**West Virginia**

**Total Score:** 1 **Points** of 8 **Total Available**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Force</th>
<th>.5 of 1.5 total points</th>
<th>Prevention Education</th>
<th>0 of 4.5 total points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Abuse</td>
<td>.5 of 1 total points</td>
<td>Staff Training</td>
<td>0 of 1 total points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why did my state receive this grade?** West Virginia is in the bottom tier and should actively work to improve statutes to make prevention education viable and accessible for youth.

**Who does this exploitation and trafficking impact?** Each year millions of children are victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, affecting communities small and large. This happens all over the world, including in your own community.

**How does this happen?** Children are most often exploited by an acquaintance (significant other, friend, family member, etc.). They are targeted, groomed, tricked, and manipulated.

**West Virginia by Numbers**

- 57 calls to the human trafficking hotline.
- 16 human trafficking cases reported.
- 16 cases concerned a minor.
- <3 cases involved females, <3 involved males.

**West Virginia Laws and Provisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Task Force?</td>
<td>West Virginia Human Trafficking Task Force <a href="https://stophumantraffickingwv.org/">Link</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms included in West Virginia’s Definition of Abuse</td>
<td>Exploitation only (Trafficking not included)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Education Law, Scope, and Grade Levels</td>
<td>None identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training Requirements</td>
<td>Neither mandated nor recommended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXPLOITATION BY NUMBERS

- Approximately 1.6 million children run away every year in the United States.\(^2\)

- Of the nearly 27,000 runaways reported to NCMEC in 2017, one in 7 were likely victims of child sex trafficking.\(^3\)

- There were 8,524 human trafficking cases reported in the United States in 2017 and 32% of those cases involved a minor.\(^4\)

- In 2017, 88% of trafficked children were in the care of social services at the time the exploitation began.\(^5\)

RECOMMENDED STEPS AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

**TASK FORCE**

- Amend state task force to include a focus on the prevention of child exploitation and trafficking.

- Direct that a seat on the task force is filled by a child exploitation prevention expert.

**STATE DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE**

- Amend state statute defining child abuse to include trafficking.

**PREVENTION EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

- Mandate child exploitation prevention curriculum in all state public schools for all grade levels.

- Identify within the curriculum the need to educate youth with age appropriate curriculum on child exploitation, child trafficking, and child abuse.

**STAFF TRAINING**

- Mandate all state public school staff are trained to effectively recognize and respond to the signs of child exploitation and factors that make youth vulnerable to child exploitation.

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1 Polaris Project, Human Trafficking Hotline, 2017 State Statistics: [https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states](https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states). Note that not all demographics are captured by every report to the hotline.


4 National Human Trafficking Hotline Statistics: [https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states](https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states)


MISSION: We equip adults to empower youth to eradicate exploitation. For more info visit: [http://iempathize.org/educators/the-prevention-priority/](http://iempathize.org/educators/the-prevention-priority/)