

Law Enforcement Sector Recommendations

Strategies to Respond to FGM/C in the United States

- 1 FGM/C is a form of child abuse and should be classified and recognized as such by local, state and federal enforcement agencies.

 - On the federal level, HHS/ACF discretionary money should be allocated to fund FGM/C education, risk assessment and training for child abuse professionals. As a standard-setter for child protection “best practices”, HHS/ACF should consider developing a standard CPS training curriculum and suggested protocols for FGM/C investigation and response to provide to states.
 - On the state and local level, education is needed for mandatory reporters; training is needed for those handling calls to call centers, investigating allegations, and for case workers and supervisors, and specific codes should be created to allow for accurate tracking and identification of calls related to FGM/C as a distinct harm, rather than subsuming FGM/C under a general code (for sexual assault, for example).
- 2 FGM/C is a form of violence against women. Accordingly, the federal Violence Against Women Act should be amended to (i) specifically identify FGM/C as covered by the Act and (ii) create a discretionary fund for use by the U.S. Government to allow for federal grants to finance education, prevention and services for individuals at risk and survivors. This will ensure that FGM/C and other intersectional forms of violence against women not previously enumerated in the Act, such as forced marriage, are addressed.
- 3 Local, state and federal law enforcement (prosecutors, police, agents, and others) should receive education and training about dealing with victims, at-risk girls, and their families. The focus of community education and outreach about rights and legal options available to individuals at risk and survivors and their families should be on risk assessment and prevention.
- 4 Education and training should be done in coordination with community-based stakeholders. Law enforcement and child protection officials should work with community groups (such as immigrant and refugee service providers) to educate families and communities about the harmful effects of FGM/C, the applicability of federal and state laws barring child abuse and FGM/C, and where to find support services.

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