



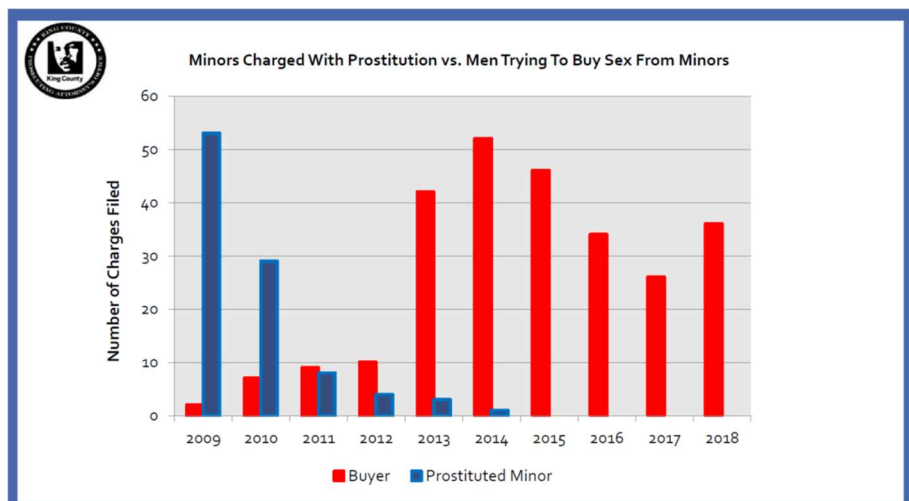
StolenYouth Community Call to Action – 2019 Update

StolenYouth was founded eight years ago with the mission to end child sex trafficking in Washington State. Today, thanks to partnerships with the public and private sectors, there has been increased focus and collaboration on providing services for commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC), addressing the system weaknesses that can lead to the exploitation of vulnerable youth, and, the root cause – sex buyers.

One of the most meaningful measures of Seattle/King County’s achievements in the fight against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) is a reversal in arrests. In 2008, 82 youth were arrested for prostitution and referred to Juvenile Court; in 2018, no minors were arrested for prostitution.

The national and local trend has shifted from arrest and prosecution of juveniles for prostitution, to reframing their status as commercially sexually abused and in need of protection and referral to services. King County’s Prosecuting Attorney Office reported a 28% increase in prosecutions of buyers between 2017 and 2018.

Minors Charged with Prostitution vs. Men Trying to Buy Sex from Minors



The data demonstrate that progress has been made in the fight against this heinous crime committed against the most vulnerable. However, our work to radically disrupt child sex trafficking in Washington State must continue with even more determination as demonstrated by the 2019 CSEC Study findings.

In 2018, 21 Agencies Provided Services to 473 Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

In 2019, StolenYouth commissioned Cultural Anthropologist Debra Boyer, PhD, to update the 2008 study, *Who Pays the Price*, to re-examine the issue of CSEC in our area and determine what we should be doing next to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children. For this study, *Commercially Sexually Exploited Children in*

Seattle/King County- 2019 Update, 21 participating agencies identified **473** unduplicated CSEC who received services in 2018.

The 21 reporting Seattle and King County agencies provide either direct social services to CSEC youth, or are programs that include law enforcement and prosecutorial offices that prosecute commercial sexual abuse of a minor (CSAM) and child sex trafficking cases.¹ These agencies reviewed their 2018 case file information and reported the number of CSEC youth (age ≤ 24) they served.

The number of CSEC identified in services in 2019 (473) approaches the higher end of the service planning estimate of 300-500 given in 2008. The 2019 service planning estimate of 500-700 results from an increase of services available and more effective identification of CSEC. Service providers and policy advocates should prepare for increased service needs as more exploited youth are identified.

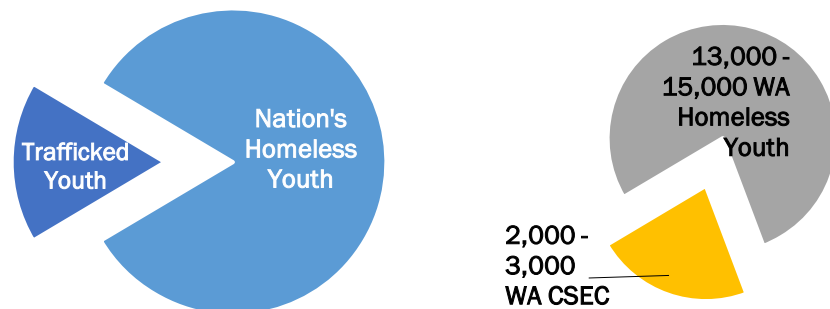
CSEC - Obtaining an accurate count is likely impossible due to the illegal and hidden forms of exploitation involved, and that these youth are generally under the control of others.

The Largest Known Population of Youth Vulnerable to Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) are Runaway and Homeless Youth, and Children Involved with Foster Care

Covenant House, a service provider offering housing and services to homeless youth in 31 cities, states that 1 in 5 homeless youth are victims of human trafficking.

A Way Home Washington, a statewide movement to prevent & end youth homelessness, focuses on the 13,000 - 15,000 WA youth surviving homelessness on their own.

Estimated Homeless Youth that are CSEC



Based on these identified homeless youth and applying Covenant House's 1:5 ratio, an estimate of the Washington CSEC prevalence ranges from 2,000 to 3,000 youth.

Homeless Numbers

- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports 40,934 homeless students in Washington State schools, including students whose families “double up” with other families due to economic conditions (N=30,090), and those in hotels, motels, shelters, or unsheltered (N=10,844).² In years 2016-

¹ Data related to prosecuted cases involving minor victims were provided by two agencies: United States Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Washington, Kate Crisham, Assistant United States Attorney and King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. (2019) *King County Sexual Exploitation Cases*. Ben Gauen, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Special Assault Unit. Seattle, Washington. Data from cases prosecuted in 2018 by the KCPAO report are included.

United States Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Washington, Kate Crisham, Assistant United States Attorney. Between 2010 and 2018, 39 cases were prosecuted under 18 USC 1591 (Sex Trafficking of Children and/or by Force, Fraud, and Coercion, 18 USC 2421 Transport Generally, 18 USC 2422 Coercion and Enticement, and 18 USC 1590 Trafficking with respect to peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor. Of these cases, 22 prosecutions were related to Sex Trafficking of Children, but none were prosecuted in 2018. Thus, data have not been included.

² Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington. Available online: www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hau-hlp-counts-of-homelessness-2017.pdf.

2017, there were 5,379 unaccompanied homeless students in Washington. These data demonstrate that a high-risk population for CSE are in school and can be counted – a clear window for prevention efforts.

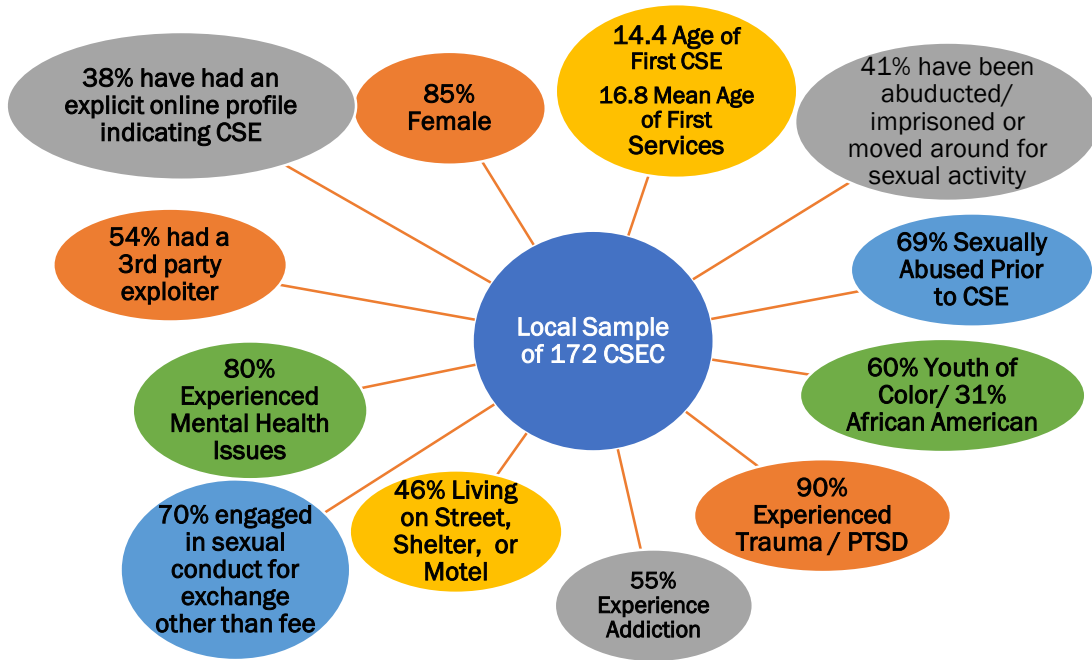
- Seattle/King County’s 2019 All Home Point-In-Time Count estimated 1,089 homeless youth ages <25 years - 68% were unaccompanied and unsheltered youth (32% were sheltered on the night of the count).³
- If the 1:5 ratio for CSE in the homeless youth population is applied to the 2019 estimate for homeless youth in Seattle/King County, the incidence of CSE would be 217 for this distinct population.

Vulnerability of Youth Placed in Foster Care

- The 2019 All Home Point-In-Time Count reported thirty-two percent (32%) of unaccompanied young people indicated ever having been in foster care.
- The FBI documented that in 2014, 60% of children rescued from sex trafficking were involved with foster care. The average age of CSEC recovered by law enforcement was 14 years.

Description of a Local Sample of 172 CSEC from 10 Reporting Agencies:

The research study included descriptive data on a local sample of 172 CSEC currently receiving services. These data are important for policy and program decision making and for community awareness. Participating agencies completed a case file review checklist of 30 questions for current CSEC clients. Limited non-identifying demographic data were collected to ensure individuals could not be tracked or identified.



Key Issues:

- Commercial sexual exploitation of children disproportionately affects children of color. While those of African American descent make up only 6.2% of King County’s population, 31% of CSEC in the study were African American youth.

³ All Home (2019) Count Us In: Seattle/King County Point in Time County of People Experiencing Homelessness
Available online: allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AG_3_2019HIRDReport_KingCounty.pdf

- There is a two-year gap between the age of the first CSE (14.4 years) and the age when a youth enters CSE services (16.8). This gap is filled with enormous trauma for these children.
- There is a cycle of CSEC engaging with services, disappearing, and reengaging. One survivor reported to StolenYouth 17 separate attempts to exit the CSE before finding success.
- There is a low number of males and non-binary individuals in the data provided. Socially isolating factors make it difficult for service providers to access or identify this subgroup and more work needs to be done to increase access to services.

Who are the Buyers?

Between 2013–2018, 73% of Prosecuted Buyers were Caucasian, 60% of Trafficked Youth are of Color

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reported that between 2010 – 2015, there was an 846% increase in reports of suspected child sex trafficking directly correlated to the increased use of the Internet to sell children for sex.⁴ In 2018, NCMEC received more than 18.4 million reports, most related to apparent child sexual abuse images, online enticement, child sex trafficking and child sexual molestation.

There still exists the false belief that trafficked children are responsible for and able to consent to their own sexual victimization.

In June 2019, Seattle Against Slavery (SAS) ran a 24-hour “sting” using chatbot technology that simulates a conversation with an underage youth being sold on the Internet. During this period, SAS estimated between 1,971–2,475 potential buyers on one website alone. Data show that sex buying can be disrupted online, and through law enforcement focusing on sex buyers. But buyers and exploiters find other ways to seek out victims, and the pipeline of vulnerable youth continues to be sustained by poverty, racism, abuse, and homelessness.

What are the Successes?

In the 10 years since the last Seattle/King County CSEC study, there has been steady progress made on multiple fronts to combat CSEC. Seattle and King County have gained national recognition for a coordinated, collaborative, and multidisciplinary service system, protective legislation on sex trafficking, and innovative and aggressive policies against sex buying. Local initiatives in Seattle and King County include the following:

PREVENTION

- A youth CSEC school curriculum has been developed, with waiting lists for this preventive education.

TRAINING

- Healthcare professionals are being trained in the identification of, care for and referral of CSEC.

EDUCATION

- Businesses have been educated in appropriate intervention and referral of suspected minor victims.

LAWS

- Since 2002, the State of Washington has passed 40 state laws related to human trafficking.
- CSEC are now subject to mandatory reporting to Child Protective Services.
- Prostituted minors are viewed as victims of a crime instead of having committed a crime.
- Child sex buying has become subject to aggressive law enforcement policies, with increased penalties and programs established to stop buying behavior.

⁴ Congressional Testimony of Yiota G. Souras, Senior Vice President & General Counsel, NCMEC, Nov. 2015.

SERVICES

- The number of coordinated CSEC services in 2018 is equal to the service planning estimate from 2008 thanks to public and private funding.
- Since 2014, over 800 CSEC youth have been identified and engaged by services. Service providers are likely to see up to 200 new referrals annually.
- Services are providing safety and offering a way to build a future without sexual exploitation through counseling, legal aid, housing, job training and other services designed to move toward a healthy life.
- CSEC youth reaching out to community advocates increased from 55% to 95%. Those maintaining consistent contact with the advocate increased from 33% to 67%.⁵

What does the future look like? - Intervening with Exploited Youth Will Not End CSEC

StolenYouth celebrates what the coalition of service providers, law enforcement, governmental advocates, corporations, and private citizens has accomplished. As the only organization in Washington state focused solely on **ending child sex trafficking**, we will continue to support those working to provide a future for the vulnerable youth who are the survivors of these heinous crimes. However, we acknowledge that services alone cannot end CSEC. StolenYouth will join others in taking a multi-pronged approach to tackling these crimes so that our city, county, and state will see dramatic reductions in CSEC in the next decade.

Education to Change Cultural Norms

Education programs are critical to the fight against CSEC and schools provide an early intervention point. We learned from this research that 41% of the CSEC sample attended school in the past year, and Seattle Public Schools have the highest number of homeless students in the state. This is a clear window for prevention efforts as this population is at high-risk for CSE.

- StolenYouth will direct additional attention to middle and high school curricula that educate students about commercial sexual exploitation and its harms, healthy relationships, online risks, and what to do when a student believes someone needs assistance in connection to CSE.
- Our education efforts will seek guidance from communities disproportionately affected by CSEC.
- As education programs are adopted throughout King County, these curricula will be promoted to school districts across the state.

Ending Demand

StolenYouth will be exploring the question: “What more can we do to end demand?” Demand has deep roots in history and reducing it is beyond the scope of one organization. However, it is a question that must be asked and StolenYouth will continue to explore innovative partnerships with service providers and private corporations to reduce demand through prevention and rehabilitation efforts, and increased penalties.

The Evolution of Services

- StolenYouth will support creating more relevant paths for care for trafficked youth in subgroups involved in hidden forms of exploitation and who fear coming forward, including males and LGBTQ+ youth.
- StolenYouth will continue to explore and support services that address areas challenging advocates and CSEC youth – too few CSEC advocates, a lack of shelter beds and access to supportive and transitional housing; and, limited access to mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Advocacy

- StolenYouth will build community awareness to keep this issue in front of funders and policy makers.
- Washington State is NOT among the 23 states that have passed statutes eliminating criminal liability for minors for prostitution-related crimes. This is a legal policy area for exploration and potential advocacy.

⁵ Parker, E.M., Pullmann, M.D., & Mangiaracina, K. (November 2018). System & service use patterns of youth in the child welfare system who are commercially sexually exploited & the role of a multi-disciplinary interagency taskforce. American Public Health Association. San Diego, CA.