



**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
CRIME PREVENTION, YOUTH,
AND VICTIM SERVICES**

**Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director
2021 Annual Report**

EX ORD 01.01.2018.19 B

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Introduction	2
Background	3
Establishing Statewide Best Practices to Serve Victims	3
Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program	4
Human Trafficking Training	5
Child Advocacy Center Standards for Accredited Member Programs	5
Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and Related Partnerships	5
Maryland Stadium Authority - FIFA World Cup	5
Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network	6
Handle With Care Model	6
Available State and Federal Funds to Support Victims	7
Conclusion	8

Introduction

Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 created the Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director (Director) position within the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (Office) - previously known as the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention.¹ In this role, the Director shall:²

- Serve as the Governor's coordinator for human trafficking issues and provide information and policy guidance to the Governor, the Governor's Cabinet, and the Executive Director of the Office;
- Collaborate with State units, local governments and departments of social services, child advocacy centers and other nonprofit entities, law enforcement agencies, and other appropriate parties identified by the Director to:
 - Promote statewide coordination of:
 - Supportive services and resources for victims of human trafficking;
 - Law enforcement responses to human trafficking;
 - Collect, maintain, and disseminate to stakeholders information about human trafficking and related supportive services in Maryland;
 - Map current local supportive services and resources that provide care to victims of human trafficking; and
 - Establish statewide best practices for serving victims of human trafficking;
- Monitor and pursue, on behalf of the State, federal funding for efforts to combat human trafficking;
- Serve as the Governor's liaison to the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force; and
- Serve as the Governor's liaison to the Crime Research and Innovation Center at the University of Maryland to assist its efforts to provide research to the State about human trafficking, including best practices in collecting data to identify victims of human trafficking.

Pursuant to Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B, the Director shall submit a report to the Governor by December 1 of each year as it relates to the status of the following: (1) progress made in establishing statewide best practices for serving victims of human trafficking; (2) a summary of State and federal funding available to serve and support victims of human trafficking; (3) an update on the work of the Crime Research and Innovation Center at the University of Maryland related to human trafficking; and (4) recommendations for administrative, regulatory, or statutory

¹ Maryland General Assembly. (2020). [Chapter 11, Acts of 2020](#). In March 2020, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention was renamed the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services.

² The State of Maryland, Executive Department. (2018). [Executive Order 01.01.2018.19: Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director](#).

changes that would further the State's efforts to address human trafficking.

In accordance with Executive Order 01.01.2018.19 B, this *Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director 2021 Annual Report* provides a follow-up to a report, titled *Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director 2020 Report*, that was submitted in February 2021.³

Background

In October 2018, and pursuant to Executive Order 01.01.2018.19, the Office hired Maryland's first Anti-Human Trafficking Director (Director) to help combat human trafficking in the State of Maryland, and to coordinate supportive services for victims and law enforcement activities as they relate to human trafficking. In this role, the Director worked with stakeholders on various initiatives geared around: best practices to serve victims; available funds to support victims; work related to human trafficking; and recommendations to further combat human trafficking. Specifically, and between October 2018 and March 2020, the Director collaborated 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; served as a member of the executive review committee that drafted and published the first adapted *Child Sex Trafficking Protocols*, based on the National Children's Alliance standards for Child Advocacy Centers in the nation; coordinated with the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force Training and Law Enforcement subcommittees to improve statewide training efforts for first responders; and much more.

In March 2020, the Director position became vacant. Shortly thereafter, and in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that led to the State of Emergency, the State implemented a budget and hiring freeze to recover from the fiscal impact of this crisis. Although the Director position has not yet been filled, the Office remains committed to further the State's effort to combat human trafficking through the efforts of the Office's Victim Services Unit (*as described in greater detail on the following pages*).

Establishing Statewide Best Practices to Serve Victims

In the absence of a Director, the Office's Victim Services Unit continues to fulfill the responsibilities of the Director's roll by collaborating 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

³ Department of Legislative Services. (2020). [Statewide Human Trafficking Response Director 2020 Annual Report](#).

human trafficking.

Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program

In 2019, Governor Hogan signed the [Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019](#) (Act) into law which established the [Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant \(RNPG-VOCA\)](#). The primary purpose of this program is to develop a network of regional navigators to coordinate and/or provide identified or confirmed child sex trafficking victims with specific services, to include:

- Safety planning
- Basic living needs, not include housing
- Trauma counseling and mental health services
- Drug and alcohol treatment
- Legal services
- Victim advocacy
- Case management

The program also requires law enforcement and local departments of social services, who have reason to believe a certain child is a victim of sex trafficking, to notify a regional navigator in their jurisdiction to obtain needed services for the child. Regional navigators are currently located in the following ten jurisdictions: Baltimore City, and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Washington counties. Although efforts occurred to expand the program, the 2021 Maryland Budget Bill limited the use of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding to support the statewide expansion of the program as outlined in the Act.

In October 2021, Governor Hogan announced⁴ the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support and expand the Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program. In response to this announcement, the Office is currently working on a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to expand the program statewide in the fourteen jurisdictions where no regional navigators are located.

The Victim Services Unit continues to work with the ten existing regional navigator jurisdictions to create and implement a method to evaluate and report gaps in services in those jurisdictions; and will compare the number of children served in those jurisdictions, both before and after program implementation, to determine its effectiveness. Additionally, a training protocol will be

⁴ The Office of Governor Larry Hogan. (2021). [Re-Fund the Police: Governor Hogan Announces \\$150 Million Initiative to Increase Support for Law Enforcement, Crime Control, and Victim Protection Efforts](#).

developed to help newer programs implement best practices, and provide peer support to address unique challenges to program advancement in each jurisdiction.

Although the Act requires a statewide roll-out of the program by January 1, 2022, the inability to utilize VOCA funding has limited the statewide expansion of the program.

Human Trafficking Training

The Office also makes training available to multiple disciplines on various human trafficking issues. In prior trainings, topics included, for example: an introduction to human trafficking, human trafficking and the hospitality industry, human trafficking for first responders, human trafficking and substance abuse, human trafficking legislation, and the Governor’s initiatives to reduce human trafficking in Maryland. In 2021, multiple human trafficking and regional navigator training efforts were conducted by the Director of Victim Services Policy and Programs. Some of those efforts include training at the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force Law Enforcement Professionals Seminar, the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force Law Enforcement Investigators Seminar, and the Maryland Association of Realtors.

Child Advocacy Center Standards for Accredited Member Programs

The Office continues to work with the Maryland Children’s Alliance, the Department of Human Services, and the Office’s Children and Youth Division to promote the first adapted [Child Sex Trafficking Protocols](#), which are based on the National Children’s Alliance standards for Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) in the nation.

Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and Related Partnerships

The Office continues to work with the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and related partnerships to identify best practices and gaps in services for human trafficking survivors.

Maryland Stadium Authority - FIFA World Cup

The Office is working with the Maryland Stadium Authority on the bid to bring the FIFA World Cup games to Baltimore City in 2026. The Office has assisted significantly with the “human factor” element of the application. FIFA required a proactive approach to the mitigation of sex trafficking, labor trafficking, criminal activity, and other factors that tend to coincide with large-scale sporting events such as the World Cup. A legacy plan is also required.

Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network

At Governor Hogan's direction, the Office developed the [Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network \(MCIN\)](#) in 2017 to combat criminal gang enterprises and repeat violent offenders responsible for terrorizing Maryland citizens and participating in violent crimes throughout the State. Through this grant program, MCIN enables law enforcement to identify, disrupt, and dismantle violent criminal networks through collaboration and comprehensive data sharing. MCIN works to dismantle gun trafficking, drug trafficking, gangs, and human trafficking.

After an eight month long operation, the "Brown Drug/Human Trafficking Organization" was dismantled in Anne Arundel County where a hotel was utilized as the base of the organization's operations. In 2021, leaders of the organization plead guilty to drug distribution and sex trafficking charges.

Handle With Care Model

At Governor Hogan's direction, the Office is implementing the [Handle With Care](#) model across the State to increase trauma-informed approaches, and to address adverse childhood experiences to prevent future victimization and/or justice system involvement. Through this model, if a law enforcement officer encounters a child during a call (which could include a minor victim of trafficking), that child's name and the words, "handle with care," will be forwarded to the child's school/child care agency before school starts the following day. The school implements individual, class, and whole trauma-sensitive curricula so that traumatized children are handled with care. If a child needs more intervention, on-site trauma-focused mental healthcare is available at the school. Through the Handle With Care model, the program will help keep the child engaged in school, and will help mitigate the disruption the victimization had on the child's life. In April 2021, the Office's Handle With Care Coordinator presented on the Handle with Care model at the virtual Maryland Crime Victims' Rights Conference.

In addition, and in an effort to coordinate victim services at the State level, the Office will continue to:

- Develop and make accessible a statewide resource map for victim service providers and law enforcement across jurisdictions with help from victim service partners and data collected from the Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program;
- Research and develop strategies to provide emergency and long term housing for adult and minor victims;
- Continue to train substance abuse counselors on what human trafficking is and the needs of victims with co-occurring disorders;

- Continue to partner with the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force steering committee to sponsor and coordinate quarterly meetings with the heads of local human trafficking task forces around the State to promote a uniform statewide standard of care to human trafficking victims, and troubleshoot jurisdictional issues that arise;
- Research outcomes of specialized programs targeting individuals who have been trafficked, or are at a high risk for trafficking, to include, but not limited to:
 - Involvement in commercial sex work;
 - Homelessness;
 - Substance use disorders;
 - Domestic violence victimization; and
 - Youth who have experienced trauma.

Available State and Federal Funds to Support Victims

Our Office remains committed to providing funding for human trafficking victims with 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. Our Office also encourages direct service providers, nonprofit organizations, and law enforcement to apply for any open and available State and federal grant funding source, to include the following:

- [Children’s Justice Act Committee \(CJAC\)](#): Improves the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim.
- [Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant \(RNPG-VOCA\)](#): Continues services in the current ten jurisdictions, and will expand the program to additional jurisdictions requiring victim service agencies, law enforcement, and local departments of social services, who have reason to believe a certain child is a victim of sex trafficking, to notify a regional navigator in their jurisdiction to obtain needed services for the child.
- [Internet Crimes Against Children \(ICAC\)](#): Supports local law enforcement agencies for salaries, training, and equipment to be used for the investigation and prosecution of Internet Crimes Against Children; supports the ongoing operations of the Maryland Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force established by the Department of State Police (DSP); and continues services provided at child advocacy centers.
- [Maryland Victims of Crime Fund \(MVOC\)](#): Provides for advocacy and support services to victims of crime through the creation of new ideas and the enhancement of existing programs in Maryland.

- [Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network \(MCIN\)](#): Focuses on identifying, disrupting, and dismantling gangs and violent criminal networks involved in the distribution of illegal drugs, the use of firearms in crimes of violence, human trafficking, or other inherently violent criminal enterprises, through enforcement, prevention, intervention, and information sharing.
- [STOP \(Services * Training * Officers * Prosecutors\) Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program \(STOP VAWA\)](#): Encourages the development and strengthening of effective, victim-centered law enforcement, prosecution, and court strategies to combat crimes against women.
- [Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Grant Program \(SARC\)](#): Supports local rape crisis centers to provide services to adult and child victims of rape and other sexual offenses. Services to victims include a 24-hour hotline, counseling, medical accompaniment, and assistance in accessing and using other support services such as legal assistance.
- [Sexual Assault Services Program \(SASP\)](#): Provides intervention, advocacy, accompaniment (i.e., accompanying victims to court, medical facilities, police departments, etc.), support services, and related assistance for adult, youth, and child victims of sexual assault, family and household members of victims, and those collaterally affected by the sexual assault.
- [Victims of Crime Act \(VOCA\)](#): Helps to improve the treatment of victims of crime by providing victims with the assistance and services necessary to aid their restoration after a violent criminal act, and to support and aid them as they move through the criminal justice process. Victim assistance includes services such as crisis intervention, counseling, emergency transportation to court, temporary housing and criminal justice support, and advocacy.

Conclusion

The Office remains committed to further the State's effort to combat human trafficking. Given the State's three major airports, inexpensive bus transportation, train service along the east coast, large sporting events, casinos, large concert and event venues, and pockets of both poverty and disposable income, Maryland is a destination of interest for traffickers. Because of this, 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, as well as root causes of victimization, and working with law enforcement to reduce recidivism of traffickers; and

- Uplifting **victim services** that utilize best practices, trauma-informed care, and a research-based approach to meet the unique needs of human trafficking victims, and to increase the safety, self-sufficiency, and access to information of victims.