

Improving Resources for At-Risk Youth

Sex trafficking and sexual exploitation occur because a youth's vulnerabilities are being exploited. If a youth lacks a sufficient support system - including basic resources and options for survival - they are at an increased risk of exploitation.

To help prevent sex trafficking and sexual exploitation, communities should strive to provide resources to their most vulnerable youth:

- Youth struggling with substance abuse, homelessness, and poverty,
- Youth with physical, developmental, mental illness, or cognitive disabilities,
- Youth with a history of involvement with the delinquency or child welfare systems, and
- Youth of color, undocumented youth, Native youth, and youth who identify as LGBTQ or gender-nonconforming.

Who are the most vulnerable youth in my community, and what resources are available to them?

Are youth-serving programs and service providers equipped to support youth of all races and gender identities?

How can we increase funding to build the capacity of existing youth-serving programs and service providers?



ISSUE

ASK

"... I feel like what could help is a program that is focused on the youth of this demographic that taught them life skills and survival skills and gave them a safe place to stay, taught them how to fend for themselves, there are tons of reasons why someone could be in this situation."

- Survivor, Voices of Safe Harbor

LEARN

ACTION

- **Learn from Regional Navigators and other Safe Harbor service providers** about the most pressing needs of sexually exploited youth and how best to support the work of these agencies.
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/injury/topic/safeharbor/docs/MDHSafeHarborReferral.pdf>
- **Learn from survivors.** *Voices of Safe Harbor: Survivor & Youth Input for Minnesota's Model Protocol on Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Youth.*
<http://www.hennepin.us/~media/hennepinus/your-government/projects-initiatives/documents/no-wrong%20-door-voices.pdf?la=en>

- Mobilize business owners, faith community members, private foundations, and other community resources to provide financial support to existing youth-serving programs, or create new programs aimed at youth employment and education.
- Look for ways to reduce risk of exploitation to youth: addressing homelessness, bullying, harassment, "everyday" intolerance and discrimination, etc.
- Contact existing service providers to find out more about the needs of at-risk youth in the community and how best to support their work.

