Human trafficking is considered to be one of the fastest growing illegal industries in the world, generating billions of dollars for traffickers (Polaris Project).

The purpose of this research study was to identify gaps and provide recommendations for better identification and criminal justice service intervention. Research questions included:

1. What are the experiences of criminal justice professionals around sex trafficking?
2. What are the needs of trafficked persons and barriers to getting help?
3. What are recommendations for identifying and serving sex trafficked persons?

This research project utilized qualitative semi-structured interviews to examine sex trafficking from the perspective of criminal justice professionals.

17 interviews were conducted with an average duration time of 45 minutes. Participants were from a variety of criminal justice sectors, including law enforcement, attorneys, and case managers. Interview data were transcribed and analysis consisted of line-by-line coding, creation of categories and thematic analysis. Implications for criminal justice professionals included comprehensive training related to recognizing and responding to human trafficking, systematic screening for trafficking, and increased collaboration among criminal justice agencies.

Additionally, this research study had practice recommendations as well as policy implications related to broadening Utah’s sexual solicitation statute. The majority of participants supported the expansion of Utah’s Safe Harbor legislation.