

# South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force Annual Report 2015



## Findings and Recommendations

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# Overview and Introduction

Human trafficking is happening in South Carolina. Often referred to as “modern day slavery,” human trafficking can be labor trafficking, sex trafficking, or both.<sup>1</sup> Very simply, this crime is people profiting from the control and exploitation of other human beings.

Victims vary widely and include citizens, non-citizens, males, females, children, and adults. Trafficking is not something that only happens abroad. Foreign nationals are not the only persons who are trafficked. United States citizens, including South Carolinians, are also among those trafficked and at risk for becoming trafficking victims.

In 2012, the South Carolina legislature passed comprehensive new legislation to combat this problem in South Carolina. The South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force (task force) has published this report in compliance with the human trafficking law, specifically S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2050(D)(3), mandating that the task force shall:

*“Starting one year after the formation of the task force, submit an annual report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate on or before December thirty-first of each calendar year.”*

On June 12, 2014, the task force released the *South Carolina State Plan to Address Human Trafficking* (State Plan). In this State Plan, five areas were identified to address the issue of human trafficking in South Carolina. Task force members from organizations all over the state gave input on the State Plan. After it was released, the task force continued to work on the implementation of that plan. The plan may be viewed in its entirety at [www.scag.gov/human-trafficking](http://www.scag.gov/human-trafficking). This annual report is structured to reflect four of the focus areas of the State Plan:

- 1. Determining the Magnitude of Human Trafficking in South Carolina**
- 2. Protecting, Supporting, and Serving Victims of Human Trafficking**
- 3. Investigating and Prosecuting Human Traffickers**
- 4. Preventing Human Trafficking in South Carolina**

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<sup>1</sup> Legal definitions for both labor trafficking (forced labor, debt bondage, involuntary servitude) and sex trafficking can be found in S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2010.

In each of those areas, this report aims to highlight the progress that has been made, what is currently being worked on, and the goals and recommendations for moving forward as identified by the task force over the past year.<sup>2</sup>

This 2015 report will also address the current structure of the task force, how the task force operates, and measures that have proven effective in implementing the State Plan released in June of 2014. The full task force meets quarterly to progress into this phase of the State Plan.

Important Goals of the task force over the past year have included:

- sharing trafficking data and best practices among agencies;
- investigating criminal trafficking groups and sharing information about these groups among investigative agencies;
- establishing connections to help the state government work with nongovernmental organizations;
- reviewing and identifying services available to human trafficking victims;
- providing training for any agencies that may encounter human trafficking;
- creating public awareness materials and campaigns to help the public both recognize victims and avoid victimization; and
- utilizing the 2012 law in prosecution and the State Grand Jury.

These goals are not only discussed and accomplished through the larger task force, but often smaller groups and constituent agencies work on issues independently to find the most effective solutions and methodologies. Considering the magnitude of the issue at hand, the task force has made great progress in 2015 in anti-trafficking efforts and diligently continues its work into 2016.

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<sup>2</sup> This report was written to be as inclusive as possible. The information provided is reported at task force meetings and to the task force coordinator at the Attorney General's Office. Agencies and organizations may also be doing additional work, and further anti-trafficking efforts may be taking place throughout South Carolina.

## Structure of the Task Force

In the 2012 human trafficking law, S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2050(B)(1) states that the Attorney General will chair a task force, along with other essential agencies, to address the problem of human trafficking. Some members of the task force were legislatively mandated, including:

The Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation

The South Carolina Police Chiefs Association

The South Carolina Sheriffs' Association

The State Law Enforcement Division

The Department of Health and Environmental Control Board

The State Office of Victim Assistance

The South Carolina Commission on Prosecution Coordination

The Department of Social Services

A representative from the Office of the Governor

A representative from the Department of Employment and Workforce

Two persons are appointed by the Attorney General from nongovernmental organizations (the South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault [SCCADVASA] and South Carolina Victim Assistance Network [SCVAN]).

Members are invited to participate on the task force from the United States Attorneys' Offices, the Department of Labor, and federal law enforcement agencies offices within the state – including the FBI and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office/Homeland Security Investigations.

## Meeting Dates December 2014-December 2015

The Human Trafficking Task Force meets quarterly throughout the year. Quarterly meeting notices are sent out to anybody who requests to receive them. These meetings were held on the following dates:

-December 12, 2014

-March 13, 2015

-June 19, 2015<sup>3</sup>

-September 4, 2015

-December 11, 2015

## Task Force Membership Growth

The mandated members actively attend and participate in the task force meetings. However, the task force has seen exponential growth over the past year as human trafficking gained recognition as a serious problem in South Carolina, and more entities began taking part in anti-trafficking efforts. Attendees now also include individuals from law enforcement agencies all over the state, non-governmental agencies, independent advocates, non-profit agencies, legal services, and many more. The average number of attendees for full group meetings in the last year was 42 people.<sup>4</sup>

For goal implementation purposes, subcommittees and smaller groups were created. Subcommittee meetings include those that focused on victim assistance and services; public awareness and outreach; forward momentum and support; law enforcement, prosecution, and judicial matters; and information gathering and protocols.

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<sup>3</sup> This meeting was split into subcommittees.

<sup>4</sup> This number is based off attendees who signed the sign-in sheet at the December 12, 2014 meeting, the March 13, 2015 meeting, the September 4, 2015 meeting, and the December 11, 2015 meeting. In June, meetings were broken down into smaller groups (subcommittees) to address specialized areas, so these numbers were not counted as "full group" attendance.

In addition, various task groups have met to work on specialized smaller projects. Breaking out into smaller groups through constituent agencies on the task force has proven effective in discovering best practices, advancing protocols, and networking. Also, task forces specific to regions in the state have started to form, allowing counties and cities to focus on resources located in their service areas. It is a recommendation by the task force to encourage creating these localized teams or task forces, in addition to attending the larger statewide meetings.

# 2015 Task Force Accomplishments, Goals, and Recommendations

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# Determining the Magnitude of Human Trafficking in South Carolina

Human trafficking statistics are challenging to track. This is due, in large part, to the underground nature of the crime and the difficulty in recognizing cases. Some estimated global and national statistics include:

- According to the International Labour Organization, forced labor (which includes human trafficking) is a **\$150 billion a year** industry, and at any given time **21 million** individuals worldwide are victims.<sup>5</sup>
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reports that **1 in 6** endangered runaways reported to them in 2014 were likely sex trafficking victims. That is up from **1 in 7** in 2013.<sup>6</sup>
- Shared Hope International, an international anti-trafficking non-profit, lists that the common age a child enters into sex trafficking is **14-16 years old**.<sup>7</sup>

As noted in the State Plan, South Carolina does not have comprehensive statistics on human trafficking. Data collection projects are currently underway. However, the task force compiled available information from the past year regarding services provided to human trafficking victims. Task force agencies and organizations submitted information as to how they have been working to serve victims and survivors of human trafficking. While these numbers are not meant to be a complete or statistical analysis of exactly what is happening in South Carolina regarding human trafficking, they do give an overview of how participating task force agencies are addressing the issue and the volume of activity each group has encountered.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> International Labour Organization, *Facts and Figures*, <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm> (2015).

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, <http://www.missingkids.com/1in6> (2015).

<sup>7</sup> Shared Hope International, *What is Sex Trafficking?*, <http://sharedhope.org/the-problem/what-is-sex-trafficking/> (2015).

<sup>8</sup> A call for information was made to members of the task force, and these were the groups that responded in time to include information for the report. This is not an exhaustive list of service providers or agencies working to combat human trafficking in South Carolina, but is meant to give a picture of some groups that are working on the issue, and what they have been experiencing recently. Additionally, the *number of trafficking victims/survivors served in 2015* represents that organization's tracking of the number of individuals to whom services were provided in the past year, which may differ slightly from group to group depending on method. Lastly, there is potential for overlap with these numbers in the agencies that frequently work together, but each number given is representative of that organization's work.

## ✧ South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

**Brief organization description:** The South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA) is a statewide coalition made up of 23 domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy organizations in South Carolina. For almost 35 years, SCCADVASA and member organizations have been representing the critical needs of domestic violence and sexual assault survivors and their families. Member organizations span across the state. [www.sccadvasa.org]

**Services provided to minor and adult victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking:** Hotline services; forensic interviewing; hospital accompaniment; medical advocacy; in-office therapy, crisis services and mental health services; personal and legal advocacy; emergency shelter; referrals and follow-up services.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served<sup>9</sup> in 2015:** 58

\*Of these, 16 individuals received emergency shelter, 7 youth received forensic interviewing, 10 adults and youth received medical advocacy/hospital accompaniment, and more than 33 individuals received mental health services (trauma therapy and crisis counseling).

## ✧ South Carolina Victim Assistance Network

**Brief organization description:** The South Carolina Victim Assistance Network (SCVAN) coordinates for representatives of agencies that are involved with victim/witness services. SCVAN does this through advocacy, victim assistance functions, and collaboration. SCVAN also provides training, events, and managing of grant-funded programs that provide services to crime victims in South Carolina. [www.scvan.org]

**Services provided to minor and adult victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking:** Legal representation; filing of immigration applications for foreign national victims (including Continued Presence, T visa, and U visa applications); supportive

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<sup>9</sup> Most victims receive multiple services while working with SCCADVASA member organizations.

services; referral to other agencies for support<sup>10</sup>, public benefits advocacy, victim services, providing emergency financial assistance in the first 90 days after the crime has occurred, assisting victims with enrollment in victim notification programs (state and federal), advising victims of their rights.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served in 2015:** 31

### ✧ Operation Freedom Awareness

**Brief organization description:** Operation Freedom Awareness (OFA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness in local communities and working on the prevention of human trafficking. They also assist in providing services to victims of human trafficking and are working to open a rescue and rehabilitation shelter. [<http://ofamission.org>]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking:** Goods; resources for victims; and funds for hotel rooms as shelter for victims when safety is needed.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served in 2015:** 8

### ✧ Dee Norton Low Country Children's Center

**Brief organization description:** Dee Norton Low Country Children's Center (DNLCC) is a non-profit organization that works to keep children safe from abuse and trauma and to heal children and families when it does occur. DNLCC is a Child Advocacy Center, including multidisciplinary approaches and collaborative responses when there is a concern of child abuse. [[www.dnlcc.org](http://www.dnlcc.org)]

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<sup>10</sup> SCVAN noted that they often partner with Lutheran Services Carolinas Anti-Human Trafficking Program to identify housing, medical, financial, safety, and therapeutic resources.

**Services provided to minor victims of sex trafficking:** Primary services at DNLCC include forensic interviews, medical examinations, and mental health assessments. DNLCC also provides therapy to child victims and families when it is appropriate.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served<sup>11</sup> in 2015:** 5

✂ **Pro Bono Legal Services through Murphy & Grantland, P.A.**

**Brief organization description:** Murphy & Grantland, P.A. is a private law firm that provided pro bono services to survivors of human trafficking. [<http://www.murphyandgrantland.com>]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking:** Attorneys at Murphy & Grantland provided legal counsel and advice to individual survivors of trafficking and various service providers. Legal services were the services provided by this agency.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served<sup>12</sup> in 2015:** 4

✂ **Switch**

**Brief organization description:** Switch is a non-profit with the mission of ending human trafficking and sexual exploitation in the upstate of South Carolina through awareness, prevention, anti-demand efforts and education, intervention, and restoration. [[www.switchsc.org](http://www.switchsc.org)]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking:** Strip club outreach; street outreach; 24-7 hotline access for victims;

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<sup>11</sup>DNLCC provided services to several others who were at risk for being victims of criminal sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) where the organization suspected trafficking, but the individuals denied it. This number is for confirmed victims.

<sup>12</sup> Contact: Elliott B. Daniels, Esquire  
edaniels@murphygrantland.com  
Direct Dial: 803-454-1256

referrals from law enforcement and other community partners; referrals to detoxification and rehabilitation facilities; referrals to human trafficking restoration homes; counseling; hygiene products; food; clothing; basic needs; resumé building and professional development; budgeting and finance education; advocacy; referrals to transitional housing facilities; and transportation needs.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served<sup>13</sup> in 2015: 12**

### ✧ Doors to Freedom

**Brief organization description:** Doors to Freedom is a non-profit working to provide a safe place for survivors of sex trafficking to experience a transformed life. Doors to Freedom primarily serves females ages 12-21, but also assists young adult survivors as needed when possible and able. Doors to Freedom hopes to open a safe home in the future but currently supports survivors however they can. [doorstofreedom.com]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking:** Case management; victim advocacy; individual counseling and mentoring; life skill development; continuing education and vocational training; transitional care; clothing; and connection to legal services.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served<sup>14</sup> in 2015: 12**

### ✧ Fresh Start Healing Heart

**Brief organization description:** Fresh Start Healing Heart aims to provide survivors of human trafficking with safe housing, immediate needs such as clothes, food, transportation, case management, and in-house support groups to give survivors the opportunity to focus on healing. Fresh Start Healing Heart also

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<sup>13</sup> Switch also provides services to sexually exploited women, and served 116 individuals in that capacity this year, which includes the 12 above.

<sup>14</sup> Doors to Freedom noted that prior to 2015 they served 3 other clients.

works to connect survivors with local resources for further support. They are located in the low country of South Carolina. [www.freshstarthealingheart.org]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking:** Case management; general support; and advocacy.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served in 2015:** 1

#### ✧ Hopewood Haven Ministries

**Brief organization description:** Hopewood Haven provides residential housing to victims of human trafficking. Residents receive a variety of services. Hopewood Haven also provides advocacy and education on human trafficking to residents of South Carolina. [www.hopewoodhaven.com]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking:** Medical care; individual and group counseling; housing; education; life skills training; spiritual mentoring and other resources at no cost.

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served in 2015:** 6

#### ✧ Lutheran Services Carolinas

**Brief organization description:** Lutheran Services Carolinas provides case management and cash assistance to foreign-born clients residing within 150 miles of Columbia, South Carolina. Lutheran Services Carolinas serves clients of any age, sex, or type of trafficking. They partner closely with South Carolina Victim Assistance Network, SC Legal Services, and SCCADVASA to ensure quality care. [www.lscarolinas.net]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking:** Case management; resource referrals; cash

assistance; and pre-screening for individuals who have not made a report to law enforcement..<sup>15</sup>

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors served in 2015:** 11

\*This number represents 10 labor trafficking survivors and 1 sex trafficking survivor.

## ✂ A21 Campaign

**Brief Organization Description:** A21 Campaign is an international non-profit with one office currently in Charleston, South Carolina. A21 commits to anti-trafficking efforts through prevention with awareness and education, protection and restoration of victims of human trafficking, supporting prosecution of traffickers, and partnership with others in the fight against human trafficking. [www.a21.org]

**Services provided to victims of sex trafficking:** Providing food; clothing; transportation; education; mental health; physical health; life skills; mentorship; employment help; and support through legal proceedings..<sup>16</sup>

**Number of trafficking victims/survivors from South Carolina served in 2015:** 7

## Accomplishments

*Highlights of what has been accomplished in this focus area through 2015:*

1. Organizations have started to recognize human trafficking and track intake, services, or other numbers relevant to that organization.

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<sup>15</sup> Victims or potential victims may call (803) 750-9917 and Lutheran Services Carolinas will conduct this pre-screening. They are also happy to assist clients in other parts of the state with referrals to local agencies based on need.

<sup>16</sup> A21 noted that some of these services were provided directly by A21 staff, and others were provided through community partnerships. A21 does have full-time staff to meet individual needs of human trafficking survivors, and they assist survivors from many states. The number shown for this report were survivors from South Carolina.

2. Continuous monitoring of National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline<sup>17</sup> (as operated by Polaris) information, including call volume and tip information.
3. Subcommittees (example: Information Gathering and Protocol Subcommittee) have been formed to discuss sharing information effectively but within professional parameters.
4. Human trafficking representative at the Attorney General's Office attended a nationwide conference in Washington, D.C., in June 2015. This conference introduced new ideas for collaborating on information sharing and data collection.
5. Development of a law enforcement and prosecution subcommittee that allows for data intelligence sharing between law enforcement agencies. This includes both federal and state agencies.
6. State Grand Jury now has jurisdiction over multi-county human trafficking cases, which will allow those cases to be tracked through the State Grand Jury system.

## **In Progress**

*Highlights of ongoing work for this focus area into 2016:*

1. There are multiple data collection projects underway. These will give a more comprehensive look at human trafficking across South Carolina.
2. Continuous training is being provided on how to recognize victims of all types of human trafficking so agencies can continue to learn to monitor and recognize these individuals.
3. Shaping how organizations should report data – standardizing definitions, what type of data should be collected, how it should be reported, and other specifications.

## **Goals and Recommendations**

*Suggestions by the task force to encourage success moving forward:*

1. Develop method for collection of information from law enforcement and solicitors' offices on cases. Also share data about convictions, pleas,

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<sup>17</sup> For more information on hotline calls and statistics specific to South Carolina from the Polaris-run National Human Trafficking Resource Center, please visit <http://traffickingresourcecenter.org/state/south-carolina>.

arrests, and other statistical information on non-active, closed cases between state and federal law enforcement and prosecutors.

2. Continue to consider all aspects of trafficking when collecting, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, domestic victims, and immigrant victims.
3. Share information on the Attorney General's website as it becomes available.
4. Track trends and patterns regarding human trafficking in South Carolina.

# Protecting, Supporting, and Serving Victims of Human Trafficking

Victim services are vital to combatting human trafficking. Without effective victim assistance, it would be difficult for victims to find freedom from the bonds of human trafficking. Increased awareness and training of front line responders brings more identification of human trafficking victims. As a result, the need for effective and comprehensive victim services has grown. It is critical that the state take measures to ensure that such resources will be available to meet the call for action.

As listed in the previous section, many service providers and agencies served victims of human trafficking this year. Those services are listed under each aforementioned organization, and should be considered in conjunction with this portion of the report. This section continues to highlight the work of task force agencies in the victim assistance realm in a more general capacity, to further showcase the forward momentum and goals of the group.

In addition to the full task force meetings, a Victim Assistance and Services Subcommittee convened to address the goal of protecting, supporting, and serving victims of human trafficking in South Carolina. Experts and victim service providers came together to discuss specific needs in this area.

## **Accomplishments**

*Highlights of what has been accomplished in this focus area through 2015:*

### 1. Shelter space

- a) First human trafficking shelter in South Carolina opened in 2014 and continues to operate. This shelter is for adult female sex trafficking victims.<sup>18</sup>
- b) Other shelters and agencies throughout the state have worked to provide space for human trafficking victims and are continuing to work to provide those services.

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<sup>18</sup> Hopewood Haven, as previously described under *Determining the Magnitude of Human Trafficking in South Carolina*.

- c) Agencies in South Carolina continue to build partnerships with out-of-state agencies to house minor victims of human trafficking and provide necessary services.
- d) Developed emergency response systems to get victims to safe shelter spaces when it is needed.

## 2. Trainings

- a) Human trafficking trainings occurred statewide throughout 2015. Many agencies hosted full-day trainings or included human trafficking as a topic in their conferences.
- b) Service providers and other professional agencies sent employees to trainings, including national conferences, so that they could learn to properly identify and work with victims and survivors of human trafficking.
- c) The task force includes multiple individuals who can train and speak on how to properly serve victims of human trafficking in a variety of professions.

## 3. Resources for service providers

- a) Agencies throughout the state have applied for, and some received, grants for human trafficking positions or support.
- b) Expansion of network of service providers – more people have connected and now work together, both statewide and locally. The task force helps to bring people together, creating a network of professionals that responds to trafficking situations.
- c) Non-profits have held fundraisers to help build shelters and provide other victim assistance.
- d) Private organizations have donated resources like homes or money to advocacy organizations.
- e) Legal services are available for sex trafficking survivors and migrant workers vulnerable to human trafficking.
- f) Smaller task forces have developed regionally allowing for very successful localized responses.
- g) Some areas are creating flowcharts for responses to human trafficking situations and best practices are surfacing from these models.

- h) Multiple trainings were held for healthcare professionals, including sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE).<sup>19</sup>
- 4. Immigration benefits for trafficking victims
  - a) There have been multiple trainings on both U visa and T visa applications and how they can be beneficial for victims and for prosecuting agencies.
  - b) Benefits have been applied for and obtained for victims of human trafficking in South Carolina.

## **In Progress**

*Highlights of ongoing work for this focus area into 2016:*

1. Anticipating the opening of shelters in the near future, particularly a shelter for minor victims of human trafficking.
2. Continuous application and/or efforts for funding. Because of the wide variety of services needed, funding is important to provide a continuum of those services.
3. Continuous training for, and held by, victim assistance groups.
4. Development of smaller work groups, including rapid response teams, to answer acute trafficking situations.
5. Growth and development of already existing trauma-informed programs to incorporate human trafficking.
6. Recognizing gaps in services and how to best address them.

## **Goals and Recommendations**

*Suggestions by the task force to encourage success moving forward:*

1. Provide shelter for every victim of human trafficking.
2. Mandated, reputable training for service-oriented agencies and organizations.
3. Develop methods for easy access to language/translation services.

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<sup>19</sup> *Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System* reported that they have trained hundreds of medical professionals and other members of multi-disciplinary teams on how to recognize sex trafficking and how to assist commercially sexually exploited children. They have also formed partnerships with local non-profit organizations and safe homes to potentially house victims once identified.

4. Continue to provide education to first responders, medical professionals, labor, and victim advocacy agencies and organizations.
5. Develop protocols for all types of responses and distribute them to encourage standardized methods of response.
6. Create rapid response teams in all areas of the state.
7. Create a South Carolina website or resource guide to provide quick reference to available resources for victims.
8. Attempt to obtain further funding from governmental and private sources.
9. Address need for human trafficking victims to have easy, ready access to comprehensive legal services.
10. Focus on the specific needs of child victims.

New legislation also passed this year providing additional assistance to victims and survivors of human trafficking. In S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2020(J), for victims of human trafficking, expungement of criminal offenses may be an option for offenses that were committed in relation to being trafficked. Additionally, provisions that protect minor victims of human trafficking from arrest for prostitution and human trafficking were added.<sup>20</sup> Restitution provisions were addressed further in S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2040(D). The law was expanded by S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2100 to contain language regarding posters with information about the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, which runs a hotline that victims can call for help. The posters require the hotline number and information in both English and Spanish, and the posters are mandated to be posted in specified locations all over South Carolina. Hopefully these posters will provide outreach to victims, with a tip line for them to contact for assistance. This poster is attached for to this report as Appendix A. It is available for public access and download on the Attorney General's website at [www.scag.gov/human-trafficking](http://www.scag.gov/human-trafficking).

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<sup>20</sup> S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2020(J): "In a prosecution of a person who is a victim of trafficking in persons, it is an affirmative defense that he was under duress or coerced into committing the offenses for which he is subject to prosecution, if the offenses were committed as a direct result of, or incidental or related to, trafficking. A victim of trafficking in persons convicted of a violation of this article or prostitution may motion the court to vacate the conviction and expunge the record of the conviction. The court may grant the motion on a finding that the person's participation in the offense was a direct result of being a victim. A victim of trafficking in persons is not subject to prosecution pursuant to this article or prostitution, if the victim was a minor at the time of the offense and committed the offense as a direct result of, or incidental or related to, trafficking."

# Investigating and Prosecuting Human Traffickers

Great strides were made in 2015 in the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking. Larger goals in this focus area include ensuring that law enforcement, prosecution, and regulatory agencies all over South Carolina are educated, prepared, and aware of human trafficking in South Carolina; the same agencies are aware of resources available to assist in this fight; the community is protected from trafficking; victims are safe from future victimization; and law enforcement and investigators attack both the supply and the demand<sup>21</sup>.

One large success in 2015 is legislation allowing human trafficking to be investigated by the State Grand Jury.<sup>22</sup> The State Grand Jury can be used to investigate multi-county operations. This is imperative in human trafficking cases, because traffickers often operate in more than one county. With the use of the State Grand Jury, one large investigation that covers many areas can create a comprehensive case, meaning not only legal efficiency, but also less stress on victims and stronger cases to present in court.

In consideration of the goals of the State Plan, a Law Enforcement and Prosecution Subcommittee convened to address the goal of investigating and prosecuting human traffickers in South Carolina. Experts in law enforcement and prosecution came together to discuss specific needs in this area. The larger task force also addresses this area throughout the year.

## **Accomplishments**

*Highlights of what has been accomplished in this focus area through 2015:*

1. First conviction under 2012 human trafficking law obtained by Attorney General's Office in October. This case was out of Greenville, South Carolina, and involved one adult female victim of sex trafficking and two

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<sup>21</sup> "Supply" means the trafficker, or the one supplying/facilitating the victim for labor or services. "Demand" is the individual providing something of value in exchange for a victim's labor or services (purchaser).

<sup>22</sup> S.C. Code Ann. § 14-7-1630(A); S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-2020(L)

traffickers. Both defendants received a 12-year sentence for human trafficking.<sup>23</sup>

2. State Grand Jury now has jurisdiction over multi-county cases. This allows for an expansion of human trafficking investigations.
3. Law enforcement-specific training has occurred statewide. This has led to more law enforcement recognition of human trafficking.
4. The South Carolina Commission on Prosecution Coordination hosted an all-day training on human trafficking for prosecutors.
5. Increased number of tips coming in through Polaris and other sources.
6. Training provided to magistrate judges on human trafficking. These judges not only set bonds, but could potentially see human trafficking signs in lower-level offenses that would come through magistrate courts.
7. Regional task forces created acute response teams to include law enforcement; these models are proving successful for quick response.
8. Successful partnerships occurred between state and federal agencies. This includes law enforcement and prosecution. There has been collaboration on busts, prosecutions, trainings, and more.
9. The Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation trained investigative staff to identify trafficking, updated data on their website to include information regarding human trafficking and resources, and collaborated with law enforcement on human trafficking reports.
10. The Criminal Justice Academy updated its curriculum and offers human trafficking-specific trainings.
11. Law enforcement, prosecutors, and other professionals from South Carolina attended nationwide conferences on human trafficking to learn how to better address this in our state.

## **In Progress**

### *Highlights of ongoing work for this focus area into 2016:*

1. Trainings continue to be scheduled for law enforcement, prosecutors, and other regulatory agencies.
2. Other trainings are currently scheduled for judges in all levels of the court system.

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<sup>23</sup> AG Wilson Announces First Human Trafficking Convictions in South Carolina, <http://www.scag.gov/south-carolina-office-of-the-attorney-general-news-releases/10-12-2015-first-human-trafficking-convictions-00769185> (2015).

3. Continually developing best practices in prosecutions and how the new law should be applied in cases.
4. Interagency collaboration continues to develop a network of individuals that can successfully identify human trafficking cases and assist victims.
5. Currently working to adopt a law enforcement-only information holding system to share leads and tips faster.
6. Continue to utilize Polaris and the National Human Trafficking Resource Center for the tip line and updates provided on those tips.
7. Utilize tools further to gain access and knowledge on how human traffickers use the internet to recruit and advertise victims.

## Goals and Recommendations

*Suggestions by the task force to encourage success moving forward:*

1. Provide law enforcement with readily accessible information on how to identify a victim. Consider pocket cards, or cards to keep in a vehicle.
2. Write protocols for human trafficking response systems.<sup>24</sup>
3. Establish a law enforcement contact who is educated on human trafficking in as many areas of the state as possible.
4. Mandated, reputable training and education for first responders.
5. Create a data compilation method for law enforcement to report human trafficking statistics.
6. Explore the possibility of creating a South Carolina-specific human trafficking hotline.
7. Continue to provide education for law enforcement, prosecution, judges, and regulatory agencies.
8. Create diversion programs in the court system that will help to identify victims in the system to get assistance when needed.
9. Focus on minor victims (diversion programs, school resource officers, educating law enforcement not to arrest minors for prostitution).
10. Develop “john” courts to address the demand aspect of human trafficking.
11. Obtain grant funding so that these efforts can be expanded.
12. Develop a law enforcement newsletter or mailing list for effective communication of ideas and information.

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<sup>24</sup> Suggested protocols by the task force included: volunteers at shelters; working with survivors; teachers; law enforcement; prosecution; mental health; healthcare; forensic interviews; rapid response teams; foreign-born victims; service industry/hospitality industry staff; and child welfare agencies.

# Preventing Human Trafficking in South Carolina

As discussed in the State Plan, awareness is key, and the task force found that a “lack of awareness about human trafficking and ingrained societal perceptions aggravate this problem, resulting in lost opportunities to help victims and hold perpetrators accountable.”<sup>25</sup> Throughout 2015, the task force focused on public awareness and education to aid in prevention efforts. In addition to the larger task force, the Public Awareness and Outreach Subcommittee, and the Forward Momentum and Support Subcommittee, convened to address issues of prevention in South Carolina.

South Carolina also partnered with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in promoting the Blue Campaign. The Blue Campaign is a unified voice for the DHS efforts to combat human trafficking. Among many things, this partnership includes a series of three human trafficking awareness posters that are available for download and display. This partnership is important not only to strengthen the fight against human trafficking with other agencies, but also to expand the awareness that trafficking is happening in South Carolina. Posters are available in both English and Spanish and available for public access and download at [www.scag.gov/human-trafficking](http://www.scag.gov/human-trafficking). These posters are attached to this report as Appendix B.

## **Accomplishments**

*Highlights of what has been accomplished in this focus area through 2015:*

1. Partnership with DHS Blue Campaign.
2. Numerous human trafficking awareness and education events held statewide. The human trafficking coordinator at the Attorney General’s office participated and spoke on trafficking at 38 events in 2015.
3. *South Carolina State Plan to Address Human Trafficking* won one of the top 10 notable documents of 2014 by the South Carolina State Library.
4. More media coverage on human trafficking than previous years, to include cases and human trafficking in general.

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<sup>25</sup> *South Carolina State Plan to Address Human Trafficking*, pg. 50, [www.scag.gov/human-trafficking](http://www.scag.gov/human-trafficking).

5. Various groups are working to reach out to schools, and have done educational programs on human trafficking in middle schools and high schools throughout South Carolina.
6. Growth of task force shows acknowledgment of issue in South Carolina. More agencies than ever are now involved in meetings and efforts to combat human trafficking.
7. Agencies have been able to get billboards and other large media avenues donated to advertise awareness for human trafficking.

## **In Progress**

*Highlights of ongoing work for this focus area into 2016:*

1. Awareness events and education opportunities continue to be made available going into 2016.
2. Considering partnering with nationwide organizations to develop larger campaign to address prevention.
3. Groups currently working to address demand/prostitution laws in South Carolina.
4. Working to develop social media pages to share information about the task force and its constituent agencies.
5. Brochures are being developed to hand out to professionals and to the public.
6. Developing partnerships with colleges, and using that engagement for awareness and advocacy.

## **Goals and Recommendations**

*Suggestions by the task force to encourage success moving forward:*

1. Eliminate the belief that Human Trafficking does not exist in South Carolina.
2. Implement anti-human trafficking education requirements in schools.
3. Create an anti-human trafficking public service campaign.
4. Produce educational information materials to be distributed to high risk groups.
5. Utilize several different forms of media to gain awareness.
6. Create of fast fact sheets for identifying and responding to human trafficking.

With the call for information on victims and survivors served in 2015, many agencies submitted material on how they also educated individuals all over South Carolina. Organizations engaged in: advocacy; public fundraisers for awareness; general awareness; training on human trafficking; training on demand aspects; speaking to youth groups in churches; speaking to businesses; educating families; educating hotel and motel staff; training on internet safety; webinars; and publishing articles in local magazines. These endeavors reached into the thousands as far as number of people who were educated by members of the task force in 2015, and these agencies plan to reach more people in 2016.

## Conclusion

In 2015, the task force put forward unprecedented work and progress toward anti-trafficking efforts in all areas of major concern in the State Plan. More people were educated, more public awareness events were held, and more cases have come to light. Moving forward, the task force, through the quarterly meetings, subcommittees, work groups, and constituent agencies, will continue to implement the State Plan into the new year.

Resources for more information on human trafficking are included in Appendix C and can be found on the Attorney General's website at [www.scag.gov/human-trafficking](http://www.scag.gov/human-trafficking).

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# Appendices

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# Appendix A

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

**LÍNEA DIRECTA DEL CENTRO NACIONAL DE RECURSOS**

**PARA LA TRATA DE PERSONAS**

Available 24/7 |  
Nongovernmental |  
Anonymous and Confidential |  
Accessible in 170 languages

Able to provide help, referral  
to services, training, and  
general information

Disponible 24/7 | No gubernamental |  
Anónimo y Confidencial | Accesible en  
170 idiomas

Capaz de proveer ayuda, la referencia  
de servicios, entrenamiento, e  
información



**1-888-373-7888**

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS BEING FORCED TO ENGAGE IN ANY ACTIVITY AND CANNOT LEAVE, WHETHER IT IS COMMERCIAL SEX, HOUSEWORK, FARM WORK, OR ANY OTHER ACTIVITY, CALL THE NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESOURCE CENTER HOTLINE TO ACCESS HELP AND SERVICES. VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ARE PROTECTED UNDER FEDERAL LAW AND THE LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA.**

Si usted o alguien que usted conoce está obligado a participar en cualquier actividad y no puede salir, si sea un acto sexual con fines comerciales, trata laboral, o alguna otra actividad forzada, llame la línea directa del Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Trata de Personas para obtener ayuda y servicio. Víctimas de la trata de personas están protegidos por la ley federal y las leyes de Carolina del Sur.



**233733 (BEFREE)**

[WWW.TRAFFICKINGRESOURCECENTER.ORG](http://WWW.TRAFFICKINGRESOURCECENTER.ORG)

# Appendix B

# CAN YOU SEE HER?

It's time to open our eyes. Victims of the sex trade, domestic servitude, and forced labor have been invisible, until now.

RECOGNIZE  
**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

TO REPORT SUSPECTED TRAFFICKING CALL

**1-866-DHS-2-ICE**  
1-866-347-2423

For victim support call **1-888-373-7888** | Text INFO or HELP to BeFree (233733)



[DHS.GOV/BLUECAMPAIGN](https://dhs.gov/bluecampaign)



[WWW.SCAG.GOV](https://www.scag.gov)

The United States Department of Homeland Security is a Federal agency of the United States Government and is a separate and distinct entity from the State of South Carolina.

BC-ST6-PP-SC 6/15

# CAN YOU SEE HIM?

It's time to open our eyes. Victims of forced labor, domestic servitude, and the sex trade have been invisible, until now.

RECOGNIZE  
**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

TO REPORT SUSPECTED TRAFFICKING CALL

**1-866-DHS-2-ICE**  
1-866-347-2423

For victim support call **1-888-373-7888** | Text INFO or HELP to BeFree (233733)



[DHS.GOV/BLUECAMPAIGN](https://dhs.gov/bluecampaign)



[WWW.SCAG.GOV](https://www.scag.gov)

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It's time to open our eyes. Victims of domestic servitude,  
forced labor, and the sex trade have been invisible, until now.

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**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

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[DHS.GOV/BLUECAMPAIGN](http://DHS.GOV/BLUECAMPAIGN)

[WWW.SCAG.GOV](http://WWW.SCAG.GOV)

The United States Department of Homeland Security is a Federal agency of the  
United States Government and is a separate and distinct entity from the State of South Carolina.

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# Appendix C

# Human Trafficking Information Resources

- ✧ Polaris Project  
<http://www.polarisproject.org>
- ✧ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Rescue and Restore Campaign  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking>
- ✧ Department of Homeland Security, Blue Campaign  
<http://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>
- ✧ United States Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons  
<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/index.htm>
- ✧ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
<http://www.missingkids.com/home>
- ✧ International Labour Organization  
<http://www.ilo.org/global/lang-en/index.htm>

