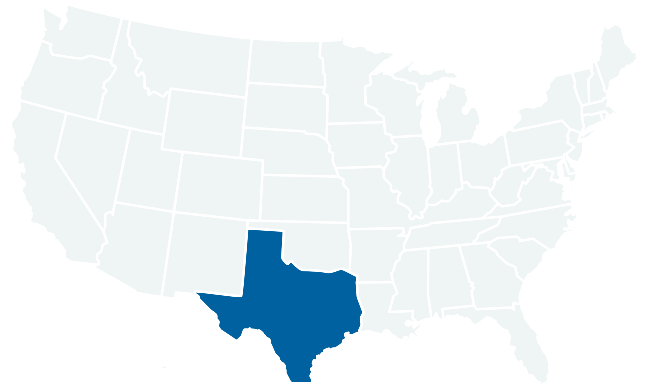


# Texas

## Out of the Shadows Index: Shining a Light on Prevention of and Response to Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the United States



It takes place mostly in the shadows, but sexual violence against children is happening everywhere, irrespective of income level, age, race, religion and sexual orientation. Yet, child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) can be solved, and there are strategies that have proved to be successful in reducing it. When CSEA is approached as a public health problem, with the child at the center of reforms, progress is possible.

The Out of the Shadows Index United States pilot (the US pilot index) aims to understand how states are tackling CSEA both in person and online. It serves as a tool for policymakers, frontline workers and civil society, capturing state action to combat CSEA and identifying key areas for attention.

### Background indicators

Population (m)	29
Population under 18 (%)	27
Median household income (US\$)	61,874
GDP per head (US\$)	60,771

### State summary

**Texas has made some important strides to improve their prevention of and response to CSEA, including training requirements for key stakeholders, comprehensive data collection, and oversight of criminal justice mechanisms. Prevention efforts could be strengthened.**

#### Where has progress been made?

**Training of key stakeholders:** While a number of pilot states provide training to staff in schools on preventing and responding to sexual abuse, Texas is the only state that has broadened this mandate to include training for all employees of youth-serving organizations working directly with children. The state also requires peace officers working on family violence and sexual assault assignment to have regular training on providing a child-friendly and trauma-informed response.

**Specialized medical care:** Texas has established SAFE-ready facilities where specially-trained nurse examiners or physicians conduct sexual assault forensic examinations. Texas also ensures the right to an advocate during an examination.

**Feedback and oversight:** Texas has taken important steps to evaluate the criminal justice response to CSEA in the state. This evaluation included engagement with service providers, law enforcement, and victim-survivors to identify key challenges in the criminal justice chain from the time an incident is reported to the prosecution of an offender.

**Data collection efforts:** Texas has comprehensive data available on the state prevalence of child sexual abuse, disaggregated by the gender and age of the victim, as well as the perpetrator. Data collection efforts also extend to the criminal justice system, where key statistics on CSEA-related arrests, charges and convictions have been collected and provided.

#### What more needs to be done?

**Limited preventive services:** Texas lacks primary prevention programs and help-seeking services aimed at those who are concerned they may be at risk of sexually abusing children.

**Restricting abortion access:** Texas has some of the most restrictive abortion policies in the country that can make it difficult or impossible for women and girls to access services, including victim-survivors of abuse, assault, and incest.<sup>1,2</sup>

### Index scores

#### Overall score

65.8

55.85

#### Legal Framework & State Capacity

The degree to which a state provides legal protections from child sexual exploitation or abuse.

79.3

71.78

#### Policies & Programs

State investment in programs critical to preventing child sexual exploitation and abuse and addressing its risk factors.

58.9

42.88

#### Provision of Support Services

The availability of short- and long-term support for victims, and the degree to which this support is child-centered and trauma-informed.

52.4

52.29

#### Justice Process

The capacity of the state's justice system to put the interests of the child at the center of the process.

72.1

53.34

Texas All states

<sup>1</sup> <https://states.guttmacher.org/policies/texas/abortion-policies>  
<sup>2</sup> [https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/parentalinvolvementlaws.pdf](https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/parentalinvolvementlaws.pdf)

## Out of the shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation

Indicator	Score/100	Indicator	Score/100
<b>Prevention</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>58.6</b>
1.1) Gender Equality, Gender Protection and Marriage Laws	34.2	3.1) Support - Child Welfare	57.8
1.2) Consent Laws	75	3.2) Support - Immediate Support and Recovery	75.9
1.3) Laws Against CSEA	99.6	3.3) Rehabilitation & Prevention	0
1.4) Exemptions & Qualifiers	83.3	3.4) Children's Response to Online Sexual Harms	87.2
1.5) Background Checks/Disqualifications	80	4.1) Child-Centered Emergency Response	57.4
1.6) Data Availability	64.2	4.2) Police Capacity	53.2
2.1) Building Individual Skills & Knowledge	62.6	4.3) Integrated Response and Coordination	100
2.2) Educating Providers	100	4.4) Judicial Processes	71.7
2.3) Promoting Community Education	33.3	4.5) Legal Representation & Advocacy	43.3
2.4) Fostering Coalitions & Networks	100	4.6) Monitoring & Evaluation	71.4
2.5) Changing Organizational Practice	80		
2.6) Influencing Policy & Legislation	26.8		

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#004a7c; border:1px solid #004a7c;"></span> First quartile (100-75)	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#0072bc; border:1px solid #0072bc;"></span> Second quartile (74.9-50)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#46a0c9; border:1px solid #46a0c9;"></span> Third quartile (49.9-25)	<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:#a0c9e0; border:1px solid #a0c9e0;"></span> Fourth quartile (24.9-0)

For a full explanation of indicators, weightings and more detailed information on Texas's performance, please see the interactive Excel model available on the [US pilot index website](#).

In addition to the full methodology, a report outlining the overall findings is also available.

### What is the Out of the Shadows Index?

The World Childhood Foundation USA's (Childhood USA) US pilot Out of the Shadows Index, developed by Economist Impact, examines how stakeholders are responding to the threat of child sexual abuse and exploitation in 12 states. It does not attempt to measure the scale of the problem or incorporate information on the prevalence of sexual violence against children in each state. Rather it uses 182 individual metrics aggregated into 22 indicators and grouped into four categories to measure the extent to which states are acknowledging the problem of sexual violence against children, and whether they are implementing measures to prevent and address the problem holistically.

While the US pilot index can help highlight key areas for attention, existing resources such as the Center for Disease Control's [Technical Package on Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect](#) and [Prevent Child Abuse America](#) offer more detailed information and support for implementation of solutions.

### Please use the following when citing this state profile:

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### For further information, please contact:

- **Katherine Stewart**  
Project Director: [katherinestewart@economist.com](mailto:katherinestewart@economist.com)
- **Laura Avery**  
Senior Analyst: [lauraavery@economist.com](mailto:lauraavery@economist.com)
- **Araceli Irurzun Perez**  
Research Manager: [araceliirurzunperez@economist.com](mailto:araceliirurzunperez@economist.com)
- **Gabriele Bowen**  
Analyst: [gabrielebowen@economist.com](mailto:gabrielebowen@economist.com)