

# Ending Child Sexual Exploitation in Texas: Progress and Hope

The Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT), created by the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature, is a division within the Governor’s Public Safety Office. CSTT’s mission is to build sustainable capacity, enhance expertise, promote policies, and create new and leverage existing collaborations to:

- **Protect** children and youth from sexual exploitation by building their awareness of and resilience to child exploitation and by curbing demand for child sex trafficking.
- **Recognize** sexual exploitation by raising public awareness and by implementing screening tools to identify potential victims.
- **Recover** victims with protective and empowering collaborative responses.
- Support the **healing** of survivors through a variety of trauma-informed and responsive services and supports.
- **Bring justice** for survivors by holding exploiters (traffickers, buyers, and those who profit from exploitation) accountable.



**PROTECT:** Child sex trafficking is not limited to any race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or zip code. Traffickers prey upon vulnerability, and children and youth are inherently vulnerable. Sadly, these exploiters can often be the very people our children trust – friends, romantic partners, family members, teachers, and others. CSTT is implementing the following key prevention strategies: providing age appropriate, research-based prevention education to high-risk youth in the child protection and juvenile justice systems; partnering with the Texas Education Association and Texas Association of School Boards to develop and implement new policies that require school-based prevention education for educators and children; enhancing existing child abuse and sexual violence training and prevention programs to include age-appropriate education on sexual exploitation; funding programs that provide healthy connections and other protective factors for vulnerable youth, like Court Appointed Special Advocates and Boys and Girls’ Clubs; and reducing demand for exploitation by increasing efforts to deter and prosecute buyers, as well as by educating youth and young men about the harms of commercial sex so that they do not become consumers.



**CEASE Texas (Cities Empowered Against Sexual Exploitation) is engaging male volunteers in Austin, DFW, Houston, Galveston, Midland, and San Antonio to raise awareness in their communities about exploitation, educate young men about the harms of commercial sex, and to deter and interdict buyers online. For more information, visit [ceasetexas.org](http://ceasetexas.org)**

**CSTT’s website for more resources: [www.gov.texas.gov/cstt](http://www.gov.texas.gov/cstt)**

**RECOGNIZE:** Victims of sexual exploitation generally do not outcry, and exploitation often continues for a significant time before victims are identified by others. To identify victims sooner, CSTT is raising public awareness through the Can You See Me? campaign, a partnership with A21, Outdoor Advertising Association of Texas, the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, local anti-trafficking coalitions and taskforces, and First Lady Cecilia Abbott. Billboards in 70 Texas markets, radio PSAs, short educational videos, and social media posts educate the public about the subtle signs of trafficking and urge reporting to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, at 1-888-3737-888.

#CanYouSeeMe #TexasSeesYou



The Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool (CSE-IT) is being used by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, and hundreds of county probation offices and child-serving agencies to identify likely victims. Once youth are screened as likely victims with a score of “Clear Concern,” they are assessed for victimization and provided services to start the healing process. As of 12/31/2019, 19,471 Texas youth have been screened. Most of these are high risk youth. 2,556 (13.13%) of youth screened scored “Clear Concern,” which means they had high levels of research-based indicators of exploitation and have likely been exploited.

**RECOVER:** CSEY (Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth) advocates are trained to respond to calls from first responders and others to provide crisis intervention, ongoing case management, and a healthy, supportive long-term relationship for survivors up to age 22. They work under a set of minimum standards and best practices developed by CSTT and Praesidium. As of December 2019, CSEY advocates have served over 1,369 youth, two-thirds of which had been recovered from crisis by law enforcement or other first responders.

## CSEY Advocacy Agencies Providing Crisis Response, Long-Term Supportive Relationships & Case Management

### NORTH

1. **For the Silent** (Smith & Gregg)
2. **Traffick911** (Collin, Dallas, Denton & Tarrant)
3. **Unbound Fort Worth** (Tarrant)

### SOUTH

1. **BCFS Common Thread** (RGV)
2. **Refugee Services of Texas** (Cameron & nearby counties)

### EAST

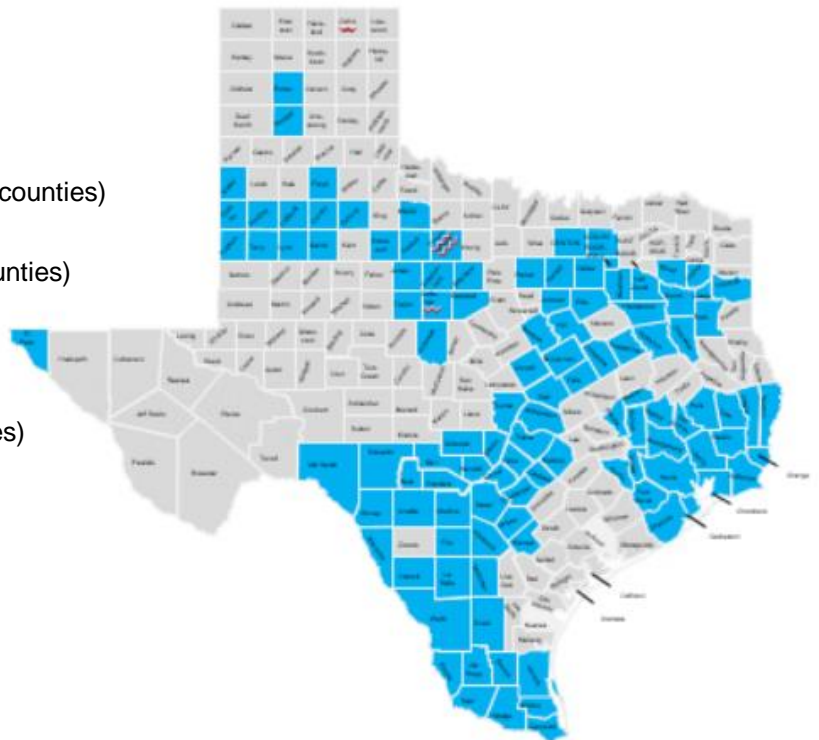
1. **BCFS Common Thread** (Harris & contiguous counties)
2. **Harvest House** (Jefferson)
3. **Refugee Services of Texas** (Harris)
4. **The Landing** (Harris & 5 nearby counties)
5. **Unbound Houston** (Brazoria & Galveston)
6. **YMCA International** (Harris & contiguous counties)

### WEST

1. **Family Support Services** (Potter & Randall)
2. **Paso del Norte Center of Hope** (El Paso)
3. **Regional Crime Victim Crisis Center** (Taylor)
4. **Voice of Hope** (Lubbock & 11 nearby counties)

### CENTRAL

1. **Alamo Area Rape Crisis Center** (Bexar)
2. **AWARE Central Texas** (Bell)
3. **BCFS Common Thread** (I-35 Corridor: San Antonio to Killeen)
4. **Refugee Services of Texas** (Travis)
5. **SAFE** (Travis)
6. **Unbound Waco** (McLennan & 5 nearby counties)



**RECOVER** : CSTT and the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas partner to develop Care Coordination processes for multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) to develop recommendations for, and facilitate access to, services for child victims. As of February 2020, 523 child victims were provided care coordination in Harris\*, Dallas, Tarrant, and Comal counties. In 2020, care coordination will be available in Bell, Bexar, Collin, Denton, Jefferson, Kerr, McLennan, Montgomery, and Travis counties. (\*Although the Children’s Assessment Center is part of the MDT, Harris County Protective Services serves as the Care Coordinator in Harris County.)



**Juvenile Justice Based Programs:**

- **Texas Juvenile Justice Department:** Interventions for Victims of Complex Trauma
- **Bexar County:** New Life Expansion Project
- **Dallas County:** Poetic
- **Harris County:** Girls Inspiring Future Triumphs (GIFT)



**Drop-In Centers:**

- **Austin:** SAFE’s Seton House
- **Dallas:** New Friends New Life’s Youth Resource Center
- **El Paso:** El Paso Center for Children
- **Houston:** The Landing
- **Killeen:** CTYS’ Project Hope
- **San Antonio:** Roy Maas’ Centro Seguro



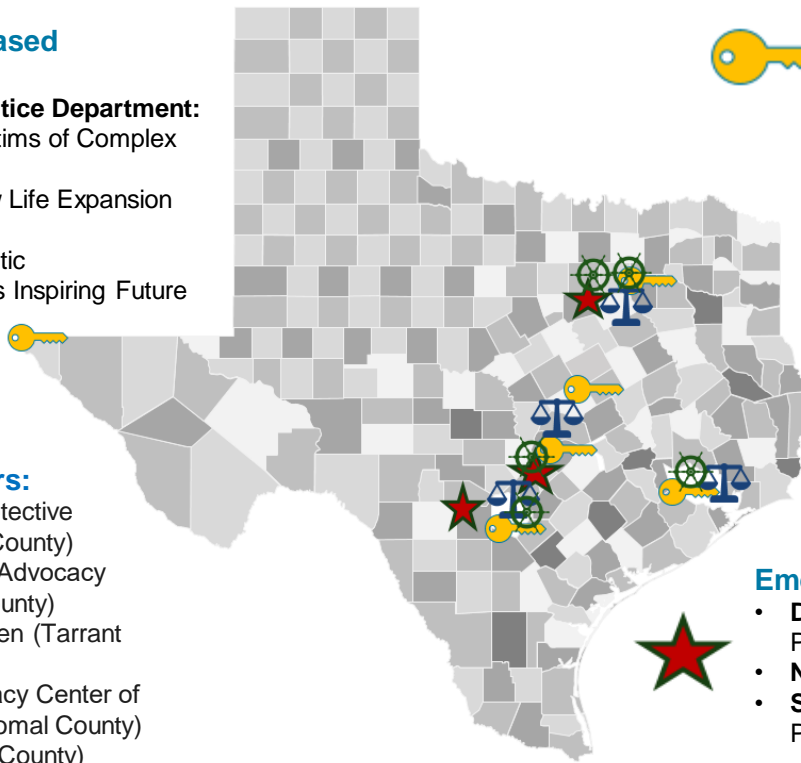
**Care Coordinators:**

- Harris County Protective Services (Harris County)
- Dallas Children’s Advocacy Center (Dallas County)
- Alliance for Children (Tarrant County)
- Children’s Advocacy Center of Comal County (Comal County)
- ChildSafe (Bexar County)



**Emergency Shelters:**

- **Dallas/Forth Worth:** Jonathan’s Place RESET Emergency Shelter
- **New Braunfels:** SJRC
- **San Antonio:** Roy Maas’ La Puerta



**SUPPORT HEALING:** CSTT is partnering with public and private organizations to develop an array of victim-centered, trauma-informed services to meet the immediate and long-term needs of survivors.



**Community Case Management and Counseling Programs for Adults:**

- **Dallas, Fort Worth:** Valiant Hearts
- **Houston:** Rescue Houston, City of Houston Direct Services for HT Victims, YMCA International Counseling, United Against Human Trafficking
- **Lubbock:** Family Counseling Services of Lubbock
- **Pharr:** City of Pharr HT Liaison



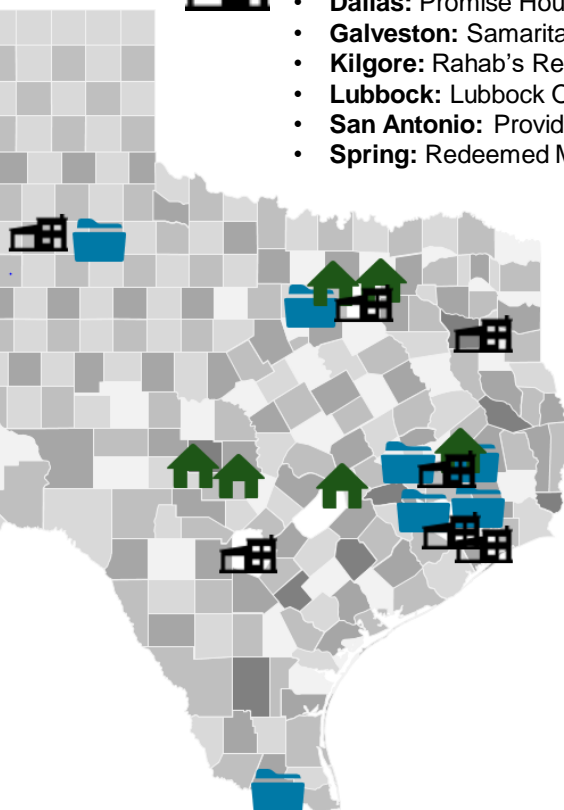
**Residential Programs for Adults:**

- **Dallas:** Promise House
- **Galveston:** Samaritan Woman at the Well
- **Kilgore:** Rahab’s Retreat and Ranch
- **Lubbock:** Lubbock Open Door
- **San Antonio:** Providence Place
- **Spring:** Redeemed Ministries



**Residential Programs for Youth:**

- **Bastrop:** The Refuge
- **Bulverde:** SJRC
- **Dallas:** Promise House
- **Dallas/Forth Worth:** Jonathan’s Place
- **El Paso:** El Paso Center for Children (foster homes)
- **New Braunfels:** SJRC
- **Houston:** Freedom Place, Hope Rising (foster homes)



CSTT's 5 Regional Administrators help communities build their continuum of care for survivors and also support prevention, awareness, and justice activities. They provide child sex trafficking training, training on the CSE-IT screening tool, strategy sessions with local stakeholders to identify and fill gaps in the continuum of care, and facilitation of care coordination development in conjunction with Children's Advocacy Centers.

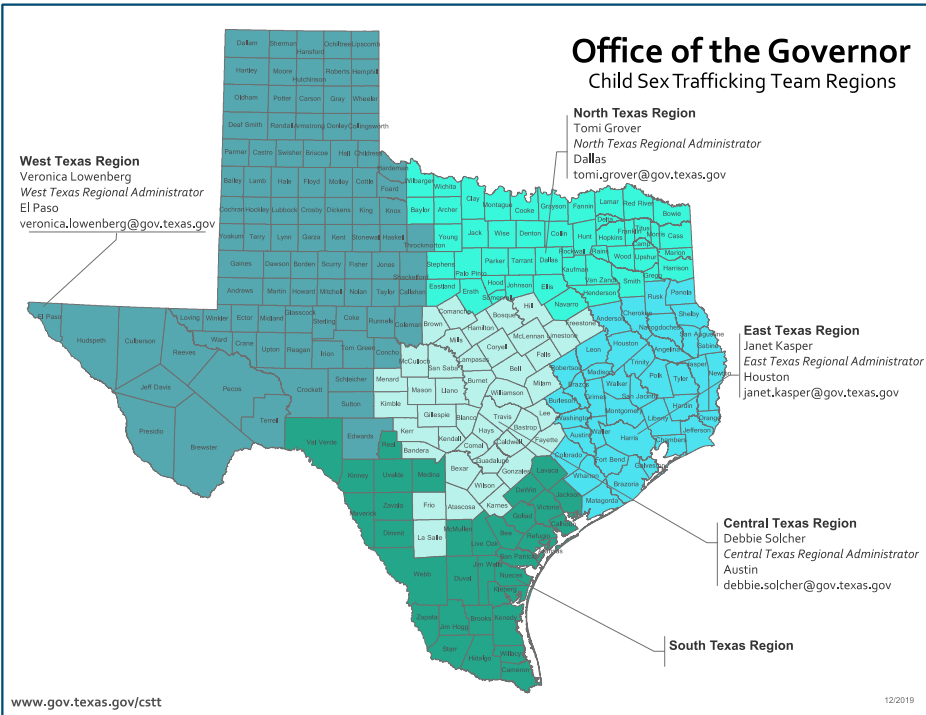
**BUILDING EXPERTISE:** CSTT helped fund research by the University of Texas on exploited youth in Texas, which resulted in a report titled "To the Public, Nothing Was Wrong with Me': Life Experiences of Minors and Youth in Texas at Risk for Commercial Exploitation."

CSTT curates a document of relevant research articles, complete with summaries from the last three to five years.

The articles are primarily from peer-reviewed journals and are organized by CSTT's five overarching goals: protect, recognize, recover, support healing, and bring justice.

CSTT has launched a monthly webinar series for stakeholders. Interested individuals may sign up for updates about these webinars as well as access archived webinars through the CSTT website: [www.gov.texas.gov/csstt](http://www.gov.texas.gov/csstt).

CSTT developed, in partnership with Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, a Roadmap for Texas Communities to Address Child Sex Trafficking. The Roadmap provides research, emerging practices, lessons learned, and resources for communities to effectively engage in the fight against child sex trafficking

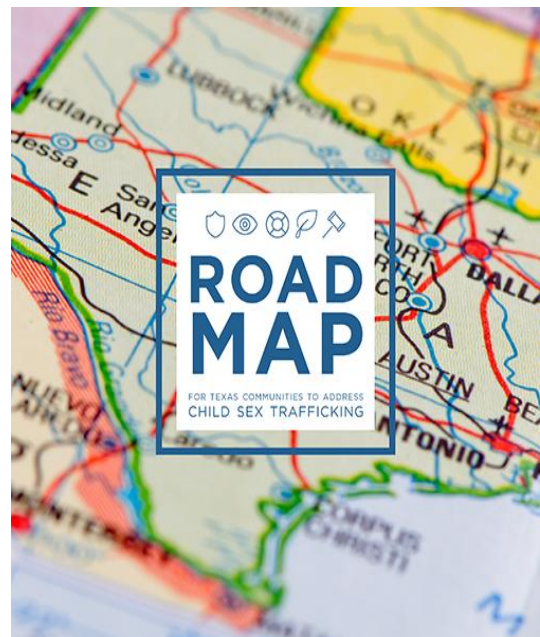


**BRING JUSTICE:** CSTT grants are funding training for the criminal justice system as a whole and funding dedicated positions in Dallas, Harris, Montgomery, and Jefferson Counties and at the Office of the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute child sex exploitation.

CSTT is partnering with Collective Liberty to provide 4.5-day intensive and hands-on experiential workshops for law enforcement and prosecutors on eradicating human trafficking.

CSTT works closely with the Governor's Budget and Policy Division to ensure that Texas laws and the state budget reflect the governor's goal of eradicating child sexual exploitation. Under Governor Abbott's leadership, new laws have been enacted to increase penalties against exploiters and to streamline processes by which survivors can clear their criminal records to obtain employment and housing. New appropriations have also been established to equip law enforcement, child welfare, and other systems with resources to combat human trafficking.

and align themselves with statewide strategies and goals.



For more information about CSTT and its strategies, contact CSTT via its website: [www.gov.texas.gov/csstt](http://www.gov.texas.gov/csstt).