

*New York Prevalence Study of  
Commercially Sexually  
Exploited Children*

## Final Report

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Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York State Legislature required the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to develop a comprehensive study that: (1) estimates the prevalence of sexually exploited children within New York State, (2) identifies the unique needs of sexually exploited children, (3) specifies the types of programs and services that best meet such needs, and (4) evaluates the capacity of the current children’s service system to meet the needs of commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC). Under contract with OCFS, Westat designed and conducted a prospective survey to estimate the prevalence of these children in the current service system and to specify available and needed services.

The Safe Harbour bill of 2006 defined “sexually exploited children” as:

people under the age of 18 who may be subject to sexual exploitation because they have engaged or agreed or offered to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee, traded sex for food, clothing or a place to stay, stripped, been filmed or photographed performing or engaging in sexual acts or loitered for the purpose of engaging in a prostitution offense as defined in section 240.37 of the penal law.\*

Westat developed two mail surveys, two qualitative interview protocols, and a focus group protocol to facilitate the collection of data. The mail surveys were sent to 159 agencies in four New York City (NYC) boroughs—Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens—and seven Upstate counties—Chautauqua, Erie, Oneida, Onondaga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington. These counties represented a purposive sample drawn to represent variations in population under 18 and geography, high rates of prostitution arrests and high rates of child sexual abuse reports, and the presence of agencies likely to serve as sentinels of CSEC. Agencies sampled within these counties included county and municipal law enforcement, probation departments, detention centers, OCFS female juvenile justice facilities, child advocacy centers (CACs), runaway shelters and transitional independent living programs, congregate care facilities, rape crisis centers, and youth-serving agencies.

The data on prevalence of CSEC were collected through prospective mail questionnaires covering children identified as commercially sexually exploited from July 15

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\* Education, Labor and Family Assistance Article VII/Language Bill (S6458 – C/A 9558-B), Part F. Note that trading sex for drugs was included in the definition used for this study because it was added to the May 2006 version of the Safe Harbour bill.

through September 15, 2006. Ninety-seven of the agencies returned the mail surveys, for a response rate of 81.0 percent Upstate and 45.2 percent in NYC. Data were weighted to give annual estimates of the prevalence of CSEC identified by service agencies for the two geographic areas—NYC and the seven Upstate counties. In addition, 20 non-police agencies—the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), the seven Departments of Social Services (DSS) responsible for the Upstate counties covered by the mail survey, and 12 other service agencies—participated in qualitative interviews. Finally, three focus groups were conducted with CSEC in NYC.

On an annual basis, the number of CSEC identified in NYC is estimated at over five times the number for the seven Upstate counties (2,253 identified in NYC versus 399 Upstate). The estimate of 399 CSEC for the Upstate counties is not a statewide estimate, but applies only to the seven counties sampled for the study. Demographically, there are noteworthy variations between CSEC in NYC and the sampled counties Upstate. CSEC in NYC were predominantly female (85 percent), Black/African American (67 percent), and 16 to 17 years old (59 percent). Just four percent ( $n=82$  girls) were age 13 or under. NYC had the only children who identified as transgender ( $n=31$ ), and the majority of children identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning. Nearly one fifth of the NYC children were Hispanic/Latino. Upstate, male children were a significant minority (22 percent). Upstate children were also younger; only 36 percent were 16 to 17 years old and 28 percent ( $n=63$  girls and 50 boys) were 13 or younger. Only two percent identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning, and none were transgender. The largest racial group Upstate was white (47 percent). Ten percent were Hispanic/Latino.

Consistent with other research, the data analysis revealed that the overwhelming majority of CSEC (at least 85 percent), regardless of geographic area, had prior child welfare involvement—typically in the form of child abuse and neglect allegations/investigations (69 percent of the NYC CSEC and 54 percent of those Upstate) and/or a foster care placement (75 percent of the NYC CSEC and 49 percent Upstate). A substantial proportion (over half of the NYC CSEC and 44 percent of those Upstate) had a prior juvenile justice placement, although secure placements were more common among the NYC children. About half of both groups had prior episodes of commercial sexual exploitation.

Distinct differences in the characteristics of the most recent commercial sexual exploitation between NYC and the Upstate counties are evident. While a sex act in exchange for money is by far the most common type of exploitation, reported for over 80 percent of CSEC in

both areas, loitering for prostitution is more often identified in NYC (30 percent versus five percent Upstate), while only the Upstate counties report involvement with sexual acts that are filmed, photographed or tape recorded (17 percent). In NYC, the exploitation most often occurred in a hotel (44 percent versus nine percent Upstate) or outside (30 percent versus two percent Upstate). Upstate it typically occurred in the child's home (52 percent versus seven percent in NYC). In NYC, the exploiter was most likely an adult stranger (75 percent versus 28 percent Upstate), while Upstate, the exploiter was most likely an adult friend or acquaintance (58 percent versus 24 percent in NYC). In NYC, force was used in 58 percent of the cases, compared with 32 percent in the Upstate counties.

Questions about service availability and capacity, CSEC service needs, and problems providing needed services were included in both the mail questionnaire and the qualitative interviews. Typically, CSEC in NYC received more types of services (7.6 on average) than did CSEC in the Upstate counties (5.8 on average). Mental health counseling and case management were provided to the majority of CSEC in both geographic areas. A majority of CSEC in NYC also received food, clothing, transportation, assessment, and/or advocacy. The majority identified Upstate also received residential services. Service referrals, made for 86 percent of the NYC children and 45 percent of those Upstate, were also critical to the constellation of services available. Medical care (71 percent) and mental health counseling (68 percent) were the most common referrals by NYC agencies. Substance abuse screening (30 percent) and mental health counseling (22 percent) were the most common service referrals Upstate.

When asked about specialized service needs for CSEC, NYC agencies identified an average of 3.1 services compared to an average of 1.6 by the Upstate agencies. In both areas, mental health counseling was the need most often identified (72 percent in NYC and 64 percent Upstate). The largest proportional difference between the two geographic areas occurred for medical care (identified as a need by 59 percent in NYC versus 25 percent in Upstate) and crisis shelter (27 percent in NYC versus 9 percent Upstate).

Agencies were also asked about service barriers. The type of barriers identified differed by both service category and geographic area. NYC respondents most commonly cited an insufficient number of beds for crisis shelter and restrictions on non-county youth for residential services. Limited funding and lack of staff or staff training were typically cited for other service needs. Upstate, concern centered on insufficient slots or beds for mental health counseling.

“Other” barriers were the most typically cited for other services needs identified Upstate. These barriers included lack of insurance, limited transportation, and general lack of resources.

In discussing service gaps and barriers, interviewees from DSS and other service agencies echoed many of these concerns, but specified finding and funding safe housing as a particular challenge. The majority of interviewees (both in NYC and Upstate) were also concerned about training deficits for personnel who work with CSEC, ranging from clinical staff to police and judges who handle CSEC cases.

A number of recommendations emerged based on responses to the qualitative interviews, discussions with the Study Advisory Group, and findings from the mail survey and other data sources. The proposed support for both short-term crisis housing and long-term safe houses in the Safe Harbour bill was fully consistent with the study findings. Nine agencies (seven from NYC and two Upstate) responding to the qualitative survey reported that housing was the most critical need for CSEC, and three NYC agencies supported dedicated housing for this population because of the stigma attached to the sex industry. Agencies supported changes in criminal statutes, such as exempting 16- and 17-year-olds from prosecution in criminal court for prostitution. Support was also expressed for defining 16- and 17-year-olds that engaged in prostitution as PINS. Support was mixed concerning exempting youth under 16 from delinquency statutes because of concern that a secure placement option was necessary for some youth with a history of running away from foster care and non-secure voluntary agency settings and being re-exploited. The Advisory Group strongly supported the development of a safe environment for CSEC, which would include counseling and other “tailored” services. It also argued for increasing the severity of the sanctions for pimps, whom they perceive as currently receiving little more than “a slap on the wrist.”

Annual counts of CSEC would be helpful for determining their service needs; however, agencies will need to develop an ongoing procedure to capture this information and use a consistent definition of commercial sexual exploitation. Additional consideration should be given to conducting a census of street youth who are active in the sex industry but may not be receiving services.

Programs directed toward commercially sexually exploited children should be prepared to address a multiplicity of problems presented by these children, including a history of victimization, mental health needs, and medical issues. Other recommendations made by agency staff and supported by the Advisory Group include:

- a written protocol or community plan for dealing with CSEC,
- a tool for identifying CSEC among children referred to an agency,
- increased public education and awareness,
- consistent response between the courts and law enforcement,
- placing a victim advocate in the law enforcement system,
- mandated joint investigations,
- mandatory sentences for abusers,
- more after-school activities, youth centers, outreach workers,
- improved procedures for information sharing,
- primary prevention and early intervention in family difficulties as well as additional efforts to ensure a smooth and seamless transition from child welfare and juvenile justice to the next stage of a child's life, and
- responsive programs tailored to the child's background, experience, and needs.

**NEW YORK PREVALENCE STUDY OF COMMERCIALY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED  
CHILDREN**

**FINAL REPORT**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

In April 2006, the New York State Legislature required the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to develop a comprehensive study that:

- Estimates the prevalence of sexually exploited children within New York State;
- Identifies the unique needs of sexually exploited children;
- Specifies the types of programs and services that best meet such needs; and
- Evaluates the capacity of the current children's service system to meet needs of commercially sexually exploited children.<sup>1</sup>

The initiative for this legislation began through the efforts of Assemblyman William Scarborough and Senator Dale M. Volker. They became interested in how the child welfare and criminal justice systems were handling youth who were sexually exploited in the commercial sex business after advocates for sexually exploited children raised the issue with the Legislature in 2005. In response to the concerns of advocates, Assemblyman Scarborough and Senator Volker first introduced a bill called the Safe Harbour Act to address the special needs of sexually exploited youth.

In early 2006, the Assembly Committee on Children and Families convened a roundtable where an expert from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children provided estimates of the magnitude of the problem of child sexual exploitation nationwide. More disturbingly, several young people provided testimony about their own harrowing experiences as sex workers that started when they were only 12 or 13 years old in New York City (NYC). Rachel Lloyd, the founder of Girls Education and Mentoring Services (GEMS), which specializes in outreach services to girls who are being exploited through prostitution in New York City, spoke about the unmet needs of the girls she was trying to extricate from dangerous abuse inflicted by pimps and customers. Ms. Lloyd testified that safe housing and context-specific counseling by staff who understood the problems of girls who were being prostituted was most urgently needed. Without safe and secure housing, pimps could and did psychologically and/or physically kidnap these traumatized girls, bringing them back to work for them before the girls had been given a chance to heal.

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<sup>1</sup> Education, Labor and Family Assistance Article VII/Language Bill (S6458 – C/A 9558-B), Part F.

Shortly thereafter, the New York State Legislature decided it needed information about the magnitude of the problem that was specific to New York State before prescribing changes in law or mandating special services statewide.

The study to address these concerns was carried out in summer and fall 2006, using a combination of mail surveys and telephone interviews of public and private agencies that handle cases involving sexually exploited children, and placing an emphasis on those aspects of sexual exploitation that are commercial. The surveys targeted a purposive sample of 11 New York counties and focused on children identified by the participating agencies during a two-month period from July 15 through September 15, 2006. The data were then weighted to represent annual estimates of commercially sexually exploited children served in seven Upstate counties and four New York City (NYC) boroughs.

The purpose of this report is to describe the findings from this investigation. The remainder of Chapter 1 provides a brief review of the literature on commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) and defines commercial child sexual exploitation for purposes of this study. Chapter 2 describes the study methodology and the rate of success in getting agencies to participate. Chapter 3 provides findings from the mail questionnaire on the prevalence of CSEC in the sample counties, their characteristics, the nature of the sexual exploitation, and variations in CSEC between the Upstate counties and NYC boroughs. Chapter 4 adds more detail to the picture of CSEC by reporting findings from three youth focus groups conducted in NYC, information about commercially sexually exploited girls remanded to OCFS facilities from across the State, and a survey by the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives. Chapter 5, using data from both mail questionnaires and phone interviews, looks at current service provision, needs, and deficits. Chapter 6 examines the settings and practices used when serving these children. Chapter 7 provides a summary of findings, limitations to the study, and recommendations for identifying and serving CSEC.

## **1.2 Background**

According to *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (1996)* 300,000 prostituted children may live on U.S.

streets.<sup>2</sup> Other estimates suggest the number lies somewhere between 100,000 and 3 million.<sup>3</sup> These estimates are ten years old, and the problems plaguing studies in this area persist—small sample sizes and dependence on information from service providers who may serve only a fraction of the sexually exploited child population.

Commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) are often “hidden” because they are runaways or homeless<sup>4</sup> or never disclose their sexual exploitation due to shame or embarrassment. While girls are more likely to be the victims of sexual exploitation in most countries, advocates of programs targeting commercially exploited youth have estimated that in the United States, exploited boys may be nearly equal in number to girls; however, boys are even more difficult to find because they are less reliant on pimps and tend to create their own protection groups.<sup>5</sup>

Several studies identify three primary paths to commercial sexual exploitation: (1) survival sex, where sex is used by runaway or homeless youth for food, clothing, housing, and protection; (2) sex used to maintain a drug addiction; and (3) participation in the sex industry primarily for money, where children are used for an adult’s profit.<sup>6</sup> Reasons for entry into these paths are complex and nuanced. A number of different attributes appear to place children at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. As adolescents, these children often have problems—low self-esteem, poor judgment, neediness—that make them targets.<sup>7</sup> Many lack adults who care about them and who can serve as role models.

Childhood victimization is often a factor. In different studies, the percentage of prostituted women with a history of childhood sexual abuse varied from 10 to 70 percent.<sup>8</sup> Some

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<sup>2</sup> *Report of the special rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography.* (1996) United Nations Economic and Social Council. Commission on Human Rights. 52<sup>nd</sup> Session. Agenda Item 20, Section 35, U.N. Document #/CN.4/1996/100.

<sup>3</sup> Youth Advocate Program International. (1998) *Children for sale: Youth involved in prostitution, pornography, and sex trafficking.* Washington, DC: Author, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Klain, E.J. (1999) *Prostitution of children and child-sex tourism: An analysis of domestic and international responses.* Washington, DC: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Youth Advocate Program International, op. cit., 1.

<sup>6</sup> Youth Advocate Program International, op.cit., 1; Barrett, D., Beckett, W. (1996) “Child prostitution: Reaching out to children who sell sex to survive.” *British Journal of Nursing* 5 (13):1120-1121.

<sup>7</sup> Slavin, P. (2002) “How safe are our children on the Internet.” *Children’s Voice.* Accessed December 9, 2006, from [www.cwla.org/articles/cv0201safeinternet.htm](http://www.cwla.org/articles/cv0201safeinternet.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Dalla, R.L., Xia, Y., and Kennedy, H. (2003) “You just give them what they want and pray they don’t kill you. Street-level sex workers reports of victimization, personal resources, and coping strategies.” *Violence Against Women* 9:1369; McClanahan, S.F., McClelland, G.M., Abram, K.M., and Teplin, L.A. (1999) “Pathways into prostitution among female jail detainees and their implications for mental health services.” *Psychiatric Services* 50(12):1608.

come from generations of family abuse. In their study of female jail detainees, McClanahan and colleagues found that childhood victimization affects entry into prostitution, regardless of the age at entry. Running away particularly affects entrance into prostitution for children under 15 years of age.<sup>9</sup> Widom and Kuhns also found that child physical abuse and neglect were associated with an increased risk for prostitution.<sup>10</sup> Advocates suggest that abuse or neglect makes children especially vulnerable to pimps who may initially shower attention on them.<sup>11</sup> This has been found to be particularly true for females.<sup>12</sup>

Many children may not understand that they are being exploited, due to age, learning disabilities and limitations, poor judgment, need for attention, or previous sexual or physical abuse. This confusion often extends to adults who come in contact with these youth—police officers, probation officers, facility supervisors—who do not fully understand that children cannot be considered willing participants, even if they appear so.

Homelessness and running away are also key correlates of commercial sex abuse, particularly survival sex, which involves selling sex to meet basic or subsistence needs. In a nationally representative sample of youth in runaway shelters, Green, Ennett, and Ringwalt found that 61 percent of the females in the sample had engaged in survival sex. In their related sample of youth living on the street, 61 percent of the males had also participated in survival sex. In both samples, children were twice as likely to have reported engaging in survival sex if they reported being physically abused by family members.<sup>13</sup>

For children who become the victims of commercial sexual exploitation, violence is often described as a condition of everyday life. Pimp-related violence is the most well known. While not all prostitutes work for pimps, one study estimated that 80 percent of female street prostitutes are involved with a pimp at some point. Children, particularly runaways who have difficulty meeting basic needs, are vulnerable to the attention of a pimp who is skilled at assessing the needs of his victim, fulfilling the unmet needs, and “turning the victim out” for prostitution. The initial courtship between pimp and prostitute can last anywhere from one day to

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<sup>9</sup> McClanahan et al., op. cit., 1608.

<sup>10</sup> Widom, C.S., and Kuhns, J.B. (1996) “Childhood victimization and subsequent risk for promiscuity: A prospective study.” *American Journal of Public Health* 86(11):1611.

<sup>11</sup> Youth Advocate Program International, op. cit., 2.

<sup>12</sup> Widom and Kuhns, op. cit., 1611.

<sup>13</sup> Greene, J.M., Ennett, S.T., and Ringwalt, C.L. (1999) “Prevalence and correlates of survival sex among runaway and homeless youth.” *American Journal of Public Health* 89(9):1408-1409.

several months. During this time, the victim develops devotion, infatuation, admiration, or loyalty.<sup>14</sup> Pimps use violence to enforce rules set for CSEC (such as earning a set amount of money or working a specific area or time). While this violence is often predictable, pimps also use violence more randomly to keep the children under their control.

But violence comes from other sources as well, including customers, others working for the pimp, the public, and even service providers.<sup>15</sup> Customer violence or “bad dates” are common. Such violence involves beatings, robbery (which may result in beatings from the pimp), rape, and leaving the victim in a deserted or distant location. Other women or girls working for the pimp may also attack a prostitute in order to show their dedication to the pimp or, if not working for the pimp, to establish authority over a given territory. In addition, prostitutes encounter violence or abuse from the public. Objects are thrown at them from passing cars, or they are attacked or harassed when they seek services. Prostitutes rarely report such crimes to authorities for fear of being victimized by police. In Nixon, Crowne, Gorkoff, and Ursel, street prostitutes in western Canada reported being hit by or forced to have sex with police.<sup>16</sup> A number of women also avoided police because of stories they heard about abuse.

Drug abuse, particularly crack, is another factor in commercial sexual exploitation. In one study, 66 percent of the women interviewed reported entering into street prostitution to support a drug habit. In another, the same percentage of women reported becoming drug abusers after they became involved in street prostitution. For these women, drugs or alcohol were needed to overcome their fear of the street and what could happen. Pimps also use drugs to get girls under their control. Use of drugs, while reducing fear, may dispose victims to risk even greater dangers, such as engaging in unprotected sex or going with someone who poses a distinct threat.

It is widely recognized that commercially exploited youth are at substantial risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The social and emotional risks are also significant, with studies reporting disproportionate levels of mental illness.<sup>17</sup> A study on youth victimization by Kilpatrick, Saunders, and Smith found that children who were victims of sexual assault were three to five times more likely to exhibit post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),

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<sup>14</sup> Williamson, C., and Cluse-Tolar, T. (2002) “Pimp-controlled prostitution: Still an integral part of street life.” *Violence Against Women* 8:1084.

<sup>15</sup> Nixon, K., Tutty, L., Cowne, P., Gorkoff, K., and Ursel, J. (2002). “The Everyday Occurrence. Violence in the Lives of Girls Exploited Through Prostitution.” *Violence Against Women* 8(9):1016-1043.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 1037.

<sup>17</sup> Estes, R.J., and Weiner, N.A. (2001) *The commercial exploitation of children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, p. 63.

substance abuse, and delinquency. While these findings are striking, the study excluded runaways and juveniles in correctional or inpatient mental health treatment facilities—arguably some of the most vulnerable youth and those most likely to be involved in commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3 Study Definition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

For the purposes of this study, the definition of commercial sexual exploitation was based on that provided by the New York State Legislature in the Safe Harbour bill, which was first proposed during the 2005 session:

“sexually exploited children” shall mean people under the age of 18 who may be subject to sexual exploitation because they have engaged or agreed or offered to engage in sexual conduct with another person in return for a fee, traded sex for food, clothing or a place to stay, stripped, been filmed or photographed performing or engaging in sexual acts or loitered for the purpose of engaging in a prostitution offense as defined in section 240.37 of the penal law.<sup>19</sup>

This definition is comparable to the definition of “severe sex trafficking” used in the federal *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act* (TVPRA) of 2005, although more specific regarding the acts involved in sexual exploitation. In TVPRA, severe sex trafficking is defined as “a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such acts has not attained 18 years of age.”<sup>20</sup> All children identified for the study met the TVPRA definition of severe sex trafficking.

In operationalizing the definition of CSEC for this study, OCFS staff examined the intent of the legislation and discussed the definition with legislative staffers who worked on the original Safe Harbour bill, and the May 2006 revision that included trading sex for drugs in the bill’s definition of sexual exploitation. Further, staff examined the definition used by previous studies cited above. Of particular concern was the need to rule out sexual abuse of children by caregivers or others without a commercial purpose and focus on exploitation that involves exchange for money or bartered items such as food, clothing, or drugs. These distinctions can be

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<sup>18</sup> Kilpatrick, D.G., Saunders, B.E., and Smith, D.W. (2003) “Youth victimization: Prevalence and implications.” *Research in Brief*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Education, Labor and Family Assistance Article VII/Language Bill (S6458 – C/A 9558-B), Part F. Note that trading sex for drugs was included in the study definition because this wording was added to a revised Safe Harbour bill that was introduced in May 2006 before the study commenced.

<sup>20</sup> *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005* (Public Law 106-386), Section 103(8(A)).

subtle, which we further confirmed in implementing this study. Specifically, for this study, a commercially sexually exploited child is a person, under age 18, identified as having been involved in at least one of the following acts:

- Engaged in, agreed to, offered, or was threatened or coerced to engage in sexual conduct or acts with another person in return for money, food, clothing, protection, drugs, or a place to stay;
- Stripped and performed in public or over the Internet;
- Was filmed, photographed, or tape recorded engaging in a sexual act; or
- Loitered for the purpose of engaging in prostitution.

The perpetrators of sexual exploitation can be relatives, strangers, acquaintances, or friends and can be adults or minors. However, the agencies surveyed for this study were asked to exclude situations where, for example, food, clothes, or drugs were offered in exchange for sexual acts between romantic partners, such as boyfriends and girlfriends. The definition used by the study proved to be consistent with that used by these other agencies. All agencies participating in the qualitative interviews as part of the study agreed with the study definition.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

Westat used a two-pronged approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, to collect information on CSEC and the current service delivery programs for victims. The methodology—the sample design, instrument development, data collection, data processing, data analysis, and weighting—used to respond to all requirements of the study is outlined below. A brief description of the agencies included in the study is also provided.

### 2.1 Sample Design

A purposive sample of eleven counties was drawn to represent variations in population under 18 and geography; high rates of prostitution arrests and child sexual abuse reports; and the presence of agencies likely to serve as sentinels<sup>21</sup> of CSEC, such as child advocacy centers (CACs), runaway programs and shelters, and service programs known to target sexually exploited children. Because there is anecdotal evidence that the prevalence of sexually exploited children is considerably higher in NYC than in other parts of the State and that such cases may be handled differently in NYC than in the rest of the State, four of the NYC boroughs—Brooklyn (Kings County), Queens, Bronx, and Manhattan (New York County)—were included. The seven counties selected from the rest of the State, hereafter referred to as Upstate counties, were:

- Chautauqua,
- Erie,
- Oneida,
- Onondaga,
- Schenectady,
- Warren, and
- Washington.

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<sup>21</sup> The term “sentinel” is typically used in research to denote persons or agencies that are in a position to observe, identify, or intervene in the behavior that is being studied.

As shown in Table 2.1, these seven counties and four boroughs contain half the total population of New York State and half its population under 18. In 2005, these areas had 4,321 reports of child sexual abuse and 5,044 arrests of adults for prostitution. All but three arrests of persons less than 18 years old for prostitution in the State occurred in these areas—182 in the four NYC boroughs and four in the Upstate counties.

<b>Table 2.1: Demographics of the Sample Counties</b>							
County	Total Population (2000)		Population Under 18 Years (2000)		Child Sex Abuse Reports (2005)	Prostitution Arrests Over 17 <sup>1</sup> (2005)	Prostitution Arrests Under 18 <sup>1</sup> (2005)
	Number	Percent <sup>2</sup>	Number	Percent	Number	Number	Number
<b>New York City Boroughs</b>							
Bronx	1,332,650	7.0	395,849	8.5	1,246	271	11
Kings	2,465,326	13.0	658,663	14.1	897	1,542	65
New York	1,537,195	8.1	255,598	5.5	356	1,969	64
Queens	2,229,379	11.7	507,425	10.9	599	849	42
<i>Total for NYC<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>7,564,550</i>	<i>39.9</i>	<i>1,817,535</i>	<i>38.9</i>	<i>3,098</i>	<i>4,631</i>	<i>182</i>
<b>Upstate Counties<sup>3</sup></b>							
Chautauqua	139,750	0.7	34,098	0.7	163	0	0
Erie	950,265	5.0	230,257	4.9	400	86	1
Oneida	235,469	1.2	56,324	1.2	156	88	0
Onondaga	458,336	2.4	118,044	2.5	242	192	3
Schenectady	146,555	0.8	35,572	0.8	138	47	0
Warren	63,303	0.3	15,218	0.3	56	0	0
Washington	61,042	0.3	15,000	0.3	68	0	0
<i>Total for Upstate<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>2,054,720</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>504,513</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>1,223</i>	<i>413</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Total for Sample<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>9,619,270</i>	<i>50.7</i>	<i>2,322,048</i>	<i>49.7</i>	<i>4,321</i>	<i>5,044</i>	<i>186</i>
<i>Total for NY State</i>	<i>18,976,457</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>4,674,191</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>8,873</i>	<i>8,071</i>	<i>189</i>
<sup>1</sup> Prostitution arrests also include patronizing and promoting. <sup>2</sup> Percentages based on total population for New York State. <sup>3</sup> Percentages in these rows are based on totals for New York State.							

It is important to note that Westat used a purposive sample to allow fuller investigation of the issues associated with CSEC, instead of randomly selecting counties where the problem may not exist. When a purposive sample of counties is drawn, the counties do not have a known probability of selection, so it is impossible to produce unbiased estimates for all of New York State.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, in this survey, most of the sample counties were selected because their rates of juvenile prostitution are believed to be high—that is, the counties were not intended to be

<sup>22</sup> Known probability of selection means that a county or agency was drawn from among a group of counties or agencies at a given rate. For example, a ten percent sample of New York counties would yield a sample of six counties all with an equal chance of selection and a known probability of selection, one in ten.

representative. Thus, a statewide estimate of sexually exploited youth based on this sample of counties would very likely be a substantial over-estimate.

A Study Advisory Group (see Appendix A) was invited to support the project by identifying issues of greatest concern to agencies that work with sexually exploited youth as well as the types of agencies most likely to see these youth. Within each sampled county, comprehensive listings of ten targeted agency types were developed from several sources of information. The ten agency categories included:

- **County law enforcement.** One agency—the Sheriff’s Department—was selected per county, provided that investigation was part of the Sheriff’s function. (Source: *National Directory of Law Enforcement Administrators*. National Public Safety Information Bureau, 2004.)
- **Municipal law enforcement,** as well as the Port Authority Police in New York City. Two agencies per county were selected. The agencies with the largest number of officers were selected first.<sup>23</sup> (Source: *National Directory of Law Enforcement Administrators*. National Public Safety Information Bureau, 2004.)
- **Juvenile probation departments.** The probation department in each county was selected. (Source: Listing of county probation offices from the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, 2006.)
- **Juvenile detention facilities.** One facility per county was selected (the one with the largest number of beds), if there were such facilities in the county. (Source: *Directory of Juvenile Detention Facilities in New York State*. New York State Office of Children & Family Services, 2005.)
- **OCFS female juvenile justice facilities.** The OCFS Girls Reception Facility, which provides centralized intake for females committed to OCFS by the court, provided detailed information on statewide and county-level intake counts, annually and for the reference period, for all girls identified as sexually exploited (based on the arrest charge and data contained in the Reception Assessment Report) at intake.<sup>24</sup> We treated data for each county or borough as if they represented a separate OCFS “facility.” (Source: *Reception Assessment Reports on OCFS’ internal database*.)

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<sup>23</sup> In NYC, the police department covers all boroughs, so data were collected centrally for the four boroughs in NYC.

<sup>24</sup> OCFS data were limited to females because no males were admitted to OCFS for prostitution-related offenses or promoting a child in sexual performance offenses during the study period. Also, the male reception assessment reports (RAR) are not computerized and could not be searched for other hints of sexual exploitation within the limited timeframe available to conduct this study. The female RARs were available on computer.

- **Runaway homeless youth (RHY) shelters/transitional independent living (TIL) programs.** All such facilities in the county were selected. (Source: *Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Directory*. New York State Office of Children & Families, 2006.)
- **Congregate care facilities.** These facilities—such as group homes and other residences for children in foster care—were sampled on the basis of size. Agencies serving the most children (either in a single facility or multiple facilities) within the county were selected. Up to two agencies were chosen per county. (Source: *Listing of Voluntary Agencies Utilized by Counties for Foster Care from Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies and Administration for Children’s Services (ACS)*, 2006.)
- **Rape crisis centers.** Up to two agencies were chosen per county. (Source: *Local Programs*. New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 2006.)
- **Child advocacy centers (CACs).** One CAC per county was selected. (Source: *CAC Directory*. New York State Child Advocacy Resource and Consultation Center, 2006.)
- **Youth-serving agencies.** A number of agencies were selected from each county. These agencies included diversion programs for Persons In Need of Supervision (PINS), Legal Aid divisions, street outreach, and teen health programs. For the most part, all agencies in this residual category that were known to work with sexually exploited youth were selected. (Sources: *Listing of PINS Diversion Program, Children’s Aid Society*; *Listing of Juvenile Practice Division, Legal Aid*; *Listing of Youth-Serving Agencies From County Youth Bureaus*; recommendations from Advisory Board members.)

A total of 159 agencies were sampled. In cases where more than one or two agencies were located in the county, replacements were selected for any agencies that refused to participate in the study.

## 2.2 Instrument Development

Five data collection instruments were developed to capture information on the prevalence of sexually exploited children, the services needed and provided, and the experiences of those agencies working most directly with CSEC. The data on prevalence of CSEC were collected through a prospective questionnaire covering cases newly identified during a specific period of time. An alternative approach—asking agencies to retrieve data on previous cases—was rejected because members of the Advisory Group consistently commented that few agencies could easily retrieve data on past CSEC cases. As a result, police, corrections, probation, social service, and legal service agencies represented on the Advisory Group reached a consensus. Any

instrument developed would need to be given to the agencies in advance so that they could collect data soon after a case was identified.

Two mail questionnaires, one for police/sheriff's departments and a second for all other agencies, were developed (see Appendix B). The questionnaires were modeled after the Juvenile Facilities Study for the Second National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children.<sup>25</sup> These two instruments collected data on the total number of children and youth served or involved with the agency (Part I), the number of sexually exploited children identified by the agency during a two-month period (July 15 through September 15, 2006) (Part II), and more detailed information at the child level on a sample of the sexually exploited children (Part III). In Part III, agencies were asked to provide detailed information on up to five sexually exploited youth identified by the agency—specifically, the last five children identified during the reference period. The term “identified” means that the agency learned of the sexual exploitation during the reference period through child disclosure, police or other agency referral, observation of the exploitation, or some other way. This term was used in recognition of the fact that it often takes children a long time to disclose sexual exploitation (and some of it never *is* identified). Pilot tests were conducted with five agencies to refine the wording on questions and instructions.

Two qualitative interview protocols for telephone administration were developed (see Appendix C). The Agency Qualitative Interview was used with agencies identified in the mail questionnaire as providing services to CSEC. Other agencies recommended by the Study Advisory Group were also included. This survey asks for information on the different services provided, successful approaches in working with CSEC, the availability of community resources to serve these children (both within and outside the agency), and community resources needed. It also asks a series of questions about how the community deals with CSEC (such as protocols governing which agencies provide services, etc.). An alternate version of this survey, the DSS Qualitative Interview, was also developed for interviews with staff of the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the upstate Departments of Social Services (DSS) in the sampled counties. These interviews provide a context for the data collected on the number and types of services provided in each county.

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<sup>25</sup> Sedlak, A., Schultz, D., Croos, J., and Choudhry, H.(2003) *Second National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children: Juvenile Facilities Study Methodology Report*. Westat: Rockville, MD.

Last, Westat developed a focus group protocol (see Appendix D). This was sent to a subset of agencies (runaway and homeless youth agencies and agencies particularly noted for their work with CSEC), with a request that they hold a focus group comprising CSEC who were clients of the agency. Focus group topics included: (1) definitions of sexual exploitation, (2) gateways to sexual exploitation, (3) details about the clients' involvement, (4) problems caused by the exploitation, and (5) service access and availability. Three focus groups were conducted in NYC in the allotted time.

## **2.3 Data Collection**

### **2.3.1 Mail Questionnaires**

Once the sample was drawn, mailing lists and questionnaires were prepared. A joint letter from OCFS and the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) urging agencies to participate was developed. Once the OCFS/DCJS letter was approved (July 28), 159 agencies were mailed questionnaires and the accompanying letter on July 31, 2006. The letter asked agencies to respond for the period July 15 through September 15, 2006, and send completed questionnaires by September 30. Prior to mailing questionnaires, Westat staff had begun calling sampled agencies to ask for their active participation, and, where possible, to determine who should complete the questionnaire. In most cases, the executive director expressed an interest in seeing the questionnaire first. Several days after the surveys were mailed, Westat staff again called agencies to ensure that the agencies had received the survey (if not, a replacement was e-mailed, faxed, or mailed), to identify staff completing the form, and to answer questions about the survey. On August 25, postcards were sent to remind agencies about the survey and again give them a 1-800 telephone number to call if there were questions.

Few questionnaires ( $n=17$ ) were returned by September 30. A second mailing was sent to nonrespondents. This mailing included letters from the project staff and the original letter from OCFS and DCJS, the questionnaire, and a Federal Express return envelope. Several days after the mailing, staff again called agencies to determine if they had received this mailing and ask that they complete the questionnaires. Staff continued calling on a routine basis for the next few weeks. Few agencies refused outright to participate. Most refusals were passive; phone calls and questionnaires were not returned. In mid-October, staff from OCFS also called nonrespondents to enlist their participation.

Data collection for most agencies was cut off in early January 2007, to permit time for data analysis. Data for one agency was added as late as February 15, 2007. Based on responses received at that time, we determined that seven agencies that received surveys (four Upstate and three in NYC) should not have been included in the survey sample because they did not meet study criteria. They were ruled “out of scope.” Table 2.2 shows the overall response rates by agency type and for NYC versus Upstate counties. The difference in response rates between NYC boroughs and the Upstate counties is dramatic, 45.2 percent versus 81.0 percent, respectively. The lower response rate for the NYC boroughs causes particular concern given the expectation that a higher incidence of CSEC would be found there. In Upstate counties, the majority of sampled agencies in all categories submitted the mail questionnaires. In NYC, the majority of the agencies in the police, probation, detention center, OCFS juvenile justice facility, and CAC categories submitted the mail questionnaires. The lowest response rate—17.2 percent--was obtained for youth-serving agencies in NYC, where they represented the largest number of agencies ( $n=29$ ) in the original sampling frame. This had been the most diverse survey group targeted (health clinics, PINS diversion programs, legal services, street outreach, etc.). Just three youth-serving agencies were in the Upstate sampling frame and all of them responded.

**Table 2.2: Response Rates by Agency Type and Geographic Area**

Agencies	NYC (4 Counties)				Upstate (7 Counties)			
	No. Contacted	No. in scope	No. Completed	Response Rate (%)	No. Contacted	No. in scope	No. Completed	Response Rate (%)
Municipal and County Police <sup>1</sup>	5	5	4	<b>80.0</b>	21	19	16	<b>84.2</b>
Probation Departments <sup>2</sup>	4	4	4	<b>100.0</b>	7	7	7	<b>100.0</b>
Detention Centers	8	8	6	<b>75.0</b>	11	9	5	<b>55.6</b>
OCFS Female Juvenile Justice Facilities <sup>3</sup>	4	4	4	<b>100.0</b>	7	7	7	<b>100.0</b>
RHY Shelter/TILP Programs	5	3	1	<b>33.3</b>	9	9	6	<b>66.7</b>
Congregate Care	7	7	3	<b>42.9</b>	13	13	10	<b>76.9</b>
Rape Crisis Centers	9	8	3	<b>37.5</b>	7	7	5	<b>71.4</b>
Child Advocacy Centers	5	5	3	<b>60.0</b>	5	5	5	<b>100.0</b>
Youth-Serving Agencies	29	29	5	<b>17.2</b>	3	3	3	<b>100.0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>81.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> NYC Police department is counted as four agencies, representing the four sample counties in the city.

<sup>2</sup> NYC Probation is counted as four agencies, representing the four sample counties in the city.

<sup>3</sup> OCFS is counted as seven Upstate and four NYC agencies, as the Reception Facility houses girls from all counties and provided data for the sample counties and the entire state.

Another concern for the analysis was non-participation by two large police agencies in the sample, the Buffalo Police Department and the Port Authority Police in New York City, and by legal service agencies that work with CSEC. Although a number of calls were made to these agencies, staff were unable to gain participation. We believe participation from these agencies would have increased the prevalence counts.

In the few cases where agencies gave reasons for not participating, the most common explanation was that data were unavailable, which generally meant that the data were not stored in a central database, unless the child had been charged with a commercial sexual exploitation offense, such as prostitution, loitering for prostitution, stripping, or posing for pictures. Agencies frequently said that information on sexual exploitation would be found only in the narrative of a child's files. Other agencies stated that given current caseloads they did not have anyone available to extract the information from the files. Confidentiality restrictions prohibited assigning non-agency staff to this task. In addition, staff, particularly in detention centers or probation agencies, reported that unless children were charged with an exploitation offense, the child would be unlikely to disclose the pertinent experiences to their agency.

This experience with recruitment of agencies and data collection is consistent with other recent surveys, including the Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4), conducted by Westat. NIS-4, congressionally mandated and administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is conducted approximately every ten years and is considered the gold standard for developing national estimates on child abuse and neglect. Like the current study, NIS-4 is a prospective data collection effort in which both agencies and individual sentinels are recruited for participation. In NIS-4, it took staff on average 169 days from first contact to gain an agency's approval to participate and 215 days to get (or confirm) refusals.<sup>26</sup>

Aware of these challenges, Westat and OCFS made every effort in designing the current study to address problems likely to cause the greatest delays in approval. By establishing an Advisory Group of representatives of many of the agencies expected to participate, Westat and OCFS hoped to gain buy-in for the study. OCFS also discussed the study in meetings involving agency representatives so that they would be prepared for it. The questionnaire requested *no* directly identifiable data (such as child's name, agency ID, or address), so that agencies would

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<sup>26</sup> Gragg, F. et al. (2006) *Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Conducted under contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Washington, DC: Westat, p. 46.

not need to seek time-consuming approvals from Institutional Review Boards or research committees in order to collect the data. While these efforts were helpful, additional time to prepare agencies for such a collection and set up procedures would likely have produced better response rates and higher prevalence rates.

### **2.3.2 Qualitative Interviews**

Twenty-one agencies were identified as good candidates for participation in the telephone interviews. Each served children in the study counties, although not all were actually located in them. Interviews were sought with all of these agencies; a few also participated in the mail questionnaire. Only one agency (which had been recommended by two agencies participating in the mail questionnaire) was later determined to be out-of-scope and eliminated from the interview list. It was a CAC that reported it did not see CSEC.<sup>27</sup> Of the remaining 20 agencies, 12 agreed to interviews, which were conducted in September, October, and November 2006 and January 2007. For the most part, refusals were passive; agencies did not say no, but no interview times could be arranged or calls were not returned. Agencies that were identified as key to working with CSEC in the sampled counties and agreed to participate are shown in Table 2.3.

Interviews with ACS in NYC and with DSS in each of the seven Upstate counties were also requested. These interviews were designed to provide information on what protocols and services existed in each county and additional context about the issue of CSEC. All eight agencies participated in interviews. They included:

- Administration for Children’s Services, Criminal Justice Division, NYC;
- Chautauqua County Department of Social Services, Family and Children’s Services;
- Erie County Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services;
- Oneida County Department of Social Services, Services Division;
- Onondaga County Department of Social Services, Child Welfare;
- Schenectady County Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services;
- Warren County Department of Social Services; and
- Washington County Department of Social Services.

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<sup>27</sup> The agency stated that it would not refuse service to CSEC, but simply did not see children fitting the definition.

<b>Table 2.3: Agencies Participating in Qualitative Interviews</b>		
Agency	County	Agency Type
1. St Anne’s Institute	Albany	Congregate Care
2. Compass House	Erie	Runaway and Homeless Youth
3. Brooklyn District Attorney—Saving Teens at Risk (S.T.A.R.) Project	New York City	Youth-Serving
4. Coalition to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Children (CASEC) (Also known as the Mayor’s Task Force)	New York City	Coalition
5. Girls Education and Mentoring Service (GEMS)	New York City	Youth-Serving
6. Kingsbridge Heights Mental Health Center	New York City	Youth-Serving
7. Legal Aid	New York City	Youth-Serving
8. Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI)	New York City	Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault
9. Oneida County CAC	Oneida	Child Advocacy Center
10. Vera House	Onondaga	Rape Crisis (Domestic and Sexual Violence)
11. Sexual Trauma and Recovery Services (STARS)	Washington	Rape Crisis and Sexual Assault
12. OCFS Facilities	State/All sampled counties	OCFS Female Juvenile Justice Facilities

## **2.4 Data Processing**

Data processing involved careful review of the submitted data forms for clarity of responses and handwriting, consistency in counts entered, and fidelity to the study definition of commercial sexual exploitation. The first two tasks were relatively straightforward. The third task involved reviewing the case-level information on the survey and the description of exploitation to determine if the action described fit the definition used for the study. Nine agencies and five police/sheriff departments provided cases that fell outside of the commercial acts sought. Examples include sex with biological or stepfathers, brothers, or other family members and sex with a boyfriend in return for drugs. One case reported that a young girl had oral sex with her brother. In return, he protected his sister from others at school. Respondents indicated that these events were reported to child protective services, which removed the victim or perpetrator for

safety. The submission of such responses underscores the difficulty of conveying a clear definition of CSEC to agencies who work with these children. For these agencies, “exploitation” took precedence over “commercial” in understanding the definition. More lead time to work with and train agency staff prior to data collection would have improved the quality of the data.

Where discrepancies with the definition occurred, adjustments were made to the agency’s overall counts of CSEC, based on the child-level data. For example, if an agency identified ten children as sexually exploited during the reference period, provided five case-level descriptions, and one case was found ineligible because it lacked commercial aspects, Westat reduced the overall agency count by one-fifth. Prior to making this adjustment, every effort was made to contact the respondent to determine if the agency could provide revised estimates based on the correct definition. If the agency was unable to do so or could not be reached, adjustments were made as described above.

Given that data were collected from multiple agencies in the same counties, there also was a possibility of duplicating the children across study agencies. As discussed in the previous section, to meet the study timeframes, we found it necessary to avoid collection of identifiable information. At the outset, we had anticipated unduplicating cases that were referred by police, where the agency and the police were in the same county. However, given the time lapse between original arrest and intake at OCFS facilities, delays in providing youth with services (as reported by the agencies), and the likelihood of delays in disclosure of exploitation by children (unless charged with the offense), the decision was made to include all children identified by any agency. Consequently, we recognize that some duplication may exist.

## **2.5 Weights**

In order to develop estimates of the prevalence of CSEC by geographic area and agency type, the sample responses were weighted for Upstate counties and then NYC boroughs. The estimates were developed by combining the aggregated counts of CSEC from all respondent agencies within the two geographic areas, Upstate and NYC. These weights were the product of four factors: (1) the inverse of the probability of selection of the agency (the agency factor), (2) an adjustment factor for agency nonresponse, (3) the inverse of the probability of the selection of the episode (the episode factor), and (4) a nonresponse adjustment factor for missing episode reports for some or all episodes from an agency.

A simple nonresponse adjustment factor was also applied. To compensate for agencies that refused to participate, weights were increased for similar agencies in the same geographic area (Upstate or NYC) as the refusal agency. Additionally, weights were added to the sample of children (or cases) identified by the agencies and described in Section III of the mail questionnaires. This sample was treated as a random sample of the total number of children (cases) identified within the agency. These case factors were applied as the ratio of the aggregated number of CSEC reported by the agency to the number of cases or sample CSEC. Child-level nonresponse adjustment cells were initially defined by each participating agency and then within the agency-level nonresponse adjustment cells described above.

Next, prevalence estimates and the child-level sample data based on the two-month reference period were annualized. Using data on arrests of juveniles for prostitution for 2001 and 2005, annualized rates of 5.5 for NYC and 4.5 for Upstate were applied. Note that the annualization factor was not applied to descriptive data about agencies (such as services provided, services needed, barriers to services, use of protocols). The annualization factor was applied to the aggregated estimates of children served by each agency and the child-level sample also provided by the agency.

The weighted estimates derived from these calculations—for agencies involved with CSEC by agency type and geographic area and for prevalence of CSEC—are presented in the next chapter as Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

## **2.6 Data Analysis**

### **2.6.1 Analysis of Mail Questionnaires**

The mail questionnaires produced a large amount of data on exploited children and youth, patterns of exploitation, the agencies themselves, and the services needed by and provided to the children and youth. The analyses attempted to answer the following research questions:

- I. **The youth:** What is the prevalence of sexually exploited children and youth in the study counties? Does the prevalence vary between New York City and the seven Upstate counties? Do the characteristics of sexually exploited children and youth vary significantly by these geographic areas? Is geographic area associated with particular types, patterns, or histories of sexual exploitation?

- II. **The exploitation:** What are the predominant types of sexual exploitation in the sample? What are the characteristics of the exploitation (e.g., use of force, identity of the exploiter(s), where the exploitation occurred, prior episodes, and ages of children and youth at earliest and most recent episodes)?
- III. **The agencies:** What types of agencies serve sexually exploited children and youth in the study counties? What services do they provide? What services are needed by sexually exploited children and youth? What are the barriers to serving the children and youth? How do service response and availability differ between geographic areas?

Data were provided at both the agency and child levels. To develop and apply weights, statisticians used WesVar, a Westat product that uses a flexible approach to replication variance estimation. WesVar uses three methods of jackknife replication and two versions of balanced repeated replication to create survey weights. WesVar creates a set of weights for each replicate subsample, such as the Upstate and NYC groupings in this study. It also permits the development of weights for nonresponse and annualization as discussed above.

### **2.6.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

In analyzing the qualitative interviews and the focus group summaries, we focused on the following questions:

1. What patterns and common themes, both agency and county specific and cross-agency and county, emerge in interviewees' responses?
2. What responses deviate from these patterns, and what explains these atypical responses?
3. What interesting stories emerge and how do they help answer the research questions?
4. Do any of these findings indicate a need for additional research?

In this report the qualitative data are used to provide a fuller picture of the CSEC, coloring in the broad outline provided by the mail questionnaires.

In Chapter 3 we examine the prevalence rates for CSEC across all agency types and the two geographic areas targeted in the study. We also examine the variations by type of reporting agency and by geographic area.



### **3. FINDINGS ON COMMERCIALLY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN**

We begin this chapter by presenting weighted annualized estimates of the prevalence of CSEC for sample counties. We then discuss the number of agencies that handled CSEC and the number of CSEC they identified, by agency type and geographic area. As discussed in Chapter 2, these are weighted estimates based on the agency samples drawn from four NYC and seven Upstate counties and the survey responses received. Next we briefly describe the diversity of agencies that responded to the survey, in terms of caseload size and age of youth served. We then examine the characteristics of the CSEC identified Upstate and in NYC, including their demographic characteristics, the details of the exploitation, how the children were identified, and their backgrounds. A brief summary of these findings concludes this chapter.

#### **3.1 Prevalence Estimates of CSEC**

Our estimates of the prevalence of CSEC are shown in Table 3.1. Based on data collected from the sampled agencies, we estimate that 2,253 CSEC are identified by the agencies annually in the four New York City boroughs participating in the study, and 399 CSEC are identified by the agencies annually in the seven Upstate counties. These annualized estimates are obtained by using the number of children identified by sampled agencies during the study's two-month reference period to estimate the number of CSEC identified in an entire year. Within NYC, New York County (Manhattan) has the highest number, with 945 CSEC identified annually (42 percent of the NYC CSEC). The Bronx has the lowest number, with 140 CSEC (six percent of the NYC CSEC). Erie County has the highest number among the seven Upstate counties (119 CSEC), followed closely by Schenectady (117 CSEC). Those two counties account for over half of the Upstate sample county cases. Chautauqua County has the lowest number, only 9 CSEC or two percent of the Upstate sample county cases. Overall, the NYC counties account for about 85 percent of the identified CSEC (2,253 out of a total of 2,652), while containing about 78 percent of the under-18 population for the entire study area (see Chapter 2, Table 2.1).

The estimated number of agencies on which the estimates are based is shown in Table 3.2, by agency type and geographic area. Note that in some cases, the agencies responded that they did not see any CSEC. Based on the county samples, we estimate that, over the course of a year, 88 agencies in NYC and 103 agencies in the seven Upstate counties identify CSEC

**Table 3.1: Prevalence of CSEC by Sample Counties<sup>1</sup>**

County	Weighted, Annualized Estimates for CSEC:	
	Number	Percent
<b>New York City Boroughs</b>		
Bronx	140	6%
Kings (Brooklyn)	760	34%
New York (Manhattan)	945	42%
Queens	408	18%
<b>Total for NYC<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2,253</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Large Upstate Sample Counties</b>		
Erie	119	30%
Onondaga	18	5%
<b>Medium Upstate Sample Counties</b>		
Chautauqua	9	2%
Oneida	81	20%
Schenectady	117	29%
<b>Small Upstate Sample Counties</b>		
Warren, Washington <sup>3</sup>	54	14%
<b>Total for Upstate Counties</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup>The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for non-response, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.

<sup>2</sup>Although a total of 2,253 NYC CSEC are presented in this table, a total of 2,121 NYC CSEC appear in later tables that give detailed information on the child and sexual exploitation events. Other than demographics, no detailed child-level information was available from NYPD on the history of the child or the events, so the tables providing those details include 132 fewer weighted, annualized cases.

<sup>3</sup>Given the small population size of these counties, all data for these counties were handled as a single unit.

**Table 3.2: Agencies Involved with CSEC in Sampled Counties by Geographic Area<sup>1</sup>**

Agencies	Weighted Agency Estimates in:	
	NYC (N=88)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=103)
Municipal and county police	1 (1%)	40 (39%)
Probation departments	1 (1%)	7 (7%)
Detention centers	15 (17%)	9 (9%)
OCFS female juvenile justice facilities	4 (5%)	7 (7%)
RHY shelters/TIL programs	4 (5%)	9 (9%)
Congregate care facilities	14 (16%)	16 (16%)
Rape crisis centers	16 (18%)	7 (7%)
Child advocacy centers	5 (6%)	5 (5%)
Youth-serving agencies	28 (32%)	3 (3%)

<sup>1</sup>The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design and adjustments for nonresponse.

among the children they serve. In NYC, youth-serving agencies make up the largest proportion (32 percent) of agencies likely to identify CSEC, while in the Upstate counties, municipal and county police make up the largest proportion (39 percent). These proportions reflect the fact that youth-serving and police agencies were the most numerous in the sampling frames for NYC and Upstate, respectively.

Table 3.3 shows weighted, annualized estimates of the number of CSEC identified by agency type and geographic area. In NYC, youth-serving agencies account for the overwhelming proportion of the children identified—79 percent—although they are only 32 percent of the reporting NYC agencies (compare Table 3.2). In the seven Upstate counties, congregate care facilities identify more than half the CSEC (55 percent of all those identified Upstate), even though these agencies comprise only 16 percent of reporting agencies (from Table 3.2). RHY shelters/TIL programs identify another 18 percent of the CSEC in the seven Upstate counties, although they are only 9 percent of reporting agencies (from Table 3.2). Rape crisis centers in the Upstate counties identify 11 percent of the CSEC, and comprise seven percent of reporting agencies. In contrast, rape crisis centers in NYC identify none of the CSEC. No other agency type, either Upstate or in NYC, identifies more than 6 percent of the CSEC. Although municipal and county police agencies are only 1 percent of the agencies identifying CSEC in NYC (as shown in Table 3.2), Table 3.3 shows that they identify 6 percent of the CSEC. Conversely, although municipal and county police agencies are 39 percent of agencies in the seven Upstate Counties (Table 3.2), Table 3.3 shows that they identify less than 1 percent of the CSEC.

Agencies	Weighted, Annualized CSEC Estimates in:	
	NYC (N=2,253)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Municipal and county police	132 (6%)	9 (<1%)
Probation departments	0 (0%)	22 (6%)
Detention centers	57 (3%)	13 (3%)
OCFS female juvenile justice facilities	33 (1%)	5 (<1%)
RHY shelters/TIL programs	88 (4%)	72 (18%)
Congregate care facilities	129 (6%)	221 (55%)
Rape crisis centers	0 (0%)	43 (11%)
Child advocacy centers	28 (1%)	0 (0%)
Youth-serving agencies	1,786 (79%)	14 (4%)

<sup>1</sup>The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for non-response and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.

Data presented in the remainder of this chapter reflect the counts from Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. Note, however, that in discussing child-level data, only the table discussing demographic characteristics (Table 3.4) is based on the full number of CSEC shown in Table 3.1 ( $n=2,652$ ). The remaining tables with child-level data are based on a slightly lower number ( $n=2,520$ ). Tables with the lower number omit CSEC identified by the New York City Police Department (NYPD), because NYPD was unable to provide detailed child-level data (other than demographics) for them during the study timeframe. Thus, the remaining tables are based on  $n=2,520$  (NYC,  $n=2,121$  and Upstate,  $n=399$ ).

### **3.2 Description of Agencies Participating in the Mail Survey**

Before examining the data on CSEC and the service delivery system that handles them, it may be useful to briefly examine a few other characteristics of the agencies represented in the sample, based on information the agencies reported in the mail questionnaires. First, they are extremely diverse in terms of annual caseloads. The number of children and youth served by non-police agencies ranges from a low of 53 for a congregate care facility to 114,745 for a rape crisis center that pulls all cases for the hospital emergency room. The largest caseloads for each agency type are reported by agencies located in NYC.<sup>28</sup>

An estimated three-fourths of the non-police agencies serve both males and females; 17 percent serve females only and the remainder serve males only. Police agencies obviously serve both males and females. Twenty-five percent of the agencies serve children from birth; another 60 percent report initiating services to children between the ages of one and 13. Only ten percent report initiating services after age 13. Most agencies extend services beyond the age of majority. Just 16 percent end service at 17 or younger, while 72 percent end service somewhere between ages 18 and 21. Seven percent report that they provide services beyond age 21.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> The caseload ranges for each agency type are: probation: 464 to 6,864; detention centers: 252 to 22,926; OCFS juvenile justice facilities: 234; RHY shelters/TIL programs: 398 to 22,440; congregate care facilities: 53 to 9,009; rape crisis centers: 545 to 114,745; child advocacy centers: 189 to 3,199; and youth-serving agencies: 493 to 21,067.

<sup>29</sup> Seven agencies (five percent) provided no information on this item.

### 3.3 Demographic Characteristics of CSEC

Table 3.4 shows the demographic characteristics of the children identified by the NYC and Upstate agencies. Detailed breakdowns by gender, age, and sexual orientation in this table show that:

- The large majority of the CSEC are female in both the NYC (85 percent) and the Upstate (77 percent) sample counties.
- Over half the CSEC identified by the agencies in NYC and a third of the CSEC in the seven Upstate counties are girls age 16 or 17 years old. Four percent in NYC and 16 percent in the Upstate counties are girls age 13 or younger.
- Among NYC agencies, 6 percent of the CSEC are boys age 16 or 17, compared to 4 percent in the seven Upstate counties. None of the CSEC in NYC but 13 percent of the CSEC in the Upstate counties are boys age 13 or younger.
- Upstate agencies identify more CSEC age 13 and under (113 boys and girls, versus 82 girls and no boys in NYC).
- Thirty-one transgender children are identified in NYC, all in the 16- to 17-year-old category. No transgender children are identified in the seven Upstate counties.
- Six percent of CSEC in NYC and two percent in the Upstate counties are identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (GLBQ).
- Information on age and gender is not reported for six percent of NYC and one percent of Upstate samples.

Race and ethnicity data show that:

- Two-thirds of the CSEC in NYC and one-third in the seven Upstate counties are Black/African American, while six percent in NYC and 47 percent in the Upstate counties are white.
- In NYC, the second most common racial identification, after Black/African American, is 16 percent who are “other.” “Other” comprises only six percent of the CSEC from the seven Upstate counties.
- For seven percent of the CSEC in NYC and eight percent in the Upstate counties, the race is unknown or not available.
- None of the CSEC is identified as American Indian/Alaska Native or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.
- Only two percent of the CSEC in NYC and none of the CSEC in the Upstate counties are Asian.

<b>Table 3.4: Characteristics of CSEC Identified by Agencies<sup>1</sup></b>		
Characteristics	Number (Percentage) of CSEC Identified by Sampled Agencies in:	
	NYC (N=2,253)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
<b>Gender, Age, and Sexual Orientation</b>		
Female:		
Under age 10	0 (0%)	25 (6%)
Age 10-11	0 (0%)	8 (2%)
Age 12-13	82 (4%)	30 (8%)
Age 14-15	622 (28%)	116 (29%)
Age 16-17	1,200 (53%)	127 (32%)
Subtotal	1,904 (85%)	306 (77%)
Male:		
Under age 10	0 (0%)	8 (2%)
Age 10-11	0 (0%)	24 (6%)
Age 12-13	0 (0%)	18 (5%)
Age 14-15	43 (2%)	22 (6%)
Age 16-17	140 (6%)	17 (4%)
Subtotal	183 (8%)	89 (22%)
Transgender:		
Age 16-17	31 (1%)	0 (0%)
Subtotal	31 (1%)	0 (0%)
Age and gender not reported		
	135 (6%)	4 (1%)
Identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (GLBQ)		
	135 (6%)	9 (2%)
<b>Race<sup>2</sup></b>		
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asian	36 (2%)	0 (0%)
Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Black/African American	1,500 (67%)	129 (32%)
White	142 (6%)	186 (47%)
Multi-Racial	62 (3%)	26 (7%)
Other	363 (16%)	25 (6%)
Unknown/not available	150 (7%)	33 (8%)
<b>Ethnicity and Immigrant Status</b>		
Hispanic/Latino	406 (18%)	41 (10%)
Chinese	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Korean	31 (1%)	0 (0%)
Other/unknown	1,816 (81%)	358 (90%)
Immigrant		
	30 (1%)	0 (0%)

<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one type of race, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.

- Agencies in NYC identify higher proportions of Hispanic/Latino children than agencies in the Upstate counties (18 percent versus 10 percent). Only one percent of the NYC CSEC are identified as Korean, and none is identified as Chinese.<sup>30</sup> Ethnicity is other or unknown (primarily other) for a high percentage in both NYC (81 percent) and Upstate (90 percent) counties.
- NYC agencies report that 30 children (one percent) were immigrants while none of the Upstate CSEC is classified as immigrant.

At the request of the Study Advisory Group, the data collection instrument also captured counts and demographic information on young adults ages 18 to 21. This was done primarily because children in the sex industry are believed to often provide false identification that indicates they are older. The Advisory Group believed that this age category would include unidentified CSEC. We have no way at this time to estimate how many such children may fall within this older age group. As Table 3.5 shows:

- The total number of 18- to 21-year-olds in NYC and the seven Upstate counties who are identified by the sampled agencies as commercially sexually exploited is estimated to be over three times the number for under-18 CSEC ( $n=7,975$ ) in NYC and less than one-third the number for Upstate ( $n=119$ ).
- Gender is unknown for a high percentage (56 percent) of the young people identified in the seven Upstate counties, but 93 percent in NYC are female (compared to 85 percent of the under-18 CSEC in Table 3.4).
- Data on race show that more of the older youth than the younger are white in both NYC (18 percent, compared to 6 percent of the CSEC in Table 3.4) and in the Upstate counties (74 percent, compared to 47 percent).
- A slightly higher percentage of the 18-to-21-year-olds in NYC is identified as Hispanic/Latino (22 percent, compared to 18 percent in Table 3.4), while none of the 18-to-21-year-olds in the Upstate counties are identified as Hispanic/Latino (compared to 10 percent of the CSEC).

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<sup>30</sup> These ethnicity categories were recommended by members of the Advisory Board, based on anecdotal evidence suggesting that children with these ethnicities might likely be found among the CSEC population (particularly as a result of international sexual trafficking).

<b>Table 3.5: Characteristics of Commercially Sexually Exploited 18- to 21-Year-Olds<sup>1</sup></b>		
Characteristics	Number (Percentage) of Sexually Exploited 18- to 21-Year-Olds Identified by Sampled Agencies in:	
	NYC (N=7,975)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=119)
<b>Gender</b>		
Females	7,381 (93%)	43 (36%)
Males	418 (4%)	9 (7%)
Transgender	123 (2%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	53 (1%)	67 (56%)
<b>Race<sup>2</sup></b>		
Am. Indian/Alaska Native	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asian	50 (1%)	0 (0%)
Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Black/African American	4,971 (62%)	23 (19%)
White	1,425 (18%)	88 (74%)
Multi-Racial	281 (4%)	8 (7%)
Other	496 (6%)	0 (0%)
Unknown/not available	752 (9%)	0 (0%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic/Latino	1,760 (22%)	0 (0%)
Chinese	44 (1%)	0 (0%)
Korean	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other/Unknown	6,171 (77%)	119 (100%)
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. <sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one type of race, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.		

### 3.4 Backgrounds and Experiences of CSEC

Table 3.6 examines prior child welfare involvement of the CSEC, and shows findings that are consistent with the research literature discussed in Chapter 1:

- Among the CSEC identified by the NYC agencies, 85 percent had prior child welfare involvement; that proportion is 89 percent in the seven Upstate counties.
- Many CSEC have a history of childhood victimization: over two-thirds in NYC and 54 percent in the Upstate counties were known to have been the subject of a child abuse/neglect investigation.

- Three-quarters in NYC and nearly half in the Upstate counties had experienced placement in foster care.
- There are also indications of problems with parental/family supervision: 45 percent in NYC and 30 percent in the Upstate counties are known to have had a PINS placement or received PINS services.
- Over one-third (39 percent) in NYC and 29 percent in the Upstate counties had received some prevention services.

<b>Table 3.6: Child Welfare Involvement of CSEC<sup>1</sup></b>		
Child Welfare Involvement	Number (Percentage) of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Any child welfare involvement	1,801 (85%)	355 (89%)
None	0 (0%)	20 (5%)
Unknown/missing	320 (15%)	24 (6%)
<b>Types of Child Welfare Involvement<sup>2</sup></b>		
Child abuse/neglect investigation	1,466 (69%)	214 (54%)
Placement in foster care	1,599 (75%)	197 (49%)
PINS placement or services	952 (45%)	121 (30%)
Other Preventive Services	829 (39%)	117 (29%)
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. <sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one type of child welfare involvement, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.		

Many CSEC also have been involved in the juvenile justice system. Table 3.7 indicates that over half of CSEC identified by NYC agencies, and 44 percent of those identified in the seven Upstate counties, had a juvenile justice placement (defined to include stays in detention facilities). Over one-fourth (26 percent) of the NYC CSEC had been in multiple types of placement, compared to seven percent of those Upstate. This difference in the Upstate and NYC CSEC samples, may be related to the fact that the NYC CSEC tend to be older, and older children are more likely to receive secure placement. On the other hand, the differences could reflect the fact that youth in NYC are more likely to be arrested for prostitution offenses or false personation (giving police a false name and /or age when police suspect the youth of prostitution activity), while the police in the Upstate counties are more likely to take similar “wayward” youth

<b>Table 3.7: CSEC Placement in Juvenile Justice Settings<sup>1</sup></b>		
Juvenile Justice Placement	Number (Percentage) of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Any juvenile justice placements <sup>2</sup>	1095 (52%)	176 (44%)
None	472 (22%)	180 (45%)
Unknown/missing	554 (26%)	43 (11%)
<b>Types of Placements</b>		
Secure juvenile justice facility only	126 (6%)	0 (0%)
Non-secure juvenile justice facility only	168 (8%)	4(1%)
Detention center only	204 (10%)	102 (26%)
Other placement only	41(2%)	43 (11%)
Multiple types of placements	556 (26%)	27 (7%)
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.		
<sup>2</sup> Includes stays in detention.		

to a service agency such as a runaway program to get them off the street.<sup>31</sup> For those with more than one type of placement, the most typical pattern is a history of both detention center and secure juvenile facility placement (17 percent) (data not shown).

In a separate analysis, we examined the overlap between children with child welfare involvement and those with juvenile justice placement. We found that 48 percent of the CSEC overall have a history of both (data not shown).

### **3.5 Identification and Knowledge of CSEC within Agencies**

Agencies were asked *How was the most recent exploitation first identified in your agency?* Table 3.8 shows the weighted responses. For these CSEC, their exploitation came to light in three main ways that were reported on the mail questionnaire: it is the reason the youth was referred to or served by the agency (for 38 percent in NYC and 15 percent in the seven Upstate counties); the youth disclose it while receiving services (29 percent in NYC and 16

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<sup>31</sup> Study Advisory Board members discussed the variation in how CSEC were handled by police in NYC and Upstate (specifically arrests versus referral to services). This was also mentioned by Upstate police agencies participating in the pilot test. These individuals also mentioned that some CSEC referred by Upstate police might not leave any paper trail if taken to social service agencies.

<b>Table 3.8: Identification of CSEC Exploitation<sup>1</sup></b>		
How Exploitation Was Identified	Number (Percentage) of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Reason for referral	810 (38%)	61 (15%)
Youth reported during assessment	273 (13%)	106 (27%)
Youth reported during services	617 (29%)	65 (16%)
Another youth reported	22 (1%)	16 (4%)
Adult reported	32 (2%)	18 (5%)
Other	131 (6%)	112 (28%)
Unknown/missing	236 (11%)	21 (5%)

<sup>1</sup>The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.

percent Upstate), or the youth disclose it during assessment for services (13 percent in NYC and 27 percent Upstate). The exploitation is identified in some other way other for 28 percent of the CSEC in the seven Upstate counties, and six percent of those in NYC. Most respondents who checked “Other” on the forms did not fill in what the “Other” was; the few that did fill it in provided responses such as “hospital,” “child’s mother,” and “SPOA.”<sup>32</sup>

Obviously, some children may be involved with more than one agency during the same time period, and other agencies may be aware of a child’s status as a CSEC. To explore this further, we asked in the mail questionnaires: (1) Was the youth referred to you by another agency? and (2) During July 15 - September 15, 2006, was the youth identified as sexually exploited by any other agency? Table 3.9 shows that 75 percent of CSEC in NYC and 69 percent in the seven Upstate counties were referred by other agencies. For NYC agencies, CSEC are more likely to be referred from the court or probation (28 percent). Upstate agencies receive the largest proportion of referrals from child welfare agencies (31 percent). The “Other” category, accounting for 40 percent of referrals in NYC and 10 percent in the Upstate counties, primarily comprises cases where “Other” was checked but the agency type was not specified, similar to the “Other” category in Table 3.8. A few are self-referrals by the child, as well as referrals by the child’s mother, a friend, a hospital, or another type of service agency.

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<sup>32</sup>In this case “SPOA” (Single Point of Access), refers to a New York City project that connects persons with psychiatric disabilities to services and housing programs. SPOA services facilitating access to mental health services exist across New York State.

<b>Table 3.9: Source of Agency Referrals<sup>1</sup></b>		
Referrals	Estimated Number (Percentage) of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Cases with referrals	1,596 (75%)	277 (69%)
None	95 (4%)	42 (11%)
Unknown/Missing <sup>2</sup>	430 (20%)	80 (20%)
<b>Referring Agencies<sup>3</sup></b>		
Police/Law Enforcement	75 (4%)	29 (7%)
Child Welfare Agency	89 (4%)	122 (31%)
Court/Probation	590 (28%)	44 (11%)
Foster Care Agency	31 (1%)	77 (19%)
Detention Center	126 (6%)	0 (0%)
RHY Shelters/TIL Programs	0 (0%)	8 (2%)
Other/agency type not provided <sup>4</sup>	855 (40%)	39 (10%)
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. <sup>2</sup> This category includes children reported and arrested by police agencies, who were not asked for information on referrals. <sup>3</sup> Respondents could indicate referrals from more than one agency, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent. <sup>4</sup> “Agency type not provided” means that the respondent indicated that the referral source was “Other” but did not specify what that “Other” was.		

The high rate of referrals shown above might suggest a high duplication rate by the study. However, based on a separate analysis that looked at whether the child was known to any other agencies (not just the referral agency) as commercially sexually exploited, this does not seem very likely (data not shown). Respondents report overall that other agencies are aware of the sexual exploitation for only about one-third (35 percent) of the children served. Overall, police agencies are the most commonly cited as knowing about commercial sexual exploitation (21 percent), followed by child welfare agencies (16 percent).

Of course, it is possible that other agencies might know of a child’s sexual exploitation, but not reveal it for various reasons (e.g., to protect a child’s privacy or because the child is being referred for reasons viewed as unrelated to the CSEC status). In Table 3.10 below, we examine whether the type of referring agency is related to whether a child is known to be commercially sexually exploited at the time of referral. The table shows that for about half of the CSEC referred by NYC agencies, their exploitation is known at the time of referral, while that

<b>Table 3.10: Relationship Between Source of Agency Referral and Knowledge of Commercial Exploitation at Time of Referral<sup>1</sup></b>			
Referral Source	Number of CSEC Referred <sup>2</sup>	Number of CSEC Whose Exploitation Was Known at Referral	Percentage of CSEC Whose Exploitation Was Known at Referral
<b>NYC</b>	<b>1,596</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>51</b>
Police/law enforcement	75	18	24
Child welfare agency	89	27	30
Court/probation	590	273	46
Foster care agency	31	0	0
Detention center	126	126	100
RHY shelters/TIL programs	0	0	0
Other	855	252	29
None	95	6	6
Unknown/missing	430	108	25
<b>Seven Upstate Counties</b>			
<b>Seven Upstate Counties</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>22</b>
Police/law enforcement	29	9	31
Child welfare agency	122	19	16
Court/probation	44	19	43
Foster care agency	77	0	0
Detention center	0	0	n/a
RHY shelters/TIL programs	8	0	0
Other	39	7	18
None	42	0	0
Unknown/missing	80	7	9
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. The table omits 137 cases with no referral source.			
<sup>2</sup> Respondents could indicate referrals from more than one agency, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.			

proportion for the CSEC in the seven Upstate counties is only 22 percent. The table also shows that:

- In NYC, referrals from the detention centers are the only cases where the receiving agencies always know about commercial sexual exploitation at the time of referral.
- In the Upstate agencies, the exploitation is most likely to be known when the referring agency is court/probation. Forty-three percent of the CSEC referred from those agencies are identified as exploited upon referral.
- In both NYC and the Upstate counties, the exploitation is never identified at referral when the referring agency is a foster care agency or a RHY shelter/TIL program.

- For CSEC referred by child welfare agencies, the proportions for whom the exploitation is known range from 16 percent in the Upstate counties to 30 percent in NYC.
- For CSEC referred by police/law enforcement, the proportions known as CSEC upon referral range from 31 percent Upstate to 24 percent in NYC.

### **3.6 Characteristics of the Exploitation**

Agencies were also asked to describe characteristics of the most recent exploitation, who the youth was living with at the time, when the exploitation occurred, who the exploiter was, and whether there had been prior episodes of sexual exploitation.

As shown in Table 3.11, the most prevalent type of sexual exploitation among these children is a sexual act for money, reported for over 80 percent of both the NYC and the Upstate children. In NYC, the second most frequent type of exploitation involves loitering for prostitution, reported for 30 percent (compared to 5 percent reported in the seven Upstate counties). However, a separate analysis shows that 89 percent of those indicated as loitering for prostitution also are listed as engaging in a sexual act for money. In fact, for all categories of commercial sexual exploitation the majority of children also are listed as engaging in sex for money (data not shown). A sexual act in exchange for a place to stay is reported for 23 percent of CSEC in NYC and 17 percent in the Upstate counties. Stripping or performing in public is reported for 24 percent of CSEC in NYC and seven percent in the Upstate counties. No sexual acts filmed, photographed, or tape recorded were reported for CSEC in NYC, but these acts are reported for 17 percent of CSEC in the Upstate counties. Sexual acts for protection were uncommon in both geographic areas (less than one percent of CSEC in NYC and six percent Upstate).<sup>33</sup> No CSEC were involved in stripping/performing on the Internet.

Table 3.12 shows the places where commercial sexual exploitation takes place. In NYC, exploitation more frequently occurs in a hotel or motel (44 percent versus nine percent in the seven Upstate counties) or outside (30 percent versus two percent). In contrast, the commercial sexual exploitation in the Upstate counties occurs far more frequently in the child's own home (52 percent versus seven percent in NYC). The exploitation in NYC is slightly more

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<sup>33</sup> Most of the children who were initially reported as exchanging sex for protection (with no other sexual exchange listed) failed to meet the commercial aspects of exploitation and were removed from the analysis.

Sexual Exploitation	Number (Percentage) of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Any exploitation	1,994 (94%)	383 (96%)
Missing	127 (6%)	16 (4%)
<b>Type of Exploitive Acts<sup>2</sup></b>		
Sexual act for money	1,737 (82%)	323 (81%)
Sexual act for place to stay	494 (23%)	66 (17%)
Loitering for prostitution	643 (30%)	18 (5%)
Sexual act for food or clothing	301 (14%)	59 (15%)
Sexual act for drugs	58 (3%)	51 (13%)
Sexual act for protection	9 (< 1%)	23 (6%)
Sexual act filmed, photographed, or tape recorded	0 (0%)	67 (17%)
Stripping/performing in public	503 (24%)	29 (7%)
Other exploitation	53 (2%)	4 (1%)

<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one type of exploitive act, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.

Where Exploitation Occurred	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Any location	1,936 (91%)	358 (90%)
Unknown/missing	185 (9%)	41 (10%)
<b>Exploitation Locations</b>		
Outside	639 (30%)	9 (2%)
Hotel or motel	934 (44%)	34 (9%)
Exploiter's home	603 (28%)	89 (22%)
Child's own home	148 (7%)	209 (52%)
Other person's home	126 (6%)	14 (4%)
Agency such as shelter	22 (1%)	0 (0%)
In a car	447 (21%)	9 (2%)
Public facility	148 (7%)	4 (1%)
Other	150 (7%)	13 (3%)

<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one location, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.

likely to occur in the exploiter’s home (28 percent) than in it is in the Upstate counties (22 percent). For 21 percent of the CSEC in NYC, the exploitation occurs in a car, compared to two percent in the Upstate counties.

Table 3.13 presents information on the exploiters, and shows major differences between the CSEC reported by the NYC agencies and those reported by the agencies in the seven Upstate counties. In NYC, three quarters of the CSEC are exploited by adult strangers, compared to 28 percent in the Upstate counties. In the Upstate counties, 58 percent of the CSEC are exploited by an adult friend or acquaintance, compared to 24 percent in NYC. Also in the Upstate counties, 22 percent are exploited by minor (under-18) friends or acquaintances, compared to 1 percent in NYC. Finally, 16 percent of the CSEC Upstate are exploited by parents, parents’ partners, or family members, compared with seven percent in NYC.

<b>Table 3.13: Identity of Sexual Exploiter<sup>1</sup></b>		
Exploiter Identified	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Any exploiter	1,957 (92%)	369 (93%)
No exploiter specified/ exploiter unknown	0 (0%)	5 (1%)
Missing	164 (8%)	25 (6%)
<b>Exploiter Identities</b>		
Adult: stranger	1,598 (75%)	110 (28%)
Adult: friend or acquaintance	514 (24%)	233 (58%)
Adult: parent or parent substitute	22 (1%)	39 (10%)
Adult: parent’s partner	0 (0%)	9 (2%)
Adult: family member	126 (6%)	14 (4%)
Minor: stranger	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Minor: friend or acquaintance	27 (1%)	87 (22%)
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. <sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one type of exploiter, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.		

Table 3.14 presents information on where the CSEC are living when the commercial sexual exploitation occurs. It shows a large difference in the living situations between CSEC in NYC and in the Upstate counties: although the most prevalent living situation for both groups is with their family of origin or with relatives, only 32 percent of the NYC children are in this situation compared with 79 percent of the Upstate children. NYC CSEC are more likely to be

CSEC Was Living With:	Number (Percentage) of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Family of origin or relatives	669 (32%)	314 (79%)
Foster parents	148 (7%)	0 (0%)
Group foster care	376 (18%)	9 (2%)
Unrelated adult	179 (8%)	22 (6%)
Friend or boyfriend/girlfriend	157 (7%)	7 (2%)
Himself/herself	0 (0%)	5 (1%)
Other	324 (15%)	30 (8%)
Unknown/missing	268 (13%)	12 (3%)

<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFs identification of CSEC in prior years.

living in group foster care (18 percent) at the time of the exploitation than Upstate CSEC (two percent), or with foster parents (7 percent, compared to none of the CSEC in the Upstate counties). Fifteen percent of the NYC CSEC are living in an “Other” situation, compared to 8 percent of the CSEC in the Upstate counties. These situations include homeless children and those living in types of group homes other than foster care, as well as those where the “Other” situation was not specified.

Table 3.15 presents other characteristics of the CSEC’s most recent commercial sexual exploitation, as well as the prevalence of prior episodes and age at first episode. It shows that:

- The most recent commercial sexual exploitation occurred within New York State for the large majority of CSEC in both locations (locations were not provided when the exploitation occurred outside of New York State).
- For 58 percent of CSEC in NYC and 32 percent in the Upstate counties, force was used.<sup>34</sup>
- Agency respondents believed the exploitation was still ongoing for four percent of these children in NYC and 3 percent in the Upstate counties.
- Around half of the CSEC in both groups had experienced prior episodes of exploitation.

<sup>34</sup> The question used in the survey, *Was force, coercion, or the threat of force used in this sexual exploitation?*, attempts to identify characteristics of this episode of commercial sexual exploitation. For many of the children, all aspects of being “in the life” are the result of force or implied force; the children do not see that they have any choice.

- For half of the Upstate children, the age at time of first sexual exploitation was 11 years old or younger. None of the NYC children was known to be exploited at this age. The most frequent age group for initiation in NYC was age 14-15 (43 percent); the most frequent age group in the Upstate CSEC was 10-11 (also 43 percent). Fifty-five percent of the NYC CSEC versus only 15 percent of Upstate children were initiated into commercial sexual exploitation at age 14 or older.

<b>Table 3.15: Other Characteristics of Exploitation<sup>1</sup></b>		
Characteristic	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of CSEC in:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
<b>Most Recent Exploitation</b>		
Exploitation occurred in New York State	1,956 (92%)	379 (95%)
Force was used	1,235 (58%)	129 (32%)
Exploitation still ongoing	92 (4%)	12 (3%)
<b>Prior Episodes of Exploitation</b>		
Prior episodes of exploitation	1,172 (55%)	194 (49%)
Age at first exploitation		
Less than 9 years old	0 (0%)	28 (7%)
10 to 11 years old	0 (0%)	170 (43%)
12 to 13 years old	399 (19%)	5 (1%)
14 to 15 years old	922 (43%)	45 (11%)
16 to 17 years old	261 (12%)	16 (4%)
Missing/Unknown	539 (25%)	135 (34%)
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. <sup>2</sup> Respondents could check more than one characteristic, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.		

### 3.7 Measures Associated with the Exploitation Characteristics

We consider it important to take a closer look at what factors might be associated with commercial sexual exploitation other than geographic location and the agency identifying the youth. In particular, we are interested in whether gender, age, race, or ethnicity is related to characteristics of exploitation such as use of force, who the exploiters are, and where the exploitation occurs. There is little variation in the sample on many of these dependent variables, so we do not find significant associations for most of the investigated factors. Two significant correlations emerge based on gender, however: (1) females are more likely to encounter force or

coercion in the current commercial sexual exploitation; and (2) females are also more likely to be associated with a sexually exploitive act in a hotel or motel.<sup>35</sup>

### **3.8 Summary and Discussion**

Stepping back a moment, it may be useful to review findings shown above and summarize differences between exploitation in NYC and the seven Upstate counties. First, the distribution of respondents for the study differs between the Upstate and NYC counties. Most (91 percent) of the CSEC identified by NYC agencies are identified by youth-serving agencies, congregate care facilities, and police. Most (84 percent) of the CSEC identified by Upstate agencies are identified by congregate care agencies, RHY shelters/TIL programs, and rape crisis centers. Congruent with anecdotal reports from members of the Study Advisory Group, we believe this represents a real variation in who identifies these children and how cases of CSEC are handled in the two geographic areas. For example, as previously noted, police in NYC are reputed to be more likely to arrest youth picked up for prostitution, while police in the Upstate counties are more likely to take youth directly to service agencies. However, our ability to confirm this variation is constrained by the low response rates from NYC social service agencies, where data on the youth picked up by police might be available.

Demographically, there are significant variations between CSEC in NYC and Upstate. As might be expected from the state population overall, substantially more of the Upstate CSEC are white. Although the majority of the children identified in both areas are girls, commercially sexually exploited boys are more likely to be reported by agencies in the seven Upstate counties than by the NYC agencies. The Upstate children also are more likely to be younger (both at the time of the current episode and at first commercial exploitation) and nearly four-fifths are living with their family or relatives at the time of the current exploitation, compared to about one-third of the children in NYC. NYC children are more likely than those Upstate to be living in out-of-home settings such as foster care.

Differences in the characteristics of the commercial sexual exploitation between NYC and the Upstate counties are also evident. While a sex act in exchange for money is by far the most common type of exploitation, reported for over 80 percent of CSEC in both areas,

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<sup>35</sup> The Pearson correlation between gender and force was  $r=.407$  and for gender and hotel location was  $r=.354$ . The Pearson correlation coefficient can vary from -1 to 1, with a correlation of 0 indicating that there is no association between two variables. As each value increases toward 1, the ability to predict the characteristic on one item from the response on the other increases. We only considered correlations that were at least .25 (positive or negative).

loitering for prostitution is more often identified in NYC, while only the Upstate counties report involvement with sexual acts that are filmed, photographed or tape recorded. Also, in NYC the exploitation occurs most often in a hotel or motel or outside while Upstate the exploitation occurs most often in the child's home. The identity of the exploiters also differs between NYC and Upstate. For example, the majority of NYC exploiters are reportedly strangers, while the majority of Upstate exploiters are reported to be adult friends or acquaintances of the child.

Finally, it is important to mention what these children had in common. The overwhelming majority (at least 85 percent), regardless of geographic area, had prior child welfare involvement—typically in the form of child abuse and neglect allegations/investigations (69 percent of the NYC CSEC and 54 percent of those Upstate) and/or a foster care placement (75 percent of the NYC CSEC and 49 percent Upstate). A substantial proportion (over half of the NYC CSEC and 44 percent of those Upstate) had a prior juvenile justice placement, although secure placements were slightly more common among the NYC children.<sup>36</sup> For over 80 percent of CSEC in both areas, the exploitation involved a sexual act for money; in nearly all cases, the exploitation occurred in New York State; and around half in both groups had prior episodes of commercial sexual exploitation.

In the next chapter we take a closer look at a few of the CSEC to get a clearer picture of their everyday life and the issues they routinely face.

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<sup>36</sup> Perhaps this is because the CSEC identified in NYC tended to be older, or perhaps because commercial sexual activity by a child is more likely to be viewed as a law enforcement matter in NYC while upstate it is more likely to be treated as a child welfare matter, or some combination of child age and system response.

## 4. A MORE IN-DEPTH LOOK AT CSEC

The numbers of CSEC and the characteristics outlined in the previous chapter do not provide a full picture of sexually exploited children. To more fully develop this picture, the study examined additional data from three sources. First, study staff reviewed data from three focus groups conducted with CSEC from NYC. Next, we examined OCFS intake data on adjudicated girls placed in OCFS juvenile justice facilities for a full year (including the two-month reference period). Last, study staff reviewed the prevalence data for CSEC on probation caseloads, collected by the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) earlier in the reference year. Findings from each of these data sources are discussed below.

### 4.1 Focus Groups

Three focus groups were held between October 2006 and January 2007 with young people involved in commercial sexual exploitation in NYC. Requests for focus groups were sent to Upstate agencies as well; none were able to conduct focus groups for the study. (One Upstate agency expressed concern with identifying enough CSEC to develop a focus group.) Fifteen individuals participated in the focus groups—ten females, two gay males, and three transgender youth, ranging in age from 13 to 22 years old. All entered “the life” at a much younger age (10 to 17, with an average age of 13.8 years). Race was not identified for all participants; at least five were African American, two were from Caribbean islands, and one was of mixed race. Each participant received a \$15 gift card for participating in the focus group.<sup>37</sup>

A number of topics arose in these focus group discussions, including the young people’s perception of their home environment when they entered “the life” and (in a few cases) when they returned to it; how they became involved in sexual exploitation; their experience on the street, particularly regarding violence and involvement with pimps and customers; leaving the life; and supports needed to succeed.

Note that the terminology used by the participants was different from that of the researchers. Participants never spoke of “sexual exploitation,” referring instead to escorting or working for an escort service, stripping, and pornography. The sex exchanges were negotiated on

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<sup>37</sup> The focus groups were conducted by two agencies—one by a congregate care home, and the other two by a community-based agency working with CSEC.

the street, through pimps, on telephone chat lines, and over the Internet. Several participants commented that pimps advertised girls on Craig's List, in the *New York Daily News* classifieds, and in the *Village Voice*.

Participants cited a number of different reasons for getting into "the life."

- Love or at least someone paying attention to them—"Not just the pimps, even the tricks, having guys lined up to see you makes you feel special"(n=4),
- Enticement by friends (n=3),
- Money (n=3),
- An attempt to get parental attention (n=2),
- Survival (n=3),
- Kidnapping (n=2),<sup>38</sup> and
- Desperation/lack of acceptance—"Being trans, you can't get a job if you look like a girl, but your name is Brian" (n=3).

Many of these youth did not realize they had crossed a line or entered the sex industry. One youth commented "I didn't realize I was prostituting until I got to court and they read the charges out loud. I thought I was just making some money...well, making someone else money." Another commented "I never imagined I would end up in the life. I didn't believe it was really real. I thought pimps were just on TV." Participants from two different groups talked about the entry into the life as not being a real choice. One young girl said "It's not a choice. No one just wakes up and wants to do this." The gay and transgender participants concurred that this was "a choice, but not a choice," further explaining that the decision was made from a very limited set of options. Six of the participants referred to problems at home, including limited options and resources, past abuse, and not being accepted. Three had been homeless and described themselves as desperate. A common theme was not knowing whom to talk to about the problems and issues they faced.

Not all were runaways. Four of the focus group participants lived at home during the sexual exploitation. One youth stated "My mother never knew what I was doing, which is crazy. I was out every night, coming home at 9:00 am." Two of the youth said they were kidnapped and forced to enter "the life."

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<sup>38</sup> No specific definition of kidnapping was provided in the focus group.

Participants reported being cajoled by pimps to enter into sexual exploitation. One girl explained “There are a million ways to tell a story. And they [pimps] come up with some type of way to tell you something.... For some reason you believe it because you want to believe so bad it is easier for you to fall into it because it sounds good. They find all your weaknesses...what makes you tick.” Still another girl remembered how her pimp would “whisper sweet nothings to make me feel special and loved.” Several of the participants talked about how pimps recruit at schools and at foster homes.

Most of the females had worked for at least one pimp. Several commented that initially they did not think the person they were talking to was a pimp. The people they spoke to were young (many commented they were getting younger all the time), dressed in jeans and t-shirts, had business cards, and called themselves money managers and entrepreneurs. They did not look like the TV version with “big hats and fur coats.”

Once in the life, the youth reported violence either from pimps, dates/customers, or both. Pimps were constantly using threats to keep the participants working the street. One reported “My pimp broke my face in a couple of places.” Another stated “I tried to leave and got beat with a suitcase.” Still another commented “he beat me everyday for nothing.” A fourth said the pimp “beat me with a belt buckle.”

Experience with dates covered a wide range of situations. “Bad” dates included instances of “being hung by the throat,” “cut on my back,” having “a gun pointed at me,” as well as being robbed, raped, gang raped, and locked in a home. Horror stories circulate throughout this community. Participants of one focus group knew the story of a sexually exploited child who “ended up chopped up in a hotel.” On the other hand, there were stories of dates helping participants out of a bad situation by dropping them at a police station. Sadly, one participant considered one of her dates helpful because he had not participated in a gang rape and “helped me find my clothes. I think he felt bad ‘cause I was crying.” In one focus group, the facilitator commented that the violent situations reported were clearly perceived by the participants as risks they might experience in everyday life.

Drug use was discussed in one focus group, where opinions were divided. One participant stated bluntly “I’m not going anywhere or doing anything unless I’m getting high.” Conversely, others in the group reported not taking drugs with clients because “you risk getting emotionally involved.”

The youth reported crossing State lines to work. They reported working in Jersey City, Atlantic City, and Elizabeth, New Jersey; Washington, DC; Detroit; Baltimore; and throughout Florida, specifically citing Miami.

Focus group participants made additional comments describing their experiences. Both males and females spoke of the importance of being or appearing “young” for the customers. Many customers asked them if they were 12 or 13 or asked them to act that age. Some would flatter them saying “you are too smart” or “you should go to school,” but always engaged in sex with them. A few gave examples of non-sexual encounters. One youth commented that “It didn’t always involve sex—I escort clients to fashion shows, parties, and dinner. Occasionally clients pay \$400 for me to sit and watch a movie. That’s all. He treats me with respect. But that only happens occasionally.” In one focus group, the participants talked about the sheer number of customers that they perceived were out there—“one in three men,” “a million,” and finally, “most guys are tricks.”

Nearly all of the participants had negative experiences with the criminal justice or social service systems. Two-thirds reported being arrested many times; one female reported being arrested “three to five times a month for four years.” They also reported lying about their age and no one questioning it. According to the participants, the pimp was rarely arrested or received less jail time than the focus group participant, even in an instance where the participant was identified as being 14 years old. Male facility and court staff as well as police officers reportedly propositioned them, made lewd comments, or ignored their plight. Female staff were often perceived as being very judgmental and derogatory. Most of the female youth reported trading sex with police officers to avoid arrests. None reported instances of help or assistance from adult strangers.

Exiting the life was described as difficult and often temporary. Not all participants *had* left. The pressures of making money some other way seemed frightening. One young girl described the money made in the life as an addiction. The family and hierarchy created with the pimp and the other girls and women who work for him create bonds that are difficult to break. When these participants attempted to break free and return home or to foster care, they found that people judged, looked down on, or failed to trust them:

- “They look at me as a ho, not as a person.”
- “My mother was more understanding, but the rest of my family disowned me.”

- “At my cousin’s baby shower, my other cousin said ‘You better not have no pimps come get you.’”
- “My mom won’t let me go anywhere.”
- “My grandmother wouldn’t let me take my sister anywhere.”
- “I tried to explain to my boyfriend, but he was like stuck.”
- “It’s hard coping in the real world. You learn a lot of defense mechanisms in the life that work there but it’s hard to let them go when you’re out. But they don’t work anymore.”

One of the focus group participants expressed concern about language used in the mainstream culture about “the life.” Speaking of people she now attends college with, she stated “They always make references or jokes about dirty prostitutes or ‘bitch better have my money.’ I get upset.”

Four participants commented on how people start and stop in the life. One stated that a person only stops “If something happened—bad.” Sadly enough, one youth looked for a fractured fairy tale ending—“When I meet the one client who gives me money and attention that would equal all the other clients.” Two participants who have exited the life commented that they were unable to sleep at night and had flashbacks.

These young people recommended a variety of services to help them transition from the life, including support from the agency holding the focus group. Several females were glad that their lawyer or counselor at a juvenile justice facility had told them about a particular program. Participants cited the need for services “specific to the life,” including peer-based counseling and working with counselors who had the same experiences. They had reservations about traditional therapy and medication. Participants also expressed needs for “comprehensive” services, trauma recovery, housing, and jobs. None of the participants mentioned preventive services as helpful to them before the commercial sexual exploitation occurred. However, in one focus group, participants stated that if things had been different at home or they had had more support, perhaps entry into the life might have been avoided. All agreed that age was a key factor. In one focus group, participants recommended commercials “like they do for smoking.” The ad line would be “The life.... Either it kills you or gets you locked up.” Another girl suggested that commercials should show what pimps are really like—“not glamorous.”

Again, these focus groups reflect the story in NYC. As shown in Chapter 3, many features of the exploitation were significantly different from Upstate, where exploitation was

more likely to occur in the child's home and the exploiter more likely to be known to the child. Future research efforts to examine the experiences of Upstate children in more detail would be warranted.

#### **4.2 Girls in OCFS Custody**

OCFS is responsible for (1) the care of youth who have been adjudicated juvenile delinquents by family court and (2) juvenile offenders convicted in criminal court for offenses committed when the children were age 15 or younger and ordered by the courts to be placed in OCFS juvenile justice facilities. OCFS operates separate reception facilities for males and females that receive and assess youth from across the State. At the reception facilities, youth are assessed for substance abuse and mental health issues, and receive medical examinations, dental services, counseling sessions, and health classes so that the best placement and program decisions can be made while the youth is in OCFS custody. OCFS reported data on seven females who were brought into the OCFS reception facility and met the age and county criteria for this study during the study's two-month reference period. These cases are included in all tables discussed in the previous chapter. However, OCFS made available additional data on its female service population, covering a full year and the entire State, that are worth examining in more detail. OCFS did not report data on males because there were none admitted to OCFS for prostitution-related offenses or the offense of promoting a child in a sexual performance during the study. Within the limited time available to conduct this study, the male Reception Assessment Reports (RARs) could not be manually searched for other hints of commercial sexual exploitation. In contrast, the female RARs were available on computer.

To locate all cases of sexual abuse (both commercial and other) between September 15, 2005 and September 15, 2006, OCFS conducted a word search of all RARs for girls admitted to the Tryon Girls Reception Facility in Johnstown, NY. First, OCFS searched for terms that might indicate commercial sexual exploitation (or at least warrant a closer look); these included prostitution, sexually abused, false personation, sexual acting out, sexually abused others, and pornography. In total, 86 cases were located, and individual files were then examined to find cases that met the study definition of commercially sexually exploited. OCFS determined that 27 cases (12 percent of all admissions) met the study criteria. Of these 27 cases, 23 (85 percent) involved girls from the counties and boroughs sampled for this study; 22 girls came from the NYC boroughs (four from the Bronx; six from Kings; four from New York; eight from Queens), and one from a medium-sized Upstate county. The remaining four came from Upstate counties

not included in the sample (1 each from a large and small population county, and two from medium-sized counties). The following analysis is based on all 27 girls identified for the entire year from the 234 girls admitted to the reception facility.<sup>39</sup> Tables compare the girls from NYC ( $n=22$ ) and with the five girls from counties outside of New York City, hereafter referred to as Rest of State.

Girls are classified according to the county where they were arrested, adjudicated, and committed to OCFS. Of the 22 girls arrested in NYC, only 14 percent ( $n=3$ ) resided outside NYC (two from Suffolk and one from out of state). All five of the girls adjudicated delinquent in counties outside NYC were committed by Family Court directly to placement in an OCFS facility. However, this was true for only half ( $n=11$ ) of the girls adjudicated in NYC. For the other 50 percent ( $n=11$ ), the Family Court had first placed the girls with a voluntary agency under OCFS custody, but changed their placements to a more secure OCFS facility after AWOL problems.

Table 4.1 summarizes the type of commercial sexual exploitation of the 27 girls identified statewide. By far the most common reason for identifying a girl as a CSEC was a charge of prostitution or false personation related to prostitution ( $n=17$ , all from NYC). Of the other five girls from NYC, two admitted to engaging in prostitution, while the case files of three girls had credible reports of prior prostitution activity, but the girls did not admit this behavior to the reception counselor, and there were not any known arrests. For at least three of the NYC girls, prior prostitution arrests were handled in the adult criminal justice system, as they had apparently falsely told the police that they were 16 years of age or older (data not shown).

<b>Table 4.1: Type of Sexual Exploitation of OCFS Girls</b>		
Offense	Number (Percentage) of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC ( $N=22$ )	Rest of State ( $N=5$ )
Current charge for prostitution or false personation related to prostitution	17 (77%)	0 (0%)
Past arrest for prostitution	0 (0%)	1 (20%)
Admits to prostitution, no arrest	2 (9%)	1 (20%)
Traded sex for drugs or alcohol	0 (0%)	3 (60%)
Believable allegations of prostitution, she denies	3 (14%)	0 (0%)

<sup>39</sup> Information for this section of the report is based on data from an internal OCFS database, RARs, and personal communication from Joanne Ruppel, November 13, 2006.

For girls in the Rest of State, the most common type of commercial sexual exploitation was trading sex for drugs or alcohol. One girl admitted to engaging in sex for money, but had not been arrested for it, and one had previously been arrested for prostitution in NYC, and prosecuted as an adult as she had given a false older age.

In general, these findings are similar to those reported in Chapter 3 for the mail questionnaires. Most offenses were trading sex for money or other items. Also, trading sex for drugs involved a lower proportion of NYC children than Upstate children.

Table 4.2 shows the earliest known age of commercial exploitation. Although it was difficult to determine the precise date that the girls were first commercially sexually exploited, the girls in NYC were fairly evenly distributed across the ages of 12 through 15, while four of the five girls in the Rest of State were age 15. These data differ somewhat from the mail questionnaire data, where the majority of Upstate children were 13 or younger at the time of first exploitation while the majority of NYC children were 14 or older.

<b>Table 4.2: Earliest Known Age of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of OCFS Girls</b>		
Age	Number (Percentage) of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC (N=22)	Rest of State (N=5)
12	5 (23%)	1 (20%)
13	8 (36%)	0 (0%)
14	5 (23%)	0 (0%)
15	4 (18%)	4 (80%)

Table 4.3 shows the age at placement and race/ethnicity of the 27 OCFS girls. Among the girls from NYC, 72% were Black Non-Hispanic and five percent were Black Hispanic, while 18 percent were White Hispanic. However, 80 percent of the girls from the Rest of State were White Non-Hispanic. These findings also parallel those from the mail questionnaire, where the majority of CSEC of color were identified by NYC agencies. Nearly 70 percent of the NYC girls and all of the girls from the Rest of State were 15 or 16 when they arrived at the OCFS reception facility. The age of placement into OCFS custody was fairly evenly distributed for girls in NYC but for the girls from the Rest of State it was solely at age 15 or 16.

<b>Table 4.3: Race/Ethnicity, Age at Admission and OCFS Custody for Sexually Exploited OCFS Girls</b>		
Characteristics	Number (Percentage) of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC (N=22)	Rest of State (N=5)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black Non-Hispanic	16 (72%)	1 (20%)
Black Hispanic	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
White Non-Hispanic	0 (0%)	4 (80%)
White Hispanic	4 (18%)	0 (0%)
Other Hispanic	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
<b>Age at OCFS Admission</b>		
13	3 (14%)	0 (0%)
14	4 (18%)	0 (0%)
15	8 (36%)	2 (40%)
16	7 (32%)	3 (60%)
<b>Age at Placement into OCFS Custody</b>		
13	5 (23%)	0 (0%)
14	5 (23%)	0 (0%)
15	8 (36%)	2 (40%)
16	4 (18%)	3 (60%)

All but one of the NYC girls identified as CSEC by the reception facility had a history of placements outside the home and all of the girls from the Rest of State had prior placements (Table 4.4). Eighty percent of the girls from the Rest of State had a history of juvenile justice placements plus foster care, and just 20 percent had a history of juvenile justice placement only. The NYC girls were more diverse. Forty-five percent of these CSEC had a history of both foster care and juvenile justice placement, 41 percent had juvenile justice placements (one or more) but no foster care history, and nine percent had a foster care history only. All of the girls with prior placements had histories of going AWOL from the placements, many repeatedly, and some for long periods of time. All 27 appear to have run away from home at least once. Most of the sexual exploitation occurred while AWOL or away from home. In a few cases, some of the sexual exploitation also occurred when the girls were still living at home. The one girl with no prior placement history was a runaway from another state who was arrested for prostitution in NYC.

In both NYC and the Rest of State, all but one of the girls had experienced some type of prior abuse, as reported in their RAR. (Table 4.5). Child sexual abuse was reported in 50 percent of the cases in NYC and in 80 percent of the cases in the Rest of State.

<b>Table 4.4: Prior Placements for OCFS Girls</b>		
Prior Placement <sup>1</sup>	Number (Percentage) of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC (N=22)	Rest of State (N=5)
Any placements	21 (95%)	5 (100%)
No prior placements	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
<b>Type of Prior Placement</b>		
Foster care placement only	2 (9%)	0 (0%)
Juvenile Justice placement only	9(41%)	1 (20%)
Foster care placement and Juvenile Justice placement	10 (45%)	4 (80%)
<sup>1</sup> Does not include detention stays.		

<b>Table 4.5: Prior Child Abuse/Neglect of OCFS Girls</b>		
Abuse/Neglect	Number (Percentage) <sup>1</sup> of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC (N=22)	Rest of State (N=5)
Any child abuse/neglect	21 (95%)	4 (80%)
No child abuse/neglect known	1 (5%)	1 (20%)
<b>Type of Abuse/Neglect</b>		
Child sexual abuse	11 (50%)	4 (80%)
Child neglect	7 (32%)	3 (60%)
Child physical abuse	13 (59%)	3 (60%)
Witnessed domestic violence	1 (5%)	1 (20%)
<sup>1</sup> Percentages will exceed 100% because youth could be involved in multiple types of abuse and neglect.		

Not all of the prior abuse was sexual. Physical abuse at home was found for 59 percent of the girls in NYC and 60 percent of the cases in the Rest of State. About a third of the NYC girls and 60 percent of those in the Rest of State had been victims of child neglect. In both NYC and the Rest of State there was one reported case of witnessing domestic violence.

Among girls with a history of sexual abuse, 54 percent of those in NYC and 50 percent of those in the Rest of State were first abused at age 12 or younger (see Table 4.6). In NYC 45 percent were first sexually abused at ages 13 to 16.

Age	Number (Percentage) of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC (N=11)	Rest of State (N=4)
Age 7 or younger	2 (18%)	1 (25%)
Age 8 to 11	1 (9%)	1 (25%)
Age 12	3 (27%)	0 (0%)
Age 13-16	5 (45%)	0 (0%)
Unknown but prior to age 16	0 (0%)	2 (50%)

To shed more light on some of the issues these children face, Table 4.7 lists five mental health issues identified at assessment. Interestingly, grief caused by the loss of or separation from a family member of significance was present in 68 percent of the NYC cases but none of the cases from the Rest of State. However, 68 percent of the NYC girls and 60 percent of the girls from the Rest of State had indications of depression. All but two girls, both from NYC, had records of previous mental health treatment. Drug use was common, recorded for 73 percent of the children in NYC and all of the children from the Rest of State.

Type of Abuse/Neglect	Number (Percentage) <sup>1</sup> of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC (N=22)	Rest of State (N=5)
Grief- loss of/separation from a significant family member	15 (68%)	0 (0%)
Depression- either self reported or clinically measured	15 (68%)	3 (60%)
Drug use by family member	11 (50%)	4 (80%)
Drug use by child	16 (73%)	5 (100%)
Previous mental health treatment (in records)	20 (91%)	5 (100%)

<sup>1</sup> Respondents could have more than one factor indicated, so percentages may total to more than 100 percent.

Given this profile, it is not surprising that 59 percent of the girls in NYC and 100 percent of the girls in the Rest of State exhibited significant or substantial substance abuse service needs (Table 4.8), according to OCFS. Additionally, 73 percent of NYC girls and 100 percent of the Rest of State girls exhibited significant mental health service needs. Two girls, both from the Rest of State, had previously attempted suicide, and an additional seven girls (four from NYC and three from the Rest of State) had previously expressed suicidal ideation or threats. Three girls (one from NYC and two from Rest of State) admitted to having engaged in cutting or self-mutilating behavior (data not shown.)

<b>Table 4.8: Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service Needs of OCFS Girls</b>		
Service Needs	Number (Percentage) of OCFS Girls in:	
	NYC (N=22)	7 Upstate Counties (N=5)
<b>Substance Abuse Service Needs</b>		
Substantial need	3 (14%)	2 (40%)
Significant need	10 (45%)	3 (60%)
Minimal need	5 (23%)	0 (0%)
No need	4 (18%)	0 (0%)
<b>Mental Health Service Need</b>		
Significant	16 (73%)	5 (100%)
Minimal	5 (23%)	0 (0%)
No Need	1 (5%)	0 (0%)

Several other background factors of note were found in the RARs but are not reflected in tables. Five of the girls were pregnant at reception and two others already had children. All seven of these girls were from NYC. Also, eight of the girls from NYC and two of the girls from the Rest of State were either members of a gang or had a history of close association with gang members.

Finally, there were ample indicators that working the streets is dangerous. In 14 cases (13 from NYC and one from Rest of State), the records noted physical violence (punching in the face, threats with guns, cutting of hair, and bleeding from the vagina), threats, or coercion by the pimps and/or customers against the girls. This number may be an underestimate because in some case records this question was not specifically addressed. All but one of the 27 girls had multiple incidents of being commercially sexually exploited. The remaining girl was from NYC and had been a runaway from home for five weeks when the prostitution arrest occurred. She reported that she had only tried prostitution that one time.

### **4.3 Youth on Probation**

In June 2006, at the request of the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, probation agencies submitted information on the children and youth currently under supervision who had been identified as commercially sexually exploited. Note that the same challenges to collecting the survey data discussed previously apply to the probation data: inconsistent definitions of sexual exploitation, mistakenly defining sexually abused children

as commercially sexually exploited, and failure to identify commercial sexual exploitation because children were reluctant to mention it. In addition, no New York City agencies submitted data. Among the seven Upstate counties, a total of 12 females and six males under current supervision were identified as sexually exploited.<sup>40</sup> These figures for a single point-in-time suggest that our annualized estimates for Upstate probation offices may be low at 22. No information was available on the characteristics of these CSEC or the details of the sexual exploitation.

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<sup>40</sup> Krueger, J. (personal communication, December 13, 2006).



## 5. SERVICE CAPABILITY AND DEFICITS

A number of questions in the mail surveys and the qualitative interviews were designed to capture information on services currently available and provided to CSEC, services particularly needed for CSEC, and any barriers or limitations to providing those services. The sections below provide findings from these data sources.

### 5.1 Services Provided to All Children (both CSEC and Non-CSEC) by Agencies

First, respondents to the Agency questionnaires were asked: *What services do you provide to children and youth?* Non-police agencies were presented with a list of 20 different service categories. Note that, except for one NYC agency that exclusively serves commercially exploited children, all these agencies serve a mix of CSEC and other children. We initiate the discussion of services by examining those available from non-police agencies, regardless of geographic location. (See Table 5.1.) To highlight services that are most commonly available, cells in Table 5.1 are shaded whenever the percentage of agencies providing a particular service is 50 percent or more.

The average number of services provided by non-police agencies ranged from 4.6 for probation departments to 15 for OCFS facilities. Three services categories — assessment, case management, and mental health counseling — are the most commonly offered across types of service agencies. Not surprisingly, food and clothing are typically provided by agencies that supported children in a residential environment, including as detention centers, RHY shelters/TIL programs, OCFS facilities, and congregate care facilities. Interestingly, a majority of youth-serving agencies also provide food and clothing, although they are less likely to be providers of residential services.

Overall, OCFS facilities, congregate care agencies and youth-serving agencies typically provided the largest range of services. In addition to the services mentioned above, a majority of these types of agencies provided transportation, substance abuse screening, medical care, education, and advocacy. Ninety percent of congregate care facilities also provided family reunification services and two-thirds provided dental care. Youth-serving agencies were by far the most likely to provide legal services (58 percent) and street outreach (55 percent). RHY

**Table 5.1: Direct Services Provided to All Children by Type of Agency<sup>1</sup>**

Services	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of Weighted Agencies in Sampled Counties:							
	Probation Departments (N=8)	Detention Centers (N=24)	OCFS JJ Facilities (N=11)	RHY Shelters/ TIL Programs (N=13)	Congregate Care Facilities (N=30)	Rape Crisis Centers (N=23)	Child Advocacy Center (CAC) (N=10)	Youth- Serving (N=31)
Any services	8 (100.0%)	22 (92%)	11 (100%)	11 (85%)	30 (100%)	23 (100%)	10 (100%)	31 (100%)
None/missing	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Type of Direct Services</b>								
Crisis shelter	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (77%)	1 (3%)	2 (9%)	2 (20%)	9 (29%)
Long-term shelter	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (100%)	2 (15%)	5 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (19%)
Residential services	0 (0%)	6 (25%)	11 (100%)	2 (15%)	23 (77%)	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	12 (39%)
Food	0 (0%)	20 (83%)	11 (100%)	11 (85%)	25 (83%)	3 (13%)	0 (0%)	25 (81%)
Clothing	1 (13%)	20 (83%)	11 (100%)	11 (85%)	25 (83%)	3 (13%)	0 (0%)	25 (81%)
Transportation	2 (25%)	6 (25%)	11 (100%)	10 (77%)	25 (83%)	5 (22%)	4 (40%)	24 (77%)
Assessment	5 (63%)	17 (71%)	11 (100%)	6 (46%)	24 (80%)	7 (30%)	7 (70%)	20 (65%)
Case management	7 (88%)	19 (79%)	11 (100%)	11 (85%)	30 (100%)	8 (35%)	4 (40%)	25 (81%)
Substance abuse screening	5 (63%)	16 (67%)	11 (100%)	1 (8%)	16 (53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (61%)
Detoxification or substance abuse counseling/ treatment	0 (0%)	2 (8%)	11 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	18 (58%)
Mental health counseling	2 (25%)	14 (58%)	11 (100%)	4 (31%)	27 (90%)	23 (100%)	8 (80%)	24 (77%)
Medical care	0 (0%)	20 (83%)	11 (100%)	4 (31%)	18 (60%)	7 (30%)	8 (80%)	17 (55%)
Dental care	0 (0%)	19 (79%)	11 (100%)	1 (8%)	20 (67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (19%)
Education	1 (13%)	20 (83%)	11 (100%)	1 (8%)	21 (70%)	15 (65%)	4 (40%)	23 (74%)
Legal services	1 (13%)	2 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (13%)	2 (9%)	4 (40%)	18 (58%)
Advocacy	3 (38%)	7 (29%)	0 (0%)	10 (77%)	22 (73%)	17 (74%)	10 (100%)	29 (94%)
Child welfare/ child protection	3 (38%)	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (33%)	4 (17%)	5 (50%)	8 (26%)
Family reunification	1 (13%)	2 (8%)	10 (91%)	8 (62%)	27 (90%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (45%)
Street outreach	1 (13%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (38%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	17 (55%)

<b>Table 5.1: Direct Services Provided to All Children by Type of Agency<sup>1</sup> (continued)</b>								
Referrals	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (48%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
Other <sup>3</sup>	3 (38%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	4 (17%)	1 (10%)	12 (39%)
Avg. no. of services provided	4.6	8.1	15.0	7.5	11.1	4.9	5.9	11.3
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design and adjustments for nonresponse. <sup>2</sup> Column percentages may exceed 100 percent because agencies could indicate more than one service provided. The shading highlights services provided by 50 percent or more of agencies in a category. <sup>3</sup> Other services included recreation, prevention services, and service coordination.								

shelters/TILP programs were the only other agency type with significant involvement in street outreach (38 percent). OCFS facilities provided the same services across nearly all facilities, which included most of the listed services in the survey, except for crisis shelter, legal services, advocacy, child welfare, and street outreach.

A few agency types offered a more limited set of core services. For example, rape crisis centers in the study offered mental health counseling (100 percent), advocacy (74 percent), and education (65 percent). All other services were provided by a minority of rape crisis centers. The pattern was similar for CACs. Services offered by the majority of CACs included advocacy (100 percent), mental health counseling (80), medical care (80 percent), assessment (70 percent), and child welfare/child protection (50 percent).

Across agency types, survey respondents were least likely to report providing referral, street outreach, crisis shelter, and long-term shelter. The data probably understate the proportion of agencies providing referrals, however, because “referral” was not offered as a response option on the survey. We created a separate category for it in the table because over 9 percent of agencies wrote in that service under “Other.”

Indeed we assume that many agencies, particularly police, use referrals to meet the constellation of needs identified for children under their custody. A question on the police questionnaire asked respondents to identify the referrals typically made for children and youth. The most common referrals listed by police agencies were to:

- Child welfare/child protective services (n=36 out of 41 law enforcement agencies),
- Medical care (n=33),
- Crisis shelters (n=27),
- Mental health counseling (n=26),
- Case management (n=25), and
- Substance abuse screening (n=23).

We next compare the types of services offered in NYC and the seven Upstate counties (Table 5.2). For over half of the services, a higher proportion of NYC than Upstate agencies reported providing the service. In some instances, the differences are small. However,

<b>Table 5.2: Direct Services Provided by Geographic Area<sup>1</sup></b>		
Services	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of Weighted Agencies in Sampled Counties:	
	NYC (N=87)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=63)
Any direct services	87 (100%)	59 (94%)
None	0 (0%)	(6%)
<b>Type of Direct Services</b>		
Crisis shelter	11 (13%)	12 (19%)
Long-term shelter	14 (16%)	10 (16%)
Residential services	29 (33%)	27 (43%)
Food	57 (55%)	37 (39%)
Clothing	57 (66%)	39 (62%)
Transportation	50 (57%)	37 (59%)
Assessment	61 (70%)	36 (52%)
Case management	65 (75%)	50 (79%)
Substance abuse screening	43 (49%)	25 (40%)
Detoxification or substance abuse counseling/treatment	23 (26%)	11 (17%)
Mental health counseling	78 (90%)	35 (56%)
Medical care	57 (66%)	28 (40%)
Dental care	32 (37%)	26 (41%)
Education	60 (69%)	35 (56%)
Legal services	20 (23%)	11 (17%)
Advocacy	64 (74%)	34 (54%)
Child welfare/child protection	20 (23%)	14 (22%)
Family reunification	32 (37%)	30 (48%)
Vocational training	4 (5%)	7 (11%)
Referral	10 (11%)	4 (6%)
Street outreach	21 (24%)	3 (5%)
Other <sup>3</sup>	12 (14%)	11 (17%)
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled non-police agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. <sup>2</sup> Percentages may exceed 100 percent because agencies could indicate more than one service provided. <sup>3</sup> Other services included recreation, prevention services, and service coordination.		

there are large proportional differences—of 20 percent or greater—for three service categories: mental health counseling, provided by 90 percent of the NYC agencies versus 56 percent of the Upstate agencies; medical care (66 percent in NYC versus 40 percent Upstate); and advocacy (74 percent versus 54 percent). Where the proportions for Upstate exceed those for NYC, none of the differences come close to this magnitude. (The largest occurs for family reunification, provided by 48 percent of the Upstate agencies versus 37 percent in NYC.)

## **5.2 Service Delivery to CSEC**

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 pertain to services available for the entire caseload of youth. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 show annual estimates of the services assigned and referrals made for CSEC in the four NYC boroughs and the seven Upstate counties, based on the sample child cases identified in the mail surveys. As shown in Table 5.3, on average, CSEC identified by NYC agencies received an average of 7.6 services, compared to 5.8 services for children identified by agencies Upstate.

Based on service information for 94 percent of the children identified as commercially sexually exploited, two of the services—case management and mental health counseling—were provided to the majority of CSEC both in NYC and Upstate. The only other service provided to the majority of CSEC Upstate was residential service (61 percent). Conversely, a number of services were provided to a majority of CSEC in NYC:

- Food (66 percent),
- Clothing (59 percent),
- Transportation (70 percent),
- Assessment (84 percent), and
- Advocacy (71 percent).

In fact advocacy services accounted for the largest proportional difference between the two areas (provided to 71 percent of NYC youth and 28 percent of those Upstate). Other services with a proportional difference of 20 percentage points or more in favor of NYC include food, transportation, assessment, medical care, and legal services. For two services, the percentage of children served was substantially higher in Upstate than in NYC: residential

<b>Table 5.3: Direct Services Provided to CSEC by Geographic Area<sup>1</sup></b>		
Services	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> Provided to CSEC:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Any direct services	1,995 (94%)	373 (93%)
Missing	126 (6%)	26 (7%)
<b>Type of Direct Services</b>		
Crisis shelter	304 (14%)	5 (1%)
Long-term shelter	410 (19%)	5 (1%)
Residential services	655 (31%)	244 (61%)
Food	1,408 (66%)	180 (45%)
Clothing	1,261 (59%)	184 (46%)
Transportation	1,484 (70%)	189 (47%)
Assessment	1,790 (84%)	181 (45%)
Case management	1,884 (89%)	297 (74%)
Substance abuse screening	202 (10%)	47 (12%)
Detoxification or substance abuse counseling/treatment	17 (1%)	9 (2%)
Mental health counseling	1,221 (58%)	256 (64%)
Medical care	796 (38%)	48 (12%)
Dental care	182 (9%)	57 (14%)
Education	302 (14%)	159 (40%)
Legal services	682 (32%)	37 (9%)
Advocacy	1,498 (71%)	111 (28%)
Child welfare/child protection	283 (13%)	41 (10%)
Family reunification	344 (16%)	117 (29%)
Street outreach	271 (13%)	0 (0%)
Other <sup>3</sup>	148 (7%)	29 (7%)
Average no. of services provided	7.6	5.8
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years. <sup>2</sup> Column percentages may exceed 100 percent because agencies could indicate more than one service provided. <sup>3</sup> Other services included recreation, prevention services, and service coordination.		

<b>Table 5.4: Service Referrals for CSEC by Geographic Area<sup>1</sup></b>		
Service Referrals	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> Referred to CSEC:	
	NYC (N=2,121)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=399)
Any direct services	1,829 (86%)	181 (45%)
None	49 (2%)	96 (24%)
Missing	243 (11%)	122 (31%)
<b>Type of Service Referrals</b>		
Crisis shelter	178 (8%)	4 (1%)
Long-term shelter	204 (10%)	0 (0%)
Residential services	525 (25%)	5 (1%)
Food	148 (7%)	4 (1%)
Clothing	399 (19%)	5 (1%)
Transportation	157 (7%)	4 (1%)
Assessment	461 (22%)	16 (4%)
Case management	282 (13%)	18 (5%)
Substance abuse screening	126 (6%)	119 (30%)
Detoxification or substance abuse counseling/treatment	31 (1%)	14 (4%)
Mental health counseling	1,443 (68%)	89 (22%)
Medical care	1,498 (71%)	55 (14%)
Dental care	0 (0%)	35 (9%)
Education	557 (26%)	39 (10%)
Legal services	626 (30%)	62 (16%)
Advocacy	271 (13%)	28 (7%)
Child welfare/child protection	1,056 (50%)	47 (12%)
Family reunification	32 (2%)	9 (2%)
Street outreach	126 (6%)	0 (0%)
Other <sup>3</sup>	85 (4%)	35 (9%)

<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design, adjustments for nonresponse, and an annualization factor based on the distribution of arrests and OCFS identification of CSEC in prior years.

<sup>2</sup> Column percentages may exceed 100 percent because agencies could indicate more than one service provided.

<sup>3</sup> Other services included recreation, prevention services, and service coordination.

services (31 percent in NYC and 61 percent Upstate) and education (14 percent in NYC and 40 percent Upstate). The difference for residential services is not surprising given that 55 percent of all Upstate CSEC were identified by congregate care facilities. A few services were rarely provided to Upstate CSEC, including street outreach (0 percent), crisis shelter (1 percent), and long-term shelter (1 percent), but were provided to 13 percent or more of the CSEC in NYC. Detoxification or substance abuse counseling/treatment was rarely provided in either geographic area (1 percent in NYC and 2 percent Upstate).

Table 5.4 shows the types of referrals made for CSEC and compares them across geographic areas. The majority of CSEC in NYC (86 percent) and a large minority in Upstate (45 percent) received at least one service referral. (Note that data on referrals for Upstate children was missing in 31 percent of all cases.) Medical care and mental health referrals were the most common in NYC, made for 71 percent and 68 percent of the CSEC, respectively. In Upstate, substance abuse screening was by far the most common referral (30 percent) but among the least common in NYC (6 percent). Other large differences in referrals between NYC and Upstate occurred for medical care (71 percent in NYC versus 14 percent Upstate), child welfare services (50 percent in NYC and 12 percent Upstate), and residential services (25 percent in NYC and 1 percent Upstate). Some of these differences may be attributable to the different types of agencies identifying CSEC in NYC and Upstate. Some differences may also be exaggerated because of missing referral data.

The survey responses do not provide any detail about the quality or intensity of the services provided. For that, we gleaned additional information from 12 qualitative interviews conducted with non-police agencies. These interviews make clear that services with the same label can vary considerably. For example, some agencies that reported providing mental health counseling provide only a mental health assessment in order to determine the extent of mental health needs. If indicated, the child is then referred for more in-depth counseling by a mental health agency.

According to interviewees, agency intake and needs assessment processes also differ, although they typically involve a variety of activities, such as individual interviews, home assessments, mental health assessment, medical screening, and forensic examination. Regardless of geographic area, assessment includes talking with other agencies—law enforcement, the Administration for Children’s Services and other DSS agencies, OCFS, and service providers. Many agencies also do a safety screening. One agency mentioned that its comprehensive assessment includes assessing immediate crisis needs. Another mentioned that staff use group

play and dynamic observation as part of the assessment. Several agencies indicated that assessment also included identifying perpetrators, with the hope that they will be prosecuted.

The programs provided by these agencies varied in length of stay by geographic area and program type. In NYC typical programs for CSEC ranged in length from six weeks to nine to 12 months. One program reported working with the child until he/she reaches 21 years old. Several also mentioned followup and working with children until all needs are met. One NYC agency reported working with CSEC for four to five years. Upstate agencies showed similar variations, with programs ranging from ten days to ten months. Upstate agencies more often volunteered information that there were exceptions to those average stays. For example, a shelter stated that while its average stay was ten days, some children (around 19 percent of the caseload) only stayed one or two nights, while others stayed one to two months. A congregate care program that also provides an intensive mental health program reported an eight to ten month average, expanding to 18 to 24 months for the intensive program. Note that the variations in the length of stay between NYC and Upstate agencies may be associated with the number of CSEC encountered. The NYC agencies interviewed reported seeing from 12 CSEC a year to 2000, compared with two to 27 CSEC Upstate.

Two agencies (one in NYC and one Upstate) reported that involvement with children, particularly those who are CSEC, is intermittent. These children often move back and forth from the sex industry to services. One NYC agency reported about a 50 percent success rate in breaking the cycle of girls returning to their pimps. The respondent stated that the intervention frequently does not work. For most girls, it takes multiple attempts to leave (often three) for the girls to acquire the necessary tools to set up a stable alternate life situation. The tools include recognizing the various forms of exploitation and gaining the vocabulary, ability, and life skills to say no.

### **5.3 Specialized Services Needed by CSEC**

Both the Agency and Police mail questionnaires included an open-ended question on service needs: *Based on your experiences, what specialized services do commercially sexually exploited youth need?* More than half of the respondents (62 percent) volunteered information on this question. We sorted these responses into eight categories, patterned on the service types used in previous tables. The “Other” category incorporates a variety of responses—none mentioned by more than a handful of respondents—that were broken out on earlier tables. They include street

outreach, detoxification and/or substance abuse counseling/treatment, family reunification, mentoring, child welfare/child protective services, transportation, and referrals.

On average, respondents identified 2.3 different specialized service needs for this population (data not shown). While NYC respondents reported providing more types of services than those from the Upstate counties (Table 5.2 above), Table 5.5 shows that they also reported more special service needs—3.1 on average in NYC and 1.6 in the Upstate counties. Eighty-three percent of the NYC agencies identified at least one specialized service need versus 68 percent of the Upstate respondents (Table 5.6). Mental health counseling<sup>41</sup> was the most prevalent need in both areas, reported by 72 percent of NYC respondents and 64 percent of Upstate respondents. In three categories, there were large proportional differences between geographic areas, with needs more often identified by NYC agencies: medical care<sup>42</sup> (identified as a need by 59 percent in NYC versus 25 percent Upstate), crisis shelter (27 percent versus 9 percent) and “Other” (40 percent versus 23 percent). The service need mentioned least often in NYC was education (by eight percent), similar to Upstate (seven percent). Besides education, case management (0 percent), residential services (four percent), and crisis shelter (nine percent) were also mentioned infrequently Upstate.

As seen in Table 5.6, which further breaks down the results by type of agency, youth-serving agencies specified the highest average number of service needs—3.4. Mental health counseling and medical care, the two areas of need most often cited in Table 5.5, were particularly common responses from certain types of agencies, regardless of location. These included youth-serving agencies, RHY shelters/TIL programs, detention centers, congregate care facilities, and child advocacy centers. Rape crisis centers and CACs were the most likely to mention legal/advocacy needs in both geographic areas. Along with RHY shelters/TIL programs, they also were the most likely to mention needs for crisis shelter.

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<sup>41</sup> We included a variety of more specific responses in this category, including rape crisis, one-on-one, peer group, home-based, and community counseling; family therapy; crisis and trauma intervention; and support groups.

<sup>42</sup> Medical care was typically described by respondents as testing/screening for sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, and injuries; prevention checkups; alternative medicine, such as acupuncture; and provision of health information.

<b>Table 5.5: Specialized Services Needed by CSEC by Geographic Area<sup>1</sup></b>		
Specialized Services Needed	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of Weighted Agencies in Sample Counties:	
	NYC (N=83)	Seven Upstate Counties (N=56)
Reported need for specialized services	69 (83%)	38 (68%)
None specified	14 (17%)	18 (32%)
<b>Type of Specialized Services Needed</b>		
Crisis shelter	22 (27%)	5 (9%)
Residential services	11 (13%)	2(4%)
Mental health counseling	60 (72%)	36 (64%)
Medical care	49 (59%)	14 (25%)
Legal services/advocacy	10 (12%)	11 (20%)
Case management	11 (13%)	0 (0%)
Education services	7 (8%)	4 (7%)
Other services	33( 40%)	13 (23%)
Avg. no. services specified	3.1	1.6
<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design and adjustments for nonresponse. <sup>2</sup> Total percentages may exceed 100 percent because agencies could specify more than one service needed for CSEC.		

Specialized Services	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of Weighted Agencies in Sample Counties:						
	Probation Department (N=8)	Detention Center (N=24)	RHY Shelters/TIL Programs (N=13)	Congregate Care (N=30)	Rape Crisis Center (N=23)	Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) (N=10)	Youth Serving Agencies (N=31)
<b>NYC</b>							
Reporting service needs	1 (100%)	15 (100%)	4 (100%)	11 (79%)	10 (66%)	5 (100%)	22 (79%)
None specified	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (21%)	5 (33%)	0 (0%)	6 (21%)
Crisis shelter	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	5 (36%)	6 (40%)	2 (60%)	5 (18%)
Residential services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (43%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (18%)
Mental health counseling	1 (100%)	13 (87%)	4 (100%)	11 (79%)	4 (27%)	5 (100%)	22 (79%)
Medical care	0 (0%)	13 (87%)	4 (100%)	5 (36%)	6 (40%)	5 (100%)	16 (57%)
Legal/advocacy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (47%)	3 (60%)	0 (0%)
Case management	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	5 (18%)
Education services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	5 (18%)
Other services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	11 (79%)	4 (27%)	3 (60%)	11 (39%)
<b>Seven Upstate Counties</b>							
Reporting service needs	4 (57%)	6 (60%)	6 (67%)	11 (73%)	5 (63%)	2 (50%)	3 (100%)
None specified	3 (43%)	4 (40%)	3 (33%)	4 (27%)	3 (37%)	2 (50%)	0 (%)
Crisis shelter	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (22%)	0 (0%)	1 (13%)	1 (25%)	1 (3%)
Residential services	1 (14%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Mental health counseling	3 (43%)	6 (60%)	6 (67%)	11 (73%)	5 (63%)	2 (50%)	3 (100%)
Medical care	0 (0%)	5 (50%)	3 (33%)	3 (20%)	2 (25%)	1 (25%)	1 (33%)
Legal/advocacy	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	2 (22%)	2 (13%)	3 (37%)	2 (50%)	1 (33%)
Case management	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Education services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (13%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)
Other services	3 (43%)	1 (10%)	3 (33%)	4 (7%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)
Avg. no. of services identified by agency type	1.9	2.5	3.1	2.9	2.6	3.1	3.4

<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept. 15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design and adjustments for nonresponse.

<sup>2</sup> Column percentages may exceed 100 percent because agencies could specify more than one service needed for CSEC.

## 5.4 Barriers to Service Provision (Mail Questionnaires)

For each specialized service need volunteered on the mail surveys, respondents were also asked to indicate whether the service was available in the community and if so, from whom, and what barriers existed to service provision. Table 5.7 shows the availability of agencies in the community to provide the service. In NYC, a majority of respondents (55 percent) reported that the needed residential services were not available in the community. Also, all NYC respondents indicating the need for education services reported that these services were not available. Upstate respondents were less likely to indicate services were not available in the community.<sup>43</sup>

However, even when agencies are available to provide a specialized service, there are limitations. Table 5.8 shows the limitations/barriers reported by the survey respondents. Respondents could identify up to two barriers per service, but for many of the services, a significant number of respondents did not provide any information. Not surprisingly, the type of barriers that were identified differed by both service category and geographic area. In NYC, an insufficient number of beds/slots were the most common barrier cited for crisis shelters (41 percent). Residential services were limited by restrictions on non-county youth (55 percent) and “other” barriers (55 percent). Limited funding was the most frequently cited problem for medical care (43 percent), legal services and advocacy (60 percent), case management (55 percent), and services grouped as “other” (e.g., outreach, substance abuse screening, child welfare, and transportation). The lack of staff or trained staff was specified by NYC respondents for case management (55 percent), mental health counseling (23 percent), medical care (12 percent), and “other” services (nine percent). Upstate, where fewer respondents answered survey items about service needs and barriers, it is harder to describe the patterns because of small cell sizes. One exception is mental health counseling, where respondents identified not enough slots/beds (25 percent) and “Other” (42 percent) as the key barriers. Most of the barriers identified for other service needs also Upstate fell into the “Other” category.

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<sup>43</sup> There are some indications that respondents may overestimate the availability of services. Elsewhere in the survey form, respondents were asked to name local agencies that provided services specifically for CSEC. In following up with some of the named agencies, study staff were told that the agency rarely or, in one case, never worked with CSEC.

### 5.7: Availability of Needed Services From Community Agencies<sup>1</sup>

Services Needed	Number (Percentage) of Weighted Agencies in Sampled Counties:				
	Not available in the community	Available from Respondent Agency Only	Available from Respondent and Other Agencies in Community	None Specified	Total
<b>NYC (n=83)</b>					
Crisis shelter	2 (10%)	10 (45%)	10 (45%)	0 (0%)	22 (100%)
Residential services	6 (55%)	0 (0%)	5 (45%)	0 (0%)	11 (100%)
Mental health counseling	2 (3%)	12 (20%)	46 (77%)	0 (0%)	60 (100%)
Medical care	0 (0%)	18 (37%)	31 (63%)	0 (0%)	49 (100%)
Legal services/advocacy	0 (0%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	10 (100%)
Case management	0 (0%)	10 (91%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)	11 (100%)
Education services	7 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (100%)
Other services <sup>2</sup>	6 (11%)	4 (12%)	18 (55%)	11 (33%)	33 (100%)
<b>Upstate (n=56)</b>					
Crisis shelter	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	5 (100%)
Residential services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Mental health counseling	2 (6%)	4 (11%)	26 (72%)	4 (11%)	36 (100%)
Medical care	0 (0%)	3 (21%)	10 (71%)	1 (7%)	14 (100%)
Legal services/advocacy	0 (0%)	3 (27%)	7(64%)	1 (9%)	11 (100%)
Case management	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (100%)
Education services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	4 (100%)
Other services <sup>2</sup>	0 (0%)	3 (23%)	7 (54%)	3 (23%)	13 (100%)

<sup>1</sup>The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept.15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design and adjustments for nonresponse.

<sup>2</sup> Other services include street outreach, detoxification, substance abuse counseling and treatment, mentoring, transportation, family reunification, child welfare/child protective services, recreation programs, general services, and referrals.

### 5.8: Barriers to Services Needed in the Community by Geographic Area<sup>1</sup>

Services needed	Number (Percentage) <sup>2</sup> of Weighted Agencies in Sampled Counties:								
	Limited Funding	Not Enough Slots/ Beds	Not Available to Non-County Youth	Limited Staff/ Trained Staff	Limited Access to Services <sup>3</sup>	Lack of Community Awareness	Other Barriers <sup>4</sup>	None Specified	Total
<b>NYC</b>									
Crisis shelter	6 (27%)	9 (41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (27%)	0 (0%)	2 (9%)	5 (23%)	22 (100%)
Residential services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (55%)	5 (45%)	11 (100%)
Mental health counseling	6 (10%)	8 (13%)	10 (17%)	14 (23%)	6 (10%)	3 (5%)	8 (13%)	16 (27%)	60 (100%)
Medical care	21 (43%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)	10 (20%)	12 (24%)	6 (12%)	49 (100%)
Legal services/ advocacy	6 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	10 (100%)
Case management	6 (55%)	4 (36%)	0 (0%)	6 (55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (18%)	0 (0%)	11 (100%)
Education services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (100%)	7 (100%)
Other services <sup>5</sup>	7 (21%)	0 (0%)	4 (12%)	3 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (58%)	33 (100%)
<b>Seven Upstate Counties</b>									
Crisis shelter	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	5 (100%)
Residential services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
Mental health counseling	5 (14%)	9 (25%)	2 (6%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)	15 (42%)	8 (22%)	36 (100%)
Medical care	2 (14%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (71%)	7 (50%)	14 (100%)
Legal services/ advocacy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	4 (36%)	0 (0%)	5 (45%)	11 (100%)
Case management	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (100%)
Education services	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	3 (75%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)
Other services <sup>5</sup>	5 (38%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (30%)	13 (100%)

<sup>1</sup> The weighted estimates in this table are based on data collected from sampled agencies for a two-month reference period (July 15 through Sept. 15, 2006). The weights reflect the probabilities of selection for the sample design and adjustments for nonresponse.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages may exceed 100 percent because respondents could indicate up to two barriers for each service.

<sup>3</sup> This category includes agencies that had limited hours of operation or program constraints (only served children of a certain age or sex or had mandated clientele).

<sup>4</sup> Other barriers included lack of insurance, limited transportation available, general lack of resources, resistance to program or therapy by the child, and unwillingness to disclose exploitation.

<sup>5</sup> Other services include street outreach, detoxification/substance abuse counseling and treatment, family reunification, mentoring, child welfare/child protective services, recreation programs, transportation, general services, and referrals.

## 5.5 Other Service Needs and Barriers (Qualitative Interviews)

The qualitative interviews provided an opportunity to further explore the service needs and barriers from the perspective of agencies that frequently work with CSEC. These interviews were conducted with 12 non-DSS agencies (six from NYC and six from Upstate). The interviews asked Do the needs of commercially sexually exploited youth differ from those of the rest of your population? Regardless of geographic area, respondents mentioned the intensity of the services needs for CSEC. For all NYC agencies, housing emerged as a particular concern, but concern was also expressed by two upstate agencies. Respondents described several challenges regarding housing for CSEC: (1) finding physical space and funding, (2) securing safe housing, (3) housing CSEC with other children, (4) securing transitional housing to move CSEC into a more normal living environment, and (5) securing long-term housing. Three of the NYC agencies also emphasized the problems of mixing CSEC with other children who may mock or look down on them, a theme that also emerged in the focus group sessions. One NYC agency had recently increased the number of beds for target youth through a NYC Department of Youth and Community Development grant. However, the number of beds provided remains small.

NYC agencies also stressed the vulnerability of the CSEC. The safety issue surrounding CSEC is particularly complex, given the structure of the sex industry as it exists in NYC. The information below about the structure of sex industry comes from agency respondents who work most closely with youth involved in street prostitution organized by pimps who prey on young girls in NYC. It is unknown if similar dynamics are at work in smaller communities Upstate when children are sexually exploited for commercial purposes. The discussion also does not explain youth who are engaged in commercial sex work without a pimp, as many runaway and homeless youth appear to act as free agents, making money for survival needs.

Several respondents from NYC commented that the pimp is not the only one that agencies have to guard against. They describe the social structure of the sex industry as a family, with the pimp as the head of household. Most families have several children. The pimp exerts remarkable control over them, supported by the group. Attempts to leave the group, causing a financial loss to the pimp, are considered betrayals. Not just the pimp, but other children working for the pimp try to bring back any victim who attempts to break free or is arrested. Two respondents described a “head” prostitute who serves in a mother/first wife role, sometimes referred to in the literature as the “wife-in-law.”<sup>44</sup> If a child is picked up for prostitution, this

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<sup>44</sup> Williamson, C., Cluse-Tolar, T. op.cit. 1084.

individual will visit the child in jail, detention, at law offices, or in foster or congregate care, encouraging the child to come back to the pimp or cautioning the child not to testify against him. These communications are difficult to stop since the victim may consider these individuals close friends.

Upstate agencies mentioned the need for intensive therapy to help CSEC address their confusion over roles and family issues. Upstate agencies also talked about the difficulty of achieving permanent placements for these children, because of their independence and lack of community attachment. These respondents also talked about the need to be flexible when working with CSEC to accommodate their sense of independence. Only three of the six Upstate respondents mentioned the need for housing for these youth; again, this may be a result of the smaller number of CSEC in the Upstate counties. A rape crisis center, congregate care facility, and runaway shelter commented on the need for long-term residential support, safe shelter, and independent living space.

Some respondents discussed how service limitations and barriers can exacerbate the problem if children are put on long waiting lists for services, until beds open up or staff become available. According to NYC respondents, these waits can be from one to six months. Such a wait often means the child will move back in with the pimp and “family” of prostitutes living together. One Upstate respondent also commented on the need to closely supervise CSEC as they move through the system from one placement, therapist, or program to another.

Other deficits mentioned by individual agencies in the interviews included medical care; counseling; legal support; follow-up services; treatment for juvenile sex offenders; and the lack of a system-wide or consistent response to CSEC. One Upstate agency noted a lack of transportation in rural areas and the need to expand services to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender population.

These same agencies were asked to discuss service needs in light of the outcomes they wanted to achieve for CSEC clients. These responses varied little by geographic area and focused on getting youth to a “safe place.” To achieve this goal, the agencies described a two-pronged approach: (1) identifying factors that put children at risk and (2) increasing children’s involvement in developmentally appropriate activities—attending school, working, and involvement in community, church and/or family activities. Similar objectives and approaches were identified for children at risk of sexual exploitation, but not yet involved in it. Several interviewees thought that the children at greatest risk are those who are most isolated, such as

victims of bullying at school, children with special education needs that make them feel different, or children with something else that sets them apart from their peers. One NYC agency said that pimps send youth out to recruit others who are alone and not where they should be (e.g., at a train station during school hours). Developing strategies that help these youth integrate into age-appropriate, positive social groups and expose them to positive adult role models was considered to be an extremely important factor in reducing their vulnerability to commercial sexual exploitation.

Interviewees also identified individualized follow-up as critical to helping CSEC reintegrate into the community and involve themselves in age-appropriate activities. Five of the 12 agencies (two in NYC and three in Upstate) reported doing follow-up on a routine basis. However, even in these agencies, follow-up was provided on a case-by-case basis. One respondent reported that she was the only staff member for the entire program and that she lacked the time to provide follow-up. Another agency that draws youth from around the State returns the youth to their home county for outpatient services and reintegration into the community. An Upstate agency described clients as “family” and said that some clients who are now in their 30’s still return to the agency for advice, service referrals, and other assistance.

The qualitative interviews described many of the same types of service barriers as the mail surveys, with the most significant agency constraints being insufficient budgets (cited by three respondents from NYC and three from Upstate) and staffing (two from NYC and three from Upstate). One Upstate agency commented that government funding for its program, which constitutes 70 percent of the budget, has not increased since 1989. This same agency mentioned a 12 percent loss of county funding in the past year. One NYC agency commented that it could no longer serve at-risk children, given the high demand for services from CSEC. Another agency discussed how difficult it is to get money from private foundations that do not want to hear about this issue. That respondent reported educating foundations by talking to their boards and discussing the experiences of these children.

Many agency interviewees mentioned the need for more professional education as a way to help remediate service deficits. Particularly cited was the need to better educate police departments (mentioned by four of the seven NYC agencies and nine of the 13 upstate agencies), focusing on awareness, identification, and sensitivity. Training deficits were also cited (again by the majority of agencies in NYC and Upstate) for all types of service personnel working with CSEC, ranging from clinicians and voluntary staff, judges and all individuals working with CSEC. The emphasis on professional education echoed the findings of a recent report by the

Citizens' Commission for Children about girls in the juvenile justice system, which recommended "improved training for all professional staff that come in contact with court involved girls, from court personnel to attorneys and frontline caregivers in detention and placement settings."<sup>45</sup>

Two NYC respondents spoke about the barriers caused by the public perception of CSEC as criminals. Such a perception exacerbates many of the existing barriers—funding, staffing, and reintegrating CSEC into the community. Two NYC agencies and one Upstate agency mentioned the problem of gaining the child's trust in order to provide needed services. As one NYC respondent stated, "agencies have to compete with pimps to get the child's attention and trust."

Respondents from one NYC agency and one Upstate agency identified poor communication—among federal, state, and local agencies; among service agencies, police, district attorneys, and judges; between family and criminal courts; and among borough jurisdictions—as a key barrier to service provision. Lack of coordination and communication was cited as making it more difficult to facilitate child safety. Furthermore, when communication is actively established between agencies, it is often personnel-specific rather than agency-specific. If an individual leaves, then a new connection has to be established. Two Upstate agency interviewees, along with several Study Advisory Group members, said that communication is also hampered by the lack of a good tool or protocol to identify CSEC and share information on sexual exploitation without betraying the trust of the child.

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<sup>45</sup> Citizen's Committee for Children of New York Inc. (2006) *Girls in the Juvenile Justice System: Understanding Service Needs and Experiences*. New York, NY, p. 25.

## **6. WORKING WITH COMMERCIAL SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN**

As stated in Chapter 2, the agencies included in this study were those deemed most likely to see and serve CSEC. Twenty non-law enforcement agencies participated in the qualitative interviews, including eight DSS agencies (including NYC ACS), three youth-serving agencies, three rape crisis centers, one CAC, one RHY shelter/TIL program, one congregate care facility, one OCFS juvenile justice facility, and one NYC coalition addressing commercial sexual exploitation of children. Seven agencies were from NYC; 13 were from Upstate.

Among the non-DSS agencies, there was a wide variation in how long they have been operating. The oldest agency has been in existence for 120 years and the second oldest began 75 years ago. The youngest agency opened in 1999. Among the remaining agencies, three started in the 1970s and two in the 1980s. All but three interviewed had been working with CSEC for at least five years, and these three were all based in NYC and were part of new initiatives to address the problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The non-DSS agencies were asked to estimate the number of CSEC seen in a year. This marked the biggest distinction between the NYC agencies and those found Upstate. As stated in the Chapter 5, six Upstate agencies reported seeing two to 27 CSEC a year, for an estimated annual total of 97. In NYC, agencies estimated seeing between 12 and 2000 for a total of 2,385. The larger numbers were seen by legal services agencies. Several agencies commented that it was difficult to say how many children were under 18 because these youth often lied about their age and gave false identities. Several respondents noted that they based their figures on “known” cases; other children served by their agency might also be commercially sexually exploited but not identified as such.

Below we further discuss the experiences of these agencies in working with CSEC.

### **6.1 Community and Agency Protocols for Working with CSEC**

The eight DSS agencies were included in the interviews to serve as a touchstone or basis to compare experiences in each of the different sample counties. When asked about their definition of commercial sexual exploitation, three agencies (one from NYC and two from Upstate) reported that their definition was consistent with that of the study. The other Upstate

DSS agencies reported that their definition basically covered sex abuse by a parent or caretaker (or lack of supervision by a parent or caretaker which permitted the sexual abuse). This is consistent with their traditional roles in addressing child abuse and neglect.

All non-DSS agencies reported seeing CSEC who fit the specific definition used by this study, although in some agencies their specific definition differed from that of the study, such that CSEC might be subsumed under a larger definition, as in the case of several DSS agencies. For NYC agencies, five agreed with the definition. However, one agency commented that by including protection in the definition more cases would be included that did not fit the commercial definition. We found that to be true in the mail questionnaire and had to remove most cases involving a sexual act for protection because of the lack of commercial aspect. One NYC agency cast a broader net looking at all sexual exploitation regardless of compensation. Three of the Upstate agencies concurred with the study definition, while three also cast broader nets looking at all sexual exploitation, regardless of commercial aspects.

The DSS agencies, regardless of geographic area, described similar protocols for working with CSEC.<sup>46</sup> These protocols were basically those that covered child abuse and neglect cases, which would also encompass the CSEC. These protocols covered joint investigations with police and working with district attorneys as needed. The protocols mentioned involvement with CACs and other service providers. ACS particularly mentioned working with police when targeting CSEC cases.

Most of the non-DSS agencies stated that there was at least an informal agency protocol, but there were no community-wide protocols for dealing with CSEC. As with DSS agencies, these protocols tend to be the same ones used for child abuse or any rape victims or child offenders, but several agencies stated that services (educational and case management) are more intense for CSEC. One state-level respondent stated that its protocol for dealing with male sexual offenders is much better articulated than it is for CSEC. Boys who are labeled as sex offenders go through extensive and validated evaluation assessments.

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<sup>46</sup> The mail questionnaire asked police agencies about protocols for dealing with CSEC. Twenty-five of the 32 police agencies reporting using protocols, which were broadly worded to encompass the spectrum of sex-related cases. Protocols included specific procedures for intake, gathering evidence, and considering the necessary next steps (testing for rape, counseling, and other follow-up services) for the child.

## 6.2 Connecting and Identifying CSEC

Both DSS and non-police agencies described a variety of ways that clients enter services. DSS agencies use the same approach for CSEC as they do for children in child abuse and maltreatment cases. They receive reports/referrals through the Statewide Central Registry for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) and the child abuse hotline, which transfers them to the appropriate district. Three DSS agencies also mentioned receiving direct referrals from law enforcement and/or the juvenile justice system. Other referrals come from the courts, schools, OCFS, and family members. A few also come from client disclosures. Two of the New York City agencies locate CSEC through street outreach. One agency passes out cards that are imprinted with “Confidential Outreach Services,” which then leads youth to pass service information by word of mouth. Two other agencies from Upstate mentioned doing outreach to schools, and one agency approaches sentinels, such as counselors, agencies, and police and encourages them to refer CSEC.

Of the two agencies (both in NYC) with specialized protocols for working with CSEC, one specified that upon identification, the child is referred to an agency that works specifically with CSEC, while the other uses a specialized intake form that focuses on identifying police harassment, pimp involvement, and safety issues. Agencies reported the difficulty of identifying CSEC unless the child is found by police or outreach workers stripping or being prostituted. Often the agency does not know about the exploitation at the point of intake, where services are most likely to be established. This coincides with findings from the mail questionnaire which found that sexual exploitation was known at time of referral for only 35 percent of the children. An additional 15 percent were identified as CSEC during assessment. Identification for the other 50 percent of children occurred later in the process.

One NYC agency that works exclusively with CSEC commented that the youth know their agency and whom it serves, so counselors are more forthright in questioning children about their involvement in the sex industry. Other agencies must somehow elicit a disclosure. Another NYC agency uses a developmental assessment (the DSM Family Assessment). A third described a special psycho-educational curriculum for females in an Upstate facility that may elicit disclosures. Respondents from other agencies commented that there are few disclosures from these children, and the agency may know about the problem only because of the referral charge (e.g., from police).

Staff in these agencies mentioned a number of other challenges in working with CSEC, beyond simply identifying them. These challenges crossed geographic borders. Building trust was a major one. The difficulty can be more severe if the child has been dealing with commercial sexual exploitation for some time and if he or she was abused prior to going into the sex industry, a description that fits the majority of children identified in this study. In addition, agencies find themselves working with children with severe mental health issues or limited cognitive functioning. Another challenge is getting the children's families involved, assuming that it is desirable. Agencies commented that the lack of involvement by the family is often part of the reason the child became involved in the sex industry. One Upstate agency reported seeing increases in the number of youth referred from the court because parents have taken out a protection order against the child. Another mentioned that the parent's statement to the court that the home is safe may be given more credence than the youth's statement about the presence of an active abuser. This scenario may occur when an agency attempts to return a runaway child involved in commercial sexual exploitation to the home, a home that the child fled in the first place because of abuse.

One model program for female victims of sexual abuse or assault is currently operating in the OCFS Harriet Tubman Facility. This program provides one-on-one counseling following disclosure.

### **6.3 Staff Training**

Staff training is considered critical in dealing with these challenges. All DSS agencies have required training for staff. Most of the non-DSS agencies have some staff training, which varies from general agency in-service (covering topics such as crisis management, rape crisis, child advocacy, mental health issues, interview training, sexuality, and team building) to 40 hours per year of training on working with and reporting abused children. The latter training usually covers information about HIV/AIDS, runaway/homeless youth, and the legal requirements for mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Few agencies reported receiving specialized training for CSEC. One NYC agency mentioned conducting comprehensive staff training on working with CSEC; another statewide agency mentioned specialized training for sex offender staff and training in a special curriculum. Another NYC agency mentioned that a State attorney attended training on CSEC sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Training sources included

OCFS, Girls Education and Mentoring Service (GEMS), child protective services, Planned Parenthood, the Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services, various other agencies, and conferences. However, few training resources specific to CSEC were identified, and none based Upstate. GEMS was the most commonly mentioned agency with training expertise in this topic area.

DSS agencies were asked if training for law enforcement was needed on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Six of the eight agencies agreed. However, one concern raised was the constant problem that when training occurs, officers must be taken off the street. This balance between having officers on the street or in training is a constant issue. One Upstate agency felt that training on CSEC was needed by all involved with these children.

#### **6.4 Recent Changes**

Both DSS and non-DSS agencies reported that in recent years there had been a few changes—increased resources, improved protocols, new curricula—addressing CSEC. Changes in training seemed to be the most common. Two NYC agencies mentioned that they had received funding for training and attending workshops. Two agencies mentioned developing a new “train the trainer” program. Three NYC agencies reported getting a least one new staff member to work with CSEC, but in at least one case, additional funding will be needed eventually to sustain the position. Other changes, each mentioned by one agency, included:

- A new grant for prevention/peer leadership in high schools (in NYC),
- Improved ability to work with bisexual youth (statewide agency),
- Increased community education (Upstate),
- Increased coordination between rape crisis and domestic violence providers, enabling identification of CSEC through domestic violence intake (Upstate), and
- A new sex abuse unit (Upstate).

Four Upstate agencies reported no real changes in the past few years.

From a broader perspective, it appears that the recognition of the problem of CSEC has increased. Certainly, the efforts by the New York State Legislature (such as funding for this

study and the reintroduction of the Safe Harbour bill), provide powerful evidence of this. Other efforts focus largely on NYC. Federal agencies, such as OJJDP and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) within the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), have paid increased attention to CSEC. New York City was one of two cities to receive an OJJDP grant in 2003, which is funding the Coalition to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Children (discussed below in more detail). In addition to the Coalition, this grant is supporting development of a three-pronged approach called Operation Guardian. The first piece, located in the Queens District Attorney's Office, focuses on child prostitution and the prosecution of pimps. The second component provides around-the-clock support to CSEC who cooperate with the prosecution, by providing certified counselors from the Sexual Assault Violence Intervention (SAVI) program. The third component is the development of a residential placement facility specifically for the victims of sexual exploitation. Additionally, prevention programs are being planned to support at-risk youth. Through the same grant, researchers at John Jay College are conducting a census of CSEC youth in New York City. The findings from this census are scheduled for publication at the end of 2007. Meanwhile, BJA has funded two task forces in New York State on human trafficking, which encompasses CSEC. These task forces are located in Suffolk and Nassau counties.

Another DOJ grant, announced in December 2006, was given to the Salvation Army to develop a national, multi-site training and technical assistance project in Atlantic City, Chicago, Denver, San Diego, and Washington, DC. While New York is not a direct beneficiary, the New York City-based GEMS is one of the partners to the award, lending its support to training efforts.

## **6.5 Collaborative Activities**

Interviewees identified a number of collaborative activities around CSEC issues. Five Upstate respondents reported that collaboration was one of the strengths of their community in addressing CSEC. Collaboration efforts included multi-agency staffing of Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) and multidisciplinary teams, joint investigations between child welfare and the police, cross-agency training, and a partnership between a rape crisis center and a community street outreach program. Still another agency described collaborative efforts between child welfare and domestic violence advocates.

DSS agencies were likely to cite multidisciplinary meetings within the CACs as a vehicle for collaboration, particularly with law enforcement, the district attorney, and direct

service providers. Several Upstate agencies mentioned coordinating treatment, getting releases to share information with other agencies, and attending court hearings and school meetings. Seven agencies (five in NYC and two Upstate) reported that they participate in various task forces and collaborative meetings such as the New York City Task Force Against the Sexual Exploitation of Young People (formed in 2000 by ECPAT-USA), GEMS, the International Organization for Adolescents, and DSS monthly CARE center meetings. Other groups and meetings mentioned were the Anti-Stalking Group Task Force, the Prevention Coalition, and the OCFS Girls Task Force. Two NYC agencies mentioned that they share training with other agencies. One Upstate agency described a collaborative effort with approximately 50 agencies in the community, involving a variety of joint community education activities (e.g. counseling, eating disorders, etc.). Two Upstate agencies said they were housed in the local community center and therefore shared a variety of resources with the center. Finally, several agencies mentioned attending interagency meetings several times a year to network with others.

Two collaborative bodies were frequently mentioned during the interviews, as well as by the Study Advisory Group. The Coalition to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Children, funded by OJJDP, is specific to New York City. Its multidisciplinary membership includes:

- *Law Enforcement*—New York City Police Department, FBI, New York Port Authority Police Department, District Attorneys, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, NYC Law Department;
- *Social Service Providers*—GEMS, Mt. Sinai SAVI, Paul and Lisa Program, Safe Horizon, Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA), the STAR Program; and
- *Other Agencies*—Probation, Department of Juvenile Justice, Legal Aid, Administration for Children’s Services, OCFS, Department of Education, Department of Youth and Community Development, Family Court Judges, and Midtown Community Court.

This coalition meets about five times a year. Staff associated with the coalition report good attendance and a growth in the collaborative spirit across agencies as a result of participation in the coalition.

The second collaboration often mentioned was the Juvenile Justice Coalition (JJC), which is state-based. This coalition, formed in 1997, is a network of child advocacy groups, legal service providers, alternative sentencing programs, and community-based organizations working on juvenile justice issues. Its specific goals are to: decrease the number of New York youth going to jails and prisons; reduce the disproportionate incarceration of youth of color; ensure the legal

rights of all court-involved youth; improve outcomes for young people confined in juvenile justice institutions; and promote a youth development approach to juvenile justice. The Correctional Association of New York's Juvenile Justice Project coordinates JJC and staffs its five working groups, one of which focuses on sexually exploited youth.

## **7. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter, we summarize our findings, discuss limitations to this study, and provide recommendations based on the findings and the expertise of participating agencies and the Study Advisory Group.

### **7.1 Summary of Findings**

The New York prevalence study of CSEC, conducted for OCFS at the request of the New York State Legislature, was based on a purposive sample of 11 counties, seven in upstate New York (Chautauqua, Erie, Oneida, Onondaga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington) and four NYC boroughs (Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens). Ten different types of agencies—county law enforcement, municipal police departments, probation offices, detention centers, OCFS female juvenile justice facilities, RHY shelters/TIL programs, child advocacy centers, congregate care facilities, rape crisis centers, and youth-serving agencies—were selected (n=159). Agencies received a mail survey requesting information about their experience with CSEC and specific child-level information for CSEC identified during a two-month period from July 15 through September 15, 2006. Ninety-seven of the agencies returned the mail survey, for a response rate of 81.0 percent from the seven Upstate counties and 45.2 percent in the four NYC boroughs. In addition, 20 non-police agencies—the eight DSS agencies responsible for the counties covered by the mail survey and 12 other service agencies—participated in qualitative interviews. Finally, three focus groups with CSEC were conducted with NYC commercially exploited children.

The data provided by the agencies responding to the mail surveys were first weighted to provide estimates for the two-month reference period for NYC and the seven Upstate counties. Then, using data on the quarterly distribution of prostitution arrests (in 2001 and 2005) and the number of females identified as CSEC by the OCFS intake facility in the year that included the reference period, the data were again weighted to provide an annual estimate of the numbers of CSEC identified and the number of agencies involved in identifying them. The data reported throughout this study represent weighted estimates of the identified CSEC receiving services for a year for NYC and the seven Upstate counties.

### 7.1.1 Prevalence Estimates for CSEC and Exploitation Events

The number of CSEC identified in NYC is estimated at over five times the number for the seven Upstate counties (2,253 identified in NYC versus 399 in Upstate) on an annual basis. This ratio is similar to that for commercially exploited girls committed to OCFS custody (22 girls were identified for NYC, while 5 were identified for the Rest of the State). The mail surveys of agencies also collected counts of youth 18 to 21 years old who were involved in the sex industry. This was done because the Study Advisory Group believed this age group would likely include CSEC with false IDs. Most of these youth were also identified in NYC (7,975 in NYC versus 119 Upstate).

The study found distinct differences between CSEC identified in the four NYC boroughs and the seven Upstate counties.

**Characteristics of CSEC identified in NYC.** In NYC, CSEC were predominantly female (85 percent), Black/African American (67 percent), and 16 to 17 years old (59 percent). Just 4 percent, all girls, were age 13 or under. NYC had the only children who identified as transgender ( $n=31$ ), and the majority of children identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning. Nearly one fifth of the NYC children were Hispanic/Latino. Only one percent of the children were recorded as immigrants.

Eighty-five percent of the NYC children in the study had a history of some type of child welfare involvement, such as an abuse/neglect allegation or investigation (69 percent), placement in foster care (75 percent), or PINS placement (45 percent). This is consistent with other research on CSEC. Over half also had a prior juvenile justice placement, and 26 percent had been in more than one type of juvenile justice placement (secure, non-secure, or detention).

Court or probation was the most common source of referrals for NYC and the identification of commercial sexual exploitation was the reason for referral for over one-third of these children (38 percent). The majority of CSEC (55 percent) in NYC had prior episodes of exploitation.

For the majority of CSEC in NYC, the commercial sexual exploitation involved a sexual act for money (82 percent). These children were also often charged with loitering for prostitution (30 percent), stripping or performing in public (24 percent), and committing a sexual act for a place to stay (23 percent). These acts were committed most commonly in a hotel or

motel (44 percent) or outside (30 percent) and involved adult strangers (75 percent). Force was used in 58 percent of the situations.

**Characteristics of CSEC identified in the seven Upstate counties.** The profiles and experiences of CSEC in the seven Upstate counties are different. While the majority of Upstate children were females (77 percent), there was a significant male minority (22 percent). Upstate children were also younger; only 36 percent were 16 to 17 years old and 28 percent were 13 or younger. Only two percent identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning, and none were transgender. The largest racial group was white (47 percent). Ten percent were Hispanic/Latino.

Comparable to NYC, a large majority (89 percent) had a history of prior child welfare involvement, such as an abuse allegation or investigation (54 percent), placement in foster care (49 percent), or a PINS petition (30 percent). Proportionately fewer Upstate CSEC had prior juvenile justice placements (44 percent). Only seven percent of those youth had multiple types of juvenile justice placements. The difference in juvenile justice placements between NYC and Upstate youth could be a function of the difference in age for the two samples or could reflect the difference in police practices between NYC and Upstate. It is believed that the NYPD is more likely to arrest CSEC, while Upstate police are more likely to refer them to social services.

The characteristics of the exploitation were also different for Upstate children. As with NYC, the majority of youth engaged in a sexual act for money (81 percent); however, only Upstate CSEC were filmed or photographed in a sexual act (17 percent). In the majority of cases (52 percent), the exploitation occurred in the child's home and was perpetrated by an adult friend or acquaintance (58 percent). The majority of Upstate children (79 percent) were living with their family or relatives at the time the exploitation took place.

The most common referral source for Upstate children was child welfare agencies (31 percent). Commercial exploitation was the reason for referral to the identifying agency for only 15 percent of the Upstate CSEC.

The differences between CSEC in NYC and the Upstate counties, both in terms of demographics and the characteristics of the exploitation, may be related in part to: (1) greater success in identifying sexual exploitation at young ages in Upstate, less urban areas, (2) differing enforcement and outreach priorities in the two areas, and (3) a less organized sex industry in the Upstate counties. Additional research would be required to explore these factors.

### **7.1.2 Service Estimates**

Typically, CSEC in NYC received more different types of services (on average 7.6) than did CSEC in the Upstate counties (on average 5.8). Mental health counseling and case management were provided to the majority of CSEC in both geographic areas. A majority of CSEC in NYC also received food, clothing, transportation, assessment, and advocacy. The majority identified Upstate also received residential services. Service referrals, made for 86 percent of the NYC children and at least 45 percent of those Upstate, were also critical to the constellation of services available. Medical care (71 percent) and mental health counseling (68 percent) were the most common referrals by NYC agencies. Substance abuse screening (30 percent) was the most common service referral Upstate.

While NYC agencies reported providing more types of services than agencies from Upstate counties, they also reported more specialized services needed for CSEC—3.1 on average versus 1.6 Upstate. Mental health counseling was the most prevalent need identified in both areas (72 percent in NYC and 64 percent Upstate). The largest proportional difference between the two geographic areas occurred for medical care (identified as a need by 59 percent in NYC versus 25 percent in Upstate) and crisis shelter (27 percent versus 9 percent).

Agencies were also asked about service barriers. The type of barriers that were identified differed by both service category and geographic area. NYC respondents most commonly cited an insufficient number of beds for crisis shelter and restrictions on non-county youth for residential services. Limited funding and lack of staff or staff training were typically cited for other service needs. Upstate, concern centered on insufficient slots or beds for mental health counseling. “Other” barriers were the most typically cited for other services needs identified Upstate. These barriers included lack of insurance, limited transportation, and general lack of resources.

The study found that in general and with a few exceptions, such as services provided by GEMS, Legal Aid, and a program in the OCFS Harriet Tubman Facility, most CSEC services and protocols address sexual offenses in general. These protocols cover victims and offenders, males and females, victims of sexual abuse by a parent or caretaker, victims of rape by a stranger or friend, and CSEC.

In discussing service gaps and barriers, interviewees from DSS and other service agencies echoed many of these concerns, but specified finding and funding safe housing as a

particular challenge. Many interviewees were concerned about training deficits for personnel who work with CSEC, ranging from clinical staff to police and judges who handle CSEC cases.

## **7.2 Limits to the Study**

To meet the requirements set down by the Legislature, data collection and analysis for this report were completed within a very short timeframe, approximately eight months. Under the circumstances, there were limits to what could be accomplished. For example, we were unable to gain the participation of two large law enforcement agencies, the Buffalo Police Department and the New York Port Authority Police, as well as legal service agencies likely to represent CSEC—all of whom could have contributed to the prevalence estimates.

Our experience confirms that collecting data of the type needed for this study requires significant time to set up data collection arrangements with sampled agencies. The process involves identifying the right person to complete the agency's survey, providing that person with information about the study, and answering questions about the instrument. As mentioned below under *Recommendations*, future studies need considerably more lead time to negotiate these arrangements. In the Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, Westat had one year to recruit 1,700 agencies to participate in the prospective study. Given low initial response rates, a second data collection period was designated so that an additional six months could be used to recruit agencies. Although fewer agencies were involved in the current study, the preparation time needed per agency is comparable.

This study collected data on CSEC recognized by sentinel agencies—agencies deemed especially likely to come in contact with these youths. Because of the limited timeframe for study, we focused on a two-month reference period. However, estimates of CSEC based on a two-month period may be flawed if there are seasonal patterns in exploitation or its disclosure. Some agencies told us our two-month reference period was their busiest time working with CSEC; others said this was a slow time.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that all estimates are based on *identified* cases. Previous studies and interviews with agency personnel indicated that CSEC are not quick to disclose their exploitation, unless that is the only way to get services or immediate protection. For these and other reasons discussed further below, it is certain that all CSEC served by these agencies were not identified.

Additionally, the reader is cautioned to examine the data on the basis of location. Because of the purposive sample design, which chose counties based on expected high prostitution rates, applying these rates statewide would overestimate the prevalence of CSEC. In particular, NYC numbers are unlikely to be replicated elsewhere in the State. It would also be misleading to add estimates from NYC and the seven Upstate counties together, obscuring the differences observed between the characteristics of CSEC and exploitation experiences in the different areas. These differences suggest that there may be different pathways or tracks to commercial sexual exploitation in the two areas, but future research is necessary to more fully explore those tracks.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

The recommendations are based on several sources: (1) a series of questions in the qualitative interviews about what changes are needed to prevent commercial sexual exploitation or to improve services to CSEC, (2) discussions with the Study Advisory Group in January 2007, and (3) findings from the mail surveys and the OCFS data review. Below we discuss the recommendations related to State law, policy and practice changes, and other recommendations based on the findings. Most recommendations cut across agency type and location. If the recommendations made were made only by respondents in one geographic area, that is indicated.

#### **7.3.1 Changes to State Law**

Several changes to State law have been recommended in connection with the Safe Harbour bill, which was introduced in the 2005 legislative session and reintroduced with changes in both 2006 and 2007. Among them are: increased funding for residential programs, changes in definitions (both for PINS and juvenile delinquency), changes in statutes governing prostitution by 16- and 17-year olds, and implementation of annual counts of CSEC. The qualitative interviews with DSS agencies and other service agencies involved with CSEC asked:

*What changes do you think are needed to prevent sexual exploitation or to improve services for or community response to CSEC? Are changes needed in State law? Are you familiar with the proposed legislation Safe Harbour for Exploited Children Bill (availability of safe house or other placement for short and long-term placement, determination of number of CSEC annually in programs, changing PINS to include 16 and 17 year olds engaged in*

*prostitution, and excluding children under 16 engaged in prostitution offenses from juvenile delinquent status)?*

**Availability of Safe House/Other Placement.** The proposed support for both short-term crisis housing and long-term safe houses in the Safe Harbour bill was fully supported by the study findings. Eight agencies responding to the qualitative survey reported that housing was the most critical need for CSEC. At least three NYC agencies commented that dedicated housing was particularly critical for these youth, given the stigma attached to the sex industry. Needs for crisis shelter, residential services, and more beds were also reported in the mail surveys, and echoed in the focus group discussions. The Coalition to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Children in New York City was able to report working on a new facility dedicated to CSEC.

**Changing PINS and/or the Prostitution Statutes.** Several respondents were concerned by apparent conflicts between child welfare and criminal justice statutes. For example, three respondents commented that since children under the age of 17 cannot consent to a sexual relationship, the sexual acts covered by the study should be viewed as a reflection of their survival needs (presumably on the streets) rather than as a crime. Currently, however, criminal statutes permit 16- and 17-year-olds to be prosecuted as adults for prostitution. One proposed legislative change to the Safe Harbour bill would exclude children under 16 from being charged under delinquency statutes when they engage in prostitution and would redefine 16- and 17-year-olds engaged in prostitution as PINS. Six agencies agreed with changing delinquency statutes governing prostitution. Ten agencies supported changing the PINS definition. Three agencies did not.

The Study Advisory Group also debated these issues in its January 2007 meeting. Throughout that discussion, members emphasized the need to work with children as individuals, supporting their unique constellation of needs, regardless of the label applied to the child. The Group was divided on whether CSEC were best served through the Criminal or Family Court or even directly through the child welfare system. Like delinquents, children brought in as PINS go through Family Court rather than the Criminal Court. However, children handled as juvenile delinquents can get services in a secure environment, safeguarded from the predatory pimps who unfortunately have readier access to children in social service settings where an open-door policy prevails. The Advisory Group was concerned that the dearth of secure housing mentioned by many respondents may by definition force the child into the juvenile justice arena. At this meeting the Group did agree on two points: (1) the children need a safe environment that includes counseling and other “tailored” services, and (2) the severity of the sanctions for pimps should be

increased. The Group characterized current punishment for pimps as little more than “a slap on the wrist.”

The Advisory Group, as well as several respondents to the qualitative interviews, continued to urge greater efforts by criminal justice agencies to target pimps, johns, strip clubs, and others who facilitate the exploitation of children, rather than target the child victims themselves.

### **7.3.2 Annual Counts of CSEC**

Making an annual determination of the number of CSEC in service programs—as proposed by the 2005 Safe Harbour bill—would be useful in determining service needs for this target population, but it would also be a challenge, judging from our own experience. First, reporting agencies would have to use a consistent definition of commercial sexual exploitation. Even though most agencies agreed with our definition, we found that a number did not apply it correctly. In some cases, agencies over counted CSEC; that is, they reported cases that did not meet the commercial aspect of the exploitation.

One issue raised by the Advisory Group was whether the operational definition being used in the Safe Harbour bill meets the needs of CSEC. In brief, these members discussed the value of distinguishing between commercial and other sexual abuse or exploitation. Several members thought that removing the “commercial” label from the child could remove some of the negative connotations and attitudes as well. Certainly throughout this study, we identified instances of overlap between child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation. The co-occurrence of commercial sexual exploitation and a history of child abuse support this approach. Ensuring that appropriate service strategies are provided to children, regardless of the exploitation type, was supported by all members of the Advisory Group. No final consensus was reached. However, both the Study Advisory Group and the respondents to the qualitative interviews stressed the need for an effective tool to help agencies identify those children who are commercially sexually exploited.

We expect that this study significantly undercounted CSEC. These undercounts were in part a function of the short timeframe allowed for the data collection. As stated earlier, most agencies reported needing a longer lead time to prepare for data collection, so they could include the necessary record-keeping as part of their routine business, rather than undertake the

burdensome task of combing through extensive files for each child. CSEC status is not a data element—it is not flagged as a separate category—in any agency’s current data system. Two agencies (one in NYC and one Upstate) expressed concern over labeling children in this way, however; clear confidentiality procedures must be in place defining how this information might be used. Some agencies may simply not record information on commercial sexual exploitation anywhere in their files.

Another source of undercounting involves the issue of whether the incident is considered exploitative by the reporter (i.e., a police officer or agency staffer). In the study, several respondents noted that they did not believe a particular act was exploitative though it fit the study definition, because they felt that the child was not harmed. This included such acts as a ten-year-old being paid to perform oral sex. Obviously, this case was reported and counted by the study. However, we assume that there may have been other cases that were not submitted because the respondent did not believe the child was harmed. Sometimes the child’s own characterization of the exploitation might produce underreporting. If agencies are influenced by the way that children describe their own experiences, the current counts of CSEC may represent only the tip of the iceberg.

A key issue for counting CSEC on an annual basis is which agencies should report. We identified ten types of agencies that we believed were most likely to see these children. The list may not be exhaustive, but it seems like a reasonable place to start. When working with reporting agencies, consideration also should be given to identifying sentinels within the agency who are most likely to work with CSEC, so that forms can be sent directly to these individuals rather than the agency’s “number cruncher” or even the executive director, who may or may not know about commercial sexual exploitation for any given child.

Other issues were identified by agencies regarding an annual count of CSEC. Two respondents said that in order to count CSEC, they needed a way to work with law enforcement and foster care agencies to confirm their information, and one also expressed the need for technical support to manipulate the data.

Of course, reliance on agency reporting—even with ample lead time and training support—would limit the data to the children who are already receiving some services. A periodic survey to identify those children who do not make it into services also needs to be considered. There are some precedents. A census being conducted by John Jay College goes directly to street youth, some of whom may not be involved with an agency.

The challenges of surveying children directly should not be underestimated. On the technical side, there are the difficulties of selecting a sample, designing appropriate survey questions, and administering the survey in a way that maximizes children's willingness to report sensitive information. In addition, there are ethical and legal challenges. Who can or must give permission for children to participate in such a survey? How can we ensure that children are not placed at risk by their participation? How will the participants' privacy and confidentiality be protected? A particularly thorny question involves how to handle disclosures of sexual exploitation that are made to researchers. What is the researcher's ethical and legal obligation to report the abuse? These challenges are not insurmountable, as Westat has demonstrated in the context of studies such as the Survey of Youth in Residential Facilities and the National Evaluation of Runaway and Homeless Youth Followup Study. Such endeavors require careful planning and, often, extensive interaction with Institutional Review Boards and the use of innovative technology, such as computer-assisted self-administered interviews.

### **7.3.3 Policy and Practice Changes and Recommendations**

A number of policy and practice recommendations emerge from these findings. First, these children often present with multiple problems, as evidenced by both the OCFS intake assessments and the histories of abuse and neglect, juvenile justice placements, and commercial sexual exploitation reported for the CSEC identified by the mail questionnaires. Participating agencies overwhelmingly stressed the need for mental health counseling. Thus, programs targeting CSEC need to factor in the multiplicity and intensity of the service needs.

Respondents to qualitative interviews and the Study Advisory Group were asked to identify recommendations for preventing commercial sexual exploitation or improving services for or community response to commercial sexual exploitation. Several agencies stated that strategies needed to be developed to help youth integrate into age-appropriate, positive social groups and expose them to positive adult role models. This was seen as a preventive strategy to reduce the vulnerability of children to commercial sexual exploitation. Many mentioned the need to increase services, staff, or treatment slots. Eight agencies mentioned the need for more training, and of these, five mentioned training of law enforcement agencies specifically. Another mentioned the need to train staff in the courts.

Training offers a particular challenge. The focus groups mentioned derogatory comments, actions, and attitudes of both court personnel and police. The participants numbered

only 15, so their comments alone cannot be considered definitive. However, taken together with responses from the interviews and surveys, they suggest work is needed to train and educate staff who encounter CSEC. Placing the CSEC's current behavior in the context of a history of victimization may help to change the image from "bad" kid to child victim. Better and more positive responses toward these children could also, hopefully, increase their help-seeking behavior.

Other recommendations that were supported by the Study Advisory Group included:

- A written protocol or community plan for dealing with CSEC,
- A tool for identifying CSEC among children referred to an agency,
- Increased public education and awareness,
- Consistent response between the courts and law enforcement,
- Placing a victim advocate in the law enforcement system,
- Mandated joint investigations,
- Mandatory sentences for abusers,
- More after-school activities, youth centers, and outreach workers, and
- Improved procedures for information sharing.

In addition, given findings suggesting that NYC has large numbers of youth exploited through street prostitution who become involved with the police and juvenile justice system (compared to the Upstate counties), policy, practice, and staff training changes are more urgently needed in NYC.

The prevalence of child welfare histories in the identified CSEC also suggest the importance of continued attention to primary prevention and early intervention in family difficulties that may put children on the path to exploitation. For children already in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, the data suggest the importance of services designed to ensure a smooth and seamless transition from child welfare and juvenile justice to the next stage of a child's life. These children may have an ongoing need for supports (or perhaps graduated supports) to ensure their safety and ability to cope with their past experiences once they leave foster care or the custody of OCFS. GEMS, which works exclusively with CSEC, commented that many of its clients check in with them on an ongoing basis after returning home, going to

college, and even into their 30s. One of the Upstate foster care agencies reported similar experiences.

The report by the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, *Girls in the Juvenile Justice System*, recommended three actions that are equally applicable to findings from this study:<sup>47</sup>

1. *Develop a continuum of gender-responsive programs and services that address educational, health and mental health, and youth development needs.* Each of these program areas was considered a need by agencies serving CSEC in the current study. CSEC also have the need for dedicated housing (both crisis and long-term) that allows them to develop self-esteem, build trusting relationships with adults, and establish an identity distinct from their involvement in the sex industry.
2. *Using best practice standards, programs and services should be developed jointly among facilities and community-based service providers.* Information is growing about this “hidden” population of children and the issues and problems they face. Both the research and the findings need wide circulation. Furthermore we know, at least from the qualitative surveys, that these children frequently fall through the cracks when forced to go on waiting lists or when passed from one agency to another. For CSEC, it is not just that the child might fall prey to the wrong people; CSEC have existing predators, ready to bring them back under their domination. Not only do programs need to be jointly developed, they also need to be jointly implemented to ensure seamless transitions as youth move from one stage, program, or facility.
3. *Interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary training is essential to enable professionals—judges, attorneys, social workers, direct care staff—to understand the multiple challenges faced.* CSEC represent at least one of the challenges faced by those professionals. Training topics for CSEC suggested by the agencies include how to identify children (particularly males) that are reluctant to disclose exploitation, build trust between the exploited child and adults, and break the connection between the child and the pimp and other prostitutes who constitute the child’s “family.” Respondents interviewed commented that collaboration among agencies is a strength in many of the sampled counties. Agencies can build on and reinforce this strength by developing cross-training programs across service agencies working with CSEC, such as mental health, housing, education, and health.

In short, we need to ensure that the response to CSEC does not fall into a “one-size fits all” category. Service that is responsive to gender, background/experience, and need should be available. We know how difficult it is for CSEC to break free from the life. Many of the children identified in the service sector have made that step. Supporting children at this first step--

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<sup>47</sup> Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, op cit., 6-7.

with positive attitudes and tailored services—can help them break the bonds that hold them in the sex industry.

