



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

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## Commission Executive Director

Julie Whitman

October 31, 2019

Dear Members of the Indiana General Assembly,

Please find attached the Commission's final report on the study assigned by HEA 1075, "Children's Commission report and DCS human trafficking coordinator." The report was researched and written by the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) subcommittee and approved by the full Commission at its meeting on October 23, 2019, by a vote of 14 to zero.

Please feel free to reach out to me if there are any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie L. Whitman, MSW

Executive Director

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## **I. DIRECTIVE**

1. HEA 1075 tasked the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana (Commission) to: "study the topic of employment of a human trafficking coordinator by the department of child services. In conducting the study, the commission shall evaluate the following:
  - a. The potential duties and responsibilities of the human trafficking coordinator.
  - b. How the human trafficking coordinator could best coordinate with the efforts of authorities and entities in Indiana, including the commission, that work to address human trafficking."

The Commission assigned this task to the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force.

## **II. SUMMARY OF WORK TO DATE**

The CSEC subcommittee appointed a smaller sub-committee to address this question. The committee met on July 19, September 6, and September 27, 2019.

The committee has reviewed and approved this report.

## **III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Findings**

#### **1. Employment of a Human Trafficking Coordinator**

The language of the task is worded such that the employment of the coordinator seems to be presumed, with questions then posed about the job description and coordination. The Committee has consulted with Director Stigdon about this language. Director Stigdon has informed the CSEC committee that it is the intention of DCS to hire a full-time position to oversee Human Trafficking along with some other challenging

populations. Some of these populations overlap each other. For the purpose of this report, this position will be referred to as “Coordinator.”

## **2. Potential Duties and Responsibilities**

The committee reviewed job descriptions of coordinators in several other states and recommends the following possible duties for this position:

### **a. System Implementation**

The coordinator would develop, establish and implement systems and practices for handling human trafficking that comes to the attention of DCS. This would include developing guidelines, policies and systems based on local, state/legislative, and federal performance measures and expectations, and developing service standards for HT services.

### **b. Data collection**

The coordinator would collect data on human trafficking in the state on an ongoing basis, including types of activities reported, types of CHINS petitions filed, cases handled through the dual status system, services offered, and re-entry into the system after services. The coordinator would further collaborate with the Courts and possibly other Departments (e.g. Education and Health) to develop data sharing agreements for the purpose of developing, implementing and improving Indiana's practices related to human trafficking of children and youth.

### **c. Training**

The coordinator would develop and coordinate

training for all DCS managers and employees in implementing the guidelines, policies, and systems referenced in point (a), and serve as a content expert for ongoing system questions. This would include coordinating training with law enforcement to conduct joint trainings, collaborate with probation and the dual status system for joint trainings, and disseminate information regarding services, answers to commonly asked questions, etc.

**d. Research**

The coordinator would research practice models across the nation to develop best practices for identification, investigation, collaboration and service provision to human trafficking victims.

**e. Legal Issues**

The coordinator would work with DCS legislative director to address DCS legislative issues, such as updating the language in the CHINS statute regarding human trafficking. The coordinator would also assist DCS legislative director in analyzing other statutes that would be beneficial to the state and human trafficking victims.

**f. Identify high risk population within the DCS system**

Parts of the juvenile population are not currently being trafficked, but are at high risk for being trafficked. Such children may be exploiting themselves, participating in/selling child pornography, and/or engaging in relationships with multiple men via social media/dating websites. The coordinator would develop standards for identifying these youth and determine services to provide these youth and their families to avoid these youth becoming trafficking victims.

**g. Coordinating regional team organization**

The DCS plan is to develop a regional plan for addressing human trafficking victims and providing services. The coordinator would develop that regional plan, oversee its implementation, ensure consistency among regions, develop a plan for crisis response resources on a regional basis, and develop a plan for communication between regional leaders and the coordinator. The coordinator would further provide consultation and program monitoring for line staff, supervisors, and managers in complex and/or sensitive cases.

**h. Interdisciplinary Teams**

Facilitate and conduct planning meetings with interdisciplinary teams to improve strategies to implement consistent practice across the State.

**i. Liaison to Dual Status**

Act as a liaison and oversee DCS' relationship with the Dual Status Implementation Committee, which is working to assist counties as they implement IC 31-41. Trafficked children frequently come to the court's attention via the delinquency system; therefore, the collaboration required by the dual status statute is a key avenue for ensuring these children are served appropriately by Indiana's courts and systems—including both DCS and probation.

**j. Human Trafficking Mentor/Coaching Network for Survivors**

The Coordinator could also be responsible for developing an HT mentor/coaching network to provide support for those recovering from human trafficking and complex trauma. This would likely be a network of

survivors providing mentorship/coaching to survivors.

### **3. Coordination**

The Committee feels strongly that there should not be any additional committees appointed within the Commission regarding this topic. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Coordinator serve as the DCS liaison to the CSEC subcommittee to the Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force within the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana. Further, should the Coordinator desire to coordinate with other departments, (e.g. Education or Mental Health), individual meetings can be scheduled. The committee also recommends that the Coordinator attend the Indiana Protection for Abused and Trafficked Humans (IPATH) meetings.

### **B. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. DCS should hire a full-time position that will include significant duties regarding human trafficking. The person hired should bring significant knowledge and skills in the area of human trafficking.
2. The job description for the coordinator position include those items listed above.
3. The coordinator would be the DCS liaison with the CSEC subcommittee to the Juvenile Justice and Cross-System Youth Task Force within the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana. The coordinator should also serve on IPATH.
4. The coordinator should present a report to the Commission as to the actions taken and progress made addressing trafficking of children and youth in Indiana on an annual basis.