

*Protecting Ohio's Families*



Ohio Attorney General's Office

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**2017**  
**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**  
**COMMISSION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

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**MIKE DEWINE**

★ OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL ★

January 29, 2018

Dear Fellow Ohioans,

During the past year, the Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission has increased its focus on raising awareness of human trafficking across the state through education and victim services.

A year ago, I announced a new initiative in which the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) would identify frequent runaways, who are at great risk of being trafficked, and work with local law enforcement to offer assistance in intervening. As part of the initiative, my office has been conducting trainings to educate law enforcement on high-risk youths and frequent runaways. The trainings allow officers to learn about BCI's services and ways to look further into each runaway's case to identify risk factors. In 2017, BCI's Missing Persons Unit identified 146 potential high-risk juveniles and provided that information to 13 local law enforcement agencies.

We have also increased access to services for victims of human trafficking by providing more than \$5 million in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding to organizations and agencies that serve survivors of human trafficking. Many of these agencies have been working with commission members to improve their services and identify ways to better serve their clients. Networking with the commission and learning about available funding sources has allowed many agencies to expand their services to assist victims of human trafficking with their specific needs and challenges.

The efforts of the Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission during the past 12 months have been instrumental in the fight against this exploitation in Ohio. The partnerships that have been built and the relationships forged during commission meetings allow for a better response when survivors are identified and a greater ability to prosecute traffickers when they are exposed. Thanks to this work, Ohio continues to be a leader in the fight against human trafficking.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting vulnerable members of society.

Very respectfully yours,

Mike DeWine  
Ohio Attorney General

## Human Trafficking Commission Activities

In 2017, the Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission hosted three quarterly meetings. Each meeting focused on a different topic 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. Subcommittee members heard from speakers from many different professions including business, education, health care, and law enforcement.

### Law Enforcement Subcommittee

The Law Enforcement Subcommittee is made up of representatives from a variety of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. It continues to identify innovative ways to address the problem of human trafficking, including intelligence sharing, task force work, and trainings among law enforcement and private businesses.

To better perform investigations, the subcommittee continues to encourage partnerships among law enforcement agencies, victim service providers, grass-roots organizations, and businesses. Throughout the year, subcommittee members also met with members in several business sectors to discuss ways to try to proactively identify potential human trafficking perpetrators. They also have continued to discuss ways to better track and coordinate responses to tips received by the public and law enforcement.

### 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 work included a discussion of new legislation to be introduced in the coming year to the Ohio General Assembly and of upcoming federal policies.

The state legislation discussed included:

- Senate Bill 4, introduced by Sen. Stephanie Kunze, R-Hilliard, and Sen. Scott Oelslager, R-North Canton, to allow a person who is found not guilty of an offense, or who is the defendant named in a dismissed criminal charge, to apply for a court order to expunge his or her official records in the case if the charge, or not guilty finding, was the result of the applicant having been a human trafficking victim. It would also allow a person convicted of certain prostitution-related offenses to apply for the expungement of the conviction record when the person's participation was the result of having been a human trafficking victim.
- House Bill 327, introduced by Rep. Tim Schaffer, R-Lancaster, and Rep. Kent Smith, D-Euclid, to amend the penalties for the offense of importuning.

The subcommittee also discussed federal legislation, including "Allow Victims and States to Fight Online Trafficking Act of 2017," introduced by U.S. Rep. Ann Wagner, R-Missouri, and "Stop Enabling

Sex Traffickers Act of 2017,” introduced by U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio. These bills are aimed at ending the trafficking of all people and at helping those who have been trafficked to rebuild their lives.

The Legal and Legislative Subcommittee addressed planning for the 9th annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day and what the legislative panel would address.

## **Prevention, Education, and Awareness Subcommittee**

The Prevention, Education, and Awareness Subcommittee continues to work on three broad outreach and education areas: youths, health care professionals, and the private sector.

### **Youths**

Building upon the subcommittee’s release of *Human Trafficking Prevention Education: Guidance for Implementation of Youth Programs* in 2016, the members developed a plan, which is being implemented, to gather information on human trafficking prevention education programs across the state. The goal is to compile a comprehensive list of programs and to assess their effectiveness. A long-term goal is to host a statewide conference to improve the quality and coordination of human trafficking youth prevention programming in Ohio.

### **Health Care Professionals**

Subcommittee members, with assistance from students from the University of Dayton, are compiling a list of human trafficking training programs and resources for health care professionals. Programs also are being reviewed and evaluated against standards developed by the subcommittee and derived from a comparison of existing programs. Additionally, professional associations and health care educators throughout the state will be contacted and urged to adopt human trafficking prevention protocols and training. The subcommittee is also drafting a series of recommendations to assist health care professionals in dealing with human trafficking.

### **Private Sector**

Subcommittee members and students from the University of Dayton are compiling and evaluating private sector human trafficking prevention programs and categorizing them by target industry. Private sector outreach will be prioritized based on the risk level of each industry and the level of training and awareness available for that industry. Members will also draft a series of recommendations to improve outreach and training efforts.

## **Research and Analysis Subcommittee**

In late June 2017, the Research and Analysis Subcommittee began plans to conduct research on the intersection of heroin and human trafficking in Ohio. Subcommittee members plan to use qualitative research methods to conduct individual interviews and focus groups with treatment providers, law enforcement officers, and opioid users who were trafficked in Ohio. The planning and implementation of this project is pending.

More recently, the subcommittee has been involved in discussions to conduct a social media project. The project is designed to better understand the use of social media to recruit and traffic youths. Through discussions with representatives from the University of Toledo's Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute and Wright State University, and a high school student involved in state government, an outline and a questionnaire were created for the project. The University of Toledo's Research and Protection Board is considering whether to conduct the research. If approval is received, the project will begin.

This project consists of interviewing a sampling of people involved in anti-trafficking efforts, including law enforcement task forces, BCI representatives, chairpersons of anti-trafficking coalitions, and other professionals with knowledge about human trafficking and social media. This information will be analyzed and the connection between social media and human trafficking will be discussed. If the team is provided additional permission from the university's research and protection board, it will use the findings to develop and conduct a survey of youths about risky websites, gaming, applications, and other identified social media tools. Questions would cover participants' use of such tools and their perception of risk.

## **Demand Reduction Subcommittee**

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

Members are asked to help create documents, presentations, and training resources for the broader anti-human trafficking community. Members are invited to 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>.)

The subcommittee concentrates its education and awareness efforts on potential offenders, consumers, and traffickers – rather than on potential victims. The effort implies that a change is needed in societal norms, which view people as commodities. The subcommittee makes progress by stressing personal and community actions to end human trafficking. For example, the subcommittee created the following documents to help address these issues:

[www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Victims/Demand-Reduction-White-Paper](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Victims/Demand-Reduction-White-Paper) and [www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Victims/Demand-Reduction-Conversation-Piece.aspx](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Victims/Demand-Reduction-Conversation-Piece.aspx).

In order for demand reduction to be successful, the subcommittee has focused on primary prevention efforts. The 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. The subcommittee is committed to elevating efforts to engage men and boys in ending sexual- and intimate-partner violence.

Subcommittee projects include:

- Development of an orientation packet for new members of the subcommittee.
- Training opportunities including:
  - An update on the work of the subcommittee and an overview of demand reduction presented to the full Ohio Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Commission.
  - An expanded version of an overview on demand reduction presented to human trafficking providers during the Salvation Army’s End Slavery conference in Cincinnati.
  - An in-depth training on primary prevention, tailored for the human trafficking provider audience, from the staff of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence.

The subcommittee is working to develop a presentation for boys on the primary prevention of human trafficking and a “Social Ecological Model for Primary Prevention of Human Trafficking.” It is also surveying new resources for inclusion in the bibliography of demand-reduction resources.

## **Victim Services Subcommittee**

In late 2015, the Victim Services Subcommittee conducted a planning session to establish its direction for 2016-2017. In 2017, the subcommittee focused on, and completed, two of the four goals: working with advocates from throughout Ohio to update and expand the Child Response Protocol Toolkit and updating Ohio’s Standards of Service to Trafficked Persons.

## The Child Response Protocol Toolkit

In 2013, a group of anti-trafficking advocates from throughout Ohio met with the Victim Services Subcommittee to develop a protocol for responding to child victims of human trafficking. Since that time, new developments – such as the growth of Safe Harbor programs, increased access to legal assistance, and new leadership for the child advocacy centers – have changed the landscape. In 2016, the subcommittee hosted four meetings attended by advocates from around the state to redesign and update the Child Response Protocol Toolkit.

Through collaboration with the Ohio Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator's Office, the updated toolkit was released in August 2017. The purpose of the toolkit is to equip Ohio's communities with tools to support a coordinated response to sex and/or labor trafficking of youths. The toolkit provides a series of preferred practices to assist communities in creating collaborative, survivor-centered interventions. Its contributors envision many potential uses, including:

- Bringing key stakeholders together to customize the toolkit for their local collaborative response.
- Identifying those involved in the local collaborative response.
- Learning the red flags and indicators of human trafficking.
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable youths and providing them with appropriate assistance.

The toolkit includes a wealth of information for communities, including:

- The definition and nature of human trafficking in Ohio.
- How to screen for and identify trafficked youth.
- Strategies for implementing Ohio's Safe Harbor Law.
- How to build a local child response protocol.
- Strategies for engaging survivors.
- Providing comprehensive care to trafficked youth.
- Trauma and trauma-informed care.
- Understanding the roles of partners in human trafficking response networks.
- Strategies for connecting with local law enforcement.
- Accessing training on human trafficking.
- Sample screening tools.
- Resources for foreign national youth.
- Helpful definitions when serving LGBTQ youths.
- Resources for individuals who are deaf.
- Guidance from the Ohio Attorney General to the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services in regard to missing children in custody and reporting requirements.

A copy of the Child Response Protocol Toolkit can be found at <http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov/links/HT-Child-Protocol.pdf>.

## Ohio's Standards for Services to Trafficked Persons

Initially developed by Ohio advocates in 2010 and updated in 2013, the *Standards for Services for Trafficked Persons* provides guidelines for providers of trafficking-specific services for survivors. In 2017, the subcommittee released an updated, expanded version of this guide. Visit <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Victims/Standards-of-Service-for-Trafficked-Persons>.

The guidelines are designed to assist communities in building effective service networks for trafficked persons, by promoting continuous quality improvement and sharing of effective practices. The ultimate goal is to ensure that all survivors have access to effective services.

Following an overview of Ohio's human trafficking coalitions and response networks, the guide highlights the ethical, media and program standards recommended for any organization providing services to trafficked persons. Content areas include:

- Basic standards for non-profit organizations.
- Ethical guidelines for practice.
- Media standards for use of survivors' stories.
- The definition, basic standards, personnel qualifications, and training recommendations for operating the following services for trafficked persons:
  - A 24-hour hotline.
  - An emergency response.
  - Survivor peer support.
  - Trauma-specific therapy for human trafficking survivors.
  - Sheltering and short-term housing.
  - Residential programs.
  - Alcohol and other drug treatment.
  - Case management.
  - Victim advocacy.
  - Outreach.
  - Drop-in centers.

In 2018, the Victim Services Subcommittee plans to finalize strategies for disseminating the standards, and share the tools through trainings, partnerships, and social media. It will then measure the impact of the tools through a survey process.

## 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 report, local law enforcement agencies list 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 2017.

## 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 the information to the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). According to the data collected in 2017, law enforcement reported 202 human trafficking investigations leading to 70 arrests and 18 successful criminal convictions.

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

Female victims of sex trafficking were the most commonly identified human trafficking victims reported by law enforcement during the past year. In 2017, there were **208** potential victims of human trafficking identified.

Potential Victims					
By Gender		By Age		By Race	
Female	193	13 or Younger	2	White	110
Male	7	14-15	12	Black	52
No Gender Specified	8	16-17	24	Asian/Pacific Islander or American Indian/ Native Alaskan	39
		18-20	39	No Ethnicity Listed	7
		21-29	69		
		30-40	37		
		41-59	18		
		85 or Older	1		
		No Age Listed	6		

During the past year, law enforcement identified **221** suspected traffickers, including 211 potential sex traffickers and 10 potential labor traffickers.

Suspected Traffickers					
By Gender		By Age		By Race	
Male	178	16-17	4	Black	139
Female	32	18-20	16	White	52
No Gender Specified	11	21-29	75	Asian/Pacific Islander	26
		30-40	66	No Ethnicity Listed	4
		41-59	32		
		60-84	3		
		No Age Listed	25		

In the past year, **257** suspected consumers or buyers/johns were identified by law enforcement. Of the suspected consumers, 183 were identified as consumers of sex trafficking and 74 were consumers of labor trafficking.

Suspected Consumers					
By Gender		By Age		By Race	
Male	194	21-29	7	White	115
Female	10	30-40	7	Black	13
No Gender Specified	53	41-59	11	Asian/Pacific Islander	4
		60-84	5	No Ethnicity Listed	125
		No Age Listed	227		

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 (100)
- Runaway or homeless status (44)
- Undocumented status (24)
- Oppressed, marginalized, and/or impoverished (22)
- Truancy (2)
- Other factors (29)

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

**Identified methods of transportation**

- Motor vehicle (163)
- Airplane (5)
- Other (12)

**Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force**

The Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force was created in 2012 by the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission (OOCIC) as a law enforcement collaborative to investigate human trafficking cases in the central Ohio area. The task force is made up primarily of officers and agents from the Columbus Division of Police, the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office, the Department of Homeland Security, the Powell Police Department, the Delaware County Sheriff’s Office, the Franklin County Prosecutor’s Office, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Ohio, and the Delaware County Prosecutor’s Office, in partnership with the Salvation Army of Central Ohio. Recent cases include:

- In May 2016, a Columbus resident was indicted as the main defendant of a sex trafficking operation that included his wife and another male associate. All three were indicted by a Franklin County grand jury for various state charges, including trafficking in persons, engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity, and money laundering. During the investigation, it

was revealed that the main defendant housed his victims in various hotels and apartments in the central Ohio area. He used the victims' drug addiction, specifically heroin, to induce and compel them to work for him as prostitutes. The main defendant attracted customers by posting online escort ads through electronic devices that were linked to him. The money made from this illicit activity was funneled to his wife who in turn laundered the money for him. An associate of the main defendant also assisted with the operation by providing security and collecting money from the victims. All three defendants agreed to a plea bargain with the main defendant pleading guilty on May 22, 2017, and receiving a 10-year sentence.

- In February 2016, members of the Central Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force received several tips which indicated that a male was posting adult female victims of sex trafficking on Backpage.com. Several possible victims linked to this male were identified through phone records and Backpage.com escort ads. Using various investigative techniques, task force agents followed the suspect and several of his victims to Middleburg Heights, Ohio, Blue Ash, Ohio, Sharonville, Ohio, Pittsburgh and Louisville, Ky., where he advertised them in the escorts section of Backpage.com. During the investigation, three adult victims were rescued and provided services. Through interviews with these victims, it was learned that the suspect was controlling them through narcotics and violence. An additional 12 adult victims linked to the suspect were identified and interviewed. On Jan. 26, 2017, the suspect was indicted on five counts of sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion, in U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio, and subsequently arrested on Feb. 7. On June 29, the suspect pleaded guilty to one count of sex trafficking by force, fraud, or coercion. On Oct. 12, he was sentenced to 180 months in prison.

### **Southwest Ohio Human Trafficking Working Group**

The Southwest Ohio Human Trafficking Working Group, consisting of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and victim service providers, received tips on more than 36 potential human trafficking cases.

- In July 2017, the Cincinnati Police Department; Drug Enforcement Administration; Boone County (Ky.) Sheriff's Office; Kentucky State Police; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; FBI; Hamilton County Sheriff's Office; Colerain Township Police Department; Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office; Sharonville Police Department; Springdale Police Department; West Chester Township Police Department; and Florence (Ky.) Police Department investigated a Hamilton County man and his female associate. Both were arrested on drug and firearms violations following a multiyear investigation in which the man was identified as a suspect in the sex trafficking of dozens of women in Ohio and Kentucky. Federal and state charges are pending.
- Between April and June 2017, the Sharonville Police Department, FBI, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Cincinnati Police Department, Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office, and U.S. Marshals Service were involved in the arrest of four men from the Cincinnati area. The men were indicted on federal violations as suspects in the prostitution and sexual exploitation of a minor from Clermont County. The individuals were charged following the recovery in April of the minor by Sharonville officers at a local motel.

- In May 2017, the Cincinnati Police Department, FBI, Union Township Police Department, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, and Clermont County Prosecutor's Office were involved in the investigation of two Clermont County men and a Kansas man. The men were indicted on federal charges as suspects in the recruitment, transportation, and sexual exploitation of a minor from Indiana. The minor was recovered in Clermont County following a state and federal investigation spanning multiple states.
- The Cincinnati Police Department, FBI Cincinnati Field Office, FBI Tampa Division, St. Petersburg (Fla.) Police Department, and Clearwater (Fla.) Police Department investigated a man suspected of systematically and violently abusing multiple victims to induce them, against their will, into prostitution for his financial gain. The victims were made to travel between Florida, Cincinnati, and elsewhere to engage in sexual acts. The suspect took photos of the victims to post prostitution ads on the Internet. In August 2016, he was indicted on federal charges and arrested in downtown Cincinnati. In July 2017, he pleaded guilty to interstate prostitution and could face 20 years in prison.
- The Cincinnati Police Department and several other Hamilton County law enforcement agencies, working with Hamilton County Municipal Court officials and social service providers, referred numerous women who were involved in commercial sex to Change Court, a specialty docket to provide supervised services to help victims of human trafficking to break the cycle of drug addiction and prostitution. Twenty-two women are receiving services through the program, a collaborative effort of law enforcement, the courts and victim service groups.

### **Cleveland Area**

Several suspects who used social media to recruit female victims, including several juveniles into human trafficking were found guilty in 2017. The case was handled by the Warrensville Heights Police Department, FBI, Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department, and Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office. The first defendant was sentenced to 18 years in prison for trafficking in persons, conspiracy, and compelling prostitution. The second defendant was sentenced to 15 years in prison for trafficking in persons. The third defendant was sentenced to probation for promoting prostitution.

After an investigation that led to the rescue of two minor victims, a male suspect was indicted on charges of trafficking in persons, compelling prostitution, prohibition against commercial sexual exploitation of a minor, rape, unlawful sexual conduct with a minor, and possessing criminal tools. A trial is scheduled for November 2017. This case was worked on by the Independence Police Department, FBI, Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department, and Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office.

### **Cuyahoga County Regional Human Trafficking Task Force**

Two men were indicted by a Summit County Grand Jury after an investigation by the Cuyahoga County Regional Human Trafficking Task Force uncovered two victims of human trafficking. One of the two victims was a juvenile. Both men were charged with trafficking in persons, compelling prostitution, and corrupting another with drugs. Their trials are pending.

## **Law Enforcement Training**

The Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) trains local law enforcement to identify and investigate cases of human trafficking in Ohio. The Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTC) 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 2017, 9,244 Ohio peace officers and other law enforcement professionals completed human trafficking training through OPOTA. Of this total, more than 1,360 were new peace officers who completed the human trafficking course as a part of their basic training. There were 7,762 law enforcement professionals who completed the human trafficking course made available through the online classroom of eOPOTA. Of this total, 726 completed an updated course developed specifically for officers' continuing professional training. And 114 individuals completed the 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. However, the group's work is not done. Next year will bring more opportunities to increase education and outreach throughout the state. Members will continue to speak to new organizations to broaden awareness, encourage reporting of suspicious activity, and advocate for increased victim services.



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