



HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEETING MINUTES

Sept. 11, 2023 | 10 a.m.-noon

1. Welcome and introduction – Linda Majeska Powers
 - i. Pastor Julia Wike led a moment of silence in remembrance of Sept. 11, 2001.
 - ii. HTI welcomes new members to the commission. A variety of subcommittees exist for new member consideration. E-introductions will be made between members and subcommittee chairs upon request.
2. Advisory Council Ambassadors Updates
 - i. There were no updates from Ambassadors.
3. Subcommittee Updates
 - i. Healthcare Subcommittee – Heather Wilde
 - a. Discussed the two training videos released earlier this year for healthcare professionals. A description of the videos was provided for the benefit of new HTC members. One video examines a pregnant woman in the life of sex trafficking who visits a healthcare facility – to show what such a scenario looks like. Ambassador Stephanie Rollins, one of the commission’s survivor ambassadors, played the part of the victim. The second video examines familial trafficking in the context of a minor who visits a health clinic accompanied by her mother, who is her trafficker. The videos have built-in discussion pause points throughout that are meant to facilitate classroom discussion; there are also debriefing guides for each video. The videos are being used for training in educational institutions and healthcare facilities. Both videos and the debriefing guides are available on the Attorney General’s website.
 - b. The third video in the series – regarding labor trafficking – has been completed with the assistance of the AG’s office. Ambassador Harold D’Souza provided great insight and assured that the videos represent survivors in a trauma-informed, evidence-based way. A debriefing guide is currently being created to accompany the video. Once completed and edited, the debriefing guide will be added to the Attorney General’s website along with the video.

- c. The fourth video in the healthcare series will be filmed in October in Cleveland. The filming will take place at a volunteer's home, with EMS being "dispatched" to the home to access the medical needs of a survivor victim, realistically portraying what such an encounter looks like from the EMS perspective. Ambassador Annette Mango will be on hand during the filming as our survivor expert, to ensure a realistic portrayal of a survivor.
 - d. Ambassador Nancy Hashman is new to the subcommittee. We are excited to have her and look forward to receiving her input. The subcommittee has 40+ members, and meeting attendance is high. Meetings take place the first Tuesday of the month from 10 to 11 a.m. Anyone seeking healthcare-based educational training is encouraged to reach out to the subcommittee chair.
- ii. Law Enforcement Subcommittee – Jean-Philippe
- a. The subcommittee last met on Aug. 8, 2023.
 - b. Speaking briefly about various human trafficking task forces:
 - 1. The Mahoning Valley task force investigated three spas on March 13, 2023, and successfully shut them down. The investigations are ongoing, with indictments expected soon. We had great advocates and worked closely with Asia Network as well as The Network and Harriett Tubman to assist in survivor recovery.
 - 2. Recent cases regarding juveniles being trafficked. Youngstown is actively conducting investigations.
 - 3. We gathered training materials from both the Cleveland and the Columbus task forces and trained the entire Youngstown Police Department in HT 101.
 - 4. The Miami Valley Task Force has recently conducted a multi-jurisdictional training.
 - 5. In August, the Columbus group was dealing with illicit massage businesses (IMBs) and has successfully prosecuted one of those cases.
 - c. Concerns have been raised regarding what the subcommittee can do to facilitate training to help enhance (among newer prosecutors) the state's prosecutorial expertise in trafficking and IMB cases. Also, the subcommittee has been asked to put together a brief boiler-point presentation that law enforcement can give to minors. This may focus on social media and its role in trafficking recruitment. The subcommittee meets quarterly.
- iii. Victims Services Subcommittee – Michelle Hannan

- a. The State Service Standards Assessment and the Human Trafficking Service Directory are now live and publicly accessible on the [Attorney General's website](#). For newer commission members, the history behind these two achievements was provided. Ohio has had service standards in place since 2010. The standards were developed through the Human Trafficking Commission and have been updated four times since. More recently, the Victims Services Subcommittee has worked with the AG's office and Ohio State University to turn the standards into an assessment tool. Organizations now have the ability to complete the assessment and determine whether they meet the state standards. Organizations that don't meet the standards can work with subcommittee members to bring them into compliance with the standards. In order to be listed on the directory, an organization's programs must pass the standards. Since summer 2022, when the survey was first launched, the subcommittee has received 98 responses. Of those, 67 are viable. Eighteen programs/organizations completed the entire survey and did not meet the standards on that first attempt. Currently, 21 organizations have met the standards and have been invited to be a part of the service directory.
- b. There has been a learning curve, and the subcommittee can focus on its capacity building based on these initial assessment completions.
- c. Specific trainings are required by the standards for all service agency staff and volunteers. Our vision is that this not be a burden on organizations with small training budgets. The subcommittee can assist in pre-trainings so all can benefit from the expertise statewide.
- d. It has been exciting to have conversations with some organizations that didn't initially pass the standards and to then see them proceed to meet the standards. The goal is not to exclude organizations but to help strengthen service agencies working in the HT arena in Ohio.
- e. The survey stays open all the time, with service agencies asked in January and July to complete the assessment. For a period after the January and July deadlines, the subcommittee gathers the survey information and sends out results, informing organizations about their status.
- f. HTI learned two weeks ago from a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Lake County that a minor trafficking survivor wished to exit and sought resources. The NGO turned to our Human Trafficking Victim Services Directory and found appropriate resources for a successful exit. Law enforcement agencies have contacted the AG's Human Trafficking Initiative (HTI) to express appreciation for the directory. It's reassuring to know, they say, that the resources listed for their areas have met state standards.

- g. The Collaboration Against Human Trafficking in Cuyahoga County recently conducted a training on the importance of the directory itself and the standards for inclusion. Samantha Soloman from Asia spoke about completing the assessment successfully and how the process played out for her organization. Linda Powers spoke about the survey map and the importance of organizations taking the assessment and being part of this incredible network. The collaboration has a training ready to go for those interested in seeing it or forwarding to any coalitions. The Cuyahoga County training drew more than 50 organizations, which shows a lot of interest.
- h. The Victim Services Subcommittee meets from 1 to 2 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month. As the subcommittee provides increasing levels of technical assistance to agencies seeking to do what's necessary to meet the standards, the ability to provide such assistance will require the help of additional commission members. Assistance from members is encouraged because the more members we have analyzing the assessments, the quicker the subcommittee can assist organizations with requisite needs. Members interested in joining the subcommittee should email the chair.

iv. Demand Reduction – Tony Talbott

- a. Tony expressed his appreciation for what Jean-Philippe said about how the task force was very careful and intentional in treating the victims at the spas that were investigated. He loves hearing stuff like that, he said. Tony also praised the Human Trafficking Victim Services Directory, noting that he heard about some Miami Valley agencies that completed the self-assessment and didn't meet the state standards – but that they made adjustments and eventually did meet them.
- b. The subcommittee has completed a drop-in presentation to be added to larger-picture presentations. The slides define and explain what demand reduction is, explain how it works and identify it as one part of a comprehensive approach to eliminating human trafficking. The slides are plain and simple by design, so they can be easily modified to work within any larger presentation. There are speakers' notes for all the slides.
- c. The committee looks forward to others' review of/feedback on the slides, so they can be sure that the slides integrate easily with larger presentations.
- d. As for other work, the subcommittee is putting together an annotated bibliography of demand-reduction resources for both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. This will include best practices to evidentiary reports, articles, etc. from throughout the country.

- e. The subcommittee is also updating and expanding a white paper produced under the previous AG administration. Specifically, members are collaboratively reviewing, resources, conducting research and compiling the annotated bibliography with the idea of creating a group of subject-matter experts – because demand reduction is still very new. This rigorous approach will allow the subject-matter experts to produce the new research white paper to share around the state. Once this is completed, the next steps will be producing a full demand reduction training module on the research conducted from the white paper.
- f. The Demand Reduction Subcommittee meets on Zoom from noon to 1 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month. To receive a Zoom invite, contact the subcommittee chair.

iv. Public Awareness – Lara Wilken

- a. There are many individuals throughout the state who are providing human trafficking education, and there are others who want to provide this education but either don't know how to go about it or are providing misleading information. To help these folks, the Public Awareness Subcommittee has compiled a best-practices guide that is survivor-informed and evidence-based and has been peer-reviewed by members of both the Victim Services and the Demand Reduction subcommittees. The guide will be uploaded soon to the AG's HTI website.
- b. The subcommittee is in the final stages of also producing a Youth HT 101 best-practices guide. Peer reviewers will be needed. The subcommittee encourages HTC members to provide their expertise, knowledge and input. Anyone interested in helping with the peer review or joining the public Awareness Subcommittee is encouraged to email the chair.
- c. The HTC subcommittees are providing education and training to myriad populations as well as organizations throughout the state – all incredible work. Yet we still don't have a solid understanding of the scope of all that is being done statewide in the fight against human trafficking. To try to get a better handle on all that's happening, the Public Awareness Subcommittee has created a survey, which it plans to send only to commission members initially – so it can fully understand the work being done by the amazing HTC team. Once the Public Awareness Subcommittee gets that data back, it plans to create a map of the state depicting “hotspots,” or the locations where HT education is being provided and to whom. The subcommittee will then further analyze the data to determine where HT education is lacking. The hope is that the subcommittee can eventually provide a list-serve of approved presenters

so that, if an area that has a need for education and HTI cannot get there to provide it, HTI can call on experts in the lacking area to provide the education that is needed. The survey takes 5 to 7 minutes to complete. The subcommittee hopes to have the survey link sent to commission members soon, with the goal of closing it by November.

- d. Important note: Only one individual from each organization or collaboration should fill out the survey – to avoid redundant data. The data will reside with the Attorney General’s Office for future additions and modifications.
 - e. The Public Awareness Subcommittee meets via Teams from 3 to 4 p.m. on the last Monday of the month.
- v. Research, Data & Gap Analysis – Kirsti Mouncey
- a. This committee has authored a very extensive report on the lack of data available on human trafficking, particularly regarding prevalence in Ohio. The report was reviewed by AG Yost, who suggested that the subcommittee conduct a pilot project. The subcommittee came together with researchers statewide to create a proposal – and out of that proposal came a pilot that’s currently underway in Lucas County with the Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute in Toledo. Funding was provided to hire a project coordinator, start an MOU and design a database for the data. The group is using a lot of the work of Dr. Celia Williamson, especially material focusing on vulnerabilities and vulnerability tracking as prevalence of human trafficking. The project coordinator is Rosario Sanchez-Combs. Although the project is just beginning, it should be easy for other counties in Ohio to duplicate it, with the long-term goal being for all counties to conduct data collection that is unified, so the subcommittee can compile this data from the state. Ohio’s process then could become a model for other states.
 - b. This committee keeps abreast of other research that is happening in Ohio. Subcommittee member Christy Bartman has done amazing research on prevalence, and she has updated the subcommittee on that.
 - c. At the subcommittee’s most recent monthly meeting, Felipe Aros-Vera, Ph.D, spoke about his unpublished human trafficking mapping project and presented on the “Vulnerabilities Variables and Mapping of a Human Trafficking (HT) Risk Score for Ohio.”
 - d. The subcommittee tries to invite people from across the state to learn about what is happening and what it is doing while simultaneously trying to support the pilot project in Toledo.

- e. The subcommittee is actively looking for members and, even though the subcommittee isn't the most exciting, members are excited about the data collection. The subcommittee meets from 2 to 3 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.

vi. Legal and Legislative – Samantha Salamon

- a. The Legal and Legislative Subcommittee has narrowed its focus to three goals for the coming year:
 - 1. The expungement bill. It has not been officially introduced, but it is something this committee is looking into and evaluating.
 - 2. Erin's Law, which became law in April and is in effect this school year, requires youths to be dealt with in age-appropriate ways when educating them about child abuse, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, etc. Our committee is analyzing what constitutes an age-appropriate specific educational curriculum. We have been talking about this constantly because the Ohio Department of Education has created or adopted a module that it is sharing with school districts. Erin's Law encompasses a two-stage educational process. First, teachers are to be educated by law enforcement or a prosecutor's office about ODE's module, and then teachers are supposed to educate children regarding their age-appropriate topic, which is explained throughout the law. Our committee has discovered significant gaps with Erin's law as it pertains to content management and accountability. Although Erin's Law is first and foremost legislation dealing with sexual assault and harassment, there's a piece about human trafficking that the Ohio Department of Education has adopted as part of the child abuse module that is very limited. Ohio is also vastly different from one area to the next. The subcommittee is trying to use this law to come up with other ways to implement additional education about human trafficking within the schools. Subcommittee members have been tasked with finding out what's happening in their local school districts regarding this legislation. Some school systems aren't aware of the law – which is disturbing. Finally, our subcommittee has discovered that there's no avenue for quality control and no type of reporting requirements.
 - 3. Homelessness surrounding HT survivors.
 - 4. The Legal and Legislative Subcommittee meets from noon to 1 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month.

4. General HTI updates – Linda Powers

- i. We have our full contingent of Ambassadors, many of whom have reached out to Linda to ask about joining particular subcommittees. Linda has been sending emails introducing Ambassadors to Chairs. Subcommittee chairs are reminded to keep track of compensation time for each Ambassador who attends subcommittee meetings and participates in peer reviews. Any ambassador who hasn't received a fillable invoice from Linda is asked to reach out to her, as the HTC wants to justly compensate Ambassadors.
- ii. The 2024 Human Trafficking Summit will move to the summer from January.
- iii. HTI, which is in the process of filling two job vacancies, has extended an offer to one individual. That offer is pending.

5. Ambassador updates:

- i. Ambassador Annette Mango expressed the need for significant resources for housing, education and jobs with benefits for prevention of trafficking and survivors of human trafficking.
- ii. Ambassador Haleigh Young asked whether the Ambassadors could form a new subcommittee addressing the issues raised by Ambassador Annette Mango. All Ambassadors in attendance unanimously voted to create an Ambassador Subcommittee, which will meet monthly. HTI will share a few dates and times for the Ambassadors to choose from. Naima Ilm of Star House would like to assist in the facilitation of this new subcommittee.
- iii. Ambassador Hannah Blair requested that the topic of consumer credit be examined.

6. Upcoming Trainings and Developments – Group

- i. Gwen England: Catch Court Graduation, with 16 graduates, will take place at 11 a.m. Friday at the Statehouse Atrium. Everyone is encouraged to attend.
- ii. Maria Busch: RFP is being released on Sept. 18, 2023. The Office of Criminal Justice Services and the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force will review the requests for funding. Any direct service providers for survivors of Human Trafficking are encouraged to apply. The requirements are pretty broad. There will be a "bidders training webinar" for individuals with questions. Details will be forthcoming.
- iii. Michelle Hannan: Harriett's Hope, a 52-apartment community for survivors in central Columbus, is in the process of officially opening. Beacon 360 Management owns and operates the space, which is nearing completion. If all goes really well,

people can begin moving in by the end of December. The Salvation Army's role will be onsite peer-led management; Stephanie Rollins will be the onsite manager and oversee the intake funnel. The site might not be ideal for those not located in central, but Michelle welcomes all discussions regarding candidates who might be well-served by Harriet's Hope. She also welcomes all questions, as she would love to connect and explain more about Harriet's Hope.

- iv. Samantha Soloman: Ohio has many coalitions, but a lot of them are doing their own thing. Samantha has wanted to get all of the northeast Ohio groups together for an annual conference – and is implementing that idea this year. The Summit County Collaborative Against Human Trafficking is sponsoring a conference on Oct. 20, 2023, in Akron. Six coalitions are associated with the conference, which will focus on demand reduction. Tony Talbott will be the keynote speaker, and the conference will include a survivor panel. The groups will talk about the latest raids that Jean-Phillipe talked about earlier and understanding the collaboration between law enforcement and victim service agencies. There also will be a presentation on sextortion. Organizers of the full-day conference are applying for CEUs and potentially CLEs.
 - v. The next quarterly meeting of the Human Trafficking Commission will take place from 10 a.m. to noon on Dec. 11, 2023, at the Mount Carmel Healthy Living Center. Thanks to all new members who joined us today.
7. In attendance: Pastor Julia Wike, Jean-Phillipe Riguard, C. LaPointe Jackson, Heather Wilde, Sue Pohler, Jennifer Sherfield, Sue Pohler, Nancy Hashman, Natasha Cooper, Naima Ilmi, Maria Busch, Representative Tracy Richardson, Josh Edwards, Lara Wilken, Veronica Scherbauer, Michelle Hannon, Annette Mango, Courtney Schmackers, Kirsti Mouncey, Gwen England, Tony Talbott, Linda Powers, Katie Blankemeyer, Michelle Hannan, Harold D'Souza, Christi Bartman, Veronica Scherbauer, Tony Talbott, Jennifer Taber, Heather Wilde, Larry Henderhan, Ruth Downing, Samantha Salamon, Ryan Emahiser, Chassidy Barham, Stephanie Rollins, Catie Cleveland, Becca Peckinpaugh, Erin Meyer, Jill Jackson, Laura Kaiser, Mary Kate Waggoner, Ruth Downing, Alicia Wolf, Christi Bartman, Kathleen Hackett, Rosa Beltre, Jennifer Tscholl, Margaret Kane, Kathleen Hackett, Cindy Adam, Mia Simek, Haleigh Young, Alicia Wolfe, Terri Brown-Hood, Chelsey Gaffey, Michelle Sorrell, Jeanette Pellot-Ayala, Lisa Gifford, Kwami Adoboe-Herrera, Kristen Welsch, Larry McCoy, Lesa Griffin, Logan Ewing, Jason Shawver, Viann Barnett, Rosario Sanchez, Larry McCoy, Anna Becks, Jodi Stanton, Joshua Edwards