

Florida Department of Children and Families Annual Human Trafficking Report 2015-2016 Federal Fiscal Year



Mike Carroll
Secretary

Rick Scott
Governor

Mission: To work in partnership with local communities to protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency

Florida Department of Children and Families

Annual Human Trafficking Report

December 2016

Background

Section 39.001(5), F.S., establishes the following goals for the treatment of sexually exploited children who are residing in the dependency system:

- Ensure these children are safe;
- Provide for the treatment of such children as dependent children, rather than as delinquents in the criminal or juvenile justice system;
- Sever the bond between exploited children and traffickers, and reunite these children with their families or provide them with appropriate guardians; and
- Enable these children to be willing and reliable witnesses in the prosecution of traffickers.

Purpose

This report provides information as required in section 39.524(3), F.S., as follows:

- The number of children placed in safe houses and safe foster homes during the year.
- The criteria used to determine the placement of children.
- The number of children who were evaluated for placement.
- The number of children who were placed based upon the evaluation.
- The number of children who were not placed.
- The number of children who were referred to a safe house or safe foster home for whom placement was unavailable.
- The counties in which such placement was unavailable.

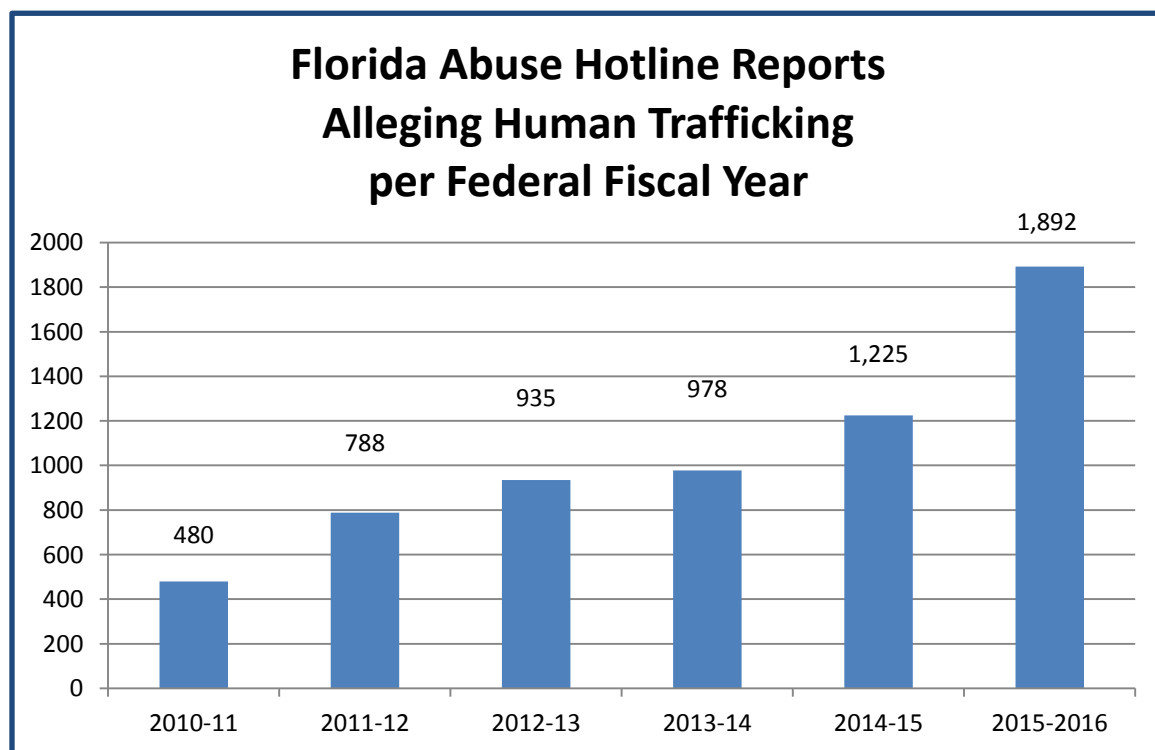
The majority of activities described within this report occurred between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016 (Federal Fiscal Year), unless otherwise noted.

The Department tracked Human Trafficking allegations in two primary categories:

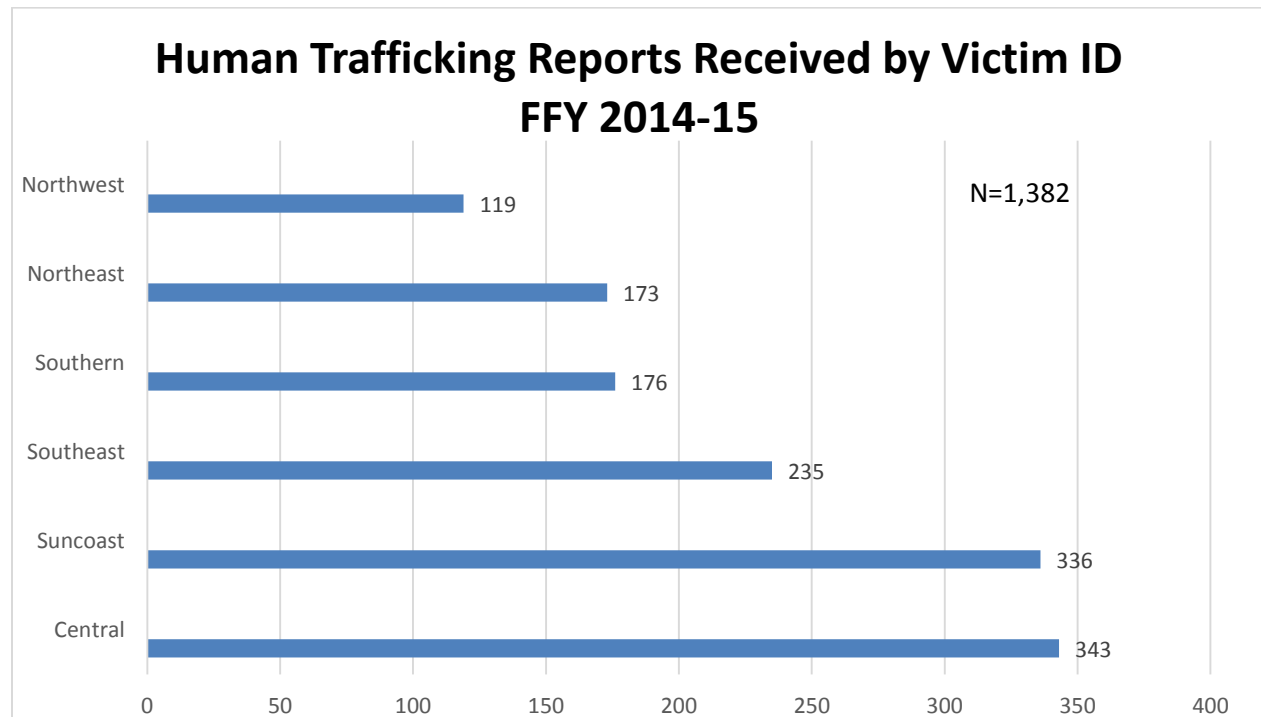
- **Human Trafficking-Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Child (CSEC):** This maltreatment type is used for those cases in which the allegations appear to involve commercial sexual exploitation of a child (e.g., adult entertainment clubs, escort services, prostitution, etc.). Investigative types for this category may be: *Caregiver*, *Other* or *Institutional*. This distinction separates reports based on whether or not the alleged perpetrator is a parent, legal guardian or caregiver, or the alleged perpetrator appears to be an institution.
- **Human Trafficking-Labor:** This maltreatment type is used in those cases in which the allegations appear to involve issues associated with labor trafficking, slavery or servitude that do not appear to be sexual in nature.

Investigative Intake

The number of reports to the Florida Abuse Hotline (Hotline) alleging human trafficking has increased each year since FFY 2010-11. In FFY 2015-16, the Hotline received 1,892 reports, continuing the upward trend with a 54.45 percent increase in the number of human trafficking reports to the Hotline in FFY 2014-15. During FFY 2010-11, the total number of reports, initial and additional, received by the Hotline alleging one of the human trafficking maltreatments was 480. In FFY 2011-12, this number increased to 788, and over the course of FFY 2012-13, this number increased to 935. In FFY 2013-14, this number continued to increase to 978. In FFY 2014-15, there were 1,225 total reports received, a 25 percent increase in the number of human trafficking reports to the Hotline in FFY 2013-14.



The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) identifies the number of reports received by Victim ID Number per region. During FFY 2015-16 there were a total of 1,382 unique victims identified in the 1,892 reports received. For the second year, the Central Region had the highest number of alleged victims (343). Approximately 14.5 percent of the reports received were male victims, which is consistent with the volume of reports received during the prior five years.



Available Safe Houses and Safe Foster Homes

In FFY 2015-16, there were four safe houses available with a total of 20 beds. All of the safe houses are gender-specific and serve only females. Although the number of identified child victims of human trafficking is higher than the number of beds available in safe houses, these beds may not be filled at all times because decisions to place an individual child are based on the existing make-up of residents and the individual's specific needs. The complexity of the residents' needs may limit the number of children a safe home takes at any given time. Often, there is a desire to not introduce too many new children into a home at any given time, to ensure good assimilation of the children into the program and staff engagement with the existing children. Each facility has its own intake and assessment process, and ultimately, determines the appropriateness of that child for that specific placement.

There are two residential campus settings that have specialized CSEC treatment for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. The residential campus settings are able to serve female, male and transgender children. The beds available on these campuses fluctuate based on the total number of residents in all programs offered. Both of these residential campuses also have additional specialized treatment for CSEC victims experiencing substance abuse and for CSEC victims with intellectual disabilities.

There were 15 beds available within the existing Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE) Program, a pilot treatment program by Citrus Health Network implemented in Miami-Dade County to address the unique mental and behavioral health needs of youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. Devereux Florida also has begun recruiting in the Central Florida region for its DELTA Foster Home program. In FFY 2015-16, Devereux had one Safe Foster Home bed available in the Central Region. The Safe Foster Home model will be able to serve male, female or transgender children; there is a one-child-in-a-residence standard. Citrus Health Network has contracted to develop Safe Foster beds in Palm Beach County and, as of November 2016, is actively recruiting for those beds.

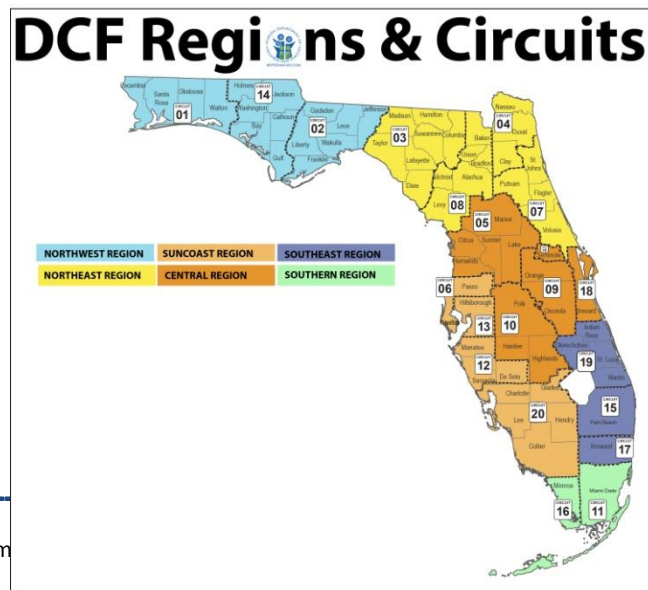
The 2016 Services and Resources Committee report for the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking indicated there was a need for specialized placements for:

- Male victims
- Pregnant and parenting teens; and
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTQ) youth

Adult programs exist in the Suncoast, Southern and Central regions, with approximately 45 beds.

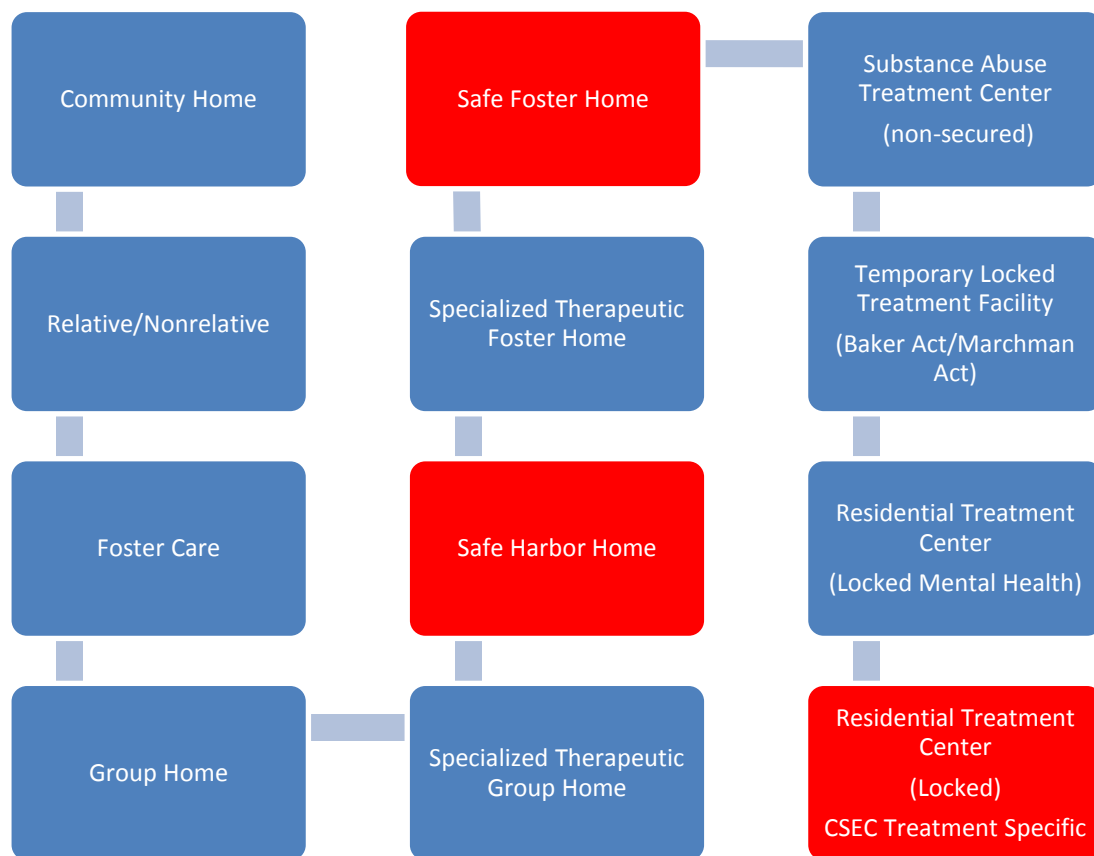
In addition, there are three drop-in centers located in the Southern and Suncoast regions. Kristi's House Project Gold is located in the Southern Region. The Wayne Foundation opened in May 2015 in the Suncoast Region, providing case management and therapeutic intervention. More Too Life, also located in the Suncoast Region, offers victim services, housing assistance, prevention and advocacy. Both of the programs in the Suncoast Region are led by human trafficking survivors.

All specialized placements, at this time, exist in the Central, Suncoast, Southeast and Southern Regions. No CSEC programs



exist in the Northeast or Northwest Regions. With the exception of the CHANCE program, which takes only children from the Miami area, all of the specialized programs are available to any child in the state of Florida. Therefore, while safe homes have not currently been established in the Northeast or Northwest regions, placement in specialized programs is available in the other regions.

Florida's Placement Continuum of Care for CSEC Victims Ages 18 and Under



The above graphic illustrates the full continuum of care for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Children have the ability to move up and down from least restrictive to most restrictive, dependent on their needs. Placements in red reflect specialized CSEC placements.

The University of South Florida (USF) continues to evaluate the CHANCE program. In the progress report dated February 29, 2016, USF identifies promising outcomes. In particular, the report notes, "Youth

have also shown significant improvements in both life functioning and educational outcomes. In particular, significant gains have been made in family functioning, living situation, and use of recreational time. Although improvements in educational attainment and school achievement have been slow, youth have attained significant improvements in school behavior, attendance, and time spent in school, which are important first steps toward greater academic success.” (Armstrong, 2016) The initial conclusions, such as “trauma in particular is very complex and may take considerable time before youth completely stabilize,” will aid in informing practice throughout the state¹.

Placement of Victims in Safe Houses and Safe Foster Homes

A Human Trafficking Screening Tool has been developed through a DCF and Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) workgroup. This tool is designed to assist child welfare professionals and DJJ staff with identifying youth who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation. DJJ launched the tool in its Juvenile Assessment Centers (JAC) statewide beginning February 27, 2015. DCF initiated statewide implementation of the tool on January 13, 2016. As of September 1, 2016, 5,277 tools had been administered by DJJ staff to a total of 3,489 youth, 56.2 percent of tools were administered to girls and 43.8 percent of tools were administered to boys. Two thousand and eighty-six (2,086) screenings resulted in a call to the Hotline, with 1,127 calls accepted for investigation (an acceptance rate of 54 percent). According to DJJ, which tracks the results as part of its statutory requirement to validate the tool, the acceptance rate for calls for girls was 59 percent; for boys, the acceptance rate was 12.5 percent².

Upon identification of a child victim of commercial sexual exploitation, Community-Based Care Lead Agencies assess the child to determine the most appropriate placement. The current mechanism for assessment of placement is through the Multidisciplinary Team staffing (MDT) and use of the Level of Care Placement Tool. These staffings include a conversation among the child protective investigator, dependency case manager, criminal justice coordinator, and any other participant identified as relevant to the conversation, such as active law enforcement agents. They discuss the specific needs of the child, risks or dangers to the child, engagement of the child’s family/support center, and the potential placements that exist. This conversation will also include any specific substance abuse and/or mental health treatment needs.

Between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016, Community-Based Care Lead Agencies reported evaluating a total of 416 children for placement in a safe house or safe foster home. This is a 104 percent increase from the previous year in which 204 children were evaluated for placement in a safe

¹ Armstrong, M., Johnson, M. Anderson, R., Landers, M., & Dollard, N. (2016). **Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE) Pilot Study: Progress Report**. Tampa, FL; Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. University of South Florida.

² Email from Anti-Human Trafficking Director at the Department of Juvenile Justice dated 10/24/2016.

house or safe foster home. Seventy (70), or 17 percent, of the children were placed in a safe house or safe foster home based on evaluation.

Of the children evaluated for a safe home placement, 131 were not placed in a safe house or safe foster home, for a variety of reasons, including the ability to remain safe with a parent or relatives with wraparound services, the child's refusal to participate (participation is required by all CSEC safe houses), the child running away, the child "aging out" of foster care, the child being admitted to a juvenile justice program, specialized services sought for substance addiction or a higher level of mental health services was required.

For 54 of the children referred for CSEC placement, such placement was unavailable. Community-Based Care Lead Agencies cited the following reasons safe homes were not available:

- Lack of capacity (no vacant beds);
- No available local resources;
- Program refusal due to the child's recruitment behavior, substance abuse issues, mental health issues, and history of running away;
- Non-dependent children who were unwilling to engage in services;
- Non-dependent children who were involved with Diversion services and not sheltered;
- Pregnant youth, who are not accepted into any specialized CSEC program; and
- Male victims, for whom no specialized beds are available.

At this time, there are no emergency placement options specifically for CSEC victims. There is often a delay between identifying the victim and placement in a specialized program. Available programs that focus on the specific trauma needs of these children have their own individualized intake and assessment processes. Such processes often require an interview of the child and/or a willingness of the child to participate in the program. Limitations on placement can also include factors such as gang affiliation and commonality of exploiter – meaning these types of factors must be considered in determining placement and the makeup of the safe house or CSEC program. Children who have a shared gang affiliation or a conflicting gang affiliation, or children who have shared exploiters, often cannot be placed together due to the degree of conflict it may cause in the home. Safe homes frequently refuse children who engage in recruitment activity, who display significant history of violence, or who have complex unmet needs, such as active drug use or non-compliant mental health treatment.

Expenditures for Human Trafficking

In SFY 15-16, \$3,000,000 was appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to serve the needs of children who are victims of sexual exploitation and have been adjudicated dependent or who are the subject of an open investigation due to allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation. As directed by the

Legislature, the funds were provided to the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies for costs associated with placement and services for sexually exploited children.

Expenditures reported by the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies indicate that they spent a total of \$4,043,237.85 on CSEC services and placements for 214 youth during state fiscal year 2015-16. During this time, the number of days per child in a CSEC placement ranged from 10 to 366 days. Individual client expenses ranged from \$29 to \$158,112. Citrus Health Network received the largest share of the funding, for a total of \$780,647. Devereux Foundation received the second largest share of the funding, for a total of \$359,856. Finally, Redefining Refuge received the third largest share of the funding for a total of \$288,725.

**To find out more about the legislative changes to support
child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, go to this link:**

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/LegislativeChanges/HB7141.shtml>

Child welfare professionals can find additional resources about human trafficking at:

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/SexualExploitation/SexualExploitation.shtml>

Conclusion

Florida continues to lead the nation in its response to the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children. During FFY 2015-16, there was increased progress in the identification of victims and increased awareness of the specialized needs of these victims in placement and treatment. DCF developed certification language for safe houses and safe foster homes. Two safe houses are currently certified under the new standards. Child welfare professionals continue to see a need for the independent evaluation of placements and programs to fully understand and identify the best intervention options for the children served.