



## GOVERNOR'S COORDINATING OFFICES

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**FROM: Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services**

February 16, 2022

The Honorable Larry Hogan  
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: Report required by Family Law Article § 5-704.4(g)(1) (MSAR #12677)**

Dear Governor Hogan, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

In accordance with § 5-704.4 of the Family Law Article of the [Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019](#), which established a Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant (previously known as the Safe Harbor Regional Navigator Grant Program), please accept this letter as fulfillment of the required report.<sup>1</sup>

Specifically, the *Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019* (Act) requires the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (Office) to provide grant funding for services provided by the Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant. Pursuant to § 5-704.4(g)(1) of the Family Law Article, it also requires the Executive Director of the Office to submit an independent evaluation report with qualitative and quantitative data to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2019, and every two years thereafter, as it relates to whether services coordinated and provided by grantees under this section are available, adequate, and successfully serving children and youth who are victims of sex trafficking.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland General Assembly. (2019). [Chapter 559 of 2019 \(House Bill 827\). Child Abuse and Neglect - Sex Trafficking - Services and Investigations \(Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019\)](#).

In response to the Act, the Office established the [Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant](#) to develop a network of regional navigators to coordinate and/or provide identified or confirmed child sex trafficking victims with specific services (*as illustrated below*).

- Safety planning
- Basic living needs, not including housing
- Trauma counseling and mental health services
- Drug and alcohol treatment (i.e., substance abuse disorder 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.

In September 2019, the Office released a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to invite child advocacy centers, sexual assault crisis programs, or a qualified community-based victim service provider to apply for funds to develop a Regional Navigator Pilot Program. In November 2019, and in response to the eight applications received, the Office awarded a combined total of approximately \$400,000 in Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds to the three pilot jurisdictions: Cecil County, Montgomery County, and Washington County.

In August 2020, the Office released a [FY 2021 Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act Regional Navigator Program Grant \(RNPG-VOCA\) NOFA](#) to support the expansion of the Program. In November 2020, the Office announced \$1 million in grant awards, expanding the program to 10 jurisdictions in Maryland. The program expanded services to Baltimore City, and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Prince George's counties. Although the hiring and onboarding for these positions was complicated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all 10 programs are currently operational.

In 2021, the 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 announced<sup>2</sup> the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support the expansion of the program. In response to this announcement, the Office is working on a NOFA to expand the program statewide in the fourteen jurisdictions where no regional navigators are currently located. 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.

Grant subrecipients are required to submit quarterly performance measures and progress reports to the Office to provide an update on the implementation of the program within its jurisdiction. This data will ultimately be used to evaluate the program prior to its implementation statewide. Specifically, the Office will compile all quarterly submissions and data reported by jurisdictions

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<sup>2</sup> 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](#).

as it relates to the prevalence of child sex trafficking to determine program effectiveness, and ways to improve the program for future funding opportunities. In doing this, the Office will create and implement a method to evaluate and report gaps in services in regional navigator's jurisdiction; and will compare the number of children served in those jurisdictions, both before and after program implementation, to determine its effectiveness.

The Office continues to partner with the University of Maryland, School of Social Work as it relates to the [Child Sex Trafficking Victims Initiative](#) to collect data, review screening materials for best practices for law enforcement, and establish a data collection process for the jurisdictions to ensure consistency.<sup>3</sup>

Based on the current efforts and challenges to expand the program statewide, our Office anticipates that the next report will capture more insight as it pertains to the evaluation and expansion of the program, and a comparison of children served before and after program implementation.

Should you have any questions relating to the information provided, please feel free to contact me at 410-697-9338.

Sincerely,



V. Glenn Fueston, Jr.  
Executive Director

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

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that the Child Sex Trafficking Victims Initiative “was established with funding from the Children’s Bureau and works to: improve victim identification through creation and statewide implementation of a screening tool to identify trafficked and at-risk youths; enhance victim response by equipping child welfare professionals with necessary knowledge” and skills, achieved “by developing new training curriculum and statewide training plan to reach all new and existing child welfare staff; and ensure victims receive comprehensive, trauma-informed care through capacity-building of service providers and targeting existing service and resource gaps.”