



2023 REPORT

OKLAHOMA

Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking

State Action. National Change.



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IN 2011, SHARED HOPE RELEASED THE NATION'S FIRST LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT CHALLENGED states to enact laws that comprehensively address the crime of child sex trafficking. When we launched the Protected Innocence Challenge project—and issued the inaugural State Report Cards—the majority of states received an “F” grade, reflecting the reality that many states’ laws failed to even recognize the crime of child sex trafficking. Since then, we have been working to lay the foundation for transformational policy, practice, and cultural change by supporting state legislators and stakeholders in identifying gaps in the fabric of laws needed to address this heinous crime. By 2019, no state received an “F” grade, and a majority of the country received an “A” or “B.”

PROTECTED INNOCENCE CHALLENGE

OKLAHOMA

2019	SCORE	GRADE	10	24.5	15	7.5	19.5	12
	88.5	B	10	25	15	10	27.5	15
2011	SCORE	GRADE	4.5	13.5	13.5	7	17.5	9.5
	65.5	D	10	25	15	10	27.5	15

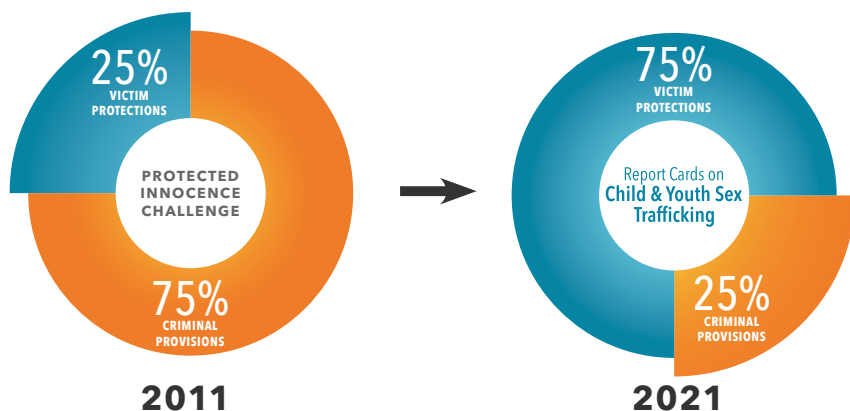
From 2011 to 2019, Oklahoma raised their grade under the Protected Innocence Challenge from a “D” to a “B,” enacting legislation aimed at holding offenders accountable and protecting survivors.

To view Oklahoma’s 2019 PIC report, visit sharedhope.org/PICframe9/reportcards/PIC_RC_2019_OK.pdf

A SHIFT IN FOCUS

THE PROTECTED INNOCENCE CHALLENGE PROJECT WAS SHARED HOPE’S VISION FOR MOBILIZING collective state action to ensure national change. Building on the progress already made under that project—while preserving its most fundamental components—we released a new, advanced legislative framework in 2020 that

focuses on new policy priorities reflective of feedback and research collected from the field. This framework is meant to challenge states to take the next step in the fight against sex trafficking by focusing on the area of law where the largest gaps remain—victim protections.



ADVANCED LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

6 ISSUE AREAS IDENTIFIED:

CRIMINAL PROVISIONS

IDENTIFICATION OF & RESPONSE TO VICTIMS

CONTINUUM OF CARE

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

TOOLS FOR A VICTIM-CENTERED CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE

PREVENTION & TRAINING

40 POLICY GOALS ANALYZED:

110 TOTAL POINTS AWARDED:

States earn up to 2.5 points per policy goal

Extra credit: Protections for labor and youth 18+

100 possible points

plus up to 10 points

FINAL LETTER GRADES ASSIGNED:

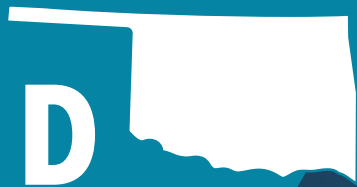
A | 90-110 **B** | 80-89 **C** | 70-79 **D** | 60-69 **F** | <60

TIER RANKING

Another way the Report Cards on Child & Youth Sex Trafficking will measure progress is through a Tier system that will help states understand how they are doing compared to other states. Especially at this stage where grades are clustered at lower levels, the Tiers help to show states where they are on a spectrum. This provides another way for states to evaluate the progress they make beyond changes to their letter grade.

THE TIERS ARE STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWS:

- ▶ TIER 1 = TOP 10 SCORES
- ▶ TIER 2 = MIDDLE 31 SCORES
- ▶ TIER 3 = BOTTOM 10 SCORES



OKLAHOMA

2023 Report Card

TIER II









GRADES ARE BASED SOLELY ON AN ANALYSIS OF STATE STATUTES. While we recognize the critical importance of non-legislative responses to propel progress, grading on statutory law provides a clear mechanism for evaluating policy goals across all states while ensuring that survivor-centered reforms are an enduring part of states' responses.

STATE HIGHLIGHTS:

- Between 2021-2023, raised score by 11 points.
- Currently ranked 14th in the nation.
- One of 10 states to raise their letter grade this year.
- Provides child sex trafficking victims with an affirmative defense to violent felonies committed as a result of their trafficking victimization.
- Child welfare must provide access to services that are specialized to the unique needs of child sex trafficking victims.

SAFE HARBOR STATUS:

State law protects some, but not all minors, from being criminalized for prostitution offenses; minors who are not identified as child sex trafficking victims may still be subjected to arrest and prosecution for their own victimization. One of only 4 states to expand this protection to adult victims of sex trafficking.

Issue		Grade	Score	Summary
	1. Criminal Provisions	A	$\frac{17}{17.5}$	Policy goals accomplished related to buyer accountability under the trafficking law, buyer and trafficker accountability under state CSEC laws, mistake of age defenses, decoy defenses, and business entity liability under the trafficking law. Gap remains related to financial penalties.
	2. Identification of and Response to Victims	F	$\frac{16}{27.5}$	Policy goals accomplished related to third party control, screening through child welfare, affirmative defenses for violent felonies, and child abuse definitions. Gaps remain related to foreign national victims, screening through the juvenile justice system, non-criminalization for prostitution offenses, expanded non-criminalization, juvenile court jurisdiction, and non-caregiver trafficking cases.
	3. Continuum of Care	F	$\frac{5.5}{15}$	Policy goal accomplished related to services through child welfare. Gaps remain related to community-based services, MDT responses, services through the juvenile justice system, extended foster care services, and appropriations.
	4. Access to Justice for Trafficking Survivors	C	$\frac{10.5}{15}$	Policy goals accomplished related to civil orders of protection, restitution, and civil remedies. Gaps remain related to crime victims' compensation, vacatur, and statutes of limitation.
	5. Tools for a Victim-Centered Criminal Justice Response	F	$\frac{5.5}{10}$	Policy goal accomplished related to alternatives to live, in-court testimony. Gaps remain related to hearsay exceptions, victim-witness supports, and privileged communications.
	6. Prevention and Training	F	$\frac{4.5}{15}$	Policy goal accomplished related to training for child welfare. Gaps remain related to training for juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, prosecutors, and school personnel as well as prevention education in schools.
EXTRA CREDIT	 Youth		2	Protections related to affirmative defenses for violent felonies and civil remedies are extended to sex trafficked youth,
	 Child Labor Trafficking		4	Protections related to affirmative defenses for violent felonies, services through child welfare, restitution, and civil remedies are extended to child labor trafficking victims.

OVERALL GRADE
TIER II

D 65

WHAT IS SAFE HARBOR?

“Safe Harbor” refers to laws that insulate survivors from a punitive response and direct them toward funded, comprehensive, and protective services.










WHY SAFE HARBOR?

These laws ensure survivors of child and youth sex trafficking are not involved in the juvenile or criminal justice system and receive trauma-informed care. Appropriate identification and access to services are vital to creating a just response for survivors of child and youth sex trafficking.

SAFE HARBOR LAWS

Comprehensive Safe Harbor laws
**SHOULD PROHIBIT
ARRESTING, DETAINING,
CHARGING, & PROSECUTING**
all minors for prostitution offenses, regardless of
whether a finding of trafficking victimization is
made, and, instead, require law enforcement to
direct child and youth survivors to
SPECIALIZED SERVICES & CARE.

Safe Harbor laws
**SHOULD ALSO PROHIBIT
CRIMINALIZATION**
of child sex trafficking survivors for other crimes
committed as a result of their victimization.

Status	Safe Harbor Policy Goal
 Fully met	The definition of child sex trafficking victim in the criminal code includes all commercially sexually exploited children without requiring third party control (see Policy Goal 2.1 for further analysis and Issue Brief 2.1 for background).
 Fully met	State law mandates child welfare agencies to conduct trauma-informed CSEC screening for children at risk of sex trafficking (see Policy Goal 2.3 for further analysis and Issue Brief 2.3 for background).
 Not met	State law mandates juvenile justice agencies to conduct trauma-informed CSEC screening of children at risk of sex trafficking (see Policy Goal 2.4 for further analysis and Issue Brief 2.4 for background).
 Partially met	State law prohibits the criminalization of minors under 18 for prostitution offenses and establishes a services-referral protocol as an alternative to arrest (see Policy Goal 2.5 for further analysis and Issue Brief 2.5 for background).
 Partially met	State law prohibits the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for status offenses, and misdemeanor and non-violent felony offenses committed as a result of their trafficking victimization (see Policy Goal 2.6 for further analysis and Issue Brief 2.6 for background).
 Partially met	State law prohibits the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation offenses, including accomplice and co-conspirator liability, committed as a result of their trafficking victimization (see Policy Goal 2.7 for further analysis and Issue Brief 2.7 for background).
 Fully met	State law provides child sex trafficking victims with an affirmative defense to violent felonies committed as a result of their trafficking victimization (see Policy Goal 2.8 for further analysis and Issue Brief 2.8 for background).
 Not met	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 (see Policy Goal 3.1 for further analysis and Issue Brief 3.1 for background).
 Not met	State funding is appropriated to support specialized services and a continuum of care for sex trafficked children regardless of system involvement (see Policy Goal 3.6 for further analysis and Issue Brief 3.6 for background).

STATE SUMMARY:

Oklahoma protects some, but not all, minors from prosecution for prostitution. Because state law hinges non-criminalization on a finding of victimization, survivors may be subject to re-traumatizing practices and adversarial processes prior to being identified as a child sex trafficking victim, while others may never be identified and subject to prosecution for prostitution. Importantly, non-criminalization protections extend beyond prostitution offenses to misdemeanors, non-violent felony offenses, and certain commercial sexual exploitation-related conduct committed as a result of the person's own trafficking victimization. However, state law does not facilitate access to, or provide funding for, community-based services, potentially leaving some survivors underserved or disconnected from resources that are necessary to address trauma and promote healing.

SAFE HARBOR RESOURCES: For additional information, visit reportcards.sharedhope.org/safeharbor/.

SAFE HARBOR MAP: To see our map of state Safe Harbor law development, visit reportcards.sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SafeHarborMapDec2022.pdf.

This report provides a thorough analysis of Oklahoma’s statutes related to offender accountability and victim protections while providing recommendations for addressing gaps in those statutes.¹ This report does not analyze case law, agency rules, or regulations, nor does it analyze practices or initiatives that exist outside of statutory law. However, stakeholders were invited to share non-statutory responses to paint a fuller picture of the state’s anti-child sex trafficking response; where such responses were submitted, they are included as “Insights from the Field” under the respective policy goal but are not factored into the state’s grade.

For more information on how to use this Analysis Report, click [here](#).



ISSUE 1: Criminal Provisions

Policy Goal 1.1

The child sex trafficking law is expressly applicable to buyers of commercial sex with any minor under 18.

● **FULLY MET**

Oklahoma’s trafficking law expressly applies to buyers of commercial sex with minors based on term “purchasing” used within the definition of “human trafficking for commercial sex.” Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B) (Human trafficking), “It shall be unlawful to knowingly engage in human trafficking.”² Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(6)(b) defines “human trafficking for commercial sex” to include “recruiting, enticing, harboring, maintaining, transporting, providing, purchasing or obtaining, by any means, a minor for purposes of engaging the minor in a commercial sex act.”³

Further, following federal precedent, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B) could apply to buyers based on the term “obtaining.”⁴

¹ Evaluations of state laws are based on legislation enacted as of July 1, 2023.

² Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(4) defines “human trafficking” as “modern-day slavery that includes, but is not limited to, extreme exploitation and the denial of freedom or liberty of an individual for purposes of deriving benefit from that individual’s commercial sex act or labor.”

³ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(2) defines “commercial sex” as “any form of commercial sexual activity such as sexually performances, prostitution, participation in the production of pornography, performance in a strip club, or exotic dancing or display.”

⁴ See *United States v. Jungers*, 702 F.3d 1066 (8th Cir. 2013). In this case, the Eighth Circuit specifically addressed whether the federal sex trafficking law, 18 U.S.C. § 1591 (Sex trafficking of children or by force, fraud, or coercion) applies to buyers of sex with minors. Reversing a District of South Dakota ruling that Congress did not intend the string of verbs constituting criminal conduct under 18 U.S.C. § 1591(a)(1) (“recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, obtains, or maintains”) to reach the

Policy Goal 1.2

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) laws⁵ specifically criminalize purchasing or soliciting commercial sex with any minor under 18.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law criminalizes soliciting commercial sex with a minor. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1029(A), (B)⁶ (Engaging in prostitution, etc. – Soliciting or procuring – Residing or being in place for prohibited purpose – Aiding, abetting or participating – Child prostitution – Presumption of coercion),

A. It shall further be unlawful:

....

4. To knowingly offer money or any other item or service of value, or agree to provide or pay money or any other item or service of value to, or on behalf of, another person, for the purpose of engaging in sexual conduct, as defined in subsection B of Section 1024.1 of this title [Definitions], with that person or another; or

5. To aid, abet, or participate in the doing of any of the acts prohibited in paragraph 1, 2, 3, or 4 of this subsection.

B. Any prohibited act described in paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 of subsection A of this section committed with a person under eighteen (18) years of age shall be deemed child prostitution,⁷ as defined in Section 1030 of this title [Definitions], and shall be punishable as provided in Section 1031 of this title [Punishment for violation].

Further, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1040.13a(A), (B) (Facilitating, encouraging, offering, or soliciting sexual conduct or engaging in sexual communication with a minor or person believed to be a minor) states,

conduct of buyers (*United States v. Jungers*, 834 F. Supp. 2d 930, 931 (D.S.D. 2011)), the Eighth Circuit concluded that 18 U.S.C. § 1591 does not contain a “latent exemption for purchasers” because buyers can “engage in at least some of the prohibited conduct.” *Jungers*, 702 F. 3d 1066, 1072. Congress codified *Jungers* clarifying that the federal sex trafficking law is intended to apply to buyers in the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA) of 2015 Pub. L. No. 114-22, 129 Stat 227, enacted on May 29, 2015. The JVTA adds the terms “patronize” and “solicit” to the list of prohibited conduct and expressly states, “section 108 of this title amends section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, to add the words ‘solicits or patronizes’ to the sex trafficking statute making absolutely clear for judges, juries, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials that criminals who purchase sexual acts from human trafficking victims may be arrested, prosecuted, and convicted as sex trafficking offenders when this is merited by the facts of a particular case.” *Id.* at Sec. 109. The Eighth Circuit decision in *United States v. Jungers* and the federal sex trafficking law as amended by the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act establish persuasive authority when state courts interpret the string of verbs constituting prohibited conduct in state sex trafficking laws (in particular, the term “obtains”) to the extent such interpretation does not conflict with state case law.

⁵ The phrase “commercial sexual exploitation of children” (or “CSEC”) encompasses a variety of criminal offenses committed against a child in which the child engages, or agrees to engage, in a sex act in exchange for something of value either directly or through a third party. Appropriately crafted CSEC laws can be important, additional tools available in a prosecution of child sex trafficking conduct by supplementing available penalties under the trafficking law and providing additional options for plea negotiations without requiring prosecutors to rely on unrelated or low-level offenses in that context. For this reason, we analyze trafficking laws separately from CSEC laws—even though both involve commercial sexual exploitation. For a complete list of Oklahoma’s CSEC laws, *see* the appendix located at the end of this report.

⁶ The text of Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1029 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 2054 during the 2023 Regular Session of the Oklahoma state legislature (effective July 1, 2023).

⁷ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1030(2) defines “child prostitution” as “prostitution or lewdness as defined in this section with a person under eighteen (18) years of age, in exchange for money or any other thing of value.”

A. It is unlawful for any person to . . . solicit sexual conduct with a minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor, by use of any technology,⁸ or to engage in any communication for sexual or prurient interest with any minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor, by use of any technology . . .

B. A person is guilty of violating the provisions of this section if the person knowingly transmits any prohibited communication by use of any technology defined herein, or knowingly prints, publishes or reproduces by use of any technology described herein any prohibited communication, or knowingly buys, sells, receives, exchanges, or disseminates any prohibited communication or any information, notice, statement, website, or advertisement for communication with a minor or access to any name, telephone number, cell phone number, e-mail address, Internet address, text message address, place of residence, physical characteristics or other descriptive or identifying information of a minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor.

Policy Goal 1.3 Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) laws⁹ apply to traffickers and protect all minors under 18.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma’s CSEC laws address an array of trafficker conduct. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 843.5(H) (Child abuse – Child neglect – Child sexual abuse – Child sexual exploitation – Enabling – Penalties) prohibits a person from “willfully or maliciously engag[ing] in child sexual exploitation”¹⁰ while Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 843.5(J) prohibits

⁸ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1040.13a(A) defines “by use of any technology” as follows:

the use of any telephone or cell phone, computer disk (CD), digital video disk (DVD), recording or sound device, CD-ROM, VHS, computer, computer network or system, Internet or World Wide Web address including any blog site or personal web address, e-mail address, Internet Protocol address (IP), text messaging or paging device, any video, audio, photographic or camera device of any computer, computer network or system, cell phone, any other electrical, electronic, computer or mechanical device, or any other device capable of any transmission of any written or text message, audio or sound message, photographic, video, movie, digital or computer-generated image, or any other communication of any kind by use of an electronic device.

⁹ See *supra* note 5 for a full discussion on the purpose of analyzing trafficking laws separately from CSEC laws throughout this report.

¹⁰ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 843.5(O)(4) defines “child sexual exploitation” as follows:

[T]he willful or malicious sexual exploitation of a child under eighteen (18) years of age by another and includes, but is not limited to:

- a. human trafficking, as provided for in Section 748 of this title, if the offense involved child trafficking for commercial sex,
- b. trafficking in children, as provided for in Section 866 of this title, if the offense was committed for the sexual gratification of any person,
- c. procuring or causing the participation of a minor in child pornography, as provided for in Section 1021.2 of this title,
- d. purchase, procurement or possession of child pornography, as provided for in Section 1024.2 of this title,
- e. engaging in or soliciting prostitution, as provided for in Section 1029 of this title, if the offense involved child prostitution,
- f. publication, distribution or participation in the preparation of obscene material, as provided for in Section 1040.8 of this title, if the offense involved child pornography,
- g. aggravated possession of child pornography, as provided for in Section 1040.12a of this title,
- h. sale or distribution of obscene material, as provided for in Section 1040.13 of this title,

“[a]ny person responsible for the health, safety or welfare of a child [from] willfully or maliciously engag[ing] in enabling child sexual exploitation”¹¹

Under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1087(A) (Child under 18 years of age – Procuring for prostitution, lewdness or other indecent act – Punishment),

No person shall:

1. Offer, or offer to secure, a child under eighteen (18) years of age for the purpose of prostitution, or for any other lewd or indecent act, or procure or offer to procure a child for, or a place for a child as an inmate in, a house of prostitution or other place where prostitution is practiced;
2. Receive or to offer or agree to receive any child under eighteen (18) years of age into any house, place, building, other structure, vehicle, trailer, or other conveyance for the purpose of prostitution, lewdness, or assignation, or to permit any person to remain there for such purpose; or
3. Direct, take, or transport, or to offer or agree to take or transport, or aid or assist in transporting, any child under eighteen (18) years of age to any house, place, building, other structure, vehicle, trailer, or other conveyance, or to any other person with knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the purpose of such directing, taking, or transporting is prostitution, lewdness, or assignation.

Further, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1088(A) (Child prostitution – Inducing, keeping, detaining or restraining for prostitution – Punishment) states,

No person shall:

1. By promise, threats, violence, or by any device or scheme, including but not limited to the use of any controlled dangerous substance prohibited pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Act, cause, induce, persuade, or encourage a child under eighteen (18) years of age to engage or continue to engage in prostitution or to become or remain an inmate of a house of prostitution or other place where prostitution is practiced;
2. Keep, hold, detain, restrain, or compel against his will, any child under eighteen (18) years of age to engage in the practice of prostitution or in a house of prostitution or other place where prostitution is practiced or allowed; or
3. Directly or indirectly keep, hold, detain, restrain, or compel or attempt to keep, hold, detain, restrain, or compel a child under eighteen (18) years of age to engage in the practice of prostitution or in a house of prostitution or any place where prostitution is practiced or allowed for the purpose of compelling such child to directly or indirectly pay, liquidate, or cancel any debt, dues, or obligations incurred, or said to have been incurred by such child.

Lastly, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1040.13a(A), (B) (Facilitating, encouraging, offering, or soliciting sexual conduct or engaging in sexual communication with a minor or person believed to be a minor) states,

-
- i. soliciting sexual conduct or communication with a minor by use of technology, as provided for in Section 1043.13a of this title,
 - j. offering or transporting a child for purposes of prostitution, as provided for in Section 1087 of this title, and
 - k. child prostitution, as provided for in Section 1088 of this title;

¹¹ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 843.5(O)(8) defines “enabling child sexual exploitation” as “the causing, procuring or permitting of child sexual exploitation by a person responsible for a child’s health, safety or welfare.”

A. It is unlawful for any person to facilitate, encourage, offer or solicit sexual conduct with a minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor, by use of any technology,¹² or to engage in any communication for sexual or prurient interest with any minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor, by use of any technology

B. A person is guilty of violating the provisions of this section if the person knowingly transmits any prohibited communication by use of any technology defined herein, or knowingly prints, publishes or reproduces by use of any technology described herein any prohibited communication, or knowingly buys, sells, receives, exchanges, or disseminates any prohibited communication or any information, notice, statement, website, or advertisement for communication with a minor or access to any name, telephone number, cell phone number, e-mail address, Internet address, text message address, place of residence, physical characteristics or other descriptive or identifying information of a minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor.

Policy Goal 1.4 Mistake of age is not an available defense in child sex trafficking prosecutions.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law expressly prohibits a mistake of age defense in prosecutions for child sex trafficking. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(F) (Human trafficking), “Lack of knowledge of the age of the victim shall not constitute a defense to the activity prohibited by this section with respect to human trafficking of a minor.”

Policy Goal 1.5 Use of a law enforcement decoy is not an available defense in child sex trafficking cases.

● FULLY MET

Although the trafficking law does not expressly prohibit an offender from raising a defense based on the use of a law enforcement decoy posing as a minor, Oklahoma’s criminal attempt statute, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 44 (Attempt defined), could provide prosecutors with an alternative avenue to prosecute those cases. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 44(a) states,

A person is guilty of an attempt to commit a crime if, acting with the kind of culpability otherwise required for commission of the crime, he:

(a) purposely engages in conduct which would constitute the crime if the attendant circumstances were as he believes them to be; or,

Accordingly, an offender could be found guilty of attempting to commit a child sex trafficking offense despite the use of a law enforcement decoy.

¹² Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1040.13a(A) defines “by use of any technology” as follows:

the use of any telephone or cell phone, computer disk (CD), digital video disk (DVD), recording or sound device, CD-ROM, VHS, computer, computer network or system, Internet or World Wide Web address including any blog site or personal web address, e-mail address, Internet Protocol address (IP), text messaging or paging device, any video, audio, photographic or camera device of any computer, computer network or system, cell phone, any other electrical, electronic, computer or mechanical device, or any other device capable of any transmission of any written or text message, audio or sound message, photographic, video, movie, digital or computer-generated image, or any other communication of any kind by use of an electronic device.

Policy Goal 1.6 Business entities can be held criminally liable for conduct that violates the trafficking law.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law allows business entities to be held criminally liable for conduct that violates the trafficking law. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B), (C) (Human trafficking),

B. It shall be unlawful to knowingly engage in human trafficking.¹³

C. . . . Any person violating the provisions of this section where the victim of the offense is under eighteen (18) years of age at the time of the offense shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a felony

Importantly, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 105 (Definition – Person) defines “person” to “include[] corporations, as well as natural persons.” Accordingly, business entities can be held liable for a trafficking violation.

Policy Goal 1.7 State law mandates that financial penalties are levied on sex trafficking and CSEC offenders and are directed to a victim services fund.

● PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law requires financial penalties imposed on trafficking offenders to be directed into a victim services fund; however, financial penalties imposed on CSEC offenders are not likewise required to be directed into a victim services fund, nor are proceeds from forfeited assets.

Regarding court-imposed penalties, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.3¹⁴ (Victims of human trafficking and prevention revolving fund) states,

A. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund for the Office of the Attorney General to be designated the “Victims of Human Trafficking and Prevention Revolving Fund”. The fund shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall consist of all monies received from penalties imposed by the courts on convictions of human trafficking violations and funds received from any other source, including legislative appropriations. All monies accruing to the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the Office of the Attorney General for the purposes provided in subsection B of this section. Expenditures from the fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law with the Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for approval and payment.

B. The purposes of the fund include, but are not limited to:

1. Educating the public about the recruitment, trafficking, and exploitation of persons through human trafficking;
2. Assisting in the prevention of recruitment in schools of minors for exploitation;

¹³ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(4) defines “human trafficking” as “modern-day slavery that includes, but is not limited to, extreme exploitation and the denial of freedom or liberty of an individual for purposes of deriving benefit from that individual’s commercial sex act or labor.” Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(6) defines “human trafficking for commercial sex” as follows:

. . . .

- b. recruiting, enticing, harboring, maintaining, transporting, providing, purchasing or obtaining, by any means, a minor for purposes of engaging the minor in a commercial sex act, or
- c. benefiting, financially or by receiving anything of value, from participating in a venture that has engaged in an act of trafficking for commercial sex;

¹⁴ The text of Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.3 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of Senate Bill 661 during the 2023 Regular Session of the Oklahoma state legislature (effective November 1, 2023).

3. Establishing a survivors' resource center to make information available to survivors of human trafficking about services and resources, including legal services, social services, safe harbors, safe houses, and language services;
4. Assisting in the coordination between law enforcement agencies and service providers; and
5. Providing information concerning a petition for expungement of a criminal history record resulting from the arrest or filing of charges for an offense committed or reported to have been committed while the person was a victim of human trafficking.

Regarding asset forfeiture, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1738(A), (B) (Seizure and forfeiture proceedings – Vehicles, airplanes, vessels, etc. used in attempt or commission of certain crimes) provides for forfeiture of the following:

A.

1. Any commissioned peace officer of this state is authorized to seize any equipment, vehicle, airplane, vessel or any other conveyance that is . . . used in any manner to facilitate or participate in the commission of any human trafficking offense in violation of Section 748 [Human trafficking] of this title, or used by any defendant when such vehicle or other conveyance is used in any manner by a prostitute, pimp or panderer to facilitate or participate in the commission of any prostitution offense in violation of Sections 1028 [Setting up or operating place of prostitution], 1029 [Engaging in prostitution, etc.] or 1030 [Definitions] of this title; provided, however, that the vehicle or conveyance of a customer or anyone merely procuring the services of a prostitute shall not be included.

....

B. In addition to the property described in subsection A of this section, the following property is also subject to forfeiture pursuant to this section:

....

11. All conveyances, including aircraft, vehicles or vessels, monies, coins and currency, or other instrumentality used in any manner or part, to commit any violation of the provisions set forth in Section 748 of this title;
12. Any and all property used in any manner or part to facilitate, participate or further the commission of a human trafficking offense in violation of Section 748 of this title, and all property, including monies, real estate, or any other tangible assets or property of or derived from or used by a prostitute, pimp or panderer in any manner or part to facilitate, participate or further the commission of any prostitution offense in violation of Sections 1028, 1029 or 1030 of this title; provided, however, any monies, real estate or any other tangible asset or property of a customer or anyone merely procuring the services of a prostitute shall not be included;

....

Accordingly, both buyers and traffickers face asset forfeiture in trafficking cases; however, only traffickers face asset forfeiture in CSEC cases as Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1738(A), (B) expressly excludes forfeiture in CSEC cases where the offender is “a customer or anyone merely procuring the services of a prostitute.”

Disposition of forfeited assets is governed by Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1738(P), which states,

The proceeds of the sale of any property shall be distributed as follows, in the order indicated:

1. To the bona fide or innocent purchaser, conditional sales vendor, or mortgagee of the property, if any, up to the amount of such person's interest in the property, when the court declaring the forfeiture orders a distribution to such person;
2. To the payment of the actual reasonable expenses of preserving the property;
3. To the victim of the crime to compensate said victim for any loss incurred as a result of the act for which such property was forfeited; and
4. The balance to a revolving fund in the office of the county treasurer of the county wherein the property was seized, to be distributed as follows: one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) to the investigating law enforcement agency; one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of said fund to be used and maintained as a revolving fund by the district attorney to be used to defray any lawful expenses of the office of the district attorney; and one-third

($\frac{1}{3}$) to go to the jail maintenance fund, with a yearly accounting to the board of county commissioners in whose county the fund is established. If the petitioner is not the district attorney, then the one-third ($\frac{1}{3}$) which would have been designated to that office shall be distributed to the petitioner. Monies distributed to the jail maintenance fund shall be used to pay costs for the storage of such property if such property is ordered released to a bona fide or innocent owner, lien holder, mortgagee, or vendor and if such funds are available in said fund.

....

As noted above, however, state asset forfeiture laws do not direct a percentage of a sex trafficking or CSEC offender's forfeited assets into a victim services fund.

- 1.7.1 Recommendation: Statutorily direct a percentage of financial penalties levied on CSEC offenders into a victim services fund. (See [*Issue Brief 1.7.*](#))
- 1.7.2 Recommendation: Statutorily direct a percentage of sex trafficking and CSEC offenders' forfeited assets into a victim services fund. (See [*Issue Brief 1.7.*](#))



ISSUE 2: Identification of & Response to Victims

Policy Goal 2.1

The definition of child sex trafficking victim in the criminal code includes all commercially sexually exploited children without requiring third party control.

● FULLY MET

The definition of child sex trafficking victim includes all commercially sexually exploited children without requiring third party control. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(9) (Human trafficking) defines “victim” as “a person against whom a violation of any provision of this section has been committed.” Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B) expressly applies to buyers of commercial sex with minors based on term “purchasing” used within the definition of “human trafficking for commercial sex,”¹⁵ meaning a buyer can be charged regardless of whether a trafficker is involved or identified. Accordingly, third party control is not required to establish the crime of child sex trafficking or, consequently, to identify a commercially sexually exploited child as a trafficking victim.

Policy Goal 2.2

State law provides policy guidance to facilitate access to services and assistance for trafficked foreign national children.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not provide policy guidance that facilitates appropriate responses to foreign national child sex trafficking victims.

- 2.2.1 Recommendation: Statutorily provide policy guidance that facilitates access to services and assistance for trafficked foreign national children. (See [Issue Brief 2.2](#).)

Policy Goal 2.3

State law mandates child welfare agencies to conduct trauma-informed CSEC screening for children at risk of sex trafficking.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law requires child welfare to establish policies and procedures for identifying and responding to system-involved children who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing sex trafficking victimization. Okla. Stat. tit. 10A, § 1-9-123(A) (Children and youth at risk of sex trafficking – Department policies, procedures, protocols and reports to law enforcement) states,

1. The Department of Human Services shall, in consultation with state and local law enforcement, juvenile justice systems, health care providers, education agencies, and organizations with experience in dealing with at-risk children and youth, establish policies and procedures, including relevant training for caseworkers, for identifying, documenting in agency records and determining appropriate services for children and youth at risk of sex trafficking.
2. The policies and procedures shall be developed for every child or youth over whom the Department has responsibility for placement, care or supervision and shall apply when the Department has reasonable cause to believe a child or youth is currently, or is at risk of being, a victim of sex trafficking, including a child or youth:
 - a. or whom the Department has an open case file, but who has not been removed from their home,

¹⁵ See *supra* Policy Goal 1.1 for a full discussion of buyer-applicability under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.

- b. who has run away from foster care and who has not attained eighteen (18) years of age, or
- c. who is not in foster care but is receiving services.

Additionally, in relation to children who were previously missing from foster care placement or care, Okla. Stat. tit. 10A, § 1-9-123(C)(4) requires child welfare to “develop and implement specific protocols to . . . [d]etermine what the child or youth experienced while absent from care, that would include an appropriate screening to determine if the child or youth is a possible victim of sex trafficking.”

Policy Goal 2.4 State law mandates juvenile justice agencies to conduct trauma-informed CSEC screening of children at risk of sex trafficking.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not require juvenile justice agencies to conduct trauma-informed CSEC screening of children and youth who are at risk of sex trafficking.

- 2.4.1 Recommendation: Enact a state law requiring juvenile justice agencies to screen children and youth who are at risk of sex trafficking for experiences of commercial sexual exploitation. (See [Issue Brief 2.4](#).)

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.

● PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law prohibits the criminalization of some, but not all, minors for prostitution offenses. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1029(A)(1)–(3), (C)¹⁶ (Engaging in or soliciting prostitution – Residing or remaining in place for prohibited purpose – Aiding, abetting, or participating in prohibited acts – Child prostitution – Human trafficking),

A. It shall further be unlawful:

- 1. To engage in prostitution, lewdness, or assignation;
- 2. To solicit, induce, or entice another person to pay or provide money or any other item or service of value to engage in an act of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution, with himself or herself;
- 3. To reside in, enter, or remain in any house, place, building, or other structure, or to enter or remain in any vehicle, trailer, or other conveyance with the intent of committing an act of prostitution, lewdness, or assignation;

....

....

C. No child who is a victim of human trafficking shall be subject to juvenile delinquency or criminal proceedings for the offenses described in subsection A of this section which occurred as a result of the child being a victim of human trafficking.

In addition to the protection provided for under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1029(C), Oklahoma law requires law enforcement to assume protective custody over a minor engaged in commercial sex and to make a referral to child welfare for emergency services and support. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(E) (Rights of victims of human trafficking – Civil action against perpetrator) states,

- 1. Any peace officer or employee of a district court, juvenile bureau or Office of Juvenile Affairs who has reasonable suspicion that a minor may be a victim of human trafficking and is in need of immediate protection shall assume protective custody over the minor and immediately notify the Department of

¹⁶ See *supra* note 6.

Human Services. The minor shall be transferred to the emergency custody of the Department pursuant to the provisions of Section 1-4-201 of Title A of the Oklahoma Statutes. While in custody of the Department, the minor shall be provided with any necessary emergency social services which include, but shall not be limited to, medical examination or treatment, or a mental health assessment

2. The minor shall not be subject to juvenile delinquency proceedings or child-in-need-of-supervision proceedings for prostitution offenses or misdemeanor or nonviolent offenses committed as a result of being a victim of human trafficking.

Resultantly, Oklahoma law insulates identified child sex trafficking victims from prosecution for prostitution and establishes a services-referral protocol; however, minors not identified as victims may still be subject to criminalization, including arrest, detention, charges, and prosecution, for engaging in a commercial sex act.

- 2.5.1 Recommendation: Strengthen existing law to expressly prohibit the criminalization of any person under 18 years of age, regardless of whether the minor is identified as a victim of child sex trafficking. (*See Issue Brief 2.5.*)

Policy Goal 2.6 State law prohibits the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for status offenses, and misdemeanor and non-violent felony offenses committed as a result of their trafficking victimization.

❶ PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law prohibits the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for misdemeanor and nonviolent felony offenses; however, victims can still be charged with status offenses committed as a result of their trafficking victimization. Specifically, Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 748.2(E)(2) (Rights of victims of human trafficking – Civil action against perpetrator) states in part, “The minor shall not be subject to juvenile delinquency proceedings or child-in-need-of-supervision proceedings for prostitution offenses or misdemeanor or nonviolent felony offenses committed as a result of being a victim of human trafficking.”

- 2.6.1 Recommendation: Amend state law to prohibit the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for status offenses committed as a result of their trafficking victimization. (*See Issue Brief 2.6.*)

Policy Goal 2.7 State law prohibits the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation offenses, including accomplice and co-conspirator liability, committed as a result of their trafficking victimization.

❶ PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law prohibits the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for certain conduct related to commercial sexual exploitation; however, victims can still be charged as sex trafficking offenders or as accomplices alongside their exploiters. Under Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 1029(A), (C)¹⁷ (Engaging in prostitution, etc. – Soliciting or procuring – Residing or being in place for prohibited purpose – Aiding, abetting or participating – Child prostitution – Presumption of coercion),

A. It shall further be unlawful:

1. To engage in prostitution, lewdness, or assignation;
2. To solicit, induce, or entice another person to pay or provide money or any other item or service of value to engage in an act of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution, with himself or herself;

¹⁷ See *supra* note 6.

3. To reside in, enter, or remain in any house, place, building, or other structure, or to enter or remain in any vehicle, trailer, or other conveyance with the intent of committing an act of prostitution, lewdness, or assignation;
4. To knowingly offer money or any other item or service of value, or agree to provide or pay money or any other item or service of value to, or on behalf of, another person, for the purpose of engaging in sexual conduct, as defined in subsection B of Section 1024.1 of this title [Definitions], with that person or another; or
5. To aid, abet, or participate in the doing of any of the acts prohibited in paragraph 1, 2, 3, or 4 of this subsection.

....

C. No child who is a victim of human trafficking shall be subject to juvenile delinquency or criminal proceedings for the offenses described in subsection A of this section which occurred as a result of the child being a victim of human trafficking.

While Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 1029(C) shields child sex trafficking victims from prosecution for certain prostitution-related activity, it does not prohibit criminalizing the child for sex trafficking offenses committed as a result of their victimization. Victims charged with a sex trafficking offense must rely on an affirmative defense. Importantly, Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 748(D) (Human trafficking) broadly provides for “an affirmative defense to prosecution for a criminal, youthful offender, or delinquent offense that, during the time of the alleged commission of the offense, the defendant or alleged youthful offender or delinquent was a victim of human trafficking.”

- 2.7.1 Recommendation: Amend state law to prohibit the criminalization of child sex trafficking victims for sex trafficking offenses, including accomplice and co-conspirator liability, committed as a result of their trafficking victimization. (See [Issue Brief 2.7.](#))

Policy Goal 2.8

State law provides child sex trafficking victims with an affirmative defense to violent felonies committed as a result of their trafficking victimization.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law provides child sex trafficking victims with an affirmative defense to violent felonies committed as a result of their trafficking victimization. Specifically, Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 748(D) (Human trafficking) broadly provides for “an affirmative defense to prosecution for a criminal, youthful offender, or delinquent offense that, during the time of the alleged commission of the offense, the defendant or alleged youthful offender or delinquent was a victim of human trafficking.”

EXTRA CREDIT



The affirmative defense provided for under Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 748(D) applies to prosecutions for a criminal, youthful offender, or delinquent offense and does not limit availability to cases involving minors charged as adults. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(9) defines “victim” as “a person against whom a violation of any provision of this section has been committed.” Because Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748 criminalizes trafficking of both minor and adult victims, the affirmative defense provided for under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(D) extends to youth who are charged with criminal offenses as a result of their victimization.



The affirmative defense provided for under Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 748(D) is available to victims of child labor trafficking. Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 748(A)(4) defines “human trafficking” as “modern-day slavery that includes, but is not limited to, extreme exploitation and the denial of freedom or liberty of an individual for purposes of deriving benefit from that individual’s commercial sex act or labor.” Okla. Stat. tit. 21, § 748(A)(5). Accordingly, the inclusion of “labor” within the definition of “human trafficking” extends availability of the affirmative defense to child labor trafficking victims who are charged with offenses as a result of their victimization.

Policy Goal 2.9 Juvenile court jurisdiction provides for a developmentally appropriate response.

❶ PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law does not provide age-appropriate juvenile court responses for all minors accused of engaging in juvenile or criminal conduct. While Oklahoma law extends juvenile court jurisdiction to all minors under 18 years of age, governing state statute fails to establish a minimum age for juvenile court jurisdiction, permits direct file and automatic transfers for minors charged with certain offenses or previously convicted in criminal court, and fails to require courts to consider the impact of trauma or past victimization in make discretionary transfer determinations.

	Minimum Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction	Maximum Age for Charging Youth in Juvenile Court	Automatic Transfers or Permits Direct File	Discretionary Transfers	Requirement for Court to Consider Trauma or Past Victimization
Summary	None. “Child” and “juvenile” are defined as “any person under eighteen (18) years of age”	17.	Yes. Minors: (1) 15+ years of age charged with 1 st degree murder, 1 st degree rape, or attempt of either (prosecuted as an adult); (2) 15+ years of age charged with other felony offenses (prosecuted as a youthful offender) (3) 13 or 14 years of age charged with 1 st degree	Yes. Minors charged with any felony offense, except those qualifying for automatic transfers or direct filing. ¹⁸	No. ¹⁹

¹⁸ Notably, Oklahoma’s “Youthful Offender Act,” codified at Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, §§ 2-5-201 through 2-5-213, creates an alternative path into the adult criminal justice system for minors who are sentenced as youthful offenders for an offense enumerated in Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 2-5-205(A), (C), (D), or (E) (Youthful offender certification). Although the sentence will initially be served in the supervision or custody of the Office of Juvenile Affairs, a youthful offender may be transferred to the custody or supervision of the Department of Corrections if the youthful offender fails to make satisfactory progress toward completing the treatment plan, engages in disruptive or prohibited conduct, or otherwise violates the terms of their sentence. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, §§ 2-5-208A, 2-5-210A(A)(2). Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 2-5-210A(B), “An order transferring custody of a youthful offender to the Department of Corrections shall be deemed an adult conviction and shall be recorded as such in the court records and criminal history records of the offender” If, however, a youthful offender successfully completes the terms of their sentence, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 2-5-202(D) states in part, “Unless otherwise provided by law, when a court determines that a youthful offender has successfully completed his or her treatment and rehabilitation plan and is discharged by the court without a court judgment of guilt and the case dismissed with prejudice, the arrest or adjudication record does not have to be disclosed for the purposes of employment, civil rights, or any regulation, license, questionnaire, application, or any other public purpose.” Accordingly, state youthful offender laws serve the dual purpose of protecting the public while rehabilitating youth and providing accountability.

¹⁹ Although Oklahoma law does not require a court to consider trauma or past victimization in making transfer decisions, trafficking victimization may be considered as a factor in support of a mitigated sentence if the minor was convicted as an adult and committed the offense against their exploiter. Okla. Stat. tit. 10A, § 2-5-401(B) (Mandatory minimum sentence) states,

If a minor is convicted as an adult for an offense that the minor committed when he or she was under eighteen (18) years of age and the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person against whom the minor was convicted of committing the offense trafficked the minor or sexually abused or sexually assaulted the minor within ninety (90) days before the commission of the offense, the court may:

1. Depart from the mandatory minimum sentence or sentence enhancement;
2. Suspend any portion of an otherwise applicable sentence; or
3. Transfer the minor to the jurisdiction of the juvenile division of the district court for further proceedings.

The text of Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 2-5-401 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of House Bill 2210 during the 2023 Regular Session of the Oklahoma state legislature (effective November 1, 2023).

			murder; or (4) previously convicted in criminal court.		
Relevant Statute(s)	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 2-1-103(6) (Definitions)	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 2-1-103(6) (Definitions)	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A § 2-5-205(B), (H) (Youthful offender certification); Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A § 2-5-206(A)–(B), (G) (Acts creating youth offender status – Petition – Warrant – Preliminary hearing – Certification process – Sentencing); Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A § 2-5-204(H) (Certification as adult or youthful offender)	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A § 2-2-403(A) (Child is charged offense which would be a felony if committed by an adult – Trial as adult – Certification order – Bail)	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A § 2-2-403(A) (Child is charged offense which would be a felony if committed by an adult – Trial as adult – Certification order – Bail); Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A § 2-5-205(E) (Youthful offender certification)

Consequently, some minors may still be subject to age-inappropriate juvenile court responses due to state laws that: (1) fail to establish a minimum age for juvenile court jurisdiction that aligns with domestic standards; (2) allow some juvenile cases to be subject to direct file or automatically transferred to criminal court; and (3) do not require the juvenile court to consider past trafficking victimization or trauma when making a transfer determination.

- 2.9.1 Recommendation: Enact comprehensive state laws requiring age-appropriate juvenile court responses for all children accused of engaging in juvenile or criminal conduct. (*See Issue Brief 2.9.*)

Policy Goal 2.10 State law defines child abuse to include child sex trafficking to ensure access to child welfare services.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law defines “abuse” to include commercial sexual exploitation of children. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-1-105(2) (Definitions),

When used in the Oklahoma Children’s Code, unless the context otherwise requires:

....

2. “Abuse” means harm or threatened harm to the health, safety, or welfare of a child by a person responsible for the child’s health, safety, or welfare, including but not limited to nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation

a. “Harm or threatened harm to the health or safety of a child” means any real or threatened physical, mental, or emotional injury or damage to the body or mind that is not accidental including but not limited to sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, or dependency.

....

- c. “Sexual exploitation” includes but is not limited to allowing, permitting, encouraging, or forcing a child to engage in prostitution, as defined by law, by any person eighteen (18) years of age or older or by a person responsible for the health, safety, or welfare of a child

Policy Goal 2.11 State law allows for child welfare involvement in sex trafficking cases that do not involve caregiver fault and provides for an alternative, specialized response in those cases.

○ NOT MET

Child welfare’s involvement in non-caregiver child sex trafficking cases is limited to an emergency response; further, a specialized response is not statutorily required for children reported to child welfare due to trafficking victimization perpetrated by a non-caregiver trafficker.

While Oklahoma’s definition of “abuse” under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-1-105(2) (Definitions) is specifically limited to “harm or threatened harm to the health, safety, or welfare of a child by a person responsible for the child’s health, safety, or welfare,” Oklahoma’s law providing special protections and rights to victims of human trafficking, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2 (Rights of victims of human trafficking – Civil action against perpetrator), provides for a specialized response for all child sex trafficking victims who are taken into protective custody by law enforcement and transferred to the custody of child welfare for emergency services. Access to these services does not hinge on caregiver fault, but child welfare’s ability to provide these services is limited to the initial emergency response, and ongoing access to services may hinge on parent or caregiver fault or other limiting factors by requiring the child be deemed a “deprived child” in order to receive further child welfare services. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(E)(1),

Any peace officer or employee of a district court, juvenile bureau or Office of Juvenile Affairs who has reasonable suspicion that a minor may be a victim of human trafficking and is in need of immediate protection shall assume protective custody over the minor and immediately notify the Department of Human Services. The minor shall be transferred to the emergency custody of the Department pursuant to the provisions of Section 1-4-201 of Title 10A of the Oklahoma Statutes.²⁰ While in custody of the Department, the minor shall be provided with any necessary emergency social services which include, but shall not be limited to, medical examination or treatment, or a mental health assessment.

Law enforcement and the Department of Human Services shall conduct a joint investigation into the claim.

The minor shall remain in the custody of the Department of Human Services until the investigation has been completed, but for no longer than two (2) judicial days, for the show-cause hearing. The Department may release the minor to the custody of a parent or legal guardian if it determines the minor will not be subject to further exploitation. If no such determination is made, the minor shall be subject to the deprived child provisions of the Oklahoma Children’s Code and made eligible for appropriate child welfare services.

²⁰ Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-4-201(A) (child taken into custody prior to filing of petition – Prepetition emergency custody orders),

[A] child may be taken into custody prior to the filing of a petition . . . [b]y a peace officer or employee of the court, without a court order if the officer or employee has reasonable suspicion that:

- a. the child is in need of immediate protection due to an imminent safety threat,
- b. the circumstances or surroundings of the child are such that continuation in the child’s home or in the care or custody of the parent, legal guardian, or custodian would present an imminent safety threat to the child, or
- c. the child, including a child with a disability, is unable to communicate effectively about abuse, neglect or other safety threat or is in a vulnerable position due to the inability to communicate effectively and the child is in need of immediate protection due to an imminent safety threat

Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-1-105(21)(c) (Definitions) defines “deprived child” to include a child “who has been abused, neglected, or is dependent;” however, since the definitions of “abuse”²¹ and “neglect”²² hinge on caregiver fault and the definition of “dependency” is limited to children who are “homeless or without proper care or guardianship,”²³ child sex trafficking victims whose parent or caregiver is available to provide support and is not otherwise at fault for the child’s victimization may not be able to access services beyond initial emergency child welfare services provided pending the show cause hearing.

- 2.11.1 Recommendation: Statutorily allow for child welfare involvement in child sex trafficking cases regardless of parent or caregiver fault and provide for a specialized response in those cases. (See [*Issue Brief 2.11.*](#))

²¹ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-1-105(2) (Definitions) defines “abuse” as limited to acts “by a person responsible for the child’s health, safety, or welfare.”

²² The definition of “neglect” under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-1-105(49) (Definitions) focuses on acts or omissions of a “parent, legal guardian or person having custody or control of a child.”

²³ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-1-105(20) defines “dependency” as “a child who is homeless or without proper care or guardianship through no fault of his or her parent, legal guardian, or custodian.”



ISSUE 3: Continuum of Care

Policy Goal 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.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not mandate a process for coordinating access to specialized, community-based services for child sex trafficking victims that does not require involvement in a child-serving system.

- 3.1.1 Recommendation: Statutorily mandate a process for coordinating access to specialized services for child sex trafficking victims that does not require involvement in child-serving systems. (See [Issue Brief 3.1](#).)

Policy Goal 3.2

State law provides for a survivor-centered multi-disciplinary team response to child sex trafficking cases.

● PARTIALLY MET

Although child sex trafficking victims could receive a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) response through an existing child abuse MDT, Oklahoma law does not require an MDT response specific to child sex trafficking cases. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-9-102 (Coordinated Multidisciplinary Team – Members – Functions – Meeting – Intervention – Duties) states,

- A.
1. In coordination with the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, each district attorney shall develop a multidisciplinary child abuse team in each county of the district attorney or in a contiguous group of counties.
 2. The lead agency for the team shall be chosen by the members of the team. The team shall intervene in reports involving child sexual abuse or child physical abuse or neglect.
- B. The multidisciplinary child abuse team members shall include, but not be limited to:
1. Mental health professionals licensed pursuant to the laws of this state or licensed professional counselors;
 2. Police officers or other law enforcement agents with a role in, or experience or training in child abuse and neglect investigation;
 3. Medical personnel with experience in child abuse and neglect identification;
 4. Child protective services workers within the Department of Human Services;
 5. Multidisciplinary child abuse team coordinators, or Child Advocacy Center personnel; and
 6. The district attorney or assistant district attorney.

- 3.2.1 Recommendation: Statutorily require a multi-disciplinary team response specific to child sex trafficking victims. (See [Issue Brief 3.2](#).)

Policy Goal 3.3

State law requires child welfare to provide access to specialized services for identified sex trafficked children and youth.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law provides access to services that are specialized to the unique needs of child sex trafficking victims. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(A) (Rights of victims of human trafficking – Civil action against perpetrator),

A human trafficking victim shall:

1. Be housed in an appropriate shelter as soon as practicable;
 2. Not be detained in facilities inappropriate to their status as crime victims;
 3. Not be jailed, fined, or otherwise penalized due to having been trafficked;
 4. Receive prompt medical care, mental health care, food, and other assistance, as necessary;
 5. Have access to legal assistance, information about their rights, and translation services, as necessary;
- and
6. Be provided protection if the safety of the victim is at risk or if there is a danger of additional harm by recapture of the victim by a trafficker, including:
 - a. Taking measures to protect trafficked persons and their family members from intimidation and threats of reprisals, and
 - b. Ensuring that the names and identifying information of trafficked persons and their family members are not disclosed to the public.

Further, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(E)(1) provides trafficking victims with access to emergency child welfare services, stating,

Any peace officer or employee of a district court, juvenile bureau or Office of Juvenile Affairs who has reasonable suspicion that a minor may be a victim of human trafficking and is in need of immediate protection shall assume protective custody over the minor and immediately notify the Department of Human Services [DHS]. The minor shall be transferred to the emergency custody of [DHS] . . . While in custody of [DHS], the minor shall be provided with any necessary emergency social services which include, but shall not be limited to, medical examination or treatment, or a mental health assessment.

Law enforcement and [DHS] shall conduct a joint investigation into the claim.

The minor shall remain in the custody of [DHS] until the investigation has been completed, but for no longer than two (2) judicial days, for the show-cause hearing. [DHS] may release the minor to the custody of a parent or legal guardian if it determines the minor will not be subject to further exploitation. If no such determination is made, the minor shall be subject to the deprived child provisions of the Oklahoma Children's Code and made eligible for appropriate child welfare services.

EXTRA CREDIT



Oklahoma law provides child labor trafficking victims with access to specialized under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2, which applies to victims of both sex and labor trafficking.

- Policy Goal 3.4** State law requires the juvenile justice system to provide access to specialized services for identified sex trafficked children and youth.
- NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not provide access to specialized services for identified sex trafficked children and youth in the juvenile justice system.

- 3.4.1 Recommendation: Statutorily require the juvenile justice system to provide access to specialized services for identified sex trafficked children and youth. (See *Issue Brief 3.4*.)

- Policy Goal 3.5** State law extends foster care services to older foster youth.
- PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law extends foster care services to youth under 21 years of age by providing access to transitional planning. However, these services are not extended to youth under 23 years of age as permitted under federal law.²⁴ Specifically, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-9-107(G)–(J) (Successful Adulthood Act – Purpose – Eligibility – Permanency Plan – Notice of Rights – Medicaid Coverage – Information About OHLAP) provides,

G. Successful adulthood services may continue to the age of twenty-one (21), provided the individual is in the custody of the Department or a federally recognized Indian tribe due to abuse or neglect and is in an out-of-home placement at the time of the individual's sixteenth birthday.

H. Individuals who are sixteen (16) years of age or older, who have been released from the custody of the Department or federally recognized Indian tribe due to the entry of an adoption decree or guardianship order are eligible to receive successful adulthood services until the age of twenty-one (21).

I. Individuals who are eligible for services pursuant to the Successful Adulthood Act and who are between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age shall be eligible for Medicaid coverage, provided such individuals were also in the custody of the Department or a federally recognized Indian tribe on the date they reached eighteen (18) years of age and meet Medicaid financial eligibility guidelines.

J. The Department, in conjunction with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, shall provide parents and legal guardians of foster youth with information on the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) including, but not limited to, eligibility, application guidelines, academic requirements, and any other information required by the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Act for participation in the Program.

Adulthood services are available to human trafficking victims under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(A)(4) (Rights of Victims of Human Trafficking – Civil Action Against Perpetrator), which states that “human trafficking victims shall . . . [r]eceive prompt medical care, mental health care, food, and other assistance, as necessary.”

- 3.5.1 Recommendation: Strengthen existing law to better support transition age youth by extending transitional foster care services to youth under 23 years of age. (See *Issue Brief 3.5*.)

²⁴ For more information, see Shared Hope Int'l, *Issue Brief 3.5: Continuum of Care*, <https://reportcards.sharedhope.org/related-resources/#3.5> (discussing federal laws that allow for funded foster care services to be extended to youth under 23 years of age).

Policy Goal 3.6

State funding is appropriated to support specialized services and a continuum of care for sex trafficked children regardless of system involvement.

○ NOT MET

The Oklahoma state legislature did not appropriate funds to support the development and provision of specialized, community-based services and care to child and youth survivors.²⁵

- 3.6.1 Recommendation: Appropriate state funds to support the development of and access to specialized, community-based services to child and youth survivors of sex trafficking. (See [*Issue Brief 3.6.*](#))

²⁵ However, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 74, § 18r(5) (The human trafficking response unit) requires the Human Trafficking Response Unit within the Office of the Attorney General to “[a]ppropriate targeted funding for victim services programs.”



ISSUE 4: Access to Justice for Trafficking Survivors

Policy Goal 4.1 State law allows trafficking victims to seek emergency civil orders of protection.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law allows trafficking victims to seek ex parte civil orders of protection against their exploiters under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 40.2 (VPO for victim of rape, forcible sodomy, sex offense, kidnapping, assault and battery with a deadly weapon – Officer not to discourage pressing charges), which applies to victims of a sex offense. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 40(6)(b)–(p) (Definitions – Assault and battery with a deadly weapon – Forcible sodomy – Kidnapping – Rape – Sex offenses) defines “sex offense” to include the following crimes:

- b. human trafficking for commercial sex as provided in Section 748 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
....
- d. child sexual abuse or child sexual exploitation as provided in Section 843.5 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
....
- n. offering or soliciting sexual conduct with a child as provided in Section 1040.13a of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
- o. procuring a child for prostitution or other lewd acts as provided in Section 1087 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes,
- p. inducing a child to engage in prostitution as provided in Section 1088 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes, and

Accordingly, civil orders of protection are available to victims of child sex trafficking.

Under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 40.2(A) (VPO for victim of rape, forcible sodomy, sex offense, kidnapping, assault and battery with a deadly weapon – Officer not to discourage pressing charges), “A victim protection order for any victim of . . . a sex offense . . . shall be substantially similar to a protective order in domestic abuse cases pursuant to the Protection from Domestic Abuse Act.” Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 60.2(G)²⁶ (Protective order – Petition – Complaint requirement for certain stalking victims – Fees), codified under the Protection from Domestic Abuse Act, allows protective orders to be granted on an ex parte basis, stating, “A victim of . . . a sex offense . . . may petition, or have a petition filed on the victim’s behalf if the victim is a minor, for an emergency temporary order or emergency ex parte order regardless of any relationship or scenario pursuant to the provisions of this section.”

Policy Goal 4.2 Ineligibility factors for crime victims’ compensation do not prevent victims of child sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) from accessing compensation.

● PARTIALLY MET

Although Oklahoma’s crime victims’ compensation laws define “victim” broadly enough to include victims of child sex trafficking and CSEC, ineligibility factors under the Oklahoma Crime Victims Compensation Act may prevent a commercially sexually exploited child from accessing an award.

²⁶ The text of Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 60.2 cited here and elsewhere in this report includes amendments made by the enactment of Senate Bill 291 during the 2023 Regular Session of the Oklahoma state legislature (effective November 1, 2023).

For purposes of accessing crime victims' compensation, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.3(14) (Definitions) defines "victim" as "a person who suffers personal injury or death as a result of criminally injurious conduct" "Criminally injurious conduct" is defined under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.3(5)(a) to include the following:

[A] misdemeanor or felony which occurs or is attempted in this state, or against a resident of this state in a state that does not have an eligible crime victims' compensation program as such term is defined in the federal Victims of Crime Act of 1984, Public Law 98-473, that results in bodily injury, threat of bodily injury or death to a victim which:

- (1) may be punishable by fine, imprisonment or death, or
- (2) if the act is committed by a child, could result in such child being adjudicated a delinquent child.

Under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.5(A) (Powers of board relating to claims for compensation – Office and staff support), "The Crime Victims Compensation Board shall award compensation for economic loss²⁷ arising from criminally injurious conduct if satisfied by a preponderance of the evidence that the requirements for compensation have been met." However, those requirements may limit a commercially sexually exploited child's ability to seek crime victims' compensation. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.10(A)–(C) (Award of compensation – Criteria – Amount – Denial, withdrawal or reduction – Reconsideration),

A. Compensation shall not be awarded:

1. Unless the claim has been filed with the Board within one (1) year after the injury or death upon which the claim is based. If the victim is under a mental or cognitive disability or is a child under eighteen (18) years of age, the Board may use the date the criminal incident was disclosed to a responsible adult when establishing whether or not the claim was timely filed. The Board may, at its discretion, extend the filing period beyond one (1) year upon a showing of good cause²⁸ or in all cases of child sexual assault;
2. To a claimant who was the offender, or an accomplice of the offender;
-
4. Unless the criminally injurious conduct resulting in injury or death was reported to a law enforcement officer within seventy-two (72) hours after its occurrence or the Board finds there was good cause for the failure to report within that time.

B. Compensation otherwise payable to a claimant shall be diminished to the extent:

-
2. Of the degree of responsibility for the cause of the injury or death attributable to the victim as determined by the Board.

C. The Board, upon finding that the claimant or victim has not fully cooperated with appropriate law enforcement agencies, may deny, withdraw or reduce an award of compensation.

4.2.1 Recommendation: Statutorily exempt victims of child sex trafficking and CSEC from ineligibility factors for crime victims' compensation. (*See [Issue Brief 4.2.](#)*)

²⁷ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.3(9) defines "economic loss" as "monetary detriment consisting only of allowable expense, work loss, replacement services loss and, if injury causes death, economic loss and replacement services loss of a dependent, but shall not include noneconomic loss." Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.3(1)(a), "'Allowable expense' means: a. charges incurred for needed products, services and accommodations, including, but not limited to, medical care, wage loss, rehabilitation, rehabilitative occupational training and other remedial treatment and care." "Noneconomic detriment" is defined under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.3(10) as "pain, suffering, inconvenience, physical impairment and nonpecuniary damage."

²⁸ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 142.10 does not explain what constitutes "good cause" for purposes of this section.

Policy Goal 4.3

Sex trafficked children and youth may vacate delinquency adjudications and criminal convictions for any offense arising from trafficking victimization.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not allow sex trafficked children and youth to vacate delinquency adjudications or criminal convictions for offenses arising from trafficking victimization.

- 4.3.1 Recommendation: Enact a law that allows sex trafficked children and youth to vacate delinquency adjudications and criminal convictions for any offense arising from trafficking victimization. (See [Issue Brief 4.3](#).)

Policy Goal 4.4

State law mandates restitution for child sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law requires an offender convicted of a child sex trafficking or CSEC offense to pay restitution. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(C) (Human trafficking), “The court shall . . . order the defendant to pay restitution²⁹ to the victim³⁰ as provided in Section 991f [Definitions] of Title 22 of the Oklahoma Statutes.”

Restitution is available more generally to victims of other crimes pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 991f(C), which provides,

1. Upon conviction for any crime . . . wherein the crime victim suffered injury, loss of income, or out-of-pocket loss, the individuals criminally responsible shall be sentenced to make restitution. Restitution may be ordered in addition to the punishments prescribed by law.
2. The court shall order full restitution based upon the following considerations:
 - a. the nature and amount of restitution shall be sufficient to restore the crime victim to the equivalent economic status existing prior to the losses sustained as a direct result of the crime, and may allow the crime victim to receive payment in excess of the losses sustained; provided, the excess amount of restitution shall not be more than treble the actual economic loss incurred, and
 - b. the amount of restitution shall be established regardless of the financial resources of the offender.

EXTRA CREDIT



Oklahoma law mandates restitution for victims of child labor trafficking under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(C), which requires offenders convicted of Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B), inclusive of sex and labor trafficking, to pay victim restitution.

²⁹ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 991f(A)(1) defines “restitution” as “the sum to be paid by the defendant to the victim of the criminal act to compensate that victim for up to three times the amount of the economic loss suffered as a direct result of the criminal act of the defendant.”

³⁰ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 991f(A)(2) defines “victim” as “any person, partnership, corporation or legal entity that suffers from an economic loss as a direct result of the criminal act of another person.”

Policy Goal 4.5

State law provides child sex trafficking victims with a trafficking-specific civil remedy.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law allows victims of child sex trafficking to pursue civil remedies against their exploiters. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(B) (Rights of victims of human trafficking – Civil action against perpetrator) states,

Any person aggrieved by a violation of subsection B of Section 748 [Human trafficking] of this title may bring a civil action against the person or persons who committed the violation to recover actual and punitive damages and reasonable attorney fees and costs. The civil action brought under this section may be instituted in the district court in this state in the county in which the prospective defendant resides or has committed any act which subjects him or her to liability under this section. A criminal case or prosecution is not a necessary precedent to the civil action

EXTRA CREDIT



Oklahoma law provides sex trafficked youth with a trafficking-specific civil remedy under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(B), which allows “[a]ny person aggrieved by a violation of [Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B) (Human trafficking)] [to] bring a civil action” Importantly, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B) criminalizes trafficking of both minor and adult victims.



Oklahoma law provides child labor trafficking victims with a trafficking-specific civil remedy under Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(B), which allows “[a]ny person aggrieved by a violation of [Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B) (Human trafficking)] [to] bring a civil action” Importantly, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B) criminalizes both sex and labor trafficking.

Policy Goal 4.6

Statutes of limitation for criminal and civil actions for child sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses are eliminated to allow prosecutors and victims a realistic opportunity to pursue criminal action and legal remedies.

● PARTIALLY MET

Though not eliminated, statutes of limitation for certain criminal and civil actions, including those related to child sex trafficking, are lengthened. Regarding prosecutions, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 152(C)(1)–(2), (L) (Statute of limitations) provides,

C.

1. Prosecutions for sexual crimes against children, specifically . . . child abuse pursuant to Section 843.5 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes . . . of the Oklahoma Statutes shall be commenced by the forty-fifth birthday of the alleged victim. Prosecutions for such crimes committed against victims eighteen (18) years of age or older shall be commenced within twelve (12) years after the discovery of the crime. As used in this paragraph, “discovery” means the date that a physical or sexually related crime involving a victim eighteen (18) years of age or older is reported to a law enforcement agency.
2. However, prosecutions for the crimes listed in paragraph 1 of this subsection may be commenced at any time after the commission of the offense if:

- a. physical evidence is collected and preserved that is capable of being tested to obtain a profile from deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), and
- b. the identity of the offender is subsequently established through the use of a DNA profile using evidence listed in subparagraph a of this paragraph.

A prosecution under this exception must be commenced within three (3) years from the date on which the identity of the suspect is established by DNA testing.

....

....

L. Prosecutions for the crime of human trafficking pursuant to Section 748 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes shall be commenced within three (3) years after discovery of the crime. For purposes of this subsection, “discovery” means the date upon which the crime is reported to a law enforcement agency.

Prosecutions for Oklahoma’s other CSEC offenses must commence within 3 years; Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 22, § 152(H) states, “In all other cases a prosecution for a public offense must be commenced within three (3) years after its commission.”

Regarding civil actions, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748.2(B) (Rights of victims of human trafficking – Civil action against perpetrator) provides,

Any person aggrieved by a violation of subsection B of Section 748 [Human trafficking] of this title may bring a civil action against the person or persons who committed the violation The statute of limitations for the cause of action shall not commence until the latter of the victim’s emancipation from the defendant, the victim’s twenty-first birthday, or the plaintiff discovers or reasonably should have discovered that he or she was a victim of human trafficking and that the defendant caused, was responsible for or profited from the human trafficking.

- 4.6.1 Recommendation: Strengthen existing law to allow prosecutions for child sex trafficking and CSEC offenses to commence at any time and eliminate the statute of limitation for filing trafficking-specific civil actions. (See [*Issue Brief 4.6.*](#))



ISSUE 5: Tools for a Victim-Centered Criminal Justice Response

Policy Goal 5.1

Non-testimonial evidence may be admitted through a child sex trafficking-specific hearsay exception to reduce reliance of victim testimony.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not allow non-testimonial, out-of-court statements made by a commercially sexually exploited child to be admitted into evidence in lieu of, or for the purpose of corroborating, the child's testimony.

- 5.1.1 Recommendation: Enact a hearsay exception that applies to non-testimonial evidence in cases involving commercial sexual exploitation of children under 18 years of age. (See [Issue Brief 5.1](#).)

Policy Goal 5.2

State law provides child sex trafficking victims with alternatives to live, in-court testimony regardless of the prosecuted offense.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law allows child sex trafficking victims to testify by an alternative method regardless of the prosecuted offense. Specifically, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 12, § 2611.7 (When child witness may testify by alternative means – Findings, factors, evidentiary standards) states,

A. In a criminal proceeding, the judge or presiding officer may allow a child witness³¹ to testify by an alternative method³² only in the following situations:

1. The child may testify otherwise than in an open forum in the presence and full view of the finder of fact if the judge or presiding officer finds by clear and convincing evidence that the child would suffer serious emotional trauma that would substantially impair the child's ability to communicate with the finder of fact if required to testify in the open forum;³³ and

³¹ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 12, § 2611.4(2) (Definitions) defines "child witness" as "a child as defined by Section 1-1-105 of Title 10A of the Oklahoma Statutes who has been or will be called to testify in a proceeding." In turn, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-1-105 defines "child" as "any unmarried person under eighteen (18) years of age."

³² Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 12, § 2611.4(1) defines "alternative method" as follows:

[A] method by which a child witness testifies which does not include all of the following:

- a. having the child testify in person in an open forum,
- b. having the child testify in the presence and full view of the finder of fact and presiding officer, and
- c. allowing all of the parties to be present, to participate, and to view and be viewed by the child.

³³ Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 12, § 2611.8 (Factors affecting selection of alternate method of testifying),

[T]he judge or presiding officer shall determine whether to allow a child witness to testify by an alternative method and in doing so shall consider:

1. Alternative methods reasonably available;
2. Available means for protecting the interests of or reducing emotional trauma to the child without resort to an alternative method;

2. The child may testify other than face-to-face with the defendant if the judge or presiding officer finds by clear and convincing evidence that the child would suffer serious emotional trauma that would substantially impair the child's ability to communicate with the finder of fact if required to be confronted face-to-face by the defendant.
- C. In a noncriminal proceeding, the judge or presiding officer may allow a child witness to testify by an alternative method if the judge or presiding officer finds by a preponderance of the evidence that allowing the child to testify by an alternative method is necessary to serve the best interests of the child or enable the child to communicate with the finder of fact. In making the finding, the judge or presiding officer shall consider:
1. The nature of the proceeding;
 2. The age and maturity of the child;
 3. The relationship of the child to the parties in the proceeding;
 4. The nature and degree of emotional trauma that the child may suffer in testifying; and
 5. Any other relevant factor.

Policy Goal 5.3 Child sex trafficking victims have access to victim protections in the criminal justice system.

❶ PARTIALLY MET

	Child sex trafficking victims have the right to a victim advocate	Child sex trafficking victims testifying against their exploiter are provided supports in the courtroom	Child sex trafficking victims' identifying information is protected from disclosure in court records
Summary	Not statutorily required.	Children can have support person or therapy dog during testimony.	Not statutorily required.
Relevant Statute(s)	None.	Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 12, § 2611.12(B), (C) (Use of a Certified Therapeutic Dog)	None.

- 5.3.1 Recommendation: Statutorily require that child sex trafficking victims have the right to a victim advocate and their identifying information is protected from disclosure in court records. (See [Issue Brief 5.3.](#))

Policy Goal 5.4 State law provides for privileged communications between caseworkers and child sex trafficking victims.

❶ PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law does not provide for privileged communications between caseworkers and child sex trafficking victims specifically. However, child sex trafficking victims may benefit from privileged communications protections provided to certain behavioral and mental health professionals and clients if the victim received care or services from such professionals.

3. The nature of the case;
4. The relative rights of the parties;
5. The importance of the proposed testimony of the child;
6. The nature and degree of emotional trauma that the child may suffer if an alternative method is not used; and
7. Any other relevant factor.

Statute	Profession	Relevant Limitations
Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 12, § 2503 (Physician- and psychotherapist-patient privilege)	Psychotherapists, including psychologists and psychiatrists	None.
Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 59, § 1261.6 (Information confidential – Disclosure)	Social workers	Privilege does not apply to information obtained involving a minor who is the victim or subject of a crime.

- 5.4.1 Recommendation: Enact a child sex trafficking-specific caseworker privilege law that protects a child sex trafficking victim’s communications with a caseworker from being disclosed. (See [Issue Brief 5.4.](#))



ISSUE 6: Prevention & Training

Policy Goal 6.1

State law mandates statewide training for child welfare agencies on identification and response to child sex trafficking.

● FULLY MET

Oklahoma law mandates statewide training for caseworkers on identification and response to child sex trafficking. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 10A, § 1-9-123(A) (Children and youth at risk of sex trafficking – Department policies, procedures, protocols, and reports to law enforcement),

1. The Department of Human Services shall, in consultation with state and local law enforcement, juvenile justice systems, health care providers, education agencies, and organizations with experience in dealing with at-risk children and youth, establish policies and procedures, including relevant training for caseworkers, for identifying, documenting in agency records and determining appropriate services for children and youth at risk of sex trafficking.
2. The policies and procedures shall be developed for every child or youth over whom the Department has responsibility for placement, care or supervision and shall apply when the Department has reasonable cause to believe a child or youth is currently, or is at risk of being, a victim of sex trafficking, including a child or youth:
 - a. for whom the Department has an open case file, but who has not been removed from the home,
 - b. who has run away from foster care and who has not attained eighteen (18) years of age, or
 - c. who is not in foster care but is receiving services.

Further, Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 74, § 18r(2), (4) (The human trafficking response unit) provides,

There is hereby created within the Office of the Attorney General the Human Trafficking Response Unit, which shall:

.....

2. Develop training programs that address prevention efforts and best practices on identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking and support agencies in identifying at-risk environments for human trafficking;

.....

4. Create an incentive program to encourage state agencies to have personnel attend training programs and review policies;

Policy Goal 6.2

State law mandates statewide training for juvenile justice agencies on identification and response to child sex trafficking.

● PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law authorizes statewide training for juvenile justice agencies on identification and response to child sex trafficking. Pursuant to Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 74, § 18r(2), (4) (The human trafficking response unit),

There is hereby created within the Office of the Attorney General the Human Trafficking Response Unit, which shall:

.....

2. Develop training programs that address prevention efforts and best practices on identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking and support agencies in identifying at-risk environments for human trafficking;

....

4. Create an incentive program to encourage state agencies to have personnel attend training programs and review policies;

Resultingly, resources and training regarding child sex trafficking may be, or become, available for use by juvenile justice agencies. However, state law does not statutorily require individuals employed by juvenile justice agencies to receive such training.

- 6.2.1 Recommendation: Statutorily mandate statewide training for juvenile justice agencies on identification and response to child sex trafficking. (See [Issue Brief 6.2.](#))

Policy Goal 6.3 State law mandates ongoing, trafficking-specific training on victim-centered investigations for law enforcement.

● PARTIALLY MET

Oklahoma law authorizes trafficking-specific training on victim-centered investigations for law enforcement. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 74, § 18r(2), (4) (The human trafficking response unit),

There is hereby created within the Office of the Attorney General the Human Trafficking Response Unit, which shall:

....

2. Develop training programs that address prevention efforts and best practices on identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking and support agencies in identifying at-risk environments for human trafficking;

....

4. Create an incentive program to encourage state agencies to have personnel attend training programs and review policies;

Resultingly, resources and training regarding child sex trafficking may be, or become, available for use by law enforcement. However, law enforcement officers are not statutorily mandated to receive such training nor is the training required to be ongoing.

- 6.3.1 Recommendation: Statutorily mandate ongoing, trafficking-specific training on victim-centered investigations for law enforcement. (See [Issue Brief 6.3.](#))

Policy Goal 6.4 State law mandates trafficking-specific training on victim-centered investigations and prosecutions for prosecutors.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not mandate trafficking-specific training on victim-centered investigations and prosecutions for prosecutors.

- 6.4.1 Recommendation: Statutorily mandate trafficking-specific training on victim-centered investigations and prosecutions for prosecutors. (See [Issue Brief 6.4.](#))

Policy Goal 6.5 State law mandates child sex trafficking training for school personnel.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not mandate training on child sex trafficking for school personnel.

- 6.5.1 Recommendation: Statutorily mandate trafficking-specific prevention education training for school personnel. (See [Issue Brief 6.5](#).)

Policy Goal 6.6 State law mandates child sex trafficking prevention education in schools.

○ NOT MET

Oklahoma law does not mandate child sex trafficking prevention education in schools.

- 6.6.1 Recommendation: Statutorily mandate developmentally and age-appropriate child sex trafficking prevention education in schools. (See [Issue Brief 6.6](#).)

KEYSTONE STATUTES

State Laws Addressing Child Sex Trafficking

1. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(B), (C) (Human trafficking) states,

B. It shall be unlawful to knowingly engage in human trafficking.³⁴

C. . . . Any person violating the provisions of this section where the victim of the offense is under eighteen (18) years of age at the time of the offense shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment in the custody of the Department of Corrections for a term of not less than fifteen (15) years or for life, or by a fine of not more than Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00), or by both such fine and imprisonment

Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(6) defines “human trafficking for commercial sex” as follows:

. . . .

b. recruiting, enticing, harboring, maintaining, transporting, providing, purchasing or obtaining, by any means, a minor for purposes of engaging the minor in a commercial sex act,³⁵ or

c. benefiting, financially or by receiving anything of value, from participating in a venture that has engaged in an act of trafficking for commercial sex;

³⁴ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(4) defines “human trafficking” as “modern-day slavery that includes, but is not limited to, extreme exploitation and the denial of freedom or liberty of an individual for purposes of deriving benefit from that individual’s commercial sex act or labor.”

³⁵ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 748(A)(2) defines “commercial sex” as “any form of commercial sexual activity such as sexually performances, prostitution, participation in the production of pornography, performance in a strip club, or exotic dancing or display.”

State Laws Addressing Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

1. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1029(A), (B)³⁶ (Engaging in prostitution, etc. – Soliciting or procuring – Residing or being in place for prohibited purpose – Aiding, abetting or participating – Child prostitution – Presumption of coercion) states,

A. It shall further be unlawful:

1. To engage in prostitution,³⁷ lewdness,³⁸ or assignation;
2. To solicit, induce, or entice another person to pay or provide money or any other item or service of value to engage in an act of lewdness, assignation, or prostitution, with himself or herself;
3. To reside in, enter, or remain in any house, place, building, or other structure, or to enter or remain in any vehicle, trailer, or other conveyance with the intent of committing an act of prostitution, lewdness, or assignation;
4. To knowingly offer money or any other item or service of value, or agree to provide or pay money or any other item or service of value to, or on behalf of, another person, for the purpose of engaging in sexual conduct, as defined in subsection B of Section 1024.1 of this title [Definitions], with that person or another; or
5. To aid, abet, or participate in the doing of any of the acts prohibited in paragraph 1, 2, 3, or 4 of this subsection.

B. Any prohibited act described in paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 of subsection A of this section committed with a person under eighteen (18) years of age shall be deemed child prostitution,³⁹ as defined in Section 1030 of this title [Definitions], and shall be punishable as provided in Section 1031 of this title [Punishment for violation].

When the victim is a minor, a violation of Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1029 is punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years and a fine up to \$5,000. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, §§ 1029(B), 1031(C).

2. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1087(A), (B) (Child under 18 years of age – Procuring for prostitution, lewdness or other indecent act – Punishment) states,

A. No person shall:

³⁶ See *supra* note 6.

³⁷ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1030(1) defines “prostitution” as follows:

- a. the giving or receiving of the body for sexual intercourse, fellatio, cunnilingus, masturbation, anal intercourse or lewdness with any person not his or her spouse, in exchange for money or any other thing of value, or
- b. the making of any appointment or engagement for sexual intercourse, fellatio, cunnilingus, masturbation, anal intercourse or lewdness with any person not his or her spouse, in exchange for money or any other thing of value;

³⁸ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1030(6) defines “lewdness” as follows:

- a. any lascivious, lustful or licentious conduct,
- b. the giving or receiving of the body for indiscriminate sexual intercourse, fellatio, cunnilingus, masturbation, anal intercourse, or lascivious, lustful or licentious conduct with any person not his or her spouse, or
- c. any act in furtherance of such conduct or any appointment or engagement for prostitution; and

³⁹ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1030(2) defines “child prostitution” as “prostitution or lewdness as defined in this section with a person under eighteen (18) years of age, in exchange for money or any other thing of value.”

1. Offer, or offer to secure, a child under eighteen (18) years of age for the purpose of prostitution, or for any other lewd or indecent act, or procure or offer to procure a child for, or a place for a child as an inmate in, a house of prostitution or other place where prostitution is practiced;
 2. Receive or to offer or agree to receive any child under eighteen (18) years of age into any house, place, building, other structure, vehicle, trailer, or other conveyance for the purpose of prostitution, lewdness, or assignation, or to permit any person to remain there for such purpose; or
 3. Direct, take, or transport, or to offer or agree to take or transport, or aid or assist in transporting, any child under eighteen (18) years of age to any house, place, building, other structure, vehicle, trailer, or other conveyance, or to any other person with knowledge or having reasonable cause to believe that the purpose of such directing, taking, or transporting is prostitution, lewdness, or assignation.
- B.
1. Any person violating the provisions of subsection A of this section shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment of not less than one (1) year nor more than ten (10) years.
 2. Any owner, proprietor, keeper, manager, conductor, or other person who knowingly permits any violation of this section in any house, building, room, or other premises or any conveyances under his control or of which he has possession shall, upon conviction for the first offense, be guilty of a misdemeanor and punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not less than six (6) months nor more than one (1) year, and by a fine of not less than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) nor more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00)

In addition to the term of imprisonment noted in Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, 1087(B)(1), an offender also faces a possible fine up to \$10,000. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 64(B) (Fine in addition to imprisonment or community punishment.

3. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1088(A), (B) (Child prostitution – Inducing, keeping, detaining or restraining for prostitution – Punishment) states,

A. No person shall:

1. By promise, threats, violence, or by any device or scheme, including but not limited to the use of any controlled dangerous substance prohibited pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Act, cause, induce, persuade, or encourage a child under eighteen (18) years of age to engage or continue to engage in prostitution or to become or remain an inmate of a house of prostitution or other place where prostitution is practiced;
2. Keep, hold, detain, restrain, or compel against his will, any child under eighteen (18) years of age to engage in the practice of prostitution or in a house of prostitution or other place where prostitution is practiced or allowed; or
3. Directly or indirectly keep, hold, detain, restrain, or compel or attempt to keep, hold, detain, restrain, or compel a child under eighteen (18) years of age to engage in the practice of prostitution or in a house of prostitution or any place where prostitution is practiced or allowed for the purpose of compelling such child to directly or indirectly pay, liquidate, or cancel any debt, dues, or obligations incurred, or said to have been incurred by such child.

B.

1. Any person violating the provisions of this section other than paragraph 2 of this subsection, upon conviction, shall be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not less than one (1) year nor more than twenty-five (25) years, and by a fine of not less than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) nor more than Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00).
 2. Any owner, proprietor, keeper, manager, conductor, or other person who knowingly permits a violation of this section in any house, building, room, tent, lot or premises under his control or of which he has possession, upon conviction for the first offense, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for a period of not less than six (6) months nor more than one (1) year, and by a fine of not more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00)
4. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 843.5(H)–(J) (Child abuse – Child neglect – Child sexual abuse – Child sexual exploitation – Enabling – Penalties) states,

H. Any person who shall willfully or maliciously engage in child sexual exploitation,⁴⁰ as defined in this section, shall, upon conviction, be punished by imprisonment in the custody of the Department of Corrections not exceeding life imprisonment, or by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one (1) year, or by a fine of not less than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) nor more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00), or both such fine and imprisonment except as provided in subsection I of this section for a child victim under twelve (12) years of age

I. Any person who shall willfully or maliciously engage in child sexual exploitation, as defined in this section, of a child under twelve (12) years of age shall, upon conviction, be punished by imprisonment in the custody of the Department of Corrections for not less than twenty-five (25) years nor more than life imprisonment, and by a fine of not less than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) nor more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00).

J. Any person responsible for the health, safety or welfare of a child who shall willfully or maliciously engage in enabling child sexual exploitation,⁴¹ as defined in this section, shall, upon conviction, be punished by imprisonment in the custody of the Department of Corrections not exceeding life imprisonment, or by imprisonment in a county jail not exceeding one (1) year, or by a fine of not less than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) nor more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00), or both such fine and imprisonment.

5. Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1040.13a(A)–(D) (Facilitating, encouraging, offering, or soliciting sexual conduct or engaging in sexual communication with a minor or person believed to be a minor) states,

A. It is unlawful for any person to facilitate, encourage, offer or solicit sexual conduct with a minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor, by use of any technology,⁴² or to engage in any

⁴⁰ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 843.5(O)(4) defines “child sexual exploitation” as follows:

the willful or malicious sexual exploitation of a child under eighteen (18) years of age by another and includes, but is not limited to:

- a. human trafficking, as provided for in Section 748 of this title, if the offense involved child trafficking for commercial sex,
- b. trafficking in children, as provided for in Section 866 of this title, if the offense was committed for the sexual gratification of any person,
- c. procuring or causing the participation of a minor in child pornography, as provided for in Section 1021.2 of this title,
- d. purchase, procurement or possession of child pornography, as provided for in Section 1024.2 of this title,
- e. engaging in or soliciting prostitution, as provided for in Section 1029 of this title, if the offense involved child prostitution,
- f. publication, distribution or participation in the preparation of obscene material, as provided for in Section 1040.8 of this title, if the offense involved child pornography,
- g. aggravated possession of child pornography, as provided for in Section 1040.12a of this title,
- h. sale or distribution of obscene material, as provided for in Section 1040.13 of this title,
- i. soliciting sexual conduct or communication with a minor by use of technology, as provided for in Section 1043.13a of this title,
- j. offering or transporting a child for purposes of prostitution, as provided for in Section 1087 of this title, and
- k. child prostitution, as provided for in Section 1088 of this title;

⁴¹ Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 843.5(O)(8) defines “enabling child sexual exploitation” as “the causing, procuring or permitting of child sexual exploitation by a person responsible for a child’s health, safety or welfare.”

⁴² Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 21, § 1040.13a(A) defines “by use of any technology” as follows:

communication for sexual or prurient interest with any minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor, by use of any technology

B. A person is guilty of violating the provisions of this section if the person knowingly transmits any prohibited communication by use of any technology defined herein, or knowingly prints, publishes or reproduces by use of any technology described herein any prohibited communication, or knowingly buys, sells, receives, exchanges, or disseminates any prohibited communication or any information, notice, statement, website, or advertisement for communication with a minor or access to any name, telephone number, cell phone number, e-mail address, Internet address, text message address, place of residence, physical characteristics or other descriptive or identifying information of a minor, or other individual the person believes to be a minor.

. . . .

D. Any violation of the provisions of this section shall be a felony, punishable by a fine in an amount not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), or by imprisonment in the custody of the Department of Corrections for a term of not more than ten (10) years, or by both such fine and imprisonment. For purposes of this section, each communication shall constitute a separate offense

the use of any telephone or cell phone, computer disk (CD), digital video disk (DVD), recording or sound device, CD-ROM, VHS, computer, computer network or system, Internet or World Wide Web address including any blog site or personal web address, e-mail address, Internet Protocol address (IP), text messaging or paging device, any video, audio, photographic or camera device of any computer, computer network or system, cell phone, any other electrical, electronic, computer or mechanical device, or any other device capable of any transmission of any written or text message, audio or sound message, photographic, video, movie, digital or computer-generated image, or any other communication of any kind by use of an electronic device.

RESOURCES

REPORT CARDS PROJECT: For more information on the Report Cards Project, visit reportcards.sharedhope.org.

TOOLKIT: To see how your state compares, visit reportcards.sharedhope.org/toolkit.

HIGHLIGHTED RESOURCES

Community-Based Services White Paper



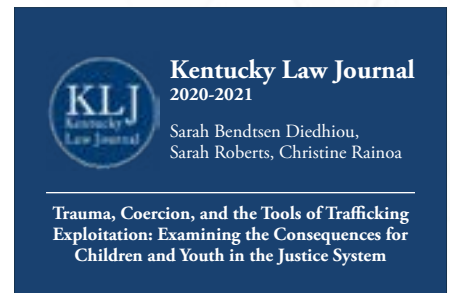
This white paper discusses the importance of providing comprehensive, trauma-informed services to all child sex trafficking victims, regardless of system involvement, and provides examples of state statutory responses.

Victim-Offender Intersectionality Report



This report examines the phenomenon of sex trafficking survivors entering the criminal justice system for allegedly engaging in sex trafficking conduct and provides tools for criminal justice stakeholders to assist in identifying and responding to these cases in a trauma-informed manner.

Trauma, Coercion, and the Tools of Trafficking Exploitation



This law journal article examines the harms of relying on a juvenile justice-based response for serving child sex trafficking victims, the importance of enacting strong non-criminalization laws, the intertwined nature of sex trafficking victimization and criminalized conduct, and the importance of using a trauma-informed lens in response.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For legislators and policy advocates assisting elected officials in creating legislation, request a consultation with our Policy Team online at sharedhope.org/legislative-technical-assistance. We will set up a meeting to discuss your legislative goals and create a customized plan for ongoing technical assistance, bill drafting services, and legislative support.

ADVOCACY ACTION CENTER

The Advocacy Action Center is an online resource that allows individuals to join the fight against child sex trafficking either through legislator engagement or by signing a petition. For more information, visit act.sharedhope.org/actioncenter.



Contact your legislators, letting them know you want greater protections for child sex trafficking victims and increased accountability for their exploiters.



Sign a petition to show your support for issues that advance justice for child sex trafficking survivors.



Help end the criminalization of child sex trafficking survivors! Several states can still criminalize child sex trafficking victims for prostitution. Sign the petition to show your support for changing these laws.