



**“We must create innovative solutions to reverse the impact on our nation’s youth who have been victimized by abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation while simultaneously working to eradicate behavior of the perpetrators.”**

**John A. Tuell, Executive Director**

**Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice**

**DUAL STATUS YOUTH** - defined as juveniles known to both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems that occupy various statuses of involvement in the dependency and delinquency systems.

**COMMERCIALLY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN (CSEC)** – a subset of dual status youth referring to minor children and youth who are victims of a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value (including monetary and non-monetary benefits). National estimates reflect there are as many 750,000 vulnerable and often marginalized children and youth who are victims or at-risk of victimization from these crimes.

**EVIDENCE** - Research has consistently confirmed that dual status and CSEC youth present a range of important challenges that require collaboration among youth serving systems, community stakeholders and key policy makers to create innovative methods and evidence-based practices to ensure each of these youth can realize a bright future. Behavioral challenges encountered by these youth include

- Severe trauma (psychological symptoms related to their victimization)
- Mental health (including suicide, depression, stunted cognitive development)
- Substance abuse (illicit drugs and alcohol, including methamphetamine)
- Educational deficiencies (truancy and high rates of developmental learning disabilities)
- Early and persistent pattern of delinquency
- Homelessness and placement instability

**APPROACH** - The RFK National Resource Center provides expert guidance through its seminal framework and proven history of technical assistance support for state and local jurisdictions in their endeavor to improve the outcomes for dual status and CSEC youth and families. The approach, currently in practice in Las Vegas (Clark County, Nevada), Delaware, and Illinois creates systematic practices and policies to ensure consistent and long-term solutions through

- engagement of agency/organizational/community leadership to capitalize on local expertise and context for change
- expert legal and policy analysis within the jurisdiction
- systematic early screening and identification
- creation of effective programmatic and fiscal system practices
- adoption of evidence-based, efficient, and integrated court, probation, child welfare, education and behavioral health management practice and system performance
- application of the neuroscience of adolescent development to address risks and treatment needs
- enhanced prevention and early intervention inter-agency approaches for youth and families
- adoption of routine performance measurement (system/youth outcomes) toward sustainable accountability

**ACHIEVEMENTS** - Through this detailed and effective approach to system change, we achieve

- Increased rates of diversion from involvement in the juvenile justice system
- Increased rates of desistance / reduced recidivism
- Elimination or reduction in detention use and lengths of stay
- Improved functioning in behavioral health, family, and education domains
- Stability of placement in a home with a positive functioning family or caregiver



## Positively Changing the Lives of Sexually Exploited Children and Youth

The RFK National Resource Center provides expert guidance through its seminal Dual Status Youth (DSY) framework and proven history of technical assistance support for state and local jurisdictions that improves the outcomes for sexually exploited and human-trafficked youth. Our partnership in state and local communities blocks the pathway to negative outcomes while creating alternative routes to success for these vulnerable and often marginalized youth victims.



### Youth Outcomes and Opportunities

- Diversion from juvenile justice system
- Stable placement with family or caregiver
- Access to transitional living
- Consistent attendance or positive reintegration into education setting
- Improved behavioral health functioning (mental health and substance abuse)
- Access to medical and dental care and treatment
- Connection to life skills and employment training
- Connected to a positive social support network



### Community and Youth System Responses

- Comprehensive victim centered service delivery – safety, security, and healing
- Trauma focused and research informed treatment
- Consistent early screening for risk of exploitation and trafficking
- Support for self-sufficiency and independence from predatory behavior
- Advocacy for alternative response to juvenile justice system involvement
- Cross-system coordination in case planning and case management
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate service delivery



### Preventing the Tragic Life Course - Human & Fiscal

- Child sexual abuse costs the U.S. an average of \$9.3 billion per year in victimization related costs (e.g., medical and behavioral health care, child welfare intervention, violence and crime, productivity loss)
- By age 18 years, estimated prevalence rates for commercial exploitation of girls is 26.6% (5.1% for boys)
- Approximately 60% - 70% of trafficked children in the United States come from child social services or the foster care system
- An estimated 1 in 7 runaways are likely victims of sex trafficking
- Children and youth with a previous or current involvement in the child welfare system are 72% more likely to be arrested for a delinquent act
- DSY are 4.8 times more likely to be arrested as juveniles and 11 times more likely to be arrested for a violent crime
- DSY are first detained at an earlier age, are detained more frequently, and spend 4 times more days in detention compared to youth with no multi-system involvement

To learn more, please visit:  
[www.rfknrcjj.org/csec](http://www.rfknrcjj.org/csec).