking victims. Based on the 2018 report of 424,066 missing children reported to law enforcement, the CSEC estimate would be **70,677**. Using the more conservative ratio of 1:7, the estimate would **60,580**.
- One in seven of the 1.3 million homeless youth estimated by the National Runaway Switchboard, would lead to a CSEC estimate of **186,000** annually.
- The HHS estimate from **youth.gov** of 2.8 million runaway/homeless leads to a much higher estimate of CSEC; **400,000**.
- If the 1 in 5 ratio is applied to the number of children reported missing to law enforcement in the NCIC, the estimate of trafficked youth would be 91,000, which approximates the FBI estimate of 100,000 CSE youth.
- **Estimates based on two studies sponsored by Covenant House** between 2014 and 2017, on the *Prevalence and Nature of Human Trafficking among Youth Experiencing Homelessness in the United States and Canada*, are often referenced by local organizations.<sup>14</sup>
  - Of **641** youth interviewed at Covenant House sites in the United States and Canada, nearly **one in five** (19% or 124) were identified as victims of some form of human trafficking. Using the NCMEC reported number of 424,066, the CSEC estimate would be 84,813.

Based on actual reports of runaway and homeless youth, the strongest empirically supported national prevalence ranges from **60,000 to 100,000** CSEC. This range is likely an undercount, because “couch surfing”, which is seldom counted, does not reveal the vulnerability to CSEC.

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<sup>13</sup> National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

[www.missingkids.org/footer/media/keyfacts#missingchildrenstatistics](http://www.missingkids.org/footer/media/keyfacts#missingchildrenstatistics). (2019)

<sup>14</sup> Murphy, L.T. (2017) Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten City Study. Modern Slavery Research Project, Loyola University, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Available online: <https://www.covenanthouse.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Loyola%20Multi-City%20Executive%20Summary%20FINAL.pdf>



NCMEC reported an increase of 846%, from 2010 to 2015, in reports of suspected child sex trafficking—an increase the organization has found to be “directly correlated to the increased use of the Internet to sell children for sex.”<sup>15</sup> To add additional context, in 2018, the NCMEC Cyber Tipline received more than **18.4 million** reports, most of which related to:

- Apparent child sexual abuse images;
- Online enticement, including “sextortion”;
- Child sex trafficking; and
- Child sexual molestation.<sup>16</sup>

Runaway and homeless youth are clearly vulnerable to CSEC, and an appropriate target population for prevention efforts. Within this group, youth of color and LGBT youth are significantly overrepresented.<sup>17</sup>

Another perspective on both vulnerability and prevalence comes from foster care data. The National Foster Youth Institute (NFYI) reports that, in 2014, 238,230 children in the U.S. left foster care.<sup>18</sup> This organization reports 60% of child sex trafficking victims recovered through FBI raids across the U.S. in 2013 had foster care or group home placements. Also reported from NFYI: The average age of children involved in prostitution, who were recovered by law enforcement, is 14.<sup>19</sup>

### *Washington State*

A Way Home Washington is a statewide movement to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness (<https://awayhomewa.org/>). The focus of the organization is on the 13,000 – 15,000 young people in Washington State who are surviving homelessness on their own. Based only on this population of homeless youth and young adults, applying the ratios earlier discussed, the CSEC prevalence statewide would range from 2,000 to 3,000.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports there are 40,934 homeless students in Washington State schools.<sup>20</sup> OSPI's homeless student count includes students whose families “double up” with other families due to economic conditions (N=30,090), and those in hotels, motels, and shelters, or those who are unsheltered (N=10,844). For 2016-17, 5,379 homeless students in Washington State were unaccompanied. Seattle Public Schools have the highest number of homeless students. These data have been included to draw attention to the point that a high-risk population for CSE are in school and can be counted. This is a clear window for prevention efforts.

### *King County*

The 2019 All Home Point-In-Time Count for 2019 estimated 1,089 homeless youth ages <25 years (10% of the total count population) in Seattle/King County. The number of unaccompanied youth and young adults decreased by 28% (429 persons) from 2018. Slightly more than two-thirds (68%) of

<sup>15</sup> Congressional Testimony of Yiota G. Souras, Senior Vice President & General Counsel, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Nov. 2015.

<sup>16</sup> National Center for missing and Exploited Children. [www.missingkids.com/footer/media/keyfacts](http://www.missingkids.com/footer/media/keyfacts). (2019)

<sup>17</sup> Michelle Page. Forgotten Youth: Homeless LGBT Youth of Color and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, 12 NWJ. L. & Soc.Pol'y.17 (2017). <http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/njlp/vol12/iss2/2>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nfyi.org/issues/sex-trafficking/>

<sup>19</sup> Clawson, Heather J., Nicole Dutch, Amy Solomon, and Lisa Goldblatt Grace. "Human Trafficking into and Within the United States: A Review of the Literature." Study of HHS Programs Serving Human Trafficking Victims. Accessed February 25, 2014, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/humantrafficking/LitRev/>

<sup>20</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Available online: [www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hau-hp-counts-of-homelessness-2017.pdf](http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hau-hp-counts-of-homelessness-2017.pdf).

unaccompanied youth and young adults were unsheltered, and 32% were sheltered on the night of the count.<sup>21</sup> Unaccompanied youth and young adults identified as LGBTQ+ at nearly twice the rate of survey respondents aged 25 years and older (34% compared to 20%). Fifty-nine percent (59%) of unaccompanied youth and young adults identified as male, twenty-nine percent (29%) identified as female, 9% identified as gender non-conforming (e.g., gender-queer, gender non-conforming, or non-binary), and 3% as transgender. Thirty-two percent (32%) of unaccompanied young people indicated ever having been in foster care. If the 1:5 ratio for CSE in the homeless youth population is applied to the 2019 estimate for homeless youth and young adults in Seattle/King County, the incidence of CSE would be 217 for this distinct population.

## LOCAL DATA SETS

### *Trend Away from Arrest*

Historically, researchers have relied on arrest data to determine the incidence of prostitution related crimes involving minors. The national and local trend has shifted from arrest and prosecution of juveniles for prostitution to a reframing of their status as commercially sexually abused, and in need of protection and referral to community-based services. Police reports are therefore no longer reliable indicators of the number of commercially sexually exploited minors. To illustrate this point, consider the arrest data for 2008 – 2014 from the National Center for Juvenile Justice in the table below.<sup>22</sup> Arrests of minors for prostitution crimes decreased by more than half (53%) from 2008 – 2014, but represent a small percentage of the total number of arrests of minors.

Table 3: Arrests of Persons Under Age 18 In the United States 2008 – 2014

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Total Arrests</b>	2,100,800	1,906,400	1,642,500	1,470,000	1,319,700	1,081,400	1,023,800
<b>Prostitution Arrests</b>	1,500	1,400	1,000	1,000	800	800	700
<b>% of Arrests of under age18 in US</b>	2.0%	1.9	1.7%	1.7%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%

The decrease in the rate of arrest and prosecution of minors for prostitution and prostitution loitering is also evident in local statistics. In **2007**, there were **82** referrals for prostitution-related charges to King County Juvenile Court.<sup>23</sup> This number represented a 40% increase from 2006 for the number of youth with initial prostitution-related charges referred to King County Juvenile Court in 2007. Of these, 80% of the charges were filed and prosecuted. Data from eight juvenile court locations including King, Clark, Snohomish, Benton/Franklin, Pierce, Spokane, and Thurston Counties for 2009 and 2010 indicated **153 youth** were referred to juvenile detention facilities on charges of prostitution. Of these, 91 arrests were in King County.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> All Home (2019) Count Us In: Seattle/King County Point in Time County of People Experiencing Homelessness Available online: [allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AG\\_3\\_2019HIRDReport\\_KingCounty.pdf](http://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AG_3_2019HIRDReport_KingCounty.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> National Center for Juvenile Justice, 3700 South Water Street, Suite 200

Pittsburgh, Pa 15203. [https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezaucr/asp/ucr\\_display.asp](https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezaucr/asp/ucr_display.asp)

<sup>23</sup> Boyer, D. (2008) Who Pays the Price: An Assessment of Juvenile Involvement in Prostitution in Seattle. Funded by City of Seattle Human Services Department, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Division

<sup>24</sup> Rapid Assessment: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in Washington State. (2011) Shared Hope International P.O. Box 65337 Vancouver, WA 98665. [www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org).

2008 marks the publication of *Who Pays the Price*, and the beginning of significant community organizing around the issue of CSEC. The table below shows the decrease in **arrests between 2013 and 2017**.

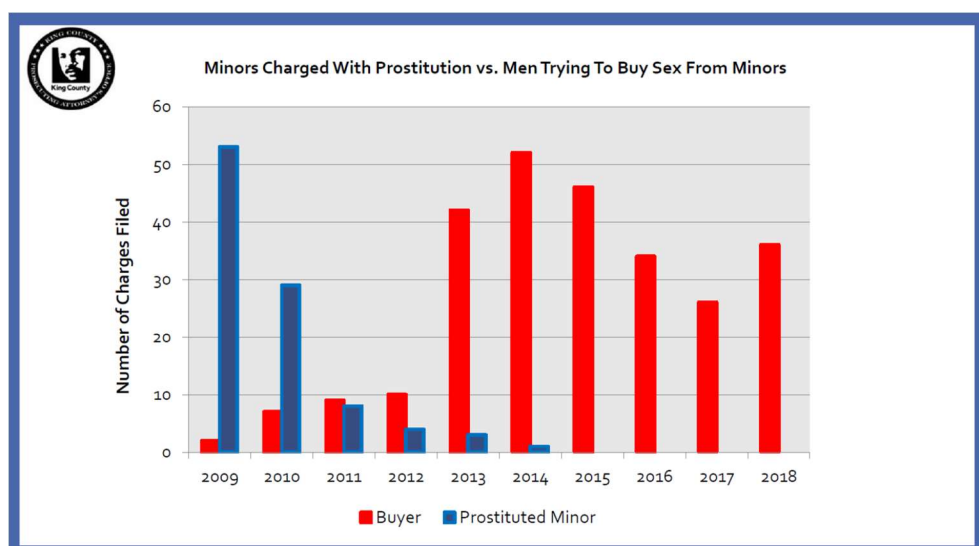
Table 4: Washington State and King County Juvenile Arrests for Prostitution

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>STATE</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>KING COUNTY</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

Sources: *Juvenile Arrests, NIBRS, and Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs*

In King County, minors are no longer charged with this crime, based on an internal policy of the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPAO). Data from KCPAO illustrate the shift from prosecution of minors for prostitution toward prosecution of buyers. The chart below shows the reversal in the number of minors charged with prostitution versus the number of men charged with buying sex from a minor, from 2009 to 2018. It is the policy of the KCPAO to NOT prosecute exploited minors; rather the emphasis is on the arrest and prosecution of sex buyers.

Table 5: Minors Charged with Prostitution vs. Men Trying to Buy Sex from Minors



### ***Section Summary***

Precise counts of the number of children and young adults who are commercially sexually exploited are challenging. Estimates are inferred from data on runaway and homeless youth populations, but estimates based on that method are imperfect at best. Recent changes in policy regarding the treatment of CSEC have also eliminated criminal justice records as a reliable source of information for estimating the size of this population. The inadequacy of these traditional data sources highlights an increased reliance on a targeted community response to address the needs of CSEC. With these policy shifts, it is now incumbent on communities to develop and sustain appropriate service responses and data collection processes.

Knowing the approximate number of CSEC in the local area will continue to be fundamental for service and policy decisions.

## 2018 CSEC INCIDENCE AND SERVICE PLANNING ESTIMATES

The first step in this assessment was to ascertain the actual number of CSEC engaged by services in a one-year period. Data presented in the table below were collected from 21 agencies and programs in the Seattle/King County area who provide direct social services to commercially sexually exploited youth. Bridge Collaborative data include information submitted from YouthCare CSEC program advocates, Friends of Youth, Nexus Youth and Families, the Organization for Prostitution Survivors, and Kent Youth and Family Services. Data were also requested from two agencies, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington. These agencies prosecute commercial sexual abuse of a minor (CSAM), and child sex trafficking cases.<sup>25</sup>

Agencies were asked to review their case file information for the year **2018** and report the number of commercially sexually exploited youth they served who were aged 24 years and younger. Agencies were also asked to provide the number of CSEC within their group that were 18 years and younger. For this assessment, the CSEC age range included youth and young adults aged < 25 years (ages 24 years and younger). This age category was selected because experts in the field have recognize that vulnerability reaches into young adulthood, and many funders support CSEC services up to 24 years of age. Bridge Collaborative data includes individuals up to age 24 years, for example.

The table below has four columns of information. **Column 1** shows the **name of agencies** that agreed to participate and provided information for the assessment. This is a non-exhaustive list; it does not show all services available to CSEC in Seattle/King County but does give the reader an indication of the number of resources available. Each are dedicated CSEC service providers or have internal programs with staff dedicated to CSEC issues.

**Column 2** shows the number of CSEC each agency or program reported themselves to have worked with in 2018 (intakes may have occurred prior to 2018). The reader should note Column 2 counts are **duplicated**; individual CSEC are often served by more than one agency, and each agency may open a case file on them. Thus, some CSEC cases would also be reported in other data sets; KYFS, which served 10 CSEC, reported data on these individuals to the Bridge Collaborative. Column 2 with duplicated counts was included to show the total number of CSEC served by each agency, program, and collaborations. Agencies were only included that could provide a CSEC number tied to case files that could be reviewed. Of these agencies, 10 provide CSE services to adults as well; the numbers in this chart do not represent the full extent of agency CSE services. Finally, if an agency could only provide an estimate of CSEC numbers, these estimates were **not** included in this table.

**Columns 3 & 4** show the number of **unduplicated CSEC** served by participating agencies in 2018, by age category. Arriving at an unduplicated count represented a major challenge, because collecting

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<sup>25</sup> Data related to prosecuted cases involving minor victims were provided by two agencies:

**King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.** (2019) *King County Sexual Exploitation Cases*. Ben Gauert, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Special Assault Unit. Seattle, Washington. Data from cases prosecuted in 2018 by the KCPAO report are included.

**United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington,** Kate Crisham, Assistant United States Attorney. Between 2010 and 2018, 39 cases were prosecuted under 18 USC 1591 (Sex Trafficking of Children and/or by Force, Fraud, and Coercion), 18 USC 2421 Transport Generally, 18 USC 2422 Coercion and Enticement, and 18 USC 1590 Trafficking with respect to peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor. Of these cases, 22 prosecutions were related to Sex Trafficking of Children, but none were prosecuted in 2018. Thus, data have not been included.

individual identifying information was not appropriate for this assessment. Cases from every agency were reviewed to identify duplicated records. To address duplication, the author and agency partners took the following steps:

- Data collected for the Incidence Table were restricted to 2018 caseloads.
- Cases submitted by each agency were given an agency code and case number for reference.
- Agencies were asked to review files and determine the number that appeared in other data sets reported for 2018. CSEC ages <18, tend to first appear in “upfront” referral agencies such as Spruce Street. Agencies were able to identify referrals from Spruce Street, DCYF, and in some cases from the Seattle Police Department; these numbers were reconciled. DCYF cases were deleted from the total because, in all instances, the cases were included in either the Spruce Street or Bridge Collaborative report.
- Agencies, were also asked to provide the number of cases referred into the Bridge Collaborative and these cases were also subtracted, knowing the Bridge Collaborative provides an unduplicated count from all referral sources.
- CSEC aged 18 years or older would not be in the DCYF or Spruce Street data reports. And several agencies served clients not involved with law enforcement or Bridge Agencies. Cases were independently confirmed as unduplicated.
- A second process was used to identify duplication from cases cross-referred with all other agencies on the chart. Again, cases were subtracted or reconciled as appropriate. These CSE files were confirmed as unduplicated.

Given the scope of the assessment and limited resources, this process produced an approximate estimate of the total number of unduplicated CSEC in services, tied to casefile data retained by participating agencies.

Table 6: 2018 CSEC Known Incidence by Agency

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>TOTAL CSEC SERVED by Agency <u>Duplicated</u></b>	<b>TOTAL CSEC- ALL AGES 11 – 24 YRS <u>Unduplicated</u></b>	<b>CSEC SUBSET AGES <u>18 YEARS OR YOUNGER Unduplicated</u></b>
*API Chaya	8	8	1
*Aurora Commons	41	41	0
Becca Programs/King County Superior Court	30	Data submitted to BC	
**Bridge Collaborative YC OPS FOY Nexus KYFS	195	195	126
*Cowlitz Tribes Pathways to Healing	6	6	6
Washington State Dept. Children, Youth/Families	117 Not all cases were reported in King County	37 Cases are part of Spruce Street & Bridge Collaborative Data	37 Cases are part of Spruce Street & Bridge Collaborative Data
Escape to Peace	8	8	8
*Genesis Project	6	6	1
King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office	6	6	6
Kent Youth & Family Services (Data shown here for Column 1)	10	Data Submitted to BC	
Lambert House	3	3	3
*PSKS (Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Street	10	10	3
REST – Real Escape from the Sex Trades	127	127	17
Seattle Indian Center – Project Beacon	6	3	0
Seattle Police Department/High Risk Victims Unit	24	23	23
Spruce Street Residential Pioneer Human Services	48	34 (14 cases submitted to BC)	34
US Attorney's Office/ Western Washington	3 (2018 cases with at least 1 victim)	3	3
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>473</b>	<b>Subset Total 231</b>

\*Agencies serve only 18 years and older.

\*\*Bridge Collaborative Agencies include YouthCare, Friends of Youth, Nexus Youth and Families, Organization for Prostitution Survivors, and Kent Youth & Family Services. KYFS, also shown separately on this chart.

Table 7: 2018 CSEC Incidence by Age Group

<b>AGE</b>	<b>AGES 18 YEARS OR LESS</b>	<b>AGES 19 -24 YEARS</b>	<b>TOTAL CSEC AGES 11-24 YEARS</b>
<b>REPORTED NUMBER</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>473</b>

Table 8: 2018 CSEC Incidence and Service Planning Estimates

2018 CSEC Known Incidence - Ages 24 years and younger	473
2018 CSEC Known Incidence -Ages 18 years and younger	<b>231</b>
CSEC Service Planning Estimate for ages 24 years and younger	<b>500-700</b>
CSEC Service Planning Estimate for ages <18	<b>300-400</b>

### *Rationale for Service Planning Estimates*

Table 6 shows the total approximate known incidence of CSEC, aged 24 years and younger (N=473), who were engaged with participating services in the year 2018. Two planning estimates are given; one for all age groups and one for the subset of minor CSEC <18 years. Because of the legal status associated with their age, specific services apply to this group.

Service Planning estimates are higher than the incidence reported. The service planning ranges are based on several factors including current known cases, expected new cases, and estimates of undercounted youth. These factors are discussed below.

An unduplicated count of CSEC in King County identified from the Bridge Collaborative (744), DCYF (37), and KCPAO (97) between 2014 and 2018 is **878**, which supports the service planning estimate of 500-700.

The incidence reported in this assessment for just one year (2018) for ages 24 years and younger is 473; more than double the current annual number of Bridge Collaborative referrals. The Bridge Collaborative reports an average of 12 – 16 new referrals per month from reporting agencies. The expected number of new CSEC is 144 – 192 annually. The service planning estimate incorporates the expected range of unduplicated annual referrals to the Bridge Collaborative:

- 2017 - 189
- 2018 - 195
- April 2014 – December 2018 – unduplicated referrals total: **744**

The CSEC Liaison with the Department of Children Youth and Families identified 276 CSEC in DCYF's Regions 3 (King County) and 4 (Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, and Island Counties) over the past three years. This number is expected to increase with implementation of a screening tool and mandatory reporting requirements.

CSEC are often in services for up to a year or more, which shows the need to plan for increased numbers of youth in services, and the ever-increasing case load of advocates.

Existing services are reaching CSEC, and youth are entering services. However, qualitative data suggest there are new patterns of exploitation and geographical locations of CSE, which may result in an undercount. Staff from KYFS and Nexus Youth and Families estimate that 100-200 CSEC have not been identified as such, and therefore not accessing services in the South King County area. This estimate is based on the number of unsheltered homeless youth in South King County, poverty indicators, and patterns of CSE in pockets of poverty in South King County. Poverty has become more concentrated in the South Region of King County in recent years.<sup>26</sup> This number cannot be confirmed, but it was

<sup>26</sup> King County Hospitals (2018/2019) King County Community Health Needs Assessment. Available online: [kingcounty.gov](http://kingcounty.gov).

suggested to the author by three different CSEC outreach and advocate staff. As the service net is extended, more youth are being identified, and staff are learning about additional means of exploitation. Thus, policy planners and service providers should closely monitor future reports, to plan for service needs.

YouthCare's Orion Center served 1,116 unduplicated youth in 2018. Although many CSEC both use the Orion Center's programs and are served by the Bridge Collaborative, not all are specifically served by CSEC advocates or included in Bridge Collaborative data. The Director of the Orion Center estimates that 1/3 of those served are experiencing or have experienced commercial sexual exploitation in some form. This estimate fits with what we know about the relationship between homelessness and CSE. Youth who have no stable place to live are more likely to trade sex for a tent, for food, for drugs, for protection.

Low barrier services often are unable to confirm the age of clients. Thus, CSEC <18 years may be accessing services without being identified as minors. New Horizons reported serving an estimated 150 CSEC between the ages of 18 and 24 years annually but could not provide case file review data. Again, this is a high number that could not reasonably be included in the count, but advocates should also not lose sight of an uncounted group.

### ***Section Summary***

The incidence estimate presented here is higher than that found in 2008. The higher number is not necessarily the result of an overall increase in the number of CSEC. More services are available now than in 2008, and training across community sectors has led to increased identification of, and access to services for CSEC. The current known incidence is at the higher range of the service planning estimate from 2008; 300-500. Given the higher number of identified CSEC (473 in 2019 versus 238 in 2008), service providers and policy advocates would be wise to prepare for increased service needs as a growing service base locates and identifies more exploited youth.

## **DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL CSEC SAMPLE**

The next step in the assessment was to build a description of a local sample of CSEC currently in services. Often professionals in the field are asked questions about exploited youth, but nobody has attempted a descriptive analysis of local youth for quite some time. These data are important for policy and program decision making, as well as for community awareness. The data presented here provide descriptive information on 172 CSEC, from the case files of 10 agencies.

Participating agencies were asked to complete a case file review checklist of 30 questions for current CSEC clients on their caseloads. Limited non-identifying demographic data were collected to ensure individuals could not be tracked or identified. Data are summarized and presented in aggregate form (see note for explanation of human subjects' protections taken).<sup>27</sup>

The Case File Review included a CSEC checklist developed by the Center for Children and Youth Justice (CCYJ) to verify CSEC status and understand CSE dynamics. Demographic questions included: date of

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<sup>27</sup> Note from the author: The author is experienced with human subjects' protection protocols in research. Although this project was not subject to a review process, data collection and research protocols did not present risk of harm to individuals represented in the quantitative or qualitative data collected. Surveys and interviews with community leaders and service providers focused on general policies, practices, services, and emerging conditions and issues affecting CSEC. Only aggregated and non-identifiable demographic data were collected on the target population. There were no direct interactions or interventions with individuals represented by the case file data collected.



intake, age at intake, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, current living situation, and school attendance.

Additional questions were asked to collect data in several areas that are not tracked in existing local data sets. This information is generally part of case file documentation: age at first CSE/prostitution, history of prior sexual abuse, types of CSE experienced, ever arrested, ever in juvenile detection, and other issues affecting the youth, including trauma, mental health, homelessness, and physical health.

Four questions were asked about client's current status: current service involvement, if currently involved in CSE, status of youth related to exiting, and if currently enrolled in services. A final question was asked as one measure to control for duplicated case files between agencies: Was information on this case submitted to another database?

The sample had several limitations. A few agencies did not keep detailed service files and did not have all the information requested. Staff changes impeded data collection because new advocates did not know the clients.

The author and agency partners took several steps to avoid duplicate cases in the sample. Case files were coded by agency and given a unique number for reference within agencies. Agency staff were able to review files for the original referral, intake date, and any cross-referrals to other agencies. The author worked with each agency individually to determine if their submissions were duplicated by other agencies and assure a sample of unique case file records. Service providers were asked to identify files that would exist in other data sets, such as frontline CSEC referral agencies, including SPD and Spruce Street that also provided case file information. In these cases, the file data were reviewed, and cases that could not be confirmed as unique were taken out of the sample. The process of assuring a sample of unique cases underscores the need for centralized data collection and a standardized protocol for unduplicated incidence reporting to understand the scope of the problem, particularly as it may vary over time. Again, the intent was to develop a local cross-agency sample of CSEC with key descriptive information.

Ten agencies agreed to complete the case file review checklist for CSEC engaged with their services. The agencies reporting and the number of files each provided are listed in Table 9 below.

For all tables, (N) describes the total number of cases that findings are reported for, and (n) indicates a subset of the total sample.

Table 9: Agencies Reporting and Number of Files Provided

<b>AGENCY (N=10)</b>	<b># OF CASE FILES (N=172)</b>
<b>Cowlitz Tribes Pathways to Healing</b>	6
<b>Escape to Peace</b>	11
<b>Friends of Youth</b>	18
<b>Kent Youth and Family Services</b>	24
<b>Nexus Youth and Families</b>	6
<b>Organization for Prostitution Survivors</b>	9
<b>PSKS</b>	3
<b>REST</b>	17
<b>Seattle Police Department (High-Risk Victims Unit)</b>	30
<b>Spruce Street (Pioneer Human Services)</b>	48

The data presentation for this report is limited to descriptive analysis. In the tables below, findings are presented for descriptive variables from the case file review. These include: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Age

at Intake, Age at first CSE, Living Situation, School Attendance, Arrest History, Service engagement and CSEC status, health issues, and findings from the CSEC checklist.

### ***Gender***

The sample was predominantly female; 85%. (n=146). As acknowledged earlier, individuals in other gender categories were likely undercounted.

Table 10: Gender Distribution Within Sample

<b>Gender (N=172)</b>	<b>% (Number)</b>
<b>Male</b>	7% (12)
<b>Female</b>	85% (146)
<b>Transgender</b>	5% (8)
<b>Intersex and Other</b>	3% (6)

### ***Race/Ethnicity***

Of the sample, 40% were reported as Caucasian; 31% were African American, 10% Native American/Alaskan Native, and 13% were Hispanic/Latinx.

Table 11: Race/Ethnicity Distribution Within Sample

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>% (N=154)</b>
<b>Asian</b>	< 1% (2)
<b>Black/African American</b>	31% (47)
<b>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	0 (2 reported NH/PI and African American)
<b>Caucasian/White</b>	40% (61)
<b>American Indian/Alaskan native</b>	10% (15)
<b>Hispanic/Latinx</b>	8% (13)
<b>Unknown</b>	
<b>Other- Reported Two Or More Ethnicities</b>	10% (16)

This sample, as with others, demonstrates that CSEC disproportionately affects children of color. Those of African American descent, for example, make up 6.2 of King County's population, but comprise 31% of CSEC in the study sample. While all efforts to end CSEC will benefit all groups, this inequity is so severe, services must focus prevention efforts with meaningful guidance from communities that are disproportionately affected.

### ***Age of Sample***

Age at intake was provided on the whole sample (N=172). Ages ranged from 12 to 24-years.

- Mean Age at Intake was 16.8 years for the entire sample (age 24 years and younger)
- Mean Age at Intake was 15.8 years for those ages 18 years and younger
- Mean Age at Intake for those ages 19-24 years was 21 years.

Of the sample,

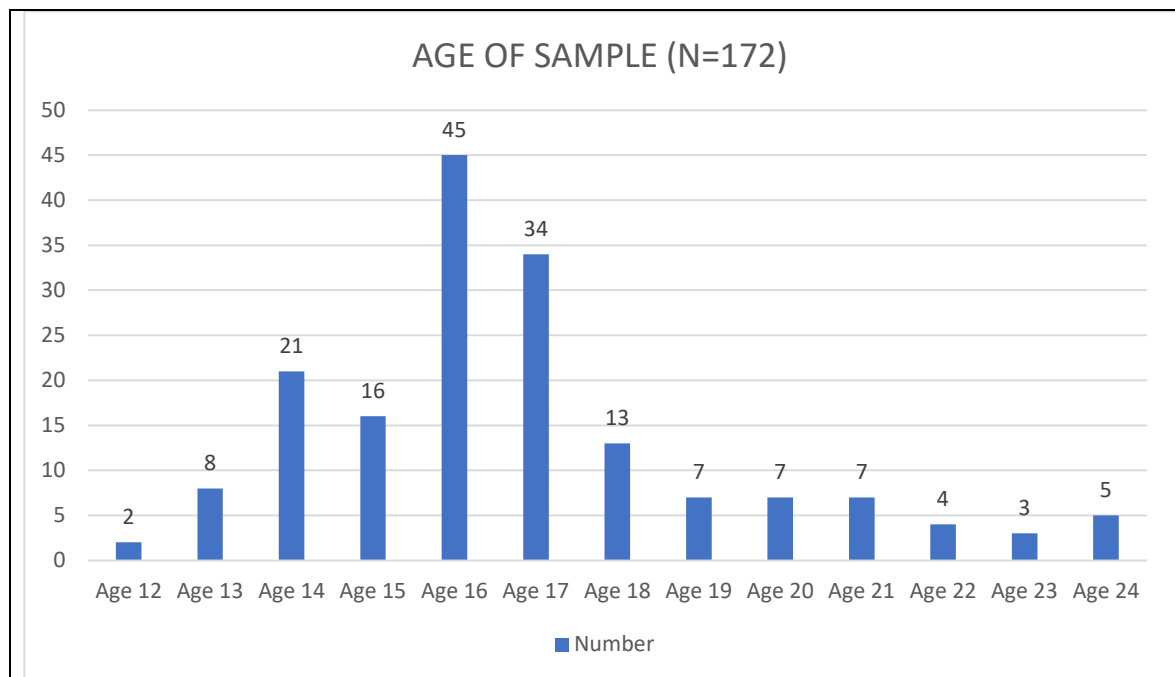
- 73% (n=126) were ages 12-17 years,

- 27% (n=46) were ages 18-24 years.

For those aged 12-17 years:

- 27% (47) were ages 15 or younger, and
- 18% (31) were ages 14 or younger

Table 12: Age Distribution Within Sample



### *Age Comparisons & Age at First Commercial Sexual Exploitation*

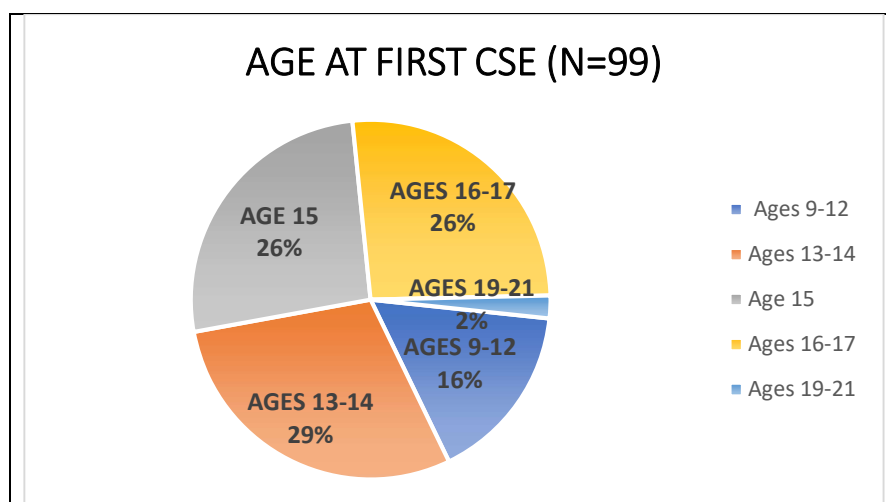
Agency staff were asked to report age at first commercial sexual exploitation from case file data on individuals in the sample. It is important to have this information on the local CSEC population to understand local dynamics, service needs, and to provide information to funders, the public, and key public entities.

Data were collected on Age at First CSE for 99 cases, ages 12-24 years. **The mean age at first CSE was 14.4 years**, only two cases reported first CSE as above age 18; one at age 19 and the other at age 21.

As noted above, **the mean age at intake for the whole sample (ages 12-24) was 16.8 years**. This suggests over a two-year gap between first CSE and involvement in **CSE services** (Mean Age First CSE, 14.4 years). Many youth were likely involved in other services; if they were dependent, they would have had group or foster care placement, for example. This finding suggests the importance of strengthening prevention efforts and identifying youth at risk for CSE earlier.

Data on age at first CSE was only available on 99 of the cases compared to age at intake (N=172). Comparing a subset of cases that had both data points; age at intake and age at first CSE shows a similar finding; mean age at intake for this group was a little older; 17 years of age.

Table 13: Age Comparisons &amp; Age at First Commercial Sexual Exploitation



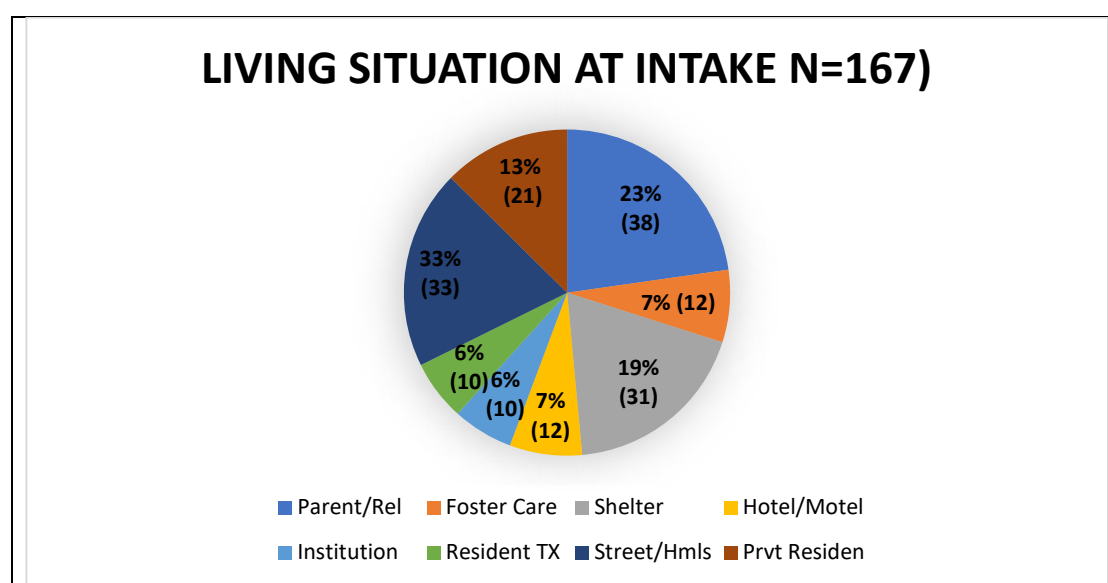
AGE AT FIRST COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	(N=99) % (n)
9-11 YEARS	6% (6)
12 YEARS	10% (10)
13 YEARS	7% (7)
14 YEARS	22% (22)
15 YEARS	26% (26)
16 YEARS	21% (21)
17 YEARS	5% (5)
19-21 YEARS	2% (2)

### *Living Situation at Intake*

Although 23% (38) of youth were living with a parent or relative at the time of intake, this situation is no guarantee of stability, as one of the case studies included in this report indicates. Of the remainder, 26% (43) were in a shelter or foster home; 12% (20) were in an institutional setting, and 27% (45) were living on the street, homeless, or in a hotel or motel. The combined categories of shelter, hotel/motel, and street/homeless show that almost half of the cases reported on, 46% (76), were not in stable living situations. Supportive housing is an ongoing need for this population; an increase in shelter beds, transitional and permanent housing would protect against CSE.

Table 14: Living Situation at Intake

LIVING SITUATION	N=167 % (n)
With Parent/Parents/Other Relative	23% (38)
Licensed Foster Home	7% (12)
In A Shelter	19% (31)
Hotel/Motel	7% (12)
Psychiatric Hospital	2% (4)
Correctional Institution	3.5% (6)
Residential Treatment	6% (10)
Street/Homeless	20% (33)
Private Resident	13% (21)



Responses to the question on living situation at intake indicated that 76 youth were homeless at intake; staff reported a higher number (88) in the question on other issues affecting youth. Often youth are intermittently homeless, or staff are aware that the living situation they come in with is temporary. Homelessness is a crucial issue for CSEC and an unsolved service need.

### *History of Sexual Abuse*

Multiple studies over several decades have recorded the prior history of sexual abuse as a precursor to involvement in prostitution and all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>28</sup> This is key information for

<sup>28</sup> Boyer, Debra. (1999) Child Sexual Abuse: The Forgotten Issues in Adolescent Pregnancy and Welfare Reform. Battered Women, Children, and Welfare Reform: The Ties That Bind, Ruth Brandwein, ED. Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publications.  
 Boyer, Debra, and D. Fine. (1992) Sexual Abuse as a Factor in Adolescent Pregnancy and Child Maltreatment. Family Planning Perspectives, Vol.24 (1).  
 Boyer, Debra. (1989) Male Prostitution and Homosexual Identity, Journal of Homosexuality, 17:1-2, 151-184, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v17n01\\_07](https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v17n01_07)  
 Boyer, Debra, and Jennifer James. (1983) Sex and Social Order: The Prostitute as Victim. Deviance and Victimology. D. MacNamara and A. Karmen, Eds., Sage Annual Review of Studies in Deviance Vol. 7, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.  
 Whitbeck et al. (2004). Mental Disorder, Subsistence Strategies, and Victimization among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Homeless and Runaway Adolescents. Journal of Sex Research, 41(4): 329-342.

understanding trauma history and treatment needs, and for describing conditions of local CSEC to those who question the impact of early trauma.

The case file review included this question: Does this person have a history of sexual abuse? The intention was to gather information on sexual abuse prior to involvement with commercial sexual exploitation, which was clarified with respondents.

There were 143 responses to this question; “Yes” 69% (n=99), “No” 4% (n=6), and “Unknown” 27% (n=38). Combining the “Unknown” responses with cases with missing data shows that 39% of the cases did not have a response for this question. This much missing data presents a quandary for how to present findings on a very important question.

Of the total sample, (N=172), there is confirmation that 58% were known to have experienced sexual abuse prior to CSE. To take this one step further, if we examine the subgroup of known cases for which there were responses “Yes” or “No” (N=105), then 94% (n=99) of this sample of 105 experienced prior sexual abuse.

To be consistent with how other findings are presented in this section, I have used the total number of cases with responses of “Yes,” “No,” and “Unknown” as the baseline (N=143); the finding for prior sexual abuse is reported as “Yes” 69% (n=99) of these.

This question should be included on all data collection tools going forward. For trauma assessments, additional information should be gathered, including age at abuse, if the abuse was repeated, associated violence, and who the abuser/abusers were in relation to the victim.

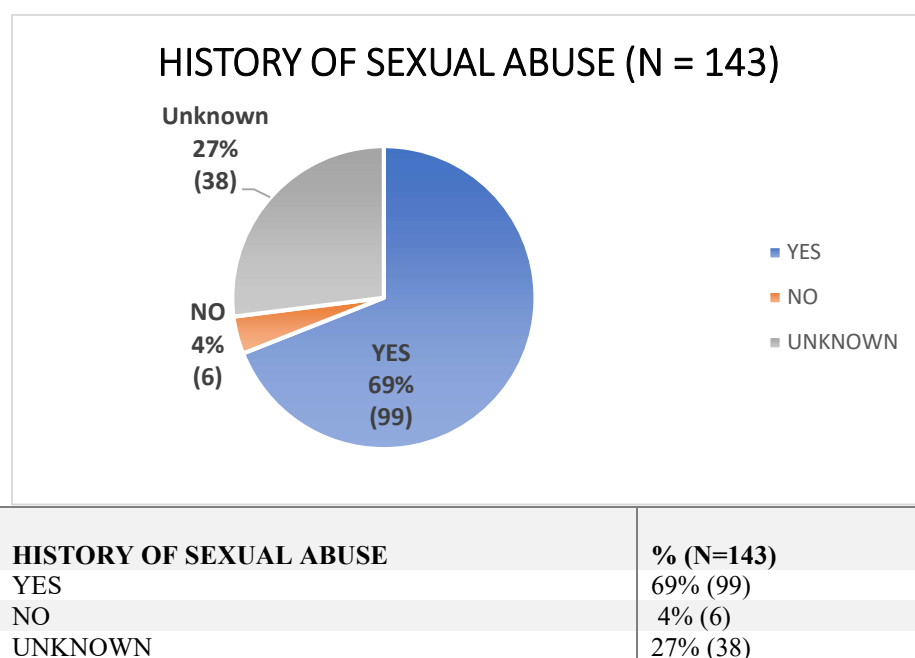
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Tyler et al. (2000). The Effects of Early Sexual Abuse on Later Sexual Victimization among Female Homeless and Runaway Adolescents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 235-250.

Martin, et al. (2010). Meaningful Differences: Comparison of Adult Women Who First Traded Sex as a Juvenile Versus as an Adult. *Violence Against Women* 16 (11) 1252-1269.

Nadon et al. (1998). Antecedents to Prostitution: Childhood Victimization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 13:2, 206-221.

Table 15: History of Sexual Abuse



### *School Attendance*

Agencies reporting case file data were asked if CSEC youth had attended school in the most recent term. Data were provided on 111 cases aged <18 years (12 – 17 years). Of these 41% (46) responded “Yes” to youth having been in school; 59% (65) responded “No”. Two youth, aged 18 years were also reported as having been in school in the last term, bringing the total number to 48.

Table 16: School Attendance

Attended School Most Recent Term	% (N=111)
YES	41% (46)
NO	59% (65)

### *Health Issues*

Agency staff reporting case data were asked what additional health issues and challenges youth faced: trauma/PTS, addiction, mental health, homelessness, medical/health issues, and one open category; other. Data were provided for 134 cases. Given the physical and sexual violence of commercial sexual exploitation plus the impact of family dysfunction and developmental interruptions, the results for other health issues presented in this chart are well known to service providers and researchers in the field.<sup>29</sup> Having this descriptive data documented on a current local sample of CSEC should give support for the importance of services for physical and mental health needs of CSEC.

<sup>29</sup> Farley, M., Baral, I., Kiremire, M., & Sezgin, U. (1998). Prostitution in Five Countries: Violence and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. *Feminism & Psychology*, 8(4), 405–426. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353598084002>

Table 17: Health Issues

ISSUE	TRAUMA/PTS	ADDICTION	MENTAL HEALTH	HOMELESS	MEDICAL/HEALTH	OTHER
<b>%(N=134)</b>	90% (120)	55% (74)	80% (108)	66% (88)	36% (48)	5% (7)

### *Arrest History*

The shift away from a criminal response to CSEC, toward a non-criminal and community-based service response, has been pointed out in several sections of this report. While data on arrests may no longer be useful for estimating the incidence of CSEC, service providers should still collect and record it to measure the extent to which CSEC continue to be arrested and/or detained for other charges.

Within the sample, data were provided on 143 cases, of those, 82 reported having been arrested. However, the response was “Unknown” for 30 cases.

Table 18: Arrest History

<b>EVER ARRESTED</b>	<b>% (N=143)</b>
YES	58% (83)
NO	21% (30)
UNKNOWN	21% (30)

- Of the 126 minors in the whole sample, arrest history was known for 80%. (100). Of these 100 cases, 65 had been arrested; 52%.
- Of those aged 18-24 (N=46) 34% (17) had been arrested, among the known cases.
- Of 107 cases reporting on whether youth had been held in detention or not, 67 reported “Yes”.
- Of the 126 minors in the sample 53% were reported to have been in detention.

That 65 youth experienced an arrest raises a flag about a non-prosecutorial response. The available data does not include information about why the youth were arrested. For minors, the arrest would not have been for prostitution. In many cases, the arrest was likely due to outstanding warrants resulting from a violation of a court order, and dependency or “run” warrants. As HB 5290 (Elimination of use of the valid court order exception to place youth in detention for noncriminal behavior) is implemented, service providers and advocates should continue to track this number going forward to determine the number and reasons for detention of CSEC.

### *Current CSEC Status*

The CSEC Checklist, developed by CCYJ, was included in the case file review to generate information on local dynamics and the types of exploitation experienced by local youth. All cases were identified as CSEC or suspected CSEC. Only 9 cases did not check any indicators but noted self-disclosure or suspected CSE. The table below identifies the CSEC Checklist Indicators and the percent that responded “Yes” to each indicator for the cases. The checklist items are presented in order of highest frequency.



Table 19: Current CSEC Status

<b>CSEC CHECKLIST ITEMS</b>	<b>(N)</b>
(N) = total number responding to each item	<b>% YES</b>
% = percent responding "Yes" to item	<b>(n)</b>
(n) = number represented by %	
<b>Youth is known to have engaged in sexual conduct for exchange other than a fee</b>	<b>N=172 70% (121)</b>
<b>Youth is known to have been taken to clubs, hotels, casinos, residences by adults and engaged in sexual conduct</b>	<b>N=162 60% (98)</b>
<b>Youth is known to have a third-party exploiter or acknowledged having one ever</b>	<b>N=161 54 % (87)</b>
<b>Youth is known to have been abducted/imprisoned or moved around for sexual activity</b>	<b>N=160 41% (66)</b>
<b>Youth has explicit sexual online profile or internet community sites that indicate CSE</b>	<b>N=159 38% (61)</b>
<b>Youth has been removed from area of prostitution or commercial sexual activity by authorities</b>	<b>N=161 24% (39)</b>
<b>Youth is known to have been subject to production, promotion, distribution of pornography</b>	<b>N=161 12% (20)</b>
<b>Youth is known to have engaged in exotic dancing at clubs, private parties, possess an exotic dancing permit</b>	<b>N=160 11% (18)</b>
<b>Youth is known to have received a fee or exchange for recruiting peers/others into CSE</b>	<b>N=171 8% (14)</b>
<b>Youth has been prostituted and/or sexually exploited as part of gang initiation, membership, affiliation</b>	<b>N=161 6% (11)</b>
<b>Youth is under age 18/and has record of arrest for prostitution</b>	<b>N=170 5% (8)</b>

### *Types of Commercial Sexual Exploitation Experienced*

In addition to completing the CSEC Checklist, respondents were also asked about specific forms of exploitation the youth had experienced. As the table below shows, CSEC endured multiple forms of exploitation. The most common form of exploitation experienced by youth was street/track prostitution including CSE in tent cities and encampments; 64% (81), followed by the Internet; 47%, (59), personal

ads; 16% (13) (personal ads could be internet facilitated or in print media) and other forms; 14% (1). Other forms included being exploited out of a house, by family, and Internet pornography.

Data from interviews with CSEC advocates noted an increase in commercial sexual exploitation in homeless camps, hotels, motels, and cars. Three staff said they believed there was an increase in gang and family exploitation. Although the numbers on the checklist in these categories are low, staff felt these were patterns emerging in South King County that were undercounted and underserved. “Encampment” was combined with the Street and Track category, however respondents viewed exploitation in “tent cities” as operating somewhat differently from street activity, requiring different interventions, and having different implications for youth.

Table 20: Types of CSE Experienced

<b>CSE CATEGORIES</b>	<b>% (N=126) Exploitation Category</b>
Street, Track, Encampments	64% (81)
Escort Service	n=2
Massage Parlors	
Brothels	
Internet	47% (59)
Personal Ads	13% (16)
Gang Affiliation	7% (9)
Dance Clubs	n=3
Other	14% (18)

### *Areas of Exploitation*

Youth were exploited in many locations across King and Pierce Counties, and in Snohomish County: Youth had been exploited the length of Pacific Highway South, Aurora Avenue North, up to Evergreen Way in Everett, and Casino Road in Marysville, Washington. They were exploited on Central Avenue in Kent, Federal Way, Tukwila, West Seattle, Des Moines, on Hosmer in Tacoma and around the Port of Tacoma, and on 65th and Roosevelt in Seattle. They were moved between cities, and in some cases between three different states.

### *Service Engagement*

Table 21: Levels of Service Engagement

<b>Currently Engaged with Services (N=144)</b>		<b>Currently being Sexually Exploited N= (144)</b>		<b>Current CSEC Status (N=132) Exit, Transition, Involved</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	42% (61)	<b>Yes</b>	31% (44)	<b>Exit</b>	23% (30)
<b>No</b>	45% (65)	<b>No</b>	25% (36)	<b>Transition</b>	22% (29)
<b>Unknown</b>	13% (18)	<b>Unknown</b>	44% (64)	<b>Involved</b>	55% (73)

The chart on service engagement raises questions that are best answered by advocate staff who can describe the lengthy stabilization and exit process for CSEC, which incorporates the well-known cycle of engagement, disappearing, and reengaging with services. It is important to remember that the youth currently being exploited, and those still involved in CSE are likely the more recent referrals of 2018. Exit data were not collected on CSEC status for youth served in prior years.

Although some data were missing on the Current CSEC Status question, 45% (n=59) of youth from the responding agencies had exited CSE or were in transition in 2018.

Data on service usage patterns, current involvement in CSE, and current CSEC status are not being collected. Again, this highlights a need for centralized data collection, and inclusion of key categories of information that will support analysis of the impact of policy changes and identify emerging prevention and service needs. This issue is addressed in more detail in the section on recommendations.

## SEX BUYERS

A discussion of the commercial sexual abuse of children and young adults is not complete without a discussion of the root cause: buyers. For this assessment, Robert Beiser, Executive Director of Seattle Against Slavery (SAS) ran 2 underage-posing chat bots on Megapersonals.com on 6/19/19. A chat bot is a computer program designed to simulate conversation with human users. These were done over the Internet.

- During a 24-hr period, the ads received a combined 17 contacts from buyers, 15 of the buyers were unique.
- During that same period, 825 ads were posted on Megapersonals.com for King County, with 657 unique ads (168 were duplicates).

Table 22: Buyer Snapshot

<b>Buyer Snapshots Performed 12pm – 12pm Performed 6-19-2019</b>				
<b>King County US Census 2017</b>		<b>Unique Online Ad Numbers in 24-hour Snapshot</b>		
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>1,043,799</b>	<b>Unique Min # Ads</b>	<b>Total Max # Ads</b>	
<b>Adult % Over Age 18</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>825</b>	
<b>Male %</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>Contacts in 24 Hours</b>		
<b>Est. Male Population</b>	<b>427,958</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Unique</b>	<b>Average Buyer Contact Per Ad</b>
		<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8.5</b>
		<b>Repeat Contact %</b>		
		<b>11.76%</b>		
		<b>Estimate of Buyers</b>		
		<b>Minimum Estimate of Buyers</b>	<b>Maximum Estimate of Buyers</b>	<b>% of Adult Males (Max)</b>
		<b>1971</b>	<b>2475</b>	<b>.58%</b>
				<b>% of Adult Males (Min)</b>
				<b>.46%</b>

Using this response-per-ad rate, SAS estimated between **1,971 and 2,475 buyers** were contacting ads in King County on Megapersonals.com at this time. It is important to note that Megapersonals.com is only one of the top three sites for commercial sex in King County (the other two are CityXGuide.com and SkipTheGames.com. (See <https://www.kingcountycsec.org/videoscsec> for a video featuring Robert Beiser on prevention of sex buying.)

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPAO) provides additional insight on the volume of buyers in the local area.<sup>30</sup> KCPAO reports a 28% increase in Commercial Sexual Abuse of a Minor (CSAM) charges in 2018 compared to 2017. KCPAO notes this increase occurred with a limited number of jurisdictions consistently dedicating resources toward the problem of men paying minors for sex. KCPAO emphasizes the need for significantly more police departments to conduct CSAM investigations if we are ever to successfully reduce the prevalence and demand of men buying sex from minor youth. Efforts to prosecute buyers are suffering from a significant resource deficit, given there may be up to 2,000 buyers responding to online ads in one 24-hour period.

Victim data also show a clear and disturbing racial disproportionality that cannot be ignored: Of 97 CSEC victims seen by KCPAO between 2011 – 2018, 45% were African American and 44% were Caucasian; all females. The African American population in King County is estimated to be 6.2% of the total population. Of sex buyers of minors who were prosecuted between 2013 – 2018, 73% (N=242) were Caucasian.

There are efforts, locally and nationwide, directed toward buyers. Local law enforcement has an aggressive policy toward arrest of buyers as shown in the chart below; King County is responsible for 91% of the arrests for “patronizing” or sex buying in the state.<sup>31</sup> The Stopping Sexual Exploitation Program for Men, a 10-week men's accountability class developed through OPS and now operated by SAS, is implemented in 6 jurisdictions in King County.

Although Seattle has the highest rate of charges against buyers, the Seattle Municipal Court has not adopted this program. In 2018, Seattle law enforcement officers made about 62 percent of the arrests statewide for “patronizing”. As mentioned above, this high arrest rate is due to the commitment from the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to focus law enforcement efforts on arresting buyers of commercial sex, rather than those being exploited.

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<sup>30</sup> King County Prosecuting Attorney Office (2019) King County Sexual Exploitation Cases: The Data Behind the Charges. Ben Gauen, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney.

<sup>31</sup> State of Washington, Department of Commerce (March 2019) Criminal Penalty Fees Related to Sexual Exploitation Crimes: RCW 43.280.100. Report to the Legislature. Washington State Department of Commerce Office of Crime Victims Advocacy1011 Plum St. Box 42525 Olympia, WA 98504-2525 [www.commerce.wa.gov](http://www.commerce.wa.gov)

Table 23: Buyer Charges by Seattle/Non-Seattle

Year	Seattle	Non-Seattle	Total
2008	75	46	121
2009	54	83	137
2010	143	27	170
2011	116	20	136
2012	89	35	124
2013	40	60	100
2014	89	95	184
2015	84	75	159
2016	147	35	182
2017	198	116	314
2018	101	82	183

Online disruption efforts and comprehensive individual intervention programs, such as the SSE program, are showing positive results against repeat sex buying. Sex buying has long been culturally approved, and an accepted male privilege. Changing these attitudes requires a long-term commitment and specific actions to address the root cause of CSEC. The actions listed below need to be sustained:<sup>32</sup>

- An emphasis by law enforcement on arrests and prosecutions of sex buyers;
- Assess statutorily mandated fees and increase patronizing penalty from simple misdemeanor to gross misdemeanor to deter buyers;
- Referring sex buyers to intervention programs;
- Collecting fees to fund services for commercially sexually exploited persons;
- Reducing arrests and prosecutions of CSE individuals and redirecting to services;
- Support of programs to assist CSEC to exit;
- Middle and high school, and college level programs to educate students about commercial sexual exploitation and its harms, healthy relationships, online risk, and what to do when a student believes someone needs assistance in connection to CSE;
- Collaborative efforts and training in the private sector to implementing policies and practices against buying sex (see BEST, Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking);<sup>33</sup>
- Engaging a cross-section of the community including public health, education, business, media, and criminal justice to change cultural norms around buying sex.

Buyer disruption efforts have been aided by legislation at the national level. In 2018, the Department of Justice seized the online sex marketplace, Backpage. At the same time, two pieces of legislation were passed by Congress and signed into law: SESTA (Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers), and FOSTA (Fight Online Sex Trafficking). These new laws caused significant disruption to online sex buying but did not include service dollars for victims.

### ***Section Summary***

<sup>32</sup> Congressional Research Service, “Sex Trafficking of Children in the United States: Overview and Issues for Congress,” (2015), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41878.pdf>

<sup>33</sup>BEST <https://www.bestalliance.org/>

The root cause of commercial sexual exploitation is the market for sex. To reduce CSEC there must be ongoing support for efforts against demand for sex from children, and exploration of new strategies to deter that demand.

## **DESCRIPTION OF CSEC SERVICES**

The system of services put in place for commercially sexually exploited youth and adults in Seattle/King County over the last decade is nothing short of remarkable. The redirection of policies and law enforcement from prosecution to protection has resulted in effective partnerships and a broad community commitment to ending CSEC. A concise description of key features of CSEC services is provided below, so the reader will have context for the policy and practice discussion that follows. The service description is organized by best practice criteria and includes comments regarding strengths, and work that yet needs to be done.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Model CSEC Protocol***

The Center for Children and Youth Justice, in partnership with YouthCare, received funding in 2011 to develop a Washington State Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) protocol.<sup>35</sup> The model protocol meets best practice standards with these core principles: Recognition of CSEC as victims; directing provision of victim-centered services; prioritizing CSEC safety; directing recognition and competent responses to diverse cultural and linguistic needs; supporting prosecution of CSEC exploiters; focusing on local, regional, and statewide collaboration and coordination; and reliance on data and outcomes to improve CSEC response.

The model protocol is the operating framework for CSEC policy and services, and its implementation has led to system change across sectors. Locally, a non-criminalizing response has been set up, and on a broader scale; CSEC is now defined as child abuse under state law and subject to mandatory reporting to CPS. However, the State of Washington still has not enacted a non-criminalization statute and protocols for CSEC. Local and statewide task forces and collaboratives continue to work on policy and statutory non-criminalization of CSEC.

The Model Protocol is not uniformly applied to victims of CSE in the 18 – 24-year age range; this age group remains subject to arrest, prosecution, and incarceration. The Seattle/King County Model, which is intended to be applied for all ages of CSE persons and developed by the Ending Exploitation Collaborative (also known as the Nordic or Equality Model) is implemented via internal policy directives and can be altered at any time.<sup>36</sup>

### ***Collaborative Structures***

CSEC services in Seattle/King County are driven by collaborative efforts; King County CSEC Task Force, Bridge Collaborative, Adult Survivor Collaborative, and Ending Exploitation Collaborative, for example. The CSEC Task force functions appropriately in terms of best practices, by providing a centralized coordinating effort and encouraging collaboration across multiple agencies. Many stakeholders from every community sector are engaged, and training has occurred across sectors, such as

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<sup>34</sup>Boyer, D (2011) Decision Points: State Protocols and Best Practices Review for Washington State CSEC Protocol. This document was prepared under the sponsorship of the Center for Children and Youth Justice with support of the Children’s Justice Act grant: Washington State Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Protocol. Seattle, WA.

<sup>35</sup> Funding for this project was provided by the Children’s Justice Interdisciplinary Task Force.

<sup>36</sup> See Ending Exploitation Collaborative [www.endingexploitation.com](http://www.endingexploitation.com) for description of Nordic Model.

See recent article on increased arrests of CSE persons: <https://crosscut.com/2019/10/alternatives-stretched-and-neighbors-angry-seattle-police-return-arresting-sex-workers>

social service, health services, law enforcement, education, and business. Collaborations are effective at sharing communication between networks and building community awareness and community support. The latter is critical for sustaining efforts to end CSEC.

Fostering trust and building relationships across diverse community sectors is ongoing work with constant learning. Continuing to build relationships across diverse community sectors and populations will increase avenues for identifying CSEC and for youth to feel safe coming forward to access services.

### ***CSEC Youth Are Identified***

As shown in the section of this report on CSEC Incidence, services in Seattle/King County are successfully reaching large numbers of youth. The number of youth served approaches the incidence estimates given in the initial *Who Pays the Price* Report from 2008. In the first study, many agencies were unaware they were serving CSE youth. In that study, agencies were provided a CSEC checklist for file reviews, to identify youth. One agency in the earlier study was quite surprised to find they had served 60 youth who were identified as CSEC via the checklist. Now, a well-coordinated system of services is succeeding at identifying and referring youth to specialized CSEC services.

Several elements are critical for CSEC identification: these include training, victim screening tools, victim protection protocols, coordination between social services, law enforcement, and juvenile justice. Many of these elements are in place. Mandatory reporting of CSEC to Child Protective Services is resulting in another avenue for identification. Youth are also able to self-refer through hotlines, texting, and other mechanisms. Youth can also access services without fear of arrest, or pressure to cooperate with prosecution.

### ***Services Fit the Needs of the Population***

- CSEC service coordination via service collaboratives and the work of the King County CSEC Task Force has helped ensure multiple points of access so that CSEC from diverse sectors can be identified and engaged in services.
- Services are accessible via 24/7 hotlines from several agencies including the Bridge Collaborative, REST, and Safe Place for example. Although there are several hotline numbers, a single centralized intake number does not exist. Referrals from outside agencies can come through the shared hotline, as well as direct email to advocates.
- Multi-system response teams or multi-disciplinary teams (MDT's) are embedded in Bridge Collaborative, King County Children's Justice Center, and CPS response protocols.
- Up to 20 CSEC Advocates from 13 agencies participate in the King County CSEC Task Force.
- CSE survivors participate at every level, in most agencies and task forces.
- Monthly CSEC training and toolkits are provided through the KC CSEC Task Force.
- An advocate from one of the Bridge Collaborative agencies generally responds to a referral within 24-hours and usually much sooner.
- Services are predominantly community-based and available in Seattle, East and South King County.
- Services focus on advocacy and support, and initial relationship building. Advocates are trained in trauma, victim-centered interviewing, and assessment methods.
- Services are accessible at times of crisis. At a time of heightened vulnerability, victims of CSE are most likely to be open to services, and fast track interventions can be highly effective at this point.
- Youth are assessed for basic needs and can state their most urgent concerns.
- Safety planning is the primary goal of the CSEC advocate.

- Service providers have received training and understand the dynamics of CSE. Ongoing support is incorporated into service planning.
- Survivor support and mentorship are available through several agencies. The CSEC Task Force helped create a formal partnership with King County's Becca Program Truancy/Education Reengagement Team to provide girls' empowerment groups to middle school aged girls who are not currently attending school.
- Service providers recognize the need for a rapid response for substance abuse treatment, housing, and assessment and treatment for mental health issues, such as complex trauma and PTSD. Services are not sufficiently available to meet these needs. However, service providers have taken steps to provide in-house treatment, including on-site mental health therapists, and chemical dependency counselors who can provide assessment and out-patient support.
- Housing options have increased and funding for youth housing has been prioritized in allocations to address the housing/homeless crisis in this area. Emergency beds and supportive housing still fall short of the need.
- Employment and school reentry programs are available through several agencies.
- Multiple trainings on CSEC issues have been offered at little or no costs to participants across the community over the past 5 years, resulting in significantly increasing the availability of trauma-informed services and training on intersectionality of poverty, racism, and gender issues affecting CSEC.
  - In 2018, there were 52 trainings with 974 attendees.
  - In 2019, to date, there have been 40 trainings with 628 attendees.
- Trainings offered on a routine basis via the CSEC Taskforce include:
  - CSEC 101: Responding to the Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Youth
  - CSEC 102: And Boys Too
  - CSEC 103: At the Margins: The Sex Trafficking of LGBTQ+ Youth
  - CSEC 201: Engaging Men to End Commercial Sexual Exploitation
  - CSEC 202: Understanding Running Away Behavior
  - CSEC 301: Engaging and Serving Youth Using Motivational
  - CSEC 401: Survivor Centered Programming
  - CSEC 402: Queer Like Me
  - Train the Trainer

The synergy of networking and collaboration between community-based and systems-based services has resulted in new and innovative services. The ConnectUP program is a partnership between Casey Family Programs, Department of Children Youth and Families, King County Superior Court, YMCA Accelerator, YouthCare, and the Organization for Prostitution Survivors. Together, they provide specialized supportive services to state-dependent children identified as confirmed, or at high risk of, CSE, and their caregivers ([www.ConnectUPWA.org](http://www.ConnectUPWA.org)).

Another key feature of local CSEC services is that they are available to individuals up to age 24. The 18-24-year age group has access to Bridge Collaborative Services as well as programs offered by agencies serving commercially sexually exploited adults.

Areas that continue to challenge advocates and CSEC youth are housing, and access to mental health and substance abuse treatment. The next section contains a discussion of service strategies that have been adopted by programs to remediate the decades-long service shortfalls.

### ***Evaluation and Data Collection***



A comprehensive CSEC Task Force evaluation is being conducted by the University of Washington's School of Medicine, Division of Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy.<sup>37</sup> Preliminary results were presented to the KC CSEC Task Force for youth served by the Bridge Collaborative, who completed surveys at intake, and then every 90 days. Of those who completed surveys: housing stability increased from 19% of youth served to 60% of youth served; safe housing increased from 58% to 90%; those initiating reach-out to the community advocate increased from 55% to 95%; those with consistent contact with the community advocate increased from 33% to 67%; and employment increased from 8% to 40%.<sup>38</sup>

The Bridge Collaborative collects limited data on youth referred to participating agencies. The Center for Children and Youth Justice has implemented statewide data collection on CSEC youth through Project Respect as part of statewide implementation of the CSEC Model Protocol and CSEC response system. Evaluation data are being collected via the current CSEC Task Force Program Evaluation of Collaborative Capacity and Lifetime Cross-Systems Involvement of CSE Youth, which is tracking a sample of youths from the Bridge Collaborative, King County Juvenile Court, and DCYF. CSEC is subject to mandatory reporting, and DCYF tracks calls and data on CSEC cases that are opened.

Although several important data collection efforts are underway, no one agency is tasked with the responsibility of managing centralized data collection on CSEC. Comprehensive data collection is necessary to estimate incidence/prevalence, identify service needs, and for continuous assessment of the changing dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation.

### ***Policy and Legislation***

Implementation of the Model CSEC Protocol resulted in key legislative and policy changes that recognized CSEC as victims rather than offenders. A few are listed below and referenced in the following discussion.

- **Senate Bill 6476** (Protected Innocence Initiative), was passed in 2010 and advocated by former State Representative Linda Smith. Modeled after New York State's Safe Harbor legislation, SB 6476 specifically redefined *sexually exploited child* to include a victim of the crime of commercial sex abuse of a minor, and *sexually exploited child* was added to the definition of children in need of supervision (CHINS).
  - The status of CSEC victims was changed, placing them under the mandate of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Child Protective Services (CPS).
  - SB 6476 permits victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) to have immediate access to the secure CRCs created by the Becca Bill.
  - Youth identified by law enforcement can utilize a CHINS petition to access the secure CRCs like other at-risk youth. Under this law, parents or DSHS can file a CHINS petition for a youth to be placed outside the home.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The evaluation of the CSEC Task Force was funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #90CA1825. Also see Pullmann, M.D., Roberts, N., Parker, E.M., Mangiaracina, K.J., Briner, L., Silverman, M., & Becker, J. (under review). Commercially sexually exploited youth involved in the child welfare system: Lifetime residential placements, arrests, and detention.

Parker, E.M., Pullmann, M.D., & Mangiaracina, K. (November 2018). System and service use patterns of youth in the child welfare system who are commercially sexually exploited and the role of a multi-disciplinary interagency taskforce. American Public Health Association. San Diego, CA.

<sup>38</sup> Presentation to King County CSEC Task Force (7-26-2019) Michael Pullmann, PhD and Jed Jacobson, PhD. University of Washington's School of Medicine, Division of Public Behavioral Health and Justice Policy, Seattle, WA

- Beginning July 1, 2011, the CHINS petition may be used to temporarily detain a sexually exploited child in a semi-secure CRC for up to **15** days, without criminal charges.
- **KCPAO** implements policy against charging/prosecution of minors for prostitution related crimes.
- Prostitution and prostitution-related offenses are no longer included in the screening criteria for admittance into Juvenile Detention (CSEC are referred to advocates instead).
- **HB 1382** was passed in 2019 and provides immunity from prosecution for CSE victims of any age if the victim is seeking emergency assistance.
- **SB 5290** was passed in 2019 and is designed to eliminate the use of the valid court order exception to place youth in detention for noncriminal behavior. Under this statute a warrant may not be issued, either for failure to appear at a court hearing that requires commitment of such youth to juvenile detention, or as a contempt sanction during CHINS proceedings.

As described earlier, except for HB 1382, protective legislation and policies are not in place for youths in the 18-24-year age group.

The State of Washington does not have a non-criminalization statute in place for minors.

### ***Ending Demand***

As discussed in the previous section on buyers, several innovative strategies are being employed in the local area to address sex buyers, and to end demand. Seattle Against Slavery has implemented the Trafficking Prevention in Schools curriculum and Stopping Sexual Exploitation: A Program for Men. SAS has also been a leader in the use of technology to disrupt sex buying with its Freedom Tech programs. Law enforcement in Seattle, and in many King County jurisdictions, have redirected their focus to arresting buyers and accommodating referral to services for victims. However, as recently noted in the Seattle press, this policy is subject to change when demand is not curbed. (see footnote 36)

### ***Summary of Local CSEC Policy and Practices***

Seattle/King County has successfully adopted a consistent definition of CSEC and educated the community. A well-coordinated response system is also in place. Stakeholders have established a good foundation from which to extend services into other parts of the county, include more service sectors and agencies, move to identify hidden forms of CSEC, and to support expansion of the model protocol statewide. Victims are identified through law enforcement, community networks, outreach, and other public sectors including education and health. Victims are provided safety, protection, shelter, and access to self-prescribed support services. The community has focused on eliminating demand, and this focus has resulted in significant policy shifts from prosecutors and law enforcement. As CSEC programs grow across King County and the State, they have access to a protocol and training guidance that allows them to provide consistent responses to CSEC, grounded in best practices as we understand them through experience and learning. Local professionals participate and contribute to national and international forums and conferences, where they promulgate the Seattle/King County Model of services, learn from others how to improve the response to CSEC, and develop new strategies.

Every person involved in this effort is aware of the challenges involved working with CSE youth affected by complex trauma and submerged in a violent subculture. Many have taken part in the struggles that have ensued, to change minds about who these youth really are.

The best indicator of local success regarding services is that from 2014 to date, over 800 youth have been identified and engaged by services. We also know the Bridge Collaborative agencies alone are likely to

see up to 200 new referrals annually. But, intervening with exploited youth will not end CSEC. Real world data has shown that sex buying can be disrupted online, and through law enforcement focusing on sex buyers. But sex buyers and exploiters find other ways to seek out victims.<sup>39</sup> Most problematically, the pipeline of vulnerable youth continues to be full; sustained by poverty, racism, abuse, and homelessness.

### ***Ongoing Challenges and Specific Service Recommendations***

Despite notable successes, a problem of this enormity presents ongoing challenges to services. Interviews with CSEC advocates, agency leaders, and law enforcement have pointed out the most urgent issues:

1. CSEC are no longer arrested for prostitution charges and held in juvenile detention, thus removing the secure placement option, often seen as necessary by both law enforcement and service providers, despite their commitment to community-based services. Youth <18, who are receiving services from DCYF, (dependent youth) are often taken to Spruce Street, an emergent short-term residential program. Staff point out that it is the lack of suitable follow-up placements that lead to youth running away, and then becoming exploited or re-exploited. Spruce Street is the resource used most by police because the program coordinates with DCYF for dependent youth.

Treatment options are needed for a cross-section of youth, but before there is a fall back to secure facilities, it should be recognized that there are alternatives being underutilized in the community. With DCYF caseworker agreement, police can also take CSEC to licensed residential placements known as Hope Centers, such as the one run by YouthCare. Hope Centers and other licensed facilities that serve youth can provide long-term options. This same recommendation was made in the 2016 report by the Statewide CSEC Coordinating Committee<sup>40</sup> This does not solve the problem of lack of placements, but current resources could be more fully utilized than they are now.

2. Gaps in the field of services continue to erode positive steps with CSEC. One major gap is the lack of housing across the continuum, including shelter beds, supportive and transitional housing, and the limited availability of detox beds. A related issue is that the CSEC are very often the youth who run from placements and/or violate rules, leading to removal from programs. Making recommendations in this area may appear to be presumptuous. However, this challenge has been addressed by other high-risk youth programs using respite care and identifying safe places for youth to go at intake if they decide to leave the program. Programs have informally set up these alternatives, but given the problem described by the staff who were interviewed for this project, now may be the time to formalize alternative living plans with the MDTs across agencies to insure that CSEC agencies are in fact keeping their youth in safe placements.
3. The challenge of undercounted and underserved CSEC is part of on-going discussions. It has always been the case that youth are afraid to ask for help and do not know where to go. We know that youth who have accessed services have been found through outreach, and the availability of safe places (drop-in centers) where they can be safe and find help. As we learn more about needs in other parts of King County, services that exist in Seattle need to be available to what seems now, a hidden population.

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<sup>39</sup> Spectre, R. (2018) Beyond Backpage: Buying and Selling in the United States One Year Later. ChildSafe AI:Protecting Kids Online

<sup>40</sup> Commercially Sexually Exploited Statewide Coordinating Committee (2016) Report to the Washington State Legislature, Attorney General's Office State of Washington

4. More CSEC advocates are required to meet the needs of this population. At any one time, there are 13-15 CSE advocates. Some are dedicated to CSEC. For others it is only a portion of their job description. Using the CSEC incidence rates given in this report, individual caseloads could range from 40-60 clients, which is of course unreasonable.
5. Mobile advocacy, going to the CSE youth when possible, is an effective service engagement strategy for this population. However, “mobility” requires added resources for advocates. For example, advocates need laptop computers and quick access to client assistance funds. And, nobody can guess how often it may occur that an advocate cannot respond to a client emergency because they do not have money for gas. Advocate compensation levels should be reviewed as a matter of policy, along with a review of mechanisms to ensure that front-line staff have access to the resources necessary for mobile advocacy.
6. Mental Health Treatment programs frequently have long waitlists, and youth must transport themselves to treatment, and navigate a complex system, often unaccompanied. Increasing mobility of services is one strategy that has proven very effective and should be extended to specialized needs. YouthCare and the YMCA Accelerator program, ConnectUP, have hired a mobile mental health therapist and a child and family therapist, respectively. These services create a much less intimidating experience for clients, with a much higher probability that youth will receive initial and follow-up services. A mobile mental health therapist can provide assessments, including trauma assessments, and determine a service plan. However, for mobile advocacy to work, staff need an appropriate place to meet with clients, and be able to address all safety concerns. These staff support mechanisms must be built into program design.
7. Funds for client assistance need to be easily accessible and increased. As advocates point out, meeting basic needs must be done first and, by so doing, increases client stability and engagement with services.

### ***Going Forward***

In-depth interviews with approximately 30 stakeholders revealed very similar concerns about challenges moving forward. These challenges are not new. They are widely recognized, and many are being addressed by various task forces:

- How do we reach more youth, and reach them sooner?
- How do we effectively address the disproportionate number of CSE youth of color?
- How can we expand the critical work of identifying and providing services to youth currently being exploited, in underserved and undercounted populations?
- Shifts in policy from criminal to non-criminal status have had unintended consequence for law enforcement. What should our protocols be for partners, including law enforcement and service providers?
- Can we increase our focus on prevention efforts with youth at known risk for CSEC?
- What more can we do to end demand?
- How can we ensure survivor leadership?
- How do we sustain community awareness, education, and training to keep this issue in front of funders and policy makers?

## POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section includes recommendations based on qualitative and quantitative data collected for this project. The participants in this assessment were all key stakeholders on CSEC issues in Seattle/King County. The recommendations reflect their concerns, although there may be differences of opinion as to solutions. These recommendations are not meant to be exhaustive, many local experts in this field would add content. They are suggestions to help solidify the gains made over the past decade, address urgent issues that have appeared because of changes made, and to insure movement forward toward common goals.

### 1. ELIMINATE THE CRIMINAL LIABILITY OF MINORS FOR PROSTITUTION RELATED OFFENSES

The State of Washington is not among the twenty-three states, plus the District of Columbia, that have passed statutes eliminating criminal liability for minors for prostitution related crimes.<sup>41</sup> Although Washington State has often led the nation with anti-sex trafficking legislation, and was among the first states to pass Safe Harbor legislation, which calls for victim-centered protocols and a non-criminal response, the core contradiction between best practices and the state statutory framework persists.<sup>42</sup> Washington State prostitution laws are age neutral, and despite prosecuting attorneys' offices across the state enacting internal policies against charging minors, youth may still be criminalized for prostitution. This serves the fallacy that they are responsible for, and able to consent to, their own sexual victimization.<sup>43</sup>

The argument for enacting non-criminalizing legislation for CSEC does not need to be made here. Legislative work groups and task forces are working on this issue; a non-criminal approach has many champions, locally and across the state. Moving forward, it is important to acknowledge that the **preconditions for enacting non-criminalization legislation** are, to a large degree, in place in Seattle/King County and in several counties across the state.

- Seattle and King County have succeeded in implementing a victim-centered and non-criminal response for CSEC, which serves as a state-wide model.

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<sup>41</sup> Shared Hope International (2018) Seeking Justice: Legal approaches to eliminate criminal liability for juvenile sex trafficking victims. Available online: [https://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ANALYSIS-OF-STATUTORY-APPROACHES\\_ver4.pdf](https://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ANALYSIS-OF-STATUTORY-APPROACHES_ver4.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> **Senate Bill 6476** (Protected Innocence Initiative), was passed in 2010 and advocated by former Representative Linda Smith. Modeled after New York State's Safe Harbor legislation, SB 6476 specifically redefined *sexually exploited child* to include a victim of the crime of commercial sex abuse of a minor, and *sexually exploited child* was added to the definition of children in need of supervision (CHINS).

- The status of CSEC victims was changed, placing them under the mandate of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Child Protective Services (CPS).
- SB 6476 permits victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) to have immediate access to the secure CRCs created by the Becca Bill.
- Youth identified by law enforcement can utilize a CHINS petition to access the secure CRCs like other at-risk youth. Under this law, parents or DSHS can file a CHINS petition for that youth to be placed outside the home.<sup>42</sup>
- Beginning July 1, 2011, the "Child in Need of Services" (CHINS) petition may be used to temporarily detain a sexually exploited child in a semi-secure CRC for up to **15** days, without criminal charges.
- Each CRC must have staff experienced working with child sexual exploitation victims as a condition of licensing.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Boyer, Debra. (2013) A Case for Exempting Minors from Prosecution for Prostitution in Washington State. Lawyer, Washington State Bar Association, Vol. June: 22-25.  
[http://nwlawyer.wsba.org/nwlawyer/june\\_2013/?pg=24&pm=2&u1=friend](http://nwlawyer.wsba.org/nwlawyer/june_2013/?pg=24&pm=2&u1=friend)

- The Center for Children and Youth Justice’s Project Respect has set the groundwork for consistent implementation of the CSEC Model Protocol and a victim-centered response across several counties in the state.
- A specialized CSEC coordinated service response has been established via the Bridge Collaborative advocate model, which serves as a statewide model.
- CSEC is subject to mandatory reporting to Children’s Protective Services, making CPS’s resources available to CSEC state-wide, as well as community partners to support DCYF’s added caseload.
- A CSEC screening tool has been field-tested, adapted, and validated by state-level researchers. Multiple versions of these screening tools are used, but they have been implemented in key settings, including Juvenile Court and Detention programs, DCYF, and CSEC service agencies. Similar tools are also used in educational settings by school counselors. These are available, and in use state-wide.
- The Seattle/King County community has benefited from multiple efforts to increase public awareness. CCYJ reports that in 2018-19, there were 92 CSEC related trainings with over 1,600 attendees. This number does not include additional CSE trainings provided by individual agencies.
- Prostitution-related crimes are no longer among the criteria for Juvenile Detention; youth are no longer routinely taken to detention unless it is for a separate crime.
- Juvenile Detention screens for CSEC with admitted youth; in those cases, youth are put in touch with a CSEC advocate. YouthCare currently has four staff working out of detention, for example.
- The Safe Harbor law passed by the Washington State Legislature ensures youth across the state can access services on their own and/or be removed from unsafe situations without an arrest.
- Although housing remains a challenge, and youth homelessness is part of a larger housing crisis, significant gains have been made, including new specialized programs ConnectUP and Project 360.<sup>44</sup>

Seattle/King County and other counties in the state have had significant practice and success at providing community-based services. However, formalizing non-criminalization into law has uncertainties because of the challenges of working with those CSEC youth, who are clearly in unsafe conditions with exploiters and reject services. The perceived need for secure assessment and treatment options applies to CSEC as well as to other youth in the Juvenile Justice System with similar issues. It will not be easily or quickly resolved, due to budgetary and other legal complications. We should let the successes of community-based services lead the way in this discussion.

Unless there is a significant change of heart in the law enforcement community, the policy of not detaining and charging minors for prostitution related crimes will not be reversed. The responsibility for serving CSEC has been squarely placed in the community. A majority of CSEC service referrals are coming from the community, not Juvenile Detention; in 2018 Bridge Collaborative advocates received only 28 referrals from detention.<sup>45</sup> It was also noted in the Statewide CSEC Task Force Coordinating Committee’s 2016 report to the legislature that CHINS (Children In Need of Supervision is one of the

<sup>44</sup> King County Sexual Assault Resource Center, Project 360 <https://www.kcsarc.org/project360>.

ConnectUP Washington, <https://www.connectupwa.org/>

<sup>45</sup> Once in detention, needs assessments are administered to youth. In this process, CSE may be identified and detention and/or probation staff may make referrals to community advocates. YouthCare has 4 staff located in Juvenile Detention who are readily available for these referrals. This is an effective practice, which is evident in the Bridge Collaborative data reports and may be the most reliable count of CSEC in King County Juvenile Court. Referrals from Juvenile Court to the Bridge Collaborative averaged **38** per year from 2014 -2017, and **28** youth were referred from the Juvenile Court/Legal System in 2018. Those making the referrals included Juvenile Probation Counselors (n=8), staff from the Screening Unit in Juvenile Court (n=7), and Police Officers/Detectives (n=7). How the remaining 6 were identified was not specified.

Becca Programs for status offenders.) petitions were not an effective means of providing services to CSEC. (see footnote 40)

Most significantly, community-based services are being used, and CSEC are accessing these services. It makes sense to move forward now with a **comprehensive non-criminalization statute for commercially sexually exploited minors**.

The second barrier to enacting non-criminalization is law enforcement concerns, including requirements for investigations in CSEC cases. This issue is addressed in Recommendation 5. A recommendation related to non-criminalization of CSEC is discussed next.

## **2. EXTEND NON-CRIMINALIZATION TO OTHER CRIMES RESULTING FROM SEX TRAFFICKING/COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

### ***When a CSEC becomes a Felon and is No Longer Perceived as a Victim***

CSEC and CSE adults often face multiple criminal charges that are related to their exploitation. In Shared Hope’s policy paper, Seeking Justice (see footnote 41) a case is made for extending non-criminalization to other crimes that include prostitution related offenses. The recommendation suggests including crimes that range in severity from juvenile status offenses to felony crimes. The diversity of offenses that are included under state non-criminalization laws reflect states’ varying policy positions on what can be attributed to trafficking victimization, as well as the different offenses that victims are most susceptible to committing and, therefore, face punishment for in each state. A similar recommendation was made in 2016 by the CSEC Statewide Coordinating Committee asking that consideration be given to amending a Washington State law to exempt victims of CSAM from criminal liability. Currently, diversion is mandatory for minors with prostitution related charges and it is not uncommon for prosecutors to divert other cases when sex trafficking and CSE are known; there is an analogous practice already in place.

Extending non-criminalization of prostitution-related offenses is an important consideration for inclusion in future non-criminalization proposals that may be brought forward. Service providers and survivors understand that criminal history and incarceration are significant barriers to exiting from CSE. Lawmakers should heed the practical knowledge of these experts, and shape future legislation accordingly. The injustice resulting from not considering the impact of CSE victimization on related crimes raises clear cause for concern.

Washington State and King County have had cases and will continue to have cases in which CSEC are charged with crimes and no longer perceived as victims. Some of these cases parallel that of Cyntoia Brown who was convicted of murdering a “client” in self-defense at age 16 and sentenced to life imprisonment in Tennessee. In this case, the known histories of childhood abuse, rape, and trafficking did not mitigate sentencing. It is not appropriate to detail similar local cases here, and there is significant disagreement regarding the outcomes of local cases. But, without a doubt, similar cases are currently in the system.

This recommendation will likely generate resistance and there is much to debate regarding extending non-criminalization; to which crimes, and to what age groups, for example. The conversation needs to take place. In the meantime, Recommendation 3 suggests an immediate corrective action.

## **3. ADOPT A CSE VICTIM/DEFENDANT PROTOCOL FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM FOR SURVIVORS OF CSE CHARGED WITH RELATED CRIMES**

While the extension of non-criminalization statutes is being debated, there are protocols from analogous situations that could assist CSE **victim/defendants now**. Implementing the recommended practice will open discussion and move the conversation forward regarding the idea of extending non-criminalization to related crimes and ensuring consideration of CSE history in criminal proceedings.

There are many similarities between domestic violence and commercial sexual exploitation; one is that very often, victims become defendants. The King County Coalition on Ending Gender-Based Violence developed the Victim Defendant Project. This is a Coalition resource designed to help increase access to safety, justice, and support for survivors of abuse who are accused of committing domestic violence related crimes. The project has published reports, developed resource materials, and created tools for the criminal justice system and the community.<sup>46</sup> These include a suggested protocol for judges to consider when domestic violence survivors are charged with a crime, and training for defense attorneys and prosecutors..

A similar protocol could be developed for CSEC and all victims of CSE and sex trafficking to ensure trauma history and sex trafficking victimization are included in all phases of court proceedings; particularly important phases are at charging decisions, and sentencing. This recommendation would require training across the criminal justice system to include defense and prosecuting attorneys, and judges.

The similarities of CSE survivors to DV survivors are apparent, and the description for them should include trauma history. For example, the first section of the model DV protocol describes survivors:

*A survivor of DV is a person who has been the victim of a pattern of ongoing violent and controlling behavior perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner or spouse. This behavior often includes physical and sexual violence, threats, abuse of children and family pets, control of finances and decision-making, isolation of the survivor from family and friends, constant criticism, and degradation, etc.*

The protocol suggests a set of questions that should be asked about defendants at sentencing. These are easily adapted from DV to CSE, for defendants who are clearly survivors of ongoing commercial sexual exploitation/sex trafficking:

- What is an appropriate punishment for a defendant who has committed a crime but is the victim of ongoing violence by a battering partner who is the alleged “victim” in the case?
- If the defendant committed the crime in the context of ongoing violence and threats by the batterer, does she pose a threat to public safety?
- Is rehabilitation an appropriate sanction for a victim of ongoing violence by a battering partner?
- Does a defendant who is a domestic violence survivor pose a high risk for reoffending? If they committed the offense because they believed they were in danger, what resources would help to keep them safe?

A fully developed criminal justice protocol for CSE would address all phases of the criminal justice process. Adoption of a CSE Victim/Defendant Protocol would be an important step to ensure fair treatment for victims of CSE charged with related crimes.

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<sup>46</sup> Victim Defendant Project. King County Coalition on Ending Gender-Based Violence. <https://endgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Vic-DefIssuesforJudges1.pdf>. See also: [https://endgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Steps\\_in\\_criminal\\_case1.pdf](https://endgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Steps_in_criminal_case1.pdf).



#### 4. ENGAGE CSE SURVIVORS TO LEAD DEVELOPMENT OF THE CSE VICTIM/DEFENDANT PROTOCOL

**A corollary to Recommendation 3 is that Survivor Leadership be supported to develop the CSE Victim/Defendant Protocol.** It is their lived experience that most convincingly and expertly provides the rationale for this recommendation. There is an emerging group statewide, Survivors Mobilization Group, and also the Survivor Engagement Project, housed within CCYJ, that could potentially involve CSE survivors from across the state in this process.<sup>47</sup>

#### 5. RESOLVE AMBIGUITIES IN THE LEGAL STATUS AND DISPOSITION OF CSEC

In the early phases of developing the CSEC Model Protocol, policy advocates recognized it would be difficult to navigate a victim-centered response for CSEC, while also supporting law enforcement in the protection of victims and the prosecution of exploiters. This is one of the dilemmas impeding non-criminalization of CSEC.

Three state laws pertaining to juveniles provide mechanisms for CSEC and other youth perceived as at-risk, to be picked up by police and transported to a safe environment. Washington State law contains several provisions for police officers to place a child in protective custody, making formal arrest of a CSEC victim unnecessary.

- Under Washington State law, police are authorized to take a child into protective custody when it appears that a child is in imminent danger or has already been abused or neglected.
- The At-Risk/Runaway Youth Act (Becca Law), which became effective in July 1995, governs issues related to status offenders and non-offenders, including runaways, at-risk youth, truants, and children in need of mental health and substance abuse treatment. Law enforcement officers can pick up a reported runaway, or any minor whom the officer believes is in circumstances that cause a danger to the child's safety.
- The Becca legislation allows police officers to take youth into custody if they believe they are in danger and provides for placement in secure crisis residential centers (CRCs), which is an alternative to arrest, detention, and criminal charges.<sup>48</sup>

These statutes apply to virtually all CSEC <18 years of age. These provisions also remain in effect for CSEC even though minors will not be charged with prostitution related crimes and they should be retained in any new legislation on non-criminalization. But it is important to recognize that law enforcement operates in an environment where the criminal statute is in effect, but the policy is to not arrest. Police can take youth into protective custody, but they have no statutory protocol for what their next steps should be.

Once placed in “protective custody,” youth will not be admitted into detention for prostitution related behavior, thus foreclosing detention as an option for police. The complexity increases regarding young adults who can receive CSEC services, but who are in the 18-24-year range. There are limited options for

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<sup>47</sup> N. Canete, (2019) Survivor Engagement Project: Recommendations for Anti-oppressive Survivor Engagement. The Center for Children and Youth Justice, Seattle, WA

<sup>48</sup> Passed in 1995, the Becca Bill (RCW 13.32A.010) provides law enforcement and DSHS with tools to intervene in the lives of youth at-risk for DMST. The Becca Bill created and funded the establishment of *Family Reconciliation Services* with the intention to increase the safety of children through the preservation of families and the provision of assessment, treatment, and placement services for children in need of services (CHINS) and at-risk youth (ARY). The legislation funded semi-secure CRCs in which youth could reside for an assessment period of up to five days to determine options for safe placements and reduce the likelihood of them returning to dangerous or life-threatening situations.

taking youth to a “safe environment”; youth often run from those placements. Laws regulating treatment and involuntary treatment further inhibit the use of treatment facilities as an option for law enforcement, which may not be available anyway. Police are left with these challenges:

- How can law enforcement agencies protect victims without an arrest?
- How can investigations of exploiters proceed without an arrest insuring access to victims?

Police are confronted with several challenges when they see a youth who may be in danger but will no longer be charged with a crime. The youth cannot be taken to detention, and the police are required to contact CPS. They are left with taking youth to a facility from which the youth is likely to run, meaning that officers will not have access to the victim, and will not have the opportunity, or the cooperation necessary, for an investigation of the exploiter. Furthermore, SB 5290 has eliminated the use of warrants to detain status offenders or, in this case, non-offenders.

For CSEC under age 18, police may transport to Spruce Street (semi-secure) if they are dependent and receiving services from DCYF. This is not a secure facility, so youth often run, or are returned to previous placements by their case manager, and then generally run again. Hope Beds are an alternative for both dependent and non-dependent youth (not receiving state services) but are underutilized. There is now the important, but extra step of notifying CPS about CSEC cases.

The concerns of law enforcement need to be addressed. Police have a critical role to play in finding CSEC and connecting them to services, and not just because of the criminal behavior involved. Police understand current patterns and locations of CSE. They can reach victims that social service staff cannot. Police find CSEC as part of police operations and they receive CSEC reports from the community. The requirement for mandatory reporting of CSEC can be met by either reporting to DCYF/CPS or the police. The importance of law enforcements’ investigative role to identify exploiters also cannot be ignored.

Different states have adopted varying strategies to address the issues discussed above and have been outlined by Shared Hope. But there is no clear path; many states continue to rely on detention and non-criminalization laws do not cover all age groups for example.

What is apparent is that Law Enforcement needs a clear protocol now, in this environment of contradictory expectations, that gives them assurance they can follow through on CSEC cases. This cannot be dependent on new treatment facilities that may or may not materialize. An immediate solution needs to be in place, in order to move forward with a non-criminalization law that also supports law enforcement’s role and that does not risk encumbering law enforcements’ ability to respond to CSEC, particularly those who only law enforcement will find.

Over the past decade there has been a sea change in the response to CSEC. Unintended consequences and unanticipated problems are unavoidable with a reversal of centuries’ old policies. Until we fully understand all the ramifications of this change, it may be difficult to find the ideal solution or the ideal law. What must be asked is, “What is the best we can do now?” until factors change, and other solutions become clearer.

Seattle/King County has a track record of successfully implementing specialized CSEC services with multi-sector involvement and with a broad set of community partners. As services and policies have developed, what seemed like unsolvable problems have turned out to have solutions, and they have been community solutions. Reliance on juvenile justice to address CSEC has progressively been replaced with community-based services; staying on this course may lead to solving the dilemma faced by law enforcement and ethical concerns of service providers.

### ***Police/Advocate First Responder Team - Replicate and Enhance Placement of CSE Advocates with Law Enforcement***

One promising strategy identified in the agency interviews was attaching advocates to police departments, such as advocates with the High-Risk Victims Unit of the Seattle Police Department and the close partnership between Kent Police Department and the CSEC advocate with Kent Youth and Family Services. This strategy provides support to Law Enforcement, frees them from managing the social service needs of identified victims, and supports continued access to victims.

Enhanced police/advocate first responder teams would include the following features and services:

1. Advocates assigned as first responders to law enforcement
2. Advocates available at point of contact, for counseling, and explaining “next steps” to CSEC, and to help police if immediate medical aid is required; or, if CSEC is a minor, to make notifications to appropriate agencies or guardians
3. Advocates included in forensic interviews and investigations
4. Advocates may accompany victims during transport
5. Advocates counsel CSEC on what is going to happen next with police investigation, and explain the options CSEC have for personal safety, support, and housing
6. The First Responder Advocate stays in contact with victim throughout the investigation and initiates the service plan and MDT response.

Currently in Seattle/King County, law enforcement is in the odd position of enforcing a non-arrest policy, which has not been enacted into law, while the statute authorizing arrests is still in place. Thus, a set of informal systems are being used. Sometimes they may be working, but accountability is more complicated and leads to concerns and frustrations for law enforcement and service providers. It is also evident that the historically prevailing system for dealing with CSEC, the justice system, has now been brought into the community-based system, as noted earlier. This gives a good foundation and model to move forward with more community-based approaches, to address the challenges of a true victim-centered response to CSEC.

### ***Adapt Family Intervention and Restorative Service Model for CSEC***

Current discussions of specialized CSEC treatment facilities include secure facilities where youth could be held for treatment and assessment for a fixed period. While such facilities may be necessary, there are significant barriers to their realization. Interviews with law enforcement and service providers gave support for adapting the new juvenile domestic violence crime model to CSEC, which is based on the Family Intervention and Restorative Services Model (FIRS).

A unit or “pod” has been dedicated to the FIRS program in the Juvenile Detention Center. A similar unit could be assigned for CSE minors. It could be designed as a receiving center with CSEC advocates available and wraparound services. Ideally, it would be better not to have a CSEC Center co-located with detention, but the unit would not be locked; but semi-secure. The program would be available to dependent and non-dependent youth.

In DV cases, an arrest is always made, which would erode a victim-centered response. However, CSEC can be placed under protective custody and this type of model could be used for youth identified under Safe Harbor or Becca legislation. This model provides law enforcement with a drop-off point for all youth with immediate access to service providers and more structural support for investigations. This model would also provide a location for LE/CSEC First Responder teams.

The DV response model may be an avenue to use semi-secure placements such as the FIRS program and is worthy of consideration and is perhaps an intermediate compromise.<sup>49</sup>

*Law enforcement found Celia during a drug raid. Her brother was in a gang and had her staying with two adult males, who were not her parents or other relatives. She was 13 and not in school. Law enforcement called a CSEC advocate who was able to meet Celia at the police department. She lived with her grandparents and the advocate used an interpreter when she met with them, because they did not speak English. The advocate was able to link Celia with a chemical dependency counselor and connect her with an elementary school counselor she had known. No one knew where her father was, and her mother was addicted. By 6th grade Celia was having violent outbursts in school. The advocate was able to get her back in school and got her school supplies. She went to school for a week, ran, and was found in a night club with an adult man. The advocate was able to reconnect with her, and several resources were brought in. At this time, she is still living with her grandparents; no one thought she would succeed in foster care. She does not go to school, but still shows up to see the advocate from time to time. The advocate points out that this young person needed in-patient treatment, “There is no one to raise her, and no place to keep her safe”.*

## 6. AUGMENT EXISTING SERVICES TO REACH MORE CSEC AND EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE THEM IN SERVICES

The recommendations for augmenting services were generated from interviews with service providers and discussed in the section Description of Services under the section Going Forward. Respondents who generously gave of their time to be interviewed for this project were able to easily identify service gaps and were actively developing solutions.

- **Housing** - Homelessness, and the uncertainty inherent in homelessness, erodes progress with CSEC. We must increase housing resources across the continuum, including shelter beds, supportive and transitional housing, and detox and mental health beds. Advocates have been engaged in creative and strategic thinking on this issue, and new partnerships to address it, as demonstrated by the ConnectUP program. One solution will not fit all CSEC; service providers have been doing extraordinary work developing a range of collaborations and solutions, so every CSEC will have an option that works for them. These efforts should be encouraged and supported.
- **Leverage All Resources** – As discussed earlier in the report, DCYF relies on Spruce Street for youth receiving DCYF services. Spruce Street is a critical service for a community-based response to CSEC. They see large numbers of youth, and have well-trained staff, but their role in the service continuum is limited. This leads to frustration from all sides, and there is no simple solution to youth running from placements. However, one option that seems to be underused is alternative placements; with DCYF caseworker agreement, CSEC dependent youth can be placed in shelters such as Home of Hope, which offer longer-term options. This does not solve the problem of lack of placements, but current resources should be leveraged on behalf of youth as much as possible.
- **Increase Mobile Advocacy** – Community-based flexible advocacy has been successfully used with survivors of domestic violence and is a strategy supported by the City of Seattle for all Gender-based Violence Survivor services. It is a strategy that should be adopted and supported in services for CSEC and CSE survivors of all ages. The basis of this strategy is that advocates meet CSEC where they are, or a location of their choice, which eliminates the transportation burden from a youth. This strategy is

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/prosecutor/youth-programs/firs.aspx>

currently in use with most CSEC advocates but could also be extended to more specialists including mental health and chemical dependency counselors, who can initiate safety and service planning and secure client engagement. There are trainings and toolkits available to prepare for implementation.<sup>50</sup>

- **Increase the Number of CSEC Advocates** - There is an on-going need for more CSEC advocates. As noted above, there are 13-15 CSE advocates with growing caseloads. As advocates know, just one or two youth can monopolize their time for given periods. Advocates are effective collaborators and bring multiple resources to the table through MDT's for clients. Agencies with CSEC programs and CSEC program funders should discuss how to increase the number by at least 10 in the next 1-2 years.
- **Increase Client Assistance Funds** – Funds for client assistance need to be easily accessed and increased. Meeting basic needs must be the priority, and it clearly increases stability and engagement with services. It is important for mobile advocates to be able to quickly access funds for client needs.
- **Centralized CSEC Intake Number** – As discussed in a previous section, there are multiple 24/7 helplines available for CSEC, including those operated by REST, Bridge Collaborative agencies and Safe Place. Several respondents noted that one central intake number for all agencies would increase access to services, coordination of services, and improve response time.

## 7. ESTABLISH A CSEC PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE

The purpose of a separately identified Prevention Collaborative would be to:

- **Identify youth at-risk for CSEC earlier,**
- **Coordinate prevention efforts for them sooner, and**
- **Specifically focus on prevention with youth of color.**

Seattle/King County has modeled successful collaborations to address commercial sexual exploitation at a systemic level and through service provision. Some of these efforts are referenced by Dr. Kirsten Foot in her book, *Collaborating Against Human Trafficking*.<sup>51</sup> More youth are being identified in schools and other settings because of public awareness and training activities. However, there is consensus that CSEC are interfacing with services far too late in the process of CSE. Findings from the sample studied for this project indicated there was up to a two-year gap between age at first CSE and age at intake for services. Several youth in the sample were involved with other systems prior to CSE services, but this only underscores the need for a very focused prevention effort. We are identifying youth after they have already experienced enormous trauma.

A recent report indicated that 48% of youth transitioning from residential programs, 28% of youth transitioning from DCYF programs, and 26% of youth leaving Juvenile Rehabilitation were homeless within 12 months of transition. In this assessment, 66% had faced homelessness. CSEC prevention efforts should target these populations.<sup>52</sup> As discussed above, a few schools have implemented CSEC/Anti-trafficking programs. In the sample described here, 41% of CSEC had been in school in the most recent term. Prevention focus must target this group earlier, as well.

<sup>50</sup> <https://wscadv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Meeting-Survivors-in-their-Home-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> Foot, K. (2015) *Collaborating Against Human Trafficking: Cross Sector Challenges and Practices*. Rowman.com.

<sup>52</sup> Youth Homelessness in Washington: Landscape Scan (2016) Report to A Way Home Washington and the Washington State Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection. Prepared by Courtney Nobel. Available online: [www.awayhomewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/YouthHomelessnessWA\\_LandscapeScan\\_August-2016.pdf](http://www.awayhomewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/YouthHomelessnessWA_LandscapeScan_August-2016.pdf)

Negative outcomes are reported to be disproportionate among people of color throughout systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice, and public education. The over-representation of youth of color in the limited CSEC sample presented here likely arises from the systemic racism manifest in the disparate outcomes found in other systems, and the historically destructive effects of that racism. This finding is another clear call to prevention.

We know the CSEC risk factors; how can we begin to translate this knowledge to more, and better, prevention programs? Prevention and early referral should be priorities for program design and funding going forward.

A nascent prevention collaborative in King County shows great promise and could be formalized into a stronger program. Seattle Against Slavery has implemented a Trafficking Prevention Curriculum for Schools, which aligns with violence prevention, health, and safety curricula already being taught and meets several Common Core State Standards. Seneca Programs provide prevention and outreach in five schools and conduct girls' empowerment groups. School counselors refer at-risk youth to Seneca staff. The Becca Programs (truancy, at-risk youth, and Children in Need of Supervision), which operate out of Juvenile Court, work with high-risk youth. Approximately 30 youth were referred to the Bridge Collaborative in 2018 from these programs. CSEC have often been involved in several systems, including DCYF, and have been in residential placements, including foster care. These are agencies that are working with CSEC at critical points in their lives, along with the YWCA Accelerator Program and ConnectUP. Statewide groups are also focused on prevention, such as Washington Trafficking Prevention.

A collaboration wholly focused on prevention could coordinate and accelerate prevention practices and generate new ideas and innovative strategies. Additional groups not mentioned here may wish to participate as well.

CSEC disproportionately affects youth of color, as has been pointed out repeatedly in this report and consistently over the years. A prevention collaborative would provide the opportunity to focus and include participation of individuals and agencies outside the CSEC networks who also work with vulnerable youth in other settings.

## **8. CENTRALIZE DATA COLLECTION AND DEVELOP A STANDARDIZED CSEC PROTOCOL**

Currently there is no comprehensive and centralized data collection for CSEC. Availability of current data is critical to understanding the incidence and prevalence of CSEC in a timely manner, to identify policy needs, and to improve service systems. Stakeholders agree about the need to establish a reliable method for tracking CSEC:

- A tracking protocol and data management system is necessary for understanding the service capacity needed to reach and serve CSEC,
- A data management system is necessary to evaluate service needs and effectiveness, and
- The national trend is to provide alternatives in the community for CSEC and to exempt minors from prosecution for prostitution offenses. This means not just an increase in services, but also an increase in the number of entities participating in data collection.

YouthCare manages Bridge Collaborative data from the 5 participating agencies and CCYJ is implementing data collection in several counties as part of Project Respect. A local system such as the Bridge Collaborative can provide critical information on a regular basis for Seattle/King County. Although extremely useful, Bridge data will likely be limited to participating agencies, and would require

additional funding support to expand. Additionally, there is a need for a statewide system that may capture more CSEC through an already established referral system. The complementary, and perhaps the primary CSEC data collection system is DCYF.

It is important to note that data collection in social service agencies is nearly a universal problem. Organizations are generally not funded for data collection and management, they usually do not have dedicated staff, and cannot maintain data systems. Organizations often keep data but may have trouble accessing it for analyses.

- **Recommendation:** Data collection and management could be required to be part of program budgets for granting purposes. A percentage of budgets could be dedicated to data collection and management, and adequately supported by funders.

A host system would be dependent upon data submission from a variety of sources. Regional or statewide data collection on CSEC would require a standardized CSEC intake protocol for submission to a central data base to combine comparable data and for meta-analyses.

- **Recommendation:** Develop and disseminate a standardized list of intake questions on CSEC and make this tool available to any agency who wants to use it. With a standardized protocol, data will be more accessible and searchable outside the agency. This protocol could be very similar to the CSEC Checklist being used by CCYJ, but would include added and crucial questions including age at first CSE, histories of sexual/physical abuse, cross-system involvement, involvement with the Juvenile Justice System, and current status relative to CSE involvement and service usage.

The most logical host for statewide data collection is DCYF due to mandatory reporting requirements. However, this may be unmanageable for them or at least take time to establish. An alternative for local data collection is to coordinate CCYJ and Bridge Models. Data collected via the Bridge Collaborative is a model for centralizing CSEC data, and it may be the only one like it in the country. The Bridge Collaborative services plus data collection accomplishes several goals: Reliable data are collected on CSEC that can be connected back to individual cases. These data are proxies for CSEC involvement in systems such as Juvenile Justice, which do not collect formal data on CSEC because they are no longer screened into detention or prosecuted for prostitution.

As system partnerships grow along with commitment to community based CSEC services, law enforcement and community groups will be less likely to revert to a juvenile justice response. However, policy and practice changes have brought forth problems that must be resolved to ensure the political backing needed for Washington State to move forward and enact non-criminalization legislation, beginning with CSE minors. The recommendations made in this report have been made with the ambiguities of the current legal landscape for CSEC in mind.

## FINAL THOUGHTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

In the concluding comments of the 2008 study, the author wrote:

*As individuals and as a community it is important to come together on how we “think” about prostitution. Whose problem is it when a 12-year-old is being prostituted? What systems are failing children to the extent that the only “treatment response” comes from the juvenile justice system?*

Private and public sectors of the local community have taken responsibility for commercially sexually exploited children and are addressing the root cause (sex buyers) and system weaknesses that increase the vulnerability of youth to exploitation. Partnerships extend across sectors, including law enforcement, juvenile justice, and child welfare. CSEC training has been available to the medical/health, education, business, and non-profit sectors. Collaborative services implement multi-disciplinary teams across systems to provide coordinated services. In the final writing stage of this report, there are new initiatives being launched to help youth, and end the systematic commercial exploitation of children and young adults. CSE as whole is also being addressed via the Ending Exploitation Collaborative, and the many agencies that participated in this project.

With this significant progress, what needs to be done next?

- The reformed policies and practices now in place for CSEC have not been solidified into law. Although there is protective anti-trafficking legislation in place, and related laws, such as increased penalties for buyers and the ability to have prostitution convictions vacated, a child can still be arrested, charged, and convicted for prostitution related crimes. Policies can be reversed more easily than laws. Therefore, continued legislative reform is imperative.
- The findings from this assessment confirm that CSEC is a significant problem in our community, which will continue to challenge systems and responders. The service planning estimate of 500-700 CSEC is an **annual** estimate of need. There are currently nearly 500 CSEC youth in services that can be counted, and there are indications this number is an undercount. Although more youth are being served, the CSEC pipeline is, unfortunately, full.
- A certainty that has come through this assessment is the urgent need for systematic and coordinated prevention efforts. Resources must be specifically dedicated to prevention. We must stop the flow of youth into commercial sexual exploitation. Many of the prerequisites for an effective prevention framework are already in place, stemming from the work of the last decade:
  - Influencing policy and legislation
  - Supporting coalitions and networks
  - Changing internal policies and practices of agencies and institutions
  - Community Education and Awareness
  - Increasing Individual Skills<sup>53</sup>

Now is the time to move forward with a unified commitment to focus on interrelated goals for the next phase of efforts to end CSEC. Law enforcement concerns need to be addressed immediately and it is time to act against the sources that feed the pipeline of vulnerable youth into CSEC. The comprehensive service and policy infrastructure that is currently in place can support these efforts and has opened the door for coordinated prevention efforts that can be as consequential for improving our ability to prevent CSEC over the next decade as coordinated services have been for intervening in the last.

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<sup>53</sup> Centers for Disease Control: Prevention Framework. Available Online:  
[https://www.cdc.gov/pictureofamerica/pdfs/picture\\_of\\_america\\_prevention.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/pictureofamerica/pdfs/picture_of_america_prevention.pdf)



## **Appendices**

APPENDIX A: PROGRESS SHEET

APPENDIX B: DEFINITION OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)

APPENDIX C: WASHINGTON STATE'S HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORT CARD GRADE

APPENDIX D: BUYERS

APPENDIX E: WA STATE: MANDATORY REPORTING

APPENDIX F: LIST OF AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED FOR THE STUDY

## APPENDIX A: PROGRESS SHEET

### *What Has Been Accomplished 2008 Recommendations*

#### Housing

- Convene planning group to develop safe and secure housing with recovery support services
- Establish housing exchange options between providers across the state
- Support up to 25 dedicated housing placements locally

#### Services and training:

- Support additional case management by community providers for youth released from juvenile facilities.
- Encourage implementation of Wraparound Case Management Model
- Augment all community services with annual community training to sustain provider knowledge and assessment skills across agencies where CSEC are contacted.

#### Community Collaborations and Community-based Support Services

- Support and expand current community CSEC collaboration efforts and maintain the inclusion of law enforcement in these efforts.
- Encourage coordination and collaboration between existing outreach programs
- Explore and support expansion of counseling services for trauma and post-traumatic stress for young women of color in their communities.
- Encourage development of survivor support groups utilizing survivors and peer workers within structured professional settings.

#### Evaluation

- Develop outcome evaluation and assessment of impact of community-based treatment model

#### Programs focused on Behavior/Attitudes of young men

- Address pimping and prostitution aspects of gang-related behavior **POLICY PROGRESS**
- KCPAO implements policy against charging/prosecution of CSEC
- CSEC no longer screened into Juv. Detention
- Proposed statewide legislation to increase age for prosecution of prostitution to 18 & Tx facilities
- HB 1382 – Protection from Prosecution for Prostitution If Seeking Emergency Assistance
- SB 5290 AN ACT Relating to eliminating the use of the valid court order exception to place youth in detention for noncriminal behavior

## 2019 PROGRESS

#### Housing

- ConnectUP, specialized CSEC foster care pilot program launched
- Housing remains a challenge, several causes

#### Services and Training

- Private/public funding of Bridge Collaborative & coalition focused on CSE and CSEC
- StolenYouth & others support CSEC community-based advocates
- Up to 20 CSEC Advocates from 13 agencies participate in KC CSEC Task Force
- Monthly CSEC trainings, screening toolkits provided through KC CSEC Task Force
- # of trainings agencies trained
- MDT's model implemented across Bridge Collaborative and KC

#### Community Collaborations

- Bridge Collaborative and Data Collection
- KC CSEC Task Force funded & chaired by Superior Court Judge
- Ending Exploitation Collaborative: Statewide implementation of Seattle/King County Equality Model & focus on demand
- Washington State CSEC Task Force
- Increased partnerships between Law Enforcement and Advocates
- Multiple trainings available on trauma informed care.
- Survivors participate at every level in most agencies and task forces
- Increased cross-agency outreach coordination
- OPS, survivor led organization, established

#### CSE/CSEC Employment

- YouthCare and BEST provide CSE/CSEC employment
- CSE agencies have survivor intern programs
- Survivor-led girls support groups

#### Evaluation

- A comprehensive evaluation is underway by University of Washington School of Medicine/Public Behavioral Health

#### Behavior/Attitudes of Young Men

- SAS Trafficking Prevention in Schools, Freedom Tech, Men's Accountability, Seneca school program
- LE focus on demand and arrest of buyers

(Note: This is a working document)

## **APPENDIX B: DEFINITION OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)**

[https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/csec\\_program.htm](https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/csec_program.htm)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC): This term refers to a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value (including monetary and non-monetary benefits) given or received by any person.

Examples of crimes and acts that constitute CSEC include:

- child sex trafficking/the prostitution of children;
- child sex tourism involving commercial sexual activity;
- the commercial production of child pornography; and
- the online transmission of live video of a child engaged in sexual activity in exchange for anything of value.

CSEC also includes situations where a child, whether or not at the direction of any other person, engages in sexual activity in exchange for anything of value, which includes non-monetary things such as food, shelter, drugs, or protection from any person.

Depending on the specific circumstances, CSEC may also occur in the context of internet-based marriage brokering, early marriage, and children performing in sexual venues.

Note: CSEC is not legally defined by federal statute or case law. However, several federal criminal provisions can be applied to conduct that falls within this definition of CSEC, including 18 U.S.C. §§ 1591, 2251, and 2423(c).

## **APPENDIX C: WASHINGTON STATE'S HUMAN TRAFFICKING REPORT CARD GRADE**

Document available at: [https://sharedhope.org/PICframe8/reportcards/PIC\\_RC\\_2018\\_WA.pdf](https://sharedhope.org/PICframe8/reportcards/PIC_RC_2018_WA.pdf)

## **APPENDIX D: BUYERS**

See the report on buyers referenced at: <https://www.demandabolition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demand-Buyer-Report-July-2019.pdf>

## **APPENDIX E: WA STATE: MANDATORY REPORTING**

The Washington State Legislature's definition of child abuse and neglect includes domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) victims. "Sexual exploitation," is defined in RCW 26.44.020 as:

(a) allowing, permitting, compelling, encouraging, aiding, or otherwise causing a child to engage in prostitution by any person.

As a result of the inclusion of sexual exploitation, which covers prostitution, pornography, and sexual performances, victims are considered abused or neglected for the purposes of Washington law and can receive a child protective response and CPS may intervene in the life of any child, under the age of 18 who is being sexually exploited by any adult— familial or non-familial.

## APPENDIX F: LIST OF AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED FOR THE STUDY

1. **Aurora Commons**
  - Elizabeth Dahl, Executive Director
2. **API-Chaya**
  - Hao Nguyen, MSW, Anti-human Trafficking Coordinator
3. **Social Strategies Now**
  - Leslie Briner, MSW
4. **CCYJ – Center for Children/Youth Justice, Project Respect**
  - Nicholas Oakley, Senior Project Manager
  - Laura Nagel, Project Respect Coordinator
5. **City of Seattle**
  - Lan Pham, Manager
  - Natalie Gonzales, Data, Performance, Evaluation Team
  - Natalie Dolci, Lead CSE Planner, City of Seattle, Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
  - Human Services Department
6. **Cowlitz Indian Tribe**
  - Judith Johnston, Advocate, Pathways to Healing
7. **DCYF**
  - Dae Shogren, MPA, Statewide Program Manager, LGBTQ+ | Disproportionality, Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC). Department of Children, Youth, & Families
  - Norene Roberts, MSW, Commercially Sexually Exploited Children's (CSEC) Liaison, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Regions 3 and 4, WA
  - Sarah Veele PhD, MPH, Research and Analysis Administrator, Department of Children, Youth, & Families, WA
8. **Escape to Peace**
  - Carol Loya, Bellevue Washington
9. **Ending Exploitation Collaborative**
  - Charlotte Lapp, Statewide Manager
10. **FBI**
  - SSA Steve Vienneau, FBI Seattle Squad C-4, Child Exploitation & Human Trafficking
11. **Friends of Youth**
  - Veronica Escalante, Case Management, Program Manager
  - Mary Schmitz, CSE Community Advocate
12. **Genesis Project**
  - Hannah File, SeaTac, Washington
13. **International Rescue Committee**
  - Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman, MPsy|, Senior Program Coordinator International Rescue Committee in Seattle, Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN)
14. **Kent Police Department**
  - Commander Andrew Grove
15. **Kent Youth & Family Services**
  - Kyra Doubek, CSEC Behavioral Health Specialist
16. **King County CSEC Task Force**
  - Kelly Mangiaracina, J.D.
  - CSEC Task Force Coordinator
  - Judge Regina Cahan
  - Judge Barbara Mack (Ret)
17. **King County Family Court Services, Becca Programs**
  - Connor Lenz, MSW, Program Manager, King County Superior Court, Family Court Services, Adoption, Dependency Mediation & BECCA Programs
  - Karen Chapman, At-Risk Youth Programs, King County Superior Court
18. **King County/Juvenile Court**
  - Dan Baxter, Supervisor, Probation Screening Unit, King County Superior Court
  - Diane Rayburn, Probation Counselor
  - Cynthia Dixon, Probation Counselor
  - Jimmy Hung, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, KCPAO/Juvenile Court, King County
19. **King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office**
  - Ben Gauen, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Special Assault Unit | King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
20. **Lambert House**
  - Ken Shulman, Executive Director
21. **New Horizons**
  - Rob Stewart, Executive Director

- 22. **Nexus Youth and Families**
  - Riley Park, Street Outreach Worker
  - Jeremiah Moseley, Community Advocate
- 23. **NW Network (Did not participate)**
  - Sexual Assault Advocacy Coordinator, Community Advocacy Program | The Northwest Network of Bi, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse
- 24. **Organization for Prostitution Survivors**
  - Noel Gomez, Director Advocacy Services
- 25. **PSKS (Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Street)**
  - Hannah Johnson, Case Manager
- 26. **REST**
  - Amanda Hightower, Executive Director
- 27. **Seattle Against Slavery**
  - Robert Beiser, Executive Director
- 28. **Seattle Indian Center, Project Beacon**
  - Josephine Kephart
- 29. **Seattle Police Department**
  - Olivia Herring, High Risk Victims Unit/CSE Advocate
- 30. **Seneca Washington**
  - Melanie G. Ferrer-Vaughn, MSW, Assistant Director of Community Based Programs, Washington
- 31. **Spruce Street/Pioneer Human Services**
  - Dominica Goode
  - Sydney Farrer
  - Colleen Sullivan
- 32. **University of Washington**
  - Michael Pullmann, PhD, Research Associate Professor, SOM, Psychiatry, Children's Division
- 33. **United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington**
  - Kate Crisham, Assistant United States Attorney
- 34. **Washington State Office of the Attorney General**
  - Kyle Wood, Assistant Attorney General, Washington State Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Justice Division
- 35. **YouthCare**
  - Charese Jones, Senior Program Manager-Engagement Services, Morgan Silverman, Director of Homeless Prevention
- Heather Post, Mental Health Therapist, Bridge Collaborative
- Melinda Giovengo, PhD, Executive Director
- Christopher Urban, KCSARC Case Manager, Orion Center
- 36. **YWCA King/Snohomish**
  - Doris O'Neal, Domestic Violence Program Director

