

Committee on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States

Statement of Task

The U.S. Department of Justice has requested that the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council convene a committee of experts to conduct a study on the commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children who are citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States. The study will be conducted by a committee of independent experts who will review relevant research and practice-based literatures that will inform future policy and practices within law enforcement, human services, and health care agencies.

As part of its work, the committee will examine the following topics:

1. What is known about the scope and severity of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents of the U.S. (under age 18);
2. Data on causes and consequences for victims and offenders, including the gateways to commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking for both populations, as well as the impact of these experiences on future criminal behavior and health outcomes;
3. Experiences with commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking among populations served by child welfare and juvenile justice systems;
4. Evidence associated with selected efforts in human services, health care, education, and law enforcement settings to prevent commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors and to intervene with victims and offenders;
5. Identify lessons learned through international, national, state, and local advocacy efforts that contribute to successful intervention and prevention strategies;
6. Assess the adequacy of current state and federal laws for addressing the commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors and recommend new legislative approaches, if necessary, to address this issue; and

Based on its examination of the preceding topics, the committee will make recommendations in the following areas:

1. Strategies to respond to commercial sexual exploitation of U.S. minors, including policies and practices for human services, health care agencies, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, and the judiciary;
2. New legislative approaches, if necessary;
3. A research agenda to guide future studies in this field.