Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council

Within SB 72, legislators mandated the creation of a Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council. The Council will be conducting a survey to gather information on human trafficking programs and services across the state. The resulting data will allow for improved coordination of state dollars allocated for human trafficking prevention efforts and the identification of gaps in services throughout Texas. The Council will also create and implement a five-year strategic plan for preventing human trafficking.

Office of the Attorney General of Texas Human Trafficking and Transnational/Organized Crime Section

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) launched its new Citywide Immersive Training initiative in Beaumont in June 2019. The Citywide Immersive Training seeks to unite Texans in the fight against human trafficking by recognizing and remediying inconsistent language, training the public on red flags of trafficking, and promoting information on victim resources.

This unique training equips an entire city with a common knowledge base, language, and set of tools in the fight against trafficking while linking schools, law enforcement, medical providers, child protective services, attorneys, the hospitality industry, and the general public.

In Beaumont, the training reached more than 600 people over the course of three days through both in-person trainings and a screening of "Be The One in the Fight Against Human Trafficking."

Kim Duchamp, Special Crimes Chief at the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office, expressed that her community is now safer and better prepared to respond to human trafficking following the training. "Not only have we seen reports of trafficking increase, but there is also a greater understanding by relevant agencies on how to respond to these cases."

The fourth meeting of the Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council, (Pictured L to R) Back row: Mark Penley, Office of the Attorney General of Texas (OAG); Jeffery Williams, Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS); Wynn Reynolds, DPS; Grahame Jones, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD); and Demetrie Mitchell, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Middle row: Brian Cottle, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR); Courtney Arbour, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC); Andrea Sparks, Office of the Texas Governor (OOG); and Ronald Swenson, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC). Front row: Brandi Soules, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC); Emily Landon, OAG; and Tiffany Lee, OAG.

The four training events will be held in Brownwood, Austin, Denton, and Austin.

Register or learn more:
- NCMEC child exploitation: bit.ly/NCMEC-training
- Collective Liberty: bit.ly/CL-contact
- bit.ly/NCMEC-training

Contact Sarah Mouser at sarah.mouser@love146.org.
Allies Against Slavery
Awarded Grant from the Office of the Texas Governor to Build Statewide Data Platform

Thanks to a grant awarded by the Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) at the Office of the Texas Governor, Allies Against Slavery is launching a data initiative to prevent exploitation and protect human trafficking survivors.

AUSTIN, Texas – The new Lighthouse Data Initiative analyzes and visualizes human trafficking data across the state by collating data from local, regional, and national sources.

The initiative’s goal is to help Texas build the collective intelligence necessary for effective, data-driven solutions to human trafficking.

“We will use all of the tools available, including cutting edge data and technology, to stop human traffickers and identify ways to better serve victims,” said Governor Greg Abbott.

“Lighthouse will help our state increase victim identification, provide the best survivor services, inform strategic planning, and craft policy,” said John Nehme, CEO of Allies Against Slavery. “Traffickers are using technology to exploit, but we can use it for good.”

READ PRESS RELEASE: bit.ly/AAS-Lighthouse

Successful Prosecutions

198 years

In December 2019, the McLennan County DA’s office successfully prosecuted State v. Clyde Vanterpool, a Trafficking of Persons case in McLennan County that was investigated by the Waco Police Department. The jury returned a verdict of guilt and sentenced Vanterpool to 198 years in prison.

READ MORE: bit.ly/Waco-Vanterpool

99 years

In August 2019, the OAG assisted the Navarro County DA in successfully prosecuting State v. Corey Henderson, a Continuous Trafficking of Persons case in Navarro County. The jury returned a verdict of guilt and sentenced Henderson to 99 years in prison.

READ MORE: bit.ly/OAG-Henderson
Legislative Updates

Numerous bills related to human trafficking were passed by the 86th Texas Legislature:

- SB 20 consists of recommendations made by the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force including strengthening prosecution and attacking demand. READ BILL: bit.ly/TX-SB20
- SB 72 creates the Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council. READ BILL: bit.ly/TX-SB72
- HB 3800 creates a statewide database to track human trafficking cases from law enforcement agencies and district and county attorneys' offices. READ BILL: bit.ly/TX-HB3800

Texas Department of State Health Services

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DHS) developed and implemented trainings, best practices, and a new Human Trafficking Work Group in 2019 as part of their commitment to fight human trafficking. The DSHS Regional Human Trafficking Work Group connects at least one point of contact in each of their eight Public Health Regions with an assigned central office coordinator to facilitate the ease and clarity of communication and trafficking initiatives.

DHS’s trainings include Somebody’s Child, Hiding in Plain Sight: Human Trafficking and Health Care, Sex Trafficking & HIV, and Sex Trafficking and Opioids. DSHS also collaborated with stakeholders to plan and present at conferences across the state of Texas.

Developments in best practices include DSHS’s implementation of human trafficking screening questions in regional clinics across the state, and development of internal regional policies and procedures regarding human trafficking identification and reporting. These internal developments have already led to the identification of three high risk/potential situations.

DSHS also formed a partnership in Midland with Wesley Nurse Program, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.’s largest geographic outreach program, whose professional nurses serve the community without regard to denomination to improve health and wellness.

Children At Risk

In 2019, Children at Risk recruited three law fellows to raise awareness about human trafficking in the Harris County Latino community. The fellows made nearly 1,000 contacts and trained approximately 500 community members through a series of Spanish-language presentations tailored for their community.

Children at Risk collected the following survey responses from the participants:

- 48% had heard of human trafficking prior to Children At Risk’s training
- 84% of respondents’ awareness of human trafficking “considerably or greatly improved” after training
- 81% of the respondents “probably or definitely would” recommend the training to others
- 68% “definitely would” report human trafficking to the police if they encountered it after training
- 62% “definitely would” report human trafficking to Polaris’ National Human Trafficking Hotline if they encountered it after training

A full report of the trainings will be available online at www.childrenatrisk.org
The Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition (HOTHTC) is headquartered in Waco, Texas, and serves McLennan, Bosque, Freestone, Limestone, Falls, and Hill counties.

Over the past year, the work of the Prevention Subcommittee has included education in rural communities, high-risk student education, front-line professional training for school personnel and medical staff, and labor trafficking awareness.

This subcommittee produces free annual conferences on rural human trafficking and promotes access to human trafficking education and services in Central Texas schools.

On February 21, 2020, the Coalition will host its third annual conference, Human Trafficking: A Rural Perspective, at the Crossbeck Convention Center. TCOLE credit will be provided and CEUs and CNEs are pending. Registration will open in early 2020, and you can remain updated by contacting the Coalition.

Unbound Waco, a member agency of the HOTHTC Prevention Subcommittee, has received funds from the Office of the Texas Governor to expand prevention education in schools.

In the past two years, more than 11,500 Central Texas youth and 2,000 school personnel have been educated using Unbound’s “Keeping Students Safe” program. This curriculum is available in Fort Worth, Waco, Bryan/College Station, and Houston.

If you are interested in becoming a licensed facilitator, please contact Jessica Sykora at jessica.sykora@unboundnow.org.

Survivor Leader Advisory Council
Laramie Gorbett, M.A.

It is an exciting time in the anti-trafficking movement, a time when we truly value collaboration and innovative partnerships. It is a time when we are taking inventory of strengths and what it is that fuels and sustains us to keep doing this work. I am constantly inspired by the strength and resiliency of Survivor Leaders in our movement and am happy to inform you of the formation of a Survivor Leader Advisory Council in partnership with the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) and the Office of the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team.

I am in the beginning stages of developing a group of professionals and subject matter experts with lived experience to help inform policy and make sure that our service providers continue to move forward in a survivor-centered and trauma-responsive way. The Survivor Leader Advisory Council is seeking diverse participants from across the state.

If you or someone you know would like more information about participating on the Survivor Leader Advisory Council, please contact me at lgorbett@taasa.org.

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

HB 2059 of the 86th Texas Legislature requires the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to approve training courses on human trafficking, including at least one that is free of charge. Post the list of approved trainings on the HHSC website, and update the list of approved trainings as necessary.

HHSC is developing a human trafficking training which will be offered to all health care practitioners free of charge. While practitioners will not need to comply with HB 2059 until September 1, 2020, HHSC anticipates publishing its training on the agency’s website by the summer of 2020.

HHSC is also developing standards to evaluate human trafficking trainings submitted by external entities. Interested parties may submit trainings for review once the standards have been approved for use. Please check back for updates on the implementation of the bill and email human trafficking@hhsc.state.tx.us if you have any questions.

Waco Police Department

Sgt. Jason Lundquist of Waco Police Department’s Crimes Against Children Unit received thanks from Texas A&M University’s Bush School of Government and Public Service for his digital forensics expertise in their research study, “Analysis of Digital Forensic Capabilities in Texas Law Enforcement Agencies.”

Additionally, Sgt. Lundquist has developed a course on digital and social media evidence that he has presented to multiple disciplines throughout Texas and various other states. Sgt. Lundquist is planning to teach his course several times throughout 2020 and is also available to present upon request.

The Waco Police Department collaborates with the Heart of Texas Human Trafficking Coalition and Unbound Waco. As part of this partnership, officers and members provided training to the Socorro Foundation in McAllen in both English and Spanish.

Upcoming Task Force meetings
February 5th
April 8th