

# COUNTY OF EL DORADO

## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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August 7, 2014

Child Advocates of El Dorado County  
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Nationally, the plight of commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) has gained the attention of child serving agencies and policy makers. Importantly, this has shed light on the suffering these children experience and the challenges we face in California to serve this unique population. The majority of child sexual exploitation victims have suffered extensive abuse and trauma, and many have been in some contact with the child welfare system.

California's child welfare system is ill-equipped to respond to the needs to protect and serve child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. In many respects these victims are like other children that counties serve in its child welfare system, but also have unique needs that require coordination and support from other systems – including El Dorado County Mental Health, Public Health, Probation, law enforcement, community providers, and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) - known locally as Child Advocates of El Dorado County.

Since 2010, El Dorado County has had twenty-six (26) foster and probation youth who have been identified as victims of sexual exploitation or domestic minor sex trafficking. The last twenty-three (23) cases occurred within this past year, and these children required specialized social workers, services, and placements.


In 2013, El Dorado County's Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) – Child Welfare Services (CWS) formed our Foster Youth and Human Trafficking (FYHT) Task Force, which is comprised of local representatives from our Sheriff's Department, City Law Enforcement Agencies, County Probation, District Attorney's Office, Mental Health, Public Health, County Counsel, County Department of Education, Child Advocates of El Dorado County and chaired by HHS Senior Management with three social workers who have been trained in this subject matter.

Prior to and following the location of the CSEC foster youth who is on the run, the FYHT Task Force coordinates a case management plan, which is designed to address unknown related traumatic experiences that will need to be addressed at the time the youth has been located, to include determining the appropriate level of placement. Both pre and post event case management programs

require ongoing specialized training, recruitment of services and placement providers - with no additional funding available to offset the fiscal implications for child welfare and stakeholder agencies. Children in foster care may be particularly vulnerable to victimization due to their history of trauma and for this reason, it is important that all social work staff and court appointed staff receive training on identification of CSEC and appropriate case management services must be implemented.

Due to the extensive trauma and violence experienced by CSEC victims, case management services must be tailored to meet their individual needs. This is accomplished, in part, by working collaboratively with other systems - including Child Advocates of El Dorado County - to leverage resources. To this end, HHSA – Child Welfare Services and the Foster Youth & Human Trafficking FYHT Task Force supports Child Advocates of El Dorado County in their application to Run for Courage for a beneficiary grant to fund services to support the victims of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic minor sex trafficking.

Sincerely,



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