



The Cook County Commission on Women's Issues

The Realities of
Human Trafficking in Cook County:
Strategies for Ending the
Exploitation of Women and Girls

Public Hearing Report
October 2007

Peggy A. Montes, Chairperson
Jennifer Vidis, Executive Director

Todd H. Stroger, President
Cook County Board of Commissioners



COMMISSION ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

2006-2007

Peggy A. Montes, Chairperson

Laura Bartell

Dr. Beverly Jean Bennett

Dr. Frances Carroll

Trina Janes

Pamela M. Jeanes

Beth Lacey

Deborah Lopez

Dr. Jodi Martinez

Mary Morris

Gail H. Morse

Alderman Ginger Rugai

Linda Wilkins Siegel

Hon. Dolores Stephan

Hon. Joanne Trapani

For more information or additional copies contact:

Dr. Eva Mika

Cook County Commission on Women's Issues

69 West Washington Street, Suite 3040

Chicago, IL 60602

312-603-1104 (voice)

312-603-9988 (fax)

312-603-1101 (TTY)

www.cookcountygov.com (follow links to Women's Commission)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Key Findings: What is Human Trafficking?	3
Scope of the Problem	4
Who is Trafficked?	5
Who are the Traffickers?	7
Barriers to Intervention	9
Solutions/Interventions	11
Coalitions	12
Recommendations	14

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Commission on Women's Issues would like to thank those individuals who have contributed to this report. Thanks to Dr. Eva Mika, Research Associate of the Commission, for the research, organization and writing that produced this report. Thanks also to the speakers for their input at the hearing, taking time to review drafts of this report, and for all the work they do to stop the exploitation of women and children.



INTRODUCTION

The Commission selected this topic because of the increased attention the media has given to human trafficking, which suggests that a significant, if not a majority, of victims are women and girls. Furthermore, the city of Chicago has been labeled a national hub for human trafficking because its large airport, central geographic location, and elaborate transportation infrastructure make it an ideal port of entry.

The Commission recruited speakers to provide testimony on the impact that trafficking has upon women and girls, the extent of local involvement, and strategies for change. Speakers included survivors and individuals representing government agencies, community-based organizations, and law enforcement:

- Mike Anton, Cook County Sheriff's Child Exploitation Unit
- Irvin Ashford, Circuit Court of Cook County Juvenile Division and Pledge to Rescue Our Minors from Sexual Exploitation (PROMISE)
- Salome Chasnoff, Beyond Media
- Greg Diephouse, Illinois Department of Human Services
- Olivia Horward, Survivor
- Katherine Kaufka, Heartland Alliance
- Emily Muskovitz Sweet, Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence
- Lt. Paul Kusinski, Chicago Police Department Trafficking Team
- Daria Mueller and Brenda Myers-Powell, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- Edgar Maldonado, Cook County Public Guardian Office
- Kathleen Muldoon, Cook County State's Attorney Office, Sex Crimes Division
- Hannah Rosenthal, Chicago Foundation for Women
- Larry Sachs, Chicago Police Department, Research and Development

And we need to really ask ourselves one simple question. What would we all do if it was our child, if it was our niece, our nephew, our grandchild that was out there in this situation? We'd do everything possible to get them off the street and get them in programming and get them the help that they need. (Edgar Maldonado, Cook County Public Guardian).

Additional research and information informing this report includes:

The Intersystem Assessment on Prostitution in Chicago (October 2006), Chicago Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence

Turning a Corner, Beyond Media Film (2006)

Rescue and Restore website, www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking

KEY FINDINGS:

What is human trafficking?

- The Federal Trafficking Victim Protection Act, enacted in 2000, defines human trafficking as recruiting, harboring, moving or obtaining a person by force, fraud or coercion for the purposes of involuntary servitude, debt bondage or sexual exploitation. Persons do not have to have been transported internationally to be considered victims of trafficking.
- In Illinois, trafficking crimes are similarly defined under the Illinois Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude Act, which went into effect on January 1, 2006. Recruiting children under the age of 18 to participate in commercial sexual activity is included as a criminal offense.
- While men and women, adults and minors are trafficked, women and children are particularly vulnerable. In practice, human trafficking is modern day slavery which entails using people, usually women and children, as objects of barter. It involves the exploitation of a person for forced labor or commercial sex. Traffickers control their victims through force, fraud or coercion.
- People are trafficked to perform a multitude of services including domestic labor, janitorial service, factory work, agricultural labor, restaurant work, construction, hotel housekeeping and criminal activity. All too often they move into forced marriages or the commercial sex trade.
- There is a clear overlap between sex trafficking and prostitution. According to The Intersystem Assessment on Prostitution in Chicago (2006), focus group members who were involved in Chicago's sex trade used terms including recruitment, force, fraud, and coercion to describe their experiences. These are the same elements that define trafficking under federal law.



SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

It would be naive to think that human trafficking is not occurring here in Cook County.

(Lt. Paul Kusinski, Chicago Police Trafficking Team)

- In monetary terms, an estimated \$9 billion in profits are generated worldwide from trafficking in human beings. After narcotics trafficking, human trafficking is the most lucrative business for organized crime.
- An estimated one-half million to two million people are trafficked worldwide. Although 70% percent of these trafficking victims are female, human trafficking is not usually viewed as a form of violence against girls and women.
- The Department of Justice estimates that over 17,000 persons are trafficked annually in the United States. Of the foreign-born victims identified by the federal government, approximately 50 percent are under the age of 18 years, and 80 percent are female.
- In a 2003 article, The New York Times labeled Chicago-land as a national hub for trafficking. Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, one of the largest national airports, its multi-faceted transportation infrastructure, and central geographic location make it an ideal location for traffickers to transport victims and disperse them as needed to other cities and states.
- Human trafficking is not just an international problem. Federal and state trafficking laws do not require transportation of individuals across international borders, which means that a Cook County resident could be a victim of trafficking without ever leaving the county. Any person under the age of 18 years who is involved in Cook County's commercial sex trade is recognized by Illinois law as a trafficking victim.
- In metropolitan Chicago, 16,000 to 25,000 women and girls are involved in prostitution annually. One third of these women first get involved in prostitution by the age of 15 years. Sixty-two percent began by the age of 18 years.
- Women and girls are trafficked throughout Cook County and to other states for the sex trade. The so called legitimate sex industry establishments in Cook County, such as massage parlors and strip clubs, often serve as a front for trafficking and involve victims of the sex trade.
- The reality of the sex trade is that it takes many forms and occurs in many types of venues. It's not just the stereotypical prostitute on the street. In fact, only about 10 percent of this \$14 billion dollar industry actually occurs at the street level. The rest occurs through supposedly 'legal' establishments such as escort services, strip clubs and massage parlors.
- Data and statistics on the sex trade are very limited because the crime is largely invisible and under-reported. Victims are afraid to report, and many do not know about or trust social resources. The use of the Internet for sex trade further pushes human trafficking underground.



WHO IS TRAFFICKED?

- Foreign-born victims are recruited on the ruse of better economic opportunity in America and are lured with false promises of a better life and legitimate employment. They are told that they will be working at jobs that will allow greater economic opportunity and assistance for family left in the home country. They are told, for example, that they will be models or dancers on their way to lucrative careers. Once they arrive, their documents, including passports, are confiscated.

Katherine Kaufka of Heartland Alliance provided the following example of a young girl who was recruited from India to the United States:

I want to provide an example of one of the clients I'm currently representing. She was a young girl from India who was recruited to the United States at the age of 11 with promises of the American dream. New clothes, education, school, living in a nice house with her own room. For her privacy and safety, I will refer to her as Anna. Anna, the day after she arrived, was told that there would be no school, and was told what her list of chores would be in the home. And that list included cooking for the family, cooking for the children, cleaning the entire house. And essentially being a house slave for this couple in a wealthy suburb just outside of Chicago in Cook County. She was never paid. She never had a day off. If she asked for rest or if she was tired, she was dismissed and told that she wasn't working hard enough. She was never allowed to make friends. She was never allowed to communicate with anyone outside of the home. And she was constantly told that if she talked to anyone or told anyone about her story, that because she was an illegal alien, no one would believe her and that she would be arrested and deported. Considering that Anna arrived here at the age of 11, these obstacles are really insurmountable. And like the things that US victims of trafficking face, she had additional barriers of not speaking English.

- Other victims get trafficked directly from within the United States, including Cook County. Many victims are homeless women and children who are vulnerable to predators because they are in need of basic necessities including shelter, food, and clothing. In fact, the most significant predictor of entry into prostitution is running away or being homeless as a youth, particularly if that homeless experience occurs prior to the age of sixteen years. Once a person is on the street or homeless, they often will engage in survival sex, which is trading sex to meet basic survival needs, such as a place to stay, food to eat or to feed an addiction.

Kathleen Muldoon, an Assistant State's Attorney with the Cook County's Sex Crimes Division, described the plight of a girl who was a ward of the Department of Child and Family Services:

We talked to one girl. She was 14 years old. And she says "But I'm going back [to her pimp]." She was a DCFS ward . . . but she wanted out. She said "But he gets me a Subway sandwich whenever I want it." That was it. That was the hold, a sandwich, a meal.

- Victims of trafficking often became homeless after fleeing domestic violence and sexual abuse. Their lack of economic resources, history of violence and subsequent psychological trauma, and lack of shelter make them targets for traffickers.



Edgar Maldonado, a supervising investigator from the Cook County Public Guardian's Office, described a girl that entered the foster system:

There was a young girl who came into the system at a very young age. She went into foster home where she was sexually abused by her foster father. She was eventually adopted by that home. About the age of 13, she began running away from home, would go and come back. She went out into the community. While she was on the run, she would fall prey to these offenders, these perpetrators, these predators out on the street."

- Similarly, very high rates of physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse and domestic violence are common childhood experiences for women that enter prostitution. In the 2002 study of the women in the Chicago sex trade, sixty-two percent reported that they started before the age of 18. The mean age of entry into sex trade is 16 to 17 years old. The overwhelming majority of these women were not new to violence. They report that they were victims of child sexual assault or that trusted adults in the home suggested prostitution to them.
- There is a high rate of incarceration among these women, especially women of color, and especially those on the street. In a 2002 report released by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless entitled "Unlocking Options," 235 women in Cook County jail were surveyed. Fifty-four percent reported that they had been homeless within 30 days of entry. And of those women, fifty-eight percent were regularly involved in prostitution. Thirty-four percent of the overall sample of women interviewed that day in the jail were regularly involved in prostitution. The most frequently cited reason for being involved in prostitution was for a survival need such as a place to stay.



WHO ARE THE TRAFFICKERS?

- Traffickers can be international organized crime syndicates or 'mom and pop' family-run operations. Traffickers include independent business owners. Many times they are members of the victim's own ethnic or national community. The traffickers may have legal status in the United States and are fluent in English as well as their native language. They often have greater social or political status in their home countries than their victims.
- These offenders and predators can include individuals who are prominent in their communities, adult men, including married men who take advantage of girls: "... your normal average male usually that's out there on the street and takes advantage of an opportunity" (Edgar Maldonado, Cook County Public Guardian). Traffickers may include family members. The focus group participants from the Intersystem Assessment on Prostitution in Chicago described how they were lured into the sex trade by a pimp, a family member, or an intimate partner who sold them false promises of money, status and protection.
- Traffickers use legal businesses including massage parlors and strip clubs as fronts for trafficking:

"Legit escort services, strip clubs are fronts. As a young girl, I was recruited right here in Chicago. Some of the things and the dynamics in my household contributed to a lot of things that were lacking. One of the reasons, I think, picking up a Reader ad from the night life in Chicago, I found a advertisement that stated, "Young women, would you like a career to become independent? Dancing is just for you" so I, you know, ride the L down to Rush Street. I tell them that I'm 16 years. Well, they hired me. They could care less if I knew how to dance. It was what I learned to do in the back rooms. And that just started a spiral of my life of being a prostituted woman. From there, I went to escort service, massage parlors. And eventually, I picked up a drug addiction. I was an IV drug user for 19 years and wound up on the streets. I realize how much my family life and environment I grew up in, the poverty, how that spoke to that need I had as a young girl wanting to escape this family, this neighborhood. Just the environmental situation that I was in. How that sounded so glamorous to me. (Olivia Howard, survivor)

- Traffickers are often organized into sophisticated rings, which are very difficult to infiltrate. They have networks established nationally where they can transport women and girls from one location to another depending on supply and demand. Trafficking survivors describe being transported to different states, cities and neighborhoods within Chicago. According to Ms. Brenda Myers-Powell, a victim of local trafficking, there is a circuit that goes from Chicago to Michigan to as far as Canada.

Brenda related being shipped around to the different prostitution houses:

These pimps that we're looking at, they travel all over the country. Detroit, Michigan. They've gone down to Texas. And what they do is, say a girl gets in trouble in Illinois, they'll just trade this girl and specifically trade this girl or sell this girl to another pimp. This girl will go to another state. And it's a whole cycle of abuse.

- Traffickers are responding to the demand for these services. People are used as commodities that are trafficked to fuel the sex trade, labor needs, and domestic servitude.



Trafficking is a criminal activity driven by greed. People make large profits because there is a high demand. And they do this because they don't have to be afraid that they're going to be prosecuted, because the risk of prosecution for traffickers at best, is negligible. (Hannah Rosenthal, Chicago Foundation for Women)

- Traffickers control their victims because victims are dependent on their trafficker for basic necessities such as food and shelter. Traffickers also use multiple means to control their victims including physical abuse, torture, isolation, psychological abuse, and debt bondage. Traffickers confiscate and withhold documents like visas and passports and other immigration documents, make threats of deportation, and make threats against the family in the home country.

And a lot of it is mental fear. They make you very scared because if you're a young girl and you see sometimes some girls don't come back, or you wondering what happened to her and all her clothes are there, you kind of get a fear of what could happen to you, so you stay there until maybe you're allowed to leave or they pass you on to another club because sometimes you're passed on to another club.

(Brenda Myers-Powell, survivor)

- Psychological abuse and terror are a significant component of the trafficker's hold on the victim. This mental brain-washing leads to victims living in a state of terror and afraid to attempt escape. Victims also feel socially stigmatized and profoundly isolated, which keeps them trapped. Furthermore, many women and girls involved in the sex trade are arrested for this behavior, which continues to limit their options outside of prostitution.

And I think about winding up in emergency rooms and people looking at me. And as soon as someone walked in, whether it was a law enforcement officer or social worker and they would look and say oh, she's a prostitute. And you'd hear the talk from behind the curtain. It goes with the territory. What does she expect?

(Olivia Howard, survivor)



BARRIERS TO INTERVENTION

There are significant barriers that interfere with the identification of trafficking victims, the provision of adequate social services for victims, the infiltration of trafficking organizations, and the prosecution of traffickers.

- The victims of human trafficking are often invisible and unlikely to seek assistance. Some are here illegally and fear the authorities. They may be physically isolated or held through psychological coercion. Many do not speak English. They are fearful of law enforcement and do not realize that they are victims who have rights under United States law.
- Identification barriers include the fact that most of sex trafficking and juvenile prostitution is underground. The Internet has replaced 'visible' street prostitution. Sex trafficking also occurs under the guise of 'legal' establishments such as massage parlors and strip clubs. As such, statistics about the extent of the problem are very difficult to obtain because trafficking is largely invisible. A lack of statistics makes it difficult to justify or apply for funding and resources.
- Infiltrating trafficking teams is very difficult. Traffickers are often organized into sophisticated and well networked rings. Discovery requires undercover investigators and cooperation between multiple jurisdictions.
- The victims of domestic trafficking have historically been overlooked in local efforts to enhance the criminal legal system and social-service response to victims of trafficking. For example, victims of domestic trafficking are less likely to be identified by law enforcement personnel as victims, and are, therefore, likely to face strict penalties, including felony convictions. There are funds available in the Chicago area and in Illinois for foreign-born victims, but not for domestic victims of trafficking. The lines between those who were involved in Chicago's sex trade and victims of international and domestic trafficking are not always clear.
- According to the Juvenile Prostitution Statute, for prostitution to qualify as juvenile prostitution the youth must be under 16 years of age. When prosecuting pimps or johns, the law stipulates that the pimp or john must have known the prostitute was under 16 years of age and they must admit to this knowledge for the crime to be a felony. Otherwise it is considered a misdemeanor. Most pimps and johns are not going to confess. Girls also lie about their age and try to make themselves appear older.
- The agencies that are involved in protecting youth and prosecuting perpetrators including the sex crimes division of the state's attorney's office, the sheriff's child exploitation unit and the public guardian, have very limited resources, including personnel. Social services, in particular, temporary shelter and housing for victims, are scarce. Shelters that provide temporary housing typically do not offer crisis intervention or other specialized services so youth often run away and are back on the streets.





- The perception of trafficking victims, especially those involved in the sex trade, is that their behavior is criminal. As such, victims are not perceived as being victimized. Instead they are often arrested and incarcerated for prostitution, substance abuse and running away from home. They are not steered towards the social services they need. It would be more effective if police officers, probation officers, judges, state's attorneys, and public defenders adopted a lens of social service needs as opposed to a lens of prosecution towards this population:

"In Chicago, there are about 5,000 prostitution-related arrests over the course of the year. And about three fourths of them are of the prostitute. And about 25 percent are of the customer, and less than one percent are the pimps. So it's a severely inequitable system. It costs nearly \$9 million a year to arrest, detain and prosecute persons engaging in prostitution in Chicago. And in 2004, we saw 400 felony convictions resulting in admissions into the Illinois Department of Corrections. So on average, it cost about \$31,000 to incarcerate women in Illinois prisons." (Daria Mueller, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless)

- Very little attention is given to the root causes of the sex trade and other forms of trafficking. Since demand fuels the industry, unless police and law enforcement officials target pimps, traffickers, and the establishments that profit financially from the exploitation of trafficked human beings, the problem will not go away.

SOLUTIONS/INTERVENTIONS:

LEGISLATION

- According to the National Immigrant Justice Center of Heartland Alliance, both federal and state law recognize human trafficking as a human rights atrocity. This enables law enforcement to punish traffickers of both domestic victims and immigrant victims. The laws also focus on the psychological abuse involved in human trafficking. Both federal and state legislation offer protection to immigrant victims of trafficking by providing a special visa. Once they have this visa, they can obtain social services. Prior to the enactment of this legislation, victims, including children, would likely have been deported. Clients involved in the sex trade or other forced labor would often be arrested and deported. Law enforcement would have been without a victim/witness to move a case forward, and traffickers would go unpunished.
- The United States passed the Trafficking Victim Protection Act in 2000, making human trafficking a federal crime. The Trafficking Victim Protection Reauthorization Act was passed in 2003. It expanded protection to victims and provided more social service opportunities, along with the opportunity for victims to sue their traffickers in federal court.
- The Illinois legislature followed suit and passed The Illinois Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude Act which went into effect on January 1, 2006. The law defines human trafficking as an offense. It also creates mechanisms where the victim can be most easily certified as a victim of human trafficking, and it allows the Illinois Department of Human Services to fund victim services, even though it doesn't appropriate those funds.
- The Predator Accountability Act was passed in the Illinois state legislature and signed by the governor into law on July, 3 2006. This allows victims of the sex trade to be able to sue their abusers in civil court, including anyone who recruited or maintained them in the sex trade or who profited from their activities.
- Illinois' First Offender Probation Act was signed into law on August 17, 2007 and gives judges the option of sentencing a person convicted of his/her first time felony prostitution to twenty-four months of probation with services. This allows women to receive services to address trauma and related mental health issues, and to access housing and employment opportunities without the barrier of a felony record.



COALITIONS

RESCUE AND RESTORE

During July of 2005, The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) started a campaign under the leadership of Governor Rod Blagojevich. The campaign is called Rescue and Restore: Look Beneath the Surface. The five overarching goals of the Illinois Rescue and Restore are: outreach, training first responders, prosecuting offenders, collecting data, and coordinating adequate social services. As part of its campaign, the IDHS has created several types of outreach materials which are available in several shapes, sizes, and languages through the federal government. Outreach materials include the number to a national hotline, 1-888-373-7888. IDHS also plans to provide training for the first responders within their purview. Front-line people should be trained to identify human trafficking and to know what to do with it when they see it. Later this year, IDHS plans to release a 45 minute training video, created in partnership with several organizations, but mainly through the Regional Institution for Community Policing.

CHICAGO REGIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

In October 2005, the Chicago Police Department, in conjunction with Heartland Alliance, was awarded the Department of Justice Grant to help fight human trafficking in the Chicago area. As a result of this grant, the Chicago Regional Human Trafficking Task Force (CTTF) was created. The task force combines various local, state, county and federal law enforcement agencies with non-governmental organizations and social service providers to rescue victims, to investigate allegations of human trafficking, and to strengthen counter trafficking efforts throughout Chicago, Cook County, and surrounding communities. CTTF is a multi jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary effort centered on several over-arching goals: to identify and respond to deficits in victim identification efforts, to identify and respond to deficits in victim services' capacities, to successfully prosecute traffickers, and to increase the number of successful trafficking victim rescues. Local partners include the Chicago Police Department, which chairs the task force meetings, the Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, the Cook County Sheriff's Office and the Chicago Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence.

In the Chicago area, more than 60 trafficking victims have been discovered and rescued in recent years, but no traffickers have been prosecuted. A recent success of the Chicago Trafficking Task Force involved rescuing two women from Brazil who were forced to work as prostitutes for an escort service operating out of suburban Boston. Key agencies in Boston and Chicago worked together. This cooperative effort resulted in the rescue of two victims and the charging of the ring leader and his girlfriend back in Boston.

PROSTITUTION ALTERNATIVES ROUNDTABLE

The mission of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless is to prevent and end homelessness by organizing and advocating for systems change and by addressing the root causes of homelessness. These can include a lack of affordable housing, access to health care and living wage jobs and many other things, including violence against women, particularly, prostitution or the sex trade as a form of violence against women. The Coalition sponsors a project called the Prostitution Alternative Round Table (PART), whose mission includes reducing the stigma associated with the sex trade.

INTERSYSTEM ASSESSMENT ON PROSTITUTION IN CHICAGO

The Intersystem Assessment on Prostitution in Chicago is coordinated through the City of Chicago Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence and has, since May of 2003, convened to examine how Chicago is currently responding to prostitution from a system's perspective and to explore the overlap between sex trafficking and prostitution. The Intersystem Assessment on Prostitution released a report of its findings in October of 2006. The report's findings indicate that there is a clear overlap between sex trafficking and prostitution and that

this intersection needs further attention. Specifically, the report recommends that federal laws, including the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, be used to prosecute traffickers who operate locally, as well as the pimps/arrangers. Several committees have been formed to prioritize and implement the recommendations from the report, including the need to train first responders in health care settings. A screening protocol for victims of sex trafficking and prostitution is being developed by the service enhancement committee and will likely be piloted at the emergency department of the John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital.

HEARTLAND ALLIANCE

The Counter-Human Trafficking Services program at the National Immigrant Justice Center, a program of Heartland Alliance, assists human trafficking victims in applying for available legal remedies and raises community awareness about human trafficking. The National Immigrant Justice Center ensures human rights protections and access to justice for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers through direct legal services, policy reform, impact litigation, and public education. Over the last six years, the National Immigrant Justice Center has assisted over 65 trafficked immigrants find recovery and protection through legal services and supportive social services.

PARTNERSHIP TO RESCUE OUR MINORS FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (PROMISE)

The mission of Chicago's Partnership to Rescue Our Minors from Sexual Exploitation (PROMISE) is to address in a holistic manner the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of all those under 18 years of age in the Chicago area. The partnership consists of over twenty Chicago agencies, including the Juvenile Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County. PROMISE focuses on building awareness, prevention, education, as well as intervention in regards to the issue of sex trafficking as it relates to youth. The PROMISE model was developed by the Salvation Army and is being implemented across the nation.

THE COOK COUNTY INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN TASK FORCE

The Cook County Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force is one of forty-six task forces across the nation funded by the federal government. The task-force gives Cook County the opportunity to network with individuals throughout the country. Ms. Kathleen Muldoon, an Assistant State's Attorney in the Sex Crimes Division of the Cook County State's Attorney Office, specifically in the Child Advocacy and Protection Unit, heads the Internet task force. The unit deals strictly with juvenile victims of sex abuse and sexual molestation; prosecutors are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to handle calls from the entire county. The unit manages high profile cases involving multiple victims and registered sex offenders, as well as cases that involve trusted authority figures such as teachers, priests, and coaches who are abusing or molesting children in Cook County. In addition to those cases, the unit also handles all the Internet crimes and the manufacturing and/or possession of child pornography.

THE COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S POLICE CHILD EXPLOITATION UNIT

The Cook County Sheriff's Police Child Exploitation Unit investigates crimes such as child pornography, the manufacture of child pornography, computer-related incidents such as the indecent solicitation of children over the Internet, juvenile prostitution, and juvenile pimping. The unit works closely with the State's Attorney's Office and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Postal Inspection Service to investigate domestic human trafficking. Many of the investigations involve runaways and young children who are brought into the prostitution business and transported across state lines. While the unit has arrested prostitutes, they are more interested in arresting the pimps who are the cause of the problem. Since 1998 when the unit was established, approximately 330 arrests and related investigations have been made. The unit has a 100% conviction rate to date and works seven days a week, 24 hours a day.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Train first responders in key county systems

The County should train all first responders in all its relevant departments and agencies. First responders in the hospital and health clinics, the public health department, the detention centers, the sheriff's office and the state's attorney's office, including all prosecutors and probation officers, should be trained on victim identification, and the existing laws and methods for relief for trafficking victims.

- 1)** The Cook County Bureau of Health should support the implementation of a pilot screening protocol in the Emergency Room Department of the John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital. A task force from the Intersystem Assessment on Prostitution is developing a protocol, including a screening assessment instrument, to identify and assist victims of prostitution and sex trafficking. The task force intends to pilot the protocol in the emergency department at Stroger Hospital.
- 2)** First responders in county departments and agencies should make the screening of trafficking victims part of their protocol. Agencies should identify referrals to appropriate service providers and agencies that work with victims. First responders need to be aware that any person, not only foreign-born, under the age of 18 years who is involved in Cook County's commercial sex trade is recognized by Illinois law as a trafficking victim.
- 3)** All county agencies and victim/witness programs that interface with victims of human trafficking should be aware of the Predator Accountability Act and make sure that these victims are educated about their right to sue their abusers in civil court. Unlike other victims of crime, this is often not a self-identifying population. The Predator Accountability Act offers a means of impacting the 'business' and profit making end of trafficking by making it possible for victims to obtain monetary damages.
- 4)** The judiciary should receive education about the impact of human trafficking, all relevant laws, victim rights, and alternatives to incarceration for individuals who are victims of the sex trade. Specifically, the First Offender Probation Act gives judges the option of sentencing a person convicted with her first time felony prostitution to probation with services.

Participate in coalitions that address human trafficking

5) The County should participate in the several existing coalitions of local governments, the federal government and community based organizations which are collaborating to end human trafficking. Local governments, state and county, are key intermediaries that already have the networks and resources available to be able to identify victims. Close coordination among federal, state, and local units of government is key to ending the trafficking of human beings and holding traffickers accountable. Such collaborations include:

- Rescue and Restore, Illinois Department of Health and Human Services
- Intersystem Assessment on Prostitution, Mayor's Office on Domestic Violence
- PROMISE, Partnership to Rescue our Minors from Sexual Exploitation, Salvation Army
- Prostitution Round Table, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- Safe State Council, Chicago Foundation for Women
- Chicago Trafficking Task Force, Chicago Police Department and Heartland Alliance

Support County agencies that are working to stop human trafficking

- 6) The County Board should provide adequate funding, resources and staff to the Child Advocacy and Protection Unit of the Sex Crimes Division of the State's Attorney Office. This unit deals with juvenile victims of sex abuse and sexual molestation by both registered offenders and trusted adults, juvenile prostitution, and heads the Cook County Internet Crimes Against Children task force. The unit operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and handles cases for the entire county.
- 7) The County Board should provide adequate funding, resources, and staff to the Sheriff's Police and Child Exploitation Unit. This unit investigates crimes related to child pornography, computer-related incidents, juvenile pimping and juvenile prostitution. The unit operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and works closely with the State's Attorney's Office. Budget reviews should bear in mind the urgency of protecting the children of Cook County from predators.
- 8) The County Board should provide adequate funding, resources, and staff to the Investigation Unit of the Incident Review Team of the Public Guardian's Office. This unit investigates malfeasance within state run residential and foster homes that cause additional abuse and neglect to child clients of the Public Guardian. The unit also investigates and locates runaway children who are Public Guardian clients and wards of the Cook County courts, and who are often prostituted and otherwise sexually exploited by adults.

The County should support the development of specialized services for victims of trafficking

- 9) Cook County should fund the development and implementation of specialized social services for victims of trafficking, including crisis intervention, emergency housing, and trauma counseling. Distinctions and commonalities among victims of international trafficking, domestic trafficking, and prostitution should be identified. A very large percentage of women and girls in detention have been involved in the sex trade and are likely to suffer post-traumatic stress from recent and childhood emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Presently, the Sheriff's Office of Women's Justice Services offers trauma counseling to its women inmates. Similar mental health services would benefit girls in juvenile detention.
- 10) The Bureau of Health should offer specialized assessment and mental health services in its clinics, including the Fantus Clinic, to clients who have been victims of trafficking. Furthermore, the social service referral base used by any first responder such as emergency room staff should include information about resources, including emergency housing, for victims of trafficking.

Advocate for legislative and policy change

- 11) The County should review the juvenile prostitution statute and identify ways to amend the statute to harmonize with trafficking laws. Specifically, while any person under the age of 18 years who is involved in Cook County's commercial sex trade is recognized by Illinois law as a trafficking victim, the prostitution statute does not consider 16 and 17 year olds as juveniles so they are not protected under this law. Furthermore, the prostitution statute stipulates that pimps have to acknowledge that they knew they were soliciting a minor for the crime to be a felony as opposed to a misdemeanor. Since perpetrators are unlikely to admit this knowledge, this stipulation should be reviewed.





- 12)** Cook County government should adopt a zero-tolerance position on human trafficking and borrow language from the Trafficking Victims' Protection Act to create a county policy prohibiting human trafficking and modern-day slavery within Cook County. This policy should be communicated to all doing business with Cook County government.

- 13)** The County Judiciary should be encouraged to offer individuals prosecuted for prostitution alternatives to incarceration. The First Offender Probation Act gives judges the option of sentencing a person convicted with her first time felony prostitution to probation with services. The judiciary should be encouraged to view prostitutes as victims of the sex trade as opposed to criminals, which is the predominant lens currently used. A prison record and/or warrants that are issued for their arrest keep many prostitutes enslaved to the sex trade as their other economic options become even more limited by a criminal record.

Conduct public outreach and education

- 15)** The County should conduct innovative outreach strategies and awareness campaigns that encourage the identification of victims. This is often not a self-identifying population, unlike other victims of crime. The County should place posters containing victim identification and hotline reporting information in all county offices.

- 16)** The County should participate in the Rescue and Restore's Annual Outreach Day which is coordinated through the Illinois Department of Human Services. Thousands of volunteers across Illinois distribute and hang public awareness posters which list the hotline number for people to call with any concerns about human trafficking.

**COOK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Todd H. Stroger, President

William M. Beavers

Jerry Butler

Forrest Claypool

Earlean Collins

John P. Daley

Elizabeth Ann Gorman Doody

Gregg Goslin

Roberto Maldonado

Joseph Mario Moreno

Joan P. Murphy

Anthony J. Peraica

Mike Quigley

Timothy O. Schneider

Peter N. Silvestri

Deborah Sims

Robert B. Steele

Larry Suffredin

