

# Gangs and Sex Trafficking

Gangs in the United States are trafficking girls and women for sex. When a woman or girl is being prostituted by a pimp, she is being prostituted by one person. When a woman or girl is being prostituted by a gang, she is owned by the entire gang.

## Why gangs are engaging in trafficking:

- **Gangs are finding that trafficking in women and girls for sex is much more lucrative than trafficking weapons or drugs. The risks are low and the returns are high.**
  - The returns are high because girls and women can be sold for sex over and over again while guns and drugs can only be sold once.
  - The risks are low because if caught, the women are always the ones charged, not the gang members who force them.
- **Young people in under-resourced neighborhoods are at high risk because gangs have discovered that domestic minor sex trafficking is profitable and easy for them.**

## How gangs are engaging in trafficking:

- **Gangs recruit girls by promising them love but then sharing them with other gang members in preparation to prostituting them. Many girls who join gangs are being forced to sell themselves in order to gain a position in the gang.<sup>1</sup> Others are brought in through force with daily beatings and death threats if they try to escape. Regardless of how they are recruited, once they are in, it is very difficult to escape.<sup>2</sup>**
- **Gang members sometimes place ads online through websites like Craigslist and Backpage. Once arrangements are made online, the girls are delivered and the money goes straight to the gang members.<sup>3</sup>**
- **Some gangs make anywhere from \$500 to \$3,000 dollars a day through sex trafficking.<sup>4</sup>**

## Recent arrests nationwide

- **The Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force ran operation 'Little Girl Lost' in 2011 to bring down a gang running a sex trafficking ring. It marked the first time that law enforcement at the state level in Illinois used wiretapping capabilities, made possible by the Illinois Safe Children Act, to build a sex trafficking case. Read more: [http://www.statesattorney.org/index2/press\\_littlegirllost01.html](http://www.statesattorney.org/index2/press_littlegirllost01.html)**
- **There were five recent cases involving the MS-13 gang in Fairfax, Virginia in 2001. One case involved a 12 year old runaway girl who approached an MS-13 gang member at a party looking for a place to stay. Within a few hours she was being prostituted by the gang. Read more: <http://www.npr.org/2011/11/14/142300731/gangs-enter-new-territory-with-sex-trafficking>**
- **In 2011 thirty-eight members of the Crips gang in Oceanside, California were arrested for operating a sex trafficking ring that involved the prostitution of minors and adult females. Read more: <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/10/4034/>**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/10/4034/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2011/11/14/142300731/gangs-enter-new-territory-with-sex-trafficking>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.amw.com/features/feature\\_story\\_detail.cfm?id=4302](http://www.amw.com/features/feature_story_detail.cfm?id=4302)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/10/4034/>

- In 2010, eight members of the Bloods gang in Los Angeles were charged with sex trafficking of minors. They had recruited their victims from local junior high and high schools. Read more: <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2011/10/4034/>