

Executive Summary

2025 Human Trafficking Annual Report

Introduction

The State Task Force was legislatively mandated in 2012 under S.C. Code Ann. 16-3-2050 (B)(1). It leads a strategic, multi-disciplinary approach to combat human trafficking in South Carolina. The law requires the Task Force to submit annual reports, including findings and recommendations, to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate. This document summarizes the Task Force's key findings in the 2025 Annual Report.

State Task Force Membership

The South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force works with numerous state agencies in its efforts to prevent the crime, investigate sex and labor trafficking, protect victims, respond to the needs of survivors, and prosecute cases. While the mandated member state agencies are engaged in broader efforts, several state agencies are also at the table in discussions. The Task Force prioritized identifying agencies that are key to the statewide response and would like to see the formalization of their membership through an amendment to the original 2012 legislation.

South Carolina Safe House Project Certification Program

The South Carolina General Assembly legislatively mandated the State Task Force to certify service providers who work directly with human trafficking victims and survivors. The Task Force partnered with Safe House Project to launch a trauma-informed, standards-driven model for evaluating residential and non-residential providers. Four specialized human trafficking programs were certified in Greenville, Richland, Charleston, and Berkeley Counties. The programs were added to the Task Force's online resource directory to help victims, law enforcement, service providers, and the courts. South Carolina is the first in the nation to mandate statewide certification for specialized human trafficking programs.

New Human Trafficking Hotline Posters

The State Task Force collaborated with its Survivor Advisory Subcommittee to redesign National Human Trafficking Hotline posters to commemorate the tenth anniversary of South Carolina legislation requiring the posting of hotline information in designated establishments statewide. The Task Force distributed 800 posters and informational handouts to each regional task force for distribution to mandated establishments within their locality. The Task Force also distributed hotline posters to major airports' restrooms, nineteen rest areas, and agricultural labor contractors and transporters across the state.

Task Force Initiatives

The transportation and tourism initiative, TravelWatchSC, launched phase three, focused on public transit systems. The State Task Force Staff delivered human trafficking awareness presentations to all major bus operators and frontline workers in all four areas of the state. Additionally, the public transit agencies agreed to post interior bus advertisements promoting the hotline to make educational materials available to passengers. The State Task Force also increased implementation of TraffickProofSC, the state's award-winning prevention education curriculum, reaching nearly 2,000 students. Additionally, the Task Force established an agreement with South Carolina Welcome Centers to distribute labor trafficking posters, targeting all major highways in the state.



2025 Human Trafficking in the Carolinas Conference

The South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force, in collaboration with the North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission, hosted a two-day regional conference in Columbia. The conference brought together more than 300 attendees from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. The conference featured national and local subject-matter experts with four professional tracks focused on law enforcement, healthcare, direct services, and legal/prosecution.

State Task Force Training and Outreach

In 2025, the State Task Force completed 54 training events, including 2,178 trainees. The total includes four two-day Advanced Law Enforcement training events across South Carolina. More than 160 law enforcement officers and victim advocates completed the intensive program addressing both foundational and advanced strategies for responding to labor and sex trafficking. In addition, the Law Enforcement Subcommittee, chaired by SLED, facilitated eight similar training events in Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester Counties. State Task Force staff and prosecutors at the SC Attorney General's Office provided 111 presentations statewide, reaching approximately 4,672 attendees.

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

SLED opened 315 tips involving human trafficking. The tips included 323 victims and were investigated in 41 out of 46 counties in 2025, including two out-of-state tips. The counties with the most investigations included Greenville (35), Berkeley and Charleston (30 each), Richland (28), Lexington (27), and Dorchester (21).

South Carolina Department of Social Services

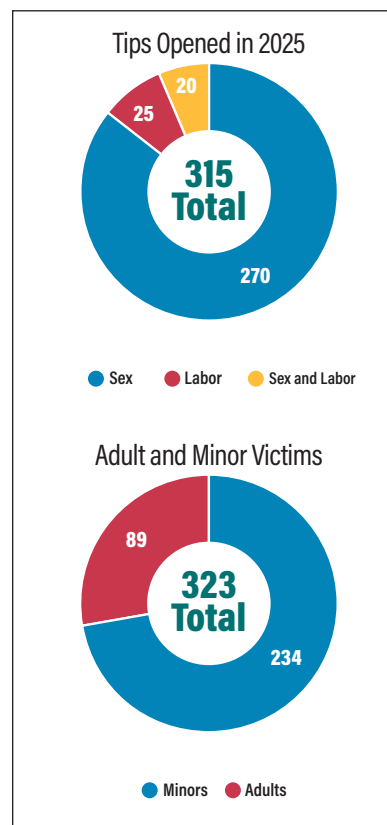
The South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice identified 159 minor human trafficking victims. 87% of the cases were female, and 91% of cases involved sex trafficking as a component of the victimization.

South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice

The SC Department of Juvenile Justice identified 56 juveniles as human trafficking victims. 93% of the victims were female, and 7% of the victims were male, a 5% increase in male victimization from 2024. Runaway was the most prevalent offense for the victims.

Court Data: Pending and Closed

32 human trafficking charges were closed in 2025, involving 17 defendants in 13 counties. Seven charges were closed by a guilty plea to human trafficking, convicting 4 defendants. This year, there were no state-level human trafficking jury trials. Nine of the 17 defendants had their human trafficking charges dismissed; however, 5 of the defendants pled guilty to other charges in exchange for the dismissal of the human trafficking charge, typically as a part of a plea agreement. In 2025, 54 charges of human trafficking were brought by local and state law enforcement involving 32 defendants in 12 counties. Of the 54 charges, twenty-three counts were related to trafficking adults and thirty-one counts of trafficking minors.



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