



# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Issue 23-16 (REV)

Date: 10/03/23

## ADVOCACY SERVICES FOR COMMERCIALY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN (CSEC)

This FYI is being issued as an update to FYI 19-32 which was released on October 7, 2019. Updates and changes are below:

### REFERRALS TO ADVOCACY SERVICES

- 1) The referral requesting Advocacy Services should be submitted by the assigned CSW through the CSEC Tracking System (CST) <https://csec.dcfslacounty.gov/> (Simple step-by-step instructions on how to submit a referral are below in the “Accessing Services” section of this FYI).
- 2) Referrals for *BOTH* prevention and intervention services can be submitted. Prevention of CSEC services can be provided to at-risk of CSEC youth whose ER referral will be closed and also to at-risk of CSEC youth on open DCFS/Probation cases. Important Note: If the ER CSW wants to refer a youth for prevention services, *the referral must be submitted by the CSW and approved by the SCSW prior to ER investigation closure in CWS/CMS.*
- 3) Referrals for prevention services can be submitted for youth should they meet “at-risk” criteria defined below.

### POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT

- A. Referrals will not be accepted for youth currently missing.
- B. Advocacy Services can only be provided to youth residing in Los Angeles County.

### BACKGROUND

DCFS has implemented CSEC Advocacy Services contracts, effective September 24, 2019, to serve children and Non-Minor Dependents at high-risk or victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE), as well as provide support to their parents/caregivers. Services include First Responder’s Protocol response, safety planning, strengths and needs assessment, advocacy planning, case management, Survivor Advocacy, Parent Advocacy, stabilization and engagement, participation in multidisciplinary team (MDT) and Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, support for participants testifying against their traffickers, and linkages to resources, services, and supports.

### TARGET POPULATION

CSEC services are targeted for DCFS/Probation referred children (8-17 yrs.) and non-minor dependents (18-21 yrs.) at high-risk or victims of CSE. Parents/primary caregivers are also supported through Parent Advocacy.



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## **ACCESSING SERVICES**

Prior to submitting a referral for advocacy services, the Children's Social Worker (CSW) must inform the youth of Advocacy Services that are available and obtain consent from the youth before submitting a referral. *Important Note:* When describing the services to youth, do not use the term "CSEC" Advocacy Services, as youth *do not identify* with this term. Simply describe Advocacy Services as mentoring services that will support them in achieving goals that matter to them and providing new and fun experiences that will help them learn new skills that they are interested in learning.

### **Step-by-Step Guide: How to Submit an Advocacy Services Referral:**

Before submitting a referral, ensure that the youth has been flagged as an "at-risk" or victim of CSEC on the CSEC Data Grid located on the ID page. Also, if you suspect or know that the youth is a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, report it to the Child Protection Hotline. Every new allegation or new incident of Commercial Sexual Exploitation must be reported to the Child Protection Hotline.

Upon confirming the child/youth's interest and consent for Advocacy Services, the CSW should submit an advocacy referral using the steps below:

1. Go to CSEC Platform on LA Kids (click on butterfly).
2. Click on CSEC Advocacy Service referral portal link.
3. Click on County Login button on CSEC Tracking System Login Window.
4. Search for youth in search window by inputting youth's first and last name and click the search button.
5. Click on blue assignment number next to the youth's name.
6. Fill in electronic referral and click submit.
7. Check off all applicable reasons for the referral. This will provide preliminary information to the provider and ensure timely and appropriate service delivery.
8. Request Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSW) review and approval of the referral. SCSWs should receive an alert via e-mail that they have a referral pending their review, but alert your SCSW. SCSWs need to review/approve the referral using the CSEC Tracking System (CTS).
  - Once the SCSW approves the referral, the CSEC Administrative team can assign the referral to an Advocacy agency.

Should the CSW/SCSW run into technical difficulties, please contact:

[EDL-DCFS-CTS-Support@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:EDL-DCFS-CTS-Support@dcfs.lacounty.gov)

## **PREVENTION SERVICES FOR YOUTH DETERMINED TO BE "AT RISK"**

As previously stated, referrals for children/youth who are at-risk or victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation but will not have an open case can be submitted for CSEC Advocacy Services. **The referral for CSEC Advocacy Services must be submitted prior to the case or investigation closure in CWS/CMS.**



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Referrals for prevention services can be submitted for youth should they meet the “at-risk” criteria below:

- The child/youth displays ONE of the following indicators:
  - Child/youth exhibits behaviors or otherwise indicates that they are being controlled or groomed by another person;
  - Child/youth spends time with people known to be involved in commercial sex;
  - Child/youth’s use of internet, cell phone, or social media involves social or sexual behavior that is atypical for their age.

**OR**

- The child/youth displays a minimum of TWO of the following indicators:
  - Child/youth has a history of running away, unstable housing, including multiple foster care placements, or periods of homelessness including couch surfing;
  - Child/youth has had prior involvement with law enforcement or the juvenile justice system;
  - Child/youth is frequently truant;
  - Child/youth’s relationships are concerning, placing them at risk or in danger of exploitation;
  - Child/youth has a history of substance abuse, specifically narcotics, opiates, crack/cocaine and amphetamines.

\*Social Security Act § 471(a)(9)(C)(i)(I), WIC § 16501.35, & WIC § 16501.45

## **WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER SUBMITTING REFERRAL**

Upon submitting the referral, the CSW can expect to receive a confirmation email that the referral has been received. Additionally the CSW and SCSW will receive an “Assignment Alert” once the referral has been assigned to a CSEC Advocacy Services agency. Once assigned, the advocacy agency will contact the CSW within one business day for initial introductions and case discussion.

## **SERVICE DESCRIPTION**

**Advocacy Services-** Four (4) Service Components:

- **First Responder’s Response with MART/ERCP** (90-minute response by CSEC Advocacy Agency)
  - Advocate will provide a joint response with DCFS/Probation and law enforcement to provide the child/youth with initial engagement and basic necessities (i.e. food, change of clothes, water) and will help stabilize the youth.
  - Advocate will develop a 72-hour safety plan.
  - Advocate will participate in MDTs/CFTs.
- **Stabilization** (approx. first 4 months of services)
  - Face-to-face contact within three (3) business days of referral.
  - Provide introductory packet to participant and parent/guardian.
  - Complete Intake Strengths and Needs Assessment
  - Complete Safety Plan.



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- Create Advocacy Plan to support youth safety, stability and well-being
- Goal is to meet with youth face-to-face a minimum of four (4) times per month.
- Contact youth weekly by phone or other social media.
  - Purpose: to develop rapport and begin addressing advocacy goals.
- **Maintenance Services** (Approx. up to 6 months; can extend services based on the individual needs of the child/youth)
  - Meet with participant face-to-face a minimum of two (2) times per month.
  - Contact youth weekly by phone or other social media.
    - Purpose: to address advocacy/case management goals, participation in educational and empowerment workshops, create a strong support system, and connect to community-based agencies to address needs of the youth and their parent/caregiver.
- **Transition Services** (last 3 months of services)
  - Meet with participant face-to-face minimum twice per month.
  - Contact youth weekly by phone or other social media.
    - To assist in transition.
    - Purpose: on-going advocacy/case management goals, participation in educational workshops, linkages to services, and development and implementation of a transition plan.
  - Create transition Advocacy Plan.

## Survivor Advocacy Services

- Face-to-face contact with youth within two (2) business days of receiving referral.
- Advocate will provide:
  - Stabilization and engagement services.
  - Support for participant testifying.
  - Crisis Response to increase support, stabilization and reduce revictimization.
  - Co-facilitate educational workshops.
- Short-term goals to help participant stabilize and transition into longer-term advocacy services.
- Provide weekly face-to-face contact with the youth participant during the first month of services, or longer, if deemed necessary for stabilization.
- Contact the youth daily via phone, text, and other forms of social media during the first month of services.
- Provide bi-monthly face-to-face contact after the first month (or once participant is stabilized) and weekly contact via phone, text, and other forms of social media.

## Parent Advocacy Services

- Parent Advocate will make face-to-face contact with parent or legal guardian, as appropriate, within two (2) business days of receiving referral.
- Parent Advocate will have weekly face-to-face contact with the parent or legal guardian to provide support needed during the first month of service or longer, depending on the need.
- Parent Advocate will offer the Parent Empowerment Program to parent/primary caregiver to help parent/caregiver understand pathways to victimization, risks and vulnerabilities, impact of



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trauma, dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation, factors involved in leaving the exploitive relationship, and ways they can support their child towards healing and recovery.

## Youth Workshops and Empowerment Activities

- CSEC prevention and intervention curriculum will be provided, in addition to educational, transitional, empowerment, and community integration events and activities.

## Restoration Funds

The agency may be able to provide and/or purchase certain items or services that support the youth in achieving safety, permanency, well-being and self-sufficiency. Items may include, but are not limited to:

1. Therapeutic or recreational activities not covered by Medi-Cal;
2. Sports equipment and uniforms;
3. College tours;
4. Tutoring;
5. Youth Empowerment Conference fees;
6. Personal/self-care/hygiene products;
7. Diapers and baby products;
8. Clothing and
9. Books.

For program support, please contact:

[CSECAAdmin@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:CSECAAdmin@dcfs.lacounty.gov)



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POLICY  
INSTITUTE

If you have any questions regarding this release,  
please e-mail your question to:

[Policy@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:Policy@dcfs.lacounty.gov)

(right click to open footer section and access link)