

Finding
K'ds



2025 FINDING KIDS ANNUAL REPORT

LET'S FIND EVERY ONE.

MESSAGE FROM CEO ISABELLE FINNEY

Seven years ago, Finding Kids (then known as Special Operations) was established to address a critical gap in the Bay Area: providing boots-on-the-ground investigations to locate missing and exploited children.

On December 30, 2025, we accepted case #272: a 15-year-old girl classified by law enforcement as a **“voluntary runaway,” a label that implies choice, reduces urgency, and fails to reflect the vulnerability and danger these children face.** Within hours, our cyber team identified indicators of trafficking. Over the next 48 hours, they tracked her movement across Livermore, Oakland, and San Francisco, where she was moved between multiple homes and hotels, ultimately guiding law enforcement to her location on January 2nd. **She was safely recovered and both traffickers were arrested the following day.**

To date, Finding Kids has helped recover 289 missing youth between the ages of 11 and 17 across Northern and Central California and Northern Nevada. We have partnered with more than 80 law enforcement agencies and contributed to the arrest of over 50 traffickers.

Our team of dedicated investigators and compassionate aftercare advocates approach every case as if it were their own child. Their tenacity and commitment are extraordinary. We have much to be proud of, but the need remains urgent.

In 2025 alone, 60,438* missing child reports were filed in California. Of those, 95% were labeled “runaways” and 2,757* children (an average of 53 per week) remain unaccounted for.

Finding Kids was established to find these children and ensure they are brought to safety.

Our work is centered on three priorities:

Recover. Care. Target.

- We **recover** missing children through field-based investigations.
- We **care** for families and youth through parent support and aftercare services.
- We **target** those who exploit children, helping to accelerate arrests.

In 2025, we expanded our reach into Central California and launched a decoy program that resulted in the arrests of 12 traffickers, strengthening our ability not only to find children, but to intervene earlier and disrupt exploitation before it escalates.

Ultimately, our vision is a world where an organization like Finding Kids is no longer needed. Where law enforcement is fully resourced to respond swiftly to every missing child. Where vulnerable families are supported long before a crisis occurs. And where the risk of exploiting a child is so high that the crime itself becomes rare.

We envision a world in which Finding Kids is no longer needed. Until then, we will continue to stand in the gap.

This work is made possible by a community of generous supporters who share this vision, a Board of Directors committed to strong governance and accountability, and a team relentlessly focused on recovering and caring for vulnerable children, ensuring every dollar goes exactly where it matters most.

Whether you choose to give, host an event, become a volunteer county champion, pray for our work, or subscribe and read our newsletters, your involvement makes a direct and measurable difference.

Thank you for your partnership and support. None of what you'll read in this report would have been possible without you.

Isabelle Finney



* <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/ch-status-reports-2025.pdf>

THE PROBLEM

The challenges facing young people – instability at home, bullying, anxiety, and isolation – are not new. What has changed is the sheer number of individuals with nefarious intentions who have access to them.

Through the internet, social media, and gaming, predators can reach children instantly, entering the privacy of their bedrooms and steadily distorting their sense of safety, reality, and belonging.

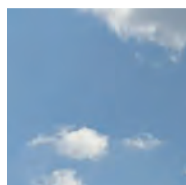
These predators are patient and deliberate. They exploit emotional needs, isolate their targets, and guide them toward increasingly dangerous situations, knowing there is an endless supply of vulnerable youth and a system that cannot respond fast enough to stop them.

At the same time, law enforcement is stretched thin.

Across California and the nation, agencies face staffing shortages, rising caseloads, and competing priorities, leaving families to confront crises with limited support.

The moment a child disconnects from family, supervision, and community, risk escalates. With every hour they remain missing, the likelihood of exploitation, trafficking, and lasting trauma grows.

Helping locate these youth, bringing them to safety, and supporting families in addressing the underlying vulnerabilities is the work Finding Kids was created to do.



Evolving our name and brand

As we prepare to find and protect many more children in the years ahead, we recognize the importance of presenting our work in a way that reflects both the urgency of the mission and the hope that drives it.

As part of this evolution, we have simplified our name to **Finding Kids**.^{*} The new name reflects the heart of what we do – relentlessly pursuing leads and working alongside our partners to locate missing and exploited youth.

Our **updated logo** carries this story forward. The **missing “i”** symbolizes both the children we have found and those we are still searching for. You may also see the “i” appear and disappear in our electronic materials, reflecting the active, ongoing nature of our work as we follow every lead in pursuit of a missing child.

^{*}For legal and IRS purposes, the organization’s name remains Special Operations – Finding Kids



750,000

child predators online actively every day seeking to have conversations with children*

^{*} FBI Agent, Shawn Henry:

https://www.fbi.gov/video-repository/newss-henry_051611/view



WHAT WE DO RECOVER. CARE. TARGET.

WE HELP **RECOVER** MISSING KIDS. WE PROVIDE **CARE** FOR HEALING. WE **TARGET** PREDATORS WHO EXPLOIT THEM.

Finding Kids fills critical gaps in the system by hiring experienced private investigators and retired law enforcement to find missing and exploited children; ensuring youth and families have the support they need; and providing information to law enforcement that holds perpetrators accountable before they can harm children again.

Recover

Missing child cases require sustained, focused investigative attention that stretched police departments cannot always provide.

Across northern and central California and northern Nevada, our investigators move quickly to analyze digital footprints, develop and pursue real time leads, gather critical evidence, and coordinate with local law enforcement when a child is located or a perpetrator identified.

Care

Parents and caregivers of missing children are understandably distraught, confused, and fearful. The Finding Kids Aftercare team steps in the moment we accept a case. While the investigative work unfolds, our trained Parent Advocates provide calm guidance, help organize critical information and ensure families receive regular case updates and the practical support they need to provide a stable, secure home when their child has been returned.

Target

The Finding Kids Decoy Program was launched in January 2025 to target individuals using online platforms to solicit and exploit vulnerable youth, intercept their activity and secure arrests before further exploitation occurs.

In collaboration with the Fresno Police Department, the pilot program recruited a trained decoy. Within weeks, she was in regular communication with traffickers attempting to meet her in person. Each interaction was carefully documented, creating critical evidence for prosecution.

The program led to 12 trafficker arrests in eight months, with the District Attorney prosecuting each case, including *The People of California vs Dexter Francis* where the jury returned a guilty verdict in ten minutes.

In 2026, we plan to expand the decoy program to include both male and female decoys and secure partnerships in several additional counties.

INTEGRITY. EMPOWERMENT. COLLABORATION. TENACITY.

These values are our guardrails.

They guide how we work together and who we work with.



Scan the QR code to view the video of how Finding Kids worked with the Fresno PD on a sting operation.



DO OUR LAWS ADEQUATELY PROTECT CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING?

Federal law is clear: any minor involved in a commercial sex act is a victim of sex trafficking, regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is present (22 U.S.C. § 7102). The responsibility lies entirely with the adult who exploits them.

California has taken important steps to strengthen its laws. Human trafficking is a felony with significant penalties (§ 236.1). Recent legislation has gone further, designating **the trafficking of a minor as a serious felony under the state's Three Strikes Law** (SB 14), and elevating the solicitation of a child to a **felony offense** (SB 1414 and AB 379). The law also reinstated penalties for loitering with intent to purchase sex, giving law enforcement a practical tool to disrupt known exploitation corridors such as International Blvd in Oakland, Capp St in San Francisco, I-5, El Camino Real, and the Figueroa Corridor in Los Angeles.

On paper, these are strong protections. In practice, enforcement and reporting vary widely by county, leaving far too many gaps for vulnerable children to be pulled into.

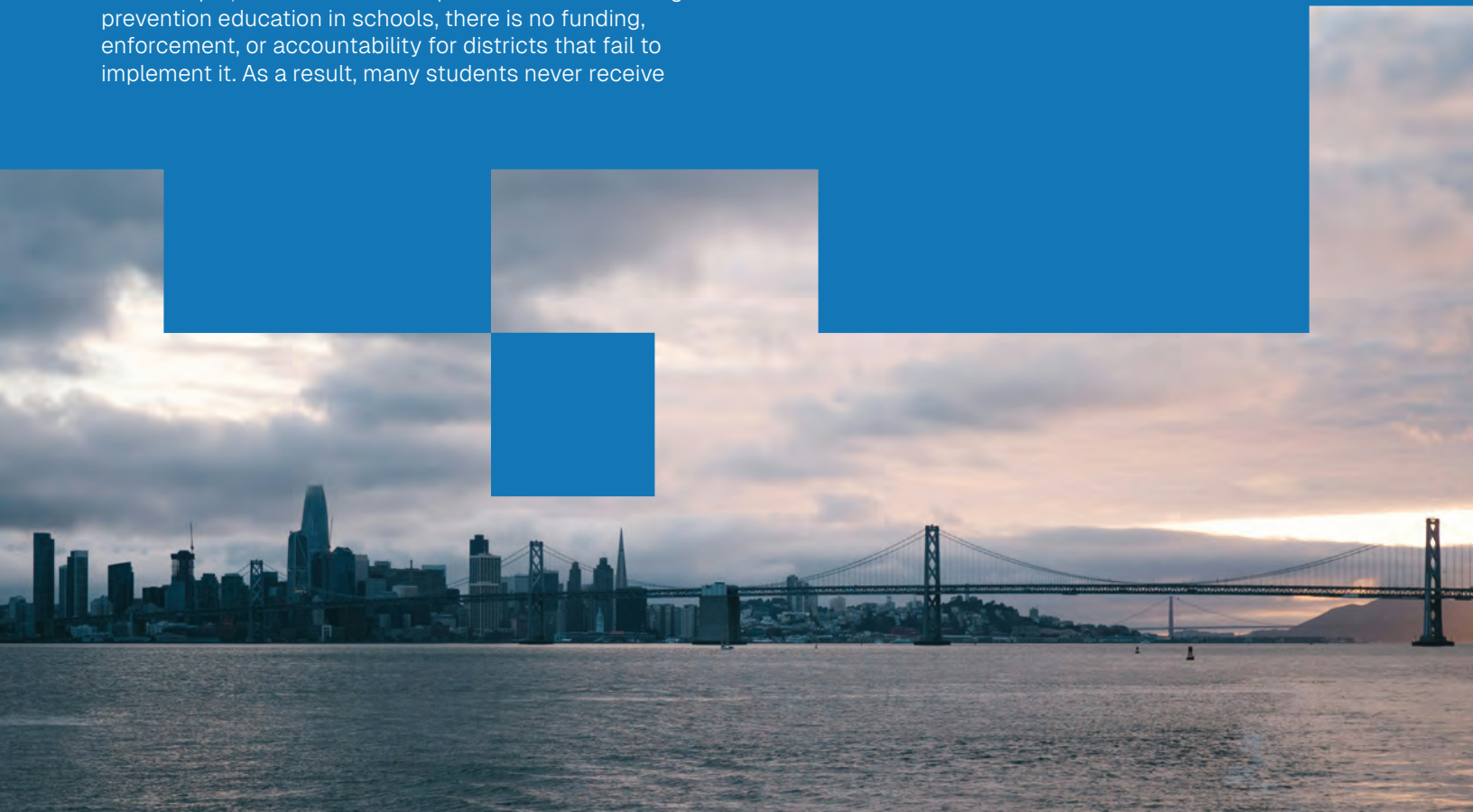
For example, while California requires human trafficking prevention education in schools, there is no funding, enforcement, or accountability for districts that fail to implement it. As a result, many students never receive

the education that could help keep them safe. Also, data is inconsistent, and trafficking cases are not currently reflected in the crime statistics published by the California Department of Justice.

Several other states offer a roadmap for improvement. Minnesota pairs strong legal protections with a statewide network of services for victims. Montana criminalizes grooming behaviors, allowing intervention earlier, before exploitation escalates. Texas and Illinois have strengthened buyer accountability laws, including eliminating “mistake of age” defenses and introducing financial penalties tied to exploitation. Florida mandates and operationalizes K–12 trafficking prevention education statewide.

Vulnerable children cannot wait for systems to catch up. While California has made meaningful progress, real protection depends on what happens in practice.

Strong partnerships between law enforcement and community-based organizations like Finding Kids are critical to identify victims and get them the support they need – now.



THREE STORIES THAT REPRESENT OUR THREE PILLARS

Recover “Christine”

On Christmas Eve, 15-year-old “Christine” disappeared from her home near Sacramento. Her father, Justin, had grown increasingly worried about her late-night online activity and feared something wasn’t right. When Christine didn’t come home, he immediately called 911 and reported her missing. But as the hours passed, Justin’s fear deepened. Through his own online research, he began to suspect that Christine may have been targeted and exploited.

A friend told him about Finding Kids. Knowing time was critical, Justin reached out for help.



Our cyber investigators immediately began analyzing Christine’s digital footprint, identifying online connections and leads across the Sacramento region. Within hours, potential links began to emerge. Private investigators were deployed in Sacramento and Oakland to follow up on those leads and search areas where vulnerable youth are often exploited.

Four days later, a credible witness reported seeing Christine on International Boulevard in Oakland – a corridor known for trafficking activity. Our investigator moved quickly to the area and located her. Maintaining careful surveillance, the investigator

coordinated with local law enforcement while monitoring the situation. At approximately 9 p.m., a vehicle pulled up. It became clear that Christine was being solicited. As Christine entered the car, police moved in. The driver was apprehended, and Christine was safely recovered.

“Christine” goes missing on Christmas Eve

Dec 24, 2025

Christine disappears from her home in the Sacramento area.

Her father, Justin, files a missing persons report with the Police Department and contacts Finding Kids.

That night, our cyber investigators identify possible locations for Christine in Sacramento and Oakland.

DEC 25-27, 2025

Private investigators are deployed in Sacramento and Oakland to follow up on leads provided by the cyber team, and search areas where vulnerable youth are often exploited.

Multiple potential informants and witnesses are interviewed.

Dec 28, 2025

Four days later, **a credible witness reports seeing Christine** on International Boulevard in Oakland.

Our investigator moves quickly to the area and spots her.

Maintaining careful surveillance, **the investigator coordinates with local law enforcement** while monitoring the situation.

At approximately 9 p.m., a vehicle pulls up. It becomes clear that the driver is attempting to solicit Christine.

As Christine enters the car, police move in. **The driver is apprehended, and Christine safely recovered.**

That night, **Christine is reunited with her parents.**

JAN - MAR 2026

Following her recovery, Finding Kids works closely with the family and our partner organizations to ensure **Christine receives trauma-informed aftercare, counseling, and ongoing support** to help her begin the long process of healing.

She is stable and safe.

Care

“Xavier”

When 16-year-old Xavier returned home after going missing, the recovery was only the beginning. Stabilizing his life proved far more difficult.

His mother, Stephanie, was suddenly navigating overwhelming challenges including financial strain, emotional exhaustion, and the daunting task of helping a traumatized teenager regain stability, return to school, and find a better path forward.

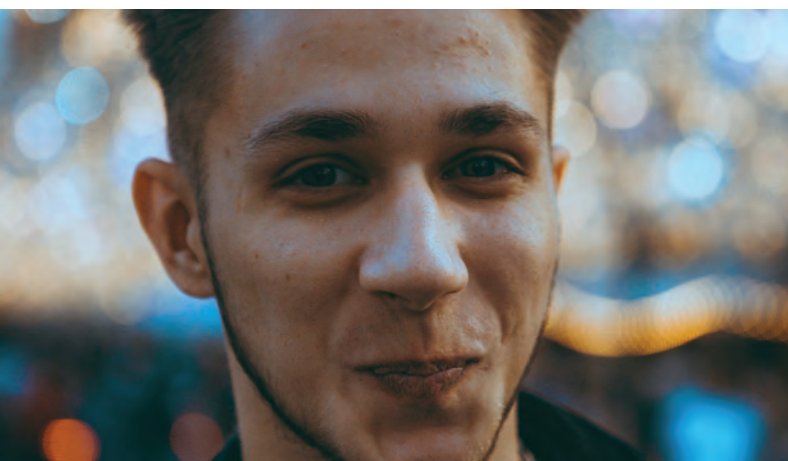
Fortunately, Finding Kids investigators had been part of Xavier’s recovery and our Aftercare team knew exactly what they had to do to support Stephanie. **They provided consistent guidance, emergency financial assistance, and hands-on advocacy, walking alongside Stephanie as she worked to help her son rebuild his life.** Over time, Xavier started going to therapy, re-enrolled in school, and began taking an interest in the activities that used to bring him joy.

Progress was not linear. There were several setbacks. At one point, a serious mental health crisis required hospitalization and intensive treatment.

Finding Kids remained by the family’s side.

Our team helped Stephanie navigate evaluations, treatment decisions, and the day-to-day logistics of care, ensuring that Xavier’s support system remained strong during a very challenging time of their lives.

Once again, Xavier began to rebuild. He returned to school and strengthened his relationship with his mother. He committed to sobriety and began forming healthy, lasting connections. **He earned honor roll recognition.** Through it all, the Finding Kids’ Aftercare program provided the structure and sustained advocacy necessary to help the family eventually move beyond crisis toward long-term stability and a much brighter future.



Target

The Razor Syndicate

In August 2025, detectives with the Fresno Police Department were pursuing members of a violent street gang, The Razor Syndicate* linked to robbery, assault, and the trafficking of vulnerable youth. Several suspects had already been arrested, but **two remained active and dangerous.**

The detectives turned to the newly established **Finding Kids Decoy Program** for assistance.

Using an undercover online identity, our decoy initiated contact with one of the suspects. Within a few weeks, the individual attempted to recruit the decoy into sex work. A meeting was arranged at a nearby hotel which allowed officers to swiftly move in and conduct a coordinated arrest when the trafficker arrived.

The suspect was taken into custody and charged with pandering, gang participation, assault-related offenses, and firearm violations tied to criminal activity.

The second suspect was arrested the following day after a barricade incident that led to the recovery of multiple weapons and ammunition.

More stories of impact

In Modesto, “Mary,” age 14, went missing twice between October and December, was trafficked by her cousin and a pimp, and was recovered after Finding Kids provided a lead that helped law enforcement arrest the traffickers on January 1, 2026.

In Sonoma, “Sienna,” age 16, was missing for 21 days. The team identified multiple adult exploiters, monitored financial activity, and gathered digital evidence. She was safely recovered on December 31, 2025.

In Yuba County, “Ruby,” age 11, was missing for 3 days in a case involving online grooming and sexual assault. The suspect was found guilty in December 2025 and sentenced to 75 years to life.

In Sacramento, “Alice,” age 15, was missing for 18 days. Finding Kids cyber analysts identified commercial sexual exploitation activity, deployed multiple PI firms, and coordinated with Oakland PD. The child was safely recovered and the buyer was arrested for solicitation.

* Pseudonym



COUNTY CHAMPION VOLUNTEERS

Message from Sheryn Hildebrand

Finding Kids Volunteer County Champion for Mendocino and Lake Counties, and
CASA Executive Director for Mendocino and Lake Counties

As the head of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for Mendocino and Lake Counties, Sheryn's days are relentless and unpredictable. She leads a team of case managers and dozens of volunteers serving some of the most vulnerable members of our community: foster children.

On any given day, her work may involve securing an emergency school placement or appearing in court, as she recently did, to advocate for a 16-year-old trafficked youth who had become involved with the justice system. "He presents as hardened and difficult," she said. "But that's the tragedy – he's still a child."

In addition to her work with CASA, **Sheryn also serves as a Finding Kids volunteer County Champion in her local community. She helps to raise awareness of our work and shares local case referrals with our team.** "Knowing there's a team behind you, and that you're part of that team, in support of gathering and sharing information right from the beginning of a case is an enormous relief in supporting foster youth who go missing."

We are looking for more County Champions to volunteer with us! Please write to us at info@findingkids.org to learn more.



Scan the QR code to meet the
core team behind Finding Kids

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“When a child goes missing, we have 48 hours to intervene before they are solicited, coerced or even forced into the commercial sex industry. We are grateful to partner with Finding Kids to expedite the safe return of missing children.”

Vanessa Russell, Founder and Executive Director,
Love Never Fails

“The Sheriff’s Office Human Exploitation and Trafficking task force has a great working relationship with Finding Kids. We have worked together on numerous cases, which have led to the safe recovery of child exploitation and sex trafficking victims.”

Detective Sergeant Justin Wall, Special Victims
Unit / H.E.A.T., Stanislaus County Sheriff’s Office

“As someone who works for a busy law enforcement agency, the team at Finding Kids has been invaluable in locating runaway kids and filling in the gaps where law enforcement does not have the time or resources.”

Nevada Police Department Investigator

“Our agency works seamlessly with Finding Kids. They provide us with instrumental tools to strengthen our investigations and help protect victims more effectively.”

Central Valley Police Department Investigator

“Local law enforcement agencies are inundated with missing persons reports and often don’t have the capacity to actively search for these youth. Finding Kids has the resources and professionals actively searching for youth until they bring them home safely.”

Dara Chanin, Redwood Children’s Center, Sonoma County

“CASA of Fresno & Madera Counties is grateful for our partnership with Finding Kids. They have been an invaluable resource in providing context, training, and encouragement to our volunteer Advocates who are assigned by Family Courts to support children in foster care.”

Christa Sharpe, Executive Director,
Fresno & Madera Counties

“Thank you for not giving up on me and for seeing the worth and value in my life that I never saw in my own.”

“Marie,” began college classes on January 20, 2026

“The Bay Area is one of the largest sex trafficking hubs in America.”

FBI

“Your unwavering support is the most remarkable thing I’ve ever experienced. It reminds me that we’re not meant to carry burdens alone.”

“Megan,” mother of found child

“The team’s professionalism, integrity, transparency, and genuine care elicits trust from parents and loved ones who would do anything to have their child back.”

Dr Sarah Lowenthal, Finding Kids Donor

“Finding Kids is an outstanding investment in all regards. It’s very fulfilling to help fund Finding Kids and I’m so grateful for Finding Kids’ work.”

D. Young – Donor

2025 FINANCIALS

Our Board of Directors covers organizational overhead, which means every dollar goes directly into programs that find missing children, support families and youth, and prevent exploitation.

Profit and Loss by Program

January – December 2025

Fundraising

Individual Giving	\$1,488,334	92%	
Grants and Foundations	85,050	5%	
In-Kind Gifts	20,796	1%	
Miscellaneous Income	26,818	1%	
Total Funds Raised	\$1,620,998	100%	

Expenses

Investigations			
Private Investigations	\$233,500	19%	
Predator Targeting	122,362	10%	
Aftercare	165,579	13%	
Partnership Engagement	393,564	32%	
Mission Support	326,110	26%	
Operating Expenses	\$1,241,114	100%	
Net Operating Income	\$379,884		



Balance Sheet

January – December 2025

ASSETS

Current Assets

Bank Accounts + Pledges	\$1,133,027
Prepaid Annual Charges	8,394
Total Assets	\$1,141,421

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$74,832
Credit Cards	4,470
Other Current Liability	11,160
Total Liabilities	\$90,461

Equity

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$671,076
Net Income	379,884
Total Equity	\$1,050,960
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$1,141,421

Statement of Cash Flows

January – December 2025

OPERATING ACTIVITIES

Current Assets

Net Operating Income	\$379,884
-----------------------------	------------------

Adjustments to reconcile Net Revenue to Net Cash

Accounts Payable	\$67,493
Accounts Receivable	683
Payroll Liabilities	4,001
Prepaid Annual Charges	– 3,424
Credit Cards	1,278

Total Adjustments to reconcile Net Revenue to Net Cash:	\$70,030
--	-----------------

Net cash provided by operating activities	\$449,914
---	-----------

Cash at beginning of period	681,852
-----------------------------	---------

Cash at End of Period	\$1,131,766
------------------------------	--------------------



METRICS

The Finding Kids Team



6.6

Full-Time Equivalents

31

Private Investigators

2

Cyber Investigators

11

Parent and Youth Aftercare Advocates

32

Volunteers

RESULTS

Missing child cases often unfold quickly and dangerously. Every day a child remains missing increases the risk of exploitation, trafficking, violence, and long-term trauma. The data from 2025 demonstrates that:

Children are being found quickly

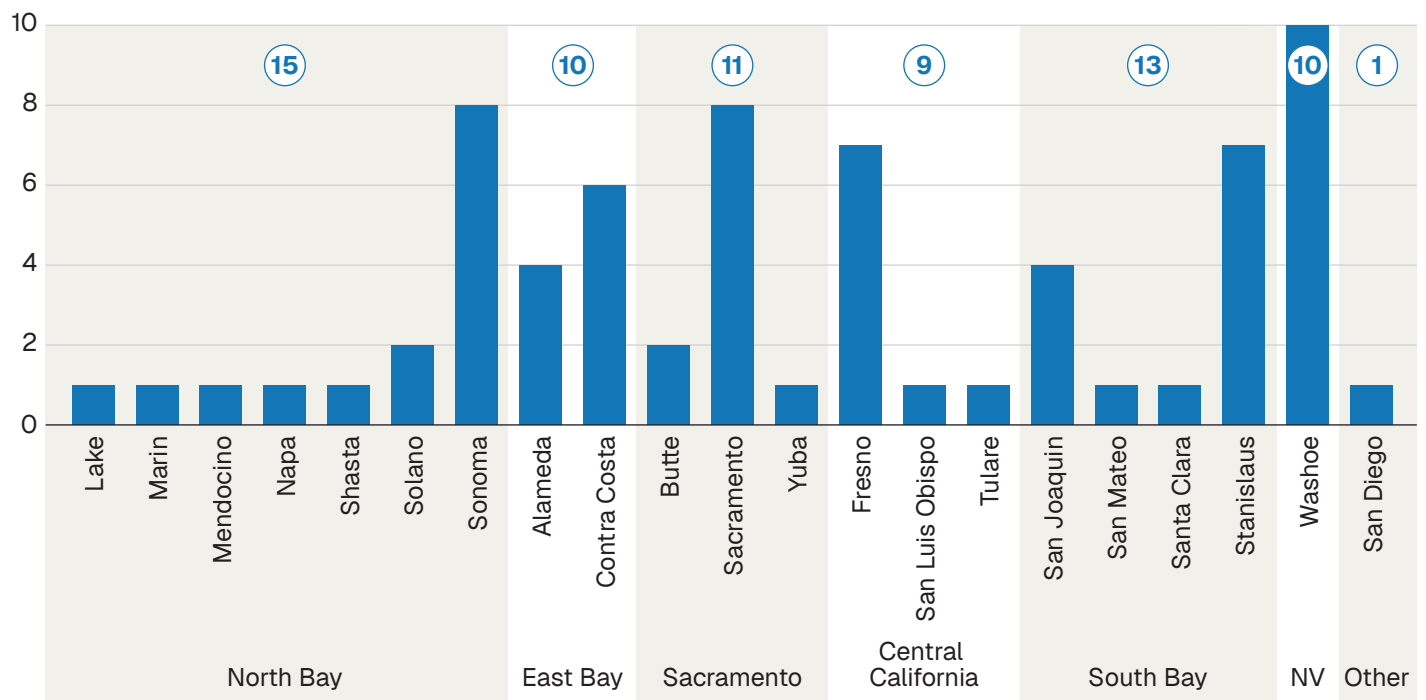
Families are receiving meaningful recovery support

Traffickers are being identified and arrested

Community awareness and referrals are growing

Region/County Spread

69 new cases in 2025



2025 Recovery Metrics

72 missing child cases assigned to 19 private investigators in 2025 (69 new case intakes)

30 of these youth suspected or confirmed trafficked

Closed 98.5% of cases with child found (65 of 66 closed cases, with six still active at the time of reporting).

Median time from case acceptance to locating child = **6.5 days**.

Average age: **15**

30% of youth served were under age 15.

16% were boys.

BIPOC **25%**

Non-system-involved: **57%**

Average number of active investigations per month: **10.5**



Finding K'ds

RECOVER

69 CASES

accepted in 2025

NETWORK OF 31

licensed private investigators

98.5%

of closed cases located the child

6.5 DAYS

median recovery time

CARE

64%

of families participate

80%

stabilized of youth within 12 months

TARGET

18 ARRESTS

of traffickers (10 from decoy program)



PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Jose, CA
Permit No. 10

FINDING KIDS

**We Help Recover Missing Kids.
We Provide Care For Healing.
We Target Predators Who Exploit Them.**

Join us in creating a future for missing children. Let's find every one.

CEO

Isabelle Finney

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Lyn Miller

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sharmin Bock, Axelle Girardot, Angelique Griep, Blair Maus, Marta Obando,
Holly Peterson, Sandra Robles, Steve Wagstaffe

Learn more at findingkids.org

Subscribe to our newsletter: findingkids.org/newsletter
Email us at info@findingkids.org



Finding Kids
2108 N St, Suite 9241
Sacramento, CA 95816

Special Operations – Finding Kids is a 501(c)(3) Organization. EIN: 81-2874951
Stock images have been used to maintain privacy.