

# Oakland Unite 2018–2019 Strategy Evaluation: Crisis Intervention for Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth

**October 18, 2019**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the staff of Oakland Unite who provided input and assistance for this evaluation. Although we cannot name everyone, we especially want to thank Josie Halpern-Finnerty, Sara Rose Serin-Christ, Valerie Okelola, Mailee Wang, and Peter Kim. We also thank Tonya Gilmore of the Office of the City Administrator. We are grateful to all of the agencies that shared data for this evaluation, including Cityspan, Alameda County Probation Department, Alameda County Office of Education, Oakland Police Department, Oakland Unified School District, and all of the Oakland Unite agencies. Several staff at Mathematica in addition to the authors also contributed to this report. We thank Kevin Conway for his technical review of the report and Esa Eslami for overseeing the creation of the administrative database used in the analyses. Dale Anderson provided editorial support and Sheena Flowers formatted the document.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Assessment Center	Alameda County Assessment Center
AC United	Alameda County United Against Human Trafficking Advisory Council
ACDAO	Alameda County District Attorney's Office
ACDCFS	Alameda County Department of Children and Families Services
ACGC	Alameda County Girls' Court
ACOE	Alameda County Office of Education
ACPD	Alameda County Probation Department
ACT	Acknowledge, Commit, Transform (Massachusetts)
BAWAR	Bay Area Women Against Rape
CASE Act (the) City	California Against Slavery and Exploitation Act City of Oakland
CSE	commercial sexual exploitation
CSEC	commercially sexually exploited children
CSE youth	commercially sexually exploited youth
CTVPA	California Trafficking Victims Protection Act
DCFS	Department of Children and Family Services (of Los Angeles County)
DreamCatcher	DreamCatcher Youth Services (a program of Covenant House)
EESS	education and employment support services
GEMS	Girls Educational and Mentoring Services
HEAT Watch	Human Exploitation and Trafficking Watch
LGBTQI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or intersex
MISSEY	Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting & Serving Sexually Exploited Youth
OPD	Oakland Police Department
OUSD	Oakland Unified School District
RIP	Runaway Intervention Program
RYSE	Resilient Young Adult Survivor Empowerment program
SARC	Sexual Assault Resource Center
STAR	Sisters Transforming and Rising
STRYDE	Survivors Together Reaching Your Dreams Empowerment
TAY	transitional age youth

TVPA	Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act
VSAC	Victim Service Advisory Committee
WCCC	WestCoast Children's Clinic

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Insights on Oakland Unite’s commercially sexually exploited youth intervention

#### Background

Oakland Unite aims to interrupt and prevent violence by focusing on the youth and young adults in Oakland who are at highest risk of direct exposure to violence, violent victimization, and active involvement in violence. Oakland Unite administers grants to community-based organizations through a diverse set of strategies and sub-strategies to accomplish this goal.

The commercially sexually exploited youth (CSE youth) intervention sub-strategy offers funding for services that support youth at risk of or experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. In particular, it aims to help survivors meet their immediate needs for safety and be connected to resources to aid them on their path to healing and stability. The sub-strategy funds outreach and crisis response, emergency housing, safe spaces, and wraparound supports. In addition, it funds training efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Oakland Unite network and local law enforcement agencies to identify and respond to CSE youth.

This 2018–2019 strategy evaluation report provides an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy and its role in the local policy context.

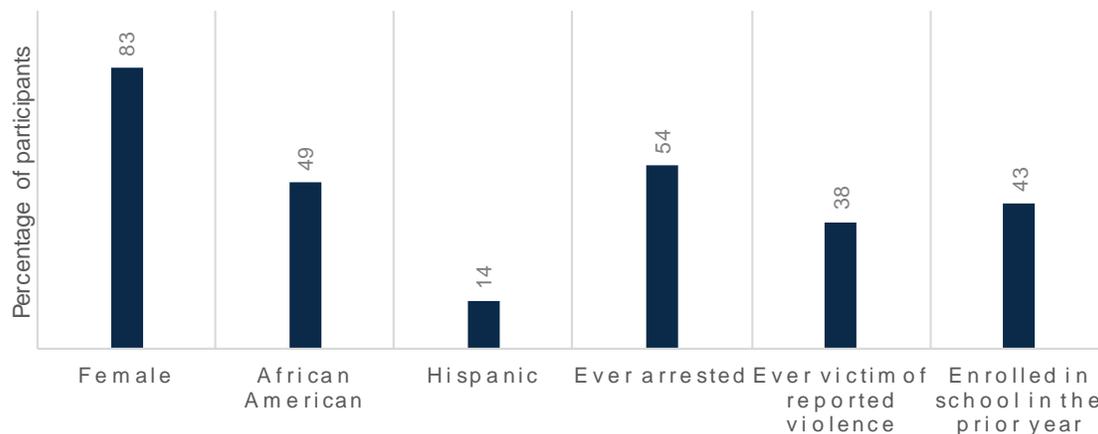
#### Key Findings



**Agencies serve the intended population of girls and young women of color with a history of victimization, contact with law enforcement, and school disengagement.**

The profile of participants was consistent with other research on CSE youth, suggesting that agencies are serving the intended population.

**Figure E.1. Background characteristics of CSE youth participants in Oakland Unite**



### Best practices for supporting CSE youth

- Develop a shared definition and validated method to identify CSE youth
- Take a trauma-informed approach to services
- Assess CSE youth's readiness for change and tailor services to their needs
- Take a long-term, flexible approach to services
- Provide a reliable, stable relationship with a caring adult
- Employ providers with expertise in CSE or lived experience
- Help youth rebuild family and community ties



**Agencies are following many best practices in their work.** Agencies have a shared understanding of the CSE youth population, which is grounded in the expertise and lived experience of providers. Staff take into account participants' readiness for change and tailor services to the individual. In addition, the agencies have a flexible open-door policy that allows youth to return for services as needed.

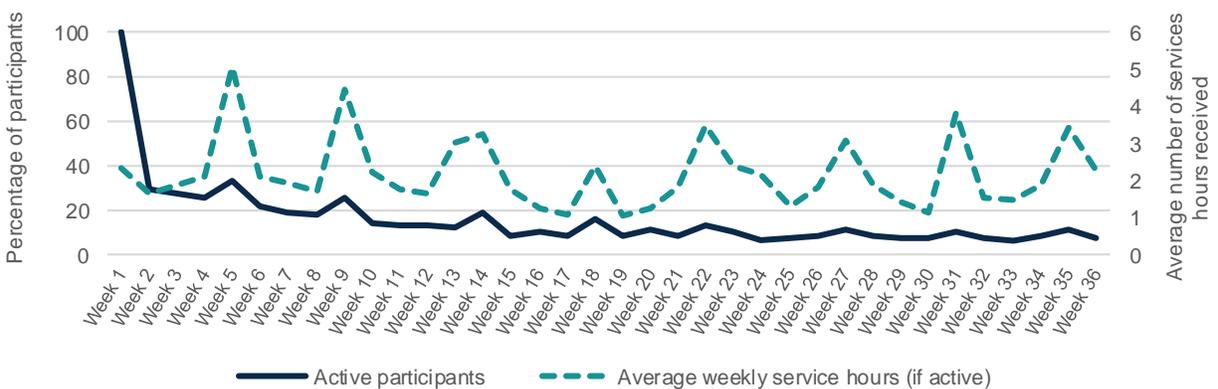


**Oakland Unite's decision to expand age eligibility for this sub-strategy will allow agencies to support transitional age youth (TAY), who have been an underserved group with different needs.** TAY appear less likely to be in a moment of crisis and are perceived to be more ready to make a change in their lives when they come to services. However, they often are too old to receive needed supports and have different needs related to housing, employment, and child care than younger participants. The recently expanded age eligibility should enable agencies to better support these older youth.



**Although the services offered by Oakland Unite agencies focus on short-term crisis response, many youth return for support over time.** Almost half of participants receive support over multiple service periods. Their engagement with services spikes every few weeks, with youth returning and receiving a higher intensity of services from time to time. These patterns suggest that some youth build a continuum of care by returning to the agencies as needed after their initial crisis has been addressed.

**Figure E.2. CSE youth participants' weekly engagement and service hours received**





**CSE youth’s unmet needs include mental health support; stable relationships with caring adults; and safe, stable housing.** Oakland Unite agencies focus on helping youth through crisis response and stabilization. However, the unmet needs that were identified may require longer-term care and relationship building, either through Oakland Unite or other partners.



**Despite strong collaboration within the sub-strategy, there is room for more cross-referrals as well as greater collaboration with other Oakland Unite strategies.**

Although the sub-strategy is designed to meet different needs of CSE youth, only 13 percent of participants received services from more than one CSE youth intervention agency. A larger share received services from another Oakland Unite sub-strategy (21 percent), but most were minors from a single agency offering services in two strategies.



**Although agencies serving CSE youth have a shared understanding of the population, the broader violence prevention community does not have a standard identification process.** Despite various efforts to develop protocols and tools to help youth-serving adults identify signs of CSE, the process of identifying and referring youth at risk of or experiencing CSE does not appear to be standardized in Oakland.



**Multiple agencies and branches of government are tackling the issue of CSE in Alameda County, but a cohesive strategy is lacking.** Various initiatives have attempted to create a more coordinated system of addressing CSE youth, but the county has not yet achieved a cohesive strategy. Different informants indicated that stakeholders need to have better communication and collaboration.

### Considerations for Oakland Unite

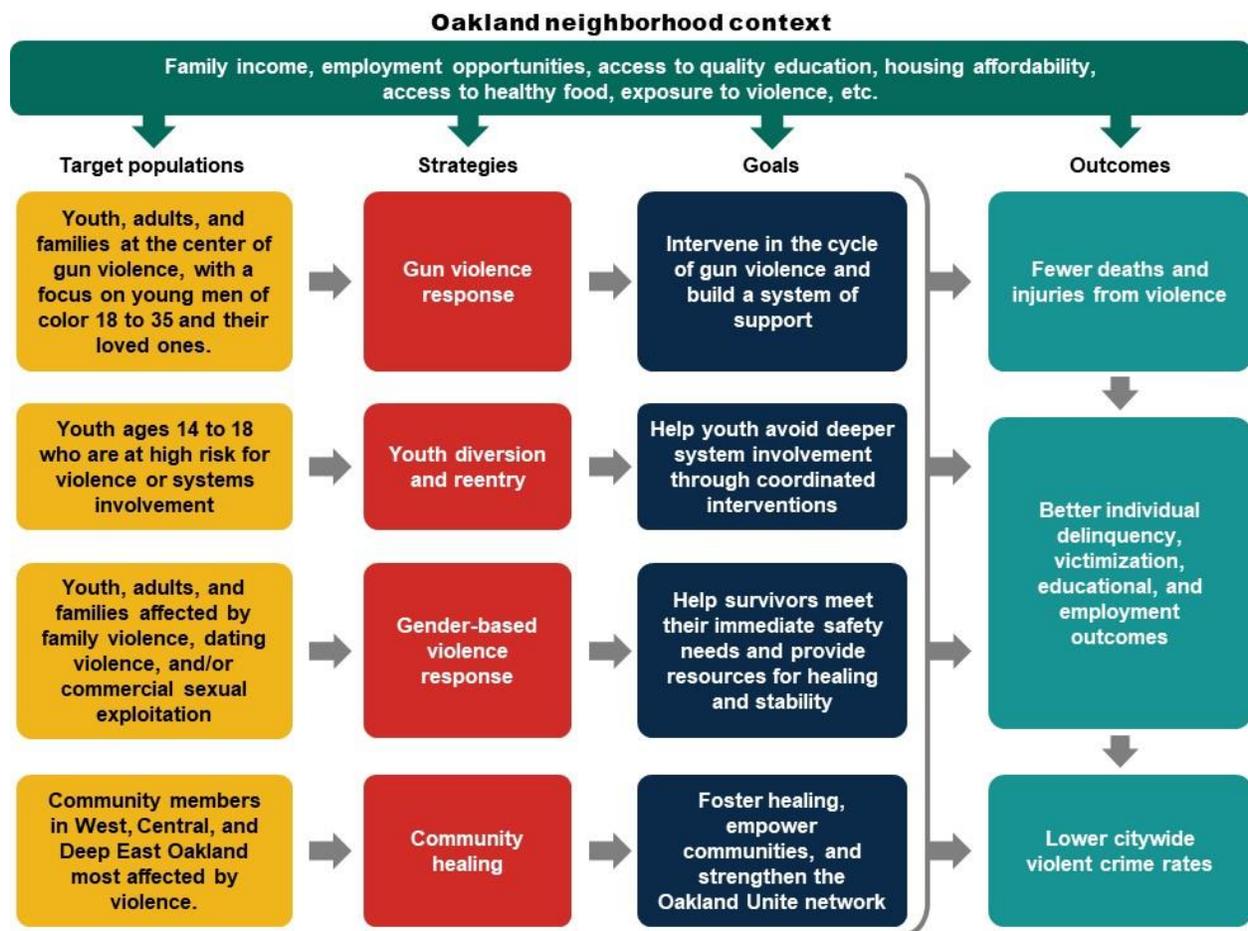
- Continue to develop standards of practice for CSE youth intervention agencies
- Support agencies in collecting additional participant data that can be used for continuous improvement
- Continue to integrate CSE and other gender-based violence responses into broader violence prevention efforts
- Promote a shared understanding of CSE youth identification and response across the county through advocacy, protocols, training, and research
- Explore areas for future research, such as assessing the effectiveness of crisis response services and identifying factors that predict youth CSE

# I. INTRODUCTION

## Background

Oakland Unite administers and supports grants to agencies offering community-based violence prevention programs in Oakland, California. The Violence Prevention and Public Safety Act of 2004, also known as Measure Y, raised funds for community-based violence prevention programs and policing and fire safety personnel through a parcel tax on Oakland property and a parking tax assessment. In 2014, Oakland residents voted to extend these levies for 10 years through Measure Z, which now raises about \$27 million annually, to focus efforts on specific types of serious violence, including gun and gender-based violence. Measure Z funds violence prevention programs, police officers, fire services, and evaluation services. Roughly 40 percent of these funds are invested in community-based violence prevention programs through Oakland Unite, which is part of the City of Oakland (the City) Human Services Department.

**Figure I.1. Conceptual model of Oakland Unite**

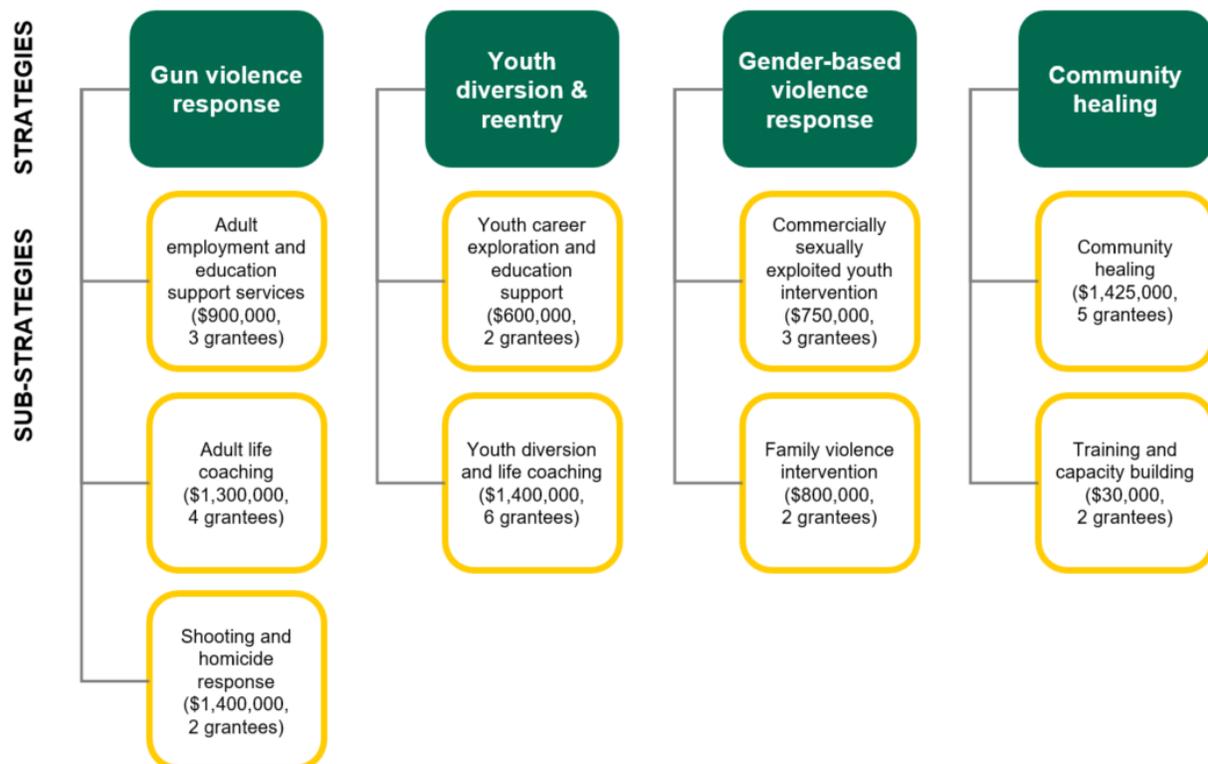


Note: Oakland Unite prepares a new spending plan every two to three years. This figure reflects the strategies in the 2019–2020 plan, which changed the strategy structure and names from previous years.

As part of this citywide effort, Oakland Unite aims to interrupt and prevent violence by focusing on the youth and young adults in Oakland who are at highest risk of direct exposure to violence, violent victimization, and active involvement in violence. Figure I.1 illustrates the relationship between Oakland’s neighborhood contexts, Oakland Unite strategies, and the outcomes Oakland Unite is designed to affect. Neighborhood context—including exposure to violence and access to quality education, affordable housing, and employment opportunities—affect the population served by Oakland Unite. The strategies thus focus on improving outcomes for those most disproportionately affected by these factors. Other parts of Measure Z, such as Ceasefire, Oakland Police Department (OPD) crime reduction teams, community resource officers, and emergency response through the Oakland Fire Department, are outside of the purview of Oakland Unite and this evaluation, but play important roles in the city’s efforts to reduce violence.

During fiscal year 2019–2020, Oakland Unite is administering \$8,605,000 in 29 grants. Oakland Unite administers grants through a diverse set of strategies and sub-strategies to accomplish violence prevention and reduction. Every two to three years, Oakland Unite prepares a new spending plan based on community input and evaluation findings. Figure I.2 summarizes the four strategies (gun violence response, youth diversion and reentry, gender-based violence response, and community healing) and nine sub-strategies supported in the current period.

**Figure I.2. Oakland Unite funding amounts for fiscal year 2019–2020**



Source: Documents provided by Oakland Unite.

This most recent spending plan changed the structure and names of the strategies and sub-strategies. Previously, the strategies were life coaching, education and economic self-sufficiency, violent incident and crisis response, community asset building, and innovation. Detailed information about the services provided by Oakland Unite agencies in 2016–2018 is available in the 2016–2018 agency report ([Eslami et al. 2019](#)).

Under Measure Z, the City funds an independent evaluation of Oakland Unite. The four-year evaluation conducted by Mathematica includes three components: (1) annual evaluations that assess the implementation and effectiveness of a selection of Oakland Unite strategies, (2) annual snapshots that summarize the work of each Oakland Unite agency, and (3) a comprehensive evaluation that will study the impact of select Oakland Unite programs from 2016 to 2020. Table I.1 summarizes the main findings from the first two strategy-level evaluations. In this 2018–2019 strategy evaluation, we present an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the commercially sexually exploited youth (CSE youth) intervention sub-strategy and its role in the local policy context.<sup>1</sup> The report focuses on services provided from 2016 to 2018, described more fully in Chapter II.

**Table I.1. Summary of past strategy-level evaluation findings**

Evaluation year	Sub-strategies evaluated	Summary of main findings
2016–2017	Adult life coaching and employment and education support ( <a href="#">Gonzalez et al. 2017</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult life coaching reduces short-term arrests for violent offenses in the 6 months after services but has limited impact on arrests for any offense.</li> <li>• Adult EESS decrease short-term arrests both for any offense and for a violent offense.</li> </ul>
2017–2018	Youth life coaching and employment and education support (EES) ( <a href="#">Gonzalez et al. 2019</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth life coaching reduces school dropout and short-term arrests for violence but has limited impact on 12-month arrest rates.</li> <li>• Youth EESS reduce school dropout but have limited impact on 12-month arrest rates.</li> </ul>

## Data

To learn about how the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy was implemented, we collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative information about agencies and participants. Qualitative data collection included site visits with semistructured interviews at each of the three agencies funded by this sub-strategy, interviews with key informants with expertise working with CSE youth, and a review of documents and materials provided by Oakland Unite and agency staff. In addition, we conducted a survey to gather information about Oakland Unite directly from a subset of participants. Finally, we collected multiple years of administrative data from various sources, as listed in Table II.1. Appendix A contains more detailed descriptions of each data source.

<sup>1</sup> Until the 2019–2020 fiscal year, the sub-strategy was known as the commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) intervention strategy.

**Table I.2. Data sources**

Data source	Description
Agency visits with semistructured interviews	During visits to each agency conducted in winter 2017 and summer 2019, the evaluation team conducted semistructured interviews with agency staff members, including managers and line staff.
Key informant interviews	In August 2019, the team conducted interviews with six key informants with backgrounds in policy and advocacy, law enforcement, community health, and coalition building.
Review of documents and materials	The team reviewed materials provided by Oakland Unite staff as well as materials collected directly from agencies during the site visits, such as scopes of work, agency budgets, and intake forms.
Participant survey	General topics of the participant survey included satisfaction with services, thoughts about the future, and experiences with violence. The team fielded surveys at each agency during September and October 2018, with 28 CSE youth intervention participants taking part.
Administrative data	The team collected school enrollment, attendance, behavior, and academic data from the Oakland Unified School District and Alameda County Office of Education; information on arrests, convictions, and dispositions from the Alameda County Probation Department; information on arrest and victimization incidents from the Oakland Police Department; and service and participant information from Oakland Unite’s Cityspan database.

To link information on the same individual across the multiple sources of administrative data, we used identifying information, including first and last name, date of birth, gender, and address. Oakland Unite participants had to provide consent before their identifying information could be shared with evaluators, which 69 percent of participants in the CSE youth intervention consented to do.<sup>2</sup> Individuals who did not consent to share their personal information are included in descriptive statistics about services received but excluded from any analyses of victimization, arrests, probation, and schooling, which require linking participants to other administrative data.

We used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the implementation of the sub-strategy, including reviewing materials provided by Oakland Unite, analyzing interview responses within and across agencies to highlight key themes, and summarizing participant survey and administrative data about services and participants.

## Limitations

Although the data sources and methods used for this report provided rich information about the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy, our analysis has the following limitations:

- **The evaluation does not assess the impact of services on youth outcomes.** Although we have assessed the impact of services on participant outcomes in other strategy-level

<sup>2</sup> This consent rate is based on all participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2018. Consent rates varied across the three agencies as follows: Bay Area Women Against Rape (66 percent), DreamCatcher Youth Services (79 percent), and Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth (73 percent).

evaluations, we determined in partnership with Oakland Unite that an impact evaluation of the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy was not appropriate for this report. The services funded by Oakland Unite to date have focused on short-term crisis response, with over half of participants receiving fewer than five hours of services. Thus, we did not have a clear hypothesis about the impact of participation on victimization, arrest, and schooling outcomes measurable in the available administrative data. In addition, limited baseline data were available to match participants to an appropriate comparison group. Without a comparison group of youth at similar risk of exploitation who did not receive services from Oakland Unite CSE agencies, we could not reliably determine whether any changes in outcomes resulted from participation in Oakland Unite. Rather than assess the effectiveness of services, this report evaluates the implementation of those services and analyzes the role of Oakland Unite’s CSE youth intervention sub-strategy in the local policy context.

- **The report excludes educational, criminal justice, and victimization data not reported in the available sources.** The available education data only included public, noncharter schools in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE). Youth enrolled in other types of schools in Alameda County or beyond would be missing from these sources. Similarly, the report used criminal justice data reported by Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD) or OPD, which would not include incidents outside of these jurisdictions. Finally, victimization data only reflected incidents reported to OPD, which is subject to underreporting, and frequently lacked complete personally identifiable information needed to link to other records.
- **Analyses of educational, criminal justice, and victimization data were limited to participants who consented to have their information matched to other data sources.** Thirty-one percent of CSE youth intervention participants did not consent to share their identifiable information. Individuals who do not consent to participate in the evaluation may differ from those who do. For example, Oakland Unite data show that CSE youth who did not consent received fewer service hours, on average, than those who consented.
- **The perspectives collected through surveys and interviews may not reflect the perspectives of all stakeholders.** Participant surveys were conducted with a small sample of participants who happened to be present or were selected by the agency. In addition, participants (as well as the staff and key informants we interviewed) could have provided responses that they felt would reflect favorably upon themselves or their agencies. Finally, key informant interviews reflect the perspectives of a limited number of stakeholders.

## Overview of the report

The rest of this report is organized as follows: in Chapter II, we present contextual information about the policy and evidence landscape in which Oakland Unite’s CSE youth intervention sub-strategy operates. We describe the implementation findings for the sub-strategy in Chapter III. In Chapter IV, we conclude the report and suggest considerations and areas of research for the future. Appendix A has additional information on the CSE policy context and provides examples of related efforts and promising programs in other parts of the country. Appendix B has additional details about the evaluation’s data collection and processing.

## II. POLICY AND EVIDENCE LANDSCAPE

In this chapter, we provide contextual information about the policy and evidence landscape in which Oakland Unite’s CSE youth intervention sub-strategy operates. After providing an overview of the sub-strategy, we discuss what is known about CSE youth in Oakland and Alameda County, summarize the local policy context, and present best practices for supporting CSE youth. Additional information on relevant policies and initiatives and promising programs is available in Appendix A.

### Overview of the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy

The CSE youth intervention sub-strategy offers funding for services that support youth at risk of or experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. In particular, it aims to help survivors meet their immediate needs for safety and to be connected to resources to aid them on their path to healing and stability. The sub-strategy funds outreach and crisis response, emergency housing, safe spaces, and wraparound supports. In addition, it funds training efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Oakland Unite network and local law enforcement agencies to identify and respond to CSE youth. Given its focus on victims of CSE, the sub-strategy primarily (though not exclusively) focuses on young women, girls, and people who identify as LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or intersex). Referrals are intended to come from multiple sources, including OPD, Alameda County Juvenile Probation, the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office (ACDAO), the Family Justice Center, Alameda County Girls’ Court (ACGC)<sup>3</sup>, OUSD and Highland Hospital. Figure II.1 provides a summary of the three agencies in this sub-strategy.

Over the years, the sub-strategy has expanded its focus and level of investment. During the 2016–2017 fiscal year, Oakland Unite funded these three agencies for a combined grant amount of \$153,000. The following fiscal year, the combined amount grew to \$428,710. In 2019–2020, the three agencies received a combined total of \$750,000. In addition to reflecting a growing emphasis on gender-based violence by Oakland Unite, the increased funding level reflects Oakland Unite’s decision to fund fewer grants overall for larger amounts and to support increases in indirect cost allowances and higher salaries for direct service staff.

The target population for the sub-strategy also expanded in the most recent grant period. Initially, the sub-strategy focused on children and youth age 18 and younger who were or had been sexually exploited. Figure II.2 presents the number of youth that received services in each calendar year covered in this report (2016 to 2018). Each year, a small share of youth 18 or older received services. As of July 2019, the priority population now includes children and young adults ages 12 to 25 who are at risk of exploitation or were or had been exploited.

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<sup>3</sup>Alameda County Girls’ Court (ACGC) is no longer in operation.

**Figure II.1. CSE youth intervention agencies**



The **Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR)** Sexually Exploited Minors program offers crisis response services to youth 18 and younger who have been sexually exploited or are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. BAWAR staff conduct outreach in coordination with community partners. Following outreach, staff provide first responder crisis intervention and stabilization services. BAWAR also conducts community trainings and outreach events for local agencies and schools to increase awareness of sexual assault and exploitation.



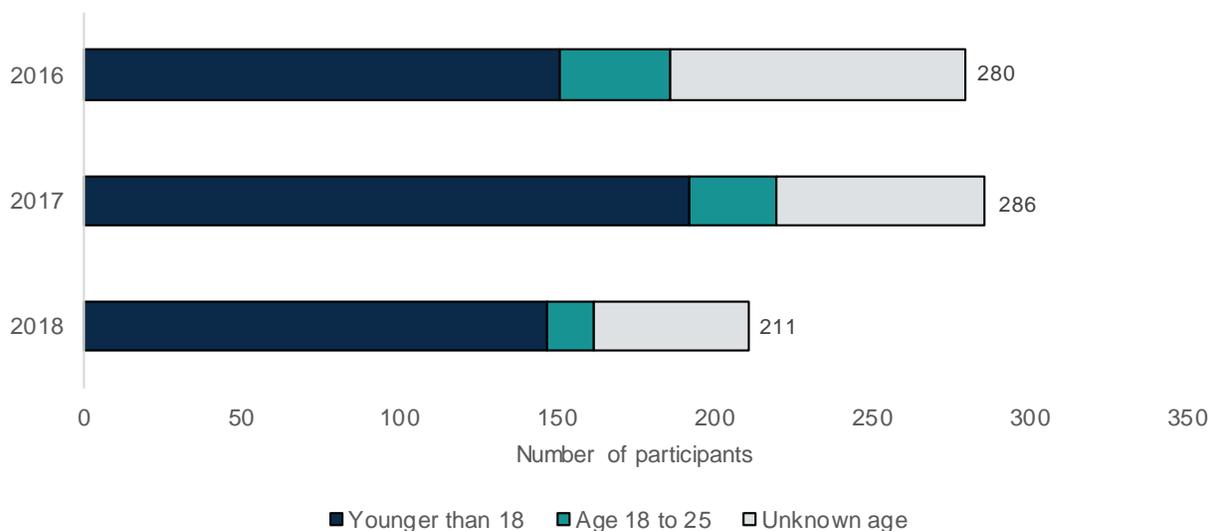
**Dream Catcher Youth Services, a program of Covenant House California**, serves homeless youth ages 13 to 17 who are at high risk of commercial sexual exploitation, providing them with emergency shelter, crisis intervention, and stabilization support. This includes Nika's Place, an eight-bed shelter for female-identified youth escaping commercial sexual exploitation, a 12-bed DreamCatcher shelter (open to homeless youth more broadly), an adolescent medical clinic, and a drop-in wellness center.



**Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting & Serving Sexually Exploited Youth (MISSEY)** offers the Sisters Transforming and Rising (STAR) Center, a daily drop-in center that serves as a safe space for female, femme, and nonbinary youth ages 12 to 25 impacted by commercial sexual exploitation. The drop-in center offers group activities for youth as well as a safe space where youth can spend time and develop positive relationships with peers and adults. Additionally, the drop-in center acts as a crisis response center for youth who need immediate assistance.

Source: Documents provided by Oakland Unite, agency websites, and interviews with agency staff.

**Figure II.2. Number of participants served by the CSE youth intervention strategy, by year**



Source: Cityspan.

Notes: Age is based on the date when the participant began receiving services.

Oakland Unite’s approach to this sub-strategy is aligned to the California Department of Social Services CSEC Program guidelines, which state that commercial sexual exploitation should be understood as child abuse and therefore victims should not be criminalized (Child Welfare Council CSEC Action Team 2015). The state outlines a three-tiered response to support CSEC,

ranging from immediate crisis response in the first 72 hours, initial services provided within 10 to 14 days to address the youth’s immediate safety needs, and ongoing support that involves case planning and coordination. The three programs funded by Oakland Unite—BAWAR, DreamCatcher, and MISSEY—focus primarily on immediate crisis response and initial services and are intended to work together to serve youths’ needs. BAWAR primarily offers immediate crisis response services, DreamCatcher offers emergency shelter and access to on-site medical and mental health support, and MISSEY offers a drop-in center with group activities and access to case management.<sup>4</sup> All three agencies also refer youth to outside services.

## CSE youth in Oakland

Sexual exploitation of youth is prevalent in the Bay Area, which has been identified as a high intensity child prostitution area by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, 2009). However, limited information exists on the current size of the CSE youth population in the region. Human Exploitation and Trafficking (HEAT) Watch, an initiative founded by ACDAO to combat human trafficking, reports that 851 minors identified as being at risk for or already involved in CSE were referred to case review meetings between January 2011 and December 2018—an average of 106 minors per year (HEAT Watch 2019). These numbers include, but are not limited to, youth who were involved in the juvenile justice system, social services, other government agencies, or community-based organizations. During this same period, an average of 220 individuals age 25 and younger were arrested in Alameda County for prostitution each year. Before the decriminalization of child sex trafficking victims in 2017, this number included an average of 40 minors each year (Figure II.3). In years past, local law enforcement estimated that approximately 100 children were sold for sex in Oakland on a given night (Grady 2010).

As part of the SafetyNet case review program, ACDAO has collected information about participating CSE youth’s demographics and risk factors (HEAT Watch 2019). Among these youth, the vast majority were female (98 percent) and predominantly African American (64 percent) or Latino (15 percent). Their most common risk factors included having a juvenile arrest history (80 percent), prior victimization (72 percent), runaway history (66 percent), juvenile probation history (65 percent), history of drug use (53 percent), and chronic absenteeism from school (46 percent). Other risk factors included family criminal history and being or having been in the custody of social services.

A study by WestCoast Children’s Clinic (WCCC) gathered rich information on the challenges faced by CSEC in Oakland and surrounding cities (Basson et al. 2012). The study’s sample consisted of 113 girls and young women ages 10 to 24 who were clients of WCCC and partner agencies. In most cases, youth experienced the onset of exploitation by age 14. In addition to identifying demographics and risk factors similar to those described by HEAT Watch, the study found that 75 percent of the youth had experienced child abuse or neglect, including severe or repeated episodes; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; physical abuse; and family violence. Many of the youth also had unstable housing situations: 21 percent lived in a transient household (where

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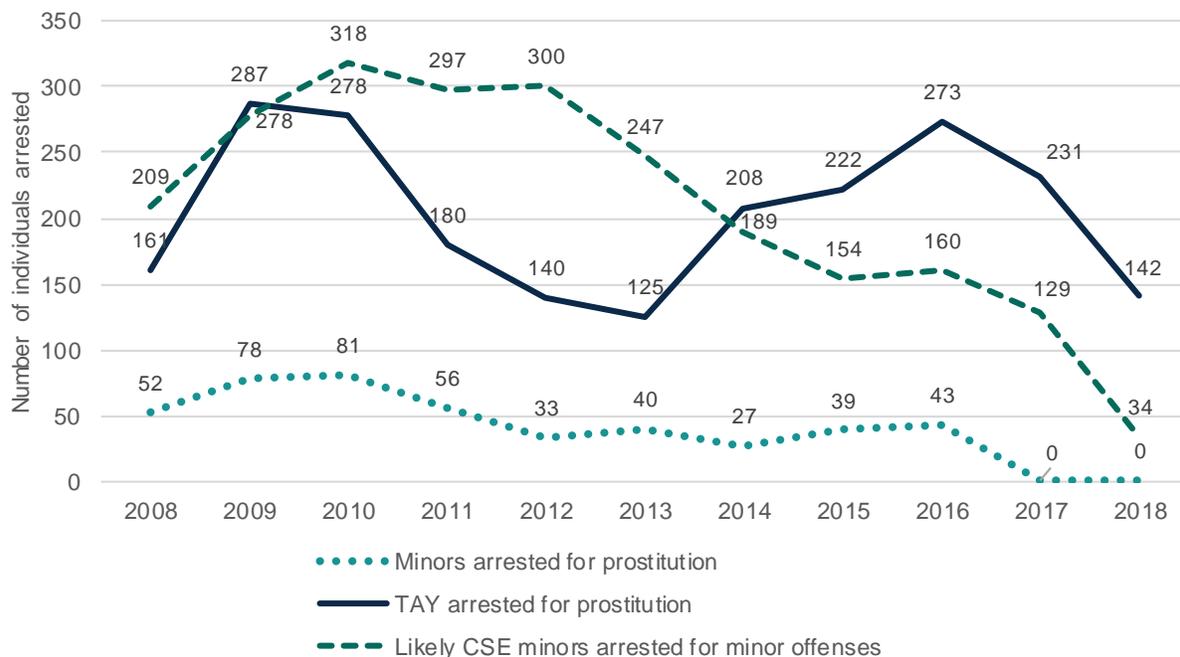
<sup>4</sup> Intensive case management was supported by Oakland Unite’s youth life coaching sub-strategy.

many family members, acquaintances, or others live for periods of time or come and go sporadically), and 48 percent experienced foster care placement disruptions. The study identified extensive mental health needs, including depression, anxiety, anger control, and attachment disorder in over half the sample. In addition, the majority of the youth did not understand that they were being exploited.

### Local policy context

Since the federal Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) passed in 2000, California has increased efforts to support CSE youth. Most recently, California followed the lead of multiple other states by passing a safe harbor law, Senate Bill 1322, which took effect in 2017 and prohibits arrest of minors younger than 18 on prostitution, loitering, or solicitation charges. In 2016, 51 minors and 349 transitional age youth (TAY) were arrested for prostitution in Alameda County (Figure II.3). Following Senate Bill 1322, no more minors were arrested for prostitution in Alameda County. The number of TAY arrested for prostitution also decreased after 2016, down to 142 in 2018. The Human Rights Center suggests that although this change in the law represented a “significant paradigm shift” in how law enforcement and the public perceive the victimization of CSEC, police could potentially shift to arresting CSEC for other offenses (Alrabe and Stover 2018). However, the number of likely CSEC who were arrested in Alameda County for minor offenses also decreased after the law went into effect (Figure II.3).

**Figure II.3. Individuals arrested for prostitution and likely CSEC arrested for minor offenses in Alameda County, 2008–2018**



Source: OPD and ACPD data.

Notes: Likely CSE minors in a given year are youth younger than 18 who ever had a reported victimization incident related to prostitution or human trafficking, or were ever arrested for a runaway or prostitution offense. Minor offenses include status, delinquent, and misdemeanor offenses.

Prior to Senate Bill 1322, local law enforcement partnered with BAWAR to provide immediate support during prostitution sting operations. Before its dissolution following the passage of Senate Bill 1322, the Alameda County Girls Court (ACGC), a gender-specific court at the Juvenile Justice Center, provided a dedicated judicial proceeding for girls who had been exploited or were at risk of exploitation, following victim-centered protocols. ACPD also partnered with MISSEY and WCCC to counsel CSEC in juvenile hall and worked with BAWAR to administer a victim assessment.

Outside of the justice system, the Alameda County Department of Children and Families Services (ACDCFS) works with community providers and partners to identify victims of CSE and address their needs. ACDCFS operates the Alameda County Assessment Center, an unlocked facility where most children are taken when they are first removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. Following Senate Bill 1322, law enforcement also take CSEC to the Assessment Center. Physical and mental health assessments are administered there, and advocates from MISSEY are present to talk to youth, connect them to appropriate providers, and follow up as needed for up to 120 days (Walker 2013). MISSEY advocates also train placement staff at the Assessment Center as well as foster parents and group home workers.

Within Alameda County, HEAT Watch has served as a hub for efforts to develop a coordinated response to supporting CSEC. In 2010, ACDAO worked with health care, law enforcement, and service providers to create HEAT Watch, a collaborative strategy for combating human trafficking (HEAT Watch 2019). In 2017, the Alameda County United Against Human Trafficking Advisory Council, or AC United, was formed as a collaborative project led by ACDAO and the Alameda County Social Services Agency to increase the services available for preventing and intervening in human trafficking, close gaps in critical services for victims, and enhance coordination of awareness and outreach efforts (HEAT Watch 2019). It is comprised of 83 partners, including county and city government agencies, law enforcement, hospitals, and community-based organizations. The manager of Oakland Unite serves as co-chair of AC United, along with the county's district attorney. BAWAR, DreamCatcher, and MISSEY are also part of AC United.

## Best practices for supporting CSE youth

Based on related efforts in other regions, promising programs for CSE youth, and existing research, we identified a number of best practices for serving CSE youth. For detailed examples of related efforts and promising programs, see Appendix A.

- **Develop a shared definition and validated method to identify CSE youth.** Stakeholders should develop a common definition of CSE youth across social services, law enforcement, and care providers (Clawson and Grace 2007; Moynihan et al. 2018). Implementing routine screening practices may be more effective than identification strategies that rely on individual practitioners' intuition (and therefore, potential assumptions) about CSE youth. Agreeing on a validated assessment tool to identify CSE victims can be an important first step (Dierkhising et al. 2016). For instance, Simich et al. (2014) developed a screening and assessment tool to identify CSEC.

- **Take a trauma-informed approach to services.** The Child Welfare Council CSEC Action Team (2015) recommends that interventions and services be trauma-informed, victim-centered, strengths-based, and culturally sensitive. Core elements of trauma-informed care include safety, trustworthiness, collaboration, empowerment, choice, and cultural relevance. Providing on-going information to both staff and victims about trauma and responses to trauma can help build an understanding of behaviors, the impact of trauma on victims, and the secondary impact on staff (Downey 2019).
- **Assess CSE youth’s readiness for change and tailor services to their needs.** There is some evidence that programs for CSE youth with theoretical underpinnings may be more effective (Moynihan et al. 2018; Thompson et al. 2011). An example is the Stages of Change model, which both Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS) and Acknowledge, Commit, Transform (ACT) use to identify where youth lie on the continuum and direct them to the services that best meet their needs. (In the Stages of Change model, individuals move in a cycle through pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, relapse, and back to pre-contemplation.) Another theoretical model is the harm reduction model, which in the context of CSE youth focuses on meeting youth where they currently are in their lives. Harm reduction operationalizes the tenets of trauma-informed care with the recognition that trauma impacts a victim’s ability to discern danger from safety (Downey 2019).
- **Take a long-term, flexible approach to services.** Both continuity of care and the provision of long-term services are essential in addressing the needs of CSE victims, who often relapse to exploitation many times before permanently leaving their exploiters (Basson et al. 2012; Child Welfare Council CSEC Action Team 2015). Providers must understand the dynamics of CSE youth, including the gradual process of change. However, many programs aim to reach a broader population of CSE youth and only have the resources to serve shorter-term needs, such as crisis support, basic food or clothing needs, and safety planning. To counter these limitations, it is important for service providers to maintain an open door policy for participants (Gibbs et al. 2015).
- **Provide a reliable, stable relationship with a caring adult.** Because of the transitory nature of many CSE victims and the instability they face, building reliable and stable relationships with caring adults is important to participants’ development (Clawson and Grace 2007). As part of the My Life My Choice program, participants never lose access to their survivor mentors. GEMS also focuses on developing transformational relationships with participants using the Roca model, which incorporates motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy, as described in Table A.1.
- **Employ providers with expertise in CSE or lived experience.** Mentors with lived experience may be most effective in building relationships with youth (Thompson et al. 2011), as their experience helps staff build rapport with youth and overcome trust issues. Both GEMS and My Life My Choice hold survivor-based empowerment as a core tenet of their programming. Clawson and Grace (2007) also found that it was important that providers “live and breathe trafficking” and possess a deep understanding of what victims have experienced.

- **Help youth rebuild family and community ties.** Improved family relations are considered a protective factor that can help victims move away from exploitation. Connectedness to family is also associated with lowering risk behaviors, such as running away (Saewyc and Edinburgh 2010). In keeping with this, Basson et al. (2012) and Moynihan et al. (2018) both found that successful programs incorporate family members. For example, ACT uses culturally responsive family therapy to help reconnect victims with their natural support systems.

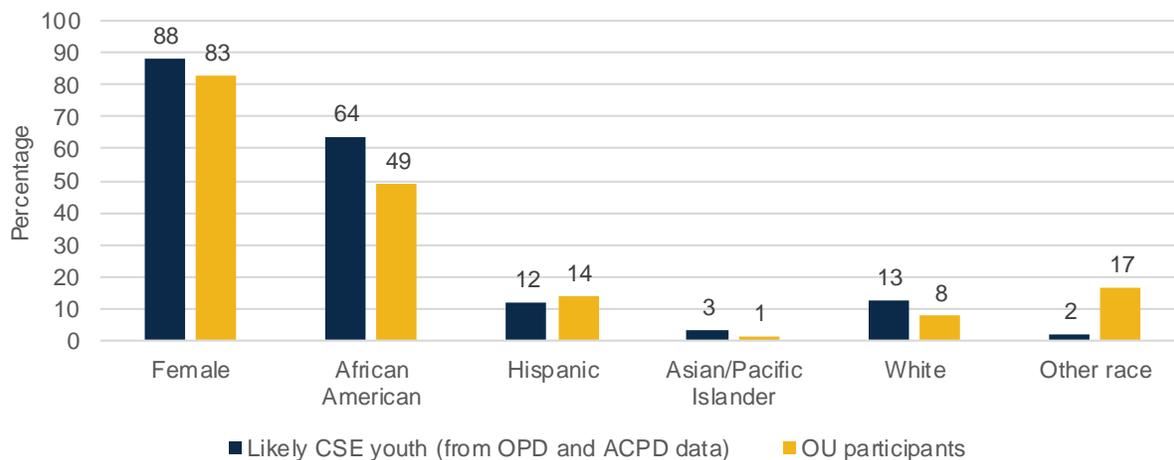
### III. IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

In this chapter, we present the results of qualitative and quantitative analyses examining the implementation of the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy based on multiple data sources, including site visits, staff interviews, key informant interviews, participant surveys, and administrative data.

#### Who are the agencies serving?

**Agencies serve the intended population of girls and young women of color with a history of victimization and/or contact with law enforcement.** Figure III.1 shows the gender and ethnicity of participants in the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy compared to youth identified as likely CSE youth according to arrest and victimization records. Both groups are comprised primarily of girls and young women of color, which suggests that agencies are serving the intended population.

**Figure III.1. Oakland Unite participant gender and ethnicity, compared to likely CSE youth in Alameda County**



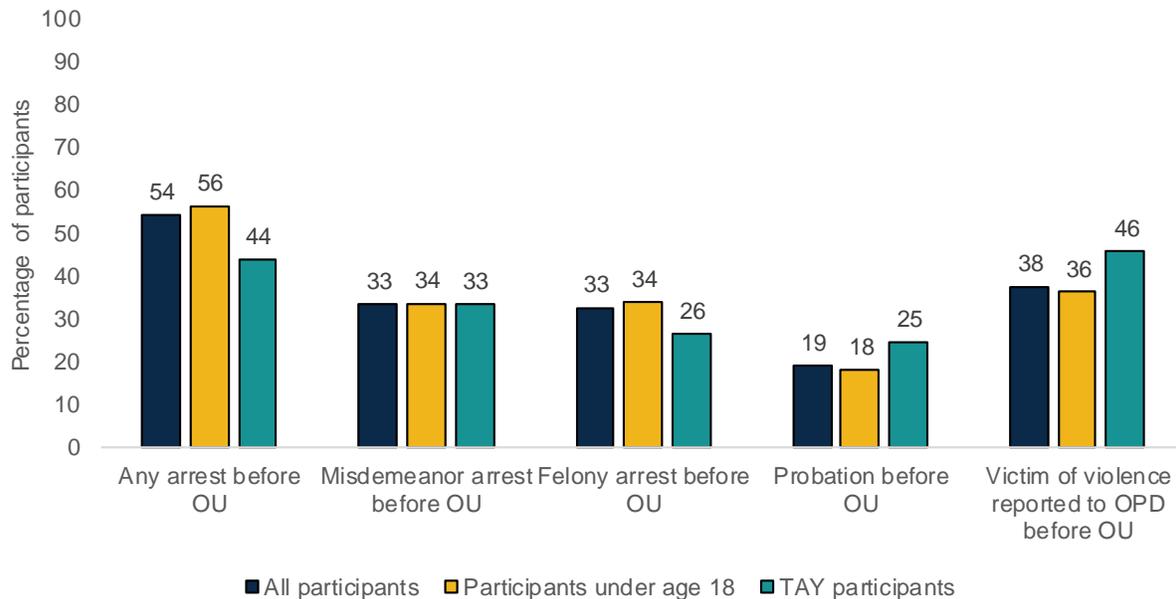
Sources: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD.

Note: Likely CSEC are youth who ever had a reported victimization incident related to prostitution or human trafficking, or who were ever arrested for a runaway or prostitution offense. “Other race” includes Native American, multiethnic individuals, and other. Most of the Oakland Unite youth in this category were multiethnic.

When examining participants’ histories of victimization reported to OPD, 38 percent of all participants had a reported violent incident (Figure III.2). This proportion includes 12 percent of participants who had repeated victimization, meaning three or more violent incidents (not shown). According to police records, the most common types of incidents were sexual assault and rape, battery, and human trafficking or kidnapping. TAY participants had even higher rates of reported violent victimization than minors (46 percent versus 36 percent). However, because victimization is frequently underreported to police and youth may have also experienced violence in other jurisdictions, these rates very likely underestimate the extent of victimization

among participants. In a survey of a small sample of participants (N = 28), 68 percent said that they had been victims of violence.

**Figure III.2. Oakland Unite participant victimization, arrest, and probation histories before services**

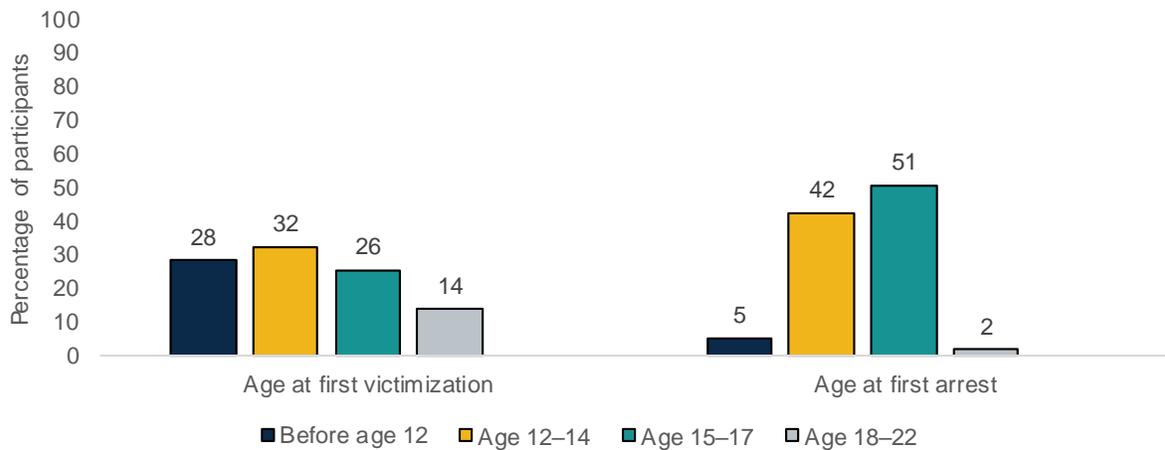


Sources: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD.

Participants also had histories of contact with law enforcement. Fifty-four percent of all participants had been arrested in Alameda County before starting services (Figure III.2), and one quarter had three or more arrests before starting services (not shown). Minors younger than 18 were more likely than TAY to have a prior arrest (56 percent versus 44 percent). The most common arrest incidents involved robbery, running away, battery, resisting an officer, vehicle theft, and prostitution. Rates of arrests for misdemeanor and felony offenses were similar overall, although TAY were less likely to have a felony arrest than minors. However, TAY were more likely to be on probation at the time of starting services.

**Victimization often precedes youths' first arrest, but arrests are more likely to immediately precede the start of services than victimization incidents.** The average age of participants' first reported victimization was 13, and almost one-third of participants were younger than 12 when they first had a victimization incident reported to OPD (Figure III.3). In contrast, the average age at participants' first arrest was 14, with more than half of participants being arrested for the first time between ages 15 and 17 (Figure III.3).

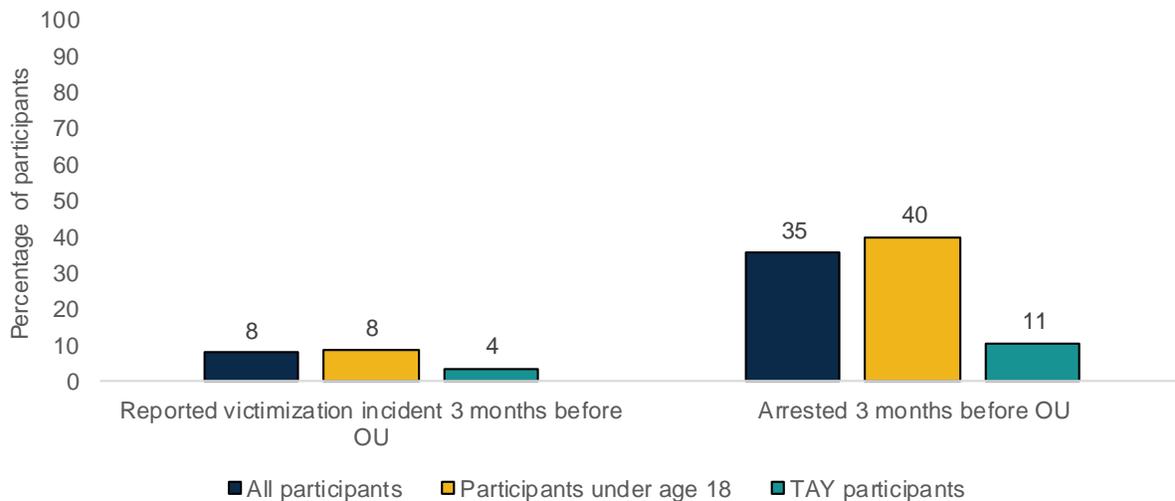
**Figure III.3. Oakland Unite participants’ age at first victimization and arrest**



Sources: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD.

However, when we examined victimization and arrest incidents in the three months before participants went to Oakland Unite, we found that participants were more than four times as likely to have been arrested during this period than they were to have a reported victimization incident (Figure III.4). This finding is consistent with law enforcement being a primary referral for the sub-strategy, particularly before 2017. In addition, participants who were minors were four times more likely than TAY to be arrested in the three months before services and two times more likely than TAY to have been victims of violence during that period, suggesting that more minors come to services at a particularly high-risk moment in their lives.

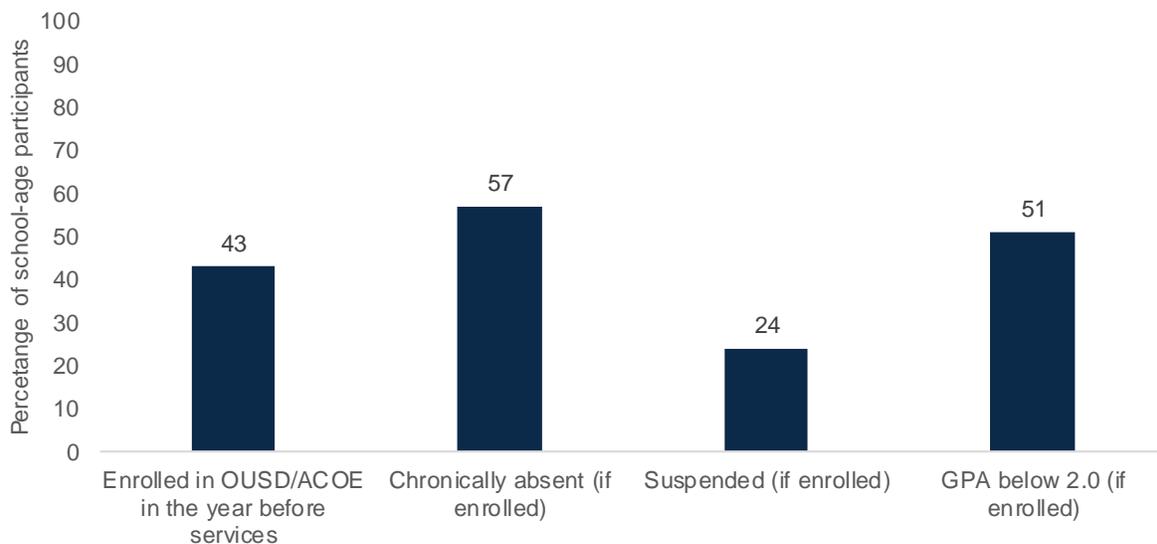
**Figure III.4. Oakland Unite participants’ victimization and arrest history in the three months prior to starting services**



Sources: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD.

**School-age participants exhibit high rates of disengagement from school before starting services.** Among participants who began services before age 18, only 43 percent were enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school during the preceding year (Figure III.5). Although this low enrollment rate likely reflects school mobility and dropout, some youth who were exploited in Oakland may have lived and been enrolled in school in surrounding jurisdictions, for which data were not available for this report. Among youth who were enrolled in an OUSD or ACOE school, chronic absence, discipline, and academic issues were relatively common: 57 percent of participants enrolled in school were chronically absent (defined as missing at least 10 percent of enrolled days for any reason), 24 percent had been suspended or expelled, and 51 percent had a grade point average below 2.0.

**Figure III.5. Oakland Unite school-age participants' engagement in school in the year prior to starting services**



Sources: Cityspan, OUSD, and ACOE.

Note: Chronic absence is defined as missing at least 10 percent of enrolled days for any reason.

GPA = grade point average.

**Limited information is available on other participant risk factors.** In interviews, agencies identified that LGBTQI youth appear to be rising among the participants they serve. According to data entered into Cityspan, the share of youth who identified as LGBTQI was relatively stable, ranging between 13 percent in 2016 and 14 percent in 2018. However, sexual orientation was not reported by 55 percent of participants. Staff at DreamCatcher further noted that the number of youth who self-identify as affiliated with a gang appears to have increased this year. (Agencies do not record gang affiliation, so this anecdotal information could not be confirmed.) Although agencies may assess various risk factors during intake, this information is not captured in Cityspan.

## How do agencies identify participants?

**Agencies have a shared understanding of the CSE youth population, but do not use a standard identification process.** Staff in the agencies have a shared perspective of CSE that is consistent with the California Department of Social Services CSEC Program guidelines, and bring their knowledge of common risk factors to the work. However, each agency relies on different identification tools and processes. Although there are assessment tools that attempt to standardize the identification process (such as WCCC’s risk factor tool designed to assist local service providers in identifying youth at risk of CSE), Oakland Unite CSE intervention agencies may use less complex tools to identify risk factors, especially for light-touch services such as a drop-in center where a more comprehensive assessment may not be feasible. Several agency staff described using an approach they termed “meet them where they are.” Upon first seeking services from an agency, the youth may not be ready to divulge the information necessary to comprehensively assess risk, and agency staff may have limited information from other sources that would enable them to determine risk for CSE. As the youth builds trust, they may share this information with agency staff.

Although staff are aware of common risk factors among CSE youth, the agencies serve differing levels and types of risk, and identification can depend in part on individual judgments made by staff. For example, DreamCatcher uses the WCCC risk factor tool and an intake form, but focuses on homelessness as the single most important risk factor of CSE. In contrast, because BAWAR has close relationships with ACPD and ACDAO, many of its participants are involved in the justice system and tend to exhibit the greatest rates of victimization, arrest, and school disengagement compared to participants in the other agencies. Identification is thus closely tied to the referral source, which also varies across agencies by design (Table III.1).

**Table III.1. Oakland Unite participant referral sources, by agency**

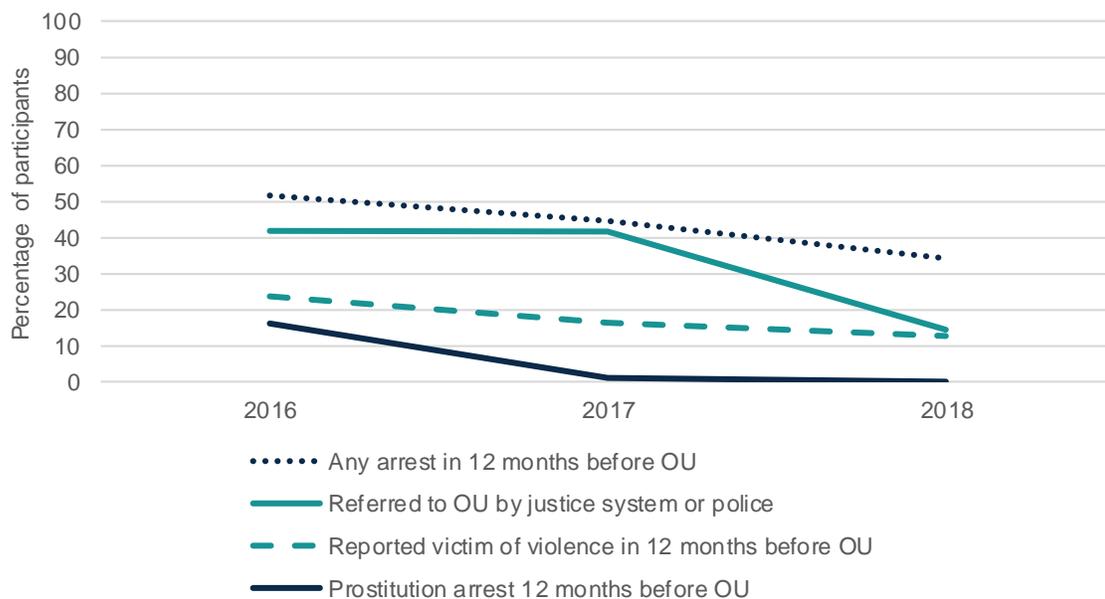
	BAWAR	DreamCatcher	MISSEY
Another agency	3%	11%	5%
Justice system	59%	1%	24%
School	1%	9%	1%
Police	7%	0%	0%
Family or friend	1%	13%	22%
Hospital	9%	0%	0%
Outreach	0%	0%	5%
Self	2%	2%	10%
Social services	1%	1%	12%
Other referral source	5%	8%	12%
Missing referral information	11%	56%	10%
Number of participants	281	195	165

Source: Cityspan.

Note: Shading reflects the relative frequency of the referral sources within each agency. Other referral sources reported include the internet, group homes, and coordinators from other service agencies outside of Oakland Unite.

**Referral pathways have expanded from law enforcement to include multiple points of entry into services.** As Figure III.6 indicates, participants’ contact with law enforcement prior to starting services decreased each year. Increasingly, staff reported that youth could arrive to their agencies through multiple channels. As one informant stated, there should be “no wrong door” for entry into a CSE program, and youth in need should be able to be identified and referred wherever they may encounter someone who can advocate for them. Although it is a best practice to have multiple referral pathways through which youth can be connected to services, processes currently vary depending on the referral source and agency, and sometimes depend on individual relationships. For example, staff said that word of mouth is now a major referral source for MISSEY and DreamCatcher. Other examples of relationship-based referrals include referrals from specific school staff who happen to be aware of an agency’s services and suspect a youth to be at risk of CSE.

**Figure III.6. Oakland Unite participants’ contact with law enforcement prior to starting services, by initial year of service**



Sources: Cityspan, OPD, and ACPD.

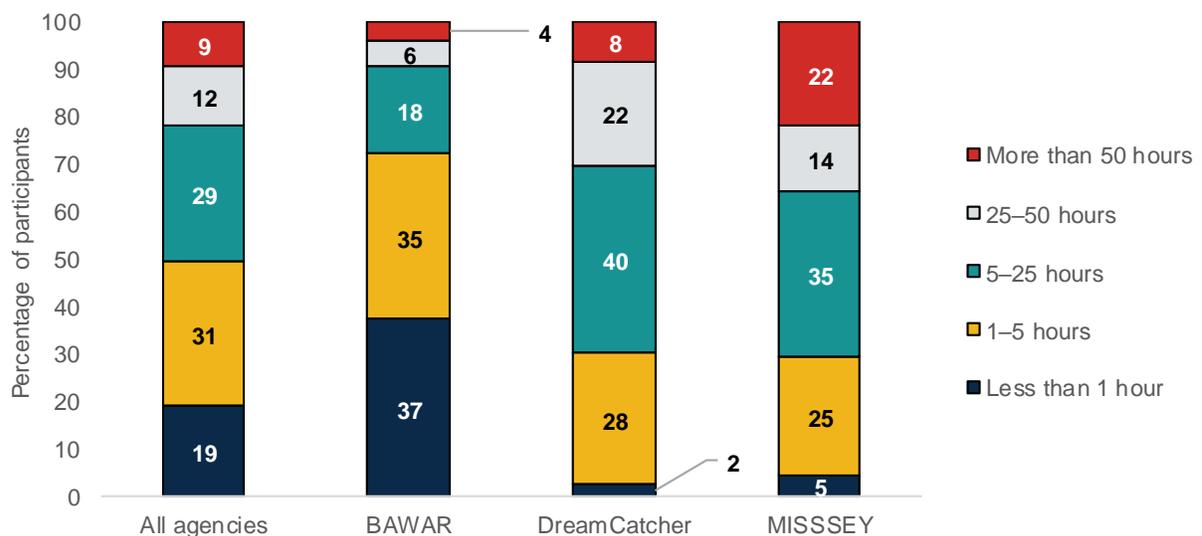
The broadening set of referral pathways may be partly attributable to decriminalization, when Senate Bill 1322 took effect. The law was widely seen as a positive step for minor victims of sexual exploitation. However, it also reduced the ability of law enforcement to help a minor connect with the agencies that could help them separate from their exploiter, and created the need to refer at-risk youth to services in other ways. Previously, an arrest would have led to the youth being held in custody. The youth may then have entered the juvenile justice system, through which referrals could be made to supportive services, such as an Oakland Unite agency equipped to address CSE needs. Now law enforcement may bring youth to the county’s Assessment Center, an unlocked facility where minors can stay temporarily while appropriate referrals and placements are arranged. Although both WCCC and MISSEY are represented at

the Assessment Center, the center serves vulnerable children between birth and age 18 and is not tailored to address CSE-specific needs.

### What services do participants receive?

Length of services differs across agencies according to their models, with half of all participants receiving fewer than 5 hours of services. As described in Chapter II, Oakland Unite’s investment in the CSE youth intervention strategy has centered on short-term crisis intervention and stabilization services. On average, participants received a total of 17 hours of services, but this total ranged from an average of 5 hours at BAWAR, 18 hours at DreamCatcher, and 35 hours at MISSEY, consistent with their different models. As noted earlier, each agency offered distinct, complementary services: BAWAR provided intensive outreach focused on crisis intervention, DreamCatcher provided emergency housing and stabilization services (including case management and group mental health, peer support, and social activities), and MISSEY offered a drop-in center where youth could receive case management, peer support, and counseling. Furthermore, these averages mask the fact that a number of participants received services for a very limited time: 50 percent received less than 5 hours of services, and 19 percent received less than 1 hour over the length of their participation (Figure III.7). Conversely, approximately 10 percent of participants received more than 50 hours of support.

**Figure III.7. Oakland Unite participants’ total service hours received**



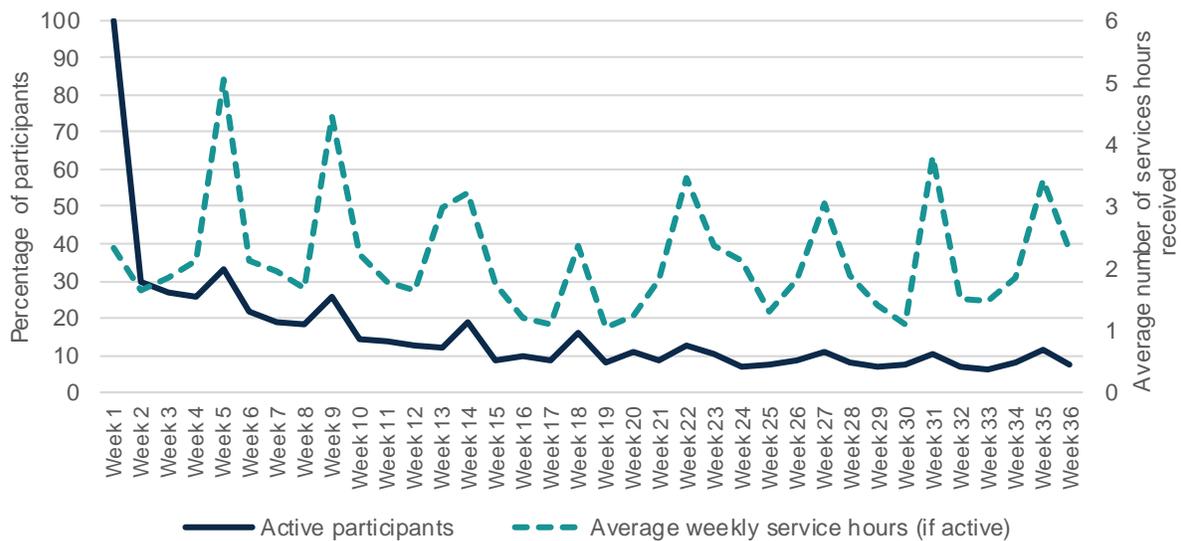
Source: Cityspan.

Note: Although MISSEY also offered services through the youth life coaching sub-strategy, this figure only includes service hours that were recorded under the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy.

Although services focus on short-term crisis response, a subset of participants remains engaged with agencies over time, with engagement spiking every few weeks. Figure III.8 shows the percentage of participants who received services across the weeks following their initial contact with an Oakland Unite agency (solid line). About 30 percent of participants returned for services a second week, consistent with the short-term nature of crisis response. Although engagement

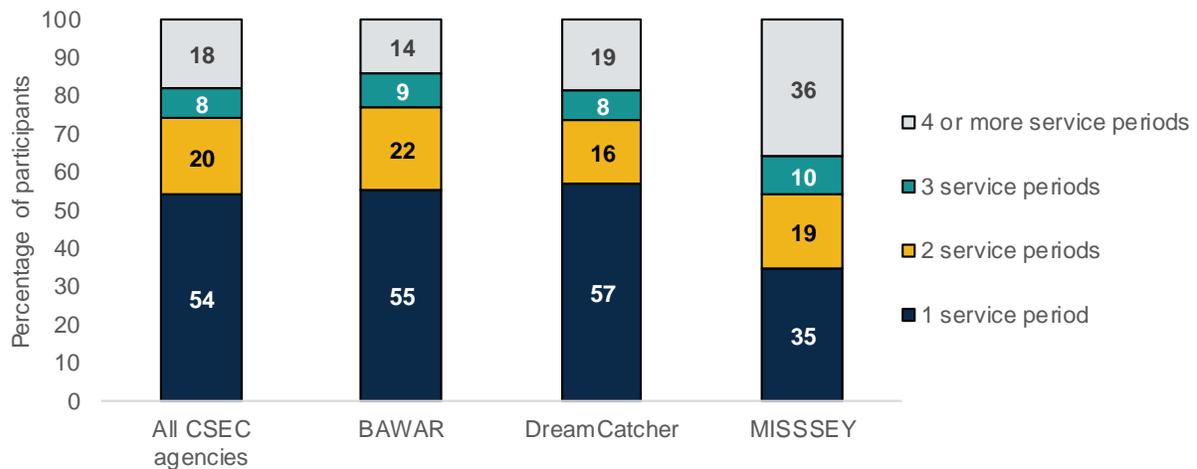
generally decreased over time, spikes in engagement appeared every few weeks, with more youth coming back for services than leaving every two to four weeks. A pattern of engagement spiking every few weeks is also apparent in the number of weekly service hours received among the subset of youth who came back for services (dotted line). On average, during periods of low engagement participants received 1 to 2 hours of services per week, whereas during periods of high engagement they received 3 to 5 hours of services per week. These patterns suggest that participants feel comfortable returning to agencies for support after their initial crisis has been addressed, and are consistent with agencies maintaining an open-door policy.

**Figure III.8. Oakland Unite participants' engagement and service hours received, by week**



Source: Cityspan.

**Almost half of participants receive support over multiple service periods.** Another way to examine participant engagement over time is to measure the number of distinct periods during which youth received services. Defining a service period as a time interval in which no more than a month elapsed between service contacts indicates that 46 percent of participants received support over multiple service periods (Figure III.9). MISSEY participants were most likely to return for services across multiple service periods, which is consistent with the drop-in nature of their services. However, across all agencies there are a subset of youth who return for services multiple times. Typically, approximately 7 weeks pass between service periods, with each service period lasting about 1 week. As noted earlier, these patterns suggest that a number of participants are able to return for short-term support when they need it, even if it is weeks after their initial contact with the agency.

**Figure III.9. Oakland Unite number of service periods participants engaged with agencies**

Source: Cityspan.

Note: A service period is defined as a time interval in which no more than a month passes between service contacts.

**Agencies offer a safe, welcoming space for youth, but participants’ sense of safety can be affected by external factors.** Drop-in facilities provide a first step for agencies to develop relationships with CSE youth. Because CSE youth are coming to the agencies through various pathways, including word of mouth or self-referral, agencies need to be able to provide a welcoming place that encourages youth to return. The facilities at MISSEY and DreamCatcher aim to provide a homelike environment to encourage continued interaction with youth who enter their drop-in or wellness centers. By helping to meet basic needs, such as offering a washer and dryer participants can use, meals, or bus passes, the facilities encourage the process of building trust with youth. This trust, in turn, is intended to lead the youth to return and become more involved with a community or open up to staff to determine what other referrals or resources from which they could benefit.

According to staff, it is critical that their facilities be perceived as safe and free from threats. This goal was consistent with participants’ views on the survey: 66 percent said that it was very important or somewhat important that the agency location is safe and convenient. For some participants, this can mean that the location has no apparent affiliation with law enforcement. Staff at BAWAR specifically noted that being located in the Family Justice Center hinders their ability to serve youth. Because ACPD is in the same building, youth who are on probation are reluctant to go to their facility. As a result, advocates sometimes meet with youth in public places outside the center, which is less secure for both the advocate and the youth. Perceptions of safety may also depend on whether the facilities are located in a neutral location, away from street violence. A staff member at DreamCatcher noted that a recent increase in gang-affiliated youth affects whether they feel comfortable seeking services from the agency. According to the staff interviewed, the cul-de-sac where DreamCatcher and MISSEY are located was considered neutral territory, but may now fall in a gang territory.

**Youth often dictate whether agencies try to engage their families in services.** Although staff acknowledged that accessing family support systems could help increase successful transitions for youth, some noted that this can be challenging as family members may be abusive, involved in the youth's exploitation, or otherwise not a positive influence in youths' lives. As a result, it is not standard practice across the sub-strategy to involve families in service provision, and staff often rely on youth to dictate the degree of family involvement. An exception is DreamCatcher, which attempts to facilitate family mediation and make referrals to family therapy as part of its efforts to help youth find a permanent home.

## What are the needs of participants?

**Appropriate mental health services are an unmet need for many CSE youth.** Appropriate options are limited for participants who are in need of therapy. At DreamCatcher, mental health graduate student interns are available on a limited basis to meet with participants. While WCCC is a primary resource for CSE youth served by Oakland Unite with mental health needs, not all participants are eligible to receive care from the organization. Outside of these agencies, respondents noted that most mental health services operate under the assumption that trauma has ended, whereas CSE youth may still be experiencing intermittent trauma while receiving therapy. In addition, respondents said that by the time a trusting relationship has developed between the youth and provider, the youth may have reached the limit on services he or she can receive. In addition, a long-term care plan is often needed to help CSE youth recover from their trauma and move past their exploitation.

**Staff burnout makes it difficult to provide the stable relationships that many youth need.** Staff at the agencies sometimes fill the role of a stable, caring adult in a youth's life. As such, they become the de facto support for addressing participants' trauma and other needs. As initially proposed, BAWAR intended to work with participants as long as they were in crisis and needed services. However, staff reported that high levels of staff burnout and turnover led to instituting a limit on the number of sessions between the participant and advocate, after which the participant's case is reevaluated to determine the best next steps. Direct service staff at DreamCatcher also indicated that staff need to care for themselves amidst the trauma and challenges they encounter with the youth they serve and are not always able to provide the ongoing relationship with a caring adult that some youth need.

**Housing continues to be a major need for CSE youth.** Lack of housing was frequently cited as a challenge facing CSE youth. This information is consistent with participant survey responses, where only 39 percent of respondents said it was very likely that they would have a safe place to live one year into the future—by far the lowest among all Oakland Unite sub-strategies. Even with the opening of Claire's House<sup>5</sup> and Nika's Place to specifically serve CSE youth, informants expressed that demand exceeds supply. In addition, these two facilities focus on minors, and are thus not an option for exploited TAY.

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<sup>5</sup> Claire's House is a short-term residential therapeutic program operated by Catholic Charities that serves CSEC ages 12 to 17.

**The sub-strategy’s expanded age eligibility will allow agencies to support TAY, who have been an underserved group with different needs.** Informants suggested that fewer services are available for TAY even though they tend to be further along the Stages of Change continuum than younger participants. As noted in Chapter II, Oakland Unite recently expanded eligibility to include TAY, which will allow older CSE youth to receive support from the agencies. Informants noted that services will need to take into account the different needs of TAY compared to younger participants. Agency staff observed that TAY may need less intensive outreach than younger participants, as TAY are more likely to be ready to make a change. As another example, MISSEY staff noted that their trauma-informed curriculum resonates more with CSEC than with older youth.

TAY also experience different challenges. For example, while younger children can be placed back into the home of a family member, ideally, or be eligible for other types of housing through foster care or Claire’s House and Nika’s Place, these are not options for TAY. In addition to housing, many TAY are also seeking jobs and child care. As part of a growing recognition of the needs of CSE TAY, a pilot project is underway outside of Oakland Unite between WCCC and MISSEY to assist trafficked TAY with health care, housing, and employment opportunities.

## How do agencies collaborate with other partners within and outside of Oakland Unite?

**Agencies say they have benefitted from collaboration and cross-agency referrals within Oakland Unite.** Staff across the agencies noted that Oakland Unite has fostered connections between them and cited each other as referral sources and partners in supporting CSE youth. One informant noted that the connections have also helped staff feel more supported, as working with the unique needs of this population can be isolating. A staff member at DreamCatcher also pointed out that Oakland Unite was a valuable resource when their agency experienced an uptick in the number of gang-affiliated youth seeking services. Through Oakland Unite, DreamCatcher was able to connect with a knowledgeable resource about gang dynamics in Oakland and with others working in that field.

**However, there is room for more cross-agency referrals across the Oakland Unite network.** Although the sub-strategy is designed to meet different needs of CSE youth, only 13 percent of participants received services from more than one CSE youth intervention agency as part of Oakland Unite (not shown). The greatest number of shared participants was between BAWAR and MISSEY (Table III.2). One informant suggested that the shared goals and target populations of BAWAR and MISSEY create an opportunity for closer collaboration that would be further facilitated by being in the same physical space. Staff at MISSEY relayed that participants want a one-stop shop where they can access multiple services, and having a safe, private place to meet with youth is a key part of BAWAR’s service model.

**Table III.2. CSE youth participation in multiple Oakland Unite agencies and sub-strategies**

Percentage of participants who also receive services from:				
	BAWAR	Dream Catcher	MISSEY	Other Oakland Unite sub-strategies
BAWAR	-	3%	20%	27%
Dream Catcher	5%	-	12%	11%
MISSEY	29%	12%	-	51%

Source: Cityspan.

Note: MISSEY includes participants in the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy only. Shading reflects the relative frequency of participant sharing overall.

A larger share of participants (21 percent) received services from another Oakland Unite sub-strategy (not shown). Most of these youth received life coaching from MISSEY, which until 2019 was funded by Oakland Unite under the youth life coaching sub-strategy. (Starting in fiscal year 2019–2020, another agency—Young Women’s Freedom Center—will offer life coaching to CSE youth leaving the Transition Center of the Juvenile Justice Center). Although Oakland Unite offers services to young adults, including life coaching and employment and education support, TAY were four times less likely than minors to receive services from another Oakland Unite sub-strategy. One informant noted that it can be challenging to build strategic partnerships with agencies outside of the CSE strategy because those agencies are not equipped to address the needs of CSE youth.

**Informants provided mixed feedback regarding collaboration with law enforcement.** One informant said that recent efforts have resulted in improvements in how law enforcement is viewed as potential collaborators working to support CSE youth. BAWAR works closely with OPD, and the two have trained each other’s staff. BAWAR has taught staff at the police academy to recognize the signs of CSE, to see a referral to BAWAR as a first response to helping youth connect with necessary services, and to understand how other agencies collaborate to serve CSE youth. However, another informant noted the effectiveness of law enforcement training depends on “what they’re willing to learn about how to better support youth.” Similarly, another informant noted that working with ACDAO can be “hit-or-miss.” As noted earlier, the passage of Senate Bill 1322 may have reduced the ability of law enforcement to help a minor separate from their exploiter and created a gap in law enforcement objectives related to CSEC. Finally, recent scandals within OPD have eroded trust in the organization.<sup>6</sup>

**Informants see an opportunity to develop a closer partnership with schools, beyond just accepting referrals.** OUSD school staff may receive training from MISSEY or WCCC, and some school staff are consistent sources of referrals. However, implementation of the district’s response protocol may be applied unevenly across schools. One informant pointed out that, given teachers’ many responsibilities, training of other types of staff at schools would be beneficial to the identification and support of CSE youth so that the burden does not fall solely on teachers. In addition, multiple staff from agencies told stories that reveal the lack of a universally shared

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see: <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2016/06/the-oakland-police-department-scandal-explained.html>

perspective on the best way for schools to support CSE youth. In one example, agency staff described a scenario in which a CSE student returned to school, which was a positive step. However, a teacher called the student's probation officer for an apparent probation violation, which resulted in the youth being arrested again while at school. Staff said that returning to custody undoes the progress youth have been making outside of the justice system.

## What role does Oakland Unite play in broader efforts to support CSE youth in Oakland?

**CSE youth intervention agencies benefit from the technical assistance Oakland Unite provides.** Technical assistance needs identified by respondents outside of the agencies included improving organizational infrastructure, obtaining additional grant funding, and tracking outcomes beyond the number of youth served. Oakland Unite has partnered with Bright Research Group to offer technical assistance to all agencies in the network, and has developed a learning agenda with topics such as healing modalities for survivors of gender-based violence.

**With Oakland Unite's expansion of the gender-based violence strategy, there are opportunities to further integrate CSE youth intervention into broader violence prevention efforts.** Multiple informants noted that increased collaboration could take place with other efforts by Oakland Unite to prevent and interrupt violence, as the communities affected by gun violence (which have historically been the focus of violence prevention efforts) are also impacted by gender-based violence. However, while CSE-focused agencies view exploited youth as victims, several informants noted that organizations that do not focus on CSE may not share this perspective. Untrained providers may thus blame the youth for making bad choices and not know how to best support them. Informants also noted that the same individual who participates in interventions to prevent gun violence may also be involved in trafficking or abusing CSE youth. From their perspective, interrupting CSE means that violence prevention efforts also need to address the role of buyers and sellers and provide education and alternatives for these individuals. Oakland Unite's expansion of the gender-based violence strategy acknowledges these dynamics and offers opportunities for further integration.

**Institutions and stakeholders across Alameda County have different views of CSE youth and how they should be treated.** Outside of Oakland Unite, institutions that come in contact with CSE youth, such as law enforcement agencies, the juvenile justice system, schools, the child welfare system, healthcare providers, and communities affected by CSE may also lack a shared perspective on the issue. One informant in particular noted that, beyond Oakland, other police jurisdictions in the county need to be in agreement with how youth are identified and treated. Informants believe that if everyone viewed CSE youth as victims entitled to certain protections, this framing of the issue could help destigmatize CSE for those youth who need help and promote a shared approach to supporting them. Developing a shared understanding of CSE across these key institutions and stakeholders has the potential to shift the conversation away from blame and toward rehabilitation.

Multiple agencies and branches of government are tackling the issue of CSE in Alameda County, but a cohesive strategy is lacking. For years, Oakland and Alameda County have been at the

forefront of efforts to tackle CSE and support victims. However, different informants indicated that service providers, law enforcement, the juvenile justice system, child welfare system, schools, health care settings and the people in the communities where CSE is taking place need to have better communication and collaboration. In addition, several informants noted that because many of the systems that CSE youth encounter are not Oakland-specific, addressing the issue of CSE youth needs to involve government agencies and stakeholders throughout Alameda County. In recognition of the need for increased collaboration across the county, initiatives borne out of ACDAO and Alameda County Social Services have attempted to create a more coordinated system of addressing CSE needs.

With co-chairs from ACDAO and Oakland Unite, AC United was borne out of a state-wide assessment that indicated that a council serving these functions was a best practice to combat CSE. However, according to informants, this effort has not yet fulfilled its purpose. Informants recommended that the council needs representation and commitment from key stakeholders in the community, and strong leadership to keep a large and diverse group of members focused on core objectives. Maintaining a consistent, ongoing schedule of meetings is also important.

One informant also noted the importance of having representation from the City of Oakland in discussions with the child welfare–led steering committee that is working to address the issue of CSE countywide. This committee provides a response protocol for CSE youth, as many are eligible for social services. The informant expressed the view that City government should be involved in the development and implementation of the plan, especially due to the need for coordination between law enforcement (at the city level) and child welfare (at the county level).

## IV. CONCLUSION

In this report, we describe the implementation of Oakland Unite’s CSE youth intervention sub-strategy. In summary, we offer the following key findings:

**Agencies serve the intended population of girls and young women of color with a history of victimization, contact with law enforcement, and school disengagement.** The profile of participants was consistent with other research on CSE youth, suggesting that agencies are serving the intended population. Participants’ first reported victimization frequently preceded their first arrest and occurred by age 14, yet youth were more likely to come to services after an arrest than after a victimization incident.

**Agencies are following many best practices in their work.** Although Oakland Unite is still developing shared standards of practice, the CSE youth intervention agencies are already implementing many best practices. For example, all agencies have a shared understanding of the CSE youth population, which is grounded in the expertise and lived experience of providers. Staff commonly referred to the Stages of Change model as a way to understand participants’ readiness for change and described using an approach they termed “meet them where they are,” which is consistent with harm reduction. In addition, the agencies have a flexible open-door policy that allows youth to return for services as needed.

**Although the services offered by Oakland Unite agencies focus on short-term crisis response, many youth return for support over time.** Almost half of participants receive support over multiple service periods. Participants’ engagement with services spikes every few weeks, with participants returning and receiving a higher intensity of services from time to time. These patterns suggest that a subset of youth build a continuum of care by returning to the agencies as needed after their initial crisis has been addressed.

**The sub-strategy’s expanded age eligibility will allow agencies support TAY, who have been an underserved group with different needs.** TAY appear less likely to be in a moment of crisis when they come to services and are perceived to be further along in the Stages of Change continuum. Despite exhibiting greater readiness to make a change in their lives, however, they often are too old to receive needed support services. In addition, they tend to have different needs related to housing, employment, and child care than younger participants. Oakland Unite’s decision to expand CSE services to TAY should offer opportunities to serve these older youth.

**CSE youth’s unmet needs include mental health support; stable relationships with caring adults; and safe, stable housing.** Oakland Unite agencies focus on helping youth through crisis response and stabilization, which are the first two tiers of the California Department of Social Services’ recommended three-tiered response to support CSEC. However, the last tier—ongoing support—may not be addressed. The unmet needs that were identified may require longer-term care and relationship building, either through Oakland Unite or other partners.

**Despite strong collaboration within the sub-strategy, there is room for more cross-referrals as well as greater collaboration with other Oakland Unite strategies.** Although the sub-

strategy is designed to meet different needs of CSE youth, only 13 percent of participants received services from more than one CSE youth intervention agency. A larger share received services from another Oakland Unite sub-strategy (21 percent), but most were minors who participated in life coaching at MISSEY. In addition to expanding cross-referrals, there may be other opportunities to increase collaboration between the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy and other efforts by Oakland Unite to prevent and interrupt violence, given that both are interrelated. However, this collaboration may require first developing a shared understanding of CSE youth across the network.

**Although agencies serving CSE youth have a shared understanding of the population, the broader violence prevention community does not have a standard identification process.**

Despite efforts from HEAT Watch, WCCC, and other agencies to develop protocols and tools to help youth-serving adults identify signs of CSE, the process of identifying and referring youth at risk of or experiencing CSE does not appear to be standardized in Oakland. As referrals broaden beyond law enforcement, it may become even more important for Oakland Unite agencies across all strategies to have shared identification criteria.

**Multiple agencies and branches of government are tackling the issue of CSE in Alameda County, but a cohesive strategy is lacking.** Although initiatives borne out of ACDAO and Alameda County Social Services have attempted to create a more coordinated system of addressing CSE youth needs, the county has not yet achieved a cohesive strategy for identifying and serving CSE youth. Different informants indicated that stakeholders need to have better communication and collaboration.

## Considerations for the future

Based on these findings, we offer some considerations for Oakland Unite to continue to improve program services:

**Continue to develop standards of practice for CSE youth intervention agencies.** Although each agency provides different services, shared standards of practice, including a standardized identification tool, could help ensure they each consistently draw from evidence-based practices in providing support to CSE youth. This could include using the Stages of Change model not only to identify where youth lie on the continuum but also to develop a response plan for youth who exhibit different levels of readiness for change, as GEMS and ACT do. Approaches could also include elements from harm reduction and motivational interviewing. Oakland Unite is already working with Bright Research Group to develop standards of practice and a training plan for the network that covers many of these topics.

**Support agencies in collecting additional participant data that can be used for continuous improvement.** Currently, limited information is collected systematically on the needs and outcomes of participants. Agencies could begin collecting data on risk factors and meaningful short-term outcomes, such as changes in self-reported attitudes and social-emotional skills or achievement of participant goals related to housing and other needs. Collecting data when

participants first begin services and throughout their engagement with the agencies could help them assess their effectiveness to better serve youth.

**Continue to integrate CSE and other gender-based violence responses into broader violence prevention efforts.** Oakland Unite could foster stronger connections between CSE-focused agencies and Oakland Unite agencies focused on other types of community violence. This work has already begun with the development of an expanded gender-based violence strategy in fiscal year 2019–2020 and the identification of training needs across the network with Bright Research Group. A next step toward fostering these stronger connections could be to define, across strategies, what CSE is, how to identify CSE youth, and how to respond appropriately to those involved on all sides of exploitation. These efforts could also include encouraging more cross-referrals with Oakland Unite life coaching and EESS, particularly for serving TAY needs.

**Promote a shared understanding of CSE youth identification and response across the county through advocacy, protocols, training, and research.** Beyond Oakland Unite, creating an infrastructure where there is “no wrong door” means that all stakeholders who come in contact with youth need to be able to identify those at risk and connect them with appropriate services. Taking an active role in AC United is one way for Oakland Unite to promote a consistent understanding of the problem and a cohesive strategy to combat CSE.

In Los Angeles and Multnomah Counties, developing a single response protocol and training a large number of staff have been core to the response model. Both counties also emphasized working closely with child welfare, schools, and hospitals, in addition to law enforcement, to create formal referral structures. Multnomah County in particular has worked to ensure that both minors and TAY have access to a full continuum of care and housing. Although Oakland Unite has focused on short-term responses, there may be opportunities to raise awareness, as well as additional funds, for longer-term needs under the new Department of Violence Prevention.

Finally, part of developing a shared understanding of CSE youth could involve promoting more data sharing and research. Currently, data on CSE youth are collected by various stakeholders, including Oakland Unite, ACDAO’s SafetyNet, OUSD, and the Assessment Center. However, there has been little linking and analysis of these data to date, even though they could assist in assessing the scope of youth CSE in the area as well as identifying predictive factors. As data sharing requires legal and technical capacity to develop agreements, processes, and analyses, it could be helpful to identify an overseeing agency for this effort, such as the HEAT Institute, the new Department of Violence Prevention, or the Alameda County Public Health Department, which already has a data and research team.

## Areas for future research

We see several areas for additional research and analysis that could support Oakland Unite in understanding and improving program effectiveness in the coming years. Although relatively limited rigorous research exists overall on services for CSE youth, this is especially true for short-term crisis intervention and stabilization services compared to more intensive programs. To

assess the effectiveness of these services, we recommend identifying and collecting relevant outcomes that are expected to change among participants in the short run, including self-reported attitudes, feelings of safety, and plans for the future. We also recommend assessing implementation fidelity once shared standards of practice have been developed. Implementation fidelity is an important complement to effectiveness research, as it helps programs identify what is being evaluated and interpret the results. A different vein of research that could take advantage of existing administrative data would be to conduct predictive analytics to identify the factors that predict CSE among local youth and thus inform responses before youth come into contact with law enforcement.

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## Appendix A:

### Additional information on CSE policy and programs

In Appendix A, we offer additional detailed information on the CSE policy context and provide examples of related efforts and promising programs in other parts of the country.

## State, county, and city policy contexts

In 2006, the state passed the California Trafficking Victims Protection Act (CTVPA), which required the Attorney General to prioritize CSEC, made human trafficking a felony, provided avenues for victims to receive damages, and created a statewide taskforce on the issue (Walker 2013). In 2012, the California Against Slavery and Exploitation (CASE) Act, also known as Prop 35, strengthened exploiter penalties and victims' court defense capabilities, while also requiring human trafficking response trainings for law enforcement, although the state did not impose any penalties for agencies that neglected to provide training (Alrabe and Stover 2018; Walker 2013). Subsequent legislation further improved CSEC protections in court testimony and outside the juvenile justice system through child welfare, replaced group homes with short-term residential treatment centers, and created funding channels for CSEC support efforts (Alrabe and Stover 2018; Walker 2013). Most recently, California passed a safe harbor law, Senate Bill 1322, which took effect in 2017 and prohibits arrests of minors younger than 18 on prostitution, loitering, or solicitation charges.

Within Alameda County, HEAT Watch has served as a hub for efforts to develop a coordinated response to supporting CSEC through “a five-point collaborative strategy” (HEAT Watch 2019). The initiative's five components are: (1) robust community engagement, (2) training for and sensitization of law enforcement, (3) vigorous prosecution, (4) education of and advocacy with policy makers, and (5) wraparound services for victim and survivors. This blueprint has become a nationally recognized, award-winning model for responding to the needs of human trafficking victims.

The HEAT Watch umbrella includes a number of programs. ACDAO also created the Bay Area HEAT Coalition, a network of system, community, and service provider stakeholders that share practices for addressing human trafficking, and the HEAT Institute, which has identified gaps in data and research and produced trauma-informed protocols for law enforcement agencies, emergency departments, and clinics in Alameda County to use in identifying signs of CSE youth. Under HEAT Watch is also the Young Women's Saturday Program, a 16-week aftercare and youth development course aimed at teaching young women self-reliance following exploitation.

Another notable program created under HEAT Watch is SafetyNet, a weekly, multidisciplinary case review of youth who have been exploited or are at risk of exploitation following initial involvement with the juvenile justice system. SafetyNet meetings include 15 agencies that interact with CSEC and at-risk youth, including BAWAR and MISSEY. Agency representatives work together to connect youth to services and resources that meet their individual needs. As part of SafetyNet, ACDAO maintains a database of CSE youth with information from the different agencies involved. ACPD has also partnered with MISSEY and WCCC to counsel CSEC who are in juvenile hall and worked with BAWAR to administer a victim assessment.

County-level efforts like HEAT Watch, AC United, and others have been complemented by past initiatives led by city agencies. In 2013, the Oakland City Council passed a resolution convening the CSEC Task Force, a collaborative comprised of organizations that work with victims of sex trafficking. The task force included elected officials and representatives from public safety agencies, service providers, OUSD, and advocate organizations, and has since been incorporated into AC United to represent the needs of Oakland. Recommendations from the task force in 2016 included expanding housing and placement options for children and TAY and requiring that all City employees participate in CSE trainings (City of Oakland CSEC Task Force 2016). Training for all public-facing City employees was completed in September 2019. OUSD also convened a CSEC Task Force in 2011, which brought together school administrators and community service agencies to provide trainings on child trafficking to school employees. Most recently, the district began tracking data on students suspected of or confirmed of being sexually exploited and developed a response protocol involving county, city, and nonprofit collaborations, including required referrals to MISSEY.

## Related efforts in other regions

Other jurisdictions nationwide have demonstrated a similar commitment to confronting and eradicating commercial sexual exploitation. We highlight key aspects of coordinated CSEC efforts in Los Angeles County, California, and Multnomah County, Oregon.

### **Los Angeles County, California**

Los Angeles County's approach to CSE prevention is coordinated by the Los Angeles County CSEC Integrated Leadership Team, which was founded in 2015 to bring together key stakeholders and connect CSEC with the services they need. Both the Los Angeles County Probation Department and the county's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) have specialized CSEC units with lower caseloads, regularly scheduled multidisciplinary team meetings for CSEC, and specialized CSE courts (Dierkhising et al. 2018). The Succeeding through Achievement and Resilience Court serves probation-involved youth in a manner similar to Alameda County's SafetyNet. In addition, the Dedication to Restoration through Empowerment, Advocacy, and Mentoring Court serves CSEC who fall under the DCFS's jurisdiction. After being identified as CSEC, they are connected with an advocate from a community-based victim advocacy agency contracted by the court who meets with youth regularly and attends these weekly multidisciplinary team meetings. This community-based advocate helps guide CSEC victims through the web of agencies and refers them to other service providers.

Understanding that many county officials may come into contact with CSEC and have the opportunity to refer them to services, the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team emphasizes identification and response training for all county employees. As of 2017, around 12,000 county probation officers, social workers, schools, and other providers were trained in CSEC response (Plaza 2017). In 2013, Los Angeles County developed the First Responder Protocol for CSEC, a set of trauma-informed response guidelines for the first 72 hours following law enforcement identification of a potential CSEC victim (Ackerman-Brimberg et al. 2018). Within the first 90

minutes of contact, law enforcement officers are expected to assess and address urgent medical needs of victims and transport them to a staging agency, where they are connected with a community-based advocate and representatives from the probation and DCFS teams described earlier. The advocate provides clothes and food and takes the child for a medical exam. Over the next 72 hours, a safety plan is developed by a multidisciplinary team, and next steps are taken to ensure the youth is connected with longer-term support systems. This protocol helps ensure that youth do not fall through the cracks.

Most recently, Los Angeles County is working to expand housing options for CSEC. Although some funding already exists in the county to provide housing to youth identified as CSEC, the county identified a shortage of dedicated housing. More than a third of minors and TAY who were victims of sex trafficking and served in 2018 by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (a core service provider for CSE victims in Los Angeles) reported that they were also experiencing homelessness (Office of Supervisor Hilda Solis 2019). County departments are working to develop a plan to create more housing placement options and provide supports for youth identified as CSEC or at risk of exploitation. The county has also recently expanded housing options for youth in the foster care and probation systems.

### **Multnomah County, Oregon**

Collaboration and coordination are the central tenets of Multnomah County's CSEC response. In 2009 the county established the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Steering Committee under a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The committee meets quarterly, at a minimum, to provide structure for a diverse and comprehensive set of stakeholders to take stock of the state of CSEC and identify gaps in service provision. Collaborating agencies include law enforcement, the Oregon Department of Human Services CSEC Unit, the Multnomah District Attorney's Office, and a broad array of victim service providers. The Committee's "no wrong door" philosophy and clearly defined roles and responsibilities emphasize referrals across all agencies, aiming to ensure that youth encountering *any* partner agency will be brought into a full continuum of care provided by partner agencies (CSEC Steering Committee 2012).

The Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC) serves as a key connection between victims and partner agencies when they come into contact with CSEC. This role ensures that victims receive the same supports, regardless of whether they were first identified by law enforcement, human services, or another agency. SARC provides around-the-clock crisis response resources, has a drop-in center, and operates two long-term case management programs: the Survivors Together Reaching Your Dreams Empowerment (STRYDE) program for youth ages 12 to 18 and the Resilient Young Adult Survivor Empowerment (RYSE) program for TAY ages 18 to 25. SARC also assists in connecting victims with partner agencies depending on youths' needs and provides opportunities for peer connection and community building via regularly scheduled group activities. Both programs use a survivor-to-leader model guided by a strengths-based philosophy that values the capacity, knowledge, and potential of victims. Each month, SARC supports more than 80 youth and young adult survivors (Nedeau et al. 2017).

In addition, emergency and long-term residential support for youth ages 14 to 21 are provided by Janus Youth Program’s Athena House, and LifeWorks Northwest operates an intensive mental health and substance abuse treatment program for both CSEC and TAY. To ensure that these services constitute a full continuum of care for CSEC victims, the Steering Committee also has a Victim Service Advisory Committee (VSAC) made up of direct service providers that meets monthly to assess any gaps or areas of improvement (Ohlsen 2015). Multnomah County recognized that TAY often age out of crucial support systems, which requires efforts to expand services for TAY. The county utilized funding from the Administration for Children and Families Domestic Victims of Human Trafficking grant to expand services for TAY. This effort expanded Janus Youth Program and LifeWorks services for young adults and established the STRYDE program (Krieger et al 2018).

### Promising programs for supporting CSEC

Programs to support CSEC victims can take a variety of forms. In a meta-analysis of available literature, Moynihan et al. (2018) identified five main categories of services: (1) health or social services, (2) intensive case management models, (3) psychoeducational therapy groups, (4) residential programs, and (5) other types (examples include a drop-in alternative school program and a cash-transfer program). Oakland Unite CSEC agencies, like many other programs, provide services that fall into multiple categories. Research on the effectiveness of programs serving CSEC populations is limited, however. In Moynihan et al.’s meta-analysis, only eight studies included comparison groups. DuBois and Felner (2016) also highlighted a lack of research with sufficiently large sample sizes and reliable outcome data in their meta-analysis of mentoring programs for CSEC populations. Despite these limitations, a number of programs are evidence-based and/or demonstrate promising results (Table A.1).

**Table A.1. Summary of promising programs for CSE youth**

<b>Runaway Intervention Program (RIP)</b>	RIP operates in conjunction with the hospital-based Child Advocacy Center in Minnesota to serve runaway girls with a history of sexual exploitation. The program employs advanced practice nurses to provide case management and utilizes girl empowerment groups and home visits to help promote healthier relationships, mental health, and behavioral health. The intervention lasts up to 12 months and includes participants spending three hours weekly with a therapist. A study found that participants demonstrated improvements in familial relations compared to abused girls from a comparison group after 6 months (Saewyc and Edinburgh 2010). By the 12-month follow up, RIP participants were no longer statistically different from a sample of non-abused girls in drug use and sexual risk behaviors and had lower rates than the non-abused girls of suicide ideation and attempts. Girls with lower levels of self-esteem and family connectedness and higher levels of emotional distress at baseline showed the greatest improvements.
<b>Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS)</b>	GEMS provides a variety of supports, including crisis care, case management, education services, youth development, and transitional and supportive housing (GEMS 2019). The organization incorporates guiding principles from the fields of domestic violence, positive youth development, gender-specific programming, and addiction into their programs. GEMS hires survivors to mentor youth and trains them to employ transformational relationship practices as delineated by the Roca intervention model using a range of methods, including motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral therapy. The organization also uses an adapted version of the Prochaska and DiClemente (1983) Stages of Change transtheoretical model to tailor their approach according to the stage where youth find themselves. For example, if a youth is in the pre-contemplation stage, the goals are to help them develop a reason for changing, validate their experience, encourage self-exploration, and leave the door open for future conversations. No evaluations of GEMS exist at this time.
<b>My Life My Choice</b>	My Life My Choice is a well-established CSEC support program in Massachusetts that has shown promising early evaluation results (My Life My Choice 2018). Program participants are paired with survivor mentors and receive intensive case management, community leadership and engagement opportunities, and specialized clinical and substance abuse recovery support. Youth are expected to build meaningful relationships with their survivor mentors, who meet with them weekly for one to two hours, traveling to see them wherever they are placed. Youth cannot age out of the program and can continue to access their mentor as long as they choose. Preliminary before-and-after results found that program participants were five times less likely to report being commercially sexually exploited after completing one year of the program and also reported a decrease in drug use and an increase in social support and coping skills.
<b>Acknowledge, Commit, Transform (ACT)</b>	ACT serves youth in Massachusetts through intensive and long-term residential treatment, pairing counseling with My Life My Choice survivor mentoring. To improve participant retention, ACT changed its service model to focus on girls who both self-reported sexual exploitation and demonstrated a willingness to commit to changing their lives according to the Stages of Change model. These benchmarks, along with readiness to adjust to life in a group home, are assessed by a motivational interview at intake. If girls are not deemed ready, they can be entered into a nonresidential program to help prepare them for ACT. This transition led to a 78 percent decrease in unplanned discharges compared to earlier iterations of the program (Thompson et al 2011). Of those who did have a planned discharge, the majority were still in a safe environment three months later. Thomson et al. (2011) also found that the residential aspect of the program helped girls stay put and provided structure in a homelike environment.
<b>Seeking Safety</b>	Seeking Safety is a counseling model to help people attain safety from trauma /or substance abuse. Although this model is not exclusively focused on CSE youth, strong evidence exists of its effectiveness. Based on a meta-analysis of 12 quasi-experimental or experimental studies, Lenz et al. (2016) found that the program was effective in decreasing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse for a broad range of individuals. In a randomized controlled trial specifically focused on adolescent girls, the program was effective in improving a variety of mental health outcomes (Najavits et al. 2006). The Seeking Safety program is designed to be integrated with other treatments and can be implemented in an individual or a group format. The program consists of 25 sessions but can be adapted to focus on a subset of those sessions if counselors have fewer than 25 sessions to work with individuals.

## Appendix B:

### Additional information on data sources

This report is based on qualitative and quantitative analyses of multiple data sources. We discuss both the qualitative and administrative data sources in this appendix. All data collection procedures were reviewed and approved by the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board.

## Qualitative data

The qualitative component of this report included primary data collection through a participant survey, site visits, interviews with agency staff, and a review of materials provided by Oakland Unite and collected during site visits.

## Survey data

The purpose of the survey data collection was to gather information about Oakland Unite directly from strategy participants. The general topics of study included experiences and satisfaction with services, importance of agency characteristics, thoughts about the future, experiences with violence, and demographic characteristics. Before the survey was administered, it was pretested with former Oakland Unite participants in two strategies. The pretest focused on respondents' understanding of questions, difficulty of answering, and the time required for completion. Based on this pretest, the survey was revised and the final version was translated into Spanish.

The surveys were fielded with participants at each agency during September and October 2018. Survey administration was typically conducted on two back-to-back days where any Oakland Unite participant who visited that agency on one of the days was asked to complete a survey. Due to the differences in services provided and the number of participants at each agency, some sites delayed the start of data collection or included additional days. Nearly all surveys were conducted using a paper copy of the survey, with 5 percent of respondents electing to use a web version. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete. As no identifying information was included on the survey, all responses were anonymous. In total, 28 participants completed a survey across the three CSE youth intervention agencies. Because the number of surveys varied by agency, the responses were weighted proportional to the number of completed surveys at each agency. This means that each agency contributed equally to the sub-strategy averages regardless of the number of participants who completed a survey.

## Site visits and interviews

The purpose of the site visits and interviews was to gather information about Oakland Unite strategy implementation from agency staff. The general topics of study included participant engagement, program implementation, program progress and tracking, collaboration networks, and successes and challenges. Site visits took place in winter 2017 and summer 2019. During each visit, Mathematica staff conducted semistructured interviews with grantee staff members, including managers and frontline staff. Across the two years, we conducted 21 interviews at the three agencies providing services in the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy, plus 6 additional key informant interviews with stakeholders in policy and advocacy, law enforcement, community health, and coalition-building (Table B.1).

**Table B.1. Site visit and interview summary**

Data collection period	Site visits conducted	Director or program manager interviews	Frontline staff interviews	Key informant interviews
Winter 2018	3	3	9	0
Summer 2019	3	3	6	6

At each site, we interviewed site directors or managers for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, focusing on topics such as defining and reaching the program’s target population, program performance measures, and staffing. Interviews with frontline staff members at each site were typically 30 to 45 minutes and focused on participant engagement, service provision, and program data. For agencies with grants across multiple strategies, we interviewed frontline staff members for each strategy. For key informant interviews, we conducted phone calls that were typically 30 to 60 minutes long.

Interview protocols included a set of topics, with questions varying depending on which type of respondent was interviewed. The protocols also included targeted questions about the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy, which asked about best practices specific to it and additional details about services and outcomes. The interviews were semistructured, meaning the evaluation team asked the same questions during each interview, but responses were open-ended and the interviewer had flexibility to probe for details or clarification in the responses. During the site visits, a note taker recorded responses in a standardized template, which linked the responses to specific interview questions and to broader topics for analysis. The evaluation team analyzed responses across interviewees within the site and across agencies within the same sub-strategy. The goals were to highlight key themes about the implementation of the sub-strategy and to identify similarities and differences between agencies.

In addition to site visits and key informant interviews, the evaluation team reviewed materials provided by Oakland Unite staff and collected directly from agencies during the site visits. The documents included the scope of work statement, agency budgets, quarterly reports, and intake forms. We used this information to better understand the types of services offered by each agency as well as their benchmarks and performance measures.

Although the qualitative data provided rich information about the agencies and the Oakland Unite program, this evaluation approach has some limitations. In particular, the participant surveys were done with a convenience sample of clients who happened to be on-site, or with clients specifically selected for participation by the agency, so their responses may not reflect the experiences of all clients. As with all data from interviews, particularly those including sensitive topics, a potential for social desirability bias also exists, as staff may provide responses that reflect favorably upon themselves. Although we specifically informed each interviewee that their answers would be kept confidential and would have no impact on their employment or the agency’s participation in Oakland Unite, respondents may still have felt that negative responses could have repercussions. We designed our site visit procedures to minimize the potential for this

bias, including interviewing in private spaces and emphasizing the confidential nature of the research in the consent language, but we cannot rule out the effect of these factors in the results.

## Administrative data

The quantitative analyses in this report used administrative data from Oakland Unite, the Oakland Police Department, the Alameda County Police Department, the Oakland Unified School District, and the Alameda County Office of Education that were linked together (Table B.2).

**Table B.2. Administrative data sources**

Data source	Total number of individual records retrieved	Date range
Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE)	1,492	August 1, 2014, to June 30, 2018
Alameda County Probation Department (ACPD)	23,377	January 1, 2010, to December 31, 2018
Oakland Unite Cityspan data	8,631	January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2018
Oakland Police Department (OPD) arrest incidents	76,630	January 1, 2006, to December 31, 2018
Oakland Police Department (OPD) victimization incidents	392,680	January 1, 2006, to December 31, 2018
Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)	82,028	August 1, 2010, to June 30, 2018

## Oakland Unite data

All Oakland Unite agencies are required to maintain administrative records in a common database managed by Cityspan. Agencies use the database to record service contacts and hours, milestones reached, incentives received, referral sources, and demographic and risk information about each participant. The data extract we received from Cityspan included participants who received services between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2018. Although some individuals may have begun participating in Oakland Unite in the prior year, we did not have information about any services they received before January 1, 2016.

Between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2018, 69 percent of the 564 participants in the CSE youth intervention sub-strategy consented to share their personal information for evaluation purposes. Accordingly, Cityspan did not provide names, dates of birth, or addresses for participants who did not consent. Although nonconsenting participants are included in most descriptive statistics about Oakland Unite, they are excluded from any analyses of victimization, arrests, probation, and schooling because these analyses require identifying information so participants can be linked to outside records.

## OPD data

OPD provided data on arrests and victimization incidents that occurred between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2018. The arrest data included information about each arrest incident, including its location, statute code, and Uniform Crime Reporting statute category code, as well

as information about the arrestee, including name, date of birth, address, and demographics. The victimization data included similar information for each incident involving a victim of a crime. We used the Uniform Crime Reporting statute categories and statute codes to determine each arrest or victimization incident's type. For example, we classified incidents by whether they involved a gun or other weapon, public order, property, drugs, a violent offense, or a violation of probation. For victimization incidents, we also identified a broader category of violent incidents, including whether they involved homicide, rape, robbery, assault, offenses against the family and children, prostitution, human trafficking, or sex offenses. For arrest or victimization incidents with multiple offenses, we used the most serious offense to determine the severity.

### **ACPD data**

ACPD provided data on state and local Criminal Offender Record Information for individuals age 13 and older served through the Juvenile Division between 2010 and 2019, and records for individuals ages 18 to 40 served through the Adult Division, including realigned populations, also between 2010 and 2019. The Juvenile Division data files included arrest date and arrested offenses, sustained offenses, disposition, and facility information. These files included juveniles arrested throughout Alameda County, including the City of Oakland. The Adult Division file included only information on sustained offenses for individuals who were on formal probation. The ACPD data was matched to the other data sources using first and last name, date of birth, race and ethnicity, and gender. Mathematica conducted the match on-site at ACPD and removed identifying information from the matched file before conducting the analysis.

### **OUSD data**

OUSD provided data on all individuals enrolled in the district at any point between August 1, 2010, and June 30, 2018. For each academic year, the data included information about the student's school, days enrolled, days absent, days suspended, and academic performance. In addition, the data contained demographic and identifying information about each student.

### **ACOE data**

ACOE provided data on all individuals enrolled in the county's community schools at any point between August 1, 2014, and June 30, 2018. For each academic year, the data included information about the student's days enrolled, days absent, days suspended, and academic performance. In addition, the data contained demographic and identifying information about each student.

### **Data matching**

To conduct the analyses, we needed to link individuals within and across data sets. To conduct these matches, we used an algorithm to assign individuals a unique identifier both within and across data sets. The algorithm used consenting individuals' identifying information, including their first and last name, date of birth, gender, and address, to perform matches. All of these data points did not have to be available or match exactly for records to be matched. Instead, the algorithm was designed to take into account the likelihood that two or more records represented

the same person, even if minor differences existed across records (such as in the spelling of names). The algorithm placed the most weight on name and date of birth but also used gender and address, if available. These weights were carefully calibrated to avoid erroneous matches while still allowing flexibility.

We received 9,700 unique Cityspan IDs in the Oakland Unite data. The matching algorithm identified 8,631 individuals, which reflects that a number of people received services from more than one Oakland Unite agency. However, this number may still overcount the unique individuals served by Oakland Unite, because we were only able to identify participants who received services from more than one agency if they consented to sharing their identifying information for evaluation. Of the 8,631 individuals identified in the Oakland Unite data, we matched 1,780 records to OPD arrest data, 1,627 to OPD victimization data, 1,625 to ACPD data, 1,319 to OUSD data, and 273 to ACOE data; 4,074 did not consent to share their identifying information with evaluators and thus could not be linked to other records.

### **Data security**

Mathematica exercises due care to protect all data provided for this evaluation from unauthorized physical and electronic access. Per our current data-sharing agreements, we do not share identifiable data with Oakland Unite or any other entity. All data are stored in an encrypted project-specific folder in a secure server. Access to this folder is restricted to authorized users through access control lists that require approval from the evaluation's project director. Only staff members who were needed to complete the evaluation objectives were granted access to the restricted data folder; they included three researchers (including the project director) and a lead programmer. These staff members have all completed data security training and background checks and are up to date on Mathematica's data storage and security policies.

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