



## **DOMESTIC CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING AND BLACK GIRLS**

### **WHAT IS DOMESTIC CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING?**

**Domestic Child Sex Trafficking (DCST)** occurs any time a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 exchanges sex for anything of value (e.g., food, shelter, money, etc.).<sup>i</sup>

### **WHAT MAKES A YOUTH VULNERABLE TO TRAFFICKING?**

The following factors make youth vulnerable to sex trafficking and exploitation.<sup>ii</sup>

- A history of sexual and/or physical abuse
- Community or family instability and dislocation
- Child welfare involvement, especially out-of-home foster care placement
- Being a runaway or homeless youth
- Disconnection from the education system and being off-track for achievement
- Poverty

### **BLACK GIRLS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AT-RISK**

Black girls are more likely to experience the risk factors listed above. In addition, studies report that Black girls become trafficked at younger ages than their racial counterparts.<sup>iii</sup> They are more likely to experience poverty, and consequently more likely to be disconnected from schools and other community supports.<sup>iv</sup> Also, younger Black Girls have an increased risk of experiencing abuse due to the fact that children are most likely to experience physical and sexual abuse at young ages<sup>v</sup> and Black girls witness and experience multiple forms of violence at higher rates than their white peers.<sup>vi</sup>

### **A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF DCST SURVIVORS ARE BLACK GIRLS**

According to the FBI, Black children comprise 53% of all juvenile prostitution arrests—more than any other racial group.<sup>vii</sup> In a two-year review of all suspected human trafficking incidents across the country, 40% of sex trafficking victims were Black.<sup>viii</sup> In Los Angeles County, 92% of girls in the juvenile justice system identified as trafficking victims were Black, 62% of those children were from the child welfare system, and 84% were from poor communities in the southeastern part of LA County.<sup>ix</sup> In Alameda County, 66% of child sex trafficking survivors identified as Black girls.<sup>x</sup>

Even in communities where a small percentage of the population is Black, Black girls are disproportionately trafficked. For example, in King County, Washington, 84% of child sex trafficking victims are female and 52% are Black, though Black children and adults together only comprise 7% of the general population.<sup>xi</sup> In Multnomah County, Oregon, approximately 95% of child sex trafficking victims are female and 27% of child sex trafficking victims are Black, though Black people comprise less than 6% of the population.<sup>xii</sup> In Louisiana, Black girls account for nearly 49% of child sex trafficking victims, though Black girls comprise approximately 19% of Louisiana's youth population.<sup>xiii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> As defined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, DCST is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” where the victim is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18. 22 U.S.C. §§ 7102(9)-(10). A commercial sex act is defined as “any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.” § 7102(4).



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- <sup>ii</sup> Kate Walker, California Child Welfare Council, [Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California](#) (2013), pp.18-20.
- <sup>iii</sup> Lisa Goldblatt Grace & Francine T. Sherman, *The System Response to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Girls*, in [Juvenile Justice: Advancing Research Policy, and Practice](#), 336 (Francine T. Sherman & Francine H. Jacobs eds., 2011).
- <sup>iv</sup> Lauren Frohlich, Janel George, Fatima Goss Graves, Lara S. Kaufmann, & Leticia Smith-Evans, NAACP Legal Defense Fund & National Women's Law Center, [Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls: A Call to Action for Educational Equity](#) (2014), p.7.
- <sup>v</sup> Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, [Child Maltreatment 2015](#) (2017).
- <sup>vi</sup> National Center for Victims of Crime, Action Partnership on Interventions for Black Children Exposed to Violence and Victimization, [Black Children Exposed to Violence and Victimization](#) (accessed 2015).
- <sup>vii</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, [Crime in the United States 2017](#), Tables 43B.
- <sup>viii</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, [Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008-2010](#) (April 2011).
- <sup>ix</sup> Los Angeles Times, "[Campaign to halt sex trafficking launched in L.A. County](#)" (May 31, 2012).
- <sup>x</sup> Kate Walker, California Child Welfare Council, [Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California](#) (2013), p.22.
- <sup>xi</sup> Val Richey, OJJDP Online University, [Reducing Demand for the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Minors in Your Community](#) (May 2017).
- <sup>xii</sup> Christopher Carey & Lena Teplitsky, Portland State University, *Memo regarding the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area* (August 3, 2013), p.3.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, *Human Trafficking, Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, and Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Annual Report*, (Feb. 2018).