Fact Sheet Series: Missing, Abducted, and Endangered Persons (MAEP) in Texas.

CRIME VICTIMS' INSTITUTE

COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
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Part I: Understanding Vulnerability and Victimization Risk

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Missing, Abducted, and Endangered Persons (MAEP) in Texas:

Every year, thousands of individuals in Texas are reported missing, with cases ranging from runaway youth to adults experiencing cognitive decline [7]. Although many missing-person incidents are resolved quickly, others involve significant safety concerns and require coordinated responses from law enforcement, service providers, families, and community stakeholders [4,7].

In Texas, a missing person may be an adult whose disappearance appears to be involuntary, a child under 18 whose whereabouts are unknown to a legal guardian, or an individual with a disability or cognitive condition that places them at risk of immediate danger [5]. Although missing-person cases can involve abduction, not every missing-person incident entails criminal activity, as instances of running away, becoming lost, or cognitive impairment can be involved [4]. Recognizing these differences is essential to understanding missing, abducted, and endangered persons (MAEP) in Texas and developing appropriate responses to address the circumstances and potential risks associated with each case.

Have You Heard About MAEP in Texas?

- Texas originated the AMBER Alert system following Amber Hagerman's 1996 abduction and murder in Arlington. AMBER Alerts were designed to increase public awareness and aid in the recovery of endangered missing children [1].
- In 2007, the Silver Alert program was implemented to assist in locating missing older adults and other individuals with documented cognitive impairments [9].
- In 2025, Texas recorded 40,309 missing-person cases; 70% of these were minors [8].
- Texas crisis-service data from 2024-2025 indicate that the most reported challenges among runaway youth in missing-person cases were family dynamics (83%), emotional abuse (29%), mental health concerns (23%), peer influences (22%), physical abuse (18%), and economic concerns (18%) [3].

What Are the Consequences?

Missing-person cases can produce substantial public safety and victim-service concerns. Understanding the potential consequences of delayed recovery is important because timely intervention may reduce risks of victimization, injury, exploitation, and other adverse outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations [6]. For example, runaway youth may be vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking [6], while older adults experiencing dementia may face elevated risks of injury or death if not located quickly [2]. In Texas, 106 of 1,095 children recovered after going missing from foster care placements experienced victimization while missing; 53 were identified as victims of sex trafficking and one as a victim of labor trafficking [6]. Moreover, missing adults with dementia can face harm, accidental death, and care-partner stress [2].

How to Raise Awareness and Support MAEP:

Any concerns about a disappearance should be reported to law enforcement immediately. Texas law requires that missing-person information be entered into the Clearinghouse and National Crime Information Center databases within two (2) hours of receiving a report [5]. Texas operates several public alert programs: AMBER Alerts for child-abduction cases, Silver Alerts for missing older adults with cognitive impairment, Endangered Missing Persons Alerts for missing people with intellectual disabilities or developmental disorders, and CLEAR Alerts for endangered or involuntarily missing adults ages 18-64 [7].

Resources

Texas

- **Endangered Missing Persons Alert (Department of Public Safety) - https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/homeland-security/endangered-missing-persons-alert**
- **AMBER Alert (Department of Public Safety) - https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/homeland-security/amber-alert**
- **Silver Alert (Department of Public Safety) - https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/homeland-security/silver-alert**
- **CLEAR (Department of Public Safety) - https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/homeland-security/clear-alert**

National

- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children - https://www.missingkids.org/home**
- **National Runaway Safeline (24/7 Youth Support and Resources) - https://www.1800runaway.org/**
- **National Missing and Unidentified Persons System - https://namus.nij.ojp.gov/**
- **Report Human Trafficking - https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/report-trafficking**

References

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[5] Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 63, Missing Children and Missing Persons. (2025). https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/

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Resources

• Aging and Disability Resource Center	855-937-2372
• Cyber Civil Rights Initiative	844-878-2274
• Mothers Against Drunk Driving	877-623-3435
• National Child Abuse Hotline	800-422-4453
• National Domestic Violence Hotline	800-799-7233
• National Human Trafficking Hotline	888-373-7888
• National Sexual Assault Hotline	800-656-4673
• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	988
• Texas Abuse Hotline	800-252-5400
• Texas Council on Family Violence	https://tcfv.org/survivor-resources/
• Texas Association Against Sexual Assault	https://taasa.org/get-help/
• Victim Connect Resource Center	855-484-2846
• Victims Of Immigration Crime Engagement (VOICE)	1-855-48-VOICE (1-855-488-6423)

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