New Child Exploitation Task Forces Signal Enhanced FBI Effort to Combat Crimes Against Children

Local News

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Olympia, WA - The FBI is enhancing its efforts to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse by partnering the task force elements of the Innocence Lost and Innocent Images national initiatives in Child Exploitation Task Forces (CETFs). In Washington state, three CETFs synthesize the efforts of the former Innocence Lost Task Forces (ILTFs)—combating commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)—and those of Innocent Images investigators—working to stop the production and distribution of child pornography facilitated by and perpetuated through the Internet.In today’s increasingly web-based society, in-person exploitation of children is often intertwined with online forms of exploitation. The CETFs reflect the FBI’s commitment to advancing its approach to law enforcement to effectively combat evolving threats. By ensuring that investigators with complementary missions are working aside one another—sharing intelligence, conducting meshed operations, combining physical resources—the FBI enhances its ability to protect children.As the ILTFs in Washington have done since being formalized in 2008, the CETFs provide a rapid and effective investigative response to reported federal crimes involving the victimization of children. The CETFs strive to reduce the vulnerability of children to all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. They continue to identify and rescue child victims and go after both pimps and Internet predators. They also continue to strengthen the capabilities of federal, state, and local law enforcement through training programs and investigative assistance.

The three CETFs in Washington state are based in Seattle, Everett, and Tacoma.The Seattle CETF is a partnership between the FBI; the King County Sheriff’s Office; the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI) directorate; and the Seattle, Kent, SeaTac, Port of Seattle, and Bellevue Police Departments.The North Sound CETF is a partnership between the FBI, the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office, and the Everett and Mt. Vernon Police Departments.The South Sound CETF is a partnership between the FBI, the Tacoma and Lakewood Police Departments, the Internal Revenue Service, and ICE-HSI.The FBI combats the range of crimes against children. In addition to working to end the exploitation of children, the FBI often investigates child abductions, international parental kidnappings, and other violations of federal statutes related to minors.