

# DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING IN THE U.S.

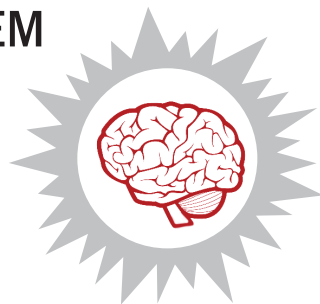
In 2009, under a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, **Shared Hope International** conducted undercover investigations that revealed many of America's children are being used in the commercial sex industry. Children who are exploited through **prostitution, pornography and sexual entertainment** are victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. Due to misidentification, ignorance, or efforts to keep victims safe from traffickers, these minors are often placed in detention facilities. **Growing demand** for sex with young, innocent children is fueled by a glorification of pimping and *normalization of sexual exploitation*.

## AT A GLANCE: THE PROBLEM

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE U.S. IS A **\$9.8 BILLION INDUSTRY**

**100,000+**

At least 100,000 U.S. children are exploited in prostitution every year in America.



Pornography rewires the male brain to become dependent on chemicals. This dependency is linked to negative perceptions, attitudes, and aggression toward women.

**13 YEARS OLD**

is the average age a child is first exploited through prostitution.

(For sources cited please visit <http://sharedhope.org/trafficking/faqs/>)

## WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF DMST?

Kids are especially susceptible to the deception and manipulation of traffickers. Traffickers recruit at locations that commonly attract youth; like schools, malls, parks, even protective shelters and group homes.

**Boys and girls can be victims.**

**1.68 MILLION**

Over 1.68 million American children run away each year.

In one New York study, **85%** of DMST victims experienced contact with the child welfare system.

## VICTIM VULNERABILITY: SEVERAL FACTORS

The primary factor of vulnerability: *the child's age*.



**1 out of 5 girls, and 1 out of 10 boys will be sexually victimized by the time they reach adulthood.**

## WARNING SIGNS: TRAITS OF TRAFFICKING

- Significantly older boyfriend
- Signs of trauma (physical or other)
- Travel with older male (not guardian)
- Chronic runaway
- Multiple delinquent charges
- Homelessness
- Special marked tattoos
- Substance abuse



Young girls are commonly trafficked in strip clubs, hotel rooms, and on online sites like *BackPage.com*.

**70%**

**70% of DMST victims** have experienced physical or sexual abuse in their homes.

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INTERNATIONAL  
[www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org)

**THE DEFENDERS** USA  
The Men of Shared Hope  
[www.theDefendersUSA.org](http://www.theDefendersUSA.org)

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## DEMAND: WHO ARE THE BUYERS?

America's fascination with pornography and prostitution is linked to demand. Those who purchase sex or pornography are fueling the commercial sex industry and contributing to the exploitation of American's children. Buyers come from all ages, occupations, and ethnicities.

**21**   
YEARS OLD

Buyers reported that they were an average of **21 years old** when they first bought sex.

**48%**

M T W Th F S Su

48% men use pornography once a week or more often.

83% of buyers said jail time and 79% said a letter sent to their family would be a deterrent to purchasing sex with a minor.



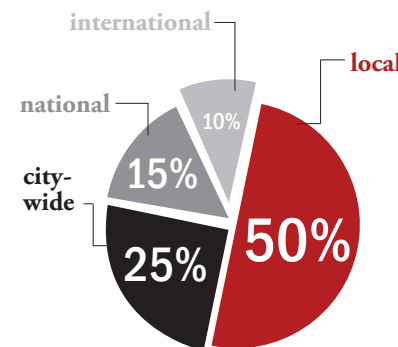
## WHO ARE THE TRAFFICKERS?

A **trafficker** is anyone who profits by receiving cash or other benefits in exchange for sex with a minor. **These criminals are often called pimps.** Across the United States, family members, friends, and “boyfriends” can be pimps and traffickers.

**20-800**  In one Chicago-based study, traffickers sold anywhere from **20-800** individual women in their lifetime.

## BREAKDOWN OF A PIMP

Traffickers operate at the following levels:



**\$400**

Traffickers commonly sell underage girls for \$400 per hour or more.

**90%** Up to 90% of victims are under the control of a pimp.

## THE DEFINITION OF DMST

**Domestic minor sex trafficking** (DMST) is the commercial sexual exploitation of American children within U.S. borders. It is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” where the person is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 years.

## ABOUT SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL

**Shared Hope International** is a leader in the worldwide effort to prevent DMST, restore women and children, and bring justice. Since 1998, Shared Hope has worked around the world in partnership with local groups to prevent trafficking and rescue and restore the victims of sexual slavery.