



**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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September 4, 2018

To: Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Chair  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Janice Hahn  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Bobby D. Cagle  
Director

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMERCIALY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN (CSEC) INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP TEAM (ILT) REPORT BACK**

On November 3, 2015, a motion by Supervisor Ridley Thomas, seconded by former Supervisor Knabe, instructed the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Integrated Leadership Team (ILT), to report back to the Board regarding updates to the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol (FRP) and the countywide expansion of the protocol.

Supervisor Ridley Thomas' office requested that the ILT provide updates on the following:

- FRP and expansion to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD);
- Advocacy Services for CSEC and the status of the Advocacy Services RFP(Request for Proposal);
- Holding exploiters and buyers accountable: Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) Demand Abolition efforts and update;
- Healthier Communities, Stronger Families, Thriving Children (HST), Senate Bill (SB) 855, and SB 794 funds balance and spending plan;
- CSEC Housing Research and parent/youth housing surveys;
- County CSEC Awareness online module compliance update;
- Parent Empowerment Program update.

Please find below updates to all requested activities outlined above.

As of April 2018, the FRP Operational Agreement has been formally updated, approved and signed by all parties to the Agreement – Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD), Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Long Beach Police Department (LBPD), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Probation Department (Probation), and the Department of Health Services (DHS). The First Responder Protocol serves to guide law enforcement, County agencies, and community-based partners on appropriate steps to take within the first 72 hours of interfacing with an identified or suspected CSEC victim, using a victim-centered, multi-agency response model. The Operational Agreement and protocol reflect Los Angeles County's commitment to treating commercially sexually exploited children who have been exposed to severe violence, threats, and trauma, as victims of child abuse and human trafficking, rather than criminalizing them as delinquents.

The First Responder Protocol was initially implemented in August 2014, in a pilot area with LBPD and LASD Compton and Century Stations; and was expanded in 2015 to include LAPD's 77th and Southeast Stations, and all LASD patrol stations. The Protocol was further expanded as of April 1, 2018, to LAPD's South Bureau (Harbor and Southwest stations) and Valley Bureau (Devonshire, Foothill, Mission, North Hollywood, Topanga, Van Nuys, and West Valley stations). On July 31, 2018, the FRP expanded to the LAPD West (Hollywood, Olympic, Pacific, West L.A., and Wilshire stations) and Central Bureaus (Central, Hollenbeck, Newton, Northeast, and Rampart stations). The full expansion to all LAPD Divisions was completed as of July 31, 2018. The ILT will now begin to work on a plan to engage and expand the FRP to the 45 independent police departments.

#### RESCUE & RECOVERY:

Since the last ILT report to the Board on March 13, 2018, there have been an additional 70 FRP recoveries as of July 26, 2018. Since the initial implementation of the FRP in August 2014, there have been a total of 478 recoveries of commercially sexually exploited youth in the FRP areas. The following chart provides a breakdown of number of recoveries by fiscal year:

Fiscal Year	Number of Recoveries
FY 14-15	35
FY 15-16	104
FY 16-17	181
FY 17-18	150
FY 18-19 as of July 26, 2018	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>478</b>

*Data Source: First Responder's Protocol Tracking Log, July 26, 2018*

The parties to the FRP Agreement have convened on a monthly basis to monitor implementation, discuss challenges and successes, and make necessary changes to the protocol to ensure it continues to meet the overarching goals.

One of the challenges that the ILT has grappled with is determining jurisdictional responsibilities over housing youth that are from out of state or out of county and do not have a delinquency warrant. In order to ensure the safe return of children to their county or state of origin, runaway children were being temporarily held in Juvenile Hall pending arrangements for their return to their county or state. As of November 2017, a decision was made by the Probation Department to only house out of county and out of state youth who had an active delinquency warrant; therefore, all out of state youth without delinquency warrants are now being housed in non-locked DCFS facilities instead of Juvenile Hall.

Interstate Commission for Juveniles (ICJ) rules allow out of state children who are determined to be a danger to themselves or others, to be detained in a secure facility until arrangements can be made for their return to their state. When the youth is not determined to be a danger to themselves or others, ICJ rules allow for the child to be held at a location deemed appropriate by the host state until the youth is returned to their home state. DCFS analyzed FY 17-18 data for out of state youth and found that 20 out of state CSEC were recovered between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018. Of those, 12 were temporarily held in Juvenile Hall and safely returned to their state, 7 were placed through DCFS of which 57% (4 of the 7) ran away and were missing within 72 hours. Please note, one other youth was hospitalized due to injuries and transported back to her state by her parents upon discharge from the hospital. Based on this data, youth are more likely to safely return to their home state when temporarily housed in a secure setting such as Juvenile Hall.

#### MEDICAL SERVICES EXPANSION:

During the ILT report to the Board on June 20, 2017, Supervisor Solis instructed the CSEC ILT to expedite a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with LAC+USC Medical Center to offer CSEC services, specifically in the San Gabriel Valley area. The MOU between LAC+USC Medical Center and East San Gabriel Valley (ESGV) Hub Clinic was signed on November 30, 2017. The official implementation of this agreement is in effect. However, currently the DHS continues to work on finalizing all the requirements needed for ESGV to receive medications, some of which will be for the treatment of CSEC. This process takes some time, as it requires obtaining clinic and pharmacy permits. The Pharmacy Board recently requested additional information regarding ESGV. DHS is working with LAC+USC Medical Center Regulatory Compliance in order to obtain the additional information that the Pharmacy Board is requesting.

In anticipation of the LAPD expansion, DHS and DCFS connected with the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) Adolescent Clinic and developed a referral process so that CSEC youth have access to receiving the appropriate CSEC medical services from their facility. This will be particularly helpful when we expand to the LAPD-Hollywood Division, as Hollywood is an area known to have high numbers of commercially sexually exploited (CSE) youth and is in close proximity to CHLA, which has agreed to link youth who identify as LGBTQ to their specialized LGBTQ services and supports.

## II. STATUS OF THE ADVOCACY SERVICES CONTRACTS

The number of referrals for advocacy services for CSEC youth continue to increase as more CSEC are identified. One major reason for the increased number of youth being identified is the County's ongoing efforts to raise awareness through training of County employees, including social workers, probation officers, mental health, and public health providers, etc. To date, there have been a total of 622 referrals made from February 2016, through July 2018 (Data Source: Advocacy Services Referral Log); 132 referrals were made since the last ILT Report in March 2018. At this time, Saving Innocence continues to be the only advocacy agency providing specialized advocacy services to identified CSEC through our County contracts. Saving Innocence currently has eight case managers and two Survivor Advocates and has the capacity to serve up to 160 youth. The current Advocacy services caseload is 134.

DCFS is currently working on a Request for Proposals (RFP) solicitation to increase the capacity and to expand the service population. The eligible population will be expanded to include not only CSEC youth, but also youth at risk of becoming CSEC, Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs) up to 21 years of age, as well as for supportive services for parents of commercially sexually CSE youth. These additional efforts targeted to non-offending parents, will enhance a parent's ability to feel equipped and empowered to support their children through the healing and recovery process. The contract will include specific service goals and outcome measures linked to the provision of CSEC advocacy services as a requirement for all contracted providers. It is expected that the newly expanded advocacy services will take effect in September 2019. Below is the timeline for the RFP process:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>
Release Solicitation Document	By September 2018
Evaluation of Proposals (60 days to submit proposals)	By February 2019
Appeals/Protest (90 days)	By May 2019
Awarding of Contracts	By September 2019

## III. THE COUNTY'S APPROACH TO HOLDING EXPLOITERS/BUYERS ACCOUNTABLE

The Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force (LARHTTF), in its third year, remains committed with our Task Force (TF) partners to end trafficking in Los Angeles. The combination of law enforcement resources, coupled with staff from DCFS, Probation, and specialized service providers, all co-located at the LASD Sherman Block Headquarters, remains an effective collaboration toward this shared goal. The partnership is committed to meeting the objectives of rescuing trafficking victims, identifying and arresting traffickers and reducing the demand side of trafficking by increasing the risk to those who believe it is acceptable to purchase children for sex.

LA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING BUREAU:

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's commitment to holding buyers of commercial sex accountable was strengthened through the partnership with Demand Abolition since January 2018. The Task Force continues its mission while incorporating strategies and techniques developed from its partnership with Demand Abolition. While only a component of the overall effort to eliminate Human Trafficking, demand reduction efforts have proven effective in amplifying the risk to potential buyers, identifying exploiters during undercover operations, and identifying victims while conducting enforcement efforts on the main tracks throughout the County.

Education/prevention efforts have been incorporated through cyber patrols in which decoys make contact with potential sex buyers on the internet, establish a sex for money agreement, and then "flip the script" and identify themselves as law enforcement. During the subsequent conversation, the buyer is educated about the potential consequences of his criminality as well as the harm inflicted on the trafficking victim he chose to exploit. From April 2018 to July 2018, 194 customers were contacted using this disruption technique.

Further, 49 males were arrested for soliciting sex, 9 of which were seeking sex with a minor. These arrests were conducted during covert street and internet-based interaction with buyers. All of these suspects were arrested and booked into county jail, as we no longer cite and release offenders in the field.

Our BOT (robot) system communicated with 38 individuals who attempted to solicit sex via the internet and were ultimately sent a disruption message indicating that their phone number and information had been captured by law enforcement. The BOT system has not been utilized as frequently, since the closure of "Backpage" and similar websites, which is where we joined the sex buyer arena to place the ads for the BOT. We anticipate further use of the system as new websites establish themselves. Further, 2,830 direct message ads were sent to phone numbers associated with sex buyers and more than 250,000 ad messages were sent to social media users whose profiles are similar to that of typical sex buyers.

Through our relationship with other CEASE cities, including ***Seattle Against Slavery***, we continue to maintain our anti-trafficking website [la.stopbuying.me](http://la.stopbuying.me).

The LASD Human Trafficking Bureau's decoy program provides newly assigned deputies to the task force investigators for deployment in an undercover capacity to further human trafficking investigation case work. We have realized a tremendous benefit from this resource, as exploiters have become more cautious and are often times demanding to meet face to face with their victim, before committing the criminal pandering act. We anticipate this program to continue indefinitely.

#### **IV. HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES, STRONGER FAMILIES, THRIVING CHILDREN (HST), SB 855 AND SB 794 BUDGET BALANCE AND SPENDING PLAN**



In June 2014, California Senate Bill (SB) 855 was signed by the Governor. SB 855 amended Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 300 to clarify under existing law, CSEC whose parents or guardians failed or were unable to protect them may fall within the description of WIC Section 300(b) and be adjudged as dependents of the juvenile court. The Legislature also amended WIC (commencing with section 16524.6) to establish a state-funded county opt-in CSEC Program to be administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

On September 29, 2014, the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (H.R. 4980) was signed into law, which required states to develop and implement policies and procedures related to CSEC, runaway, or missing children and youth. In October 2015, the California legislature codified the requirements of the Federal Law in SB 794, through the additions of WIC sections 16501.35 and 16501.45. These requirements apply to all counties in California. In January 2016, the State charged child welfare and probation agencies with the implementation of these mandates through an All-County Letter (ACL).

DCFS and Probation are responsible for ensuring that all staff receive relevant training in identifying, properly documenting, and determining appropriate services for youth who are or have the potential of becoming victims of CSE. DCFS and Probation are also responsible for enhancing efforts to expeditiously locate any youth or non-minor dependent (NMD) who is missing or runs away from care or home, and upon locating the youth, conducting a debrief to gather information regarding their experiences while absent from care or home. The information gathered through this debrief should be used to help inform subsequent placements. DCFS and Probation, with the help of the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL), have developed policies and procedures regarding these mandates. DCFS began implementation in the month of February 2018, and Probation is currently working on an implementation plan to include training which they anticipate will be in effect by the next ILT quarterly report. An update by Probation will be provided in the next report.

On January 31, 2018, CDSS released a County Fiscal Letter (CFL) informing the County of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18 State Commercially Sexually Exploited Program General Fund final allocation. DCFS was allocated \$3,031,316 in SB 855 and SB 794 funds and Probation was allocated \$237,365 in SB 794 funds.

On June 12, 2018, CDSS released CFL 17/18-69, confirming that DCFS will receive rollover funds from the unspent FY 16-17 allocation in the amount of \$2,875,507, resulting in a final allocation of \$5,906,823 for FY 17-18. Probation received rollover funds from their unspent FY 16-17 allocation in the amount of \$49,039, resulting in a final allocation of \$286,404 for FY 17-18. Refer to **Attachment A** for the SB 855 and SB 794 Budget/Spending Plan.

Los Angeles County is planning to use SB 855 and SB 794 funding to support the strategic priorities that have been developed to identify, assess, locate, and provide treatment

services to address the needs of commercially exploited children and their families in order to achieve the overarching goals of child safety, permanency, and well-being.

**SB 855 FUNDED ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2018-2019:**

**1) Crisis intervention and CSEC Advocacy services (\$315,000):**

Saving Innocence provides 24-hour crisis intervention to CSE youth by working in close collaboration with DCFS, Probation, LBPD, LAPD, and LASD. Saving Innocence is on call 24-hours a day so that when a CSEC youth is identified, the youth can receive crisis intervention, advocacy, and support services at any time. The CSEC Advocates travel to the location of the intervention, conduct a crisis assessment, and begin case management and advocacy for the child immediately. Additionally, in collaboration with DCFS and Probation, the advocacy services agency conducts a Needs Assessment, and develops a Safety and Advocacy Plan that includes the youth's goals, interventions to help address the youth's needs and goals, and a work plan that outlines which parties (i.e. youth, Advocate, CSW, Probation Officer, parent, caregiver) will be implementing the action steps needed to achieve positive outcomes.

The advocacy services agency also participates in Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Meetings with other key members of the youth's team in order to team around ongoing assessment, case planning, and service delivery to achieve the case plan goals. Auxiliary funds are also provided to CSE youth through the Advocacy agency to support the achievement of the case plan goals. Auxiliary funds can be used for a wide array of services and supports, such as clothing, transportation, tattoo removal, and various therapeutic and recreational interventions. L.A. County will have a greater capacity to serve additional youth by September 2019, when the new advocacy services contracts are implemented. The menu of advocacy services will be expanded to include services for youth at risk of CSE, non-minor dependent youth, and parents.

**2) CSEC Individualized Incidental Restoration Funds (IIRF) (\$125,000):**

Individualized Incidental Restoration Funds are accessible to CSE children and youth in order to: stabilize crisis and meet acute needs of CSEC victims who come to the attention of DCFS or Probation; decrease re-entry by maximizing normalizing opportunities (i.e. removing physical signs of exploitation such as tattoos that provide stigma and interfere with employment opportunity; repairing teeth that may have been damaged through inflicted injury; or providing appropriate clothing and self-care products); provide educational support through tutoring, skill building, and experiential activities; increase employability by providing specialized vocational training opportunities (e.g., cosmetology school or computer tech school); enhance opportunities for success by providing daycare so victims can meaningfully participate in school, employment, or services; and support parenting youth by providing support to meet the basic needs of their children.

3) Dedication to Restoration, Empowerment, Advocacy and Mentoring (DREAM) Court (\$295,000):

In partnership with the Los Angeles Superior Court, County Counsel, and Children's Law Center (CLC), DCFS initiated a dedicated courtroom to serve CSEC in the dependency court system. The establishment of the dedicated courtroom, named the Dedication to Restoration through Empowerment, Advocacy, and Mentoring Court, was based on lessons learned from the STAR Court in the delinquency system. By having a dedicated Judge/Hearing Officer and CSEC trained and informed County Counsel, CLC attorneys, and DCFS staff, the DREAM Court has allowed for increased expertise, consistency in practice, and better case planning for the CSEC population. The CSEC cases heard in the DREAM Court have MDT meetings and more frequent court hearings.

On July 10, 2018, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors approved delegated authority to the Director of DCFS to provide an additional year of funding to CLC, (with authorization to extend the funding agreement two additional years). This funding is to be utilized to assist CLC in covering the costs associated with serving CSEC, specifically to fund the CLC case manager positions, training, and CSEC support and relationship development.

4) CSEC Empowerment Youth Club (\$30,000):

DCFS is developing and implementing a youth club for CSEC youth, at-risk for CSE youth, and dually supervised youth to provide monthly empowerment activities and mentoring activities with the youth. Monthly activities with the youth will be hosted in collaboration with CSEC serving community-based organizations. The activities will be fun, with a purpose, and will expose youth to a variety of life experiences that will help build confidence and resilience. Eventually, the group will be youth led, with the support of caring adults and allies.

5) Los Angeles Sheriff's Locate Team (\$100,000):

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Human Trafficking Bureau (HTB) assists DCFS and Probation with the location of missing CSEC youth. SB 794 funds are used by DCFS to fund overtime for LASD HTB officers to locate missing CSEC youth.

6) LAPD Locate Team (\$100,000):

DCFS plans to utilize SB 794 funds to fund overtime for LAPD officers to assist with the location and recovery of missing CSEC youth.

7) DPO II STAR Court Liaison (\$120,000):

Funds the specialized CSEC staff in STAR Court (dedicated CSEC Delinquency Court) to support youth and Probation staff who work with the youth.



8) Time study costs (\$600,000):

Funds to pay for CSEC specialized work/case management duties by the two DREAM Court (specialized CSEC Dependency Court) Liaisons as well as CSEC data tracking activities by two Child Protection Hotline social workers.

HST FUNDS:

The current balance for HST funds is \$5,334,500. The following expenditures are planned for FY 18-19:

- 1) Advocacy Contract to include victim advocacy services, Individualized Incidental Restoration Funds, CSEC survivor advocacy (\$500,000);
- 2) Technical Assistance from National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) (\$295,702 for FY 18-19 and \$161,298 for FY 19-20; \$457,000 in total). NCYL Provides consultation and technical assistance on developing CSEC policy, procedures and interagency protocols.
- 3) Prevention/intervention Tool Kit, including translation of the CSEC prevention and intervention curriculums into Spanish (\$50,000);
- 4) CSEC Training (\$268,521 for FY 18-19 and \$146,479 for FY 19-20; \$440,000 in total);

Training will be provided to increase awareness of how to identify a child that may be at risk of becoming a victim, understanding the risks and vulnerabilities linked to CSEC, exploiter tactics, youth engagement strategies, stages of change model and how to support a youth in the various stages of change, continuum of abuse, impact of trauma, intervention strategies, vicarious trauma, post traumatic growth development, and Social Media training for County staff, placement providers, and the community in order to raise awareness of the dangers of social media, which is often used as a platform by traffickers to manipulate children and youth into exploitation.

- 5) Safe Place (Safe Youth Zone) Communications Campaign (\$50,000).

Refer to **Attachment B** for the HST Budget/Spending Plan. The ILT will be re-evaluating the HST budget items and will be updating the spending plan based on the current needs of CSEC children and families as well as the strategic priorities geared towards impacting improved outcomes for the CSEC population. The updated HST spending plan will be provided in the November ILT Report.

## V. RESEARCH REPORT ON CSEC HOUSING

In 2016, the Board of Supervisors requested further research be done on the impact and effectiveness of different types of services and placements on the safety,

well-being, and stability of CSE children and youth. The County partnered with CalState Los Angeles and the National Center for Youth Law to complete this study. The research includes three interrelated components: (1) surveys of CSE and non-CSE girls and young women in the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems to evaluate their perspectives on placement options and specialized CSEC services; (2) in-depth interviews and corresponding case file reviews to highlight CSE girls' trajectories through the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems to understand their experiences in their own words; and (3) administrative data from Probation and DCFS to compare CSE-girls and young women and a matched non-CSE comparison group on placement stability and system histories. In addition, administrative data was used to assess for potential differences in placement stability between CSE-girls who received specialized services and CSE-girls who had not received specialized services.

A Preliminary Report outlining findings of this study is included in this report as **Attachment C**. The Preliminary Report includes background on the study, findings from a separate but related landscape analysis, findings from the surveys and the in-depth interviews, preliminary recommendations, and next steps. While significant analysis of the administrative data has already been completed, due to an unforeseen challenge in obtaining the appropriate and comprehensive data related to different types of group homes (small, large, in county, out of county, and out of state), it is not yet possible to disaggregate outcomes from these different placement types, a critical question raised by the Board of Supervisors' motion. Another data pull is required to obtain additional, more detailed information about placement type to provide a clearer picture of the effect of these placements on youth safety, well-being and stability. The data is being analyzed and the findings will be included in the final report. Although the Preliminary Report presents information from the surveys and interviews about the girls' and young women's preferences regarding placement types, it does not contain a recommendation on this topic. Any recommendations regarding placement will be reserved for the final report when the complete administrative data and qualitative information (surveys and interviews) can be analyzed together. The final report is expected to be completed in October and will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors in the November 13<sup>th</sup> CSEC ILT Report.

## **VI. COUNTY CSEC AWARENESS ON-LINE MODULE COMPLIANCE UPDATE**

On November 14, 2017, the Board of Supervisors instructed that CSEC 101: The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children online course be made available to all County employees; and that all County Departments require employees to participate in this training as part of their new employee orientation.

The CSEC 101 online module was implemented in March 2018; and has been gradually rolled out to each Department. As of August 1, 2018, 9,752 county employees have completed the online training. The final rollout of this training was initiated during the first week of August, with the final rollouts going to DCFS and LASD. Below is a breakdown of the number of employees who have completed the online training by County Department:

County Department	Number of County Employees that Completed CSEC 101 Online Training
Fire Department	3,897
Public Works	3,326
Internal Services	1,197
Probation	474
Human Resources	397
Board of Supervisors	311
Department of Children and Family Services	98
County Counsel	9
Mental Health	9
Animal Care and Control	7
Health Services	5
Public Social Services	5
Public Health	5
Assessor	4
District Attorney	4
Child Support Services	1
Public Library	1
Sheriff's Department	1
Treasurer and Tax	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,752</b>

Data Source: DHR CSEC 101 Online Training Transcript, August 1, 2018

## VII. THE PARENT EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM (PEP)

On June 8, 2018, L.A. County launched the PEP, a program that is for parents and primary caregivers of youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. DCFS, DMH, Probation, our contracted CSEC Advocacy services provider, and faith-based partners collaborated to implement PEP. The program is delivered in 90-minute sessions once a week, for 10 weeks. The 90-minute sessions are intended to be a combination of an interactive psycho-educational workshop and parent support group where parents/caregivers can discuss issues that are impacting them, share their experiences, and support and learn from each other. The purpose of the curriculum is to educate, equip, and empower parents and caregivers with the knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of CSE; the pathways and vulnerabilities that lead a child to falling victim of CSE; the reasons why it is difficult for a child to leave an exploitive relationship; the impact of trauma on development, the brain, and the youth's behavior; engagement strategies that parents can utilize with their children to reconnect and build a trusting relationship; safety planning, and ways parents can help their child towards healing, recovery, and growth. The first round of the program has included special guest presenters representing the LAPD, a Survivor Advocate that experienced CSE as a youth, and an

expert on social media that taught parents the dangers of social media, as well as strategies on how to supervise and parent youth who are on social media. So far, parents have expressed appreciation and gratitude for the program, and feedback has been very positive.

Community based resources are provided in order to address other needs that parents/caregivers may have, including resources to assist with meeting the basic needs of families, community-based family support services, CSEC specific services, as well as free recreational activities for families.

A pre and post-test is administered to assist with evaluating the program. The pre and post-test measure whether or not the parents feel an increased level of support, an increased understanding of resources that are available within their communities, and whether or not core learning objectives were learned.

For the first round of the session, there have been eight parents consistently attending. Based on the experience gathered during the first round, it was determined that the capacity for these groups should be between 8-10 participants to give time for each parent to share and express their thoughts, feelings, ask questions, and for each parent to participate in discussion. The parents often express being in crisis and have shared their need to have an ongoing connection with parents who are experiencing the impact of CSEC once the first 10-week program is completed. The location of the weekly sessions is at a church in Compton, California where a high number of CSEC referrals are received. Dinner is provided for parents and their children a half hour before the program starts, and free childcare and transportation stipends are provided to maximize parental participation. Parents who have attended at least 8 out of the 10 sessions will receive a \$100 Ralph's Gift Card as a graduation gift, along with a Certificate of Completion.

The PEP design team (DCFS, DMH, Saving Innocence, and Probation) discussed the next steps for further development of the program:

- 1) Update and refine curriculum based on lessons learned during the first round, which will be completed on August 10, 2018. Too many topics were initially planned to be presented, so the curriculum will be simplified so that only the most critical topics are presented, which will give parents more time to process what they are going through and receive feedback from the facilitators and their peers.
- 2) Add an informational resource for parents so that they know how and with whom to report any additional information that they have on the trafficker, and/or the location of their child who is missing, in order to support efforts to identify/prosecute traffickers and to recover missing children as soon as possible.
- 3) DMH will explore creating an open, ongoing Parent Support Group for parents with CSE youth to meet the need for parents to connect with other parents that have shared experience with having children that have been commercially sexually exploited.

- 4) Conduct a second 10-week pilot round, using the refined and simplified curriculum, as well as a simplified Pre and Post-test.
- 5) Determine how we will expand the PEP program to the Spanish speaking parent population.
- 6) Engage contracted community partners that have experience working with the CSEC population and community-based organizations to determine who is able and willing to be trained on how to implement PEP so that the program can be implemented in all Supervisorial Districts.

The CSEC ILT will report back in November on the following:

- Updated SB 855 spending plan;
- Revised recommendations for HST spending plans;
- RFP Solicitation for expansion of CSEC Advocacy Services;
- The progress of county-wide expansion of the First Responder's Protocol;
- Update on the implementation of CSEC Housing Research recommendations;
- Update on the second round of the Parent Empowerment Program; and results of pre and post test from the first round of the program; and
- Updated Probation juvenile and adult policy to address identification, response and supervision

If you have any questions or need additional information, you may call me or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

BDC:BTN:RM  
EF:EM:ae

#### Attachments

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Probation Department  
Sheriff's Department



**CSEC SPENDING PLAN 2018 - 2023: GENERAL FUND**

Los Angeles County Department of Children &amp; Family Services

<b>Total County Welfare Department Allocation FY 17-18: \$3 million</b>	\$	3,031,316
<b>FY 16-17 Unspent rollover funds: \$2.9 million</b>	\$	2,895,894
<b>Approximate total budget for FY 17-18: \$5.9 million</b>	\$	5,927,210
<b>Approximate expenditures for FY 17-18: \$4.7 million</b>	\$	4,700,000
<b>Approximate balance for FY 17-18: \$1.2 million</b>	\$	1,227,210
<b>Estimated budget for FY 18-19: \$4.2 million (includes allocation and rollover funds)</b>	\$	4,258,526

CSEC Initiative	Service Description	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
1 CSEC Victim Services Advocate	Advocacy (Advocate and CSEC Survivor) Services; First Responder Protocol Response; Prevention and Intervention Workshops for youth and parents. Note: Probation's contract with Saving Innocence ends Dec. 2018; however Probation will do DAA to extend contract through Dec. 2019. DCFS new CSEC Advocacy contracts begins approx. Sept. 2019 and ends Nov. 2022	\$ 315,000	\$ 1,756,666	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
2 CSEC Empowerment Youth Club	Monthly gatherings with CSEC youth to provide mentorship, life skills learning and leadership opportunities	\$ 30,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
3 Individualized Incidental Restoration Fund	Provides funding to purchase interventions that address the child's underlying needs and promotes child safety, permanency, stability, well-being, and self-sufficiency.	\$ 125,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
4 Public Health Nurse (Cover this under Title IV-E funding - \$185,000 per FY)	A dedicated PHN to work closely with DCFS youth, caregivers, and CSEC Children's Social Workers to ensure medical needs are being met.	\$ 185,000	\$ 185,000	\$ 185,000	\$ 185,000	\$ 185,000
5 Children's Law Center (18CM042) Move to HST in 2020- \$295,000 per FY	Hired additional CLC attorneys in DREAM Court (dedicated CSEC courtroom) to have a reduced caseload to improve service delivery to youth.	\$ 295,000	\$ 295,000	\$ 295,000	\$ 295,000	\$ 295,000
6 National Center for Youth Law (17PB0025) (Move to HST budget - \$200,000 for FY 18-19)	Provides consultation and technical assistance in the development of CSEC policy, protocols and procedures.	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
7 Sheriff's Locate Team (18SH0155)	Funds LASD to pay officers overtime to locate missing youth	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
8 DPO II STAR Court Liaison (18PB0021)	Funds specialized CSEC staff in STAR Court (dedicated CSEC Delinquency Courtroom) to support youth and Probation staff who work with the youth.	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000
9 LAPD Locate Team		\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
10 Time Study/Direct Costs	Kay Tyree (FT), Marie Canamoso (FT), Gina Hamilton (PT) and Rachel Elliott (PT)	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000	\$ 600,000
<b>FUNDED BY HST/TITLE IV-E</b>		<b>\$ 385,000</b>	<b>\$ 385,000</b>	<b>\$ 480,000</b>	<b>\$ 480,000</b>	<b>\$ 480,000</b>
<b>FUNDED BY CSEC ALLOCATION/ROLLOVER</b>		<b>\$ 1,685,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,016,666</b>	<b>\$ 2,965,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,965,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,965,000</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$ 2,070,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,401,666</b>	<b>\$ 3,445,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,445,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,445,000</b>
<b>CSEC ALLOCATION/ROLLOVER BALANCE</b>		<b>\$ 2,574,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>

## Summary of Proposed HST Funded Programs and Services for CSEC

March 13, 2018

CSEC Initiative	Service Description	Original Budget	2015-16 Budget	2015-16 Actuals	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Actuals	2017-18 Budget	2017-18 Actuals	2018-19 Budget	Available Balance
1. Victim Services Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy (Advocate and CSEC Survivor)</li> <li>• First Responder Protocol</li> <li>• Educational Workshops</li> </ul>	\$1,312,500	\$100,000	-\$100,000.00	\$212,500		\$500,000	-\$412,000.00	\$500,000	\$800,500
2. Training <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSEC Awareness</li> <li>• CSEC Continuing Education</li> <li>• Foster Care Provider training</li> <li>• County Department Specific training</li> <li>• Protocol Implementation training</li> </ul>	\$750,000		-\$60,000.00	\$250,000		\$250,000	-\$440,000.00	\$250,000	\$250,000
3. Individualized Incidental Restoration Fund	See page 7 of report dated October 16, 2015 for available services	\$360,000	\$90,000		\$90,000		\$90,000		\$90,000	\$360,000
4. CSEC Survivor Advocate	Survivor Advocates (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 for Probation</li> <li>• 2 for DCFS</li> </ul>	\$360,000	\$90,000		\$90,000		\$90,000		\$90,000	\$360,000
5. Evaluation	Consultant services to complete evaluation	\$141,500	\$70,750		\$70,750			-\$141,500.00		\$0
6. Prevention Awareness Tool Kit	Cost of printing CSEC prevention workbook and tool kit	\$80,000	\$20,000		\$20,000		\$20,000		\$20,000	\$80,000
7. CSEC Website & Safe Place Communications Campaign	CSEC Website and Safe Place communications campaign	\$240,000	\$60,000		\$60,000		\$60,000		\$60,000	\$240,000
8. Housing	Set aside half of available total funds for housing resources, including the possibility of funding to develop a safe facility (capital project funds).	\$3,244,000								\$3,244,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$6,488,000</b>		<b>-\$160,000.00</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>		<b>-\$993,500.00</b>		<b>\$5,334,500</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> \$250,000 previously moved to Probation's 2015-16 budget and deducted from the original HST fund balance. Therefore this figure is not included in totals reflected in the chart.

# Commercially Sexually Exploited Girls Involved in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice in Los Angeles County:

## An Exploration and Evaluation of Placement Experiences and Services Received

Preliminary Findings

### AUTHORS

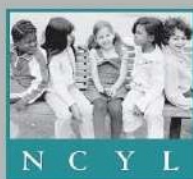
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This report is a summary of the preliminary findings of two of the three research components in the current project. A full report will be available at a later date.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth (CSEC/Y)<sup>1</sup> can involve child sex trafficking, child pornography, child sex tourism, and trading sex to meet basic needs often referred to as “survival sex.” Traffickers often prey on already vulnerable children and youth, such as those with histories of child abuse or neglect, violence or chaos at home, those involved in the child welfare and/or the juvenile justice systems, or those who have run away from home or placements. Between 2009 and 2016, prior to changes in California law making the crime of prostitution and related crimes inapplicable to minors, there were over 1,500 arrests of youth under 18 for prostitution-related offenses in Los Angeles County alone (Probation Case Management System). Between 2013-2018, there were almost 3,000 child welfare referrals made related to potential victims of CSEC/Y in the County (CWS/CMS Datamart, July 9, 2018).

Because of the staggering numbers of children and youth being commercially sexually exploited (CSE) or at high risk of exploitation in Los Angeles County, in 2010, the County began its efforts to better understand the issue and strategize about how to more effectively prevent CSEC/Y. In response to a growing awareness and increasing recognition that CSEC/Y often have prior interactions or current involvement with the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems, the County began to train public agency staff about CSEC/Y and to implement policies and programs to provide specialized supports to children and youth using a collaborative, multidisciplinary model. Over the past eight years, Los Angeles County has become a leader in developing innovative programs and services to prevent CSEC/Y and support those currently being exploited.

This Report presents the preliminary results of a first-of-its-kind study about the experiences and impact of different types of services and placements on the safety, well-being, and stability of CSEC/Y. In July 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion directing further research about the County’s specialized services and placements for CSEC/Y. That motion initiated the current research project which aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of girls and young women<sup>2</sup> who received specialized CSEC services in LA

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, we use the term CSEC/Y to refer both to the act of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth, and to children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. We also are deliberate in our use of both children *and* youth. Often one or the other is used as a catch all—when the statistics demonstrate that both young children, as young as 9 in Los Angeles County, and older youth fall victim to exploitation. Additionally, research and literature has demonstrated that children and youth of color, specifically black girls, are viewed as older and imputed with more control over their decisions, which often leads to their criminalization for actions for which their white counterparts are not (see Phillips, J. (2015) Black Girls and the (Im)Possibilities of a Victim Trope: The Intersectional Failures of Legal and Advocacy Interventions in the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Minors in the United States. *62 UCLA L. Rev.* 1642).

<sup>2</sup> To date, a majority of identified victims in Los Angeles County are girls and young women. Thus, this research focuses exclusively on girls and young women. Through training and education, the County is becoming more effective at identifying boys, young men, and transgender individuals.



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County, including assignment to the specialized CSEC unit through the Probation Department (Probation) or the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), referral to a specialized court for CSEC/Y—either the Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) or Dedication to Restoration through Empowerment, Advocacy, and Mentoring (DREAM) Court—and connection to a specialized, community-based advocate.

The study considers both the subjective experiences of girls and young women through interviews and surveys, as well as administrative data from Probation and DCFS. Specifically, the research includes three interrelated components: (1) surveys of CSE and non-CSE girls and young women in the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems to evaluate their perspectives on placement options and specialized CSEC services; (2) in-depth interviews and corresponding case file reviews to highlight CSE girls’ and young women’s trajectories through the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems to understand their experiences in their own words; and (3) administrative data from Probation and DCFS to compare CSE girls and young women and a matched non-CSE comparison group on placement stability and system histories, and to assess for potential differences in placement stability between CSE girls and young women who received specialized services and CSE girls and young women who did not receive specialized services.

This Preliminary Report presents the initial findings and recommendations drawn from the first two sets of data—the surveys and in-depth interviews—and from a separate but related landscape analysis about services and placements for CSEC/Y across the country. This Report concludes with a brief description of the next steps for the research.

## LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS<sup>3</sup>

In Los Angeles County, and across the nation, despite increased attention to the issue of CSEC/Y, and the development of programming to serve the population, there has been little research demonstrating the most effective types of placements and services for CSE and at-risk children and youth. This dearth in research limits our understanding and implementation of evidence-based practices and programs to support CSEC/Y. To address this gap in knowledge, a landscape analysis was designed and conducted by Northeastern University in collaboration with the Children’s Advocacy Center of Suffolk County, and the National Center for Youth Law. This analysis examined the characteristics of residential placements across the nation that are providing specialized services to victims of child trafficking, which includes CSE as well as labor trafficking.<sup>4</sup> By understanding common characteristics across programs, we hope to begin to build a knowledge base from which to develop promising practices.

To identify specialized programs and placements for the target population, researchers searched existing lists of placements that house victims of child trafficking, conducted a state-by-state online search for programs associated with the terms “exploitation,” “trafficked,” “trafficking,” “human trafficking,” and “at-risk youth,” reviewed advocacy websites, and contacted child welfare agencies. Once identified, researchers asked placement providers to complete preliminary surveys, and then requested and conducted in-depth interviews. The study identified 92 programs that provide specialized CSEC/Y programming, 67 of which offer specialized programming related to commercial sexual exploitation in residential settings. Of the 67 residential placements, 61% served CSEC/Y exclusively, while 39% served an integrated population. The researchers contacted all residential placements identified through the preliminary survey as serving trafficked youth, and conducted in-depth interviews from 23 of the specialized placements that consented to participation.

Although the study was not able to determine the most effective practices or identify whether certain features of programming led to better outcomes, based on the surveys and in-depth interviews of service providers, the landscape analysis uncovered common features of these placements, which include:

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<sup>3</sup> This landscape analysis study was conducted separately from the current study and was supported by independent funding from the Gardner Howland Shaw Foundation. We include a discussion of this landscape analysis because it serves as an important backdrop to the current study and the state of the research on specialized programming around the country for CSEC/Y. The National Center for Youth Law is a partner on both studies as part of its efforts to broaden the knowledge base about CSEC/Y both in California and around the country. A final report on the landscape analysis is forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> The landscape analysis study also examined the legal landscape in each state as it relates to child trafficking, specifically whether minors can be criminalized for prostitution, whether a mandatory mechanism exists to protect victims of child trafficking from delinquency adjudications for prostitution, and whether the law provides access to specialized services for child trafficking victims.

- Specialized training for staff members including information on CSEC/Y, trauma-informed care, de-escalation strategies, and input from survivors, as well as internal support for staff members;
- Therapeutic or clinical programs designed to address the needs of CSEC/Y, focusing on skill-building, coping skills, substance use, empowerment, and counseling/supports that, in some cases extend support to the whole family;
- Smaller programs in home or home-like settings, and specialized foster care models;
- Engagement in multidisciplinary team meetings, wraparound services, and partnerships with survivor mentors;
- Safety planning, including variation in security levels of facilities, and protocols and programs to respond to and engage youth who run from care, including a large percentage of placements that keep beds open when kids have run away.

The study found that on average, the specialized placements had 11 beds, although the researchers identified three programs that maintain over 200 beds per program that were analyzed separately. The research team also found that 96% of specialized programs serve female youth, 61% serve or would accept transgender youth, and 39% serve male and female youth. Forty-six percent of the placements were in rural areas, 36% were in urban areas, and 18% were in suburban areas. In addition, the study found that 10% were locked facilities, 28% were unlocked, and 62% were staff secured. Of youth served, 88% of youth had prior child welfare system involvement, and 78% had juvenile justice system involvement.

While the study identified trends in services and placements for CSEC/Y, it found that few programs regularly and consistently collect data and conduct program evaluation.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the study found that there are no standard metrics for measuring success and effectiveness across programs, making it difficult to analyze the comparative effectiveness of different types of services and placement types, and their impact on youth. Absent standardized definitions of what constitutes “success” or longitudinal data documenting outcomes of particular programs, it is difficult to draw conclusions about which programs “work.” Further, few programs elicit feedback in a systematic way from youth about the impact or effectiveness of their programs, or their experiences within the programs.

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<sup>5</sup> One exception was the Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE) program in Florida, which was evaluated by researchers at the University of South Florida (see Armstrong, M. I., Johnson, M. H., Landers, M., Dollard, N. & Anderson, R. (2016). Citrus helping adolescents negatively impacted by commercial exploitation (CHANCE) pilot study: Progress report year 3 Tampa, FL: Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. University of South Florida.)

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In addition to the inconsistent data collection, lack of formal evaluation, and inconsistent metrics about program activities or outcomes, the study also identified other program challenges. These challenges include: funding and resource constraints, lack of housing and specialized services for boys, male-identifying youth, and LGBTQ youth, difficulty addressing safety needs and preventing harm during periods when youth are missing from care, and discrepancies across states in programs' abilities to hire survivors on staff.

These findings, from across the nation, highlight the need for continued research and evaluation on placements, programs, and services for CSEC/Y. The next sections in this Preliminary Report represent Los Angeles County's continued innovation to drive this work forward.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS: A SURVEY OF GIRLS' AND YOUNG WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON PLACEMENTS AND SERVICES

### Overview of Methodology

A survey was developed by Michelle Guymon, the Director of the Child Trafficking Unit in the Probation Department, and the National Center for Youth Law, in an effort to gain direct feedback from youth regarding their perspectives on placements and specialized services (e.g., specialized Probation Officers and social workers, collaborative courts, and CSEC/Y community-based advocates). Both CSE and non-CSE girls and young women were asked to respond to the survey by representatives from Probation or DCFS. Respondents were recruited through a variety of methods including through their social worker or Probation Officer in person or via telephone, at a youth event, and in placements.

### Summary of Findings

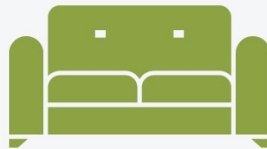
Of the 121 girls that responded, 56% were from Probation (n = 68) and 44% were from DCFS (n = 53). Just over half were identified as CSEC/Y 60% (n = 73) and 40% (n = 48) were not CSEC/Y-identified.

### Placement Preferences

87%



The majority of CSE girls and young women (87%) preferred unlocked placements. For instance, one youth stated she preferred unlocked placements, *“Because I at least feel at home,”* and another stated, *“So I can feel like I am actually a part of the community.”*






CSE girls and young women preferred small group homes (e.g., 6-bed homes) and foster homes over large group homes because they had more personal time and attention from staff, it was quieter and calmer (e.g., less drama), and they had more personal space (see Table 1).



CSE girls and young women preferred local placements over remote or out-of-state placements because they were closer to family. Yet, CSE girls were more likely to rank out-of-state placements higher in preference compared to non-CSE girls. Specifically, 14% of CSE girls ranked out of state as their first choice compared to 2% of non-CSE girls.



		
<p>Regarding out-of-state placements, CSE girls and young women reported that they were less likely to go absent without leave (AWOL) and it was easier to focus on programming.</p>	<p>Girls and young women preferred integrated placements as opposed to CSEC/Y-only placements. Many girls reported recruitment in CSEC/Y-only placements and experiences of being persuaded to AWOL to return to “the life” as problems associated with CSEC/Y-only placements.</p>	<p>Ninety-nine percent of CSE girls and young women surveyed reported running away, from placement or home, compared to 79% of the non-CSE girls and young women.</p>

**Table 1.** Summary of CSE girls’ perspectives on the positives and negatives of different size placements.

	Pros	Cons
<b>Large Group Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More socializing</li> <li>• More activities</li> <li>• More staff to make you feel comfortable</li> <li>• More services</li> <li>• Learn to deal with different personalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• No privacy</li> <li>• Fighting (easier to get into one and more around you)</li> <li>• Unclean</li> <li>• Too many girls, causes a range of problems</li> </ul>
<b>Small (6-bed) Group Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less drama because fewer girls</li> <li>• More personal time and attention from staff</li> <li>• Home-like</li> <li>• Quieter and calmer</li> <li>• Can prepare your own meals, watch TV, have your own bed</li> <li>• More personal space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Fewer activities and programming</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Small space</li> </ul>
<b>Foster Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like a real home</li> <li>• More freedom</li> <li>• More family-like</li> <li>• More normalcy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not your real family</li> </ul>

- 
- CSE girls and young women were asked what type of training they believe group home staff should have to work with CSE youth. The most common response was CSEC training. Girls expressed the desire for staff to understand what they have been through more, how to talk to them, and how to not be judgmental. For example, one youth stated,

“

*Staff need more advice on CSEC issues, sometimes they made me feel bad and ashamed.*

”

- When asked for a recommendation on how to improve placements, CSE girls and young women discussed ways to improve rapport and engagement between staff and themselves. CSE girls also recommended better staff, more money, better food, more outings and activities, better and more immediate therapeutic services, more clothes, and more passes. For example,

“

*Longer home passes, passes to other relatives and more services.*

”

Another girl recommended,

“

*Immediate therapeutic services, even the day you get there I need that; more group sessions; longer family passes.*

”

## Specialized CSEC Services

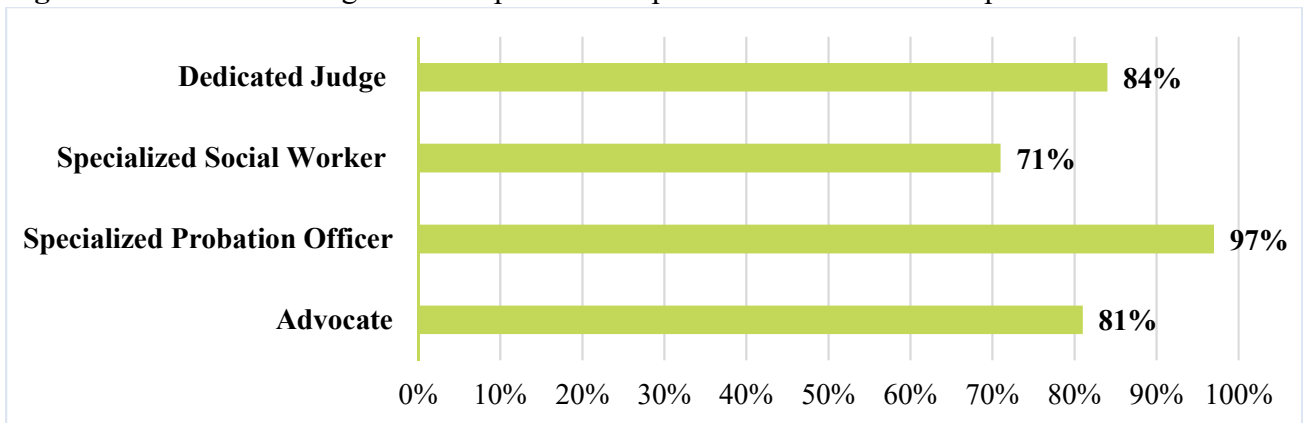
### *Brief Description of Services<sup>6</sup>*

This study explored three types of specialized services for CSEC/Y currently provided in LA County: referral to a collaborative court, assignment to a specialized Probation Officer or case worker through Probation or DCFS, and connection with a specialized, community-based advocate.

Specialized Court (STAR & DREAM)	Specialized Units: Probation Officer or Case Worker	CSE Advocate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A courtroom and judge established exclusively for CSE victims, which includes:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated judicial officer</li> <li>• Multidisciplinary case planning</li> <li>• More frequent court visit</li> <li>• Youth voice more prevalent</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case workers and Probation Officers who are specially trained to work with CSE victims.</li> <li>• More frequent interaction with youth</li> <li>• In person and via phone and text</li> <li>• Minimize transfers between social workers and Probation Officers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialized advocates from community-based agencies who are trained to provide support and advocacy services for CSE victims.</li> <li>• Partner with DCFS and Probation</li> <li>• Frequent in-person interaction</li> <li>• Crisis response (available 24 hours a day)</li> <li>• Consistent advocate throughout service</li> <li>• Survivors on staff</li> </ul>

CSE girls and young women surveyed overwhelmingly found these specialized services to be helpful.

**Figure 1.** Percent of CSE girls who reported that specialized service was helpful.



<sup>6</sup> The specialized courts and the specialized units in Probation and DCFS were established using many of the same basic philosophies. While some components of the services are similar, there are differences, such as frequency of visits to court, intensity of supervision, and other practices, that vary between DCFS and Probation.

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## IN THEIR OWN WORDS: INTERVIEWS AND CASE FILE REVIEWS

### Overview of Methodology

Researchers interviewed six young women and reviewed their case files in order to capture in-depth perspectives and narrative examples of how they experienced placements, their trajectories through the system, and services they may have received. Probation identified three of the subjects and the remaining three were identified by DCFS. In an attempt to capture a range of perspectives, researchers interviewed young women who had transitioned out of the system, those still receiving services, and those with experience in both systems. Below is a sampling of information from the interviews and file reviews.

### Sasha

Sasha is 17 years old and is African American. She has been involved in both DCFS and Probation throughout her life. Her involvement in DCFS began at 3 years old and Probation at 12 years old. From ages 12 to 14, Sasha experienced numerous out-of-home placements, ran from placements, and was commercially sexually exploited. Her first placement was a large group home in Los Angeles, far from where she lived, where there was significant staff turnover. Sasha received a specialized Probation Officer and was assigned to the STAR Court. At 14, she went to an out-of-state placement where she remains today. She shared her experiences about placements that were difficult for her, as well as what she found helpful.

“

*...that [her first placement] was the only group home we would go out a lot, but the times we weren't [out], we would fight because there were so many of us and it was so chaotic, and people would run away, they would cut themselves, they would try to hang themselves. Not a stable environment. It was really stressful...I don't think I was at that level to be placed there—I – I wasn't that high risk yet—but, but exposing me to all of that stuff just made it worse.*

”

“

*I think that I wouldn't have made as much progress if I didn't have my team [at her current placement]. My direct team. Everything else I can care less about. My therapist, my case manager, have always stayed the same.*

”

## **Latisha**

Latisha is 19 years old and is African American. She has been involved in the child welfare system for her entire life. She was removed from her mother the day after she was born with drug exposure. Latisha went back and forth between being placed at home with her mother as her mother worked to get sober, and DCFS placements. When Latisha was 13 years old, her mother died. A few months later, Latisha was arrested for prostitution, which started her involvement with Probation. She explained that she ran frequently from placement because of conflicts with staff. She received a specialized Probation Officer and was assigned to the STAR Court. Her Probation case recently closed and she utilizes the AB 12<sup>7</sup> program to access independent living resources and services. Latisha explained the way that her grief and trauma impacted her behavior, as well as her positive experience with the STAR Court.

“

*They [Probation] took the lead [at the] second court date because I was [messing] around. At the same time I didn't care, but at the same time they didn't know I was grieving for my mom—but, but I didn't understand I was grieving either.*

”

“

*Everybody in the courtroom, they support... you feel like a family...I feel like they just need to teach they placements all of that. Because the placements don't understand, that's what be [messing] us up.*

”

---

<sup>7</sup> Assembly Bill 12 (Beall; Stats. 2010, ch. 559), as amended by Assembly Bill 212 (Beall; Stats. 2011, ch. 459), the California Fostering Connections to Success Act, makes it possible to access federal Title IV-E assistance for eligible child welfare or probation youth that remain in foster care up to age 21.

## Skylar

Skylar is 18 years old and is biracial. She first became involved with Probation at 13 years old, when her parents called the police because they believed she was out of control. Skylar continued to get in trouble at home and school and was eventually put in placement. At placement, she was first exposed to commercial sexual exploitation through peers. She ran from that placement and was subsequently commercially sexually exploited. Eventually, Skylar was trafficked out of state. When she returned, she was referred to the specialized Probation unit and the STAR Court. After being arrested for robbery, she was placed at the Dorothy Kirby Center, where she participated in numerous services and activities, including family counseling, individual and group therapy, substance abuse counseling, anger management, life skills classes, and education. She later returned home where she currently resides with her parents and siblings. Her Probation case has since been closed. Skylar explained her experiences with peer recruitment, entry into exploitation, and how she felt supported by specialized services.

“

*Everybody talks about what they used to do on the streets. You can't stop somebody from doing that but you can prevent how many or who you have in the same setting. You can prevent that. I didn't have no say so of what placement I went to. They put me in a placement with mothers and prostitutes.*

”

“

*Yeah, I AWOL'ed and that's when I got in—I'm – I'm like, I need some money.*

”

“

*Yeah. I love [her Probation Officer]. Because she like – she more than a PO... Like, she's understanding. Very understanding. She understands realistically like, what a regular PO probably would not understand. ... Like, I think that her job isn't just a job. No, she actually cares about her job. Like, she cares about her client. Like, her kids. She cares about that. She cares about them...we're not just her job to her. Like, where she just sends us left and right. Of course, she's gonna send us if we need to be sent....Like, you could talk to her.*

”



## Jasmine

Jasmine is 17 years old and is African American. She was removed from her home when she was 12 years old when her mother gave birth to her youngest brother who was drug exposed. She lived with a supportive foster family for the first few years until she went to live with an aunt. After that, both of Jasmine's parents died within a year of each other. Three months later, Jasmine ran away and was found soliciting sex from a Vice Officer. That night, her social worker and a specialized, community-based advocate responded to address her immediate needs and provided other intensive support as required by the Los Angeles Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol. After bouncing between relatives' homes, her trafficker, and placements for the following few years, Jasmine became very focused on school. She graduated from high school and was accepted to multiple 4-year universities. Jasmine highlighted the impact of positive and negative relationships on her trajectory.

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*[My advocate] was there that night with me through the whole process, and then she even came the next morning and talked with me, so it was just having someone there because the first couple of nights, [at placement] I'm just like, -, 'You know what? Forget it. I'm leaving'. But just having her there and just being able to talk to someone helped. I'm just like, ' - You know, at least someone's expecting me to do better, knowing I can do better. So, it's like, Why not stay for her?'*

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*Had to keep telling myself this to get it together because it's just like why are you chasing after someone who obviously doesn't care for you? But it's just like I have abandonment issues with my family in general, so it was just him telling me he loved me was just a big thing, so every time I talked to him, 'Oh, I love you. Just come back please. I'll never do this again,' this, and this, and that. So, it—it was just like, —he - He does care about me. At least he's calling me. My family's not. He is. He's trying. - So, that was the thing.*

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## Jada

Jada is 17 years old and is African American. She was dually-involved in Probation and DCFS. She came to the attention of DCFS as a victim of commercial sexual exploitation at 15 years old after being kidnapped, trafficked out of state, and left on a street corner in Los Angeles. Jada then struggled in several out of home placements. She frequently ran away and got in trouble for fighting. Jada was also experiencing several mental health issues. Eventually a fight at a

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placement initiated her involvement with Probation which, coupled with her CSEC history, led to an out-of-state placement. After returning home from placement, Jada continued to run away, leave school without permission, and do drugs. One day, she was lured by a trafficker into a car and was raped by multiple men. Jada now struggles with her trauma and her mother has quit her job in order to take care of her. Jada discussed the judgment she experienced.

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*You have to treat them [youth in placements] as your own child. How you'll treat your child, that's what you have to do—you have to be there for them, mentally and physically. Because, I heard a lot of girls' stories, I talked to a lot of girls, I did speeches for a lot of girls and stuff, and I know it's hard for them. Being raped, and just being in the streets, and having nobody, so they just go to the streets.... People judged them off the bat because what they did, you know?*

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### **Christal**

Christal is 19 years old and is African American. She recently had a baby and is receiving independent living resources through AB 12. Christal's history in DCFS started when she was two years old. Throughout her life, she was referred to DCFS a total of 48 times for allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Her father was charged and served prison time for the attempted rape of her sister following several domestic violence incidents against her mother. When Christal was 16, she was recovered by Vice who found her on Craigslist, where she was being sold for sex. She was assigned a specialized case worker through DCFS and a specialized advocate. She then went to a small group home placement and shortly after became pregnant. She moved into her own apartment two months before her child was born. Christal reflected on her trauma, and the benefits of the harm reduction approach utilized by her previous placement.

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*I wouldn't recommend anyone to go through what I've been through. It's not fun. It doesn't feel good. I mean, it's just you looking for a fast way to live life, I guess.*

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*To me, that placement – they gave you special privileges. Because certain placements, you can't have your phone. You can't stay out overnight. Like, you're on lockdown, basically. And that one, they'll let me stay out. I could keep my phone. We didn't have to go to sleep; we just had to be in our rooms. It was cool.*

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*Yeah. And not only that, I got passes early. Because I guess you have to wait like a week or so before you got passes. But, it was so hard for me to just sit around and stay. I had asked the lady like, “Can I leave?” and she let me leave. She told me just to come back. But, every time I would leave, I would come back. Or, if I would spend the night out, I would make sure I called and came back the next day.*

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

The preliminary recommendations below are based on the findings from the surveys, in-depth interviews and case file reviews, which derive primarily from the youth's stated preferences and experiences. These recommendations also draw from the findings of the landscape analysis discussed above. The final report will contain additional findings and recommendations which incorporate analyses of Probation and DCFS administrative data.

- 1. Recognize and Address the Impact of Trauma:** As the preliminary findings indicate, many CSEC/Y in Los Angeles County have experienced significant trauma, including childhood physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, and traumatic loss, prior to their exploitation. These traumatic events increase youth's vulnerabilities to exploitation, decrease their ability to cope with other life stressors, and impact their behavior, placement stability, and willingness or ability to engage with providers and services. Providing trauma-informed services to CSEC/Y means addressing the whole youth and the multi-faceted needs associated with trauma exposure and traumatic stress reactions such as health and mental health services, education support, assistance with pregnancy and/or parenting, as well as identifying strengths and sources of resilience. Trauma-informed practices should be employed throughout all programs and services for CSEC/Y and should incorporate:
  - Trauma-specific screening and assessment strategies to identify trauma triggers, traumatic stress reactions, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in order to refer to appropriate treatment and increase the use of adaptive coping strategies;
  - Utilization of, and referral to, evidence-based trauma-specific interventions that include psychoeducation, self-regulation skills, adaptive coping skills, safety skills, and, when appropriate, trauma processing;
  - Recognition of additional stressors of racial inequities and discrimination that disproportionately impact girls and young women who are exploited; and
  - Understanding of birth-parent trauma and intergenerational trauma that may impact the family system and caregiving.
- 2. Promote Consistent, Healthy Relationships:** Steady, healthy, supportive relationships with trusting adults and peers are critical components of effective programs and services with CSEC/Y. Children and youth routinely report that their close relationship with a caring adult was the primary factor that helped them to move from exploitation to safety and stability. Additionally, they report the importance of feeling genuinely cared for and loved. Because many CSEC/Y are bonded to their exploiters and depend on them for love and care, adults working with CSEC/Y have an opportunity to demonstrate that those needs can be fulfilled in healthy, safe ways. The same is true for CSEC/Y who are engaged in survival sex. Some examples of ways to promote these relationships include, but are not limited to:

- Specialized case management/supervision/social work services, that involve more frequent and strategic interactions with CSEC/Y;
- Specialized, community-based advocacy, that partners with the public agencies and provides around-the-clock support;
- Connection to family, broadly defined (e.g., non-relative extended family members), and other natural supports, when appropriate, even when the youth is not placed with them;
- Collaboration across agencies to establish a common philosophical approach to serving and supporting CSEC/Y; and
- Consistency in staffing assignments (i.e., Probation Officers, case managers, social workers) and communication between team members working with a youth to ensure continuity when a youth moves in and out of care, or between placements and services.

3. **Center and Promote the Child and Youth’s Perspective:** Many youth involved in public systems, especially those who have been commercially sexually exploited, feel disempowered and that they lack agency. CSEC/Y routinely report the benefit of being included and feeling heard in decisions that affect their lives. Balanced, honest, and developmentally-appropriate discussions with children and youth about risk and safety issues, using the lens of the Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard<sup>8</sup> will promote transparency and trust between the adults and the children and youth. Specific strategies should include:

- Facilitating inclusion of youth voice and meaningful participation in meetings, court proceedings, and other decision-making points, and explaining to youth the reasoning behind decisions that do not align with youth’s expressed preferences;
- Conducting focus groups on an ongoing basis with CSEC/Y to understand current needs and trends; and
- Establishing a mechanism to gather individual feedback from CSEC/Y on an ongoing and/or real-time basis about what is working and the problems or unaddressed needs related to specific placements, service providers, and staff.

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<sup>8</sup> A state standard that defines the basic goals a parental entity or guardian should have for a child in order to make decisions and provide a living environment that is in the best interest of the child.

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4. **Require Comprehensive Training:** Preliminary research shows that youth respond more positively and are more engaged with public agency workers, service providers, caregivers, community partners and other individuals who understand the dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation and common issues facing CSEC/Y, while at the same time recognizing and supporting the whole youth beyond their experiences with exploitation and without judgment. All individuals working with CSEC/Y, from public agencies to private partners and family members, should be trained on these topics, as well as promising practices and approaches for engaging CSEC/Y. Trainings should include, but not be limited to:
- Understanding risk factors for and forms of CSEC/Y;
  - Reducing “otherizing” of CSEC/Y by dispelling common myths and misconceptions about CSEC/Y;
  - Employing promising and collaborative engagement strategies (e.g. Child and Family Teams) that promote trust and consistency with healthy adults and peers;
  - Understanding the prevalence and impact of trauma on CSEC/Y in their behavior, stability, wellbeing, and coping;
  - Methods for preventing CSE and discouraging peer recruitment within placements;
  - Supporting youth to remain in placement or at home, and decreasing absences without leave (AWOL) by understanding and addressing underlying needs that lead CSEC/Y to run from home or placement; and
  - Employing harm reduction strategies, which prioritize long-term safety through ongoing safety planning; recognizing lasting change is not immediate, trust building takes time, and returning to exploitive situations is a part of the recovery process.



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## NEXT STEPS

This Report presents the preliminary findings from two of the three research components of the full project as well as a separate but related landscape analysis. The third and final research component is an analysis of administrative data from both DCFS and Probation. Administrative data from each agency is being analyzed to compare CSE girls and a matched non-CSE comparison group of girls on placement histories, placement stability and system involvement. In addition, administrative data is being used to assess for potential differences in placement stability between CSE girls with specialized services and CSE girls who did not receive specialized services.