

SAFE HARBOR

Safe Harbor increases awareness, understanding, and identification of the commercial sexual exploitation of youth of all genders. In Minnesota, sexually exploited youth are not seen as criminals, but as victims in need of services. In 2014, the Minnesota Safe Harbor Law went into effect.

THE SAFE HARBOR LAW:

- Protects youth from being arrested or prosecuted for prostitution.
- Adds the definition of sexually exploited youth to Minnesota law.
- Funds protocol development, training, and evaluation, and provides services, housing, and outreach for youth ages 24 and under.

MINNESOTA'S RESPONSE

Any door a youth goes through – in any community – should provide a safe environment that leads them to services that can help empower them to leave the exploitation. Sexually exploited youth 24 years old and younger deserve and are eligible for specialized, trauma-informed, state-funded services to heal and recover. Federal funding from the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice supports Minnesota's response to labor trafficking and exploitation.

Creating a Community Response

Minnesota developed a Safe Harbor network of services with eleven Regional Navigators who direct youth to specialized services, housing, and shelter. Regional Navigators are available to increase local capacity and awareness by training communities. Safe Harbor also funds Tribal Nations and services, as well as survivor advisement on program implementation through state and federal funds.

[Safe Harbor Regional Navigators \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/response/navigators.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/response/navigators.html)

Youth Outreach

Victims of sexual exploitation might not see themselves as victims. To assist with outreach, Safe Harbor created materials, with help from sexually exploited youth, to speak directly to youth and their situation. Access or view the materials:

[Safe Harbor Youth Outreach Materials \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/communities/youthoutreach.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/communities/youthoutreach.html)

Safety Through Child Welfare System Responses

Sexually exploited and sex trafficked youth need protection. Child protection must be notified of all youth victim/survivors of sex trafficking, whether or not their families are involved in the trafficking. Child welfare agencies can respond to reports of sexual exploitation by a non-caregiver with a voluntary child welfare response. Services will focus on youth safety while connecting them to trauma-informed, specialized services.

[Safe Harbor/No Wrong Door \(www.mn.gov/dhs/safe-harbor\)](http://www.mn.gov/dhs/safe-harbor)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Commercial Sexual Exploitation occurs when someone exchanges sex for anything of value or a promise of something of value such as money, drugs, food, shelter, rent, or higher status in a gang or group. Another person may or may not be involved in arranging this exchange.

Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is a type of commercial sexual exploitation that involves the prostitution of an individual in which a third person – not the buyer or the victim – facilitates or profits.
MN Statute 609.321-609.322.

Labor Trafficking and Exploitation

Labor trafficking includes debt bondage or forced labor or services. Debt bondage means someone is under another's control or debt and the debt cannot be paid back with reasonable work due to fraud by the trafficker. MN Statute 609.281-609.282. Labor exploitation involves violations of laws protecting how workers are treated, including how much and when someone is paid, child labor, and health and safety in the workplace.