Best Practice Response to Trafficking and Exploitation of Children and Youth in Minnesota

TOPIC
Publication of Best Practice Response to Trafficking and Exploitation of Children and Youth in Minnesota: A guide for county and tribal child welfare agency staff.

PURPOSE
To announce publication of comprehensive guidance and resources for child welfare response to sex or labor trafficking or sexual exploitation of children in Minnesota.

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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.
I. Background

DHS-7641Z, Best Practice Response to Trafficking and Exploitation of Children and Youth in Minnesota: A guide for county and tribal child welfare agencies (best practice guide), was developed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (department) in collaboration with the department’s Child Trafficking and Exploitation Work Group. The work group has been meeting since 2017, with more than 200 stakeholders statewide, to advise department staff on best practices for the child welfare system response to trafficking and exploitation. These best practices are integrated in Minnesota’s broader Safe Harbor No Wrong Door model, in partnership with the Minnesota Departments of Health and Public Safety, and community-based Safe Harbor partners. Department staff incorporated contributions of survivors of trafficking or exploitation and American Indian tribal community members whose advice shaped this guide.

II. Utilizing the best practice guide

A. Quick reference to the best practice guide

The best practice guide was created for child welfare system staff, providing effective tools, explanation of legal requirements, and guidance for effective engagement with youth and families who experienced sex or labor trafficking or sexual exploitation. The best practice guide covers all stages of the child welfare system response. A brief list of key topics include:

**Screening for sex trafficking and sexual exploitation**

*Best practice guide content:* Pages 10-12 (Child protection intake and screening, screening for sex trafficking and sexual exploitation).

*Supporting content:* DHS-7641N, [Child Protection Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Intake Tool](#) (Appendix A).

**Emergency placement of youth**

*Best practice guide content:* Page 28 (emergency placement) for guidance when an emergency placement is necessary.

*Supporting content:* See the department’s [Safe Harbor website](#) for resources.

**Safety planning**

*Best practice guide content:* Page 14 (Safety assessment and planning) to learn about assessing safety and making a safety plan with a youth and family who experienced sex or labor trafficking or sexual exploitation.

*Supporting content:* DHS-7641R, [Safety Assessment and Safety Planning Considerations](#) (Appendix D).
**Coordinated response**

**Best practice guide content:** Pages 12-13 (Law enforcement coordination), and 17-19 (Safe Harbor and medical or mental health services).

**Supporting content:** See the Minnesota Department of Health’s [Safe Harbor website](#), and Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault [Safe Harbor Protocols tools and resources](#).

**Investigating sex trafficking or sexual exploitation**

**Best practice guide content:** Pages 12-22 (includes face-to-face contact with victims, interviewing alleged offenders, making determinations and other topics).

**Supporting content:** DHS-7641L, [Sex trafficking as a form of child maltreatment: A brief guide for child protection supervisors and investigators](#).

**Service planning**

**Best practice guide content:** Pages 24-27 (Service referral and coordination, in the Case Management section).

**Supporting content:** DHS 7641U, [Service planning with trafficked or exploited youth](#) (Appendix E).

**Intersectionality and disproportionality**

**Best practice guide content:** Pages 5-9 (includes practice implications for working with youth and families who are disproportionately impacted by trafficking and exploitation in Minnesota, including American Indians, African Americans, foreign nationals, LGBTQI and youth with disabilities).

**Supporting content:** See [Safe Harbor Protocol Guidelines](#), Chapter Four on Cultural Considerations.

**Working with American Indian youth and families**

**Best practice guide content:** Pages 6-7 (includes overview of requirements under the Indian Child Welfare Act and Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act). Content is also integrated throughout the best practice guide.

**Supporting content:** Resources in the [ICWA/MIFPA Resources link](#).

**Labor trafficking**

**Best practice guide content:** Page 12 includes information about labor trafficking screening, child welfare case management in labor trafficking cases (pages 22-27), and working with foreign national children (pages 8-9).

**Supporting content:** DHS-7641O, [Identifying and responding to child victims of labor trafficking](#) (Appendix B), and DHS-7641P, [Child protection and child welfare response to labor trafficking](#) (page 27 of the best practice guide).
B. Training and technical assistance provided on implementation of best practice guidance

The department provides training throughout the state for child welfare system staff and partners. This two-day training is practice-oriented and integrates the best practices for child welfare to work effectively with youth and families impacted by trafficking or exploitation. Child welfare agencies may request training by contacting the DHS Training Unit at dhs.csp.training@state.mn.us; caseworkers can sign up through Trainlink, or contact DHS.safeharbor@state.mn.us. Other child welfare trainings are on the department’s Safe Harbor website www.mn.gov/dhs/safe-harbor.

Many additional online webinars and trainings are available through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and the Safe Harbor regional navigators. To find trainings through MDH, see the website https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/, or contact the Safe Harbor training coordinator at health.safeharbor@state.mn.us.

Local child welfare agency staff may contact Rapid Consultation at 1-888-234-1138, or the human trafficking child protection coordinators at DHS.Safeharbor@state.mn.us, for technical assistance or information on identifying and responding to trafficking and exploitation.

Implementation of best practice guidance requires collaboration with partners in the local community. Each agency is highly encouraged to develop agencywide protocols for identifying and serving youth and families impacted by sex or labor trafficking or sexual exploitation. Agencies are also advised to become involved in collaborative efforts to create community-level response protocols so that communities across Minnesota achieve the goal of providing a No Wrong Door for youth who need help to find safety and freedom outside of trafficking or exploitation.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-3039 (voice) or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency’s ADA coordinator.