



*Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking &  
the Safe Harbor Law and No Wrong Door  
Response*

# Sex Trafficking: Crim Reality

*The state of Minnesota does not have the data on the prevalence of sex trafficking as we do for homelessness which is the reason for the request for one-time funds for a prevalence study, however, we know it is happening across our state...*

- *Data from the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey found that 5,000 Minnesota 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders have experienced sexual exploitation.*
- *The Link served 134 unduplicated youth in 2021 and is only one of many Safe Harbor grantees across the state.*
- *For adolescents, the most common age of entry into the commercial sex industry in the U.S. is 12–14 years old. (U.S. Department of Justice, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section; For Minneapolis, Martin et al., 2016)*

# Demographics of Victim Survivors



*Research shows that boys and young men are exploited at equal rates as girls and young women (Edwards, et al. 2006; Nicholson, et al. 2003)*



*Youth who identify as Black (46% v. 6% of general youth population), Multi-Racial (31%) or Native American (8% v. 1%) are over represented within Minneapolis (Folger, et al, 2013)*



*33% of sexually exploited youth identified themselves as LGBTQ+ v. 3-5% of general youth population (Folger, et al, 2013)*

# *How does Sex Trafficking Happen?*

- *Parents/care givers/family members selling or trading their children*
- *Youth who are experiencing homelessness being trafficked for a place to live or “rent”*
- *Seduction and coercion, grooming*
- *False advertising for “modeling,” “acting,” or “dancing” opportunities*
- *Peer recruitment*
- *Internet recruitment*

## *Safe Harbor: Provides Safety, Healing and Empowerment*

- *It was written by front line workers in the anti-trafficking field and youth with lived experience along with Marilyn Carlson-Nelson, Advocates for Human Rights, the Women's Foundation, was passed in 2011 and went into effect in August of 2014*
- *Decriminalizes "prostitution" offenses for youth under 18*
- *Recognizes youth who have been sexually exploited or trafficked as victim and survivors of a crime*
- *Amends the Child Protection Code to include Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking*
- *No Wrong Door Response created through a multi-disciplinary stakeholder process through Bush Fellowship and the State Dept. of MDJ/DJS/DPS Safe Harbor Committee both included survivor input and leadership*

**Continuum of  
Services funded  
through Safe  
Harbor – No  
Wrong Door  
Response**

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*Safe Harbor Regional Navigators*

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*Street Outreach*

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*Services: Therapy, Legal, CD Counseling and  
More*

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*Emergency Shelters*

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*Host Homes*

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*Transitional Housing*

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*Permanent Supportive Housing*

# Safe Harbor Grantee Examples:

- *The Ain Dah Yung Center in St. Paul offers culturally specific case management.*
- *Lutheran Social Services offers outreach and a specialized foster care program called “Saving Grace” in Brainerd.*
- *180 Degrees is the East Metro Regional Navigator and has a specialized emergency shelter in St. Paul for female victim survivors – Brittney’s Place.*
- *The Link is the West Metro Regional Navigator and also has specialized street outreach, an emergency shelter, housing program and a continuum of services including but not limited too: mental health therapy, substance abuse counseling and aftercare all of which are open to youth of any gender identity.*

# Safe Harbor Grantees Collaboration



# *Youth Services Network Ask*

- *Make a commitment for our state to reduce and end sexual exploitation*
- *Increasing Safe Harbor is how to build out our state-wide capacity and are asking for a \$20 million increase*
- *\$300,000 one time Funds for prevalence study on youth and adult sexual exploitation*

# Investing in the Safe Harbor Law Works!

- *According to Wilder Research Center's Safe Harbor Evaluation – 1, 279 youth were served between 2017 and 2019.*
- *97% reported positive changes after receiving Safe Harbor services, 100% felt more prepared to reach their educational goals and 89% felt more prepared to support themselves in a financially safe way.*
- *According to the University of Minnesota-URCC's 2012 Cost Benefit Study, there is a 34:1 return on investment to the public sector for early intervention with adolescent girls (boys were not included in this study).*

# *A Few Examples of Safe Harbor's Impact*

- *15 year old girl from the inner city who had been trafficked across multiple states was court order to The Link's Passageways Emergency Shelter, the court thought she would run away, but she ended up telling the court she wanted to stay longer because she felt safe, supported and getting help with her education and healthcare needs. Her trafficker was prosecuted.*
- *16 year old boy from a west metro suburb was "befriended" and groomed online by a trafficker from Texas, a family friend noticed and referred him to The Link, he and his father were able to both receive support and are doing well, he was able to graduate from high school and his trafficker also was prosecuted.*

*What the Safe Harbor Impact Looks Like...Safety, Support and Empowerment...*

