



Protecting Ohio's Families



Ohio Attorney General's Office

2018

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ANNUAL REPORT



MIKE DEWINE

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

OHIO HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION



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★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★

December 21, 2018

Dear Fellow Ohioans,

About 20 million people worldwide fall victim to human trafficking each year, according to estimates. Some of those victims are right here in Ohio, and among them are the most innocent members of society – children. Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves using force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person to provide labor or engage in commercial sex acts.

Some victims go undetected and unassisted. A recent study of survivors of sex trafficking found that about 88 percent of them had been seen by a health care practitioner during the time they were being trafficked, but, tragically, they were not identified as victims. To help address this issue, Michael Abrams, president of the Ohio Hospital Association, and I sent a letter to more than 200 hospitals and health systems throughout Ohio this year encouraging them to better train staff to identify and serve these victims and provided resources to do so. As a result, many hospitals have contacted my office for on-site training or to discuss training protocols.

My office continues to support access to services for victims of human trafficking by providing Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding to organizations that assist survivors of human trafficking. The resources enable such groups to improve and expand their programming and identify ways to better serve their clients.

This annual report highlights the work and research undertaken by my Human Trafficking Commission for the education of all Ohioans on how to prevent and fight this insidious crime. As awareness of, and support for, victims of human trafficking is increased, Ohio will continue to serve as an example for other states.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to this cause and for your ongoing commitment to protecting our most vulnerable members of society.

Very respectfully yours,

Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General

Human Trafficking Commission Activities

In 2018, the Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission hosted three meetings. Each one focused on a different topic area and brought together professionals and advocates from across the state and country. The commission is made up of six subcommittees that focus on individual and collaborative efforts to end the demand for trafficking in Ohio and provide improved services to the victims. Throughout the year, subcommittee members heard from speakers from many different professions including those in higher education, judicial/legal, faith-based, and victim service providers.

Law Enforcement Subcommittee

The Law Enforcement Subcommittee has representation from various federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The subcommittee continues to identify innovative ways to address the problem of human trafficking in Ohio, including intelligence sharing, task force work, and trainings among law enforcement and private businesses.

The subcommittee continues to encourage the partnership among law enforcement agencies and victim service providers, grass-roots organizations, and businesses in order to effectively perform these types of investigations. Numerous subcommittee members throughout Ohio continue to be actively involved in training and outreach to their communities.

Legal and Legislative Subcommittee

The Legal and Legislative Subcommittee worked on developing new legislation to strengthen Ohio's laws and protections for survivors of human trafficking. The legislation discussed included:

- House Bill 461, introduced in January 2018 by Reps. Teresa Fedor, D-Toledo, and Tavia Galonski, D-Akron, to mirror the federal human trafficking law and expand Ohio's "safe harbor" protections to all minors – treating them more like victims rather than criminals when picked up for trafficking-related offenses such as prostitution. Under current Ohio law, children ages 16 and 17 have to prove that force, fraud, or coercion was used to make them a victim of human trafficking.
- Senate Bill 4, introduced by Sens. Stephanie Kunze, R-Hilliard, and Scott Oelslager, R- North Canton, to clarify that a person found not guilty of certain offenses, or a defendant named in a dismissed criminal charge, may apply to expunge the record of his or her participation in any offense where the person's participation was a result of human trafficking. The law went into effect on Sept. 28, 2018. It allows victims of the offense of compelling prostitution to request intervention in lieu of conviction.

The subcommittee also made plans for the 10th Annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day to take place at the Statehouse. The event is set for Feb. 28. Preliminary plans include a youth summit and a reception for survivors of human trafficking.

Prevention, Education, and Awareness Subcommittee

The Prevention, Education, and Awareness Subcommittee focused on two outreach and education groups: youths and health care professionals.

Youths

To assess the state of youth anti-human trafficking programming in Ohio, the University of Dayton Human Rights Center conducted a series of online and telephone surveys in 2018. Data were collected on 43 human-trafficking prevention education programs for youths across the state. The study revealed that anti-human trafficking programs in Ohio cover 38 counties and have reached thousands of teachers and parents and tens of thousands of students during the past few years. Most programs are run by nonprofit groups and regional anti-human trafficking coalitions. The majority of programs use curricula developed in-house by the various organizations. Furthermore, the study found that 84 percent of programs educate high school students, 52 percent of programs focus on middle school students, and 23 percent of programs educate elementary school students. The programs focus on both at-risk and general student populations. Finally, 39 percent of the programs specifically address the concerns of nonbinary/third-gender youths.

Health Care Professionals

A recent study indicated that nearly 88 percent of human trafficking victims are attended to in health care settings yet are rarely identified as being victims. This is due to a variety of factors, including lack of awareness and education on the part of health care professionals. Given the complex physical and emotional trauma that these victims suffer, human trafficking is considered a public health issue.

To help address the issue, in cooperation with the Ohio Attorney General's Office and the Ohio Hospital Association, the subcommittee developed a letter, including educational resources, which encourage hospitals to train staff to better identify and serve these individuals. The letter was sent under the signatures of both Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and Ohio Hospital Association President Michael Abrams to more than 200 hospitals and health systems throughout Ohio. As a result, several hospitals have contacted the Human Trafficking Commission for on-site training or to discuss protocols that their institutions already have in place. To see the letter, visit www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/Files/Briefing-Room/News-Releases/Attorney-General-OHA-Human-Trafficking-Protocol-Le.aspx.

Research and Analysis Subcommittee

The Research and Analysis Subcommittee completed a study on how social media is used to recruit and traffic vulnerable youths. The project consisted of interviewing professionals involved in anti-trafficking efforts, including law enforcement task forces, representatives of the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), anti-trafficking coalitions, and other professionals who have worked with victims recruited through social media. Interviews, which lasted 25 minutes to an hour, were transcribed and the information was analyzed to identify themes. Findings suggest that social media allows traffickers to make many more immediate connections and accomplish faster engagement with vulnerable youths compared to in-person connections. Social media allows traffickers to understand a youth's vulnerabilities faster and easier than in person. By focusing on these vulnerabilities, traffickers entice youths with attention, praise, and gifts in order to eventually transition the relationship into one of control.

The report, produced from this study, informs professionals, parents, and youths about the online predatory practices of traffickers. Additionally, the report outlines the following themes: connecting to vulnerable youths online; grooming youths online to form quicker relationships; using self-erasing technology and/or developing a second persona to traffic youths; and moving youths from an online relationship to in-person one.

The report also encourages parents to learn about social media, find out what sites their child is using, and to develop a healthy, open relationship with their child. In doing so, parents can wage a worthy defense against potential online recruitment and exploitation of their child. The report provides links to websites with additional information.

To read a copy of the report, visit www.utoledo.edu/hhs/htsj/pdfs/smr.pdf.

Demand Reduction Subcommittee

Reducing the culture of tolerance for forced labor and compelled commercial sexual activity in Ohio is the mission of the Demand Reduction Subcommittee. Subcommittee members dedicate their time and effort to learn about, and teach others about, the diverse elements of demand reduction and how they can be incorporated into local efforts. Members stay engaged by participating in monthly calls and through in-person meetings.

Members help create documents, presentations, and training resources for the broader anti-human trafficking community. They also bring current research, news articles, and other demand-reduction efforts to the attention of the subcommittee. Currently, the subcommittee tracks anti-trafficking and demand-reduction research through a “rolling” bibliography and maintains a blog. (Visit <http://ohhtcdemand.blogspot.com>.)

Demand reduction:

- Concentrates focus and education/awareness efforts on potential offenders, consumers, and traffickers instead of on potential victims.
- Calls for a change in current cultural and societal norms that view individuals as commodities and encourages the affirmation of human dignity and an end to exploitation and abuse.
- Stresses policy actions by individuals and society to end human trafficking.

Two past subcommittee projects, “[Demand Reduction White Paper](#)” and “[Demand Reduction Conversation Piece](#),” provide examples of how to accomplish this. The publications can be found on the Ohio Attorney General’s website under “Publications” and “Victim.”

To be successful, demand reduction efforts must be connected to primary prevention efforts, the practice of stopping human trafficking before it becomes an issue. Some strategies of demand reduction focus on the criminal justice response when there is a suspected problem (reverse stings) or after trafficking has taken place, but there should also be an attempt to reduce harm through “John Schools,” programs for those arrested for soliciting illegal commercial sex that focus on the risks and realities of the commercial sex industry. For more information on the use of John Schools, visit <http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov/links/John-Schools-Report.pdf>.

The Demand Reduction Subcommittee is interested in learning and sharing information about how individual and societal factors lead to the perpetuation and normalcy of exploiting human beings for profit through the purchase of commercial sex and use of forced labor. In this process, the subcommittee is committed to elevating efforts to engage men and boys in ending sexual and intimate partner violence.

Subcommittee projects in 2018 included:

- The start of an annual strategic planning process.
- Completion of the “Social Ecological Model (SEM) for Primary Prevention of Human Trafficking” document.
- The redesign of primary prevention training to provide a focus on human trafficking.
- Training opportunities from the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence and Ohio Domestic Violence Network.

The subcommittee will continue with the development and evaluation of a presentation for men on the primary prevention of human trafficking; plans for distribution and implementation of the “Social Ecological Model (SEM) for Primary Prevention of Human Trafficking” document; distribution and support for the use of the document with local human trafficking coalitions; ongoing orientation for new members interested in the work of the committee; and survey of new resources for inclusion in the bibliography of demand-reduction resources.

Victim Services Subcommittee

In 2018, Ohio’s capacity to identify and serve survivors of human trafficking expanded through the combined, multidisciplinary efforts of Ohio’s anti-human trafficking advocates. A primary goal of the Victim Services Subcommittee is to expand survivors’ access to 24-hour assistance in order to leave a trafficking situation and get comprehensive services for their recovery. To achieve this goal, the subcommittee works with partners and advocates to increase the number of counties with coalition coverage and the number of response protocols established in Ohio.

Capacity Building Resources

In 2017, the Victim Services Subcommittee, in partnership with Ohio’s anti-trafficking advocates, completed two tools to support the development of effective services for survivors. The first tool completed in partnership with the Governor’s Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, the Child Response Protocol Toolkit, equips Ohio’s communities with tools to support a coordinated response to the sex and/or labor trafficking of youths. The tool outlines preferred practices to assist communities in creating collaborative, survivor-centered interventions. The second tool, “Ohio’s Standards for Services to Trafficked Persons” was initially developed in 2010 and updated in 2013 and 2017. The tool defines standards for trafficking-specific services to promote continuous quality improvement and to ensure that all survivors have access to effective services.

In 2018, these tools were disseminated throughout Ohio’s communities. The resources were shared at the annual coalition conference and were used to provide technical assistance for emerging coalitions. The tools were also shared with training audiences, including representatives from social services, child welfare, corrections, law enforcement, educators, and other key audiences.

Coalition Development

Ohio has continued to embrace the human trafficking coalition model as an effective approach to combating human trafficking in its communities. The Victim Services Subcommittee has supported the Ohio Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force, the State Anti-Trafficking Coordinator's Office, and the Ohio Network of Anti-Trafficking Coalitions in efforts to expand the number of counties benefiting from human trafficking coalitions. In the past year, three new coalitions were launched in Ohio or were in the development stages, for a total of 23 coalitions.

While the number of coalitions has increased in Ohio during the past year, survivor access to 24-hour response protocols and comprehensive services is uneven throughout the state. As of November 2018, 18 Ohio counties were not part of a coalition. And, some counties with coalition coverage had not yet developed local response protocols for survivor services, although they were engaged in public awareness and legislative advocacy.

Law Enforcement Updates

The Ohio Attorney General's Office provides law enforcement with training through the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA), offers investigative resources through the regional human trafficking task forces, and collects local law enforcement human trafficking data to help the public understand the scope of the problem in Ohio. In this section, local law enforcement agencies report their identified cases of human trafficking, the regional task forces provide updated information on cases, and OPOTA states the total number of officers trained on human trafficking awareness in 2018.

Local Law Enforcement Human Trafficking Statistics:

Ohio Revised Code Section 109.66 requires local law enforcement to collect data on human trafficking investigations and forward this information to the Ohio Attorney General’s Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). According to the data collected in 2018, law enforcement reported 242 human trafficking investigations leading to 80 arrests and 61 successful criminal convictions.

Law enforcement agencies also reported the number of potential victims, traffickers, and buyers/johns.

Female victims of trafficking were the most commonly identified human trafficking victims reported by law enforcement during the past year. In 2018, there were 199 potential victims of human trafficking identified.

Gender	Number of Potential Victims
Female	187
Male	11
No Gender Specified	1

Age	Number of Potential Victims
13 or Younger	6
14-15	14
16-17	23
18-20	26
21-29	65
30-40	50
41-59	11
60 or Older	0
No Age Listed	4

Race	Number of Potential Victims
White	126
Black	45
Other	20
No Ethnicity Listed	8

During the past year, law enforcement identified 201 suspected traffickers, including 194 potential sex traffickers and seven potential labor traffickers.

Gender	Number of Suspected Traffickers
Male	165
Female	36
No Gender Specified	0

Age	Number of Suspected Traffickers
14-17	11
18-20	3
21-29	62
30-40	72
41-59	41
60-84	5
No Age Listed	7

Race	Number of Suspected Traffickers
Black	114
White	72
Other	8
No Ethnicity Listed	7

In the past year, 206 suspected consumers or buyers/johns were identified by law enforcement. Of the suspected consumers, 206 were identified potential consumers of sex trafficking and none were identified as potential consumers of labor trafficking.

Gender	Number of Suspected Consumers
Male	72
Female	20
No Gender Specified	114

Age	Number of Suspected Consumers
14-17	6
21-29	17
30-40	34
41-59	33
60-84	2
No Age Listed	114

Race	Number of Suspected Consumers
White	67
Black	23
Other	2
No Ethnicity Listed	114

Law enforcement agencies were asked to categorize the social and/or economic factors contributing to the victim being trafficked.

Factors contributing to victim being trafficked:

- Drug, alcohol, or other dependency (97)
- Runaway or homeless status (36)
- Undocumented status (3)
- Oppressed, marginalized, and/or impoverished (47)
- Truancy (14)
- Other factors (26)

Trafficking can involve movement of victims across cities, states, or the country.

Identified methods of transportation:

- Motor vehicle (155)
- Airplane (9)
- Other (10)

In two cases, the method of transportation was listed as “nonapplicable,” which most likely means that the case did not involve known transportation.

Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force

- In March, a 28-year-old Canal Winchester man was indicted in connection with trafficking three victims. The Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force began investigating after receiving a tip from a Franklin County deputy sheriff who recognized several indicators of sex trafficking. The investigation found that the suspect advertised his victims online for commercial sex and child pornography. The victims included a woman from Columbus, a woman from Georgia, and a juvenile from Youngstown.
- In March, four individuals accused of running a human trafficking ring in the Columbus area were arrested after an investigation by the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force. For two years, almost a dozen women were trafficked through online ads, the investigation showed.

Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force

- In April, an undercover operation aimed at reducing demand for sex trafficking led to the arrests of eight men, including one suspect who investigators believe was attempting to recruit an undercover officer into the sex trade. The Warren Police Department and Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force, which is part of the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission (OOCIC), placed ads online to which the suspects responded. The suspects allegedly exchanged messages with an undercover officer and arrived at a location in Warren expecting to pay for a sexual encounter with an adult female.

- In August, a three-day undercover operation aimed at preventing child sexual exploitation and reducing demand for sex trafficking led to the arrests of 12 men, including an elementary school teacher. The investigation was led by the Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force, which is part of the OOCIC. A teacher at Kirkmere Elementary School in Youngstown is among the 12 suspects facing charges. He was arrested on charges of importuning, attempted unlawful sexual conduct with a minor, and possession of criminal tools. The suspects are all accused of having sexually explicit online conversations with undercover officers posing as juveniles. They all allegedly traveled to a vacant home in Mahoning County with the intent to engage in a sexual encounter with a minor. Two of the suspects are also charged with disseminating matter harmful to juveniles for allegedly sending sexually explicit photographs during their online chats with the undercover officers. The Ohio Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force also played a role in conducting the investigation.
- In October, five individuals were indicted on more than 100 charges in connection with almost 90 human trafficking victims. The investigation was led by the Mahoning Valley Human Trafficking Task Force and began after a tip relating to child pornography was relayed to the task force. The investigation eventually led to the uncovering of a large-scale human trafficking ring.

Law Enforcement Training

The Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) actively trains local law enforcement to identify and investigate cases of human trafficking in Ohio. The Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission implemented the Missing and Human Trafficking course as a part of the basic training curriculum in response to the Safe Harbor Law, which requires all new peace officers to receive human trafficking training. The training ensures that incoming law enforcement officers are armed with awareness about human trafficking and tools on how to investigate such crimes.

In 2018, a total of 5,483 Ohio peace officers and other law enforcement professionals took part in and completed human trafficking training through OPOTA. Of this total, 1,479 were new peace officers who completed the human trafficking course as a part of their basic training. There were 3,983 law enforcement professionals who completed the human trafficking course made available through the online classroom of eOPOTA. And 21 individuals completed the advanced, in-person human trafficking OPOTA training.

Conclusion

The work of the commission continues to raise awareness of human trafficking. As a result, more victims are being identified, more support services are being provided, and comprehensive victim protocols are being implemented throughout Ohio.



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