

MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

Human Trafficking in the U.S.

Each year, an estimated **100,000** U.S. children are victims of commercial sexual exploitation; one-third of sex-trafficking allegations in the U.S. involve minors, mostly girls. An estimated 70% of runaway and homeless youth engage in prostitution, while **10-15%** of children living on the streets are trafficked for sexual purposes.

The Scarlet Letter

These children engage in destructive behaviors in order to survive street life, such as drugs, sexual activity, and violence. Labeling a child as “promiscuous” empowers the modern day slave trade by shifting responsibility away from the trafficker and towards the child.

Consent

In the U.S., the most common age of entry into prostitution is between **12-14 years of age**. Many still believe the sexual exploitation of minors isn't child abuse because the child consented to engage in sexual activity. Nevertheless, in California, a child under the age of 18 is legally incapable of giving consent under any circumstance.

Choice

Commercial sexual exploitation of children is not a victimless crime. Labeling a child a “prostitute” suggests an element of choice and that the choice is voluntary. These **children are prostituted**, not prostitutes.

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LOCAL RESOURCES FOR CSEC

Alameda County:

- Asian Health Services/Banteay Srei: 510-533-6825
- Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR): 510-845-7273
- Covenant House: 510-379-1010
- DreamCatcher Youth Shelter & Support Center: 510-522-8363
- Highland Hospital, Sexual Assault Center: 510-534-9290
- Motivating, Inspiring & Supporting Sexually Exploited Youth (MISSEY): 510-267-8840
- West Coast Children's Clinic (WCC): 510-269-9030

Out of County:

- Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach (San Francisco): 415-567-6255
- Community Solutions (San Jose): 408-842-7138
- Community Violence Solutions (Marin & Contra Costa): 510-237-0113
- The SAGE Project (San Francisco): 415-905-5050
- San Francisco Women Against Rape: 415-647-7273
- WEAVE (Sacramento): 866-920-2952

REPORT AN ANONYMOUS TIP

Alameda County H.E.A.T. Watch Tip-Line

510-208-4959 or

tipline@heat-watch.org

National Human Trafficking
Resource Center Hotline

1-888-3737-888

Text info or help to BeFree



"Every day, people in our community are bought and sold for profit. Human beings are not products and can't be exploited. Help us stop this national epidemic."

District Attorney Nancy O'Malley



DEFINITION OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)

The commercial sexual exploitation of children refers to the act of sexually abusing a child for economic gain through force, fraud, or coercion. CSEC is modern-day slavery and can include prostitution of children, child pornography, and child sex tourism.

In Alameda County, over **70%** of at-risk or involved CSEC are **under the age of 18 years old**; more than 60% are African American; 83% have runaway history; almost all have been involved or are currently involved in the probation and foster care systems; and over 50% of youth are from Oakland, CA.¹



HUMAN EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING (H.E.A.T.) WATCH PROGRAM

H.E.A.T. Watch is an Alameda County program that engages the community to improve the investigation and prosecution of human traffickers and purchasers, and assists agencies with the coordination of victim services.

H.E.A.T. Watch uses a 5-point strategy to keep victims safe and hold their traffickers responsible.

¹ Data gathered from January 2011 to August 2013, with a sample size of over 330 minors identified in Alameda County.

5-POINT STRATEGY

- 1. Community Education and Engagement.** Be the eyes and ears of your neighborhood to keep our children safe. Report a tip, and raise awareness about H.E.A.T.
- 2. Law Enforcement Training, Intelligence Sharing, and Coordination.** Build up law enforcement capacity to successfully respond to CSEC cases and investigations.
- 3. Prosecution of Offenders.** Prosecute perpetrators and offenders who buy and sell our children.
- 4. Engage and Enlist Policymakers, Legislators & Community Decision Makers.** Educate lawmakers on the reality of sexually exploited minors, and work with them to improve national, state and local laws against human trafficking.
- 5. Coordinate the Delivery of Essential Services for Stabilization.** Meet victims where they are at, and bring partners together to provide specific and sensitive services for CSEC victims.

BAY AREA H.E.A.T. COALITION (B.A.H.C.)

B.A.H.C. is a Bay Area-wide effort that brings together agencies and individuals to stop human trafficking.



To join B.A.H.C., email info@heat-watch.org



H.E.A.T. WATCH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS SafetyNet

The Alameda County District Attorney's Office facilitates weekly case reviews for all at-risk or involved CSEC victims, in order to create a safety plan for them, and support law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute traffickers.

Young Women's Saturday Program (YWSP)

YWSP is a 12-week educational program for at-risk and involved CSEC victims who have been identified through the **Alameda County Girls Court**, a gender-specific juvenile court that addresses the particular needs of young women in the criminal justice system.

YWSP provides a process for victims and at-risk youth to clear their juvenile arrest record, and connect them to advocacy, education, and case management services that support their immediate and ongoing rescue and recovery.

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