Safe Harbour: NY Fast Facts:
CSEC and Minor Trafficking

What is human trafficking?
Human trafficking is the practice of exploiting a person for the purposes of sexual or labor servitude using force, fraud, or coercion.
- Under New York State law, a person who engages in prostitution or labor through force, trickery, or conspiracy is a victim of human trafficking.¹
- Under federal law, any person under 18 years old who exchanges a sex act for anything of value is automatically a victim of sex trafficking.² Child sex trafficking is one form of commercial sexual exploitation of children (see below).
- Youth are trafficked by their family members, boyfriends and girlfriends, peers, gangs, community members, and by customers who purchase sex acts or performances from them.

What is force, fraud, or coercion?
- Force includes any instance of violence used to bring a person into a trafficking situation or to keep them feeling trapped.
- Fraud includes lies or deception (for example, bait-and-switch employment offers or saying, ‘I really love you and I need you to do this so we can stay together.’) and false promises (for example, saying, ‘If you do this for me this one time we can stay together forever.’)
- Coercion includes threats made against the victim or their loved ones (for example, saying, ‘You can leave but I’ll go get your sister’; ‘If you don’t do what I say I’ll tell everyone what you’ve done’; ‘If you tell someone I’ll have you arrested/deported.’)

What is the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)?
CSEC is a form of child sexual abuse. Commercial sexual exploitation of children, or CSEC, is any instance where a person under the age of 18 has exchanged a sexual act or performance in exchange for something of value.
- Actions which constitute CSEC under the New York Safe Harbour law include but are not limited to: stripping, exotic dancing or performance, sexually explicit photography or video, and minor sex trafficking.³

Who are the victims of child trafficking?
Anyone can be trafficked. Most identified victims of trafficking in New York State are American-born females; however, immigrant and undocumented youth as well as male and transgender youth have also been identified as victims of sex and/or labor trafficking.

Youth who are especially vulnerable to trafficking include:⁴
- children who have a history of sexual abuse, physical abuse, maltreatment, and neglect;
- children with a history of substance abuse;
- children with disabilities;
- LGBTQ youth;
- refugees, immigrants, and non-English speaking youth;
- children in foster care or who have interacted with the justice system; and
- homeless youth and youth who left home.

¹ New York Penal Law §135.35.
² TVPA, 2000.
³ N.Y.S.S. Title 8-A § 447A.
How can I recognize child trafficking or CSEC?
The following ‘red flags’ are warning signs that a youth might be trafficked or sexually exploited: 5,6,7

- Leaves home frequently and/or for significant periods of time
- Shows signs of mental, physical, or sexual abuse
- Has a significantly older partner or spends a lot of time with a controlling person or older adult
- Indications or reports of domestic violence/intimate partner violence
- Lies about age or carries a fake form of identification
- Housing is provided by employer
- Significantly reduces contact with family, friends, or other support networks
- Displays a pattern of staying in the homes of friends or a non-legally responsible adult
- Reluctant to discuss how they make money, where they live, how or when they came to the U.S.
- Lacks control over schedule and/or money
- Has large amounts of money or costly items that s/he cannot reasonably afford
- Involvement in systems such as social services, PINS, courts, etc.
- Works more than he or she is in school or does not often attend school
- Experiences suicidal ideations and/or depression

What can I do if I recognize a victim of child trafficking or CSEC?

- If you believe the person is in immediate danger call 9-1-1.
- To report a tip, or for guidance on responding to a potential child trafficking survivor, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888 or text BEFREE (233733).
- If you believe the child is potentially being abused, neglected or maltreated by a caregiver, call the NY Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) at 1-800-342-3720.
- If you have reason to believe that a youth is being abused or neglected while placed in residential care, call the New York State Justice Center at 1-855-373-2122.

To learn how New York State is responding to CSEC and child trafficking visit:
www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/humantraffic/

To learn more, contact: humantrafficking@ocfs.ny.gov

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7 Safe Horizon Anti-Trafficking Program.