

Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation
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As the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families has documented, Human Trafficking is the misuse of other people often in the forms of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Trafficking can occur at any age and traffickers often recruit people who are vulnerable with deception or with force. Traffickers may exploit people through fraud, abuse of power, control, violence, physical abduction or by threatening a victim or their family.

Trafficking of children and youth is a growing concern across the nation and right here in Wisconsin, and Anti-Human Trafficking work groups formed last year under the direction of the Wisconsin State Human Trafficking Task Force and Coordinator to develop critical details of Wisconsin's approach to addressing sex trafficking of youth.

I was honored to be in the Identification and Screening work group and we worked to come up with a validated screening tool for use by child and youth service agencies throughout the state, including child welfare agencies, juvenile justice agencies, runaway and homeless shelters and others. (See attachment for the Wisconsin Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Indicator and Response Guide) The guide was developed to be a stand-alone document that does not require any special training. The hope is that all systems that serve youth, particularly those with mandated reporters, will use this guide to determine when youth may be at risk of being trafficked and make the appropriate referral to child welfare and/or law enforcement. As of May 29th, 2017, Wisconsin Act 367 will go into effect. It will require child welfare agencies to investigate all cases of alleged child sex trafficking, regardless of the type of relationship between the alleged youth and the alleged maltreater. Law enforcement will also be required to report all suspected cases of sex trafficking of a minor to their local child welfare agency.

Additional work groups include Data and Research, Implementation Advisory, Placement and Services, Prevention and Public Awareness and Training. Coming soon will be the public awareness materials which were developed and will be disseminated to local communities for use in local public awareness activities, achieving STATEWIDE public education coverage and a UNIVERSAL STATEWIDE MESSAGE about this important topic which is officially documented in all 72 counties of Wisconsin.