



MEMORANDUM

Kathy Gallagher, Director

40 Douglas Drive, Martinez, CA 94553 | (925) 608.4800 | Fax (925) 313.9748 | www.ehsd.org

To: Family and Human Services Committee, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Date: June 28, 2021

From: Tamina Alon, Assistant Director, Policy & Planning/Alliance to End Abuse, Employment and Human Services Department

Subject: FHS Report #111 : Human Trafficking and Family Justice Center

This report provides an update on collaborative efforts to address human trafficking and the continuing development of the Family Justice Centers over the course of the last year. The additional social risks brought to light by the COVID-19 emergency underscore the importance of our County's coordinated response, communication, resources distribution and effort to shift toward prevention.

Human Trafficking in Contra Costa County: A Snapshot

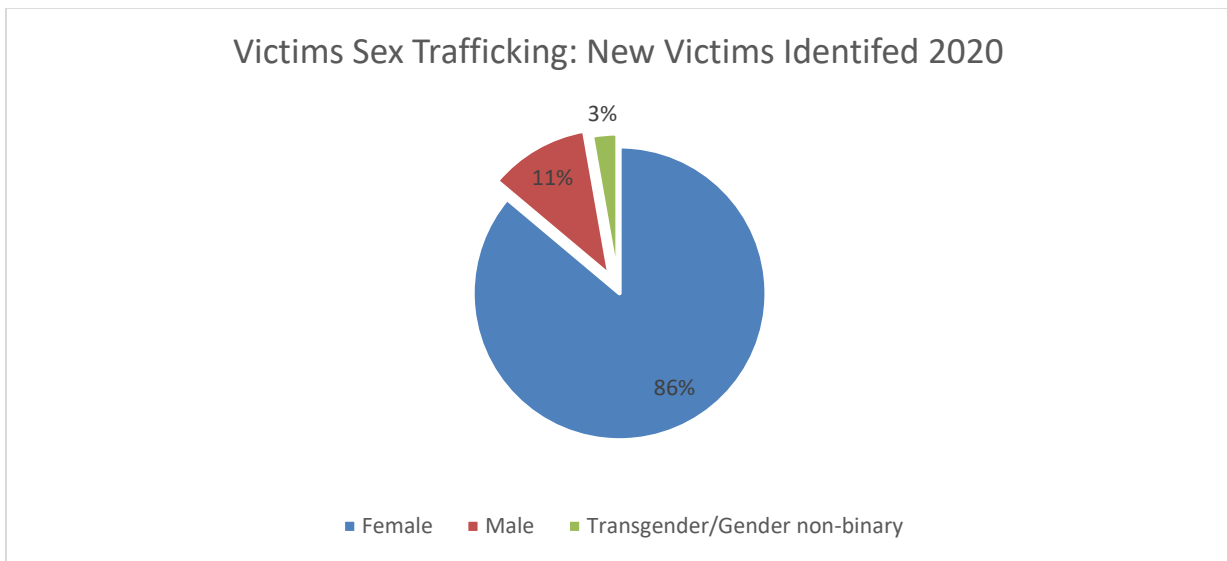
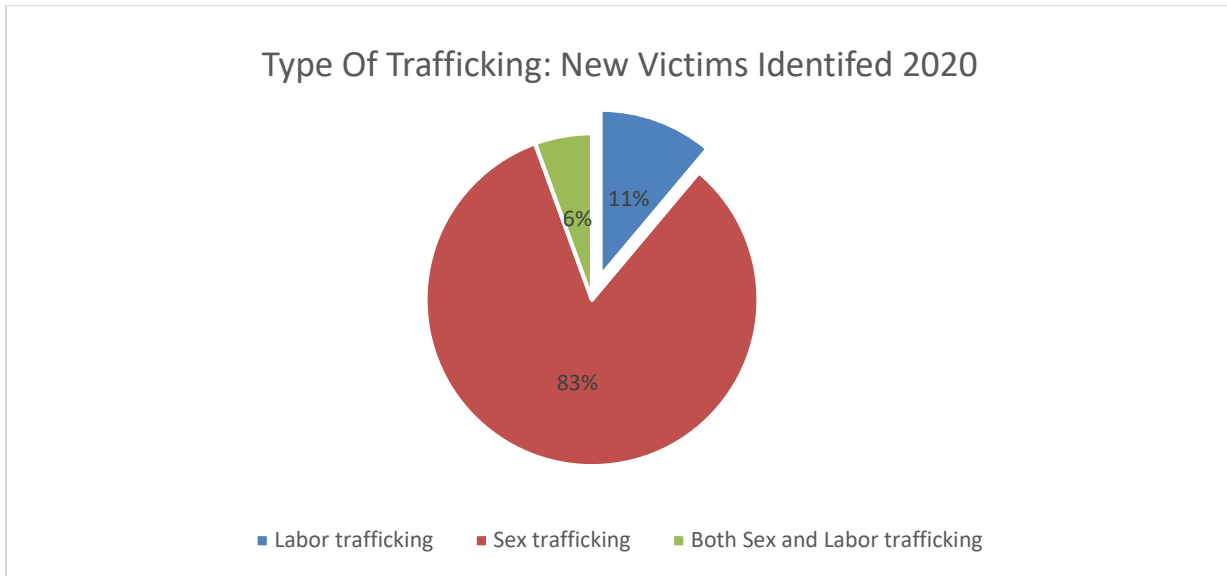
Data on Prevalence

Human trafficking can take many forms, but is generally categorized as either *sex trafficking* or *labor trafficking*. Sex trafficking is defined as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to perform a commercial sex act. Labor trafficking is a form of severe exploitation where individuals are threatened or otherwise compelled into debt bondage or other forced labor for little or no pay. Both sex and labor trafficking happen in Contra Costa County and are not mutually exclusive — a survivor can be subjected to both sex and labor exploitation.

By nature, human trafficking is a hidden crime and is often under reported, especially labor trafficking reports (labor trafficking can be more difficult to identify than sex trafficking).¹

¹ Data on human trafficking is hard to come by, and is often not reliable, as agencies and systems often are not tracking clients by trafficking specifically. Clients may first be identified and tracked as experiencing other forms of violence (such as domestic violence, sexual assault or economic abuse). Additionally, agencies that are identifying trafficking clients may not be collecting details on the type or setting of trafficking. The data

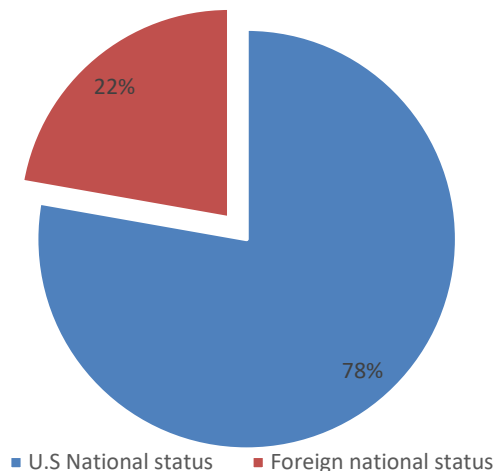
However, five Contra Costa victim service providers and the District Attorney’s Office have consistently collected data over the two years through a Department of Justice Human Trafficking Task Force Grant, facilitating an important snapshot of victims in our county.² The data was collected over a twelve month period between January 1 and December 31, 2020 and represents more than 36 new victims of human trafficking who were identified and served by victim service providers during this time period. During this same time period, there were 42 new law enforcement human trafficking investigations opened.



represented here does not define the totality of trafficking in Contra Costa County. In fact, it is likely under-representative of the amount of trafficking occurring, especially labor trafficking

² These agencies include STAND! for Families Free of Violence, Community Violence Solutions, Calli House, Bay Area Legal Aid and International Rescue Committee.

Citizenship Status: New Victims Identified 2020



Based on the demographic data collected by both victim service providers and law enforcement partners, a large amount of those served were female US national sex trafficking victims. Data across law enforcement and victim service providers is consistent - far more female US citizen victims are identified than males, or foreign national victims. The types of trafficking investigated by Contra Costa's law enforcement in the past and the types of trafficking victims being serviced by service provider caseloads tend to follow the national (and local) focus on sex trafficking.

Human Trafficking Intervention and Prevention Efforts

Human Trafficking Coalition

The Alliance to End Abuse, a robust partnership and initiative of the Board of Supervisors, continues to lead and expand the Contra Costa Human Trafficking Coalition by uniting a diverse, culturally relevant group of community agencies, law enforcement, and social services agencies. The Coalition is made up of more than 44 partner agencies including a wide range of service providers, community-based organizations, law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office and other local and national governmental departments. In addition to agency members, we have had community members join the Coalition as individuals. As a collaboration of agencies and individuals, the Coalition's goals include: conducting public awareness activities; providing training, technical assistance and a forum to share best practices; establishing policies and protocols; and creating a coordinated system of care. Coalition meetings occur quarterly and include a training component, highlighting the work of one partner agency, and the sharing of resources/networking.

The Contra Costa County Human Trafficking Coalition continues to strengthen its outreach and awareness efforts. In 2020 the Coalition added over ten new partner agencies and moved its meetings to a virtual format, increasing participation and engagement with a wider range of

agencies and individuals. Highlights from 2020 meetings included presentations and collaboration with Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition (BAATC), Love Never Fails, Justice at Last and the Family Justice Center.

Human Trafficking Multi-Disciplinary Case Review Team

The Alliance to End Abuse, in collaboration with the Family Justice Center, continues to run human trafficking multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) with a focus on high-risk and complex human trafficking cases. The multidisciplinary team includes multiple agencies (law enforcement, District Attorney's office, service providers, and culturally responsive agencies) with a focus on helping survivors meet their personal and family goals.

According to surveys, participating agencies have reported increased collaboration, increased access to services for survivors and increased relationships built across systems. In 2020, the Human Trafficking MDT met bi-monthly (6 times) and reviewed 11 "complex" cases of human trafficking. 8 of the cases were Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) and 3 were adult sex trafficking related. A total of 25 connections were made to human trafficking MDT partners during and after meetings. During case reviews, partners noted that during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place, Community Violence Solutions (CVS) and Children & Family Services (CFS) saw an increase in CSEC cases especially in group homes. Since the pandemic, communication between law enforcement partners (including the District Attorney's Office and Public Defender) around high risk HT cases has been enhanced.

From January through December 2020, the Domestic Violence MDT convened for 11 monthly meetings and reviewed a total of 18 cases with 102 partners participating. Out of the 18 cases, a total of 16 were closed (meaning, the survivor met the majority of their goals) within the year.

Department of Justice Human Trafficking Task Force Grant

In October 2018, the Alliance, in partnership with the District Attorney's Office, was awarded the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking grant by the Office of Victims of Crime. This three-year grant is focused on creating and supporting a human trafficking task force that is co-led by both law enforcement and victim service providers – working to increase services for survivors and strengthen investigations.

The Task Force works to 1) better identify all types of human trafficking victims; 2) enhance investigation and prosecution of all types of human trafficking; 3) address the individualized needs of all identified human trafficking victims by linking them to comprehensive services; 4) enhance awareness of human trafficking among law enforcement and service providers, as well as within the broader Contra Costa community; and 5) improve trauma-informed practices for human trafficking victims within law enforcement and victim service providers.

Service providers participating in the grant include Community Violence Solutions, STAND! for Families Free of Violence, Bay Area Legal Aid, International Rescue Committee and Calli House. These agencies work to provide wrap-around services to all victims of human trafficking as well as increase training and outreach. The Alliance has supported the coordination of services, data collection, data analysis and evaluation of programming for this grant. In the last

year, more than 36 new victims were identified, and more than 42 new law enforcement human trafficking investigations were opened.

Due to the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order, general Human Trafficking Task Force meetings were halted, but the Human Trafficking Core Team continued to meet consistently virtually. The Task Force Core Team members collaboratively developed and adopted decision making, media and messaging protocols. The Training and Outreach subcommittee developed a draft training presentation to be approved as an official Task Force Human Trafficking Training for Contra Costa service providers and law enforcement. The Alliance in collaboration with the District Attorney’s Office will reapply for the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking grant in June 2021 as a category 2 Task Force.



Grant partners provided over 2,200 units of service to survivors of human trafficking in 2020. The most frequent service recorded was “ongoing case-management,” followed by “legal services” and “crisis intervention or 24-hour hotline support”. In 2020, financial assistance, personal items, and housing/shelter advocacy were services provided that had a significant increase from the previous year.

Responding to Commercially Sexually Exploited Children/Youth (CSEC/Y) involved with Children and Family Services (CFS)

The Children and Family Services Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Team continues to uphold the federal and state guidelines by outlining trauma-informed protocols to support the CSE population. The mission of the program is to eliminate the exploitation of children and build a system of care that addresses the needs of at-risk CSEC youth and survivors across Child Welfare, Probation, and the Contra Costa community. The CFS CSEC Team works by following the mandate of ensuring identification, documentation, and services are provided for all CSE youth. The Team meets on a monthly basis to review any new legal mandates or updates from CDSS, and discuss program needs and resources aimed at increasing CSE awareness, identification, and referrals for services.

Since the inception of the program in 2015, there have been innovative additions to create a safety net for youth served. One of the supporting components of the program is the countywide Interagency Steering Committee. The Interagency Steering Committee provides ongoing oversight and leadership to ensure all Contra Costa County departments and community service providers are able to effectively collaborate to identify and serve youth who are at-risk or survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Additionally, the Interagency Protocol for Serving Commercially Sexually Exploited Children in Contra Costa County was revised last year to include the Contra Costa County Office of Education and the County Sheriff Department.

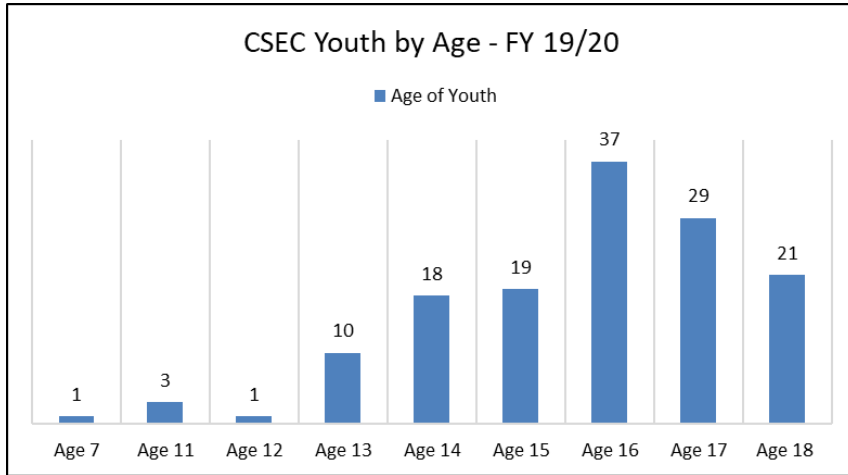
There continues to be ongoing training for social workers and community members to increase the identification of CSE youth. The continuous collaborative efforts have led to the training of community partners to screen all youth ages ten and older with the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT). Contra Costa's Probation Department and Public Health Department also utilize this tool. CFS has trained many professionals, resource caregivers, and community partners and service providers on a range of topics from Harm Reduction, CSEC Red Flags, and the intersection of CSEC and Child Labor Trafficking.

A major part of the program is the direct services provided. CFS contracts with Community Violence Solutions (CVS) to provide case management services for all identified CSE youth (at-risk and survivors). Some of CVS's resources include a Drop-In Center, a 24-hour crisis line, trainings, and ongoing consultation for all social workers with CSEC youth on their caseloads. The program continues to grow with case specialists being present in the district offices to provide immediate consultation and intervention to CFS social workers.

The data for CSE youth are documented by social workers in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS):

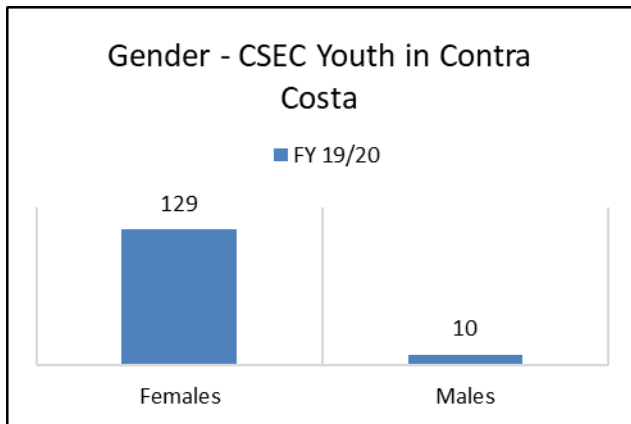
Age

Children who are at-risk or are survivors of human trafficking vary in age. In Contra Costa, the largest groups of children/youth with CSE involvement are between ages 15 and 18, with a significant increase at age 16.



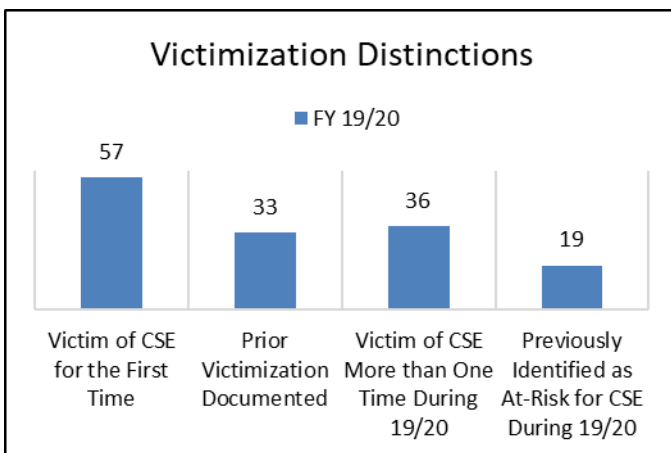
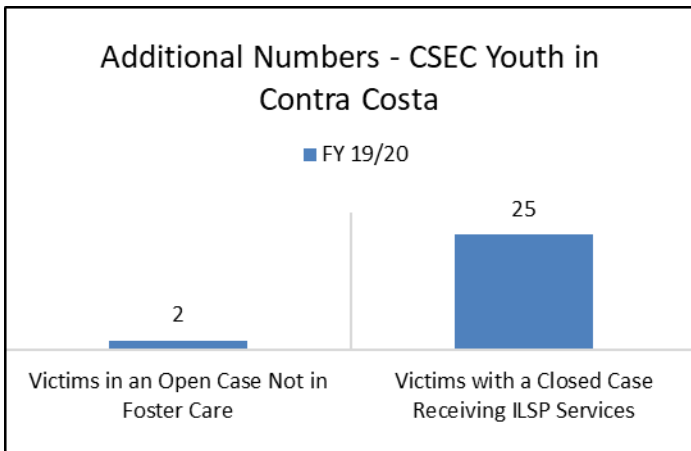
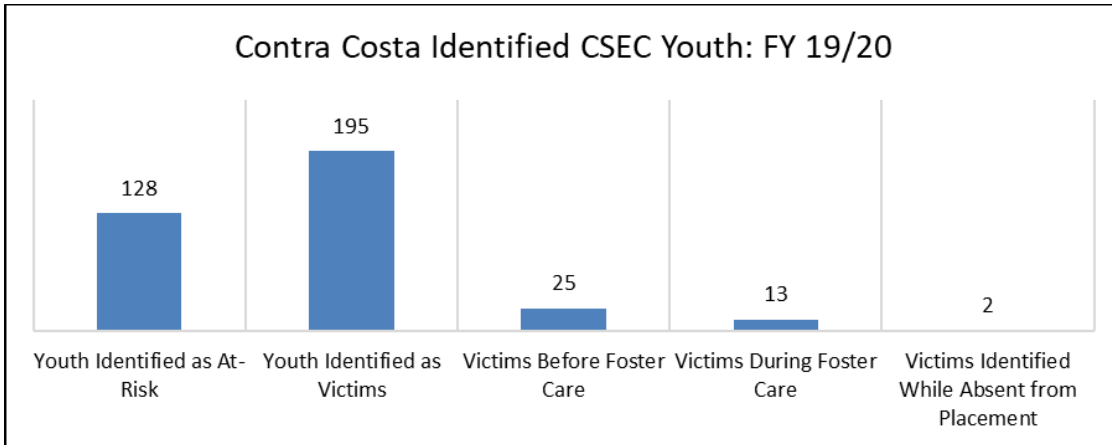
Gender

Contra Costa data shows there are more females identified as CSEC/Y than males. This has historically been the case in Contra Costa, and is also reflective throughout the state as a whole and the nation; males continue to be underreported.



CSE At-Risk Youth and Survivors

The number of youths identified as being CSE at-risk continues to grow.



This data reflects Statewide and National trends, with almost as many youth identified “at-risk” of exploitation as those identified already as victims. Because of this, CFS continues to work to strengthen prevention programming with community partners.

Challenges and Needs in Addressing Human Trafficking

While awareness of sex trafficking has increased, understanding, identification, and training on labor trafficking has not continued at the same pace. More resources and attention are required in order to achieve a better understanding of this complicated issue, including looking at the overlap with immigration status, tax evasion and fraud, wage and hour violations, building code inspections, and health inspections. Highlighting and bringing in efforts that increase the level of training, awareness, and funding to address promising practices related to labor trafficking is needed. This includes special attention to the hospitality industry, restaurants, salons, and other industries known to have large numbers of trafficked workers. Historically, sex trafficking cases have been prosecuted in Contra Costa County, but in 2020 the District Attorney's Office filed the county's first labor trafficking case. The Human Trafficking Task Force hopes to increase labor trafficking efforts among law enforcement agencies and support from victim service providers in the future.

Additional challenges remain related to flexible and timely housing and shelter options, language capacity, and culturally relevant and responsive services for victims.

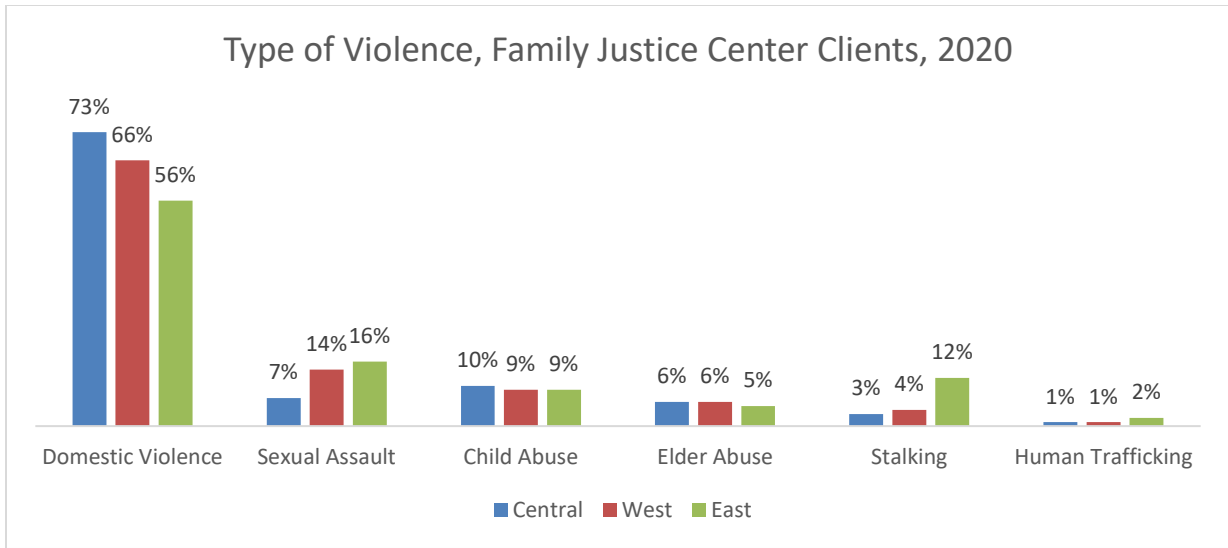
The Family Justice Center

The Family Justice Center (FJC) is a one-stop center for families affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse, child abuse, and human trafficking. The Family Justice Center coordinates with 63 on-site partners so clients can get safer sooner. The Alliance to End Abuse continues to support the development of the FJC, and County departments remain essential partners among many, supporting residents who are accessing the centers.

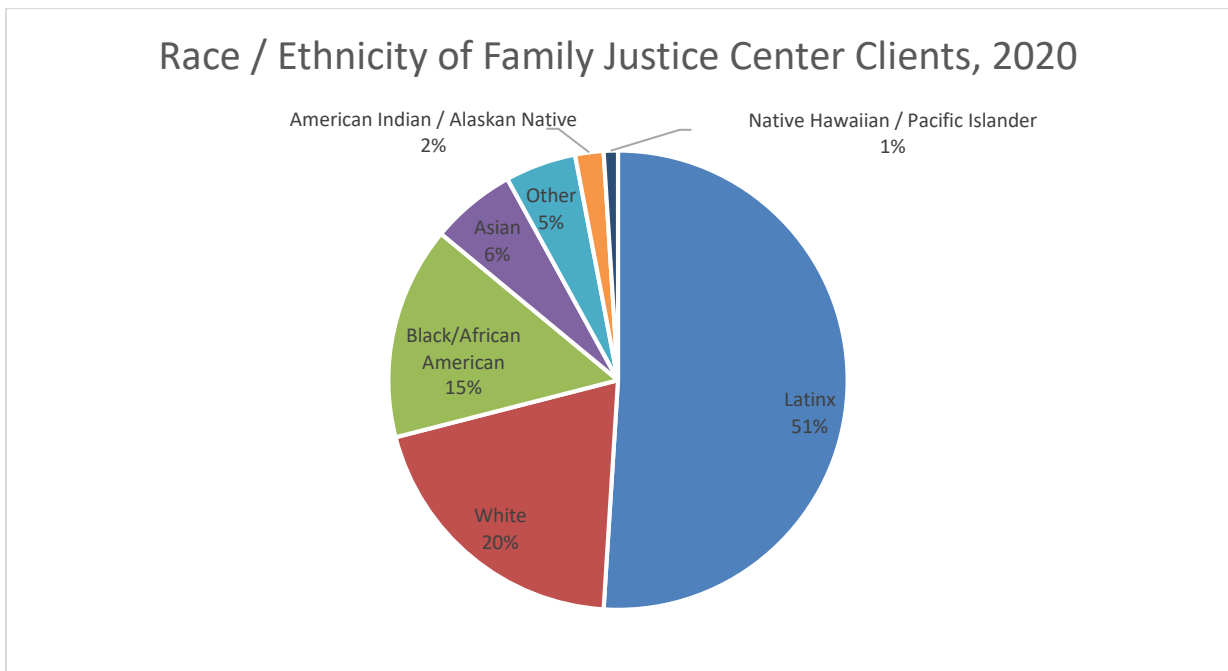
In 2020, the Family Justice Centers (in three Contra Costa County locations) provided services to 4,444 individuals who experienced interpersonal violence (2,145 clients from Central Center, 1,576 clients from West Center and 723 from East Center). This was a 13% increase of clients from 2019. Those services impacted an additional 3,421 children living with these clients.

In 2020, the Family Justice Center decided to remain open to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Home is not a safe space to shelter in place for many survivors of interpersonal violence and there needed to be somewhere to go to make a private phone call or have an in-person meeting. The FJC partnered with the Contra Costa Courts, when the courthouses shut down for several weeks, to ensure that community members could come to the FJC to fill out Domestic Violence Restraining Order applications with the assistance of attorneys. The Family Justice Center also partnered with several foundations to distribute direct cash assistance to families impacted by COVID-19 layoffs. A total of \$77,000 was provided to 142 families with 263 children impacted. 309 families were given grocery cards and 50 families were provided Chromebooks to ensure distance learning was possible. Below is a snapshot of FJC clients:

Types of Violence, Family Justice Center Clients, 2020



Race/Ethnicity, Family Justice Center Clients, 2020



Top Client Needs, Family Justice Center Clients, 2020



Additional information about FJC clients in 2020

- 97%** are worried about their safety
- 70%** have children
- 68%** have prior history with IPV or law enforcement
- 65%** earn less than \$2,000 per month
- 29%** speak Spanish as primary language
- 22%** are referred by law enforcement
- 18%** are disabled
- 13%** are referred by family/friends
- 16%** have no medical insurance
- 14%** are male
- 18%** live with a substance abuser
- 18%** lack immigration status
- 11%** are over 60 years old
- 6%** have no place to stay tonight

Coordinated Integrated Services

FJC's services are organized into two groups: crisis support and long-term safety. Crisis support services are coordinated through FJC Navigators, who connect clients to the services they need to leave their abusive situations or deal with their present crisis. After dealing with crisis, FJC staff offer services to get clients to long term safety and independence by working on four domains: health, education and training, wealth and community. Below are highlights from FJC's work to integrate services in 2020:

- The number of IPV clients served (4,444) increased by 13% compared to the previous one-year period.
- FJC expanded their partnerships by adding more (7 new partners) on and off site.

Capacity Building and Partnership Support

FJC's capacity building and partnership support strategy includes hosting monthly multidisciplinary team (MDT) case reviews of high danger domestic violence and human trafficking cases and law enforcement training coordination. In addition, through the Family Justice Institute, FJC offers trainings and workshops to educate service providers and the public about issues related to IPV. Below are highlights from FJC's work in capacity building and partnership:

- Between January 2020 and November 2020, FJC convened 11 domestic violence multidisciplinary team meetings with 102 partners to discuss high risk domestic violence cases. 18 cases were nominated and discussed. Of the reviewed cases, 100% of the victims experienced verbal threats, 12 of the 18 victims experienced physical assaults, and 50 connections were made to partner agencies.
- In 2020, the Family Justice Institute offered 26 workshops and/or trainings, attended by 1,681 individuals. FJC developed and recruited trainers for these workshops and trainings in response to training needs identified by partners. The topics included Suicide Prevention and Risk Assessment, and COVID-19 specific workshops on housing and employment rights.

Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking and Interpersonal Violence³

During natural disasters and other emergencies, rates of interpersonal violence and human trafficking can increase dramatically. During shelter-in-place, tensions in relationships, lack of support systems and exploitation may increase. Increased financial and medical stress, unemployment, as well as generalized anxiety, can lead to more violence and abuse at home and lead individuals to take jobs that may be induced by force, fraud or coercion.

COVID-19 has left many individuals without work and in need of money to pay for basic needs such a utility bills, rent and food. This has created a situation in which employers have a lot of power over employees/workers, and there has been heightened fear that exploitation, sex and labor trafficking will rise during Shelter-in-Place. Companies and businesses may lower

³ Interpersonal violence consists of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, elder abuse and child abuse

production costs and labor costs as they navigate the economic uncertainty – which can lead some to seek cheap or free labor. As individuals are in need of money, they might be more likely to take a job that is under paid, paid only through tips, or may have an element of force, fraud or coercion at play.

According to the Polaris Project, the agency that runs the National Human Trafficking Hotline, “the number of crisis trafficking cases handled by the Trafficking Hotline increased by more than 40 percent in the month following the shelter-in-place orders compared to the prior month (from approximately 60 in a 30 day period to 90). Crisis cases are those in which some assistance – such as shelter, transportation, or law enforcement involvement – is needed within 24 hours. The number of situations in which people needed immediate emergency shelter nearly doubled (from around 29 cases in Feb. 14th – March 15th, 2020 to 54 in April 2020).”⁴ Economic upheaval and a situation in which many are now without work and in need of cash, has created a situation in which trafficking may thrive. Furthermore, those who may be trafficked during this time are more exposed to the virus and have less resources to recover from it.

Furthermore, racism and oppression are deeply embedded in the dynamics of human trafficking. Many trafficking victims have multiple vulnerabilities that make them more susceptible to trafficking, such as poverty, immigration status, or involvement with the child welfare or criminal legal system. We know that these vulnerabilities predominately impact Black individuals, Indigenous individuals and People of Color because of institutionalized systems and policies that have historically disenfranchised and left out this population. In order to address the root causes of human trafficking and interpersonal violence, we must address racial and gender inequities. A public health approach to trafficking looks upstream at the root causes of violence and creates environments that support and foster wellness.

Contra Costa County’s Call to Action: Preventing Interpersonal Violence

The Alliance to End Abuse and the Contra Costa County Public Health are co-leading a planning and capacity-building process to develop and implement a countywide ‘[Call to Action](#)’ to promote safety and reduce interpersonal violence, including human trafficking. It was informed by countless community members and service providers who participated in the planning and development process. The Call to Action provides vision and values, and identifies goals and strategies to create a unified direction for multiple stakeholders. It is grounded in prevention and public health principles, and acknowledges that multiple forms of violence and abuse are preventable sources of harm in our communities, shaped by structural and community conditions, that can be significantly reduced through collective, strategic action.

The Call to Action serves as a guide for coordinated and strategic action to correct the epidemic of interpersonal violence. By developing a lasting framework that promotes equity, expands and strengthens partnerships, fosters economic opportunity and ensures community connectivity, the County is better able to address the root causes of interpersonal violence and human trafficking. Officially revealed in February 2020, the Call to Action highlighted four goals and accompanying strategies, to move the County towards a more targeted, upstream public health

⁴ <https://polarisproject.org/press-releases/human-trafficking-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

approach to violence prevention. A task force was convened in Summer 2020 to begin implementation of these goals.

When COVID-19 hit the Bay Area in March 2020, the Alliance revisited its approach to interpersonal violence in light of a national pandemic and emergency. Furthermore, it became clear that a space was needed to address and respond to immediate COVID-19 needs related to interpersonal violence. As we face both social and physical isolation during shelter-in-place orders, leading to increased anxiety and increased inequity, we need to create protective environments in order to prevent violence. Because of this, the Alliance has identified three specific prevention goals and strategies to focus on during this time, including:

1. Building sustainable, race conscious and value driven prevention infrastructure
 - Racial equity trainings, workshops and agency specific technical assistance
2. Fostering early childhood development and whole family supports
 - Community engagement and education campaigns
3. Encouraging community connectedness
 - Multi-generational community building

Investing in these strategies is key to ensuring the safety and well-being of all and is a primary approach the Alliance and Public Health will support in the coming year.

Resources

- [Contra Costa County's Call to Action: Preventing Interpersonal Violence](#)
- [Contra Costa County Family Justice Centers](#)
- [Contra Costa Alliance to End Abuse](#)