

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A Local Problem

Compiled by the Zero Tolerance for Human Trafficking Coalition
Contra Costa County
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Human Trafficking – A Local Problem

Human Trafficking is Happening in Contra Costa

Human Trafficking is a form of modern day enslavement spread throughout the United States and world. It is also one of the world's most profitable criminal enterprises as victims are exploited to provide labor or commercial sexual services through force, fraud or coercion at a huge profit to the traffickers. Victims of trafficking can be any age, gender, ethnic or economic background. Trafficked victims can be found working in many different industries including: pornography, stripping, prostitution, massage parlors, domestic servitude, sweatshops, construction, agriculture or landscaping, nail salons, hotels, restaurants, panhandling, janitorial services and venues involving children such as foster care.

The International Labour Organization estimates there are [20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally](#). The National Human Trafficking Resource Center reported 711 human trafficking cases in California in 2015. Given the trafficking trends throughout the world, nation and state, we know that the East Bay region, and more specifically Contra Costa County, is not immune to the plight of trafficked and exploited persons. Indeed, there are numerous persons being trafficked and exploited, abused and sold, in the county each year.

“..... HUMAN TRAFFICKING DOES NOT STAY WITHIN JURISDICTIONAL LINES AND IT DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN IN BIG CITIES OR AT PORTS AND TRUCK STOPS. HUMAN TRAFFICKING CAN OCCUR ANYWHERE AND IT CAN BE HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT.”

-- CHIEF GORTON, SAN RAMON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policies addressing human trafficking are changing in response to the problem. Federal and State policymakers have recently passed legislation to provide better protections for victims, harsher penalties for traffickers, and improve data collection to support program development.

In 2015 the federal [Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act](#) (JVTA) increased penalties for convictions and expanded the definition of child abuse to include human trafficking. This Act made sex traffickers and buyers equally culpable.

California's Senate Bill 855, passed in 2014, established that commercially sexually exploited children may be served through the child welfare system as victims of child abuse. Child welfare staff, caregivers, and foster youth will be trained, identification strengthened and prevention strategies implemented.

Who are the victims?

Most victims have experienced complex trauma making them more vulnerable to trafficking situations, often a history of physical or sexual abuse. The impact is vast. It affects all areas of a victim's life – psychological and emotional trauma, adverse mental and physical health effects, social stigmatization, and risk of re-victimization.

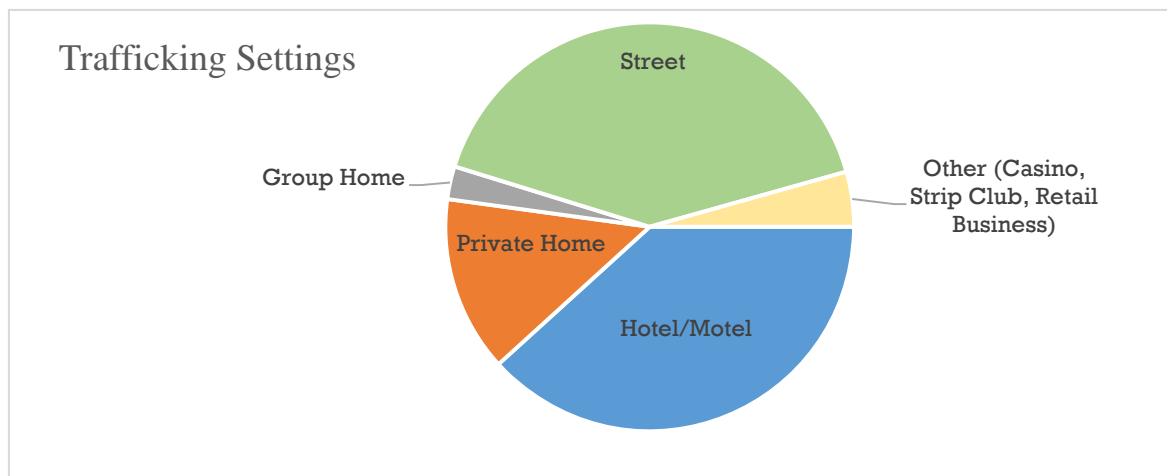
Data on human trafficking is hard to come by and human trafficking is highly under reported. Trafficking, by nature, is a hidden crime and victims seldom self-identify. As communication and transportation technologies become more advanced, trafficking efforts become more expansive and covert. The clandestine nature surrounding human trafficking inhibits local efforts to quantify the problem.

Labor trafficking is highly underrepresented in the data, as are male victims. While awareness and understanding about sex trafficking has increased in Contra Costa County in the last decade, understanding and awareness about labor trafficking and male victims is still lacking. This is represented in our data, which reflects mostly female victims of sex trafficking.

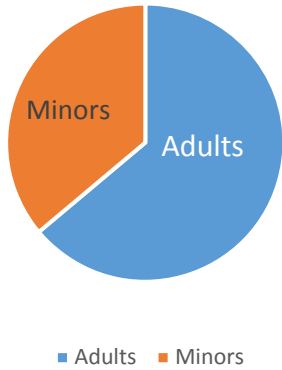
- 108 identified human trafficking victims
 - All but 1 victim involved sex trafficking
 - 5 victims were involved in labor trafficking
 - All victims were female (including 1 transgender girl)

This data was collected between June 2014 and June 2015 from four primary agencies working with trafficking victims in Contra Costa County. We estimate that there are more human trafficking cases in Contra Costa County than this data reflects.

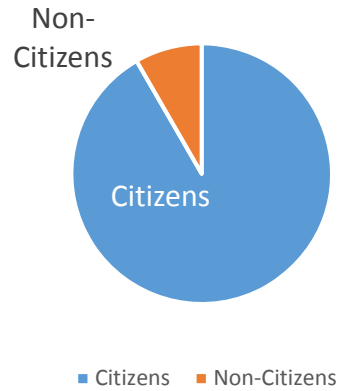
The charts that follow show a limited snapshot of data pulled from partner agencies involved in creating a continuum of coordinated services specifically for human trafficking victims.



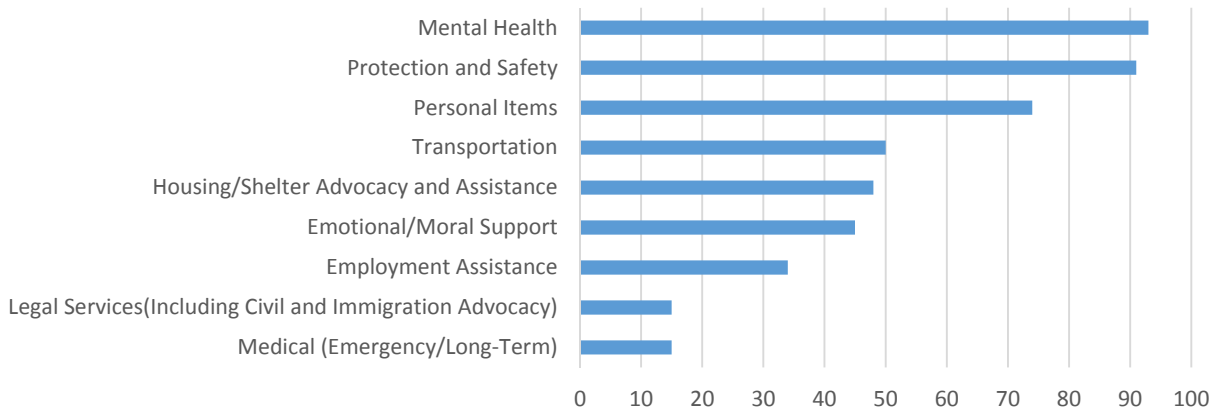
Age of Victims



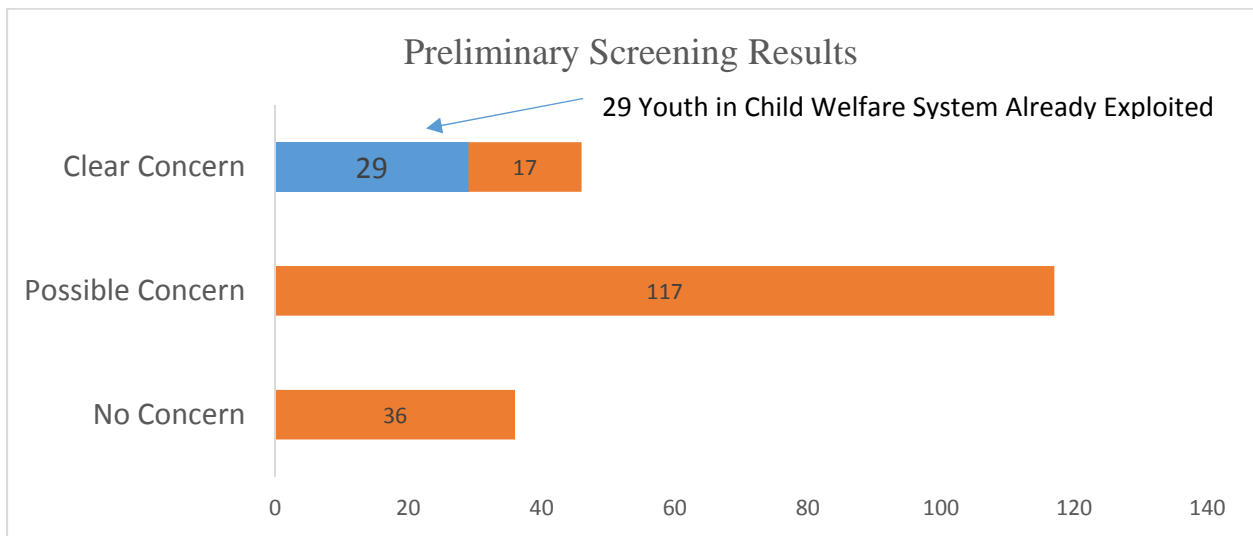
US Citizenship



Type of Services Most Accessed by Survivors



In 2015 Contra Costa County Child Welfare also began to collect data on this population. They piloted a screening tool in order to better identify commercially sexually exploited youth already in the Child Welfare system. A sample of 199 youth, aged 10- 21 years old, was screened using the CSE-IT tool developed by West Coast Children’s Clinic from May 1- November 16, 2015. The tool reviews risk factors for exploitation including a history of child abuse or sexual abuse, homeless or runaway youth, history of being system involved (juvenile justice, criminal justice or foster care systems), and LGBTQ identified. These risk factors are then used to identify the level of concern there is that the child is at risk of exploitation or already being exploited. This screening revealed that over 81% of youth screened in Child Welfare has either possible or clear concern of commercial sexual exploitation.

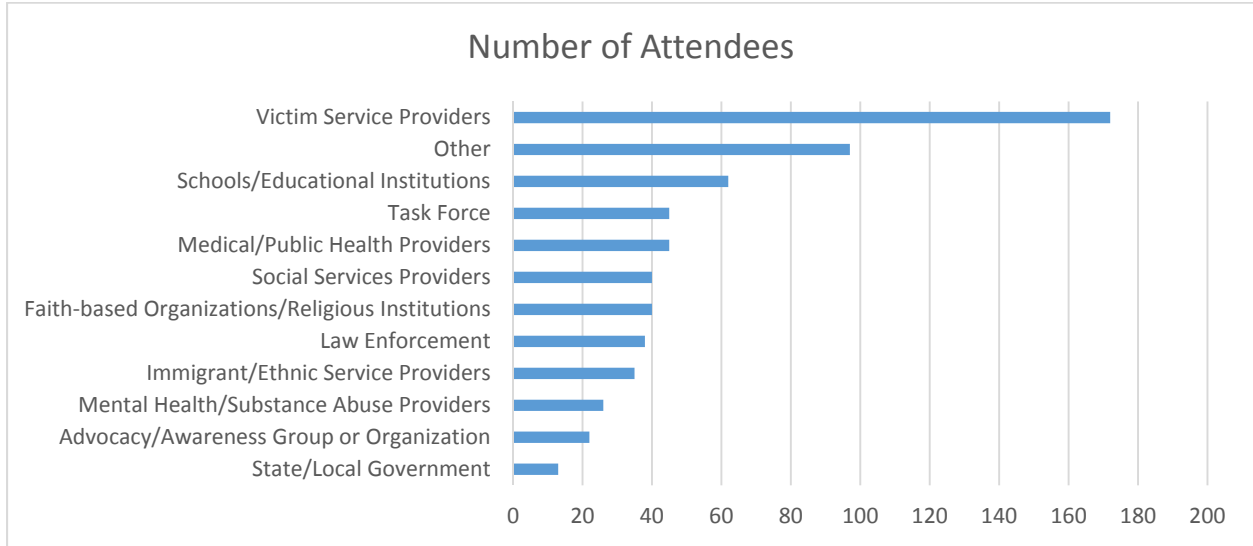


What are we doing?

Contra Costa County has been at the forefront of efforts to address the devastating impacts of domestic violence, family violence, elder abuse, and sexual assault as the first Zero Tolerance for Domestic Violence County in the State of California (SB 968). With more than a decade of effective collaboration and significant results surrounding these efforts, in 2009 the County began addressing human trafficking as the next natural progression in violence prevention.

The Zero Tolerance for Human Trafficking Coalition is a countywide, multi-agency partnership working to raise awareness, build capacity, improve policies, and increase access to coordinated services for victims of human trafficking. Capacity among professionals is building.

In the last year Coalition partners held 38 trainings with 635 attendees.



Coalition partners including Children and Family Services, Probation, law enforcement, and many local community based service providers are working to improve identification of victims, adapt intake and screening tools, and strengthen treatment options that do not re-traumatize survivors. Recently awarded federal funding totaling \$700,000 million will help strengthen a continuum of coordinated services in the coming year.



“(MY CASE MANAGER) SHE WAS WONDERFUL. SHE IS THE ONE WHO HELPED ME GET INTO COLLEGE. SHE IS THE ONE WHO HELPED ME DO A JOB APPLICATION. SHE IS THE ONE WHO SHOWED ME HOW TO DO CERTAIN THINGS I DIDN’T KNOW HOW TO DO....SO, IT WAS LIKE THEY ACTUALLY HELPED ME GET MY LIFE TOGETHER. THEY PLAYED A BIG ROLE OF WHERE I’M AT RIGHT NOW.”

-- CLIENT OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE SOLUTIONS

The Contra Costa County District Attorney’s office, a member of the Coalition, increased the number of human trafficking prosecutions in the last several years. In August 2015 District Attorney Investigators along with other partners such as the San Ramon Police Department and FBI, uncovered a far-reaching human trafficking operation that stretched from California to Cleveland to Miami to New York; this sophisticated operation was netting the traffickers tens of thousands of dollars a week utilizing multiple trafficking victims at one time (*People v. Joseph, Lavasanni, & Reynolds et. Al*).

“OUR COMMITMENT TO INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE HUMAN TRAFFICKERS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY IS UNWAVERING. THERE IS NO ROOM IN OUR SOCIETY FOR TREATING HUMAN BEINGS LIKE SO MUCH PROPERTY THAT CAN BE BOUGHT AND SOLD”

-- CONTRA COSTA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY MARK PETERSON.

What can you do?

1. LEARN! Learn the red flags that may indicate human trafficking and ask follow up questions so that you can help identify a potential trafficking victim. Learn more at the National Human Trafficking Resource Center: <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/what-human-trafficking/recognizing-signs>
2. TAKE ACTION! Report suspicious incidents. Call 211 or the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1888-373-7888) or go online to www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/report-trafficking to report a tip (you can do so anonymously).
3. BE A CONSCIENTIOUS CONSUMER. Buy fair trade, slave free products when possible. Discover your Slavery Footprint at www.slaveryfootprint.org, and check out the Department of Labor’s [List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor](#). Encourage companies to take steps to investigate and eliminate slavery and human trafficking in their supply chains and to publish the information for consumer awareness.
4. PARTNER WITH US. The Contra Costa County Zero Tolerance for Human Trafficking Coalition <http://www.contracostazt.org/projects> meets quarterly at the Concord Police Department to continue learning about human trafficking, share best practices and resources, collaborate and connect. E-mail Susan Woodhouse at swoodhouse@ehsd.cccounty.us to join.

The effort to end human trafficking needs to include everyone; families as they are often the first ones to recognize a problem; law enforcement to identify victims and prosecute offenders; service providers to support victim recovery and provide vital resources; health and human services to provide mental, physical, financial, and housing assistance to victims; and the public to be the eyes and ears of their communities. With everyone working together, we can end Human Trafficking in Contra Costa County.

Special thanks to Alex Madsen, Human Trafficking Coordinator with the Zero Tolerance for Domestic Violence Initiative, Kenya Campbell, and Michael Sumner with Employment & Human Services, Policy and Planning Bureau for their work in compiling this report.

Visit <http://www.contracostazt.org> for more information and to download a copy of this report.