

Estimating the Number of Sex Trafficked Youth Using  
Contacts with the Milwaukee Police Department

A Report by Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

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## Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of the study was to estimate the number of youth trafficked, create a demographic profile of trafficked youth, and obtain other descriptive information about the status of such youth at the time of contact with the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD). It includes an analysis of findings, potential research areas, and a discussion section on policy implications, particularly as they relate to BMCW services and processes and future research areas. For inclusion in the case review, the following case definitions were required: incident occurred in the City of Milwaukee with MPD contact between August 1, 2010 and August 1, 2012, individual was 17 years of age or younger, individual suspected or known to have been recruited, encouraged, or obtained for the purpose of a commercial sex act or sexually explicit performance as defined by Wisconsin statute.

During the two year period, 77 youth were identified as having been sex trafficked. These youth were primarily African American girls (72 years) residing on the north side of Milwaukee. The majority of the youth were 16-17 (68% or 52 youth). Almost a third of the youth were 12-15 years old (32% or 25) at the time of the trafficking incident. Nearly 70% were reported missing to the Milwaukee Police Department at least once during their lifetime. Over a quarter of the youth (29%) had reports of sexual assaults, most of these with caregivers. In almost a third of a sample of 36 incident reports, the youth independently or together with family members, sought out police assistance to report the trafficking. Most of the youth with reported involved families were 16-17 years old. BMCW was mentioned just a few times in the selected police reports. Where BMCW was mentioned, referrals were being made. BMCW or police were responding to a call from BMCW. Several organizations were mentioned as having involvement with youth. These organizations included the Sexual Assault Treatment Center, Homme House, St. Rose Center, Legal Society, and several schools.

Examining the system-wide response to missing youth, particularly African American

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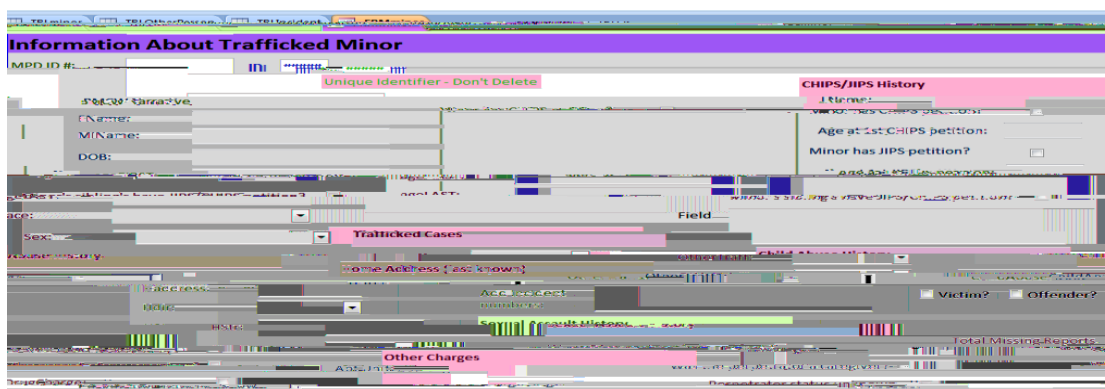
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# Introduction

Overview: In October 2012 the Bob and Linda Davis Family in collaboration with the

**Data Sources**MPD's record management system, Children's Court (JIPS and CC data only), CCAP (circuit court data only), and US Attorney and District Attorney's record keeping system (case disposition data only; data still pending).

**Data Storage and Analysis**Since the data were pulled from a variety of sources, an Access database was created to store the information. Such data included victim, offender, and witness/other persons demographic information (e.g., age, race, sex, if ever reported missing, if ever reported a sexual or physical abuse), incident information (e.g., time, location), and circumstance data (e.g., arrests made and statute/case disposition). Other systems related information was also tracked such as if referrals were made to BMCW. A snapshot of the database appears below and a list of fields is included in Appendix 2. Quantitative data were analyzed with SPSS 23.0 and qualitative data were analyzed using standard content analysis techniques (two coders).



Methodology notes critical to understanding a particular finding are provided throughout the report in paragraph and as footnotes.

**Limitations:** The limitations of this study and of the data collected have implications for the findings presented and the conclusions and recommendations made. Some are common to these types of projects and others are not. Where possible we made efforts to minimize the limitations but in several instances this was not possible. We will remind the reader of the data's limitations throughout the report and as needed. The major limitations of this study include but are not limited to:

- ” **Completeness of Primary Data** The data is limited to information obtained by the police and included in police reports. Such data is limited to law enforcement information needs and not necessarily the information needs of BMCW or the larger community responding to youth sex trafficking. As a result, information such as mental health status or family functioning was not consistently available.
- ” **Municipal (MUNI) violations versus incident records** For some youth, we had in-depth incident reports to review but for youth with only MUNI citations, there was little information about the incident. In a few cases, MUNI records were not publicly listed online. In some cases book reports had important information about loitering for prostitution citations that were issued to the minors.

” Accuracy: It may also be that the information included in the police report or found on CCAP and other data sources may not be accurate or up-to-date. We are unable to independently verify the information obtained from the reports reviewed. Data

youth ranged from 1 day<sup>2</sup> or less (2 youth), one month or less (15), six months or less (6), more than six months (2) and approximately 2 years (1).<sup>3</sup> For the majority of youth observed, the trafficking experience was the first one and few had previous reported histories of trafficking.

Race: These youth were primarily African American (78% or 60 youth), followed by White (18%, 14), Indian (1%, 1) and Latinx (3%, 2).

Gender: The overwhelming majority of youth were female (92% or 71); 8% (6) were male. No transgender youth were identified although the data was limited in capturing this information.

Age: The age of the minor at the time of police contact ranged from 12 to 17 years old. Youth were twelve (3% or 2), one youth was thirteen (1% or 1), six youth were fourteen (8% or 6) and sixteen youth were fifteen (21% or 16), sixteen youth were sixteen years old (21% or 16), and thirty-six youth were seventeen (47% or 36) the time of the incident. The majority of the youth were 16-17 (68% or 52 youth). Almost a third of the youth were 12-15 years old (32% or 25) at the time of the trafficking incident. The age of first contact with the police department for any reason ranged from 9 years old (1% of sample or 1) to 18 (18% or 1) with 17% (13) youth having first contact at the age of 12 and 15 respectively. The range of the most recent age of contact was between 12 years old (1% or 1) and 20 (1% or 1).

Age at time of first reported trafficking incident	Total
Twelve	2
Thirteen	1
Fourteen	6
Fifteen	16
Sixteen	16
Seventeen	36

Residence (zip code): The youth resided in 28 different zip code areas, including several non Milwaukee areas, the vast majority resided in the City of Milwaukee (79% or 61). The top five zip code areas accounted for 52% of the youth (40): 53209 (10% or 8), 53204 (10% or 8), 53206 (9% or 7), 53208 (9% or 7), 53216 (6% or 5), and 53225 (6% or 5). The non-Milwaukee areas included Brown Deer, WI (1% or 1), Chicago, IL (1% or 1), Cudahy, WI (1% or 1), Janesville, WI (1% or 1), Menomonee Falls, WI (3% or 2), Oak Creek, WI (3% or 2), Racine (3%

<sup>2</sup>Note in the case of municipal tickets, the length of trafficking would be recorded as one day. In some incident reports, the length of trafficking was noted as one day although the narrative indicated the time the youth had been trafficked in total was longer.

<sup>3</sup>The length of trafficking for one youth was unknown.

<sup>4</sup>One youth reported being trafficked after she turned 18. She was included in the sample as the events occurred during the time period of interest.



Sturtevant, WI, Waupaca, WI, West Allis, WI, and Wittenberg, WI (each at 1% or 1 respectively). Two zip codes were unknown.

Reported Missing: Twenty

**Sample Size** Of the 77 youth identified, 69 additional persons were identified as having connection to the case; the range included 7 other persons were identified. The persons included traffickers (e.g., pimps; 47% or 51), another trafficked minor (3% or 9), a trafficked adult (12% or 8), witness such as a friend or relative (1% or 1).

**Race** These individuals were primarily African American (88% or 61 individuals), followed by White (10%, 7), and Latino (1%, 1).

**Gender** The majority of traffickers/other persons were male (54% or 37) with 41% (32) females. Of the traffickers, 37 were male and 14 were female.

**Residence (zip code)** Other persons resided in 19 different zip code areas. The top zip codes were: 53210 (14% or 10), 53212 (13% or 9), and 53206 (12% or 8). No other Milwaukee areas included Brookfield, WI (1% or 1), Cudahy (1% or 1), Menomonee Falls, WI (2% or 2), Racine, WI, West Allis, WI, and Wittenberg, WI (each 1% or 1 respectively).

**Reported Missing** Eighteen of the traffickers or other persons had been reported missing in the past (data unavailable for two people). The range of times reported missing was between 1 and 7.

**Other Trafficking Cases** Seventeen individuals (25%) had more than one sex trafficking case including 12 of the traffickers.

**Sexual Assault** Of the other persons, 9 (13) had sexual assault reports which they were named as the victim or offender.

**Child Abuse** Seven of the other persons (10) had child abuse reports. In four (6) of the cases the person was a victim and in three (4) the individual was an offender. Three traffickers had reports where they were named as the offender in a child abuse case and one had a report of being a child abuse victim.

**Drug Charges** Fifteen of the 51 (29%) traffickers had drug charges.

Locations: Locations where trafficking occurred were not limited to the City of Milwaukee (i.e., Manitowoc, Madison, Green Bay, Kenosha, Racine, Bay View, Port Washington) or Wisconsin (i.e., Chicago, IL, Council Bluffs, IA, Miami, FL, Fort Lauderdale, FL and Omaha, NE). While other areas were noted in 8 incidents, the majority of the incidents included only acts that occurred in Milwaukee.

Type of Officer Present during Police Contact: Sensitive Crimes officers were present in 68% (44) of the incidents and district officers were present in 59% (28) of the incidents. Human Trafficking officers were present in 28% (15) of the cases, followed by Prostitution Unit (15% or 8) Fusion (9% or 5), seven (13% of cases) Detectives were also involved in incidents. Patrol officers located sex trafficked minors by initiating field interviews and responding to incidents of suspicious activity that were not initially described as prostitution or trafficking related. This was true in 5 of the reports, patrol stops by district officers resulted in enough information to determine possible trafficking. In 5 additional reports, district officers were conducting specialized prostitution investigations and located minors. Most of the youth came into contact with several types of MPD officers as patrol officers called upon the expertise of Sensitive Crimes or Human Trafficking detectives.

Locations: Locations where trafficking occurred were not limited to the City of Milwaukee (i.e., Manitowoc, Madison, Green Bay, Kenosha, Racine, Bay View, Port Washington) or Wisconsin (i.e., Chicago, IL, Council Bluffs, IA, Miami, FL, Fort Lauderdale, FL and Omaha, NE). While other areas were noted in 8 incidents, the majority of the incidents included only acts that occurred in Milwaukee.

Type of Offense: The offense used in the police contacts varied for the 53 incidents with detailed information. The most often investigated offense was Soliciting a child for prostitution (36% or 19) followed by Trafficking of a child (30% or 16) and pandering (28% or 15). There were two cases (4%) where human trafficking offenses were used. Multiple offenses were investigated at the same time for some incidents.

Type of Offense <sup>6</sup>	#	%
948.08 Soliciting a child for prostitution	19	36
948.051 Trafficking of a child	16	30
944.33 Pandering	15	28
944.30 Prostitution	5	9
948.05 Sexual exploitation of a child	4	8
948.07 Child enticement	4	8
944.32 Soliciting prostitutes	3	6
944.34 Keeping a place of prostitution	2	4



” Family involvement: In almost a third of a sample of 66 incident reports, the youth independently or together with family members, sought out police assistance to report the trafficking. Most of th

making police reports and attending charging conferences called for by prosecutors almost half of the detailed incident reports testified clear interest in getting away from the trafficker and wanting them to be held accountable. Detailed incident reports were not







act of prostitution. Among the circumstances which may be considered in determining whether such purpose is manifested: that such person is a known prostitute or panderer, repeatedly beckons to stop or attempts to stop, or engages male or female passersby conversation, or repeatedly stops or attempts to stop motor vehicle operators by hailing, waving of arms or any other bodily gesture. The violator's conduct must be such as to

## Appendix 2: Data Collection Tool (Word Version)

For each trafficked minor, suspected trafficker, and person related to the case including witnesses, trafficked adults, and others

Person Information

Unique Identifier

MPD ID number (if any)

Last Name

First Name

Middle initial

Date of Birth

Race

Sex (male, female, transgender)

Reported home address

Age at first MPD contact

Age at last MPD contact

BMCW Narrative (for any mention of BMCW)

Any additional trafficking related report  
(incident numbers):

If they were named as victim **offender**: [y/n]

Was a SA (sexual abuse/assault) report made