



## Minnesota Department of Health Safe Harbor Minnesota

For the first time, Minnesota youth who engage in prostitution are viewed as victims and survivors, not criminals. They will be treated with dignity and respect, and directed to supportive services, and shelter and housing that meet their needs and recognize their right to make their own choices.

Sexual exploitation of youth in Minnesota is commonly overlooked, misidentified as something else and undocumented.

### **On this page:**

- [What is Sexual Exploitation?](#)
- [Safe Harbor Legislative Timeline](#)
- [No Wrong Door](#)

### **What is Sexual Exploitation?**

A sexually exploited youth is someone under the age of 18 who may be subject to sexual exploitation because they engaged, agreed to engage, or were forced into sexual conduct in return for a fee, food, clothing or a place to stay.

A youth also can be sexually exploited if he or she has engaged in exotic dancing, been filmed doing sexual acts, traded sex for drugs, or has been found guilty of engaging in prostitution or prostitution-related crimes.

Not only does sexual exploitation lead to immediate and long-term physical, mental, and emotional harm, but until recently Minnesota could charge and treat sexually exploited youth as criminals – juvenile delinquents engaging in acts of prostitution.

[Top of page](#)

### **Safe Harbor Legislative Timeline**

The Safe Harbor Law, passed in 2011, includes five key changes – three were effective immediately in 2011 while two additional changes will be effective in 2014. In 2011, Minnesota:

- Added the definition of sexually exploited youth in Minnesota's child protection codes;
- Increased the penalties against commercial sex abusers or purchasers; and
- Directed the Commissioner of Public Safety to work with stakeholders to create a victim-centered, statewide response for sexually exploited youth.

Effective August 1, 2014:

- Excluding sexually exploited youth under 18 from the definition of delinquent child. This will resolve the conflict that defines in law a sexually exploited youth as both a victim and delinquent. If youth engage in conduct that relates to being hired, offering to be hired or agreeing to be hired by another individual to engage in sexual conduct, they will no longer be charged with a crime for this act.
- Implementing state service model called No Wrong Door – making available resources and services for sexually exploited youth including regional navigators, housing and shelter, comprehensive services, and training and protocol development.

[Top of page](#)

## No Wrong Door

No Wrong Door is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and multi-state agency approach. It will ensure communities across Minnesota have the knowledge, skills and resources to effectively identify sexually exploited and at-risk youth. These youth will be provided victim-centered trauma-informed services and safe housing. To learn more about the network being implemented in Minnesota to support victims, see [Regional Navigators](#), [Housing](#), and [Protocol Development and Training](#).

[Top of page](#)

**If you or someone you know is being sexual exploited or trafficked, please contact your [Regional Navigator](#) or contact the Day One Hotline to learn more about services available in your community at 1-866-223-1111.**

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For questions about this page, please contact the Injury and Violence Prevention program at: [health.injuryprevention@state.mn.us](mailto:health.injuryprevention@state.mn.us)

See also [Health Promotion and Chronic Disease](#)

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