Recommendation #1

Identify Child Trafficking as Child Abuse

Include Clear Mandates of Child Welfare’s responsibility to provide services for victims of child sex trafficking.

Educate the public on identification of psychological maltreatment and when to report this type of child abuse.

**Child Trafficking is Child Abuse**

The research and analysis subcommittee recommends that child welfare be the primary agency involved in the lives of these youth, abused through commercial sexual exploitation. A clear message needs to be sent that Ohio understands the difference between a criminal and a victim. Child welfare is designed to provide services to abused youth and trafficking youth should fall under this definition.

Currently, Ohio’s child welfare mandate does not clearly define commercial sexual exploitation of a minor as child abuse. As a result, these high-risk youth do not receive comprehensive child welfare services specifically to address abuses related to trafficking.

**Example**

See Florida’s Department of Children and Families Statute 39.01 under “Harm” for a good example of child welfare mandates. Also see Illinois.

**Overall Abuse**

44% reported being child victims of abuse

**Specific Abuse**

40% were victims of sex abuse
37% were victims of psychological maltreatment
24% were victims of physical abuse
41% were victims of neglect, not knowing what they would eat or where they would sleep on a daily basis.
Establish a Better Response to Ohio Youth who Run Away

Runaway youth are not throw away youth. Youth who runaway are at great risk for child sex trafficking, as 63% of those that were trafficked in our sample were first runaways. Runaway behavior may be a sign of family distress, which increases the vulnerability of youth to be trafficked. Runaway behavior may place youth in the proximity of sellers, buyers, and traffickers at a time when youth are in need of a place to stay, food, or other basic needs. Further, youth who initially runaway of their own free will may become trafficking victims and lose the freedom to return home. Finally, for some victims the term “runaway” is a misnomer from the beginning of their absence, as they have been forced or coerced to leave.

For the most part, communities in Ohio and around the United States do not offer much in response to runaways. In large part police engage in passive enforcement where they do not actively or aggressively search for runaway youth. Social workers will engage in street outreach in search of homeless or runaway youth, but these efforts have been sporadic around the state, as they have been dependent upon inconsistent funding. In large part Ohio, like many other states “wait” for runaways to “run back” into their families or into our communities where they may or may not be provided services. Youth who runaway may also not be adequately informed about the options for shelter and, in some communities, safe spaces for youth are lacking. Services such as shelters, safe spaces, and family focused interventions are sporadic throughout the state, with segments of youth unaware of existing services.

Runaway Statistics

- 24% ran away once, a year or more before being trafficked. Statistically significant.
- 28% ran away more than once, a year or more before being trafficked. Statistically significant.

An average of 11,000+ youth runaway in Ohio every year
Only 38 children are currently listed on the NCMEC website

Recommendation

A program operated through the Ohio Attorney General’s office that communicates with the Polaris Project, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and law enforcement departments across Ohio should be in place. Those youth who are labeled a “runaway” should be entered into the database as usual. However, those that have been gone from home for at least 7 days should be moved into a high risk category called “CARD”, which stands for Child At-Risk Database. CARD youth should receive three services:

1. Pictures (when possible) and descriptions of the runaway youth placed on the Ohio Missing Children’s Clearinghouse website;
2. Printable posters sent to NCMEC, Polaris Project, and identified coalitions around the state; and
3. Access to the database should be provided to police departments throughout Ohio and to human trafficking coalitions.
Recommendation #3

Engage Schools in the Fight Against Child Sex Trafficking

Educate Teachers, Principals, School Nurses, Counselors, and Students

The education of teachers, principals, school nurses, and counselors is critical to the identification of victims and high risk youth. From our sample of 115 victims who entered the sex trade before the age of 18, none reported receiving assistance from a teacher. However, knowledgeable teachers are likely to recognize high risk factors and intervene, before a troubled child drops out of school.

*Mandated* education for youth in how to avoid victimization and how not to become a victimizer is needed to move toward prevention rather than reactive responses. Similar mandated education has been implemented around the state for dating violence. Sex trafficking poses as real of a danger as dating violence and youth should be equipped to understand the dangers of trafficking. In addition, males need to be sensitized at a young age on respect and how to avoid becoming the victimizer or a victim.

Train the trainer

Establish train the trainers for teachers, administrators and other school staff so that they can both recognize trafficking and high risk youth and also be able to integrate their knowledge base into the curriculum when needed. Although there has been progress within pockets of school districts, the majority of school districts in Ohio remain uneducated on the issue.
Establish Protocols that Identify Victims and Protocols that Divert High Risk Youth

Identifying Trafficked Youth is reactive. Identifying both trafficked youth and high risk youth is proactive.

Immediate Assessment for First Responders to identify Victims and High Risk Youth

- R  Runaway
- E  Educational Problems
- S  Sexual Assault
- C  Court Appearances
- U  Using drugs and/or alcohol.
- E  Emotional Abuse
- C  Childhood abuse and/or neglect
- H  Homelessness
- I  Influential Others.
- L  Loving Someone Much Older
- D  Difficulty Making Friends

The research and analysis subcommittee recommends that the State of Ohio develop protocols to have first responders educated to identify, not only victims of child sex trafficking, but learn to identify the early indicators of high risk youth. Identifying already trafficked victims is important, but training first responders to identify already trafficked victims is only a part of our responsibility. First responders in the field of social services, law enforcement, health care, and more should also be trained to identify those early indicators for those who are at high risk. Prevention through diversion should be a priority. Since there have been no interventions that have boasted effectiveness in treating victims, diversion before victimization is the best response. In identifying high risk youth and providing them with comprehensive assessments and interventions we will increase the probability of preventing victimization.
### Immediate Intervention for First Responders to assist Victims

| D | Detect |
| I | Intervene |
| V | Value |
| E | Educate |
| R | Report |
| T | Trafficking hotline 888-3737-888 |

### First Responders to assist High Risk Youth

A referral process is needed for First Responders

Providers responding to the referral should at minimum:

A | Provide an **Assessment** |
B | Get “**Buy in**” from the Youth |
C | Provide intensive **Case Management** |
D | Provide **Diversion** programming that involves trauma treatment and trauma informed care. |
Reduce the Stigma related to Youth Victims

Within Organizations

We recommend the Governor’s Task Force take the lead in putting policies into place that help reduce the stigma of being a victim of child sex trafficking. This includes, but is not limited to, language used within agencies across Ohio. Victims should be referred to as “domestic minor sex trafficking victims” or “child sex trafficking victims” rather than “juvenile prostitutes” or “youth prostitutes”. Staff should have an understanding of the experiences of victims and utilize a victim centered approach when working with these youth.

Set the Tone. Establish the Framework for Engaging Victims

Practice Trauma Informed Care and Provide Trauma Informed Training to all staff. Domestic minor victims of sex trafficking have experienced extreme trauma and staff need training on how to provide the best services to victims. Without a proper approach victims may refuse to fully cooperate and interventions will suffer.

Across Organizations

Take the lead in how to work across organizations for the benefit of victims. All agencies should approach victims with the same knowledge and use the same language, skills and treatment. Consistency in treatment benefits victims.
**Recommendation #6**

Focus on Arresting and Convicting Buyers. Create a clear and Transparent Database of Arrests and Convictions Related to Prostitution and Sex Trafficking.

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<th>Identify the role that customer’s play in the commercial sex industry.</th>
<th>Local and state government can no longer ignore the role that demand plays in the commercial sex industry and sex trafficking. Buyers, who are fueling the profit for traffickers, need to be arrested and convicted as they play a central role in sex trafficking.</th>
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| Buyers of those involved in prostitution | The misdemeanor crime of prostitution provides a gateway and opportunity for the more serious crime of sex trafficking. By the very nature of prostitution, buyers are more prevalent than sellers. Yet in some communities in Ohio, sellers are arrested more than 90% of the time. When buyers are arrested, it is common practice for the buyer to plead down to disorderly conduct where they escape having the conviction on their record and receive a lesser penalty. State protocols should enforce standard mandatory charges for those who purchase sex. To arrest the problem, we need to arrest both buyers and sellers.  
A sense of fairness is needed. First time buyers are offered “john school” in some cities in Ohio. This option should be available for sellers as well.  
We recommend the Ohio Attorney General’s Office monitor the number of buyers arrested in comparison to the number of sellers. A transparent process via an annual report identifying the arrest rates for sellers and buyers in each community in Ohio should be provided and accessible to the general public. Those communities that continue to provide a severely skewed approach to decreasing prostitution by disproportionately arresting sellers will be exposed. Human trafficking coalitions may intervene and demand changes from their local police departments. |
| Buyers of Sex Trafficking Victims | Buyers of victims are committing a felony in Ohio. We recommend the Ohio Attorney General’s Office monitor all human trafficking arrests and convictions and develop an annual report that is accessible to the general public. Making demand a central component of responding to sex trafficking is critical. Using customers as witnesses against traffickers during prosecutions may allow the customer to receive immunity or a reduced sentence in exchange for their testimony. This practice sends the wrong message and should be frowned upon in the State of Ohio. |
Invest in responding to Adult Sex Trafficking.

Recognize the continued trauma of child victims that become adults involved in prostitution.

Findings from this study on adults involved in sex trafficking as victims of manipulation or force, provides evidence that these victims are not choosing to be involved.

83% of child sex trafficking victims that continued involvement in prostitution into their adult years (without a trafficker) suffered more mental health issues, more violence, more substance abuse, and were more likely to live in poverty. They are now being prostituted by drugs, poverty, and earlier trauma. In our society the common practice is to arrest these women and punish them, rather than provide them with services to recover. This approach denies the victimization that these women experienced and creates a revolving door within our criminal justice system. Successful programs have been incorporated in Ohio including the Catch Court in Columbus.

It was reported in 2007 that, if not rescued, 77% of trafficked children will go on to participate in adult street based prostitution. These are the children Ohio has missed. Offering recovery services is the minimum that Ohio could do to restore these previous victims.

A 2007 study at the University of Toledo compared 1036 women offenders in Lucas County with and without experience in prostitution. They found that women with experience in prostitution were more likely to suffer:

More health problems
- Suffered more hypertension 24.7% vs. 10.9% p=.001
- Suffered more Asthma (37% vs. 24.3%) p=.016
- Heart Problems (19.5% vs. 6.8%) p=.001
- Cancer (11.8% vs. 5.7%) p=.045
- HIV (2.7% vs. 0%) p=.001
- STI's (37.2% vs. 13.1%) p=.001

More mental health problems
- Post traumatic stress (17.3% vs 8.7%)
- Depression (61.5% vs 45.3%)

More violence
- Currently involved in domestic violence (23.9% vs 17.2%)
- History of domestic violence (51.3% vs 29.6%)
- Raped (70.2% vs 38.4)

More financial and environmental stress
- Earned enough to support self (14.1% vs 33.3)
- Live in area with a lot of crime (70.2% vs 40%) & drugs (75% vs 46%)
- Diagnosed Bi-polar disorder (47% vs 17.4)
- Diagnosed Schizophrenia (16.3% vs 5.2)