



Shared Hope International conducted research in more than a dozen locations through the United States and found American children being used in the commercial sex industry. Children who are exploited through prostitution, pornography and sexual entertainment are victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. Due to misidentification, ignorance, or efforts to keep victims safe from traffickers, these minors are often labeled as delinquents and placed in detention facilities.

### **Defining the Problem**

Domestic minor sex trafficking is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act,” where the person is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 years. It is not necessary to prove force, fraud, coercion or movement was used to cause the exploitation through trafficking of a child.

### **Scope of the Problem**

- At least 100,00 children are exploited through prostitution every year in the United States.
- The average age a child is first exploited in prostitution is 13 years old.
- Prostituted children are often controlled by a pimp who recruits them into sex trafficking by posing as a boyfriend.

### **Victims, not Criminals**

Exploited children are often labeled “child prostitutes” or juvenile delinquents and punished for the crime that is committed against them. Victims of domestic minor sex trafficking are in detention facilities across the country for charges of prostitution while those who buy sex from them are free and their traffickers frequently escape detection.

If you suspect human trafficking, please call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline - 1-888-373-7888



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