Responding to Youth Who Run Away from Foster Care
Practice Guide Issued

TOPIC
“Responding to Youth Who Run Away from Foster Care” practice guide.

PURPOSE
Inform stakeholders of the practice guide “Responding to Youth Who Run Away from Foster Care,” supporting child welfare professionals in their work with the child welfare system.

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TERMINOLOGY NOTICE
The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.
The Minnesota Department of Human Services is publishing the attached practice guide, “Responding to Youth Who Run Away from Foster Care,” to inform stakeholders of policies and procedures required when youth, for whom an agency is legally responsible, are reported or believed to have run away. This guide will be available on eDocs, DHS 6280.

On Sept. 29, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. [Public Law 113-183] This law takes important steps in protecting and preventing children and youth in foster care from becoming victims of sex trafficking. In response, the Minnesota Legislature enacted its own law, effective August 1, 2015: Minnesota Statute 260C.212, subd. 13, Protecting missing and runaway children and youth at risk of sex trafficking.

Based on federal requirements for reporting, local social service agency staff need to complete the Runaway Youth Debriefing Form which is at the end of the practice guide, as well as the Sexually Exploited Youth (SEY) screen found in the Social Service Information System (SSIS). Federal law may require additional data in the future.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory**

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-431-4670 (voice) or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency’s ADA coordinator.
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Responding to Youth Who Run Away from Foster Care

Introduction

Youth who are missing are at great risk of victimization and exploitation. Many do not perceive the inherent risks or see themselves as potential victims. This is especially true for youth who are identified as “high risk,” such as foster care youth. Many runaway youth will become involved in illegal and dangerous activities in their efforts to survive.

Youth who run away from foster care are particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking and its dangerous physical and mental health consequences. The national Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data identified 4,585 youth nationwide with a placement type of “runaway” on Sept. 30, 2013. Runaways represented about 1 percent of all youth in care on that date, and 6 percent of all 17-year-olds in care. In addition, AFCARS data indicated that about 1,100 youth exited care during fiscal year 2013 with “runaway” as their discharge reason.

On Sept. 29, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act [P. L. 113-183]. This law takes important steps forward in protecting and preventing children and youth in foster care from becoming victims of sex trafficking. Section 104 of this law focuses on locating and responding to children who run away from foster care, which includes:

- Developing and implementing plans to expeditiously locate any child missing from foster care
- Determining the primary factors that contribute to a child’s running away or being absent from foster care
- Determining a child’s experiences while absent from foster care, including screening whether a child was a victim of sex trafficking.

This law also requires reporting to law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) within 24 hours of receiving information on missing or abducted children.

On August 1, 2015, the following Minnesota Statute went into effect:

260C.212 CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT.
Subd. 13. Protecting missing and runaway children and youth at risk of sex trafficking.
   (a) The local social services agency shall expeditiously locate any child missing from foster care.
   (b) The local social services agency shall report immediately, but no later than 24 hours, after receiving information on a missing or abducted child to the local law enforcement agency for entry into the National Crime Information Center.
(NCIC) database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

(c) The local social services agency shall not discharge a child from foster care or close the social services case until diligent efforts have been exhausted to locate the child and the court terminates the agency's jurisdiction.

(d) The local social services agency shall determine the primary factors that contributed to the child's running away or otherwise being absent from care and, to the placements.

(e) The local social services agency shall determine what the child experienced while absent from care, including screening the child to determine if the child is a possible sex trafficking victim as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 609.321, subdivision 7b.

(f) The local social services agency shall report immediately, but no later than 24 hours, to the local law enforcement agency any reasonable cause to believe a child is, or is at risk of being, a sex trafficking victim.

(g) The local social services agency shall determine appropriate services as described in Minnesota Statutes, section 145.4717 with respect to any child for whom the local social services agency has responsibility for placement, care, or supervision when the local social services agency has reasonable cause to believe the child is, or is at risk of being, a sex trafficking victim.

Child and youth are used interchangeably in this guide; however, only “child” is defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.007, subdivision 4: "Child" means an individual under 18 years of age. For purposes of this chapter, Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260D, child also includes individuals under age 21 who are in foster care pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.451.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to establish requirements and provide instructions for local social service agency staff when youth, for whom the agency is legally responsible, are reported or believed to have run away. Because of potential dangers to youth, caseworkers are to consider runaway youth as a major event that requires intensive intervention. Caseworkers and their supervisors are required to notify the individuals, agencies, and organizations described in these procedures upon learning that a youth is missing.

Federal reporting requirements

Federal law requires states to report data to the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services regarding sex trafficking and runaway youth. Minnesota has developed the Sexually Exploited Youth (SEY) screen in SSIS to meet this requirement. It is available under the person tree, but is only visible to agency staff with the security function “Access SEY”
assigned to their security role. The purpose of the screen is for local social service agencies to record whether a youth is a sex trafficking victim. The reason for the new screen is that Title IV-E agencies must report annually to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services the total number of children and youth who are identified as sex trafficking victims. The law requires trafficking data to be added in AFCARS. This screen must be completed on all youth, whether they are in placement or not. This screen must be completed anytime workers discover new information regarding sex trafficking.

In addition, social service caseworkers must complete the Runaway Youth Debriefing Form that is at the end of this document when a youth has returned after being on the run. The information collected will be utilized to meet federal reporting requirements. The form will need to be completed by the caseworker and scanned into the Social Service Information System (SSIS) as an attached file following these steps:

1. Scan the document and save it with the file name “Runaway Youth Debriefing Form” so that it can be easily located by staff to retrieve information for the federal report (this is completed outside of SSIS)
2. Navigate to the “Attached Files” folder under the Person tree in SSIS
3. Select “New Attached File” from the Action menu (this requires the security function “Create Attached Files”)
4. Browse to the scanned file named “Runaway Youth Debriefing Form,” select the document and click “Open”
5. Select the document type “Other”
6. Add a comment (optional)
7. Save.

When a youth enters foster care

Be prepared in the event that a youth goes missing from foster care. As soon as they enter care, take a photograph of the youth for the social service case file and the court file. Record physical descriptive information such as height, weight, hair and eye color, complexion, identifiers such as eyeglasses or contact lenses, braces, body piercings, tattoos, and other unique physical attributes. If a youth has a history of running away, create a safety plan with all parties and clearly designate roles and responsibilities.

Reporting requirements

Supervisors and primary caseworkers (a youth’s assigned worker who has responsibility for case management and service coordination and delivery) are expected to work aggressively to locate a missing child and return them to an approved placement.

Reporting requirements for caregivers

Caregivers, including foster parents, relative caregivers, and staff of residential facilities, shall immediately (within 24 hours) report any missing youth to:
• Local law enforcement agency (giving a description of what the youth was last wearing, time last seen, etc.) and have the youth entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. Also, report if it is believed that a youth has unwillingly left placement or has been removed by an unauthorized person.
• Child’s caseworker, and on-call worker, if after business hours.

Reporting requirements for caseworkers

When a caseworker learns that a youth for whom the agency is legally responsible is missing, the caseworker shall immediately contact (within one business day):

• Law enforcement agency to ensure a verbal report was made by the caregiver and to provide any additional information.
• Youth’s parent(s), guardian, or legal custodian.
• Youth’s school, and request that they contact the caseworker if the youth contacts or arrives at school.
• Guardian ad litem.
• Other team members who may need to know.
• County attorney to request that an ex-parte order be filed with the juvenile court to have the youth picked up.
• The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). NCMEC will publish on its website and distribute posters locally and nationally. The name and identifying information will be published, but the youth will not be identified as a foster youth. This does not violate confidentiality. See attachment for more details.

A youth who has run away from foster care should NOT have their continuous placement closed in SSIS. The current placement can be ended for reason of runaway. A new placement/location/absence should be completed as setting: unauthorized absence, and reason: runaway.

These are federal requirements that must be documented in SSIS. The contacts and efforts that have been completed should be detailed in a case note titled “runaway.”

Requirements for supervisors

Upon notification by a caseworker that a youth is missing, the supervisor will immediately confirm that the caseworker has completed all required reports and contacts listed above. The supervisor will also:

• Assist the caseworker in developing and implementing a plan that has specific strategies to locate the missing youth and assure safety as quickly as possible. This plan will include daily and weekly activities to locate the youth.
• Meet with the caseworker on a weekly basis to:
Review ongoing strategies and efforts to determine the youth’s whereabouts.

- Review contact with law enforcement and others.
- Determine what additional steps may be taken to assist in finding the youth.
- Develop a placement plan for when the youth is located.
- Double check that all reporting requirements and documentation is completed.

- Document all supervisory meetings in SSIS in a case note titled “runaway.”

Searching for runaway youth

Caseworkers are to follow the steps outlined below anytime a youth is missing:

- Develop a plan with specific strategies to locate the youth.
- Meet weekly with supervisor regarding efforts to locate the youth.
- In consultation with the supervisor, the caseworker reviews and/or revises the plan as needed, to assure progress is made toward locating the youth and establishing safety.
- When a youth’s whereabouts are unknown, the caseworker must make a sustained effort to locate the youth by contacting the people, agencies, or organizations (and others as identified by the specific case) listed below at least monthly, and requesting that each person/agency contact the worker immediately if information becomes available that could assist in locating the youth:
  - Attempt to contact the youth via phone/text, check social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.
  - Local law enforcement agency.
  - Local emergency shelters and homeless youth programs.
  - Most recent caregiver, and any other caregivers with whom the youth has a close or long-term relationship.
  - Relatives, including parents and siblings.
  - Neighbors and landlord of last known address.
  - Close friends, classmates, or community members with whom the youth may have developed a significant relationship.
  - Teachers, counselors, or other school personnel.
  - Other employees of the agency who may have knowledge of the possible location of the youth (check other information systems such as MAXIS (Minnesota statewide automated eligibility system), MMIS (Medicaid Management Information System), PRISM (Providing Resources to Improve Support in Minnesota) child support system, and TCIS (Trial Court Information System)).
  - Probation officer.
  - County juvenile or adult detention centers.

- Diligently follow-up on possible leads regarding the youth’s whereabouts.
- Consult with the county attorney and guardian ad litem. Keep the juvenile court informed of ongoing search efforts by filing court reports and attending court
hearings. The CHIPS case shall remain open, and court hearings will be held at least every three months.

- Offer support to the family and caregivers.
- Document in SSIS the plan and efforts that have been completed in a case note titled “runaway.”

Return of runaway youth

When a youth is located within Minnesota

The caseworker shall:

- Request assistance of local law enforcement or the local social service agency where the youth was found for help in making arrangements for the youth to be returned to the responsible agency.
- Provide necessary documents/court orders to the other agency, proving that the youth is the legal responsibility of the agency.

When a youth is located in another state

The caseworker shall:

- Request the assistance of the child welfare agency in that state for help in making arrangements for the return of the youth to Minnesota.
- Provide the necessary documents/court orders to the other state agency proving that the youth is the legal responsibility of the agency.

When the youth has been returned

Once the youth has been located and is in a safe placement, the caseworker shall:

- Conduct a thorough follow-up interview with the youth using the required Runaway Youth Debriefing Form to determine the primary factors that contributed to the run, to screen the youth for possible sex trafficking or sexual exploitation, and to help the youth problem-solve to develop solutions.
- Inform the police, NCMEC, and all others who were notified of the run, that the youth has been located.
- Determine if there is reason to believe that the youth has been a victim of sex trafficking; make a report to law enforcement within 24 hours.
- Determine if there is reason to believe that the youth has been sexually exploited, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.007, subdivision 31; refer the youth to a regional navigator to determine appropriate services. (A list of regional navigators is on the Safe Harbor website, listed under resources in this document.)
• Review the youth’s placement options.
• Ensure that a medical examination is scheduled as soon as possible if it is determined that one is necessary, taking into account the amount of time on run and experiences while on run.
• Replace clothing or personal items the youth may need.
• Address the youth’s service, treatment, and placement needs and revise the service plan, if needed.
• Ensure that a court hearing is held within 72 hours of the youth being picked up to review the placement and services.
• Take a current photo (and update annually) of the youth, and place the photo in the court file and social service case file.
• Document in SSIS the efforts that have been completed in a case note titled “runaway.”
• Update placement screens.

Placement considerations

Current placement

• When a youth for whom the agency is responsible runs away from a placement and is still missing after 24 hours, agency staff and caregiver(s) must make a decision regarding continuation of the youth’s placement location.
• When deciding whether to return the youth to the last placement, the caseworker shall:
  o Interview the caregiver and the youth separately to determine why the youth ran away.
  o Discuss reasons given by the caregiver and the youth with the supervisor to determine whether the reasons for running away are related to the placement itself, and whether services would be beneficial to stabilize the placement and mitigate future incidents.

New or alternate placement

• Any new placement in a substitute care setting must include a determination of the individual needs of the youth, and the ability of the prospective caregiver(s) to meet those needs.
• If the youth has a history of running away or indicates that s/he will not accept a specific placement, the caseworker shall discuss with the youth, and take into account, where s/he wants to live or what type of placement the youth is willing to accept, such as:
  o A particular relative
  o A former caregiver or another adult with whom the youth has formed a relationship
  o Reunification with parent(s), if possible
  o A group home or congregate care setting
- A supervised independent or transitional living setting (if the youth is able to live independently and is between the ages of 18-21).

**Documentation**
- Update the Out-of-home Placement Plan (OHPP) to address current service needs and placement decisions
- Document in SSIS the efforts that have been completed in a case note titled “runaway.”

**Resources**

[Safe Harbor](#) – This links to the Minnesota Department of Health website, which also has a link to the regional navigators throughout the state.

The following videos can be used for educational purposes with social workers and caregivers, as well as youth:

- "The Making of a Girl"
- "It's Still Trafficking"
- “MTVu Human Trafficking PSA”
- "PSA Male Sex Trafficking"
CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE

Resources of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®

MISSING CHILDREN DIVISION

April 2015
Introduction

The passage of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, P.L. 113-183 (H.R. 4980), signed into law by President Obama on Sept. 29, 2014, illustrates a bipartisan effort to improve the lives of foster youth, among other objectives. Title I of the Act in particular is geared toward children in foster care who are victims of child sex trafficking or are at risk of becoming victims. Section 104 requires state social service agencies to immediately report missing or abducted children from foster care to law enforcement and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

NCMEC was established in 1984 and is designated by the U.S. Congress to operate as the national clearinghouse for missing and exploited children. NCMEC is uniquely positioned to provide significant and continuous support to social service agencies searching for children missing from their care. For many years prior to P.L. 113-183 (H.R. 4980), NCMEC successfully partnered with social service agencies in several states and local jurisdictions by assisting and supporting their efforts to locate and return missing children to safe placements. NCMEC provides an array of resources, including case management, poster distribution, social media, on-site law enforcement outreach teams, a long-term missing children initiative and case analysis, among many others. Every report of a missing child receives a prompt response from one of the teams who will coordinate directly with caseworkers and law enforcement to provide resources to help safely locate the missing child.

This summary document is designed to familiarize state agencies with the variety of resources NCMEC has to offer in the search for a missing child. For a more comprehensive look at the vast array of NCMEC’s resources, visit the website at http://www.missingkids.org/. For resources specific to children missing from social services care, see the website at http://cmfc.missingkids.org.

Missing Children Division

Call Center (1-800-THE-LOST®)

The NCMEC call center operates a 24/7, toll-free international hotline as posted on www.missingkids.org. NCMEC currently staffs two call centers; one at its headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, and one in its Lake Park, Florida, regional office. These call centers help families, professionals and the public seeking NCMEC resources and assist them with missing and sexually exploited child cases. Since the start of the program, the hotline has handled more than four million calls.

Additionally, NCMEC’s call center has established a system to network calls regarding runaway children to the National Runaway Safeline (http://www.1800runaway.org). This sharing of
information ensures both agencies can speak with the caller about the runaway child to best assist without either organization duplicating services or efforts.

If a child goes missing from state care, there are several ways to report information to NCMEC:

1) 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678): Primary method for parents, legal guardians and law enforcement to report information to NCMEC. This service is available 24/7.

2) Direct system to system communication: This method can be integrated into the already existing social service case management center. With technical modifications made directly to the social service case management system, communication can be established with NCMEC and reports sent directly to the call center.

3) Web-based reporting: This application is being developed to support social service agencies in reporting children missing from their care. This secure method will allow quick, Web-based access to enter a missing child report, 24/7. (Release date to be announced.)

After the initial intake information is received, whether done electronically or by telephone, the report of the missing child is assigned to a case management team.

Case Management

There are two relevant Case Management units within the Missing Children Division – the “Critical and Runaway Unit” (CRU) and the “Family Abduction Unit.” NCMEC has several case management teams, consisting of a case manager and assistant case manager, assigned to those units. These teams are located at the California, Florida, New York and Texas regional offices, as well as at NCMEC’s headquarters in Virginia.

Critical and Runaway Unit

The Critical and Runaway Unit provides technical assistance to law enforcement and support to those with a claim to custody of children who are missing under critical circumstances or who have run away from their legal guardian. Upon assignment of a case, the case management team makes initial contact with listed parents or guardians and law enforcement in order to verify circumstances surrounding the child’s disappearance. Each team provides the relevant technical assistance and uses the full array of NCMEC resources, including NCMEC missing child posters, requests for analytical reports from NCMEC’s Case Analysis Division, referrals to NCMEC’s in-house federal liaisons (including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Marshal Service, United States Postal Inspection Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Naval Criminal Investigation Service), and referrals to other NCMEC divisions (Exploited Children’s Division for possible sexual exploitation, Family Advocacy Division for family support, reunifications and post-recovery support). Once a case is ready, the case management team develops and
implements a strategy for poster distribution. Incoming leads are closely monitored and promptly forwarded to law enforcement. The case management teams keep in regular contact with parents or guardians, as well as law enforcement, and continue to assess appropriate resources to help resolve each case.

While CRU handles four different case classifications, endangered runaways constitute the largest percentage of cases reported to NCMEC. Between 2010 and 2014, more than 80 percent of case intakes by NCMEC were categorized as endangered runaways. Even though many of these cases are resolved within a few days, they can still create a challenge for CRU teams since many of the children are involved in high risk behavior and have a greater probability of victimization through commercial sexual exploitation or other endangerments. Additionally, a large number of children who are repeat runaways are in the care of social services. These children inherently have already suffered from maltreatment, abandonment, or neglect and have been placed in care. Many of these children run away repeatedly. Some may try to return to their families, but many of the children, particularly the older ones, attempt to survive on the streets. This increases their risk of endangerment. To tackle this concern, NCMEC began the practice of assigning “repeat” endangered runaway cases to the same CRU case management team. This allows CRU teams to create a familiarity with the unique circumstances of the missing child, and also develop specialized skills in locating and recovering these missing children while building strong working relationships with law enforcement officers and social service agencies that interact with the child.

Child Sex Trafficking Team
In response to the increased need for technical assistance and analysis in cases of domestic child sex trafficking, NCMEC created a Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT). Specially assigned CSTT case management teams work closely with legal guardians and law enforcement to provide technical assistance and NCMEC resource coordination. Each CSTT case management team is also assigned a CSTT analyst who provides analytical support to law enforcement. Additionally, CSTT case management teams help coordinate child sex trafficking-related victim and family support services.

Long-term Missing Children
While most of the cases involving endangered runaways resolve fairly quickly, there are instances where a child remains missing for an extended period of time. NCMEC offers forensic services to help law enforcement and families or legal guardians find long-term missing children. The Forensic Services Unit calls upon subject matter experts from a wide array of disciplines to help develop comprehensive investigative strategies, including the latest technologies, ensuring all possible avenues have been considered. The Biometrics Team assists law enforcement, coroners and medical examiners in the process of gathering biometrics with the goal of analyzing matches of missing children to living persons or unidentified human remains for positive identification. The Forensic Imaging Unit age progresses photos of long-term missing children and provides skull and facial reconstructions of unidentified deceased children. In long-term missing child cases, posters are updated with age progressed photographs of the missing child and provided to law enforcement for investigative purposes.
Family Abduction Unit

The Family Abduction Unit (FAU) provides technical assistance and support to families, law enforcement agents and attorneys in the prevention of family abductions. It also assists in locating and recovering missing children, both nationally and internationally, including those taken by a noncustodial parent from social services’ custody. Working closely with attorneys and law enforcement across the United States, FAU works each case on an individual and fact-specific basis. FAU coordinates with government and nongovernment agencies within the U.S. and abroad to provide technical support for both civil and criminal remedies. Additionally, FAU helps develop and promote resources to resolve national and international family abductions through its outreach and provision of training to the legal and law enforcement communities.

Photo Distribution Unit

NCMEC’s most publically visible resource is the distribution of missing child posters. Currently there are approximately 270 active poster distribution partners who have the ability to distribute images nationwide. There are several large corporate supporters of NCMEC for which the Photo Distribution Unit handles poster programs. The most recognizable of these include Wal-Mart, EMCOR, Comcast, Check ‘n Go and Facebook.

Law Enforcement Outreach: Team Adam/ Project ALERT

Team Adam

Team Adam is NCMEC’s “rapid-response” group made up of retired law enforcement officers who deploy to the site of critical missing child incidents. Consultants act as an on-site response and support system and provide investigative recommendations and technical assistance to local law enforcement. Team Adam consultants have expertise in the investigation of missing or abducted children, command post operations, multijurisdictional cases and violent crime investigations. In addition to assisting law enforcement, Team Adam consultants also assist the victim families in obtaining appropriate resources during a crisis. Team Adam consultants may deploy at the request of a disaster-impacted state to assist with reunification efforts of children who have become separated from their parents or legal guardians.

Project ALERT

Project ALERT (America’s Law Enforcement Retiree Team) is a corps of retired local, state and federal law enforcement professionals who donate their time and expertise to the law enforcement community. Also included are retired or experienced volunteers with backgrounds as
medicolegal death investigators, coroners/medical examiners, forensic anthropologists and forensic pathologists. Project ALERT volunteers provide technical assistance to the requesting law enforcement agency on missing children investigations. They specialize in long-term missing children cases and perform a wide range of functions including facilitation of biometric data collection.

**Family Advocacy Division**

NCMEC’s Family Advocacy Division (FAD) is made up of a specialized team of master-level trained mental health and child welfare professionals. FAD provides emotional support to families experiencing trauma when a child is missing or sexually exploited and offers expert guidance about how families can move forward. FAD’s family-centered approach helps create a collaborative environment to help families identify areas of need and find the right community-based resources to address those needs. With support from a committed network, including mental health providers, crisis intervention services, social service agencies and law enforcement, the foundation is laid for the bright future every family wants and deserves. In addition to assisting families of missing children, FAD also triages cases of extra familial child exploitation and provides referrals, support and case follow-up. FAD also coordinates the Family Advocacy Outreach Network, a proactive initiative designed to partner with licensed treatment professionals throughout the U.S. who are able to provide brief, therapeutic intervention or long-term support on a sliding fee scale, or at no cost to the families served by NCMEC.

**National Emergency Child Locator Center**

On Oct. 2, 2006, NCMEC established the National Emergency Child Locator Center (NECLC) at the designation of the U.S. Congress. NECLC is a call center dedicated to complement essential services assisting families, social services and law enforcement in the location, identification and reunification of children with their families or legal guardians during the evacuation phase, or in the aftermath of a disaster. NECLC can be placed on stand-by or activated through a request by the disaster-impacted state agency or through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**Unaccompanied Minors Registry**

The Unaccompanied Minors Registry (UMR) is a data collection tool administered by NCMEC allowing any individual to report children they find who are separated from their families or legal guardians as a result of a disaster. Basic information about a child is input into the registry and directly sent to NECLC. A photo of the child may be input as well. NECLC then cross references the unaccompanied child’s information against information obtained in telephone calls from searching parents. It is also used by NECLC to gather and share information with, and provide technical assistance to, local law enforcement and social services to assist in the reunification of displaced children with their families or legal guardians. The UMR tool is located at

CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® was established in 1984 as a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. NCMEC works in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice to help law enforcement find missing children, eliminate child sexual exploitation and prevent child victimization.

NCMEC is authorized by the U.S. Congress to perform 22 specific tasks (42 U.S.C. § 5773). All authorizations can be found at: http://www.missingkids.com/Authorization
Runaway Youth Debriefing Form

A template of the Runaway Youth Debriefing form is attached and should be copied for use when a youth has been returned. Please ensure that the form is legible and that it is a complete professional assessment of the event. Once completed, scan and upload the form into SSIS as an attached file with the file name “Runaway Youth Debriefing Form” and document type “Other”. (See detailed instructions in Section III: Federal reporting requirements.)
RUNAWAY YOUTH DEBRIEFING FORM

Youth name: __________________________________________________________________

Caseworker name: _____________________________________________________________

Dates missing: From ______________________to______________________________

Date of debriefing: _________________________
Location: ____________________________

The youth’s caseworker should ask the youth the following questions. Record the youth’s answers in the space provided.

1) Why did you run away from your placement?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2) What would have stopped you from running away?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3) Did anyone encourage you to leave? If so, who?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

4) Did you tell anyone you were leaving? If so, who?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

5) Who did you leave with?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
6) How much money did you have with you when you left?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

7) What is the first thing you did after you left?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

8) Where did you go?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

9) If you were planning to go to a specific place, did you go there?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

10) With whom did you stay while you were gone?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

11) How did you survive? (i.e., Where did you sleep? Where did you get food? How did you get money?)
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

12) What was a typical day like for you while you were gone?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

13) Did you attend school while you were gone?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

14) Did you get sick or were you physically hurt or injured while you were gone? _________
a. If so, describe your illness or how and where you were hurt/injured:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

b. Did you get medical care anywhere? If so, what care did you get and from where?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

15) Were you sexually active while you were away? ________________________________

  a. If so, describe the sexual activity: (i.e., when, with whom, what activity, 
     forced/voluntary)____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

  b. Did the sexual activity hurt you in any way? ______________________________
____________________________________________________________________

  c. For females, do you think you may be pregnant? __________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Note: Any youth who reports having engaged in sexual activity must be examined by a doctor 
within 24 hours of being located. If there is reason to believe the youth is, or at risk of becoming, 
a victim of sex trafficking, the caseworker must make a report to the local law enforcement 
agency.

16) Why (or under what circumstances, i.e., police picked the youth up) did you return?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

17) What happened to you when you returned? What were the consequences?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

18) Have you ever runaway before? If so, when and why?
____________________________________________________________________
19) What was the best thing about being away?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

20) What was the worst thing about being away?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

21) Do you think you might run away again? ________________________________

   a. If so, why would you run away again? ________________________________

   b. What can I (caseworker) or your caregiver do to help you make a decision to not run away? ________________________________

   b. What can I (caseworker) or your caregiver do to help you make a decision to not run away? ________________________________

22) Is there anything I can do for you right now to make you feel safe so you won’t run away again?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

23) If the youth has a child, and had the child with while missing:

   a. How did you meet your child’s needs for food, diapers, milk, etc. while you were gone?

   b. Did your child stay with you the entire time? If not, who cared for your child?

   c. Who watched your child when you needed a break? _______________________

   d. Did your child need to see a doctor while you were gone? If so, why? __________
e. Does your child need any medical care now? ____________________________  
______________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________  
______________________________________________________________  

Caseworker’s signature and date

Supervisor’s approval

Supervisor’s name:  
______________________________________________________________  
Supervisor’s signature:  
______________________________________________________________  
Date of approval: ______________________________