



WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor

November 29, 2023

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: Report required by Family Law Article § 5-704.4(g)(1) (MSAR #12677) - 2023 Independent Evaluation Report on Services for Victims of Sex Trafficking

Dear Governor Moore, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

In accordance with § 5-704.4 of the Family Law Article, which requires the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (Office) to submit an independent evaluation report with qualitative and quantitative data by December 1, 2019, and every two years thereafter, please accept this letter as fulfillment of the required report.

Section 5-704.4 of the Family Law Article, which was established through the [Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019](#), created the Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant (previously known as the Safe Harbor Regional Navigator Grant Program) to support services for youth victims of sex trafficking. It also requires the Office to administer the grant program and submit a report 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.

Pursuant to its charge, 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*).¹

¹ Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. *Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act Regional Navigator Program (RNPG)*. <https://goccp.maryland.gov/grants/programs/rnpg/>

- 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 2021, the Maryland budget bill limited the use of Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding to support the statewide expansion of the program. As a result, \$1.75 million in State funds was provided in the budget for SFY 2023 and SFY 2024 to allow for the expansion of the Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant without the use of VOCA funding. Programs that were funded with VOCA prior to 2021 are still eligible for and receive VOCA continuation funds. With the use of State funding, four additional programs were implemented in SFY 2023. Those four programs provide regional navigator coverage in 10 jurisdictions, bringing the total to 20 jurisdictions with a regional navigator. In SFY 2024, one jurisdiction implemented a new program, and one existing program expanded their service area to include two additional jurisdictions. Based on these additions, 23 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions implemented the program through the combined use of VOCA and State funding. Although Allegany County has not yet applied for Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant funding, the Office has been in direct communication with appropriate entities and expects to receive an application in the next 30 days. The Office also intends to make an award to achieve full statewide expansion of the program by the end of the 2023 calendar year. It is important to note that subrecipients are currently in various stages of program development. For some, this includes efforts to hire regional navigators.

In SFY 2023, funds awarded through the Human Trafficking Regional Navigator Program Grant were used to obtain needed services to comply with the [Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019](#). In addition, and based on the quarterly submission of performance measure data, subrecipients reported the following outcomes in SFY 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023):

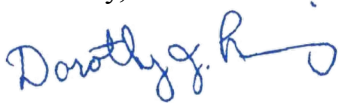
- 1,720 victims served
- 1,544 victims felt safer
- 1,473 victims felt more self-sufficient
- 1,523 victims felt more informed of their rights
- 1,623 victims felt more aware and informed of available victim services and resources
- 255 human trafficking victims served

Once the program is implemented throughout the State, the Office will compile all quarterly performance measure data and data reported by jurisdictions 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. The evaluation will compare the number of children served in each jurisdiction, both before and after program implementation, to determine program effectiveness.

The Office continues to partner with the University of Maryland School of Social Work as it relates to the [Prevention of Adolescent Risks 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.² Based on the current efforts and challenges to expand the program statewide, our Office anticipates that the next report will provide an in-depth evaluation 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dorothy J. Lennig". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Dorothy J. Lennig, Esq.
Executive Director

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

² 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.”