

After our first year of grading states on the advanced legislative framework, and in response to feedback from stakeholders following the release of the inaugural Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking, we decided to make some adjustments to a few of our policy goals to better reflect the understanding that the non-criminalization of minors cannot move forward without robust access to services through a variety of access points, including those that do not require involvement in child-serving systems. For that reason, Issue 3 has been updated as follows:



ISSUE 3: Continuum of Care

Previous Policy Goal Language	Updated Policy Goal Language
3.1: State law provides child sex trafficking victims with access to specialized services through a non-punitive system.	3.1: State law mandates a process for coordinating access to specialized services for child sex trafficking victims that does not require involvement in child-serving systems.
3.2: State law provides for a survivor-centered multi-disciplinary team response to child sex trafficking cases.	3.2: State law provides for a survivor-centered multi-disciplinary team response to child sex trafficking cases.
3.3: State law requires the juvenile justice system to provide access to specialized services for identified sex trafficked children and youth.	3.3: State law requires child welfare to provide access to specialized services for identified sex trafficked children and youth.
3.4: State law extends foster care services to older foster youth.	3.4: State law requires the juvenile justice system to provide access to specialized services for identified sex trafficked children and youth.
3.5: State funding is appropriated to support specialized services and a continuum of care for sex trafficked children regardless of system involvement.	3.5: State law extends foster care services to older foster youth.
3.6: State funding is appropriated to support child-serving agencies with providing specialized services and a continuum of care for sex trafficked children.	3.6: State funding is appropriated to support specialized services and a continuum of care for sex trafficked children regardless of system involvement.

Please note that a few of the policy goals have only shifted order. Additionally, the language of Policy Goal 2.5 has been amended to reflect a shift in focus from simply prohibiting detention and prosecution to establishing clear protocols that prevent punitive responses and facilitate access to services.

Policy Goal 2.5

State law prohibits the criminalization of minors under 18 for prostitution offenses and establishes a services-referral protocol as an alternative to arrest.

These key changes reflect the importance of ensuring access to community-based services without requiring system involvement. Prior to this year's changes, the advanced legislative framework graded states on whether their laws provided a non-punitive avenue for child trafficking victims to access services, reflecting the needed shift away from punitive system responses to protective system responses. States that provide access to services through child welfare received equal credit to states that provided access to services through community-based responses. As explained in more detail in our white paper on the need for community-based responses and access to services outside of child-serving systems, which will be released this fall, this approach to grading states on service responses did not accurately reflect best practice or the overall goal of ensuring that all trafficked children have access to services. Accordingly, starting this year, the advanced legislative framework will separately analyze state laws that provide access to services through systems—which is still needed but should not be the only avenue to access services—and laws that establish a broader plan that ensures access to services for all trafficked children.