

SOUTH CAROLINA HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE NEWSLETTER

Special Edition | January 2021



WELCOME

January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month. We designed this issue to provide an overview of the Task Force's 2020 accomplishments, celebrate the work of our Task Force partners, and share Task Force initiatives planned for 2021. As we begin a new year, we would like to thank members of the Task Force across the state for their tireless efforts to combat human trafficking and support victims/survivors in South Carolina, even amidst the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. We are looking forward to continuing this work with you throughout 2021.

2020 ANNUAL REPORT OVERVIEW

The State Task Force leads a strategic, multi-disciplinary approach to combating human trafficking in South Carolina. The collaborative approach includes efforts from key state agencies, law enforcement, nonprofits, faith leaders, community volunteers, professionals in medicine and education, and survivors. The Task Force is legislatively mandated to submit annual reports to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate.

The 2020 Annual Report detailed a number of new developments and initiatives in South Carolina's anti-human trafficking movement. Key data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline were also shared.

The South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force continually reviews its structure for modifications that may improve its response to the crime. For more information on the Task Force structure and initiatives, visit the Annual Report [here](#).

The South Carolina Office of the Attorney General would like to thank all the members of the South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force for their hard work and dedication to the cause. Collaboration is critical in the anti-human trafficking movement to successfully prevent the crime, protect our communities, and prosecute the cases. Together, we continue to make progress in combating human trafficking in South Carolina.



STATE TASK FORCE ADVISORY COUNCIL LAUNCH

The Task Force is excited to announce the launch of the Task Force Advisory Council. The purpose of the Council is to convene subject matter experts in order to leverage their sector-specific knowledge for the improvement and expansion of state anti-human trafficking efforts. The Advisory Council will provide feedback and assistance to the Task Force's specialized state initiatives on an ad-hoc basis.

The Task Force will appoint members to advise on the following subject areas:

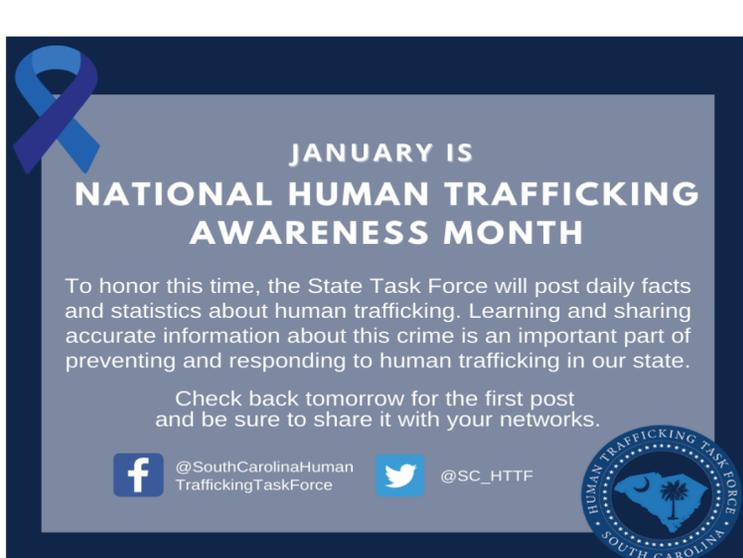
- Mental Health
- Hospitality
- Substance Abuse
- Transportation
- Technology
- Finance
- Underserved Populations
 - People of Color
 - LGBTQIA+
 - Runaway Youth
 - Homeless Population
 - Individuals with Disabilities
 - Aging Population

Across all of these subject areas, the Task Force will also emphasize language accessibility and cultural competency. In convening the Council, the State Task Force aims to expand and improve the scope of its initiatives throughout 2021.

FACTS MATTER CAMPAIGN

To celebrate National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the State Task Force began a social media campaign on January 1, 2021. For every day of January, the Task Force will post a graphic containing a fact or statistic about human trafficking to its Facebook and Twitter pages.

Through these daily posts, the Task Force aims to promote the importance of factual, accurate information in efforts to raise awareness for this crime. During 2020, the proliferation of viral content hampered national anti-human trafficking efforts by misinforming the public and overwhelming the National Human Trafficking Hotline and other key resources. By re-focusing social media engagement on accurate facts about human trafficking, the State Task Force hopes to encourage its audience to learn and share the most up to date information about the crime. Such education and awareness is key to successfully responding to and preventing human trafficking in South Carolina. Please see below for details about the State Task Force social media accounts.



HONORING SGT. ED MARCURELLA



The SC Human Trafficking Task Force mourns the loss of Colleton County Sheriff's Office Detective Sergeant Edward Marcurella. Detective Sgt. Marcurella passed away on January 16 after battling COVID-19 and pneumonia. The newly elected co-chair of the Lowcountry Human Trafficking Task Force was also a member of the South Carolina Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

Sgt. Marcurella spent 35 years as a first responder, serving in roles as a firefighter, a paramedic, a bomb specialist, and a SWAT member. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends. Thank you, Ed. God bless.

2021 HIGHLIGHTED INITIATIVES

The State Task Force is starting off the year with a number of targeted initiatives. While this is not a comprehensive list of projects, the topics below represent key areas of focus in 2021.

- ✓ **Ongoing COVID-19 Response**
As the pandemic continues into the new year, the State Task Force is committed to increasing the accessibility of meetings, trainings, and other resources necessary to maintaining a rigorous anti-human trafficking response.
- ✓ **Interfaith Engagement**
Through the Interfaith Subcommittee, the Task Force aims to expand partnerships with the interfaith community of South Carolina. This collaboration will facilitate more widespread training and awareness efforts.
- ✓ **Online Resource Library & Repository**
The State Task Force will continue adding fact sheets and resources to the Online Resource Library. The Task Force also aims to launch an online repository to increase access to virtual trainings, educational resources, and other materials.
- ✓ **Data Collection**
Through the Data & Research Subcommittee, the Task Force will continue meeting with key stakeholders from state agencies to establish a database for human trafficking. The State Task Force will also work to collect more data specific to the COVID-19 crisis.
- ✓ **Labor Trafficking Awareness & Training**
Having identified labor trafficking as a top priority, the State Task Force will continue to disseminate trainings and awareness materials to labor trafficking. The Task Force will also bolster the Labor Trafficking Subcommittee, which was relaunched in 2020.
- ✓ **Standardized, Sector-Specific Trainings**
The State Task Force will work with its partners statewide to continue expanding human trafficking training to all of South Carolina's industries. The Task Force will also leverage the subject matter expertise of the newly formed Advisory Council to inform new sector-specific trainings.

UPCOMING MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND TRAININGS

2021 State Task Force Meetings

March 5th, June 4th, September 3rd, and December 3rd.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings will be held virtually. Please refer to the calendar section of the website for updates as the public health crisis continues. To receive email updates before meetings, please send your contact information to Megan Rigabar at meganrigabar@scag.gov.

In 2020, the State Task Force continued to support regional task forces statewide. In the fall of 2020, the Lexington, Edgefield, McCormick, and Saluda (LEMS) Task Force was launched, making it the ninth regional task force in the state. Please see below for upcoming trainings and events at the regional level.

2021 Regional Task Force Meetings

Lowcountry Human Trafficking Task Force
April 21st, July 21st, and October 20th.

Richland County Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force
Meetings are held on the third Friday of every other month from 10AM to 12PM. 2020 meeting dates are: March 19th, May 14th, July 16th, September 17th, and November 19th.

Tri-County Human Trafficking Task Force
February 12th, May 14th, August 13th, and November 12th.

Upstate Human Trafficking Task Force
April 16th, July 16th, and October 10th.

2nd Judicial Circuit Human Trafficking Task Force
March 10th, June 23rd, September 15th, and December 8th. Meetings will be at 10AM & will be virtual until further notice.



January 2021 Regional Task Force Events

Coastal Region Human Trafficking Task Force
Proclamation by Horry County Council naming January 2021 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

Richland County Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force
No More Silence Demonstration: January 30th from 10AM to 1PM at Soda City Farmers Market: Main Street, Columbia, SC
Canvas the County: January 25th-30th.

2nd Judicial Circuit Human Trafficking Task Force
Awareness demonstrations and information will be placed in the downtown area for National Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

Additional Trainings & Events

State-Sponsored Trainings

Labor Trafficking Training
January 22 at 1PM. Register [here](#).

Thorn Spotlight Training
Law enforcement and prosecutors only.
January 28 at 1PM. Register [here](#).

Interfaith & Human Trafficking Awareness Event
January 29 at 12PM. Register [here](#).

National Trainings

Applying Trauma-Informed Care and Disability Justice to Working with Survivors of Human Trafficking

National Human Trafficking & Disabilities Working Group Webinar
January 26 from 2-3:30PM. Register [here](#).

Shared Hope International: 31 Days of Praying Awareness Month 31 Days of Prayer
Join [here](#).

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