

# Arizona DMST Counts Report

## Assessing the Incidence of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in Delinquency Services in Arizona

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### DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The purpose of this innovative pilot study was to establish an incidence rate of sexually exploited youth receiving delinquency residential or outpatient services in Arizona. The goals of this study are to better understand the scope and magnitude of the sexually exploited and sex trafficked minor population in Arizona as well as to create a better understanding of their identified treatment needs. With this information we can design systems of care to serve the domestic minor sex trafficking victims who currently receive little or no targeted treatment.

Prior to this study, most information about the number of victims in Arizona has been anecdotal. The finding of 161 sex trafficking youth currently in delinquency care in Arizona may assist in the justification of developing targeted treatments for systems involved youth. Of particular interest is that more than three quarters of the DMST clients identified in this study were also involved in the child welfare system (CPS). These findings demonstrate that there are minor sex trafficking victims in Arizona that are neither being identified nor receiving interventions they need.

*Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, MSW, Ph.D.*  
*Director, STIR*

*"The detailed stories of 37 young people and the statistics gathered from them and others are a call to action. We must learn more about how to identify victims of this epidemic and how to stop this scourge from spreading."*

**Hon. Rebecca White-Berch**  
**Chief Justice Arizona Supreme Court**

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

In an online survey with responses from 26 Arizona delinquency service providers we found:

- > **161** unique DMST victims were identified .
- > **37** detailed, individual accounts of DMST experience were reported.

Of these 37 DMST cases:

- > The average age of entry into DMST for this sample is **13** years old.
- > Findings also indicate that **43.2%** of the DMST clients are Caucasian.
- > **54%** of the victims have drug/alcohol addiction.
- > **51.3%** were recruited into the life by a "boyfriend".
- > **94.6%** of DMST victims are females.
- > **66.2%** of victims suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder.
- > **67.6%** of DMST victims had a history of running away.
- > **83.80%** of DMST victims had a history of sexual abuse.
- > **8.1%** were trafficked by a gang.

These findings demonstrate that there are sex trafficking victims in the service systems of Arizona that are not being detected or identified. There is currently very limited attention on sex trafficking-focused treatment interventions in these systems. A lack of understanding of the scope of the DMST problem may be a contributing factor to this issue.

## SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The number of domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) victims in the United States is unknown and general estimates range from 100,000 victims (Polaris Project) to 199,000 victims (Estes & Weiner, 2001) each year. Attaining an accurate count of the number of minors who have experienced sex trafficking has been a complex task with limited useful results, as studies often rely upon weak methodology and many service providers do not have a clear awareness of the issues of DMST (Fedina, 2014). Determining the scope of the DMST problem is critically important as the number of victims in need of targeted services will influence local, state and national decisions regarding the investment in these specific services. A reliable estimate of the number of DMST victims in Arizona will allow systems for youth, such as the juvenile and child welfare systems, to comprehensively identify and serve DMST youth with targeted treatment.

*"We know from many anecdotes that trafficking is happening every day, in every state. What this study begins to uncover is the prevalence of the problem and gives us insight into the traffickers' recruitment methods, information on victim's intersection with public service providers, and a window into the problem to begin addressing it at its roots. This is new data and another tool for public officials, law enforcement and social service providers to use to improve the unique system of services needed to assist trafficked victims."*

**Cindy Hensley McCain, Co-Chair,  
Arizona Human Trafficking Council**

## OREGON STUDY

One recent attempt to develop an accurate state-specific number of DMST victims involved the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC) of Portland regarding documented cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) from 2009 to 2013 (Carey, & Teplitsky, 2013). During the 4.5 years of data collection, there were 469 cases of CSEC recorded by the two agencies. The average age of the CSEC victims in their study was 15.5 years old with 96.4% female and 40.5% Caucasian.

This study provides a framework, and a starting point, for developing new ways to identify an accurate estimate of DMST victims. Much more is needed to be understood about DMST including the size of the problem, what services youth are interacting with, how youth are being sex trafficked, what risk factors youth are displaying and what treatment needs are identified. Detailed information such as this can assist in the development of better prevention, detection and intervention programs for Arizona DMST victims. The current research attempts to answer these questions through a pilot study of DMST within the delinquency service system in Arizona.

## DELINQUENCY AND SEX TRAFFICKING

Research has well documented the relationship between DMST victimization and delinquency, finding that DMST victims are at risk for engaging in a number of criminogenic risk behaviors (i.e. substance abuse, truancy, self harm) that lead to juvenile justice system involvement (Twill, Green, & Traylor, 2010), even when their DMST victimization is undetected (Saewyc, & Edinburg, 2010). Although this link has been found, little research has been conducted to establish how many minors involved in the juvenile justice system have also been victimized in sex trafficking situations.

This study involved conducting a census of DMST victims to establish an estimate of how many domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) victims were in residential and outpatient delinquency services in Arizona in April 2014.

### MODEL PROJECT

This pilot study was modeled after the Domestic Violence Counts: National Census of Domestic Violence Services study, which is conducted annually by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). Each year NNEDV organizes a 24-hour national survey of domestic violence programs with the goal of determining how many individuals are seeking domestic violence services, the number of individuals service providers are unable to serve, and the overall scope of services provided on that day. Prior to their national survey, NNEDV provides a web-based training to all of the organizations they are planning to survey to assist the organizations in understanding what the survey is about and the NNEDV's criteria for inclusion as a 'domestic violence victim'.

### INDIVIDUAL DETAILS ABOUT THE 37 DMST VICTIMS IDENTIFIED INCLUDE:

- > Service involvement
  - > Child Protective Services (CPS)
  - > Probation
  - > Parole
- > Treatment needs
  - > Childhood traumatic experiences
  - > Substance abuse treatment
  - > Mental health treatment
- > Older peers
- > Absent or incarcerated parents
- > High risk behaviors
- > Sex trafficking related details
- > Who was the recruiter
- > Gang/sex trafficking involvement
- > Age at sex trafficking recruitment

### RESEARCH OUTLINE

Following the NNEDV model, this study involved two parts. First, the research team offered an intensive four hour sex trafficking training for all contractors providing services to youth engaged in the juvenile delinquent system, including residential treatment programs and outpatient counseling programs. Second, three weeks after the training, the survey was sent to the clinical or program director of each service agency.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the incidence rate of DMST victims served by the Arizona delinquency system including residential and outpatient settings?
2. What specific characteristics are reported for the identified DMST clients including other system involvement and risk factors (homelessness, prior sexual abuse, presence of an older girlfriend/boyfriend, frequent moving, absent or incarcerated parent, signs of violent experiences, and a history of running away)?
3. What specific treatment needs are identified for the DMST clients?
4. Are there different pathways into sex trafficking for the identified DMST clients?

## TRAINING ON DMST INCLUDED:

- > Risk factors
- > Types of trafficking situations
- > Barriers to treatment
  - > Behavioral
  - > Mental health
  - > Emotional issues
- > Therapeutic techniques for addressing DMST victim needs

## DESIGN

### Training

A four-hour training was offered in Phoenix, Arizona on February 27, 2014 at the Arizona Supreme Court for all delinquency contract providers in Arizona.

- > **105** agencies contracted through the AZ Supreme Court were invited.
- > **32** agencies sent representatives to the training.

Speakers included academics, clinical social workers, survivors and law enforcement. Specific details about the online survey were described and discussed at the training.

### Survey/Instrument

The online survey was sent via email to the participants (director or clinical director of each of the 105 organizations that receive delinquency services contracts from the Arizona Supreme Court) three weeks after the training. These delinquency service contractors included residential and outpatient treatment programs, but not detention centers or corrections (locked) programs. The survey included:

- > Questions about the organizations
- > Number of clients currently serving
- > Number of sex trafficked clients currently being provided with Services
- > Specific details about individual clients who have been identified as sex trafficked and are **currently** being served by the agency.

The survey was designed to collect individual (DMST victim) level data for up to 30 clients per agency.

### Participants

Twenty-six agencies responded to the online survey in March 2014. Of the 26 agencies, 22 had attended the four-hour training on sex trafficking. The four agencies that did not attend reported having no sex trafficked clients. The respondents represented 65% of the agencies that attended the four-hour sex trafficking and 24.7% of the targeted delinquency service providers. The respondents identified 161 unique DMST victims (defined as being compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sexual act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact for money, clothes, drugs, protection or a place to stay) currently being served by their organizations. Many of the responding agencies serve both adults and minors, and the total number served by the responding agencies was 3,980 clients. The respondents provided detailed, individual information for 37 of the 161 total identified DMST victims.

*The respondents provided detailed, individual information for **37** of the **161** total identified DMST victims.*

**Program Type:**

Twenty-six participating agencies reported 161 DMST victims total. **Fourteen** of the 26 agencies provided individual details about 37 DMST victims in their care.

**10 residential programs reported:**

- > 5 reported no DMST (3 programs served males only; 2 of which served only male sex offenders).
- > 5 other programs served a range of 1 DMST victim (5% of total population they serve) to 20 DMST victims (14.5% of total population they serve).
- > 9% of clients served in those 5 programs were DMST victims.

**4 outpatient providers reported:**

- > DMST victims ranging from 1.1% to 6.6% of their clients
- > An average of 3% of current clients reporting a history of DMST

The 26 participating agencies reported on 37 individual clients currently receiving services from their programs. These individuals were identified by the program staff as having a history of sex trafficking.

RESPONDING ORGANIZATIONS

CPSA Against Abuse Inc. Arizona Youth Partnership/ Harbor Back To Life, Inc. Casa de los Niños Casa de Tucson LLC CODAC Behavioral Health Services Corazon Integrated Healthcare Services Fernando Estrada Counseling Florence Crittenden Florence Crittenden Services of Arizona Horizon Human Services	Mingus Mountain Academy New Horizon Youth Homes Oasis Behavioral Health Oasis Casa Grande Rio Salado Behavioral Health Systems, Inc. SAGE Counseling TASC Teen Law School, Inc. The New Foundation The Resolution Group Touchstone Behavioral Health West Winds Counseling Inc. WMHRS, LLC Youth Development Institute
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Program Type	# Reported	Average % of clients served
Residential Programs	53	9%
Outpatient Programs	108	3%
Total Clients Reported	161	

**FINDINGS**

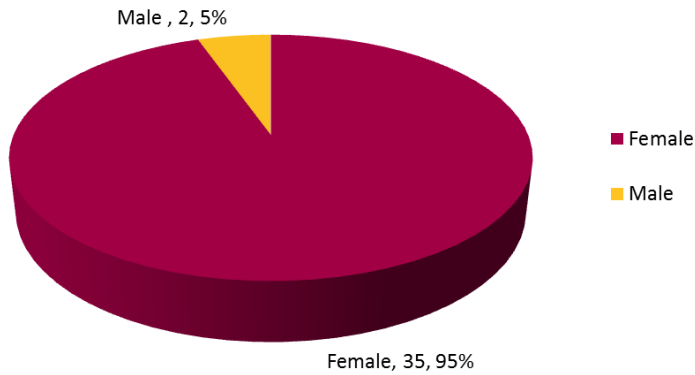
**DMST Client Characteristics**

The 37 domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) clients included 35 females (94.6%) and 2 (5.4%) males. Twenty four (64.9%) of the DMST clients were in residential services and 13 (35.1%) clients were from outpatient services.

Individual Data on DMST Clients from	# of DMST Clients
Residential Programs	24
Outpatient Programs	13
Total Individual Data	37



### 37 Total Reported DMST Clients



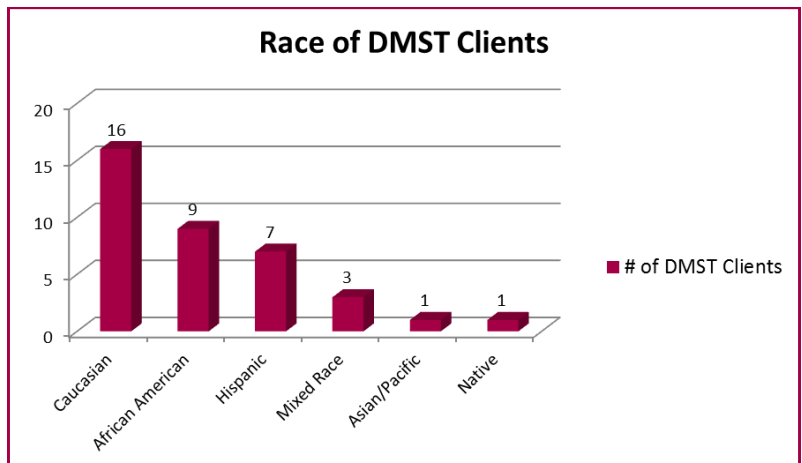
### Age

The current age of the 37 identified DMST clients ranged from 12 to 19 ( $M = 16.03$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ), and the reported age that the DMST client was first trafficked ranged from 8 to 17 years ( $M = 13$ ,  $SD = 2.29$ ).

Age Information	Range	Mean	SD
Current Age	12-19 years	16.03	1.28
Age at Sex Trafficking Recruitment	8-17 years	13	2.29

### Race

Race of the DMST clients included 16 (43.2%) Caucasian, 9 (24.3%) African American, 7 (18.9%) Hispanic, 3 (8.1%) mixed race, and 1 (2.7%) each for Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American.



### Service System Involvement

Service providers reported that the majority of the DMST clients were involved in other systems of care including Child Protective Services (29, 78.4%) and Juvenile Probation (26, 70.3%).

System Involvement	DMST Clients N = 37
Child Protective Services (CPS)	29 (78.4%)
CPS Custody	23 (79.3%)
Family Services	5 (17.2%)
Department of Developmental Disabilities	1 (3.7%)
Juvenile Justice Probation	26 (70.3%)
Juvenile Justice Parole	1 (3.7%)

### Risk Factors Identified

Risk factors reported about the 37 DMST clients included the presence of an older boyfriend/girlfriend by 27 (73%) clients, a history of running away by 25 (67.6%) clients, an absent parent by 22 (59.5%) clients, frequently moving by 14 (37.8%) clients, previous involvement in the juvenile justice system by 14 (37.8%) clients and homelessness by 11 (29.7%) clients.

Risk Factors	# of DMST Clients	% of DMST Clients
Prior sexual abuse	31	83.8%
Presence of an older boyfriend/girlfriend	27	73.0%
History of running away	25	67.6%
Absent parent	22	59.5%
Frequent moving	14	37.8%
Previous Juvenile Justice System involvement	14	37.8%
Homelessness	11	29.7%
Incarcerated parent	8	21.6%
Sex trafficking related tattoos/brands	5	13.5%
Signs of violence (bruises, reports of assault, scars)	5	13.5%

### Treatment Needs, Services and Mental Health Diagnoses Identified

The DMST clients were reported to have significant *treatment needs* with sexual abuse being reported by 83.8% ( $n=31$ ), drug alcohol addiction reported by 54.1% ( $n=20$ ), and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder by 62.2% ( $n=23$ ).

Treatment Needs and Diagnoses	# of DMST Clients	% of DMST Clients
Drug/Alcohol addiction	20	54.1%
Diagnosed with PTSD	23	62.2%
Complex trauma	17	45.9%
ADHD	5	13.5%
Bipolar disorder	2	5.4%
Mood disorder	2	5.4%
Mild mental retardation	1	3.7%
Depression	1	3.7%

The identified DMST clients in the residential and outpatient programs were identified as receiving substance abuse treatment (9, 24.3%), mental health treatment for a mental health diagnosis (24, 64.9%), and/or a co-occurring disorder (16, 43.2%). Some responses to the question regarding mental health treatment and diagnosis indicated mental health diagnoses but were not specific (e.g. “psychiatric treatment”, “mental health diagnosis”); however, the majority of responses provided information on specific diagnoses. Responses occasionally

included more than one diagnosis, and were coded into each category developed from responses to this open-ended question.

### Trafficking Situation:

Responses to the question regarding clients’ pathways into sex trafficking were provided for each of the 37 DMST cases. Responses were read carefully to identify specific categories of recruitment including: 1) friend/acquaintance/older peer, 2) boyfriend, 3) family member, 4) gang, and 5) survival. Responses occasionally included more than one category, and were coded into each category represented in the brief narratives provided in response to this question.

Recruitment Category	# of DMST Clients	Example Descriptions
Friend/acquaintance/ older peer	9	“Client reported she was introduced by a friend” “she was recruited by her peers”
Boyfriend	19	“Recruited by boyfriend” “she was trafficked by her boyfriend”
Family member	6	“Mom and mom’s boyfriend trafficked client in ex- change for drugs or money” “she was trafficked by a parent”
Gang member	2	“Recruited by a gang”
Survival*	5	“Running away”; “drugs and alcohol”; “Ran away and met a pimp”

*\*Note: The fifth category, “survival” does not represent a specific relationship or type of recruitment, but was mentioned as a primary reason why clients became victims of trafficking.*

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study found a reported 161 youth in delinquency program services in Arizona to be DMST victims in April 2014. While only 24.7% of the delinquency service providers responded to the survey, the reported 161 DMST victims is a starting point to develop targeted identification and intervention programs within the Arizona service systems. This count is a significant improvement on all current estimates, guesses and conjectures of the number of minors in Arizona who have been DMST victims.

The multisystem involvement of the DMST clients in this study demonstrates the necessity to integrate sex trafficking training and identification tools for all systems involved in providing services to youth. From a court perspective, the information gleaned from this research advances knowledge to better understand and provide sex trafficking specific Victim Recognition training to court practitioners (ie) juvenile detention officers, juvenile probations officers, judges and treatment providers. More importantly, this study allows the court who provides funding to delinquency service providers to determine more specialized outcomes through better identifying juvenile sex trafficking victims as well as understanding the key factors in treating and rehabilitating sex trafficked minors in Arizona.

This study contributes important new information about the population of DMST victims who are living and receiving treatment or services in the state of Arizona and these findings can assist in the development of targeted trainings, identification protocols and treatment-focused programming for this population of youth. These victims can easily go unnoticed and often do, especially to those with an untrained eye. The likelihood of re-victimization is high, so it is critical that the victims be identified and receive the appropriate interventions.



## CONCLUSION

The individual data collected on 37 victims serves as an invaluable resource for researchers and service providers to develop better prevention, detection and intervention programs for at risk populations of Arizona youth. Of particular interest is the multi-system (child welfare and juvenile justice) involvement of most of the youth and that the average age of first being sex trafficked in the 37 reported cases was 13 years old, lower than previously thought in Arizona, which can offer service providers important insight into younger populations of potential victims. Another important discovery that presents treatment challenges is the relationship between gang affiliation and sex trafficking of minors. Three clients (8.1%) identified as having been trafficked by a gang, specifically the Bloods Gang, and four clients (10.8%) reported being a gang member.

Many risk factors often reported in research literature were supported in this study including high rates of history of childhood sexual abuse, history of running away, involvement with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, presence of an older boyfriend, incarcerated parent, signs of physical violence and presence of tattoos or branding marks. These risk factors can help service providers identify potential victims and offer critical interventions. The presence of 161 DMST victims currently being served by a sample of the juvenile delinquency services system demonstrates that the problem is real and significant in Arizona.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The goal of the ASU STIR office is to be an innovative source of research on domestic sex trafficking that can be used to inform the decisions made by those who are in contact with victims and perpetrators of sex trafficking including law enforcement, prosecutors, educators, and medical and social services. Investment in cutting edge and innovative research on sex trafficking by the McCain Institute for International Leadership made this study possible.

Located, in Washington, DC, with a strong footprint in Arizona, the McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University (ASU) is a non-partisan do-tank dedicated to advancing character-driven leadership based on security, economic opportunity, and human freedom and democracy in the United States and around the world. The Institute seeks to promote leadership and decision-making in the best American tradition of open inquiry, spirited debate, and practical action, and to embrace technology in producing better designs for better decisions in national and international policy. The McCain Institute's commitment to strengthening character-driven global leadership is reflected in its efforts to support humanitarian action. Inspired by Mrs. Cindy McCain's life-long championing of humanitarian causes, the Institute is focusing on two critical humanitarian areas: ending human trafficking--starting in our own backyard in Arizona--and reversing the decline of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For more information about the McCain Institute for International Leadership, please visit: <http://mccaininstitute.org>.

For more information on the Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, please contact the Director, Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, at (602) 496-0093 or [Dominique.roe@asu.edu](mailto:Dominique.roe@asu.edu).