



Joette Katz
Commissioner

DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

*Making a Difference for Children, Families and
Communities*



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

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Federal Grant To Fund Improved Response To Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in Connecticut

Focus On Needs Assessment, Evaluation, And Improved Collaboration Among Agencies

HARTFORD – The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is receiving a \$1 million federal grant to improve Connecticut's response to child victims of domestic sex trafficking.

The five-year grant from the federal Administration for Children and Families will support DCF's efforts to coordinate the response by local and state agencies, including law enforcement and the medical community, so that child victims of sex trafficking receive effective and comprehensive treatment.

The focus of the grant-funded project will be on identifying what additional response services are needed, enhancing inter-agency collaboration, and improving data collection and reporting so that the Connecticut response can be rigorously evaluated.

Governor Dannel P. Malloy said the award will enable Connecticut to improve its response to child trafficking by strengthening data collection and analysis as well as inter-agency collaboration that is essential to adequately helping the victims.

"This will give us the ability to both evaluate how well we are doing and strengthen the strategic partnerships that are critical for us to improve our response," Governor Malloy said. "We need to ensure that what we are doing is effective, that we have the right services, and that we know what improvements we still need to make to respond to this terrible form of exploitation."

DCF Commissioner Joette Katz said Connecticut has been cited as a leader among states in responding to domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) and that the grant will enable Connecticut to take the next step in managing the effort.

"Connecticut has made considerable progress in combating child sex trafficking by raising awareness, enhancing partnerships with law enforcement, the medical community and the courts, and providing therapeutic interventions to victims," Commissioner Katz said. "This grant will support a next step of evaluating the systemic response and improving how we work together across organizational lines. In addition, this opportunity will allow for other jurisdictions in the country to learn about our model and inform response systems in other states."

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Beginning in 2008, there have been more than 240 reports of suspected child sex trafficking to the DCF Careline. DCF has worked with police departments across the state to ensure that children exposed to trafficking are treated as victims who need help and not as criminals who potentially could be prosecuted.

The project will focus on conducting an in-depth analysis of DCF's human trafficking response system and seek to accomplish four goals:

- 1) Conduct a needs assessment to determine gaps in service and services in need of replication and/or enhancement within the current response system;
- 2) Develop inter- and intra-agency collaborations and infrastructures needed to enhance, expand and sustain delivery of service to victims in DCF care, victims who have aged or opted out of care, or victims living with a parent or guardian at the time of referral;
- 3) Develop a data collection and reporting system to identify data trends to support improved identification and understanding of risk factors and early indicators to inform treatment and support services; and
- 4) Create new forums for intra-agency collaboration to combat DMST.

Background On DMST In CT

- In CT since 2008, there have been more than 260 unique referrals of high risk or confirmed cases of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST).
- Girls overwhelmingly represent the largest number of referrals at over ninety percent.
- To date, over 1,300 police officers have been trained on DMST. As of October 2014, legislation calls for the Department to train law enforcement agencies.
- In January 2014, the Department coordinated a high-level conference of professionals co-sponsored by the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, Office of the Chief States Attorney, Department of Consumer Protection and the Mohegan Tribe. This weblink (<http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=4071&Q=540384&PM=1>) includes the recorded event and materials from the day's presentations and panels focused on educating officials, judicial branch, state departments, federal, state and local law enforcement on the issues of DMST and the challenges in responding to these cases.
- To raise awareness, DCF has trained over 2,400 staff, including public and private providers, direct care workers, probation, and others.
- During the 2014 legislative session, Public Act 14 -186 (S.B. 5040) was passed. This act allows victims to be classified as "uncared for" thereby enabling the Department to provide immediate services. It also calls for the Department to train law enforcement and requires the creation of Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) to assist victims.
- Connecticut remains a model for other child welfare agencies across the country. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) identifies the Department as an example in five out of ten of the Emerging Practices within Child Welfare Responses. The five examples include: 1) Institute Mandatory Screening, 2) Train Case Workers, 3) Centralize Listing of Victim Services, 4) Coordination with Local Children's Hospitals and Child Advocacy Centers and 5) Coordination on Data Collection.