



## **Report On Child Sex and Labor Trafficking**

*Completed pursuant to Family Law Article § 5-704.4(g)(2)*

January 16, 2025

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## REPORT REQUIREMENT

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This report is hereby submitted in response to the following reporting requirement:

*(g)(2) Beginning December 1, 2019, the Department of Human Services shall annually report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on:*

*(i) the number of reports of child sex trafficking and labor trafficking made in the State in the preceding year;*

*(ii) the outcome or disposition of reports of child sex trafficking and labor trafficking made in the State in the preceding year; and*

*(iii) the number of referrals made to regional navigators under this section in the preceding year.*

Source: Family Law Article § 5-704.4(g)(2)

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## BACKGROUND

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Since 2013, the Department of Human Services has actively tracked data on reports of alleged child sex trafficking to monitor and respond to these complex incidents. This data collection includes the number of reports received by Child Protective Services (CPS) and the outcomes of each investigation on a statewide level.

The [Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act](#), enacted in 2019, mandates that law enforcement agents and Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) notify a Regional Navigator when they suspect or have reason to believe a child is a victim of sex trafficking. This notification triggers access to necessary services for the child. The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy (GOCPP) oversees the Regional Navigator Program (RNPG), managing the application process, funding, and program oversight. This report, under the Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act, provides data on reports of child sex trafficking and labor trafficking, their outcomes, and referrals to regional navigators.

In February 2024, funding was awarded to implement programs in all 24 jurisdictions, achieving full statewide implementation of the RNPG.

In response to the passage of [House Bill 508](#) (2024) which went into effect on October 1, 2024, we recognize labor trafficking as a form of child physical abuse. In preparation for this change, we added labor trafficking as a maltreatment type for Child Abuse and Concern for Trafficking. We support our workforce by developing and providing

training in response to reports of labor trafficking. These changes will allow us to respond, track, and monitor reports of labor trafficking cases and provide valuable trend data for the next legislative report.

CPS investigations can have one of three dispositions as defined by Family Law §5-701:

- Indicated -- a finding that there is credible evidence, which has not been satisfactorily refuted, that physical or sexual abuse or neglect did occur.
- Unsubstantiated -- a finding that there is insufficient evidence to support a finding of indicated or ruled out.
- Ruled out -- a finding that physical or sexual abuse, or neglect did not occur.

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**REPORTS OF ALLEGED CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATED BY MARYLAND  
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES IN CALENDAR YEAR 2023**

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Total Number of Reports	Indicated	Unsubstantiated	Ruled Out	Number of Referrals Made to a Regional Navigator
123	42 (34%)	19 (15%)	62 (50%)	128

**Analysis**

Maryland Child Protective Services (CPS) investigated 123 reports of alleged child sex trafficking in 2023, a 31% increase (29 additional reports) from the 94 reports in 2022. Referrals to regional navigators also increased, from 115 in 2022 to 128 in 2023 (an increase of 13).

Not all Regional Navigator Program (RNP) referrals fall under CPS's investigative authority. As a result, the total number of referrals to regional navigators may exceed the total number of reports that can be investigated by Child Protective Services (CPS). An example of this would involve an adult survivor under 24. In such cases, CPS would be unable to investigate an individual over 17. Instead, incidents involving adults aged 18 or older are reported to law enforcement or the local jurisdiction's State's Attorney's Office. The Regional Navigators program can offer support and provide resources to individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 without CPS involvement.