

**STATEWIDE  
COUNCIL ON**



**HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING**

**F L O R I D A**



A N N U A L R E P O R T

**2022**



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Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, I am pleased to present the Council's 2022 Annual Report to Senate President Wilton Simpson, President Designate Kathleen Passidomo, House Speaker Chris Sprowls, and Speaker Designate Paul Renner. As mandated by the Florida Legislature, this Annual Report provides an update on the Council's ongoing work.

This year, our Council has worked diligently to expand proactive partnerships between state agencies and stakeholders such as task forces, coalitions, commissions, service providers, and businesses. Through the 100 Percent Club, we have expanded education and ensured that resources are more widely available. Human traffickers are constantly looking for new angles and tactics to exploit victims and advance their illicit trade. We must also update and improve how we target and stop traffickers.

Collaboration is key. Our Council members have worked to fulfill the mission of coordinating Florida's response to fight all forms of human trafficking and to support victims. In May, representatives from each of Florida's anti-human trafficking task forces and coalitions met in person for the first time in one room. This unique opportunity allowed law enforcement and service providers to share best practices, learn from one another, and strengthen the networks within the communities they serve.

Partnership continues in the Council's annual Human Trafficking Summit. With the introduction of a virtual format, the Human Trafficking Summit has expanded its reach to a national level, bringing potentially life-saving content to viewers beyond Florida. Each year, the Summit creates educational opportunities that allow Florida to continue working to protect victims, prevent trafficking, and prosecute traffickers.

As Attorney General, I am proud that Florida continues to serve as a national leader in human trafficking response. The Statewide Council on Human Trafficking recognizes the continued support and collaboration of our state legislature and Governor Ron DeSantis. Together, we can make Florida a zero-tolerance state for human trafficking.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley Moody". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ashley Moody  
Attorney General

## OVERVIEW



### 2022 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Attorney General Ashley Moody, *Chair*  
Secretary Shevaun Harris, *Florida Department of Children and Families, Vice Chair*  
Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo, *Florida Department of Health*  
Secretary Simone Marsteller, *Florida Agency for Health Care Administration*  
Commissioner Mark Glass, *Florida Department of Law Enforcement*  
Secretary Eric Hall, *Florida Department of Juvenile Justice*  
Commissioner Manny Diaz, Jr., *Florida Department of Education*  
Senator Ileana Garcia  
Representative Jackie Toledo  
Sheriff Chad Chronister, *Hillsborough County*  
State Attorney Amira Fox, *20th Judicial Circuit*  
Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez  
Terry Coonan, *Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights*  
Jeanette Rubio  
Jennifer Collins

### MISSION

The mission of the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking is to enhance the development and coordination of state and local law enforcement and social services responses to fight all forms of human trafficking and to support victims.

### FLORIDA STATUTE 16.617

The Statewide Council was created through legislation passed and signed into law in 2014. The 15-member Council, chaired by the Attorney General, builds on existing state and local partnerships working to combat human trafficking. Members include law enforcement officers, prosecutors, legislators, as well as experts in the fields of health, education, and social services. The Council meets at least four times a year.

### ANNUAL REPORT

Per statute, by October 31st of each year, the Council shall submit a report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives summarizing the accomplishments of the Council during the preceding fiscal year and making recommendations for a comprehensive, strategic approach to combat human trafficking.

## **COUNCIL DUTIES**

- Develop recommendations for comprehensive programs and services including recommendations for certification of safe houses and safe foster homes;
- Make recommendations for apprehending and prosecuting traffickers and enhancing coordination of responses;
- Hold an annual statewide policy summit with an institution of higher learning;
- Work with the Department of Children and Families to create and maintain an inventory of human trafficking programs and services in our state; and
- Develop overall policy recommendations.

## **WEBPAGE FOR THE COUNCIL**

Information about the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking can be found on the Attorney General's official website: [myfloridalegal.com/humantraffickingcouncil](https://myfloridalegal.com/humantraffickingcouncil)

## **COMMITTEES**

The Council formed four working committees to address the following: (i) awareness; (ii) law enforcement tools; (iii) prosecution; and (iv) victim safety and recovery. Committee responsibilities are broken down as follows:

### **Services and Resources Committee**

*Chaired by Secretary Shevaun Harris, Department of Children and Families*  
This committee examines enhancement of victim safety and recovery.

### **Criminal Justice Committee**

*Chaired by Sheriff Chad Chronister, Hillsborough County Sheriff*  
This committee explores methods of enhancing law enforcement tools, resources, and training.

### **Legislative and Special Initiatives Committee**

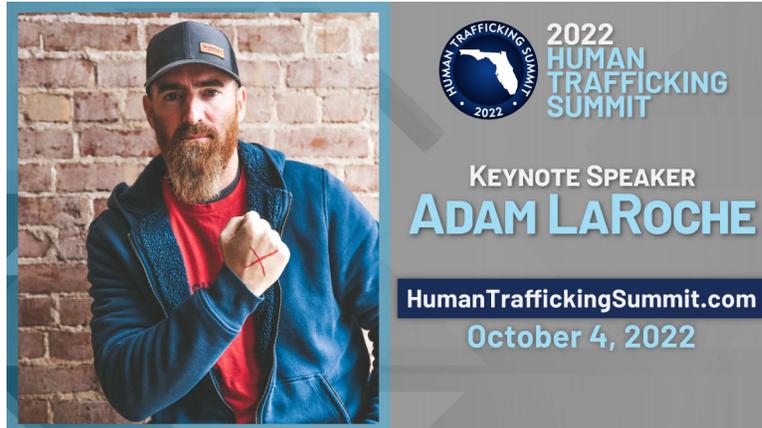
*Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez*  
This committee addresses legislative priorities and special initiatives such as increasing public awareness of human trafficking.

### **Education and Awareness Committee**

*Chaired by Jennifer Collins*  
This committee explores projects to spread awareness and educate the public about human trafficking and how to report it.

## SUMMIT

The Council is required to hold an annual statewide policy summit in conjunction with an institution of higher learning in Florida. The 2022 Human Trafficking Summit was held virtually for the third year in a row. The Summit launched on October 18, 2022 and will continue to be available for six months.



Attorney General Ashley Moody announced Adam LaRoche as the keynote speaker for the virtual 2022 Annual Human Trafficking Summit. A former Major League Baseball player, LaRoche is now an active and outspoken advocate for ending human trafficking. He currently serves as a task force officer with Homeland Security Investigations and is a Deputy Sheriff with the Bourbon County Sheriff's Office in Kansas. LaRoche gave the keynote address during the launch of the Summit. The Summit included an opening address from Attorney General Moody and more than 15 hours of presentations by speakers from across Florida and the nation.

An awards ceremony presented by Attorney General Ashley Moody, DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris, and DJJ Secretary Eric Hall also honored award recipients for the 2022 Human Trafficking Summit.

The following awards were presented to this year's award recipients:

- Survivor Advocate of the Year—Savannah Parvu;
- Community Advocate of the Year—Katie O'Rourke;
- Prosecutor of the Year—Lisa Thelwell;
- Law Enforcement Official of the Year—Special Agent Jessica Hurak;
- DJJ Human Trafficking Advocate of the Year—James Garner; and
- DCF Human Trafficking Investigator of the Year—Shanta Grant Rouse.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS



### SERVICES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

#### General Overview of Activities This Year

The Services and Resources Committee is charged with enhancing victim/survivor safety and recovery. The committee is chaired by Department of Children and Families Secretary Shevaun Harris and includes the following members: Secretary Simone Marsteller (Agency for Health Care Administration), Florida Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo (Department of Health), and Secretary Eric Hall (Department of Juvenile Justice).

In January 2022, the first committee meeting was held and focused on the intersections of substance abuse and human trafficking along with ways to increase collaboration between agencies to strengthen rehabilitative and preventive care. Presentations included an overview of the role substance abuse and dependency play in making people vulnerable for exploitation, ways chemical dependency is used to control victims, survivors' use of substances to cope with past and present trauma, and various programs available to survivors of human trafficking in Florida. The committee acknowledged the need for more wrap-around, trauma-informed substance abuse programs available for adult survivors and the need for more residential substance abuse treatment programs for minors. In follow-up to the meeting, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) engaged representatives from its Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Domestic Violence program offices to work on a joint response to the need for enhanced services.

The second meeting of the year was held in May 2022 and focused on community efforts to provide support to families and caregivers of commercially sexually exploited (CSE) youth. The committee heard presentations from two programs serving CSE youth in both residential and community settings and about their work in building and maintaining engagements with survivors' caregivers. The committee also learned about a new pilot project facilitated by DCF between Images of Glory, Inc. and University of South Florida's team of researchers. The pilot aims to address a gap in services for families of trafficked youth. The committee was then briefed on the Department of Health's (DOH) efforts to strengthen the health care industry's response to human trafficking victimization by including anti-trafficking goals in its SFY 2022-2026 State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). Additionally, DCF's Human Trafficking Unit provided a report on the Statewide Conference of Florida Anti-Trafficking Task Forces and Coalitions that took place in Orlando in early May.

The August 2022 committee meeting was dedicated to the discussion of services available to adult survivors of trafficking and existing barriers in accessing those services. Presenters from across the state provided overviews of their programs which included outreach services, comprehensive case management, housing assistance, and residential programs. A

presentation by Justice Restoration Center highlighted the challenges trafficking survivors face while trying to get their criminal records expunged and how it affects their ability to find meaningful employment and housing. Members of the committee also discussed the handling of exemption requests for employment at their agencies.

In late Fall of 2022, the last committee meeting will take place and will focus on the process of aging out and stepping down from Safe Harbor residential homes.

Florida continues to be one of the leading states in the country in its response to the issue of human trafficking. As a result, we are frequently asked to co-create and co-present training sessions with the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center. Our providers and subject matter experts continue to serve as human trafficking subject matter experts for world-class organizations such as Kristi House, The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health. We also regularly provide technical assistance to other states.

### **Agency-Specific Updates**

Each of the agencies represented on the committee submitted a summary of their efforts to address the goals of this committee.



### ***Department of Children and Families***

In 2022, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) maintained its commitment to continuously improve the response in identifying and serving populations affected by human trafficking through numerous enhancement projects while maintaining the existing service array. We are laser-focused on improving interagency collaboration to solve gaps in service delivery for all survivors of trafficking.

The Department continues to hold regular training sessions for staff employed at residential homes for youth at-risk for human trafficking. Four additional in-person train-the-trainer sessions are currently scheduled across the state this Fall that will allow at-risk group homes to build capacity for in-house training. As of May 2022, there were 137 at-risk homes throughout Florida with a total capacity for 1,367 beds. DCF also launched a one-hour human trafficking training for foster parents – another important prevention measure that will benefit Florida children and families.

Throughout 2022, DCF served as a training resource for multiple stakeholder groups and facilitated these trainings with several other organizations including but not limited to: child welfare, legal, law enforcement, medical professionals, hospitality industry, Catholic Charities, and school personnel. These training included basic human trafficking awareness for our community partners, as well as specialized trainings for various professionals, and legislatively mandated certification trainings for child protective investigators and dependency case managers.

In January 2021, DCF partnered with Florida State University to convene a workgroup focused on addressing the safety and treatment needs of verified CSE youth who frequently go missing from care with subsequent returns to sexual exploitation. It is of vital importance to respond appropriately to the needs of these survivors by providing the right services at the right time. There is a concerning number of sex trafficked youths who persistently reject services, and then return repeatedly to life-threatening commercial sexual exploitation. In many cases, service providers are unable to successfully engage these children in services due to the very short period these children spend with providers in between runaway episodes. The work group has had presentations from experts in diverse disciplines and is now in the process of formulating recommendations for Florida policymakers, which will be forthcoming.

The Department's Human Trafficking Unit is also working on implementation and evaluation of a new type of intervention for families of CSE youth. Created by clinical staff of Images of Glory (IOG), a trafficking safe house based in Orlando, Florida, the evaluation research project is being carried out by the USF Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Risk to Resilience Research Lab. This program will address the challenges of family reunification. Its overall goals include providing the child with strong familial support, bringing to light the child's experiences, helping the child and parents come to terms with human trafficking experiences, and preparing the child and family for integration into a post-trafficking lifestyle. The program details are being disseminated to service providers across the state and the first phase of the project began in late August of this year.

During State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021-22, the number of available safe houses serving survivors of human trafficking decreased from eight to five as two homes for females and one home serving males permanently closed. Two of those homes switched to providing services via outreach teams and one home was forced to close due to not being able to extend their land lease. As a result, the number of safe home beds decreased from 56 to 31 as of July 2022. There is not a waiting list for youth awaiting a safe home placement. Additionally, the Department has received interest from providers in North and Southwest Florida in expanding safe home capacity and hopes to have additional beds available over the next year.

Also noteworthy is the development of a transitional housing program that will be opening in the Suncoast region and will specifically serve dependent CSE youth over the age of 18. While there are programs in the state that provide residential transitional housing for adult females, this would be the first home where survivors transition into adult independent living within the same provider of therapeutic services and have the necessary level of support and care.

As the Department continues to maximize opportunities to support survivors of human trafficking, collaboration with other state agencies and behavioral health providers to build service capacity will be critical as well as making improvements to the Human Trafficking Screening Tool to improve identification of potential victims.



## *Agency for Health Care Administration*

Having endured severe trauma and physical abuse, human trafficking survivors have complex needs. Behavioral health treatment can help survivors recover from their experienced trauma by reducing their symptoms and restoring their emotional and psychological capacity to function in the community. The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) supports the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in its efforts to help the survivors of human trafficking through Florida Medicaid’s behavioral health system. Beneficiaries can receive services across multiple levels from community-based care lead agencies to inpatient settings delivered as a continuum of care. Florida Medicaid’s behavioral health services, beginning with intake and assessment, are designed to identify at-risk individuals and provide treatment across all levels of severity.

Florida Medicaid, as the largest health insurer in the state, provides a comprehensive array of services to all ages that include the following:

- Behavioral health assessments;
- Behavioral health individual, family, and group therapy;
- Community support services such as psychosocial rehabilitation and clubhouse;
- Behavioral health-related medical services;
- Inpatient hospitalizations; and
- Therapeutic group care homes.

Targeted case management is a specialty service that provides detailed assessment followed by individualized care to identify service needs and coordinate service access for each recipient. Every effort is made to assist the individual recover in the least restrictive environment possible and services are available in homes, including group and foster care settings, and schools.

AHCA worked with DCF to align Medicaid funding to support medical services in Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs). A QRTP provides a trauma-informed model of care in a safe residential setting designed to address the needs, including clinical needs, of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances. This trauma-informed care is available 24-hours, seven days a week to individuals under 21 years old, including victims of human trafficking. The Agency is also assisting DCF to align an array of evidence-based benefits to Medicaid-funded services available to all Medicaid members.

Additional behavioral health services are available through Florida Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) plans. These services are available as expanded benefits and “in lieu of” services and include:

- Behavioral health intensive outpatient treatment;
- Outpatient substance abuse detoxification;
- Housing assistance;
- Crisis stabilization units;
- Community-based wraparound services;
- Mental health partial hospitalization; and
- Mobile response interventions.

Florida Medicaid plays a critical role in providing a continuum of behavioral health care to support survivors of human trafficking through interagency collaboration. AHCA and SMMC health plans continue to work with DCF and the managing entities to integrate and coordinate care for these vulnerable members.



## *Department of Health*

### **2022-2026 State Health Improvement Plan**

Florida Department of Health is prioritizing human trafficking prevention by leveraging cross-sector partnerships through statewide strategic planning efforts. Through the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), partners work together to build infrastructure, increase capacity, and provide awareness, education, and tools to community members.

The Florida SHIP sets goals for Florida's public health system, which includes a range of stakeholders, such as state and local government agencies, health care providers, employers, community groups, universities and schools, non-profit organizations, and advocacy groups.

In the 2022-2026 SHIP, human trafficking is a state-level objective for the first time. The 2022-2026 SHIP has two objectives pertaining to trafficking efforts under the Goal 3 Injury, Safety, and Violence Priority Area Workgroup (PAW) to prevent or reduce injuries in vulnerable populations. There is a PAW for each of the seven priority areas included in the 2022-2026 SHIP. Each PAW is led by two or more chairs, who convene their respective PAWs throughout the duration of the SHIP. Partners from across state agencies and local communities, including county health departments, along with trafficking coalitions, victim-serving organizations and local leaders, serve on the Injury, Safety and Violence PAW to implement activities for the following objectives:

- ISV 3.1 – By December 31, 2026, increase the ratio of total human trafficking reports to verified human trafficking cases for those 18 years of age and under that are reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline from 4.1 (2021) to 4.5; and
- ISV 3.2 – By December 31, 2026, increase the number of Community Health Improvement Plan partnerships who have human trafficking strategic objectives in the CHIPs from 5 (2022) to 67.

The SHIP Steering Committee provides leadership and oversight of the state health improvement planning process. During the SHIP development phase, the Steering Committee

ensured that health issues affecting Floridians were captured and oversaw the development of comprehensive and measurable objectives that outline the path forward for enhancing the health of all Floridians. During the implementation phase of the SHIP, the steering committee meets to review and revise the SHIP and advocate for SHIP activities both in their respective organizations and across the state of Florida.

Additionally, each of Florida's 67 county health departments participate in the health improvement planning process at the community level by facilitating a community health assessment and community health improvement plan. Learn more about the Florida State Health Improvement Plan and Priority Area Workgroups at [floridaship.org](https://floridaship.org)



## *Department of Juvenile Justice*

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) has continually made strides in the statewide efforts to prevent human trafficking and to intervene with youth who have potentially experienced trafficking.

One of the core components of FDJJ's human trafficking intervention is the usage of the Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST), a screening instrument developed in collaboration with DCF and used in conjunction with DCF. During the state FY 2021-22, FDJJ administered 9,129 full HTSTs to 4,816 individual youth. Of the full HTSTs administered, 66% were administered to male youth and 33% were administered to female youth.

FDJJ is dedicated to further data collection for future evaluation of the screening tool as recommended by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) and to better understand the scope of trafficking in Florida and the prevalence of trafficked youth within the delinquency system.

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT**

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The Criminal Justice Committee is charged with exploring methods of enhancing law enforcement tools, resources, and training. This committee is chaired by Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister and includes the following members: Attorney General Ashley Moody, State Attorney of the 20th Circuit Amira Fox, and Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Mark Glass. The committee met on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, and is tentatively scheduled to meet prior to the next full Council meeting in November.

At the meeting on March 23, 2022, the committee received a presentation from Mrs. Crystal Clark, Chief Communications Officer for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. The presentation focused on a human trafficking awareness media toolkit designed specifically for Florida law enforcement. The toolkit raises awareness of human trafficking among the public by combining efforts at the local and national levels and can be implemented by any Florida law enforcement agency. Examples include:

- Infographics and quick facts about human trafficking posted on the law enforcement agency's social media platform;
- Using hashtags and posting images of Florida law enforcement showing support for local and national human trafficking awareness efforts such as #WeWearBlueBecause and #WearBlueDay on January 11th for National Human Trafficking Awareness Day;
- Law enforcement operations focused on human trafficking awareness – similar to *Click It or Ticket* – which are repeated every year during January for National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month;
- Law enforcement and Florida school districts combining efforts to produce public service announcements about the dangers of human trafficking which are played during school announcements; and
- Local law enforcement human trafficking operations publicized on social media and via local, state, and national news media.

The main benefit of an awareness campaign that is utilized by Florida law enforcement statewide is the ability to reach millions of people with a cohesive message that delivers the same information (statistics, call to action, etc.). Residents are educated on how to spot and report human trafficking, leading to positive change.

The committee continues to work in the furtherance of its goal to enhance law enforcement tools, resources, and training.



### *Office of Statewide Prosecution*

The Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution handles multi-circuit prosecutions of human trafficking cases in Florida. The Office of Statewide Prosecution has a zero-tolerance policy for human trafficking crimes. From January 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022, this office has accomplished the following in the effort to combat human trafficking:

- 15 ongoing investigations are being handled involving a total of 38 targets;
- 28 charges have been filed against 8 defendants following thorough investigations; and
- 12 defendants have been sentenced while 34 active cases involving 104 targets are ongoing.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES COMMITTEE REPORT**

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The Legislative and Special Initiatives (LSI) Committee is charged with addressing legislative priorities and special initiatives to combat human trafficking in the state of Florida. The committee is chaired by Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez and includes Senator Ileana Garcia, Representative Jackie Toledo, and Terry Coonan of Florida State University.

The Florida Legislature has been a committed partner in the effort to combat human trafficking and protect vulnerable Floridians in our state. During the 2022 Legislative

Session, the Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 615. HB 615 requires the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking to assess the frequency and extent to which social media platforms facilitate human trafficking in Florida and make recommendations on how to end or reduce social media platforms from being used for human trafficking. The bill also requires the direct-support organization of the Council, namely the Florida Alliance to End Human Trafficking, to develop training for fire safety inspectors to help them identify and report human trafficking. Lastly, HB 615 requires foster parents and all residential child-caring or child placement agency staff to complete human trafficking training. It also requires foster parents to receive the training before licensure renewal.

The Legislature also passed Senate Bill (SB) 898. SB 898, among other things, prohibits public lodging establishments from offering an hourly rate. This prohibition is intended, in part, to curb human trafficking and disincentivize perpetrators from using Florida public lodging establishments to commit this heinous crime. HB 615 and SB 898 were signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis.

During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature also allocated funding for state agencies and organizations that support victims of human trafficking. These items were approved by Governor DeSantis. The 2022-23 budget includes more than \$12.2 million in funding for services to individuals who are victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. This funding will ensure therapeutic services for victims of human trafficking and provide for the awareness and education on the dangers of human trafficking. Additionally, this funding will also ensure that individuals receive counseling, case management, and support to secure stable housing and employment. The funding includes:

- \$3,000,000 for Human Trafficking Resources in DCF's Base Budget;
- \$250,000 for Camillus House Human Trafficking Recovery Program;
- \$587,706 for Devereux – Services for Sexually Exploited Youth;
- \$500,000 for One More Child Services for Human Trafficking Prevention and Recovery;
- \$700,000 for Place of Hope – Child Welfare Services;
- \$700,000 for Bridging Freedom Program;
- \$500,000 for Florida Alliance to End Human Trafficking – Awareness Training;
- \$306,000 for Nancy J. Cotterman Crisis Intervention Programs;
- \$435,000 for NISSI Short-term Immediate Care Facility and Response Team for Victims of Human Trafficking;
- \$1,000,000 for Selah Freedom Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Victims Programs and Services;
- \$500,000 for NO MORE Foundation – Human Trafficking Victims Capacity Expansion in Tampa Bay;
- \$1,000,000 for Voices for Florida – Open Doors Outreach;
- \$500,000 for United Way of Pasco County – Transitional Housing for Survivors of Human Trafficking;
- \$272,565 for Human Trafficking Resources in the Division of Hotels and Restaurants; and
- \$2,000,000 for Safer Smarter Schools – Abuse and Human Trafficking.

Throughout 2022, the Legislative and Special Initiatives Committee focused on ways to raise public awareness and reduce incidences of human trafficking statewide. These goals were:

- Work with the Florida Legislature to develop appropriate protections for human trafficking advocates;
- Work with the Florida Legislature to ensure continued funding for the ongoing evaluation of programs and tools in the state of Florida, to transform promising programmatic practices into evidence-based responses;
- Identify strategic partnership opportunities to develop and distribute a comprehensive awareness campaign that targets the public, victims, and those of at-risk victimization that would be utilized uniformly across state agencies;
- Work with the Florida Legislature and appropriate state agencies to determine licensing and structural guidelines for safe houses serving adult victims;
- Require a staff self-care component for all programs funded or certified by the state of Florida;
- Work with the Florida Bar to promote and expand the existing pro-bono human trafficking attorney network;
- Work with the Florida Legislature and appropriate state agencies to determine how to require any entity receiving state dollars for the treatment or placement of CSEC youth to indicate program evaluation through a state university; and
- Work with the Florida Legislature and appropriate state agencies to determine how employees of specific state agencies and their contractors can receive training to recognize signs of sexual exploitation victimization.

In January, the Legislative and Special Initiative Committee heard from Eduardo Verastegui, a renowned Mexican actor, film director, and advocate in the fight against human trafficking. Mr. Verastegui produced and starred in a movie, *Sound of Freedom*, that highlights the brutal underworld of child trafficking. The movie plays a critical role in the global movement to raise awareness on the ills of child trafficking and serves as a tool to help rescue vulnerable youth. He has also launched an initiative that encourages each state, through their respective attorneys general, to adopt a state in Mexico and enter into bilateral agreements to address the identification, prevention, and fight against the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.

In May, the committee welcomed Christopher Landau, former United States Ambassador to Mexico. Mr. Landau provided insight about the unlawful migratory flows at the U.S. southern border and how it exacerbates labor trafficking, trafficking of minors, and commercial sexual exploitation. There is a troubling market for human trafficking, and the crossings at the border are oftentimes led with the help and under the auspices of illegal enterprises and criminal organizations that thrive from human trafficking and human smuggling. Florida cannot turn a blind eye to lawlessness and should continue to focus on what can be done to combat this illicit enterprise.

Later in the year, the committee heard from Kevin Metcalf, the founder and chief executive officer of the National Child Protection Task Force, and Dr. Roza Pati, the founder and director of the John J. Brunetti Human Trafficking Academy at St. Thomas University College of Law. Mr. Metcalf's organization has been able to rescue missing and exploited children and identify perpetrators around the country and the world with the help of their experts. They

use specific strategies, investigative expertise, training, and resources in their fight against human trafficking and empower law enforcement agencies so they can also rescue children. Dr. Pati highlighted the work of the Brunetti Human Trafficking Academy and their annual summit which focused on the relationship between migration and human trafficking and tracing the root causes of human trafficking while seeking solutions.

Throughout the year, members of the committee spearheaded several initiatives to raise awareness on human trafficking. Committee members joined Attorney General Ashley Moody to launch a new initiative, the 100 Percent Club, which encourages Florida businesses to ensure that their employees receive human trafficking training.

Among other things, Chair Nuñez has worked closely with public and private sector partners, and state agencies, including the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Florida Department of Health, and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, to raise awareness, highlight their services, develop new ideas, and understand the role that each of these partners play in this critical mission to end human trafficking. Mr. Coonan hosted a human trafficking meeting with representatives from our Florida anti-trafficking task forces and coalitions to share accomplishments, promising practices, and innovative ideas as we continue to chisel away at this crime. Representative Toledo held press conferences to raise awareness and along with Senator Garcia, spearheaded legislation to combat this crime.

The Legislative and Special Initiatives Committee stands ready to continue working alongside General Moody and the Council. The committee is eager to continue tackling creative and innovative approaches to end this horrible scourge.

## **EDUCATION AND AWARENESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Education and Awareness Committee is charged with exploring projects to increase awareness and educate the public about human trafficking and how to report it. The Education and Awareness Committee includes the following members: Chair Jennifer Collins, Commissioner Manny Diaz, Jr., Professor Terry Coonan, and Jeanette Rubio.

The Education and Awareness Committee is focusing on two main initiatives. In January, Attorney General Moody announced the creation of the 100 Percent Club which recognizes Florida businesses that have trained their employees through a human trafficking educational program. The Education and Awareness Committee is committed to finding ways to expand participation in this program in both public and private sectors. These efforts include working with the Florida Chamber of Commerce to encourage businesses to apply for the 100 Percent Club and complete the training.

Additionally, the committee is focused on increasing participation in Florida's Annual Human Trafficking Summit. The Florida Human Trafficking Summit has been presented in an online format for the past three years. Participants can view at their own convenience and have the opportunity to view all of the individual sessions. These efforts include communicating links to school administrators and teachers in every Florida county.

## FLORIDA ALLIANCE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING, INC.

The Florida Alliance to End Human Trafficking (incorporated as End Human Trafficking, Inc.) is a nonprofit organization created by the Florida Legislature in 2019 to provide funding, support, and assistance to the statewide effort to end human trafficking.



### Board of Directors

Senator Ellyn Bogdanoff, *Becker, Chair*  
Sara Mahoney, *U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking, Vice Chair*  
Savannah Parvu, *Survivor Leader/Speaker, Treasurer*  
Dr. Philip Toal, *Aspire Health Partners, Secretary*  
Toni Azinger, *Philanthropist*  
Allison Kinney, *HCA Healthcare*  
Graci McGillicuddy, *Philanthropist*  
Matt Mohler, *Florida Power & Light Company*  
Representative Toby Overdorf, *Florida House of Representatives*  
Special Agent in Charge Shane Pollard, *Florida Department of Law Enforcement*  
Stephanie Smith  
Commissioner Kathryn Starkey, *Pasco County Commission*  
Retired Corporal Alan Wilkett, *Pasco County Sheriff's Office*

### Executive Director

Erin Collins

### Director of Special Projects

Robyn Blank

Since its last annual report, the Florida Alliance to End Human Trafficking held nine meetings of its Board of Directors, promoted its awareness and education course for industries, and hosted its first fundraising event.

Other highlights include:

- To date, 9,506 individuals have completed the training course from various industries: including hotel, motel, vacation rentals, trucking and logistics, property management, service providers, statewide associations, state/local government agencies, universities, real estate, and more;
- Hosted two training webinars on various topics including *From Text Messages to Trafficking: A Conversation on Grooming and the Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation* and *No Reservations: The Importance of the Hospitality Industry in the Fight Against Human Trafficking*;
- Approved training for continuing legal education (CLE) by The Florida Bar;
- Received requests for nearly 30,000 human trafficking awareness materials to be distributed to various businesses across the state;
- Provided awareness and educational presentations to fifteen organizations;
- Hosted a legislative reception at the start of the 2022 Legislative Session;

- Advocated and received \$500,000 in grant funding from the Florida Legislature to update the organization’s awareness and training course into five different native languages;
- Received \$75,000 in grant funding from two foundations;
- Developed, launched, and marketed two statewide awareness campaigns;
- Promoted the Office of the Attorney General’s human trafficking awareness campaign – the 100 Percent Club – to over 150 companies/organizations;
- Marketed Speaker’s Bureau of experts and survivors for groups, private and government organizations, to access;
- Developed and received responses for a Request for Information for law enforcement about their current technology capabilities (and future needs) in efforts to combat human trafficking and offer future grant assistance; and
- Planned and hosted a fundraising event (A Night of Hope and Healing) in Tampa, Florida which raised nearly \$400,000.

During the upcoming year, the Florida Alliance to End Human Trafficking is focused on the following initiatives:

- Develop a grants program to support the technology needs of law enforcement in their proactive efforts against human trafficking;
- Hold successful fundraising events (A Night of Hope and Healing in December 2022 and Tee Off to End Human Trafficking in February 2023);
- Create, develop, and launch 2023 Human Trafficking Awareness Month social media campaign;
- Host a legislative reception during the 2023 Legislative Session;
- Build relationships with businesses, associations, and organizations to encourage the 100 Percent Club and the completion of the online training course; and
- Submit applications to various industries and professions for the online training course to serve as a continuing education option.

## COUNCIL MEMBER 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

### National Human Trafficking Prevention Month



Attorney General Ashley Moody presented a state resolution, recognizing January as Human Trafficking Prevention Month in Florida. The resolution was presented to a nonprofit organization, Created Women. Created Women operates out of Tampa, Florida and works to help and restore survivors of human trafficking.

## Attorney General Moody Launches New Training Initiative and Unveils New Tools in the Fight to End Human Trafficking



Attorney General Ashley Moody enlisted more soldiers and created new tools in the fight to end human trafficking in Florida. At a news conference in the Florida Capitol with Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez, the Florida Alliance to End Human Trafficking and business leaders, Attorney General Moody announced a new training initiative, the 100 Percent Club.

The 100 Percent Club is a partnership between companies/organizations and the Florida Attorney General's Office that recognizes businesses/organizations taking proactive steps to train employees on the signs of human trafficking. Through the program, quick reference resource cards are provided to trainees to help them effectively report suspicious activities. This could lead to thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of Floridians knowing how to appropriately handle a suspected human trafficking situation. When companies and organizations equip employees with the proper tools and training, employees become the eyes and ears throughout the state to spot suspicious activities.

The first members of Attorney General Moody's 100 Percent Club were PGT Innovations, one of the largest private-sector employers in Sarasota County, and Landstar Systems, Inc., one of the largest trucking companies in Florida. Both companies have committed to anti-trafficking training, and these partnerships bring Florida one step closer to all Commercial Driver License holders being equipped with proper human trafficking prevention training.

## Attorney General Moody Releases 2022 Online Safety Toolkit to Help Protect Children from Human Traffickers



Attorney General Ashley Moody released the 2022 Online Safety Toolkit, consisting of red flags, risk factors, and statistics relating to human trafficking recruitment via the internet. The *2020 Federal Human Trafficking Report* shows that 83% of active sex trafficking cases involved online solicitation. More than half of the children in the United States have smartphones by the age of 11, according to reports.

The 2022 Online Safety Toolkit is designed to help empower parents to teach their children about the dangers of human trafficking online and create effective online safety plans for safe internet use.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It's important that as parents we take steps to protect our children from online predators. To help with this daunting task, I am releasing my 2022 Online Safety Toolkit during Human Trafficking Prevention Month. I hope this comprehensive resource guide will better equip parents to protect children from human traffickers, or anyone else trying to use social media to harm them."

Attorney General Moody's 2022 Online Safety Toolkit contains pages of educational material aggregated from federal, state, and local public agencies, as well as private organizations, including the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Florida law enforcement, and technology companies.

### **Florida's Historic Capitol Illuminated Blue For National Human Trafficking Awareness Day**



Attorney General Ashley Moody illuminated Florida's Historic Capitol blue in recognition of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Blue is the international color of human trafficking awareness. Attorney General Moody is committed to ending human trafficking in Florida.

### **Florida's Truckers Roll On In Fight Against Human Trafficking**



In recognition of National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV), Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), Attorney General Ashley Moody, Florida Trucking Association, and Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) put a spotlight on human trafficking – a crime that often hides in plain sight – and the critical role Florida's trucking and law enforcement professionals play in combating it.

Florida's Highway Heroes initiative is an ongoing outreach campaign that was launched in October 2020 to train Florida's half a million licensed commercial drivers on how to identify and report suspected human trafficking. Florida's commercial drivers are uniquely positioned to make a difference and close loopholes to traffickers who look to use transportation systems for their personal gain. Since the launch of the initiative, FLHSMV has trained nearly 4,600 licensed commercial drivers and nearly 400 FHP members through TAT on how to identify and report suspected trafficking.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "We will not sit idly by as traffickers travel Florida preying on vulnerable people to fuel their illicit practice. We are putting the pedal to the metal to train as many drivers as possible to help steer us toward our goal of ensuring Florida is a zero-tolerance state for human trafficking. There is no one road map that will get us there. Every truck driver in Florida needs to learn the signs, take the wheel, and help us speed toward this vital goal. By doing this, our Highway Heroes will not only make our roads safer, but they could also save the life of a trafficking victim in desperate need of help."

## Operation Wanderlust Saves Victims of Human Trafficking; Arrest Dozens



The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office rescued a victim of human trafficking, and another potential victim, from falling into the dangerous life of sex trafficking. Over the course of three months, detectives went undercover to fight the solicitation of minors

online. In total, deputies made more than 300 contacts and arrested 18 people, half of which were accused of traveling to meet underage victims.

The investigation, named Operation Wanderlust, began in November 2021, with undercover detectives in the Human Trafficking Section posing online as minors. During the online discussions, the suspects solicited sexual acts from detectives posing as teens, sent inappropriate pictures, and agreed to drive to Hillsborough County in order to meet their potential victims for sex. The suspects came from all over Tampa Bay, and one even drove from Boca Raton to solicit a minor.

During the operation, detectives were able to locate and rescue two 15-year-old girls. One had a history of falling prey to commercial sex trafficking, and another was in the process of being groomed by a 41-year-old man to take part in his rape fantasies.

“The HCSO Human Trafficking Squad works diligently to save our children from becoming victims to sexual predators that use technology to hunt in the shadows of the internet,” said Sheriff Chad Chronister. “Through operations like Wanderlust, we are constantly taking a proactive approach to finding these predators, and our efforts will not stop.”

## Hundreds Arrested Since Creation of Human Trafficking Squad One Year Ago



The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office credited the newly formed Human Trafficking Squad for arresting hundreds of suspects in various sex crimes and saving several victims from a life of exploitation.

Since the formation of the Human Trafficking Squad on June 14, 2021, the deputies assigned have worked tirelessly to investigate, arrest, and stop the use of people for various criminal activities. A large part of the cases they work on include the prostitution of victims for sex. To date, 360 people have been arrested, with a total of 8 victims rescued.

“When I became Sheriff — I made a commitment to fight illegal prostitution and to protect the citizens of Hillsborough County from being victimized by predators in our midst,” said Sheriff Chad Chronister. “The Human Trafficking Squad has been given all the resources they need to save the victims, who often find themselves in a dark and dangerous life with no way out.”

## **Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez Hosts a Roundtable with Secretary Shevaun Harris to Highlight the Importance of Protecting Floridians Against Human Trafficking**



Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez held a roundtable discussion aimed at combating human trafficking in the state of Florida. The Lieutenant Governor was joined by Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Shevaun Harris, Citrus Health Network leadership, Kristi House CEO Amanda Altman, and community leaders.

“I understand the threat that this pervasive evil poses to Floridians and our administration will not stand idly by as human trafficking runs rampant in our state,” said Lieutenant Governor Nuñez. “As we continue to shed a light on this practice that is hidden in plain sight, our administration will continue to do what we can to hold traffickers accountable, give victims the chance to live their lives that were stolen from them, and eradicate this crime in Florida.”

## **Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez Highlights Our State’s Human Trafficking Efforts in Central Florida**



Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez led a roundtable discussion with the Department of Children and Families Secretary Shevaun Harris, One More Child, Heartland for Children, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, and elected leaders.

“We must all take an active role to support survivors, hold these criminal traffickers accountable, and work in partnership to eradicate this crime from our communities,” said Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez. “Together, we will continue to build upon every opportunity to prevent human trafficking and provide hope for all impacted.”

## Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez Joins the Florida State University College of Law to Raise Awareness on the Evils of Human Trafficking



Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez joined Florida State University College of Law and Trafficking in America Task Force to raise awareness about human trafficking and Florida’s efforts to develop policies, initiatives, and partnerships aimed at ending this horrible scourge.

“This heinous crime undermines and threatens Floridians, their dignity, independence, and freedom,” said Lieutenant Governor Nuñez. “I encourage you to learn about the signs and indicators of this crime and how to potentially report suspected cases. When individuals are empowered with the best practices to detect and report human trafficking, we save lives!”

## Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez and Florida Highway Patrol Host Roundtable to Highlight Human Trafficking and Drug Trafficking Prevention Efforts



Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez and the Florida Highway Patrol hosted a roundtable discussion with North Florida law enforcement leaders to discuss Florida’s efforts to combat human trafficking, drug trafficking, and human smuggling on Florida’s major highways including I-10 and I-75. Florida’s strike force conducted its first operation and among other things, seized illegal weapons, interdicted a human smuggling operation, and recovered illegal drugs including several grams of fentanyl.

“Governor DeSantis and I appreciate our law enforcement and their daily efforts to keep drug smugglers and human traffickers out of Florida,” said Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez. “Our administration will continue to support law enforcement officers and highway patrol officers who are keeping our communities safe.”

### **FSU Professor Terry Coonan Conducts a Meeting of Florida’s Anti-Trafficking Task Forces, Coalitions, and Commissions**



In May 2022, FSU Professor Terry Coonan brought together anti-trafficking task forces, coalitions, and commissions from across Florida. The meeting marked the first time these stakeholders were in one room together, sharing innovative practices and regional successes. Attorney General Ashley Moody and Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez were among the speakers at the two-day meeting.

### **FSU Professor Terry Coonan Shares Lessons Learned in Combating Human Trafficking with Officials in Kosovo**



Professor Terry Coonan, Executive Director of the FSU Center for the Advancement of Human Rights (CAHR), visited Kosovo during the summer of 2022. Fulfilling the human rights mission of CAHR, Professor Coonan met with the Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo to discuss Florida’s lessons learned in combating human trafficking.

## Local Task Forces, Coalitions, and Commissions

Task Force, Coalition, Commission	Task Force Coverage	Chair/ Point of Contact
Circuit 1 Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 1: Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton	Gretchen Busbee gretchen.busbee@usdoj.gov
Big Bend Coalition Against Human Trafficking	Circuit 2: Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla	Michelle Spaven Michelle.Spaven@usdoj.gov
Gateway to Fr33dom Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 3: Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor	Lesley Hersey Lesley.hersey@lsfnet.org
Northeast Florida Human Trafficking Coalition	Circuit 4: Clay, Duval, Nassau	Kelly Posze ironbutt7498@yahoo.com
Sumter-Lake County Human Trafficking Task Force	Regional: Sumter, Lake	Joelle Aboytes joelle.aboytes@myflfamilies.com
Marion County Human Trafficking Task Force	County: Marion	Donna Guinn dguinn@ocalapd.org
Tri-County Human Trafficking Task Force	Regional: Citrus, Hernando, Sumter	Janine Kell jkell@MFCs.US.com
Free Network	Regional: Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas	Amy O'Rourke amy.freenetwork.us@gmail.com
Pasco County Commission on Human Trafficking	County: Pasco	Liana Dean liana.dean@baycare.org
Freedom 7 Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 7: Flagler, Putnam, Saint Johns, Volusia	Christy Gillis christina.gillis@myflfamilies.com
North Central Florida Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 8: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, Union	Melanie Mitchell melanie.mitchell@pfsf.org
Central Florida Human Trafficking Task Force	Regional: Orange, Osceola, Seminole	James Kenney james.kenney@osceola.org
Tri-County Alliance on Human Trafficking	Regional: Orange, Osceola, Seminole	Tomas Lares tomas@stophumantrafficking.com
Circuit 10 Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 10: Hardee, Highlands, Polk	Amanda Wilson amanda.wilson@myflfamilies.com
Miami-Dade County Human Trafficking Coalition	Circuit 11: Miami-Dade	Ivon Mesa Ivon.Mesa@miamidade.gov
South Florida Human Trafficking Task Force	Regional: Miami-Dade, Broward, Monroe	Sergeant Veronica Carmenatty Vcarmenatty@mdpd.com
The Tampa Bay Human Trafficking Task Force	Regional: DeSoto, Hardee, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota	Major Nathaly Patterson Nathaly.Patterson@stpete.org
Circuit 14 Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 14: Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington	Lori Allen lori.allen@Gulfcoastcac.org
Palm Beach Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 15: Palm Beach	Sergeant Carlos Lisboa cmessamg@pbcgov.org
Human Trafficking Coalition of the Palm Beaches	Circuit 15: Palm Beach	Laura Cusack htcoalitionpb@gmail.com
Broward Human Trafficking Coalition	Circuit 17: Broward	Jumorrow Johnson JJohnson@sao17.state.fl.us
Broward Human Trafficking Task Force / FBI Human Trafficking Task Force	Regional: Broward and Miami-Dade	Sergeant Atina Johnson Ajohnson@laurerhill-fl.gov
Space Coast Human Trafficking Task Force	County: Brevard	Traci Klinkbeil Traci.Klinkbeil@myflfamilies.com
Human Trafficking Coalition of the Treasure Coast & Okeechobee	Circuit 19: Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Saint Lucie	Roberta Katz sarahmarie.henry@catchthewaveofhope.org
Southwest Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking	Circuit 20: Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee	Janet Ortenzo janet@swfl-humantrafficking.org
Human Trafficking Task Force	Circuit 20: Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee	Francine Donnorummo fdonnorummo@sao20.org

