

New SOG Bulletin! Human Trafficking of Minors and Young Adults: What Local Governments Need to Know

My colleague, Margaret Henderson, and I are excited to announce a new SOG resource – *Human Trafficking of Minors and Young Adults: What Local Governments Need to Know*. Youth are particularly vulnerable to traffickers. County and municipal staff in many departments have either spontaneous or deliberate interactions with youth that provide opportunities to lessen those vulnerabilities, identify indicators of trafficking, and intervene when appropriate. Download the bulletin on the School of Government's website, [here](#).

This 36-page bulletin is organized into three parts.

Part One describes the dynamics of sex and labor trafficking, including red flags to look for. There is a particular focus on minors and young adults (18-24 years old). For example, minors are victims of sex trafficking by virtue of their age, without any requirement that there be force, fraud, or coercion by the trafficker. A discussion of particularly vulnerable youth – those in foster care and those who are LGBTQ – is also included. Guidance is provided for local government staff (e.g., public health providers, school personnel, court officials, parks and recreation employees, public housing staff, librarians, etc) about how they can use their professional roles to better address human trafficking by

- creating a process for educating both staff and citizens about human trafficking and
- strengthening work processes and/or policy to better address the problem.

Part Two explains North Carolina laws that relate to minors and young adults in terms of human trafficking. There are three applicable universal mandated reporting laws:

- When any person or institution has cause to suspect a juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, a report to the county child welfare agency (typically a DSS) is required. G.S. 7B-301. Juveniles who are victims of human trafficking (both sex and labor trafficking) are abused and neglected juveniles, regardless of the relationship between the juvenile and the person who created the juvenile's circumstances. G.S. 7B-101(1), (15).
- When any person has reasonable cause to believe a disabled adult is in need of protective services, a report to the county DSS is required. G.S. 108A-102.
- When any adult knows or should have reasonably known a juvenile is or has been a victim of a violent crime, sexual offense, or misdemeanor child abuse, a report to the appropriate local law enforcement agency is required. G.S. 14-318.6 (effective December 1, 2019; see S.L. 2019-245).

DSS and law enforcement responses and collaboration to address victims of human trafficking are discussed. Immunity for and expungement of criminal convictions and juvenile delinquency

adjudications for victims of human trafficking are also addressed.

Part Three provides resources for low- and no-cost education and training concerning human trafficking. Additional resources are provided throughout the bulletin.

This bulletin was written with two service providers:

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- Christy Croft, the Prevention Education Program Manager at the N.C. Coalition Against Sexual Assault.