



HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMMISSION OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

MEETING MINUTES

September 8, 2025 | 10 AM – NOON

Attendees: Aaron Dennis, Alyssa Newell, Amy Lagesse, Annette Mango, Becca Peckinpagh, Cassandra Hartman, Celeste Prince, Celia Williamson, Chelsea Gaffey, Christi Bartman, Chrissy Hughes-McAlister, Danielle Davis, Eric Matheny, Erin Meyer, Gwen England, Hannah Estabrook, Haleigh Young, Hannah Swift, Harold D’Souza, Heather Wilde, Holly Reagan, Jamie Slayton, Jason Shawver, Jen Rausch, Jodi Stanton, John Cavanaugh, Julie Shroyer, Kathy Chen, Kathy Goellnitz, Katie Blankemeyer, Kelli Cary, Khalila Riga, Kierra Gilroy, Kirsti Mouncey, Kristina Nicholson, Lara Wilken, Latasha Brown, Lauren Kilburn, Lawaun Hill, Lesa Gifford, Linda Powers, Lily Holderbaum, Maggie Billings, Marie Fitzpatrick, Mary Kate Waggoner, Melanie Appleman, Melanie Deis, Melinda Bailey, Melisa Minier, Michele Sorrell, Michelle Grenig, Michelle Hannan, Micayla Wilson, Rosa Beltre, Sam Frisone, Samantha Salamon, Sara Johnson, Sara Williamson, Sarah Brown, Veronica Scherbauer

- I. Welcome and Introductions – Linda Majeska Powers & Mary Kate Waggoner
 - a. In-person attendees introduced themselves aloud.
 - b. Online attendees introduced themselves via Teams chat.
- II. Ambassador Advisory Council Updates – Mary Kate Waggoner
 - a. The new class of Ambassador Advisory Councilmembers officially started their terms on July 1, 2025. The new class is comprised of ten individuals with lived experience in human trafficking. There are some new members and some returning for a second term.
 - b. Several virtual meetings have been held with Ambassadors, and many have gotten plugged in to various subcommittee meetings and projects.
 - c. An in-person meeting date has been scheduled for professional headshots and vision-casting.
 - d. Graduating Ambassadors were recognized at the 2025 Human Trafficking Summit in July.
 - e. Ambassadors were given an opportunity to share personal or professional updates with the commission if desired. No updates were given.
- III. Subcommittee Updates
 - a. Healthcare – Lily Holderbaum
 - i. The Healthcare Subcommittee and the Ohio Attorney General’s Communications team have completed the newest healthcare training video:



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“Identifying Human Trafficking in a Harm Reduction Setting” and the accompanying Facilitator’s Discussion Guide.

- ii. The subcommittee is brainstorming ideas for new projects and exploring the possibilities of creating a policy & procedure template for identifying and responding to human trafficking in healthcare settings and improving data collection and sharing across healthcare systems.
- b. Law Enforcement – Aaron Dennis
 - i. The first Law Enforcement Subcommittee meeting under Aaron’s leadership will be convening soon. The subcommittee is eager to welcome their first Ambassador – who is also a sworn law enforcement officer – to the group!
 - ii. The Organized Crime Investigations Commission (OCIC) has been hard at work conducting trainings for various human trafficking task forces around the state and providing support to local task forces on various cases.
 - iii. The Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) is in the hiring process for an analyst position that will assist with human trafficking cases and will be housed under OCIC.
 - iv. Aaron encouraged attendees to keep calling in to the Ohio Human Trafficking Hotline (managed by BCI) as tips are essential to uncovering criminal networks around Ohio and recovering victims.
- c. Legal & Legislative – Samantha Salamon
 - i. The subcommittee continues to work with the Healthcare Subcommittee to explore avenues to mandate human trafficking training for nurses. The group plans to attend an open meeting of the Ohio Board of Nursing to advocate for this cause.
 - 1. A question was raised regarding the number of CEUs the group would like to be required for nurses.
 - 2. While nothing is set in stone, Samantha indicated that 1 CEU hour is likely what will be advocated for to OBN.
 - ii. The group also continues to explore zoning laws as a potential means of combatting illicit massage businesses (IMBs).
 - iii. Expanding avenues for victims to obtain compensation continues to be a goal of the subcommittee. Creating a framework around



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the distribution of asset seizure funds is currently being explored to accomplish this goal.

- d. Demand Reduction – Michele Sorrell (on behalf of Tony Talbott)
 - i. The group has not had a formal meeting in a few months due to scheduling difficulties.
 - ii. The group continues to work on the white paper surrounding best practices for demand reduction.
- e. Public Awareness – Lara Wilken
 - i. A new round of data is being collected to gain an understanding of the range and scope of training being conducted by HTC members across Ohio. Survey respondents must reply by September 26th to be included in the data collection. The link to the survey can be found here: [Human Trafficking Public Awareness Impact Survey](#).
 - ii. The subcommittee is continuing their work on updating two documents: “Apps to Watch” and “Parent Resource Guide.”
 - iii. Other projects are being discussed by the group, including building a virtual resource library and a secret project for the 2026 Human Trafficking Summit!
- f. Research, Data & Gap Analysis – Kirsti Mouncey
 - i. The subcommittee continues to work on compiling prevalence data from around Ohio.
 - ii. Amy Lagesse, from the University of Toledo, provided an update on the use of their youth and adult tools through various communities in Ohio.
 - iii. Amy announced that a new website will be launched soon with their data!
 - iv. Amy and Dr. Celia Williamson announced their collaboration with Representative Josh Williams to introduce House Bill 431, which would mandate the University of Toledo’s youth screening tool be implemented in all schools throughout Ohio.
- g. Victim Services – Chelsea Gaffey & Michelle Hannan
 - i. Chelsea officially joined Michelle as the co-chair of the subcommittee, taking the spot previously filled by Rebekkah O’Bryan.



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- ii. The subcommittee continues to focus on the maintenance of the Standards of Service for Trafficked Persons and the Victim Services Directory.
- iii. New organizations are being added to the directory as standards are met, and supplementary documents are provided.
- iv. Some organizations are due for re-assessment and will receive further instructions for renewal.
- v. A question arose regarding programs that serve domestic violence victims receiving funding to serve human trafficking survivors. Kelli Cary from the Governor's Human Trafficking Task Force shared that their office funds several programs to provide such services. The list can be found [here](#).

IV. General Human Trafficking Initiative (HTI) Updates

- a. The 2025 Human Trafficking Summit was held on July 30th and evaluations from attendees were received. Overall, the feedback was very positive!
- b. Almost one year has passed since the launch of BCI's Ohio-specific human trafficking hotline. Some year-to-date stats from BCI were provided:
 - i. 134 calls received
 - ii. 188 messages received
 - 1. 29 – app
 - 2. 87 – text
 - 3. 72 – website
 - 4. 184 messages contained information that was able to be forwarded to law enforcement
 - 5. 83 messages contained generalized location information
 - 6. 76 messages contained specific addresses and/or named locations
 - iii. BCI encourages people to continue to call in to the hotline – including law enforcement and prosecutors – to centralize data and assist in piecing together potentially related tips or criminal networks.

V. Upcoming Trainings & Developments

- a. Veronica Scherbauer shared that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) is working on developing a victim service map of Ohio that includes information from the human trafficking coalitions, the Victim Services



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Directory, and other key information – essentially creating a “one-stop-shop” for information. The goal for completion is the end of 2025!

- b. DPS is also hosting two upcoming “Advancing Human Trafficking Investigations and Prosecutions” trainings:
 - i. September 22nd, 9 AM – 3 PM, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Conference Room 1106 and 1110 (1970 West Broad Street Columbus, OH 43223)
 - ii. November 13th, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM, The Jewish Hospital — Mercy Health (4777 East Galbraith Road Cincinnati, OH 45236)
- c. Kristina Nicholson from DPS was recently promoted to Senior Anti-Trafficking Research Specialist!
 - i. Kristina is working to update the data dashboard to include law enforcement data.
 - ii. A media guide regarding the data dashboard is also in the works.
- d. Lara Wilken shared the HEAL Task Force (covering Huron, Erie, Ashland, and Lorain counties) is hosting a human trafficking training to help stakeholders from these counties strengthen partnerships to combat human trafficking. This free event will take place on Friday, October 10, 2025, from 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM at BGSU Firelands, Cedar Point Center Auditorium. Registration for the event can be found here: <https://forms.gle/d7LYPKWJSDz2bQNz5>.
- e. Amy Lagesse shared that the University of Toledo Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute will host the 22nd Annual International Human Trafficking & Social Justice Conference from September 17 – 19th!
- f. Samantha Salamon shared that the Northeast Ohio Human Trafficking Conference is upcoming on October 17th at the *Kent State Hotel and Conference Center (215 S Depeyster St., Kent, OH 44240)*. Registration is here: 3rd Annual NE Ohio Human Trafficking Conference Tickets.
- g. Kirsti Mouncey shared that the Collaborative to End Human Trafficking (Cleveland) is planning another statewide advocacy day at the Ohio Statehouse. More info to come!