Scope of Human Trafficking in Illinois and Beyond
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2018

Selected Statistics

Illinois Data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH)

- From December 7, 2007 to December 31, 2017, 1,148 human trafficking cases, consisting of 2,832 victims and survivors identified in Illinois, were reported to NHTH.¹
- From January 1 to December 31, 2017, 193 human trafficking cases in Illinois (including 150 cases of sex trafficking, 26 cases of labor trafficking, 10 cases of sex and labor, and 7 types not specified cases) were reported to NHTH. The 193 cases consisted of 552 victims identified based on high and moderate indicators of human trafficking.²
- Top venues/industries for sex trafficking in Illinois based on the 193 trafficking cases from January 1 to December 31, 2017 included: hotel/motel (20); residence-based commercial sex (19); illicit massage/spa business (18); escort services (16); and online ad and venue unknown (14).³
- Top venues/industries for labor trafficking for the same period included: traveling sales crews; domestic work; agriculture; retail/other small business; and begging rings.⁴
- The 193 cases included: gender – female (163), male (18), and gender minorities (3); age – adult (118) and minor (56); and citizenship – citizen/legal permanent resident (50) and foreign national (31).⁵

Illinois Compared to Other U.S. States for Reported Trafficking Cases

- In 2012, Illinois state was ranked 5th in number of trafficking cases nationwide reported to NHTH, whereas in 2017, the state was ranked 11th based on the number of human trafficking cases reported by all the 50 U.S. states.
- In contrast to Illinois, the first four states in number of trafficking cases in 2012 (California, Texas, Florida and New York) kept their ranking among the first five states with the highest number of trafficking cases in 2017.
- Ohio, 12th state in ranking for number of trafficking cases in 2012, was 4th in 2017, while Michigan (15th in 2012) was 6th in 2017.
- Even though the number of victims and survivors identified in Illinois in 2017 showed a 44% increase from the trafficking statistics of 2012, it is difficult to explain the substantial decrease in ranking of Illinois from the infamous 5th place in 2012 to the 11th place in 2017. This relatively considerable decrease in ranking could arguably be considered a positive indicator of the state’s anti-trafficking efforts within the last five years.

- At the national level, from December 7, 2007 to December 31, 2017, there were 40,987 human trafficking cases reported to NHTH, consisting of 88,805 victims and survivors identified nationwide.
- From January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017, 10,615 victims and survivors were identified nationwide.

Data on Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Youth in Illinois

Findings from a study based on the administrative data from the Illinois Department of Children and Families Services (DCFS) - on the prevalence of investigated allegations of child trafficking compared with the investigated allegations of other types of child maltreatment in the state’s child welfare system showed the following:

- From July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2015, there were 563 (0.0008%) investigated allegations of child trafficking compared with a total of 697,062 investigated allegations for all other types of child maltreatment. These 563 allegations represented 419 child victims of trafficking who were predominantly female (90%), African American (53%), residing in a large urban county (56%), and 14–17-years-old on average.
- 61% of the 419 child victims had a previous investigated allegation of maltreatment in their case record, and 28% had at least one entry into out-of-home care prior to, during, and/or after an allegation of human trafficking.

Based on the online data from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), by March 28, 2018, 137 children were reported missing in Illinois.⁶ One in seven runaway children reported to NCMEC nationwide in 2017 were likely victims of child sex trafficking.

It is estimated that 175,000 different johns (i.e., sex buyers) in Chicago buy sex every year.

Approximately 4,400 girls and women engaged in the sex trade on the streets in Chicago a week.⁷

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¹ The data provided are not cumulative, and a human trafficking case may include many victims.
² Idem.
³ Idem.
⁴ Idem.
⁵ Idem.
The most recent study on CSEC in Illinois was conducted in Chicago from 2011 to 2013 and published in 2016. A sample of 202 youths aged 15-24 participated in the study, including 7% of minors aged 15-17. The study focused on Southside, Westside, and Northside of the Chicago.

- Participant gender: 47% male youth, 41% female youth, and 12% transgender youth;
- Citizenship: 98% of US-born participants and only 2% of non-US-born participants; and
- Most participants in the study reported not having pimps, and not primarily engaging in the sex trade for money, but for basic survival resources (i.e., food and clothes and other things young people need). The Chicago study was part of a six-city research study on CSEC in six states. The five other cities were: Atlantic City (NJ), the Bay Area (CA), Dallas (TX), Miami (FL), and Las Vegas (NV). Highlights of the findings from the six-city research study:
  - 949 CSEC victims aged 13-24 participated in the research across the six sites, including 199 minors aged 13-17 (21% of the total sample).
  - Only 3% of the participants were non-US citizens, 97% were US citizens. This finding credibly shows that most victims of CSEC are US-born children and youths.
  - 11% of the 949 CSEC victims were either homeless/living on the streets (5%) or living in a shelter (6%), and an additional 12% reported living alone.
  - 77% of the 949 participants were living with family, friends, or in some other arrangement.
  - Three of every four victims in the study had left home under the age of 18 and 13% had left home under the age of 13.
  - Estimate of earnings by the 949 CSEC victims: about $300-$1,000 a week.
  - Only 15% of the 949 CSEC victims had pimps.
  - Three of every four participants reported using at least one illegal drug.
  - The six-city research study produces an estimate range of 4,457 to 20,994 children and youths in the sex trade at any time nationwide.

Data on Arrests of Sex Buyers and Traffickers in Illinois

McCutcheon, Mustaine & Tewksbury (2016) examined the specific locations Johns, male street-level sex workers, and pimps engaged in the sex trade as well as the proximity to their own residential locations in the city of Chicago (p. 1452). The Chicago Police Department (CPD) makes available specific prostitution data on the Internet for a period of 30 days for each case, and only males are listed on the CPD’s website. The researchers pulled a total of 143 cases for a one-year period, from December 2013 until January 2015, using the CPD web portal. The findings show the following:

- The sample included only males 18 and over who were arrested in relation to some type of prostitution offense.
- 114 of the 143 cases included enough data to differentiate between Johns (N=84), male sex workers (N=13), and pimps (N=17).
- The youngest John was 18 years old, and the oldest John was 69.
- All those charged with pimping offenses appeared to be black.
- A total of 53% of the pimps were arrested on the street, while 17% were arrested in the alley, 11% on the sidewalk, and the remaining 19% were either in vacant lots, other public place, or missing.
- Approximately a third of the cases were represented in four streets in Chicago: Hayes, Michigan, Spaulding, and Cicero. East Hayes Drive was the most frequent address for arrests, which is a street located in Jackson Park in Chicago. This area is near the industrial area of Chicago and is just east of the Chicago Midway Airport. The findings suggested that law enforcement tended to either focus on such locations or only publish prostitution arrests from a few targeted, specific areas in the city.

Findings in a Cook County Sheriff’s Office’s (2017) report based on data extracted from thousands of arrested sex buyers during the national sex trafficking stings from 2011 to 2016 showed that:

- Most sex buyers are Caucasian (38%), at least high school educated (47%), and in many cases, college educated (25%), and middle-aged or older men.
- Of the 156 women who reported the age at which they started prostitution, 44% reported starting prostitution before the age of 18.
- Over 50% of the 156 women reported being recruited into prostitution. Of those, 63% were recruited by a pimp.

Between January 7 and February 4, 2018, law enforcement made more than 630 arrests across the United States as part of the 15th National Johns Suppression Initiative (NJSI) operation.

The 16th NJSI, which ran from July 25 to August 26, 2018 and included 24 law enforcement agencies across 12 states, resulted in:

- The arrest of 473 sex buyers by two dozen police agencies.
- Ten individuals facing charges for attempts to have sex with a minor, six individuals charged with trafficking-related offenses and 11 juveniles recovered.

Arrests made in Illinois in the 16th NJSI included:

- Arlington Heights Police Department: 2 Johns arrested;
- Cook County Sheriff: 75 Johns arrested. The stings included collaborative operations with the Maywood, Lansing and Matteson police departments;
- Lake County Gang Taskforce: 9 Johns arrested.

The Cook County Sheriff’s Office started NJSI in 2011 to draw national attention to the central role sex buyers play in fueling sex trafficking. From October 2011 to August 2018, the Cook County Sheriff’s Police and over 100 participating law enforcement agencies arrested nearly 9,000 sex buyers across 12 states.

Between 2010 and 2017, the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force was responsible for the prosecution of 100 traffickers at the state level and approximately 35 traffickers at the federal level.

CSEC Prosecution and Economy at the National Level

From 2004 to 2013, a total of 37,105 suspects were investigated and referred to U.S. attorneys for CSEC offenses including child sex trafficking and the production, trafficking, distribution, and possession of child pornography. 98% of all defendants convicted of CSEC offenses for the period were sentenced to federal prison. Most defendants charged for the offenses for the period were: male (97%), white (82%), and U.S. citizens (97%).

Dank et al. (2014) estimated the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities: San Diego, Seattle, Dallas, Denver, Washington, DC, Kansas City, Atlanta, and Miami. Estimates of the underground commercial sex economy in 2007 range from $39.9 to $290 million in the 8 cities in the study.

Pimps and traffickers interviewed for the study took home between $5,000 and $32,833 a week.

Unexpected parties benefited from the commercial sex economy, including: pimps, brothel managers, escort services, drivers, and other non-sex workers.

Hotel managers and law enforcement agents sometimes helped offenders evade prosecution in exchange for money or services.
Professional Systems with Vanguard Roles in Anti-Trafficking Efforts

Law Enforcement

- As first responders, law enforcement agencies play a critical role in identifying and responding to human trafficking cases. They are also in a position to bring traffickers to justice.
- Law enforcement personnel come into contact with victims of human trafficking in many situations (during a crisis call, routine traffic stop, or during a long-term investigation).
- During the period between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015, callers representing law enforcement agencies made a total of 664 substantive calls to NHTH, including 75 calls from local law enforcement and 25% from the Federal law enforcement agencies.
- Labor trafficking investigations are not prioritized by local law enforcement agencies, because the agencies have difficulty defining labor trafficking and separating it from other forms of labor exploitation and workplace violations.

Child Welfare System

- There is an association between involvement in the child welfare and victimization to CSEC.
- Being involved with child protection services or having multiple foster care placements has been associated with increased risk of becoming a victim of CSEC.
- One in seven runaways reported to NCMEC in 2017 nationwide were likely victims of child sex trafficking. Of those potential trafficking victims, 88% were in the care of social services when they went missing.
- Many CSEC victims were in foster care, in residential programs for youth, or involved with the child welfare system in the past.
- Many children and youth involved in the sex trade interacted with the child welfare system in some capacity during their sexual exploitation situation.
- 60% of 105 teens engaged in the sex trade recovered as part of a FBI nationwide raid in over 70 cities in 2013 were from foster care or residential group homes. (Human Rights Project for Girls, n.d.; Post, 2015).
- While in the foster care system, factors like placement instability, restricted development and socialization, and the lack of opportunities upon exiting can result in children and youth’s victimization through sex trafficking.

In Illinois

- Teenagers who were prostituted told the Chicago Tribune “they would run away to escape the turbulence and brutality — then do what survival required on streets where they had no money or life skills. At the facilities, experienced youth residents introduced others to pimps, escort websites and street corners. Some disappeared into this world and never returned” (para 7).
- In a close look at two residential centers—Rock River and Lawrence Hall Youth Services in Chicago—the Chicago Tribune identified 14 youths since 2011 whose engagement in prostitution while on brief runs from the facilities was confirmed through police, court or child welfare records. In addition to the youths identified in government records, former residents and staff described cases of prostitution by some 20 other facility youth residents. The Chicago Tribune cross-checked these accounts through multiple interviews.
- The Chicago Tribune also used records and interviews to reveal sex trafficking at several other government-funded facilities that house hundreds of state wards across Illinois (para 15).

Healthcare Professionals

- Due to complex health consequences they experience, human trafficking victims are likely to visit medical and urgent care departments.
- A study report showed that as many as 88% of sex trafficking victims end up in emergency rooms (ERs) and clinics at some point while still being trafficked.
- Chisolm-Straker et al. (2012) found that just 5% of ER workers have ever been trained to deal with these patients and that 73% of ER doctors and nurses don’t even think their patients are affected by trafficking.
- Between January 2015 and December 2017, a total of 2,116 potential victims were recorded by NHTH as having a pre-existing health concern including a possible physical disability, mental health diagnosis, substance use concern, or intellectual/developmental disability, either prior to or at the start of their recruitment into trafficking.
- Human trafficking victims are found not only among health care clients and patients but also among workers in the health care industry. According to the NHTH data, potential labor trafficking victims in the health care industry are primarily found in nursing homes and as home health aides and are typically employed by health care staffing agencies.
- Nearly a third of the potential trafficking and labor exploitation victims reported in health care industry to NHTH since January 2015 were women from the Philippines.

School Personnel

- School personnel are uniquely positioned to identify and report suspected abuse and connect students to services—actions that can prevent trafficking and even save lives.
- Everyone who is part of the school community—administrators, teachers, bus drivers, maintenance personnel, food service staff, resource officers, and other school community members—has the potential to be an advocate for child victims of human trafficking.
- Many child victims of human trafficking are students in the American school system.
- School administrators and staff need to be aware that cases of child trafficking are being reported in communities throughout the nation.
- No community—urban, rural, or suburban—school or student demographic is immune to human trafficking.
- School-age children—particularly those not living with parents—are vulnerable to CSEC.
- The school setting provides an opportunity for interacting with trafficked children without a controller present.
- Sex traffickers target children because of their vulnerability and gullibility, as well as the market demand for young victims.
- The children at risk are not just high school students—studies demonstrate that pimps prey on victims as young as 12.
- Traffickers use students to recruit other students at schools and after-school programs.
- According to the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, U.S. schools are emerging as a potentially promising environment for a variety of trafficking prevention and intervention activities for the young people in their care.
- On an average of 180 days each year, most school-age youth spend six to eight hours in school. Given the regular
interaction between students and educators, school personnel are positioned uniquely to recognize changes in behavior and appearance that may be indicative of trafficking involvement.45
• “By playing a role in the prevention and interruption of the sex trafficking of minors, schools can help put an end to the physical, mental, and emotional trauma suffered by victimized students,” (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2013, p. 19).46

• In 2013, the Texas Legislature made trafficking training for educators and other school-based personnel a priority for Texas.47
• Illinois has no specific policy requiring training for teachers and other school staff about child trafficking. Likewise, no public school systems in the state including the Chicago Public School system have on their websites any specific policy related to awareness and training of their personnel about child trafficking.

Labor Trafficking in Hospitality Industry, Private Residences and Truck Stops

Owens et al. (2014), in their study titled “Understanding the Organization, Operation, and Victimization Process of Labor Trafficking in the United States,” found that the majority of labor trafficking victims—71% of the sample—entered the United States on a lawful visa, but most victims were unauthorized—69%—by the time they escaped labor trafficking and sought services.48
• Labor trafficking victims in the study were exploited across various work venues, including agriculture, hospitality, domestic service in private residences, construction, and restaurants.
• All victims in the sample experienced elements of force, fraud, and coercion necessary to substantiate labor trafficking.
• In addition to the criminal forms of abuse used to dehumanize victims, labor trafficking victims faced high rates of civil labor exploitation (Owens et al., 2014).
• Forms of labor exploitation include: being paid less than minimum wage, being paid less than promised, wage theft, and illegal deductions.

Hospitality Industry

• From December 2007 to February 2015, 1,434 cases of human trafficking in motels and hotels were reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) consisting of 92% of sex trafficking, 5% of labor trafficking and 2% of sex and labor trafficking. A total of 1,837 victims and survivors were identified in the 1,434 cases.49
• Statistics regarding 294 cases of labor exploitation within the hospitality industry which reference a range of workplace abuses and related violations, but that do not contain clear indicators of labor trafficking, reported to NHTRC from December 2007 to February 2015 included: wage and hour abuse 32%; contract fraud 32%; wrongful termination 10%; discrimination 8%; unsafe or unsanitary working conditions 5%; verbal abuse 5%.50
• In 2017, Polaris developed a classification system that identified 25 distinct types of human trafficking in the United States and found that human trafficking related to massage parlors accounted for 2,949 cases51 reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) — second in prevalence only to trafficking in escort services.52
• There are more than 9,000 illicit massage businesses (IMB) currently open for business in the USA.53
• According to Polaris (2017),54 “the total annual revenue of illicit massage businesses in the United States hovers around $2.5 billion annually.”

In Cook County, IL
• Places such as massage parlors and strip clubs sometimes serve as a front for sex trafficking.55 Massage parlors in particular continue to serve as the hot spots for the sex trade in Chicago.56

• The massage business is also susceptible to labor trafficking because it often involves women who are new immigrants to Chicago.
• A notorious example is from 2012, when Alex Campbell, the owner of a massage parlor in Mount Prospect, a northwest Chicago suburb, was sentenced to life in prison after federal authorities discovered that he was not only trafficking women at his business for sex, but that for almost two years, he was also coercing the women to work without pay and with limited food.57

A citywide crackdown on massage parlors called “Operation Hot Towel,” from February to May 2017, was conducted by the Chicago police along with the city’s Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Department: 58
• 61 massage businesses were checked for proper licensing and prostitution. The sting found prostitution at six massage parlors throughout the city. It was found that 77% of Chicago’s massage parlors were not in compliance with city regulations.59
• Multiple arrests were made, 178 violation tickets were handed out, which carried fines well into the thousands of dollars, and 11 cease and desist orders were issued.60
• Following the crackdown on massage parlors, the Chicago’s 19th Ward Alderman Matt O’Shea sponsored a city ordinance that increased fines fivefold, to $5,000, for massage parlor owners if prostitution was discovered at their business.
• Late 2017, Oak Park village trustees approved a tougher ordinance to regulate massage parlor businesses.61 The changes came after a joint investigation between Oak Park police and the Cook County Sheriff’s Office in August 2017 led to prostitution charges against four employees at three massage parlors operating in Oak Park.

Domestic Servitude

• In 2016, domestic work represented the largest sector of all labor trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (now known as NHTH).62
• 396 labor exploitation cases in domestic work were reported to the NHTH between December 7, 2007 and December 31, 2016.63
• Labor trafficking victims in domestic work commonly work 12-18 hours a day, some as much as 24/7 for little to no pay.64
• Domestic or homecare workers often live within their employers’ households and provide services such as cooking, cleaning, and caretaking for children and the elderly or infirm.65
Linda Burnham, and Nik Theodore’s (2012) study, Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work presented the results of the first national survey of domestic workers in the US.68 Between June 2011 and February 2012, they surveyed 2,086 nannies, caregivers, and housecleaners in 14 metropolitan areas including Chicago. These metropolitan areas represent every region of the country, and collectively they are home to 243,370 nannies, caregivers, and housecleaners. Domestic workers from 71 countries were interviewed. The survey revealed the following:

- Substandard working conditions are pervasive in the domestic work industry. Wage rates are low, the work is often hazardous, and workers rarely have effective recourse to improve substandard conditions;
- Domestic workers rarely receive employment benefits;
- Domestic workers have little control over their working conditions. Employment is usually arranged without the benefit of a formal contract;
- Domestic work can be hazardous. Workers risk long-term exposure to toxic chemicals and a range of workplace injuries.

A (2017) study77 showed that there are approximately 2 million domestic workers in the United States today. Domestic workers often work for wealthy families, including international businesspeople and diplomats, cleaning their houses and caring for their loved ones.

- Domestic workers’ passports are often confiscated; their jobs contracts are violated; they are forced to work long hours for little pay; their movements restricted and monitored; they are threatened with arrest and deportation if they try to escape, and treated without dignity or respect.
- 85% of domestic workers in the study reported having pay withheld or being paid well below minimum wage;
- 80% were tricked with false or otherwise deceptive contracts;
- 78% had employers threaten to report them for deportation if they complained;
- 77% reported having their movements restricted or monitored by their employers;
- 75% experienced isolation from the outside world, with employers cutting off access to communication; and
- 62% reported having their passports or other ID taken away from them by employers.

Endnotes

3 Idem.
4 Idem.
5 National Human Trafficking Hotline. Retrieved from https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states
10 Ibid.
13 Idem.
15 Ibid.
19 U.S Department of Justice Office of Justice programs Bureau of Justice Statistics (2017). Federal Prosecution of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of
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Idem.


ECPAT-USA (n.d.). Child sex trafficking and the role of school professionals. How does Child Sex Trafficking Affect Our Schools?

Idem


Op cit. p 297.

Op cit., p. 19.


Idem


Idem

Idem, page 10.


Howard Ludwig (May 22, 2017), Massage Parlor Crackdown Called ‘Operation Hot Towel’ Busts 10 Locations. DNA Info.

Idem


Idem

Idem


Ibid.