

SAN MATEO COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

**A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, THE
SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND THE SAN MATEO
COUNTY POLICE CHIEFS AND SHERIFF
ASSOCIATION**

**2018 Annual Report
December 31, 2018**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the work product of San Mateo County Human Trafficking Coordinator Lt. John Vanek, SJPD (Ret.), and San Mateo County Human Trafficking Advocacy Coordinator Ms. Pamela Estes, Attorney at Law. Mr. Vanek and Ms. Estes are tasked with providing subject-matter expertise and leadership on ways to improve the County's response to human trafficking, enhance coordination among both governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in the response to human trafficking within the County, and to represent the County in the regional efforts against trafficking. The purpose of this report is to outline the results of their efforts during calendar year 2018.

The keystone to determining the Program's future strategic efforts was an assessment of human trafficking prevalence, and the various efforts to respond to trafficking, within the County. The County Assessment was submitted to the Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association in May, 2018. The assessment confirmed that human trafficking occurs with some regularity in San Mateo County and it would be imprudent to label its prevalence as "low incidence." A review of police reports from 2015-2017 revealed incidents that suggested human trafficking, yet were not investigated or prosecuted as such. Information from various victim services agencies found approximately 102 likely victims of trafficking sought services during this same period. These findings, along with anecdotal input, suggested efforts should be made to better coordinate all anti-trafficking activities among both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The enhancement and coordination of these efforts is the overarching strategic goal of the Coordinators.

The Assessment also contained eight recommendations: (1) Build law enforcement expertise through the creation of a centralized human trafficking investigation team; (2) Create a flow chart to identify which service provider to engage in a given scenario to ensure victims have access to needed services; (3) Enhance "demand" enforcement (i.e. decrease the buying of sex within the County by targeting buyers and informing the public that buying sex in the County is not tolerated); (4) Formulate a coordinated response to illicit massage parlors operating within the County; (5) Update the County's Law Enforcement Human Trafficking Protocol; (6) Create a web presence for the County's human trafficking efforts and initiatives; (7) Initiate a program to re-refresh the Human Trafficking poster initiative; (8) Continue law enforcement operations and training on an every-other month rotation; (9) Produce an annual report by December 31, 2018.

This Annual Report will address each of these recommendations and their status as of December 31, 2018. The next section will address important issues the Human Trafficking Program continues to address, or needs to address, moving forward. The final section will offer updates and information on specific efforts and areas not addressed above.

UPDATES ON ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1 – Build law enforcement expertise through the creation of a centralized human trafficking investigation team.

Background: Recognizing the varying size and capabilities of the many law enforcement agencies within the County, and recognizing that human trafficking incidents may not occur frequently enough within each jurisdiction for every agency to gain investigative expertise, Program coordinators recommended the Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association (PCSA) authorize one investigator from each of the three law enforcement zones in the County act as the point-of-contact for trafficking investigations. It was recommended these investigators provide subject-matter expertise as needed, and either assist in the investigation (or take primary responsibility for the case) at the investigating agency's discretion. These three investigators would also be responsible for attending the monthly meeting at the Keller Center where victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) are reviewed.

Status: The PCSA decided upon identifying three "Human Trafficking Liaisons;" one each from the South San Francisco Police Department, San Mateo Police Department, and the Redwood City Police Department. The liaisons are available to provide assistance on cases when asked. They are not tasked with attending the monthly CSEC meetings.

2 – Create a flow chart to identify which service provider to engage in a given scenario to ensure victims have access to needed services.

Background: Victims of human trafficking often require a wide variety of services to assist them in recovery from victimization. In addition to general victim services, often special services are needed based upon the victims age (i.e., minors or adults) or place of birth (i.e., U.S. citizen or foreign national). Prior to 2018 no efforts were made in the County to create a comprehensive response to victim services. In addition, in the course of the assessment and assisting actual victims during 2018, the lack of tailored services and the coordinated delivery of services was determined to be a significant gap (perhaps the greatest) in the County's response to trafficking. Coordinators have worked to identify all of the various service providers currently providing services, or who may be available to offer services in the future (often dependent on funding), and worked on efforts to bring these providers together to create a comprehensive response.

Status: The age of a victim is the first criteria for response and housing. Child Protective Services has jurisdiction of all minors (under age 18). First Chance Sobering Station provides immediate shelter for adult victims of trafficking. Long-term housing / shelter options for adults vary depending upon criteria established by the various non-profit shelters. Navigating the various options is a challenge, and among the case management issues to be addressed moving forward.

In December the District Attorney's Office, Victim Services Division, offered to take the lead on discussions with other service providers in the County in an effort to create a comprehensive response for adult victims, with the first meeting in January 2019. This is a significant move forward. Meanwhile, adult victims of trafficking are served, but often in a silo depending upon their age, type of victimization, or other considerations. *The single most significant gap in the County's response to adult victims of trafficking is the lack of designated case management; case managers who are trained in this role and have legal confidentiality.* The Program coordinators will continue to heavily focus on this issue moving forward.

Coordinators have identified the International Rescue Committee (IRC) office in San Jose as a resource for assisting foreign national victims of human trafficking. The IRC Human Trafficking Coordinator regularly attends the Human Trafficking Initiative meetings and is prepared to assist any foreign national victim (regardless of age or type of trafficking) identified in the County. This assistance is no-cost to the County.

3 – Enhance “demand” enforcement.

Background: “Demand” is a term used within the anti-trafficking community when referring to the buyers of commercial sex, regardless if those providing the sex are engaging voluntarily or being exploited by traffickers. Buyers of sex (colloquially referred to as “johns,” though the preferred title within the anti-trafficking community is “buyers”) are viewed as the “demand” within the “supply and demand” economic model. Therefore, demand reduction activities focus on identifying buyers, arresting buyers, educating buyers of the risks involved, the victimization of those providing sex, and other public efforts which, together, reduce the buying of sex or compel buyer to do so outside San Mateo County. The County's limited size, geography (ocean and bay to the west and east), and ease of travel to leave the County make San Mateo County uniquely positioned to have an effective demand reduction program. The key to this type of program is that it includes a variety of efforts, and that it be publicly visible so buyers know to not engage in this activity in the County. Preliminary discussions have already occurred with the District Attorney's Office, law enforcement, and non-governmental organizations interested in providing assistance; all support the creation of a comprehensive demand campaign.

Status: In January 2019 the first formal meeting to discuss potential demand efforts will take place. Potential efforts will be discussed and investigated. Efforts occurring in other areas around the country will be examined and assessed for potential effectiveness within San Mateo County. Based on these efforts, recommendations will be delivered to the District Attorney's Office, the PCSA, and the County Manager's Office not later than April 1, 2019.

4 – Formulate a coordinated response to illicit massage parlors.

Background: Massage parlors where commercial sex also occurs, regardless if those providing the sex are engaging voluntarily or being exploited by traffickers, are referring to as Illicit Massage Businesses (IMBs). Like most Bay Area Counties, San Mateo

County has a history of IMBs operating within the County. Identifying and eliminating IMBs has been a priority in the past, and the County has a Massage Parlor Ordinance considered to be one of the most effective in the United States (though not all cities in the County have adopted the ordinance). The best source of intelligence on the prevalence of IMBs within the County is the website Rubmaps, which allows buyers of sex to comment about their experiences at various IMBs nationwide. In May 2018, 24 IMBs were identified within the County (massage parlors where a review by a sex buyer had been posted within the previous three months).

Status: The Human Trafficking Program has worked to enhance the response to IMBs through various efforts: Law enforcement operations coordinated by the Program coordinators identified six IMBs where five individuals were cited for the solicitation of sex, and these businesses are currently in the suspension/revocation process; Program coordinators assisted in organizing training on IMB investigations where the Redwood City Police Department provided the training to other agencies; Program coordinators assisted in scheduling training for law enforcement by the California Massage Therapy Council's Professional Standards Unit on the CAMTC revocation process and the assistance they can offer to law enforcement. As of January 3, 2019, Rubmaps listed 12 IMBs (a reduction of 50%) operating within the County. In addition, three IMBs identified in May have ceased operation. Identifying and eliminating IMBs within the County will continue to be a focus of the Human Trafficking Program.

5 – Update the County's Law Enforcement Human Trafficking Protocol.

Background: The Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association adopted a Human Trafficking Protocol in 2015. Since then much of the information contained has become outdated, and new promising/best practices have evolved.

Status: The protocol has undergone an extensive revision by the Program coordinators, and now includes input from primary victim services providers useful to law enforcement. In November 2018 a panel of law enforcement commanders performed an initial review of the draft, and currently the draft is under final review by this group. The final revision of the protocol will be delivered to the PCSO no later than April 1, 2019.

6 – Create a web presence for the County's human trafficking efforts and initiatives.

Background: Though the County's Human Trafficking Program has existed since July 2015 it has lacked a dedicated web presence where the public, county and city agencies, service providers, and victims of trafficking can find reliable and current information and resources related to trafficking within San Mateo County. This is a significant gap, especially in terms of raising public awareness of the County's investment and commitment to respond to human trafficking.

Status: The County Manager's Office is facilitating the creation of a stand-alone website for the Human Trafficking Program with the tentative URL: stophtsanmateo. The content for the site will be created by the Program coordinators, who will also be responsible for updating content and resources. The site is planned to launch in January 2019.

7 – Initiate a program to re-fresh the Human Trafficking poster initiative.

Background: California Civil Code Section 52.6 requires certain businesses to post a notice that promotes resources available to victims of human trafficking and the community. The law was amended in 2017 to include hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns in the list of businesses required to post this notice. Hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns are required to post the notice by January 1, 2019. The language contained on the poster, contact information for the National Human Trafficking Hotline, and the size of the poster are all mandated by California law.

Status: Program coordinators worked with the San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau to identify hotels/motels, and a variety of community organizations to design a new poster, produce, and mail the poster (along with information related to the law and common questions about human trafficking) to 170 hotels/motels within the County. The posters were mailed in November 2018. On January 29 the Human Trafficking Program will host a coffee for hotel/motel and business operators required to display the poster in an additional effort to raise awareness of compliance. Coordinators are also working with local NGOs who will inspect locations for compliance. These posters are available through the coordinators for use in any location.

8 – Continue law enforcement operations and training on an every-other month rotation.

Background: Since January 2018 Program coordinators have worked with law enforcement agencies to conduct pro-active operations to identify victims, arrest traffickers, and identify and arrest sex buyers. These operations rotate by law enforcement zones, and occur every other month. On opposing months Program coordinators present a 2-hour *Human Trafficking for Law Enforcement* course to assist agencies in complying with state law that every sworn law enforcement officer receives two hours of training on identifying human trafficking incidents, proper assistance for victims, and documenting elements of the crime.

Status: In 2018 120 law enforcement officers/deputies attended the training which will continue on a bi-monthly basis. During 2018 the pro-active operations consisted of anti-trafficking operations (targeting traffickers; no arrests), demand operations (targeting sex buyers; approximately ten arrests), and Illicit Massage Business operations (targeting IMBs offering commercial sex; approximately six arrests).

ADDITIONAL ISSUES & TOPICS

San Mateo County Human Trafficking Initiative

Prior to 2018 there was no open forum for those involved in the response to trafficking in San Mateo County to regularly meet, share information, or receive training. In February 2018 the Program coordinators launched the Human Trafficking Initiative – HTI. The HTI is held the second Tuesday of each month (except December). The

Initiative is open to all who are interested or involved in the response to trafficking. The creation of the HTI has already paid dividends that have directly assisted victims of trafficking, increased the community's knowledge of human trafficking, and allowed a wide variety of organizations and individuals to work collaboratively against trafficking in San Mateo County. Currently over 200 individuals are on the HTI Contact List.

National Human Trafficking Hotline

Contact with the National Human Trafficking Hotline was re-established in March 2018, updating the Hotline's protocol on how to notify San Mateo County when trafficking tips are received by the Hotline. Since April 2018 six trafficking tips have been received; all were investigated or are in the process of investigation. None of the tips received by the Human Trafficking Program led to identification of victims or arrests of traffickers.

The Human Trafficking Hotline also reports directly to Rape Trauma Services without notifying the Program Coordinators when callers request anonymity and do not want law enforcement involved. In 2018 RTS received 14 calls regarding human trafficking; at least two of these calls were from the Hotline. The 14 callers all chose to remain anonymous and did not want to engage in RTS Services.

CSEC Working Group & CSEC MOU Protocol Update

Since February 2018 Coordinators have worked as part of the County's CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) Steering Committee and CSEC Work Group to update the CSEC MOU Protocol which should be completed by the end of February 2019 and participate in the development of the various agencies' response to child sex trafficking.

Training

Victims of human trafficking are not discovered only by law enforcement. Many agencies and NGO's discover human trafficking victims in the course of providing non-specific services. An understanding of the crime of human trafficking, the indicators of human trafficking, and the complex trauma that victims suffer, increases the likelihood that victims will receive the services that they need to heal and recover from their trauma. Many agencies and NGO's have at one time offered human trafficking training to their front-line staff, but rarely does training occur on a consistent basis. Coordinators will explore scheduling regular trainings that will be available to service providers in the county.

Identifying and Tracking Victims

During 2018, Coordinators conducted an assessment of county service providers to determine an estimate of the number of HT victims served in the past 3 years. Coordinators discovered that many service providers do not systematically assess for human trafficking, or report human trafficking when a victim identifies herself, so consistent and reliable tracking of victims does not exist. Coordinators will explore a method for more accurately capturing the number of victims identified across the various service providers in the county.

Child and Family Services (CFS) currently track of CSEC youth who are residents of San Mateo County. In late 2018, CFS adopted use of the CSE-IT tool, an evidence-based observation tool to identify CSEC youth. As of December 2018, CFS has positively identified 9 CSEC youth who are residents of San Mateo County, and 36 other children are on the “watch list.” These numbers do not include children at risk for CSEC who are known to Juvenile Probation and the County Office of Education.

Prosecution of Cases

In 2018 the District Attorney’s Office charged three different cases related to human trafficking. Two cases (involving three defendants) ended with the defendants pleading guilty to various charges; two of the defendants were sentenced to state prison. The third case is pending trial.

In September the California Attorney General’s Office arrested and charged four family members with 59 criminal counts, including human trafficking and other labor-related charges. The defendants allegedly committed the crimes while operating adult residential care facilities in Daly City, South San Francisco and Pacifica, and a childcare facility in Daly City.

Service Provider Networking

Coordinators have organized meetings with numerous agencies and NGO’s, in-county and out of county, to meet staff, learn about the services provided, clientele served, assessment procedures, and capacities and contacts in order to understand service gaps and assist victims in navigating the various services that are available.

Regional Efforts

Both coordinators represent San Mateo County at regional events whenever possible. During 2018 coordinators attended or presented at a wide variety of events including: Western States Information Network (WSIN) Human Trafficking Symposium (Sacramento); United State Attorney’s Office Human Trafficking Summit (San Francisco); Just Sex Trafficking Conference (San Diego); San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking Conference (San Francisco); Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition Award Night (San Francisco); National Criminal Justice Training Center’s MDT Response to Child Sex Trafficking (San Diego); Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force’s, Human Trafficking Victim Advocacy Training (Sacramento); Judicial Council of California’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts’ Collaborating on Behalf of Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (San Diego).

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