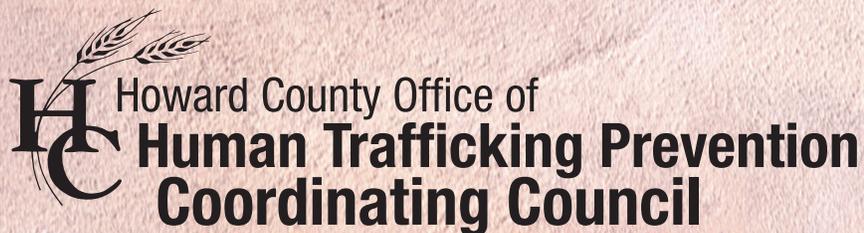




**HOWARD COUNTY  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
PREVENTION  
COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**



Department of Community Resources and Services



Howard County Office of  
**Human Trafficking Prevention**

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Department of Community Resources and Services

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## BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Human trafficking crimes have devastating impacts on vulnerable individuals, families, and communities; and Howard County is not immune. These crimes are often committed against the most vulnerable among us; children who've run from abusive homes; LGBTQ youth who are rejected and alone; teens, as they age out of foster care with few skills and fewer options; people living with disabilities who are lured into situations from which there is little chance of escape; U.S. citizen- or foreign-born adults deceived by the promises and predatory ways of those who falsely "befriend" them. It is of note that these victims are disproportionately young people of color – particularly African Americans and those from the Latinx community. No matter what their circumstances, who they are, or where they are from, Howard County is committed to providing support for victims and survivors, and eradicating Human Trafficking from our community. Please note that while the gender pronoun "she" is used, periodically throughout this document, victims may be male, female or nonbinary.

In 2014, Howard County commissioned the first Howard County Human Trafficking Task Force. Task Force members concluded that there was a strong basis to recommend increased services to victims; human trafficking awareness education for everyone in our community; and additional coordination between and among our various partnering agencies and community-based organizations.

2017 saw the creation of the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention within the Department of Community Resources and Services and the implementation of an Executive Order establishing the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council. The Executive Order required the Council to conduct the following activities: Review and prioritize the recommendations of the Human Trafficking Task Force Report of 2014, and advise the County Executive on effective methods and organizational structure to permanently coordinate and sustain human trafficking prevention efforts in the County. The Coordinating Council began meeting in FY18 (mid 2017) focused on these tasks.

The Council has met eight times; and held a survivor-focused, County-wide Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Conference on October 26, 2018. Additionally, in January 2019, Senator Ben Cardin held a regional "Roundtable on Human Trafficking" in Howard County. The Roundtable, led by Senator Cardin and facilitated by HTPCC Chair Jacqueline Scott, featured the participation of Howard County Executive Dr. Calvin Ball, Howard County State's Attorney Gibson; and numerous members of the Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council, as well as regional partners from the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, including those from the U.S. Attorney's Office, FBI-Baltimore, Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, the University of Maryland, AYUDA and many others. The information shared during the roundtable informed the recommendations in this report, as did views shared by community members and other interested persons attending HTPCC meetings and events.

Three focus groups were held with HTPCC Members and designees, on December 11, 18, and 19, 2018. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to this group on January 24, 2019. Expert input from research literature on human trafficking, as well as from professionals in the field, added significant depth. Information from each of these activities is also reflected here. We especially acknowledge the many contributions of Human Trafficking Survivor Leaders woven into the recommendations.

*The information collected and provided in this report serves as a status update on what steps have been taken over the past 18 months, and what steps are recommended as we continue to combat the problem of human trafficking within Howard County.*

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# HOWARD COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION COORDINATING COUNCIL

## MEMBERS AND DESIGNEES

Mark Breaux  
Howard County Realtor  
Community Member and Volunteer

Sheriff Marcus Brown  
Major Mark Verderaine\*

Karen S. Butler, Director  
Howard County Department of Social Services

Nancy Voight\*  
Child Protective Services Administrator

Sara Cochran, Co-Founder  
HoCo AGAST  
(Advocacy Group Against Slavery & Trafficking)

Leslie Petak\*  
Member

Janssen Evelyn, Acting Administrator  
Howard County Office of Human Rights

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Public Outreach Coordinator

Rich Gibson, Jr.  
State's Attorney for Howard County

Jennifer W. Ritter\*  
Senior State's Attorney

[Our thanks to Kim Oldham  
& Colleen McGuinn, 2017-2018]

Ayesha Holmes, Executive Director  
Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center

Sara Smoley\*  
Assistant Director

Leslie Lampieri  
Director of Social Work and Chaplaincy  
Interim Director of Case Management  
and Utilization Review

Howard County General Hospital  
James LeMon, Executive Director  
Community, Parent and School Outreach  
Howard County Public School System

Kelly Ruby\*  
Coordinator of School Counseling  
Howard County Public School System

Lisa D. Myers, Chief  
Howard County Police Department

Captain Cory Zirk\*  
[Our thanks to Chief Gary Gardner, 2017-2018]

Dianne Paulus, Member  
Howard County Commission for Women

Jennifer Pollitt Hill, Executive Director  
HopeWorks of Howard County

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Anti-Trafficking Director

Maura J. Rossman, M.D., Director  
Howard County Health Department

Andrea M. Raid\*  
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Advocate and Survivor

Jacqueline R. Scott, Chair and Director  
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Community Resources and Services

Cheryl Mattis\*  
Deputy Director  
Howard County Department of  
Community Resources and Services

Suellen Seigel, Community Member and Volunteer

Howard County Department of  
Community Resources and Services  
Office of Human Trafficking Prevention

Sidney Ford, Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinator  
Cara Baumgartner, Administrative Assistant

*Our thanks to Sheriff William McMahon  
and Dina Ward, 2017-2018*

*Our thanks to Dr. Barbara Sands, 2017-2018*

\* indicates Designees

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# HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFINED

## SEX TRAFFICKING

### WHAT IS SEX TRAFFICKING?

Sex trafficking “occurs when someone uses force, fraud or coercion to cause a commercial sexual act with an adult [such as prostitution, pornography, stripping, or another sexual act] or causes a minor to commit a commercial sex act.”<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that minors who agree to perform sexual acts for money or something else of value (shelter, food, etc.) are still considered sex trafficking victims under federal and Maryland law – regardless of their consent.

Also, human smuggling is not the same as human trafficking – human smuggling is a voluntary crime across international boundaries. While someone smuggled can become a victim of trafficking, the crime of trafficking is involuntary. Sex Trafficking is referred to as “modern-day slavery”. It is important to note that victims do not have to move, or be transported, in order to be trafficked.

### What Federal and Maryland laws are relevant to this crime?

The federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act, enacted in 2000 and reauthorized in 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013, and 2018, provides the basis for federal prosecutions of human trafficking. In Maryland, laws against sexual trafficking are found in criminal statute Section 11-303 (Prostitution section).<sup>2</sup>

## LABOR TRAFFICKING

### WHAT IS LABOR TRAFFICKING?

Labor trafficking is defined as “recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining people for forced or coerced labor.”<sup>3</sup> More than a violation of employment law, labor trafficking involves the elements of force, fraud or coercion referenced in the prior section. While many victims are foreign-born, US citizen victims can also be victimized by this crime.

### What federal and Maryland laws are relevant to this crime?

As noted above, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act is the federal statute under which human trafficking is prosecuted. Maryland law – specifically, Section 3-701, addresses labor trafficking (Extortion section).<sup>4</sup>

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1 *Shared Hope International, 2019*

2 <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/2010/criminal-law/title-11/subtitle-3/11-303>

3 *Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, 2019*

4 <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/2010/criminal-law/title-11/subtitle-3/11-303>

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## PUTTING TRAFFICKING INTO CONTEXT: UNDERSTANDING THE VICTIMS

Whether for sex trafficking or labor trafficking purposes, traffickers use a number of manipulative tactics in order to gain the victim's trust (and/or that of her/his/their family, as needed). Often, traffickers prey upon marginalized and vulnerable populations, including people who are homeless, have suffered prior childhood abuse, and/or lack a caring, supportive family in their early life.<sup>5</sup> Additional risk factors for being victimized include, but are not restricted to being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) and having a history of being systems-involved (e.g., juvenile justice, criminal justice, foster care). Other victims may have become victimized as a result of lack of knowledge about red flags in intimate partner or employment relationships.

Many victims, whether from the United States or foreign-born, may not believe that they are the victim of a crime or self-identify as human trafficking victims. This is often due to the misleading and/or deceptive practices used by traffickers as well as lack of an understanding of human trafficking and their rights as a victim. Traffickers typically coerce their victims into staying in their trafficking situation by threatening their legal or immigration status or manipulating victims to believe they will be criminalized because of their actions. Due to their past and current experiences, many victims believe this skewed portrayal of reality.

In other situations, particularly in sex trafficking, victims may view their trafficker as an intimate partner and have a trauma-bond as a result. Service providers equate this complex trauma to the "Stockholm Syndrome" experienced by some prisoners of war. In these cases, the victim may not see themselves as being victimized and may not believe that their trafficker has done anything wrong.

We sometimes see the results of trauma in the decisions of certain childhood victims of sexual trafficking who go on to become sex workers as adults. While some choose the work freely, many former victims have internalized the self-negating belief "that [paid sexual activity] is all I'm good at (or good for)" and see it as a "choiceless choice."<sup>6</sup> Moreover, difficulties obtaining employment, especially if one has a history of criminal convictions, reinforce this false belief.

There is a need for increased education for both survivors of human trafficking as well as those who might identify and support victims, to ensure that there is a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics they face. It is important for systems to be responsive such that victims are empowered to seek and receive support and not become re-victimized in the process. This can be facilitated through the support of Survivor Leaders and enlightened allies who work together to create communities and systems that value the self-determination of victims and survivors, and empower them make their own decisions and determine their futures.

While it is tempting to believe that once a victim is removed from their situation they immediately experience the benefits of "freedom," we know from the research that this is not the case. As noted in "Supporting Survivors of Human Trafficking,"<sup>7</sup> there are several important steps service providers can take to support human trafficking survivors in their long-term healing:

- Build trust with the survivor.
- Assure the survivor that they are not to blame.
- Be aware of their loyalty to the trafficker.
- Have linguistically and culturally appropriate interpreters available.
- Provide active listening and validate their experiences
- Address basic needs first and provide choice when offering counseling, legal or other service options.
- Have resources available.

Human trafficking can happen anywhere, in any community. Given the presence of victims in Howard County — as is clearly evidenced by data provided later in this report — it is incumbent on all of us to act.

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<sup>5</sup> *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the School Nurse, Journal of School Nursing, 2012; Covenant House*

<sup>6</sup> *S. Ford, 2019*

<sup>7</sup> *"Supporting Survivors of Human Trafficking," California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 2009*

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## SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

As articulated in the 2014 Human Trafficking Task Force report, human trafficking (HT) is both a local and a global problem that has been described as modern-day slavery. Globally, the majority of human trafficking is thought to occur either in less economically developed or emerging world nations, or the victims are drawn from such countries. Various reports indicate that there could be as many as 40 million victims of human trafficking on a global level, with labor trafficking exceeding sexual trafficking by a factor of four. However, because of the extraordinary difficulties in documenting such a crime, even experts are left to speculate on this point.

In terms of internationally, the United States is the country with the lowest verifiable level of human trafficking;<sup>8</sup> however, that should not be interpreted to mean that trafficking is not a problem in this nation. In the United States victims of labor trafficking are again believed to be the most prevalent (as much as four times more prevalent). Labor trafficking victims are most frequently those who are vulnerable due to their economic situation or citizenship status, particularly those who are undocumented and realistically fearful of deportation if they report their victimization.

The type of human trafficking that is the focus of most law enforcement and service provider intervention in the U.S. is sex trafficking. Sex trafficking victims, in particular victims of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC), are often – but not exclusively -- those who are emotionally vulnerable, such as survivors of prior sexual or physical child abuse or neglect, family instability, those experiencing substance disorders, homelessness, mental or physical health challenges, and/or are living with other conditions that increase the likelihood that they may be successfully lured into sex trafficking. Victims are often forced or coerced to stay in their situations due to threats of physical violence to themselves or loved ones, or revelation of their activities to parents or other authority figures. It should be noted that – defying the stereotypes on popular media -- traffickers can be family members or “friends,” and are not always unknown individuals.

The most widely-utilized hotline for reporting human trafficking (HT) allegations is the National Human Trafficking Hotline, which is run by the Polaris Project and funded primarily by the federal government. In 2017, the call center received 8,759 allegations of human trafficking to the Hotline and its “Be Free” Textline. The breakdown of those calls were as follows: 7,255 sex trafficking, 1,979 labor trafficking, 542 victims of both labor and sex trafficking and 838 cases where the form of trafficking was unknown. This was reported as a 13% increase relative to 2016.<sup>12</sup> As noted by the Polaris Project, these numbers do not reflect the true prevalence of the crime due to lack of awareness of the Hotline and fears that victims have of reporting.

*In terms of internationally, the United States is the country with the lowest verifiable level of human trafficking; however, that should not be interpreted to mean that trafficking is not a problem in this nation.*

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8 Orme & Ross-Sheriff (2015). *Sex trafficking: Policies, programs, and services*. *Social Work*, 60(4), 287-294

9 <https://polarisproject.org/victims-traffickers>

10 <https://polarisproject.org/>

11 National Human Trafficking Hotline – Polaris Project, 2019

12 National Human Trafficking Hotline – Polaris Project, 2019

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## HOWARD COUNTY'S RESPONSE: PROACTIVE, SURVIVOR-CENTERED

Howard County's response has three main components:

1. Creation of the DCRS Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (2014 Report recommendation 4.5);
2. Collaboration in the community, as embodied by the work of individual members, member agencies and the collective body of the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council (multiple 2014 Report recommendations, including 3);
3. Community-based training and education, which culminated in the first annual Howard County Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Conference, helping participants gain increased knowledge of how to identify and assist victims of human trafficking (2014 Report recommendation 1).

Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council members and participants — a group that has expanded to include numerous individuals and organizations beyond the original legislative mandate — have committed significant time and effort in the fight against human trafficking since the original report was written. Below is a summary of some of the work and progress that has been made.

### HOWARD COUNTY EARLY PARTNERS STILL MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It is important to note that well before the implementation of the Council and DCRS Office of Human Trafficking Prevention, a dedicated group of Howard County partners were engaged in law enforcement, human and social services, public education and victim-survivor services.

#### Howard County Police Department

The Howard County Police Department Human Trafficking Unit (HCPD) handled 53 human trafficking (HT) complaints in 2018, up from 21 in 2017 and 25 in 2016. This number includes everything done by HCPD in relation to this issue, even including instances where they responded to a complaint of possible prostitution at a motel room and found no evidence. The increase in cases in 2018 is more a product of an increase in personnel and more accurate record keeping than it is any evidence of an increase in the underlying problem. The other statistics in the table below may be more informative, indicating such things as total cases, total arrests, and number of victims by age.<sup>13</sup>

In the five-year period 2014-2018, HCPD handled a total of 93 cases involving human trafficking (HT) with 29 arrests and 58 identified victims. Due to the hidden nature of this crime, these cases reflect only a small portion of the total prevalence of HT in Howard County. In terms of measurable objectives, the goal of continued HT awareness and prevention efforts will be reflected in the continued upward trend across all of these categories.

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	<b>TOTAL CASES</b>	<b>HT CASES</b>	<b>HT ARRESTS</b>	<b>HT victims ADULT</b>	<b>HT victims JUVENILE</b>	<b>Reversals # ARRESTS</b>
2016	25	9	6	4	5	4 (40)
2017	21	6	9	15	4	4 (28)
2018	53	9	6	10	2	4 (33)

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<sup>13</sup> Howard County Police Department, 2019

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The Howard County Police Department is partnering with Mission 14, a Baltimore-based, faith-based NGO whose primary mission is to eliminate child trafficking, in its development of a “Soft Room.” The Soft Room will be a welcoming and home-like space in which adult victims of human trafficking can be interviewed by law enforcement personnel and supported by counselors and other advocates. It will be ready for use by Summer, 2019.

### HopeWorks of Howard County

HopeWorks of Howard County has been providing comprehensive services for survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence since 1978. HopeWorks was funded by the County in 2016 to provide services to victims and survivors of human trafficking. The Anti-Trafficking Program at HopeWorks works directly with both identified trafficking survivors and potential trafficking victims through the provision of both direct crisis intervention services and long-term supportive healing. This may include conducting needs assessments, access to confidential emergency shelter and transitional housing, individual safety planning, hospital accompaniment, referrals to legal services and individual/group trauma-informed counseling services as well. Trafficking survivors also have access to intensive case management services which may include assistance in obtaining state-issued identification, assistance in applying for public benefits, advocacy with law enforcement or identifying goals and next steps.

From early 2017 through the end of 2018, HopeWorks served 20 human trafficking survivors with legal services; 33 human trafficking survivors with emergency shelter; 1 human trafficking survivor with transitional housing; 87 human trafficking survivors with needs assessments and/or longer-term case management services; 26 human trafficking survivors with individual and/or group counseling services; 7 human trafficking survivors with individual advocacy through walk-in and/or hotline; and 3 human trafficking survivors with peer-to-peer support group specific to human trafficking.<sup>14</sup>

### Howard County State's Attorney's Office

The Howard County State's Attorney's Office has obtained convictions for 21 defendants charged with human trafficking in the County, 18 men and three women, since 2013. The Office did not prosecute six additional defendants charged with the crime, as they were referred for federal prosecution. Other defendants originally charged with human trafficking were subsequently sentenced for crimes such as assault, disorderly conduct, prostitution (and running a prostitution business), indecent exposure and handgun violations. Those sentenced as human traffickers faced a high of 50 years in prison to suspended sentences or time served.<sup>15</sup>

### HoCo AGAST

HoCo AGAST (Advocacy Group Against Slavery and Trafficking) is a community-based group, active since 2011, which in 2017 and 2018 hosted 17 monthly, public meetings that advance its mission to “educate the community about Human Trafficking in the U.S., in Maryland and in Howard County; to work for stronger laws to combat it; and to support victim service providers.” The group published monthly newsletters to 850 subscribers with information that addresses topics related to the mission statement. Members provided educational speakers to community organizations, faith communities and schools.

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<sup>14</sup> HopeWorks, 2019

<sup>15</sup> Howard County State's Attorney's Office, 2019

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Members of HoCo AGAST's Compassion Brigade attend trials as appropriate to show support for human trafficking survivors and the Howard County's State's Attorney's Office. Members also gave testimony (March, 2017) to the Howard County Council in support of the HC Massage Establishments Regulation, which passed in April, 2017. HoCo AGAST volunteers support County and area organizations that work with victims and survivors and collected and donated over 500 Holiday Gift Bags (December 2017 to 2018) to ten of these organizations. They purchased and gave backpacks, sweatpants and tops requested by the Human Trafficking Unit of HCPD and collected and delivered items to HopeWorks' pantry pursuant to the agency's request in early-mid 2018. Members also attended all of the HC HTPCC meetings, as well as ten educational conferences and meetings beyond Howard County.<sup>16</sup>

### Howard County Office of Human Rights

The Howard County Office of Human Rights (OHR) will conduct outreach and training in 2019 in collaboration with HTPCC and the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention to help eliminate human trafficking in Howard County. Previously, OHR and Safe House of Hope, a Baltimore-based NGO, provided training classes for the public on Human Trafficking Awareness in 2016. These were held at County public libraries. OHR staff collected "freedom packs" and provided them to officers of the HCPD in order to assist HT survivors recovered by the human trafficking unit. The Office plans to provide trainings for the Korean and Hispanic communities in Howard County (mid-late 2019). Staff will continue to participate in HTPCC meetings and events, as well as conferences and events in neighboring jurisdictions.

### Howard County Health Department

The Howard County Health Department, in an effort to increase staff capacity to serve this population, and as a way to make sure the Department is doing the proper screening in its clinics and programs, is participating in ongoing training through the Howard County Office of Human Trafficking Prevention. Department Health Services staff has received two training modules and will continue to receive additional training updates. The Health Department is acutely aware from research indicating trauma of any type, at any age, is a precursor to substance abuse and poor health outcomes in general. As a form of prevention, educating the public health workforce to be aware of human trafficking and to know what to do when it is discovered is of the utmost importance to giving those affected the best chance at positive mental and physical health outcomes.<sup>17</sup>

### Howard County Department of Social Services

The Howard County Department of Social Services implements Maryland State Department of Human Services (DHS) policies concerning child welfare staff response, which have been revised several times since "human trafficking" was added to the definition of sexual abuse in Maryland in 2012. DHS implemented a Statewide mandated training requirement for all child welfare staff to improve their understanding and response to child sex trafficking victims in 2017 with a projection for completion in 2019. Howard County Child Protective Services (CPS) has responded to a number of cases, and has a plan in place to improve its collaborative approach to local victims with the implementation of a subcommittee of CPS staff; police from multiple divisions including: the local Child Advocacy Center, trafficking division, and runaway youth; and our State's Attorney's Office. The goal for this group is to identify specific youth at risk and discuss and implement intervention strategies.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> HoCo AGAST, 2019

<sup>17</sup> Howard County Health Department, 2019

<sup>18</sup> Howard County Department of Social Services, 2019

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### Howard County General Hospital

Howard County General Hospital's (HCGH) Social Work Department has participated in two educational hours on human trafficking in general, as its prevalence here in Howard County. Victims of trafficking often find their way to the Hospital, therefore making it a critical point of prevention and intervention. It is important for HCGH to continue its work while incorporating the changing landscape of healthcare.

### Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center and Foreign-Born Information and Referral Network (FIRN)

Grassroots provides essential services to vulnerable people in our community. Between March 2017 and December 2018 they provided crisis services for 24 trafficked individuals. FIRN provides immigration services to foreign-born individuals and families. FIRN's staff screens for victims of sexual trafficking or labor trafficking on a routine basis and provides counseling and support as needed. While staff have encountered individuals trafficked in the past, they have not reported encountering any recent cases.

### Howard County Public School System

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) ensures that all school counselors and nurses have received professional training regarding human trafficking, including predation by traffickers on school-aged children. Several schools have provided internet safety sessions for parents, and school counselors are incorporating internet safety into classroom lessons provided to students. Educating students and their parents on human trafficking, including the grooming process and internet safety, are important prevention efforts to keep students from becoming victims. With the extensive use of social media amongst school-aged students, it is critical to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to identify and address those at risk for this crime.

### **DCRS OFFICE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION**

In 2017, the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (OHTP) was created under the Department of Community Resources and Services. The Office of Human Trafficking Prevention's mission is to assist in the identification and prevention of sexual and labor trafficking in Howard County and beyond. Its mandate is supported in part by the work of the Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council, a body appointed by the County Executive. Through the office, referrals and support are available to victims and survivors of human trafficking. As part of the Department of Community Resources and Services, OHTP subscribes to the "No Wrong Door" philosophy – providing the opportunity for victims and survivors to receive support that reflect their priorities and needs.

The work of the office includes: program and policy development; outreach, education and training, of the general public, community members and area professionals; identification and creation of funding streams to support the body of work; as well as collaboration with partner agencies and the community to identify and solve issues leading to the eradication of human trafficking in the county.

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Training provided by OHTP in 2018 included :Howard County Public School System Nurses; Howard County Health Department clinical and behavioral staff ; Centennial High Schools students (and parents) from the Anti-Trafficking Awareness Club; Department of Community Resources and Services staff, Continuum of Care partners and Point-in-Time Count volunteers; Elders and key members of the Iglesia de Dios, Columbia; HoCo AGAST; “Not My Life” Human Trafficking Prevention forum members; Jewish Community Relations Council members within the Jewish Federation of Howard County; Family & Children’s Services – Columbia; and participants in the Youth Development Coalition. To date the office has trained over 500 Howard County professionals and community members, and provided them with information on human trafficking and clinical interventions to assist HT victims and survivors.

The Office also works closely with organizations throughout Maryland and regionally to effect policy change with and on behalf of survivors, in particular, the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force. The OHTP Coordinator participates as a regional Victim Services Subcommittee member.

### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION COORDINATING COUNCIL**

The Council (HTPCC) is a diverse body of Howard County residents, professionals and service providers who are charged with helping to identify the need for increased awareness, education, survivor support and collaboration, in conjunction with the OHTP coordinator. Created in March, 2017, as a result of Executive Order 2017-2, the Council’s work formally began after the creation of the DCRS Office of Human Trafficking Prevention in November, 2017. HTPCC meetings and activities to date have included eight regular full-council meetings, numerous sub-committee meetings, the sponsorship of the Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Conference with the OHTP, and a Roundtable initiated by Senator Ben Cardin. The Council is fortunate to have many partners in addition to the ones mentioned previously. These include healthcare, homeless services and foreign-born focused entities which provide services and resources to members of the Howard County community.

### **HOWARD COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION CONFERENCE**

Howard County’s first annual Human Trafficking Awareness Conference was held on Friday, October 26, 2018, an all-day event which included a national, state and local presenters, experts and guests. With an emphasis on action, participants were challenged to increase their level of knowledge and commitment to the fight against human trafficking. Suggested ways to join the fight included:

1. Informing yourself by reading or hearing Survivor accounts of trafficking;
2. Increasing your and others’ knowledge of human trafficking by inviting an OHTP and/ or Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force-affiliated trainer to speak at your business, organization, church, synagogue, temple or community group;
3. Supporting survivor-focused, non-profit organizations that directly assist victims of trafficking;
4. Identifying and reporting suspected human trafficking;
5. Engaging in safe online social media behavior and helping share HT awareness information with others around you; and
6. Advocating for improved human trafficking laws; expanding your knowledge of intersectionality and its impact on human trafficking victims; educating others when you hear them use derogatory language or stereotypes to describe human trafficking victims, sex workers and/or other trauma survivors.

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# HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION

## COORDINATING COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below, were developed in part through input from the Howard County Task Force recommendations of 2014 and in part on the experience gained by staff and HTPCC members through their activities over the past 15 months.

1. As per the first and third recommendations of the 2014 report and our ongoing experience, we respectfully request that the County Executive establish in code the creation of a **Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council**.
  - 1.1 Reauthorize the body as a permanent Council of Howard County
  - 1.2 Reappoint or newly appoint Members of the Council to include organizations that were previously a part of the Council and add the following (but not limited to) the Chief, Department of Fire and Rescue Services; a Member of the Executive Staff of the County Executive; and Director, Child Advocacy Center of Howard County
2. As per the 2014 recommendations 1, 1.1, 1.2, 3.0 and 3.2, and our ongoing experience, it is recommended that the **DCRS Office of Human Trafficking Prevention provide, coordinate, and facilitate the delivery of targeted trainings to key groups most vulnerable to trafficking. All efforts should be made to deliver these trainings in a culturally appropriate and responsive manner, and in multiple languages.**
  - 2.1 Since youth transitioning from foster care settings, youthful members of the LGBTQ community, youth who are African American, Hispanic and/or foreign-born, transgender, or are living with disabling conditions such as mental health challenges and substance use disorders are particularly vulnerable, trainers should focus on organizations which primarily serve these populations. Social media should be employed to engage groups which utilize this form of technology as a primary means of communication.
  - 2.2 Other populations, such as community members at large and professionals in various civic and other settings are in need of training and should also be reached in a concerted effort to help everyone in Howard County understand more about this often-hidden form of exploitation. A “train the trainers” model should be utilized and, as appropriate, individuals from the most affected populations should be trained to lead in these initiatives.
  - 2.3 Staff should create a Training subcommittee under the Coordinating Council to assist with developing a set of targeted, specialized trainings.

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3. As per 2014 recommendations 2.3 and 2.4, and our ongoing experience, it is recommended that ***DCRS Office of Human Trafficking Prevention and community partners, including the Coordinating Council develop a set of strategies to increase resources and services for survivors of sexual and labor trafficking.***
    - 3.1 Develop a grants-focused subcommittee under the Coordinating Council to assist the office in identifying and applying for funding and/or other resources on behalf of area agencies committed to helping survivors of sexual and/or labor trafficking.
    - 3.2 The office should work with key law enforcement stakeholder agencies including the States Attorney's Office and the Howard County Police Department to monitor the progress of the collection of asset forfeiture funding, and develop policies for utilizing funds that become available through federal, State or local government for victim services.
    - 3.3 OHTP should work collaboratively with any and all accredited area services or programs which provide long-term housing (versus shelter) and/or employment for survivors of human trafficking to increase the availability of housing and employment options.
  4. As per 2014 recommendation 1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.5 and others, and as per our ongoing experience, it is recommended that ***DCRS Office of Human Trafficking Prevention, in collaboration with the Council and community partners develop a human trafficking education and awareness campaign to increase identification of and support to victims; share resources and information as appropriate and allowable; and otherwise ensure that Howard County provides no safe haven to human traffickers or those who predate on vulnerable citizens and others.***
    - 4.1 Develop an awareness and collaboration subcommittee under the Coordinating Council to focus on the annual Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention conference, as well as campaigns that increase prevention and reporting information and resources available to the general public.
    - 4.2 County agencies, partners, and community stakeholders should maintain a focus on the development of Survivor leadership and diversity as a means by which equity and just outcomes are the focus at all levels of services to, with and on behalf of those most affected by human trafficking.
  5. As per the Transition Team report (January 2019 – page 14), it is recommended that ***funding be provided to OHTP to “increase the staffing level of this office by a minimum of one staff member who will be focused on training and education, supervising volunteers, and as general office support.”***
    - 5.1 Given the previously-addressed (Recommendation 2) description of proposed implementation of new outreach and training opportunities, this one-person office will need to be expanded such that the appropriate number of trainings, outreach and informational sessions can be conducted.

Additional staff will enable the office to increase its capacity to develop and implement meaningful policies and programs, and engage in best practices review at all levels.

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## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### HOWARD COUNTY LINKS

- HopeWorks of Howard County ..... <https://wearehopeworks.org/>
- Howard County Executive Order 2017-02 Establishing  
Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council (2017) ..... [https://www.howardcountymd.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=\\_EegVAuUXz1%3d&portalid=0](https://www.howardcountymd.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=_EegVAuUXz1%3d&portalid=0)
- Howard County Human Trafficking  
Task Force Report (2014) ..... <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=1Xq7GfPF37o%3D&portalid=0>
- Howard County Office of Human Trafficking Prevention ..... <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/OHTP>

### NATIONAL AND STATE LINKS

- California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) ..... <http://www.calcasa.org/>
- Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force ..... <http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org/>
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ..... <https://missingkids.org>
- National Human Trafficking Hotline ..... <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- National Office on Trafficking in Persons ..... <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/victim-assistance/national-human-trafficking-hotline>
- Polaris Project ..... <https://polarisproject.org/>
- Shared Hope International ..... <https://sharedhope.org/>

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