



**Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission**  
**Quarterly Meeting**

June 8, 2026, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Mount Carmel Healthy Living Center and via Teams

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Aaron Dennis, Alanna Reyes, Amber Gahse, Andrea Franklin, Anna Becks, Anna Travis, Avery Smith, Barry Davidson, Becca Peckinpugh, Bridler Graves, Cassandra Hartman, Celeste Prince, Chelsea Gaffey, Chrissy Hughes-McAlister, Dancy D'Souza, Danielle Davis, Danielle Semon, Debra Seltzer, Devin Perry, Donna Ruch, Ezekiel Kingsbury, Gwen Jackson, Hannah Estabrook, Hannah Swift, Harold D'Souza, Heather Mohrman, Heather Wilde, Jason Shawver, Jamie Slayton, Jenna Conrad, Jennifer Coffindaffer, Jennifer Knetig, Jennie Koehler, Jill Jansen, Jodi Stanton, John-Michael Lander, Josh Edwards, Julie Shroyer, Katelyn Guidone, Katie Howell, Kelsey Hurst, Khalila Riga, Kody Perrine, Kwami Adoboe-Herrera, Lily Holderbaum, Linda Garrick, Lindsay Knight, Lesa Gifford, Maggie Billings, Mary Culver, Mary Kate Waggoner, Marie Fitzpatrick, Melisa Minier, Micayla Wilson, Michelle Hannan, Naima Ilmi, Natalie Terry-Haag, Natasha Stephens, Rebekah Richards, Rebecca Prather, Rick Stauffer, Ryn Wolfe Farmer, Samantha Isaly, Samantha Salamon, Sara Johnson, Silvia Peyton, Stewart Kitchen, Sue Pohler, Tara Meyer, Tiffany Tripp, Veronica Scherbauer, Yuan-Hung Chen

**I. Welcome and introductions**

- a. In-person attendees introduced themselves aloud.
- b. Online attendees introduced themselves via Teams chat.

**II. AGO/HTI updates – Mary Kate Waggoner**

- a. The 2026 Human Trafficking Summit will feature 15 workshops and panel discussions. Early bird registration is available until June 15, and general registration will remain open until July 6.

- b. “Operation Spring Cleaning” statewide operations yielded 84 demand-related arrests, 15 human trafficking search warrants, 38 felony arrests, and 42 potential survivors who were interviewed or offered services. Aaron Dennis added that public awareness efforts led to an increase in community tips, with Attorney General Yost’s visibility helping keep the issue front-of-mind, particularly regarding IMBs. He noted it remains a continuous effort to sustain awareness.
- c. Drivers of Demand Sex Buyer Report Key Findings – Mary Kate Waggoner
  - i. Report requested by Attorney General Yost to analyze sex-buyer trends (jail time, fines, behavior) from 2019–2025. Buyers were mostly employed, educated, unmarried white males.
  - i. Top arrest counties: Columbiana, Franklin, Cuyahoga. Most arrests (79%) were for engaging in prostitution; many charges were amended or dismissed. 593 individuals had limited or no public data.
  - ii. Average jail time was seven days; fines peaked in 2022 and remain above 2019 levels. SBE participation varied. Current counts: 286 open cases, 103 warrants, 48 repeat offenders.
  - iii. Strengths: increased arrests and SBE use. Gaps: inconsistent data tracking and limited capacity in some counties.
  - iv. Discussion and Questions
    - 1. Arrest fluctuations: Aaron Dennis explained variation is tied to task-force activity, resource availability, prosecutorial priorities, and how cases are handled locally.
    - 2. On amended charges: Mary Kate noted many sex-buying charges are changed during court processes, and some records are affected by sealing or expungement.
    - 3. Buyer awareness of trafficking: Mary Kate and Aaron stressed need for broad education. Aaron shared that some individuals do not fully understand trafficking’s financial structure. Cultural norms must shift to reduce demand.

4. SBE programs vary by county; no statutory standard. Mary Kate noted best practices exist. Discussion included training facilitators, offering preventative education, and program differences.
  5. Danielle Davis highlighted the need for early prevention and noted K–8 students’ exposure to harmful content; internet-safety education was recommended.
  6. Khalila Riga noted cultural desensitization due to early exposure and changing norms.
  7. Heather Mohrman suggested working with the Department of Education to add prevention content to existing middle-school curricula.
  8. Hannah Swift noted [relink.org](https://relink.org)’s series on men, boys, and related cultural influences.
- v. Additional notes: Walking Wise offers [prevention programs](#); parental opt-out remains a major factor in school implementation. The official sex buyer report is available [online](#) for more info.

### **III. Subcommittee updates**

- a. Healthcare – Lily Holderbaum
  - i. The subcommittee has spent the past 4–5 months updating policies and procedures to strengthen healthcare system commitments to serving victims across all settings, not only emergency departments.
  - ii. Current focus areas include appropriate follow-up practices, identifying service gaps, and incorporating feedback from healthcare ambassadors.
  - iii. Work is underway on a training video tailored to the school system, with policy and procedure revisions nearing completion.
  - iv. A [previous version of the healthcare policy](#) (last updated in 2021) is available on the website and may be adapted to fit organizational contexts.
- b. Law Enforcement - Aaron Dennis
  - i. Continued work following Operation Spring Cleaning, with emphasis on addressing illicit massage businesses (IMBs), particularly in non-urban areas where they have been historically overlooked.

- ii. Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to contact Aaron ([Aaron.Dennis2@OhioAGO.gov](mailto:Aaron.Dennis2@OhioAGO.gov)) for assistance with IMB investigations, including applying appropriate charges and using existing but previously under-utilized legal tools.
  - iii. Efforts are underway to expand IMB-related enforcement statewide and increase education around these cases; many victims are older.
  - iv. Long-term goal: eliminate IMBs from Ohio within 2–3 years.
- c. Victim Services – Michelle Hannan & Chelsea Gaffey
  - i. The subcommittee continues to support the self-assessment process for organizations seeking inclusion in the Human Trafficking Directory.
  - ii. Goals include expanding the number of partner organizations to ensure accessible, high-quality services for survivors.
  - iii. The group is reviewing updated assessments and implementing revisions that occur every 3–4 years; about half of necessary changes have been completed.
  - iv. Recent reviews of training plans prompted discussion about standardizing “Human Trafficking 101” content. Some organizations used outdated or sensationalized information.
  - v. The subcommittee is exploring collaboration with Public Awareness to establish approved or vetted training guidance, ensuring alignment with service-standards requirements.
- d. Public Awareness – Mary Kate (on behalf of Lara Wilken)
  - i. Finalizing updates to “Apps to Watch,” replacing outdated versions.
  - ii. Updating the Parent Resource Guide to support conversations with children about trafficking and online safety.
  - iii. Coordinating with the AGO Communications team on a “Highway to Hope” video for the Summit, designed to increase visibility of anti-trafficking work.
  - iv. Members may contact Lara ([LWilken@bgsu.edu](mailto:LWilken@bgsu.edu)) for additional information or to join.
- e. Legal and Legislative – Samantha Salamon

- i. Victim compensation remains a major focus, with working groups examining needed changes, possible expansions, and improving accessibility to the Trafficking Victims fund.
  - ii. Efforts continue to clarify fund visibility and determine how money flows into the fund.
  - iii. The subcommittee is exploring the use of PSI (pre-sentencing investigation) reports as a tool to identify human-trafficking victims and connect them to resources.
  - iv. The group continues to track relevant legislation and assess its viability.
- f. Research, Data and Gap Analysis - No representatives attended and no update was provided.
- g. Demand Reduction – Mary Kate Waggoner
  - i. The subcommittee is in the process of identifying a new chair following a leadership transition.
  - ii. The hope is to resume active work soon.

#### **IV. Ambassador Advisory Council – Mary Kate Waggoner**

- a. An in-person Ambassador meeting will take place later today to reflect on the first year with the new class.
- b. Ambassadors were invited to share updates. Khalila reported that Clermont County brought her on to conduct [a 7-part human-trafficking training series focused on youth](#). The series began in May and occurs monthly; the next installment will take place in July.

#### **V. Commission member updates**

- a. Upcoming trainings/events
  - i. The Department of Child and Youth pilot program is funding three human-trafficking caseworker positions in Montgomery, Hamilton, and Cuyahoga Counties. One county has begun active screening and casework, while others remain in the hiring and review phase.
  - ii. The RONI (Runaway, Outreach, Notification and Intervention) Project is developing protocols with Dayton Police Department and is expected to launch this summer.

- iii. Gracehaven will host its “[Over the Edge](#)” event on Friday at 8 a.m., where participants rappel down 65 E State Street.
  - iv. Eyes Open International will celebrate its 10-year anniversary on August 27. The organization is also expanding its Feed the Children project in Tanzania from supporting 100 children to 200 beginning July 1, with [opportunities to contribute via their website](#).
- b. New initiatives/resources
- i. State budget funding has supported ODVN trafficking shelters in providing emergency housing.
  - ii. Long-term rental assistance funds have been fully expended and are currently frozen, but emergency hotel-based housing and other short-term options remain available.
  - iii. Contact information for the housing program will be added to the minutes. [shelleym@odvn.org](mailto:shelleym@odvn.org)?