

South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force 2019 Annual Report

Executive Summary

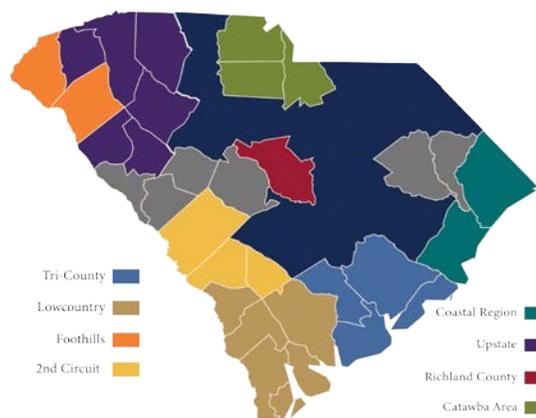
I. Introduction

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 combatting human trafficking in South Carolina. The collaborative approach includes efforts from mandated and non-mandated state agencies, state and federal law enforcement, nonprofits, faith leaders, community volunteers, professionals in medicine and education, and survivors. The law dictates that the Task Force will submit annual reports, inclusive of 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 2019 Annual Report.

II. Structure of the Task Force – Subcommittees and Regional Task Forces

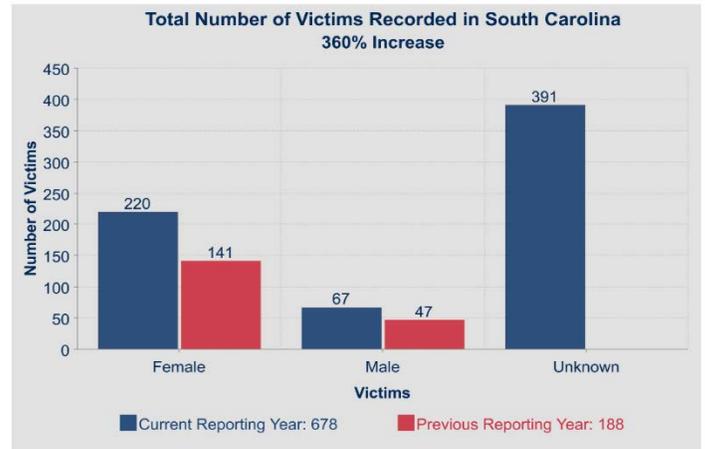
Throughout much of 2019, the State Task Force was comprised of eleven subcommittees at the state level. Toward the end of the year, the State Task Force launched the Interfaith Subcommittee to support those in the faith community in their efforts to combat human trafficking and provide support to victims and survivors. The development of this subcommittee will improve the State Task Force's ability to forge partnerships with faith organizations statewide and unify interfaith anti-human trafficking efforts in South Carolina.

The State Task Force also encourages the development of regional task forces across South Carolina to ensure that every region of the state is equipped with the resources and infrastructure necessary to effectively combat human trafficking and coordinate regional anti-human trafficking efforts. Throughout 2020, the State Task Force will continue to collaborate with existing regional task forces while assisting with the development of new coalitions.

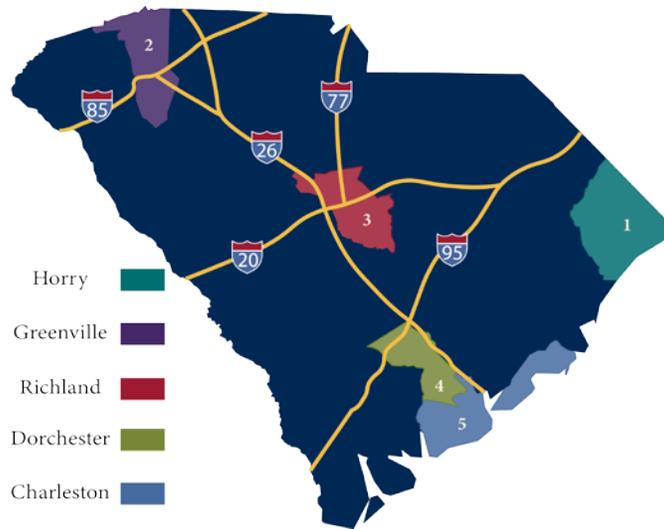


III. Determining the Magnitude of Human Trafficking in South Carolina

Understanding extent and scope of human trafficking throughout the state is critical to developing an effective strategy to combat the crime. Through the State Task Force's ongoing partnership with the National Human Trafficking Hotline, the Task Force receives data that informs the statewide response. The following data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline do not represent a comprehensive report of trafficking cases in South Carolina. Rather, the data represent the signals and cases made to the hotline during the timeframe. The statistics are accurate at the time of this report.

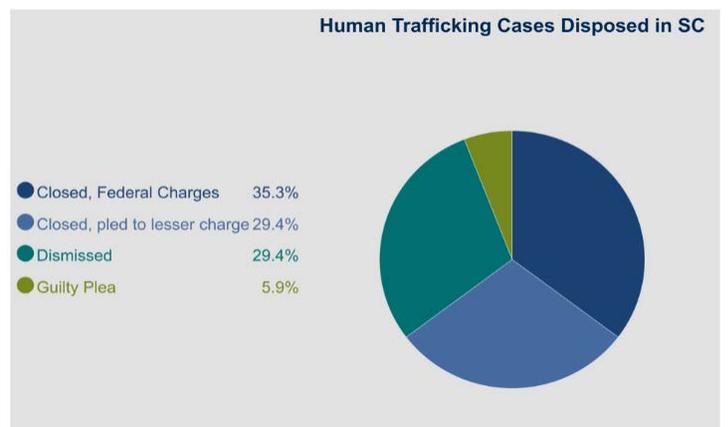
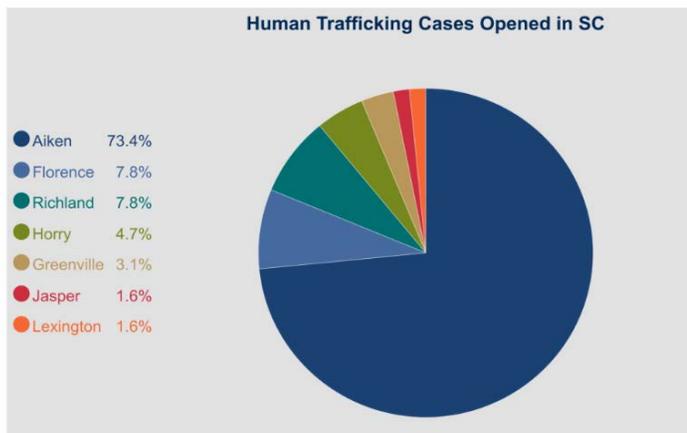


Top 5 Counties for Reported Human Trafficking



IV. Investigating and Prosecuting Human Traffickers

In 2019, 14 new defendants were charged with Human Trafficking in South Carolina State Courts. Overall, 17 charges of human trafficking were closed in state courts. As of December 15, 2019, there are 68 human trafficking cases pending in the South Carolina State Courts. Local law enforcement worked with both state and federal law enforcement agencies in investigating cases.



V. Protecting, Supporting, and Serving Victims of Human Trafficking

The data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline reflect an increase in labor trafficking in South Carolina. In order to better protect and serve labor trafficking victims in the state, the Attorney General's Office will host the State Task Force Labor Trafficking Roundtable in 2020. The meeting will include key stakeholders whose work intersects with the crime and who can provide support services for victims. The State Task Force will also create a series of posters and informational materials in English and Spanish to increase awareness of labor trafficking, inform the public of its signs, and provide the National Human Trafficking Hotline number to victims.

The State Task Force will also continue efforts to provide comprehensive training to first responders, medical professionals, labor agencies, and victim service providers to best position South Carolina to recognize the signs of human trafficking so victims can receive quality care. Furthermore, the State Task Force recognizes the statewide need for increased short and long-term shelter space for victims and survivors. The Task Force will continue prioritizing this need through the implementation of its state level certification for direct service providers to ensure safe, high quality services for trafficking survivors.

VI. Preventing Human Trafficking in South Carolina

Collaboration is central to the Task Force's multi-sector approach to combatting human trafficking in South Carolina. The Task Force, through the Attorney General's Office, developed new and innovative partnerships in 2019.



In 2019, the State Task Force formalized its partnership with the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association (SCRLA) with the intention of increasing awareness of human trafficking to SCRLA's members and equipping the hospitality industry to respond to potential trafficking incidents within their establishments.



The South Carolina Beer Wholesalers Association (SCBWA) became another formal partner of the State Task Force in November 2019. The Task Force and SCBWA will collaborate to create and distribute posters statewide, train distributors on human trafficking and safe response protocols to potential trafficking incidents, and bring awareness of the crime throughout January.

The Task Force will continue to honor and grow its existing partnerships. These include partnerships with the National Association of Attorneys General where South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson continues to be a sitting member of the Human Trafficking Committee and the Region IV Southeast Leadership Advisory Group through the US Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families where Kathryn Moorehead, Director of VAWA and Human Trafficking Programs/Coordinator of the State Task Force, sits as South Carolina's lead representative. Additionally, in 2019 Kathryn Moorehead joined six other state leaders on the first Steering Committee of the National Compendium of State-Run Anti-Human Trafficking Initiatives which serves to share ideas and inform state level policy decisions on how to most effectively address the crime.

The Task Force will also continue to partner with Polaris, the Department of Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign, Thorn, Legal Assistance for Survivors of Trafficking, the National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Work Group, the South Carolina Trucking Association, the South Carolina Hospital Association, and the Indigenous Women’s Alliance of South Carolina.

In addition to partnerships with key stakeholders, preventing human trafficking through public awareness and education efforts has been a critical component of South Carolina’s anti-human trafficking strategy since the inception of the Task Force. The Task Force created the Prevention Education and Outreach Subcommittee after identifying prevention education in schools as a key component of state anti-human trafficking strategy. One of the subcommittee’s goals for 2019 was to create a chart outlining the prevention education curricula it recommends.

The curricula the subcommittee chose vary in the target audience, language accessibility, content, and format. The Task Force encourages educators and administrators across South Carolina to review the recommended curricula and choose one to implement in their school or after-school programs. By adopting and implementing one of the following human trafficking prevention education curricula, educators can equip their students with the awareness and skills needed to protect themselves and their peers from potential human trafficking incidents.

CURRICULA COMPONENTS

	 Evidence-informed	 Age Range	 Learning Assessment	 Language	Types of Trafficking
LIGHTS by UNITAS	✓	12-18	?	ENGLISH SPANISH	SEX LABOR
PROTECT	✓	5-18	✓	ENGLISH	SEX
Love 146	✓	12-18	✓	ENGLISH	SEX
A21, Bodies Are Not Commodities	✓	14-18	✓	ENGLISH SPANISH	SEX LABOR
My Life My Choice	✓	12-18	?	ENGLISH SPANISH	SEX

VII. Summary

The State Task Force made great strides in 2019 in combatting human trafficking in South Carolina. The progress made in 2019 positions the State Task Force to continue developing and growing its anti-human trafficking efforts in 2020. Throughout the coming year, the Task Force will continue to support providers working with victims, encourage the prosecution of criminals who target children and adults as victims of sex and/or labor trafficking, and collaborate with key stakeholders and partners in statewide anti-human trafficking efforts.

