

# DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING RAPID ASSESSMENT FACT SHEET

## WASHINGTON

### BACKGROUND

Shared Hope International conducted an assessment in Washington to examine the practices and procedures used in identifying and delivering services to victims of domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) – U.S. children who are exploited through commercial sex. The Washington Assessment can serve as a springboard for the existing working groups, activists, and community members to prioritize the identification and protection of children in sexual slavery in Washington.

### KEY FINDINGS

Dedicated professionals are engaging in progressive efforts to respond to the many prostituted children who pass through the system on a yearly basis. Based on information from 105 interviews with professionals (law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders, juvenile court, juvenile detention, child protective services, and nongovernmental organizations/service providers), who interact with or advocate for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking, the following factors prove evident in Washington:

- In 2009 and 2010, 153 youth were arrested and referred to detention on charges of prostitution in King, Clark, Snohomish, Benton/Franklin, Pierce, Spokane, and Thurston Counties. In the study time-frame, the youngest was 12 years old; 15 was the average age of a child charged with prostitution.
- Seattle has developed a highly effective model of community collaboration for DMST victims that should be viewed as a model for replication. The Seattle PD's tenacity and innovation over more than 10 years has brought about justice for these children. In recent years, the Puget Sound-area *FBI Innocence Lost Task Forces* have led the nation in arrests and rescue.
- In 2010 alone (*data: Washington State Office of the Courts*), 55 youth were arrested for prostitution in eight counties. Prostituted youth are required to fill a quota of 5 to 15 men per night. Based on these statistics, youth who are exploited 5 nights a week translates into 71,500 buyers purchasing sex acts from a child in Washington in 2010. (55 youth x 5 men/night x 5 nights/week x 52 weeks = 71,500 buyers).
- Many victims of DMST in Washington reported being groomed, advertised and sold in strip clubs.
- The normalization of commercialized sex is illustrated by men buying sex from minors at strip clubs during school hours to serve lunch-time customers.
- Utilizing Shared Hope International's INTERVENE intake process at Clark County Juvenile Detention Center resulted in the identification of 6 DMST victims. These youth were offered an opportunity to provide information to law enforcement, which resulted in the investigation and prosecution of 2 traffickers. Spruce Street Secure Crisis Residential Center adapted a form of SHI's INTERVENE tool, resulting in the identification of 55 DMST victims in 2010.
- Though a trafficker can be anyone, a common trend was found to be familial and gang-related trafficking.

### ABOUT SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL

Shared Hope International rescues and restores women and children in crisis. Over the past decade, Shared Hope has worked around the world in partnership with local groups to prevent trafficking and to rescue and restore victims of sexual slavery.

**The Methodology and Field Interview Tool: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking** in the United States was developed by Shared Hope International and funded by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and approved by the Western Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Protocol #20070540). The Washington Assessment is one of 14 completed by Shared Hope International on specific areas in the United States using this methodology. The first 10 assessments were funded by the DOJ, and compiled into **The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: America's Prostituted Children** and read into the U.S. Congressional Record in 2009.



# DMST IN WASHINGTON

*The average age  
a child was  
charged with  
prostitution* **15**

## Traffickers

**Who:** Though traffickers can be anyone; a common trend was familial and gang-related trafficking.

**Where:** Many victims of DMST in Washington reported being advertised and sold in strip clubs.

**When:** Many minors said they were used during school hours to serve the “lunchtime” crowd.

## Arresting Minors

	White	Black	Asian	Other	Total
Benton/Franklin	1	0	0	0	1
Clark	8	1	0	0	9
King	32	43	2	14	91
Pierce	15	21	1	3	40
Snohomish	6	1	1	1	9
Spokane	1	0	1	0	2
Thurston	1	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>153</b>

*Number of  
juveniles referred to  
the Washington State  
Office of the Courts  
for prostitution in  
2009 and 2010*

## A Decade of Progress

**1995** Becca Bill passed, allowing parents of at-risk youth to intervene for the protection of their children

**2000** Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act Passed; qualifying minors used in commercial sex as victims of DMST

**2007** The FBI Innocence Lost Task Force was created in Washington

**2008** The City of Seattle funded research on DMST (author: Debra Boyer) which resulted in the fully-integrated system of care currently used in Seattle

**2010** SB 6476 passed, outlining stricter penalties for buyers and better response to victims

“It was almost like they were just waiting for someone to ask them the right question – to open the door and take away the burden of them having to bring it up.”

– Social Service Provider