Maryland's Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking 2025 Report

Family Law Article, Section 5-704.4(g)(1); Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B

Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy

November 25, 2025

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

Maryland
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION AND POLICY

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Executive Director

November 25, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William C. "Bill" Ferguson IV
President of the Senate
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Adrienne Jones
Speaker of the House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Family Law Article § 5-704.4(g)(1) (MSAR #15143) and Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B (MSAR #11842)

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

As required by § 5-704.4(g)(1) of the Family Law Article and Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B, please find an enclosed copy of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy's report, titled *Maryland's Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking 2025 Report*. This report includes information regarding the distribution of funding under the Safe Harbor Regional Navigator Grant Program to support services for youth victims of sex trafficking. It also identifies whether the services coordinated and provided by grantees are available, adequate, and successfully serving children and youth victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Furthermore, it provides information on best practices for serving victims of human trafficking, a summary of State and federal funds available to serve victims of human trafficking, and recommendations to further the State's efforts against human trafficking. Should you have any questions relating to the information provided in this report, please feel free to contact me at 410-697-9338.

As required, five color copies will be sent to the DLS Legislative Library.

Sincerely,

Dorothy J. Lennig, Esq.
Executive Director

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)

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Introduction

In accordance with § 5-704.4(g)(1) of the Family Law Article and Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (Office) must submit an annual report or biennial independent evaluation to the Governor and/or the General Assembly by December 1, as it relates to:[1]

- Whether services coordinated and provided by grantees under § 5-704.4 of the Family Law Article are available, adequate, and successfully serving children and youth who are victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking, as required by § 5-704.4(g)(1) of the Family Law Article; and
- Information regarding best practices for serving victims of human trafficking, available State and federal funding to serve victims, efforts to develop anti-human trafficking priorities in partnership with the Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center, and recommendations to further the State's efforts against human trafficking, as required by Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B.

Pursuant to its charge, this *Maryland's Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking 2025 Report* includes information on the distribution of funding under the Safe Harbor Regional Navigator Grant Program (RNPG), also known as the Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act Regional Navigator Program, to support services for youth victims of sex trafficking. It also examines qualitative and quantitative data to measure the outcome of the services provided; and details the State's efforts to combat human trafficking through the Office's Victim Services Unit. Furthermore, it provides a follow-up to several reports submitted in prior years. To view these reports, please visit the Office's website at: https://gocpp.maryland.gov/reports-and-publications/.

Revised Metrics for Victim Services Awards

In April 2024, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) initiated its annual process to allow agencies to update their Managing for Results (MFR) Strategic Plans to ensure requests from the legislature, metrics for newly established programs, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are integrated in the plan. Because data-driven decisions are the foundation of the Office, the measures used to inform policy, practices, and funding decisions must be accurate and

[1] It is important to note that this report accounts for two requirements with different due dates: § 5-704.4(g)(1) of the Family Law Article requires the Office to submit an independent evaluation on services for victims of sex trafficking to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1 of every other year, beginning in 2019; and Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B requires the Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director to submit a report to the Governor by December 1 of each year, on the status of the Director's work.

meaningful. For this reason, the Office examined several victim-specific performance measures to determine if the measures provided an actual representation of victims served in Maryland.

Based on an internal evaluation of the program assessment method for victim services awards, which required a manual review of programmatic data to identify and remove duplicate entries, the Office found limitations due to several overly general data metrics. Because the measures lacked clear and specific definitions, which hindered the ability to present findings in a meaningful way, the Office developed new measures in May 2024, which were approved by DBM for the FY 2026 MFR Strategic Plan (*as listed below*).[2] The Office also created definitions for each measure to ensure consistency with the data collection and submission process.[3]

- How many primary crime victims were served during this reporting period (unduplicated count)?
- How many secondary crime victims (surviving family member or other individual) were served during this reporting period (unduplicated count)?

On October 1, 2024, subrecipients were informed of the evaluation and new performance measures to reflect the outcome of the grant program. They were also asked to report on new measures as part of their mandated programmatic submissions, effective July 1, 2024. Given the importance of identifying victims served by funding source, the Office added the following measures for subrecipients to report on, effective January 1, 2025:[4]

- During this reporting period and using ALL funding sources (all grants, general funding, fundraising, etc.), how many total unduplicated NEW victims (both primary and secondary victims) who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland were served?
- During this reporting period and using ALL funding sources (all grants, general funding, fundraising, etc.), how many unduplicated NEW primary victims who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland were served?
- During this reporting period and using ALL funding sources (all grants, general funding, fundraising, etc.), how many unduplicated NEW secondary victims who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland were served?

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[2] Department of Budget and Management. (2024). *Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, and Policy - Managing for Results FY 2026*. https://dbm.maryland.gov/Documents/MFR_documents/2026/Governor_s-Office-of-Crime-Prevention-and-Policy-MFR.pdf

[3] A **primary** victim is an individual who directly experiences harm or abuse as the result of a crime; such as physical, emotional, or sexual violence. A **secondary** victim is an individual who is indirectly affected by a crime or harmful event as a result of a crime. They may be impacted emotionally or psychologically because of their relationship with the primary victim. **Unduplicated count** means that each victim is counted only once even if the victim meets more than one criteria, specific data variable, or service. **Ongoing** means services that are provided to current victims that are not counted under the new primary or secondary metrics.

[4] It is important to note that the six measures replaced the two measures that took effect July 1, 2024, to gather more insight regarding allocated grant funding for primary and secondary victims who are served in Maryland.

- During this reporting period and using ONLY THESE grant funds, how many NEW total victims (both primary and secondary victims) who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland were served?
- During this reporting period and using ONLY THESE grant funds, how many NEW primary victims who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland were served?
- During this reporting period and using ONLY THESE grant funds, how many NEW secondary victims who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland were served?

Based on the identified changes, as well as a new methodology to identify subrecipient reported information through an internal interactive data dashboard, all performance measures for victim services awards provide a better representation of victims served in Maryland as well as the funding source used. The new methodology is also used across all funding streams to improve internal processes and increase efficiency for the collection and analysis of performance metrics.

Maryland's Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking

Evaluation of Services for Victims of Sex Trafficking

Pursuant to § 5-704.4(g)(1) of the Family Law Article, which was established by the Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019 (Act), this *Evaluation of Services for Victims of Sex Trafficking* section includes information on the administration and distribution of funds to support services for youth victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking. The Office administers the RNPG program to expand programming in jurisdictions to coordinate and provide services for suspected child sex and labor trafficking victims who are age 24 and under.[5] Through this program, jurisdictions develop a network of regional navigators to provide specific services to identified or confirmed child sex or labor trafficking victims, including safety planning, emergency responses, basic living needs, trauma counseling and mental health services, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, legal services, victim advocacy, and case management. The program also requires law enforcement and local departments of social services, who have reason to believe a child is a victim of sex or labor trafficking, to notify a regional navigator in their jurisdiction to obtain needed services for the child.[6]

[5] Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. *Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act Regional Navigator Program (RNPG)*. https://gocpp.maryland.gov/grants/programs/rnpg/

[6] The Act mandated the statewide implementation of the Regional Navigator Program. For the first time, the Office received dedicated funding in State fiscal 2024; in previous years, support was provided by reallocating funds from other programs. As of February 2024, all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland had successfully implemented the program.

In State fiscal 2025, $3,349,415 was provided in general funds for the RNPG program, and the Office awarded the following subrecipients (*as illustrated in **Table 1***).

Table 1: State Fiscal 2025 RNPG Awards					
Implementing Agency	**Project Title**	**Start Date**	**End Date**	**Award Amount**	**Jurisdiction**[7]
Jane's Place, Inc.	Allegany County Regional Navigator Continuation - FY25	7/1/24	9/30/25	$72,227	Allegany
Center for Hope, Inc. (formerly The Baltimore Child Abuse Center, Inc.)	FY 2025 Baltimore City Child Sex Trafficking Screening & Services Act Regional Navigator Program	7/1/24	9/30/25	$156,368	Baltimore City
University of Maryland, Baltimore	Regional Navigator FY25	7/1/24	9/30/25	$489,150	Baltimore City
Washington County Department of Social Services	The Washington County Department of Social Services Regional Navigator Grant Program	7/1/24	6/30/25	$83,749	Washington
Board of Child Care of the United Methodist Church, Inc.	Board of Child Care-Everstand Regional Navigator Program	7/1/24	9/30/25	$155,968	Baltimore County
TurnAround, Inc. (Baltimore County)	Bridging Response to Safe Harbors (Regional Navigator Continuation)	7/1/24	6/30/25	$489,150	Baltimore County
Rape Crisis Intervention Service of Carroll County, Inc. DBA Care Healing Center	CARE Healing Center Regional Navigator Program	7/1/24	9/30/25	$195,660	Carroll
Center for Children, Inc.	Southern Maryland Child Sex trafficking Regional Navigator Program	7/1/24	9/30/25	$489,092	Charles
Cecil County Department of Community Services	Regional Navigator Program - Cecil County	7/1/24	6/30/25	$101,000	Cecil
Heartly House, Inc.	Services for HT Victims	7/1/24	9/30/25	$195,660	Frederick
Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Resource Center (Dove Center)	Garrett Human Trafficking Navigation and Training Initiative	7/1/24	9/30/25	$14,434	Garrett
Sexual Assault/Spouse Abuse Resource Center, Inc. (SARC)	Regional Trafficking Navigator	7/1/24	6/30/25	$44,141	Harford
For All Seasons, Inc.	Regional Navigator & Comprehensive Human Trafficking Response (RNPG FY25)	7/1/24	6/30/25	$489,105	Talbot
Life Crisis Center, Inc.	Lower Shore Child Sex Trafficking Navigator Program	7/1/24	6/30/25	$373,711	Wicomico
Total				**$3,349,415**	

[7] It is important to note that the awarded jurisdiction may not reflect the jurisdictions served under the identified grant award. For instance, the University of Maryland, Baltimore serves Prince George's and Montgomery; the Board of Child Care of the United Methodist Church, Inc. covers Anne Arundel; TurnAround, Inc. provides services for Baltimore County and Howard; the Center for Children, Inc. serves Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's; For All Seasons, Inc. covers Kent, Dorchester, Talbot, Queen Anne's, and Caroline; and the Life Crisis Center, Inc. provides services for Worcester, Wicomico, and Somerset.

Through the RNPG program, awarded funds were used to provide services needed to comply with the Act. In addition, and based on the quarterly submission of revised performance measures (*as described in the Revised Metrics for Victim Services Awards section*), awarded subrecipients reported the following outcomes in State fiscal 2025:[8]

- 1,075 human trafficking victims served
- 428 new human trafficking victims served
- 2,417 unique primary crime victims served[9]
- 285 unique secondary crime victims served
- 2,568 victims received ongoing services through the RNPG program only
- 4,941 victims received ongoing services through all funding sources

Furthermore, regional navigators anecdotally reported several challenges to include:

- Underreported trafficking cases and/or discrepancies in referral protocols
- Impacted service delivery due to inconsistent referrals, logistics (e.g., transportation), etc.
- Development of an outcome measurement survey to maintain an accurate count of trafficking families who complete the survey
- Transitional and/or affordable housing

Navigators also reported several notable activities that occurred during the reporting period:

- Completed trainings
- Strengthened victim service delivery
- Ongoing efforts to emphasize relationship building, survivor empowerment, and harm reduction

The Office's Victim Services Unit continues to meet with regional navigators to identify gaps in services in each jurisdiction.

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[8] It is important to note that given the recent methodology to better identify primary and secondary victims who are served in Maryland using grant funds, the Office combined figures for separate measures to identify the number of unique primary crime victims served: "How many primary crime victims were served during the reporting period (unduplicated count)" which covered the first half of the fiscal period, and "During this reporting period and using ONLY THESE grant funds, how many NEW primary victims who live, work, or were victimized in Maryland were served" which covered the second half of the fiscal period. A similar process occurred pertaining to unique secondary crime victims served.

[9] This total includes individuals identified as at-risk or suspected victims who received Navigator support. This metric is included because trafficking victims often initially deny exploitation but may disclose other crimes such as domestic violence, sexual assault, or child sexual abuse. Early intervention with these victims aims to reduce the likelihood of future trafficking.

Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director

Pursuant to Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B, this *Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director* section includes information on establishing statewide best practices to serve victims, available State and federal funds to support victims, the work of the Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center related to human trafficking, and recommendations to further the State's efforts to combat human trafficking (*as described below*). Following the vacancy of the Director position in March 2020, and the hiring freeze to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office moved funding to support the hire of staff in its Victim Services Unit to further the State's efforts to combat human trafficking.

Statewide Best Practices to Services Victims

The Office's Victim Services Unit continues to collaborate with various public safety partners, victim service providers, the statewide Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, and local task forces to identify and gather information on efforts within the State to address human trafficking. Through this process, and in coordination with local, State, and federal partners, the Office provides information on and aids in the establishment of best practices when serving victims of human trafficking (*as listed below*).

Standard Operating Procedure

In July 2025, the Office and University of Maryland Baltimore School of Social Work's Prevention of Adolescent Risks Initiative (PARI) finalized and distributed a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual for the Regional Navigator Program. This manual serves as a practical guide for programs, outlining best practices, program expectations, and consistent approaches to service delivery across the State. It also provides clarity on the role of the regional navigator, guidance on working within multidisciplinary teams, and processes for responding to human trafficking cases in alignment with Maryland's laws and victim-centered standards.

The purpose of the SOP is twofold: to ensure that all survivors of human trafficking receive high-quality, consistent services regardless of where they are located in Maryland, and to provide regional navigators and their teams with a reliable reference tool to support their daily work. By establishing statewide consistency, the SOP strengthens collaboration across regions, reduces gaps in service delivery, and reinforces accountability to both survivors and partner agencies.

The SOP is a living document and will be revisited bi-annually, with input from regional navigators and partner agencies, to ensure it reflects emerging best practices, statutory changes, and the evolving needs of survivors across the State. The second edition of the SOP will be released in October 2025, to reflect the changes with the University of Maryland School of

Social Work's PARI.

Statewide Strategic Plan to Address Human Trafficking

The statewide strategic plan to address human trafficking was originally developed through the University of Maryland School of Social Work's Prevention of Adolescent Risks Initiative (PARI). With the conclusion of PARI's grant on September 30, 2025, their formal collaboration with the Office has ended. The Office is now in the process of reviewing the strategic plan to determine which elements can be implemented moving forward.

The plan, which PARI developed in partnership with state and local stakeholders, continues to provide a strong foundation. The Office will build on the lessons, data, and recommendations from PARI to sustain effective initiatives while aligning the plan with current needs, emerging trends, and stakeholder input.

Key components of the Office-led strategic plan will include:

- **Prevention**: Strengthening public awareness, education, and early intervention strategies to prevent trafficking before it occurs.
- **Identification**: Enhancing the capacity of frontline professionals, including regional navigators, law enforcement, and service providers, to identify potential trafficking victims.
- **Service Coordination**: Promoting cross-system collaboration to ensure victims and at-risk individuals receive timely, trauma-informed, and survivor-centered services.
- **Data and Evaluation**: Utilizing data from regional navigators, law enforcement, and the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center to track trends, measure outcomes, and inform continuous improvement.
- **Legislative Alignment**: Ensuring State and local responses remain aligned with Maryland's human trafficking laws and emerging policy priorities.

By assuming stewardship of the PARI strategic plan, the Office is positioned to create a seamless transition, strengthen statewide coordination, and advance Maryland's commitment to a victim-centered, multi-system approach to combat human trafficking.

Human Trafficking Training

In 2025, the Office continued its partnership with the University of Maryland Baltimore's School of Social Work's PARI through the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking grant to provide training support for regional navigators. These efforts demonstrate the Office's ongoing commitment to professional development and capacity building. Since June 11, 2025, the Office's Victim Services Coordinator has expanded training and outreach efforts across the State. Presentations on the

Regional Navigator Program were delivered to the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) and one scheduled for Lead4Life. A human trafficking awareness presentation was also provided to Jane's Place in Allegany County. The Victim Services Coordinator will also facilitate the first Regional Navigator Summit in November 2025, which will provide specialized training for regional navigators to strengthen consistency and collaboration statewide. These efforts demonstrate the Office's ongoing commitment to professional development and capacity building.

Regional Navigator Technical Assistance (TA) & Mentorship

- **Technical Assistance**: The Victim Services Coordinator has met one-on-one in person with every regional navigator. These meetings were guided by a set of 13 predetermined questions designed to learn more about each program, and identify any statewide themes or needs. Moving forward, these meetings will continue each quarter as 30-minute virtual one-on-one sessions to provide ongoing support from the Office.
- **Mentorship**: The Victim Services Coordinator revitalized and expanded the regional navigator mentorship program to include all direct service staff within the RNPG program. Mentees are paired with an experienced regional navigator or other seasoned direct service professional for a three-month term. Each pair meets monthly for 30 minutes, following a structured guide developed by the Victim Services Coordinator. A pre- and post-test framework helps evaluate the program's effectiveness, capturing feedback to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This process ensures the program continues to evolve in ways that strengthen support for regional navigator teams statewide.
- **Onboarding**: A comprehensive onboarding process has been developed to welcome and prepare new regional navigators. This process includes a curated training plan designed to build a strong foundation in understanding human trafficking, identifying indicators, and recognizing how trafficking manifests across Maryland. The onboarding also provides essential background on the history and mission of the Regional Navigator Program, ensuring new regional navigators are fully equipped to step into their roles with confidence and clarity.
- **Website**: The Office launched a dedicated landing site exclusively for regional navigators and their teams, which is updated regularly to serve as a centralized hub of information and resources. The site features:
    - An overview of human trafficking initiatives led by the Office
    - A regularly updated regional navigator contact list
    - A library of webinars and trainings for continued education
    - Resources and best practices for supporting labor trafficking survivors
    - Details on recurring statewide meetings

The site is accessible only to regional navigators and their teams: https://mdrgnv.my.canva.site/.

Partnered Efforts

- **Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force**: The Office continues to collaborate with the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and statewide partners to identify best practices, close service gaps, and strengthen Maryland's response to human trafficking. The Victim Services Coordinator is active in the Public Awareness Subcommittee and working on developing outreach strategies, resources, and tools to increase awareness across the state. In addition, the VSC is assisting with developing a new website and social media accounts for the Task Force. The goal is to create a centralized space where community members can find accurate information and where survivors can access help and services more easily.
- **Local Human Trafficking Task Forces and/or Collaboratives**: The Office partners with local human trafficking collaboratives and task forces to strengthen service delivery and create stronger connections for regional navigators. These partnerships provide opportunities to share information, reinforce best practices, and remind local partners of the requirements and implications of Maryland's human trafficking legislation, including both the Innkeepers Bill and the Transportation Bill.
- **PARI**: In partnership with the University of Maryland School of Social Work's PARI, the Office supported regional navigators through the OVC Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking grant. Because the grant ended on September 30, 2025, the Victim Services Coordinator will provide technical assistance for regional navigators. The Victim Services Coordinator facilitates monthly regional navigator meetings and actively engages with partners across systems to expand understanding of the programs and increase referrals.
- **P.R.O.T.E.C.T & MCIN**: To foster stronger cross-system collaboration, the Office linked regional navigators with Public Resource Organizing to End Crime Together (P.R.O.T.E.C.T.) and Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network (MCIN) coordinators to provide opportunities for shared learning, cross-training, and coordinated service delivery.
- **Department of Labor**: The Office continues to partner with the Department of Labor to ensure effective implementation of the Innkeepers Bill. A key component of this collaboration includes maintaining and updating the hotel master list, which serves as the foundation for monitoring compliance and outreach to lodging establishments. In 2025, the Office updated the list on two occasions to support the Department of Labor; the most recent update occurred in September. Given the ongoing challenge to identify newly opened hotels, motels, and bed-and-breakfasts in a timely manner, regional navigators will monitor their regions for new establishments and notify the Office of any changes. Once notified, the Office will update the shared hotel master list and coordinate with the

Department of Labor to ensure it remains accurate and comprehensive. This joint approach strengthens statewide oversight and helps ensure that all relevant lodging providers are informed of their responsibilities under the law.

- **Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)**: In August 2025, the Office met with leadership from DJS to explore leveraging the Regional Navigator Program to support youth who fall under § 3-8A-35 of the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, specifically those adolescents involved in sending, receiving, or exchanging child sexual abuse material (sexting) in return for items of value. The goal of this collaboration is to ensure that youth within this statute are identified early and connected to the Regional Navigator Program for support. Regional navigators will provide outreach, education, and case-assistance tailored to these at‑risk youth, complementing DJS's existing intervention strategies. Moving forward, the Office and DJS will continue to discuss developing joint protocols for referral, risk assessment, and regional navigator involvement in relevant cases. Training for both DJS staff and regional navigator teams will be expanded to include this statutory context to ensure all involved can understand their roles in identification, reporting, and providing appropriate services.
- **Department of Human Services (DHS)**: The Office maintains a strong partnership with DHS, particularly with DHS' Human Trafficking Policy Analyst. Together, the Office and DHS have expanded statewide training for Child Protective Services (CPS). In spring and summer 2025, PARI and DHS rolled out a new training on child labor trafficking, reaching over 500 CPS workers and supervisors. This training also provided information on the Regional Navigator Program. Because CPS referrals to regional navigators are limited to active cases, the Office, PARI, and DHS identified additional groups for training, including Out-of-Home Placement staff and foster youth programs. The goal is to increase awareness and referrals both to regional navigators and CPS. A follow-up meeting with DHS's Out-of-Home Placement executives is scheduled for October 2025 to expand this effort and discuss further statewide training.
- **Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA)**: In September 2025, the Office met with MSA to explore opportunities to expand human trafficking awareness across Camden Yards and M&T Bank Stadium. Discussions focused on increasing messaging for stadium personnel, including breakroom materials to help staff recognize indicators of trafficking and understand how to report concerns. MSA also requested the development of a brief 10–15 minute training video to incorporate into both onboarding and ongoing training for its personnel. In addition, MSA expressed interest in offering the training resource to visiting teams' personnel who travel to the stadiums, further extending the reach of this awareness initiative.

Human Trafficking Data Collection

- **Maryland Statistical Analysis Center (MSAC)**: MSAC resides within the Office to facilitate statewide crime data analysis and sharing to generate effective local policies and solutions. MSAC examined human trafficking data throughout the State to develop a better understanding of the nature and scope of human trafficking in Maryland. The project, which was partially funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics through the State Justice Statistics Program,[10] served to create a resource for the Office to use, in collaboration with law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers, to develop a comprehensive approach to combat human trafficking and offer financial support to address identified needs. For more information regarding the completed project and/or to view an interactive data dashboard of the findings, please visit the Office's website at: https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoiZjE5YzhlOTItMTU0My00ZjAyLTlhNDgtMmM2NWY3NzM3YjQ1IiwidCI6IjYwYWZlOWUyLTQ5Y2QtNDliMS04ODUxLTY0ZGYwMjc2YTJlOCJ9.
- **Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC)**: In September 2025 the Office met with MCAC's Intelligence Analyst for Human Trafficking within the Artificial Intelligence Threats Division. The conversation focused on leveraging data gathered by regional navigators to further identify trafficking trends statewide. A key area of concern highlighted the growing intersection between human trafficking, artificial intelligence (AI), and child sexual abuse material (CSAM). The misuse of AI to create, distribute, and conceal CSAM not only increases risks to vulnerable youth but also complicates identification and response efforts. By incorporating regional navigator data with MCAC's intelligence and technological expertise, Maryland is working toward a more comprehensive understanding of how trafficking networks are evolving in the digital space. This partnership will enhance the State's ability to identify patterns, disrupt exploitation, and inform future prevention, enforcement, and survivor support strategies.

Innkeepers Bill

As required by § 15-210 of the Business Regulation Article, the Office approved three training materials for hotel employees to recognize the signs of human trafficking and to provide employees with training on how to respond to suspected incidents of trafficking. For more information on the approved training, please visit the Office's website at: https://gocpp.maryland.gov/victim-services/human-trafficking/.

[10] U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2021). *State Justice Statistics Program*. https://bjs.ojp.gov/programs/state-justice-statistics-program

Because a statewide database containing the required training and guidance for hotel, motel, and inn employees does not exist, the Office, in collaboration with the Department of Labor, will continue to monitor establishments to ensure they are up-to-date with certification.

- **See Someone, Save Someone Act**: The Office continues to partner with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to support the implementation of Senate Bill 7 (2024), which requires the posting of human trafficking awareness materials across transportation hubs and facilities. In collaboration with Transportation Against Trafficking and local human trafficking task forces, the Office is working to ensure that awareness efforts are coordinated, consistent, and impactful. As part of this partnership, the Office is helping to plan and host a Transportation Human Trafficking Awareness Event in Crownsville, Maryland on January 7, 2026. This event will serve as a key opportunity to highlight the progress made since the passage of Senate Bill 7 and to bring the bill's intent into practice. The event will include awareness training for transportation stakeholders and a panel discussion featuring subject matter experts from across the State. By aligning legislative mandates with public awareness efforts and collaborative training, the Office and MDOT may ensure that transportation systems in Maryland become stronger points of identification and intervention for potential trafficking cases. This partnership represents a significant step forward in leveraging State infrastructure to protect vulnerable individuals and disrupt trafficking networks.
- **Safe Harbor**: With the passage of Safe Harbor legislation (Chapters 686 and 687 of 2023), child victims of sex trafficking were protected from prosecution for certain offenses such as trespass, theft, sex work, and other offenses that the child may have committed as a result of being a victim. Chapters 348 and 349 of 2024 expanded the Safe Harbor legislation to include child victims of labor trafficking in RNPG funding requests and added housing to the services regional navigators must provide. The legislation also altered the statutory provisions that govern Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) proceedings, the reporting and investigation of suspected child abuse and neglect, and the definition of "abuse" to include labor trafficking of a child by any individual. There were no legislative updates to Safe Harbor in 2025.

Available Funds to Support Victims

The Office continues to provide funding for human trafficking victims to receive direct services such as emergency shelter, 24-hour talk-line, trauma-informed therapy, peer groups, support services (housing assistance, job training, life skills, economic empowerment, GED, and vocational training) assistance obtaining a driver's license or transportation to and from appointments and court appearance, legal advocacy, victim advocacy and system navigation, and street outreach. The Office also encourages direct service providers, nonprofit organizations, and

law enforcement to apply for any open and available State and federal grant funding source, including the following grant programs:

- Children's Justice Act Committee (CJAC)
- Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC)
- Maryland Victims of Crime Fund (MVOC)
- Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act Regional Navigator Program (RNPG)
- Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Center Grant Program (SARC)[11]
- Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)
- STOP (Services * Training * Officers * Prosecutors) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program (STOP VAWA)
- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)

For more information regarding these grant programs and/or additional funding sources, please visit the Office's website at: https://gocpp.maryland.gov/programs/.

Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center

On October 1, 2025, the Victim Services Unit met with the Director of MCRIC and her team to discuss opportunities for collaboration on anti-human trafficking priorities. Because MCRIC's participation is contingent on funding, efforts to advance human trafficking research will continue in partnership with MSAC and MCAC. The first meeting with MCAC was held in September, followed by a second meeting in October, with additional follow-up planned through the remainder of the year to develop a comprehensive human trafficking landscape analysis. This project will leverage data collected by the regional navigators to identify and track typologies, patterns of victimization, and demographic trends among suspected and confirmed referrals across the State. Follow-up with MSAC and MCAC will continue throughout the beginning of the year to maintain coordination as these efforts move forward.

Recommendations

The Office recommends a comprehensive reevaluation of the current RNPG sites to ensure that funding is optimized to provide the highest level of direct services to trafficking victims. While the program has been successfully implemented across all 24 jurisdictions, differences in structure and resource allocation create inconsistencies in the delivery of victim services. A statewide assessment will allow for adjustments to ensure equitable distribution of funds, reduce duplication of efforts, and strengthen service delivery for victims.

- **Systemization and Statewide Alignment**: To build greater consistency across Maryland, the Office recommends establishing a standardized framework for RNPG operations.

[11] It is important to note that this funding source is limited to specific centers.

This includes common performance measures, streamlined reporting requirements, and uniform protocols for victim identification, referral, and service delivery. A systemized approach will increase efficiency, improve data collection, and ensure victims receive the same level of high-quality support regardless of where they reside.

- **Structural Oversight and Supervision**: The Office is currently evaluating the regional navigator program through ongoing meetings with navigators and a review of existing grants and outcomes. As part of this process, the Office is considering whether the current structure is the most effective for the program, or if a different model may be needed. Any restructuring would aim to ensure that regional navigators are fully equipped to deliver the services required and provide the strongest possible support to survivors and suspected victims of human trafficking.
- **Expected Outcomes**
    - Increased accountability and transparency in RNPG operations.
    - More equitable distribution of funding to support direct victim services.
    - Streamlined, consistent practices across all jurisdictions.
    - Enhanced coordination between RNPG, the Office, and local partners.
    - Improved outcomes for trafficking victims through higher-quality, standardized support.

Conclusion

Given the State's proximity to three major airports (Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, Dulles International Airport, and Reagan National Airport), inexpensive bus transportation, train service along the East Coast, large sporting events, casinos, large concerts and event venues, and pockets of both poverty and disposable income, Maryland remains a destination of interest for traffickers. In recent years, the growth of digital technology and widespread access to smartphones, gaming platforms, and social media has created new avenues for traffickers to exploit children online, increasing the number of cases that begin through digital devices. Additionally, Maryland has seen a rise in the identification of familial trafficking, particularly in rural areas where access to resources is limited and isolation makes detection more difficult.

Because of these factors, the Office will continue to coordinate human trafficking efforts across the State by:

- **Improving enforcement efficacy** through best-practice policies, supportive technologies, key partnerships, and data sharing;

- **Preventing future cases** of human trafficking by addressing risk factors and root causes of victimization, including online exploitation, and working with law enforcement to reduce recidivism of traffickers;
- **Uplifting victim services** that utilize best practices, trauma-informed care, and a research-based approach to meet the unique needs of victims, with increased attention to those impacted by familial trafficking, to enhance safety, self-sufficiency, and access to information; and
- **Ensuring Maryland's regional navigators and other victim-serving partners** have access to tools, funding, and resources needed to respond effectively to cases of both online and familial trafficking and to support recovery.

The Office remains committed to strengthening Maryland's response to human trafficking. Through key personnel within the Victim Services Unit, the Office will continue to advance Maryland's efforts to combat human trafficking.