

HUMAN TRAFFICKING COUNCIL UPDATE

JUNE 2021

All Juvenile Probation Offices and their 15 Sex Trafficking Specialists continue to support and further the efforts of the Governor's Human Trafficking Council. Since 2014, the Juvenile Justice Services Division (JJSD) of the Administrative Office of the Courts has actively participated in the Council. JJSD has supported all of our counties through programming and funding to ensure a trauma informed approach is implemented that addresses the unique needs of any juvenile who has been, is suspected of, or is at high-risk for being sex trafficked.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Arizona's Juvenile Justice System has continued the efforts to combat sex trafficking in earnest and in innovative ways. The Sex Trafficking Specialist in each juvenile probation department leads all activities and best practices within their counties. To follow are highlights of juvenile justice anti-sex trafficking efforts in the last year.

JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES DIVISION

- JJSD partnered with ASU-STIR to provide virtual quarterly Brown Bag Trainings to Sex Trafficking Specialists and other juvenile probation departmental staff. These brown bags deliver new research and trends in sex trafficking in Arizona and nationally.
- JJSD is partnering with ASU-STIR, to bring two virtual STAR Group Train the Trainer workshops to juvenile probation departments so that they may implement STAR groups in their county programming.
- JJSD and several juvenile probation departments participated in the McCain Institute's Collaboration Expansion statewide discussions and are now part of the ongoing regional work to bring together multi-system stakeholders to address the needs of sex trafficked victims. Claire Merkel, Director of Arizona Programs, McCain Institute presented the group's progress at the Juvenile Administrator's Meeting and Committee on Probation Meeting. Additionally, JJSD has worked with the McCain Institute to introduce the STARFISH curriculum to school districts in Yuma County and Pima County through collaboration with the juvenile probation departments in these counties.
- A Sex Trafficking workshop will be part of the September 2021 Probation Conference and will bring together a survivor, community partner, and juvenile probation officer to address the critical intersection between probation with trafficked victims.
- JJSD working with ASU-STIR to implement a consistent screening tool for minor victims of sex trafficking to be used in all probation departments.

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

Apache County

- Department is in the early stages of developing policy and response for the use of a sex trafficking screening instrument.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Andrew Maestas.

Cochise County

- Three youth identified as at-risk, two of whom identified last year have been monitored by the Sex Trafficking Specialist and are both safe in out-of-home placement.
- Sex Trafficking Awareness training has been provided to probation officers, detention and transportation officers, and court specialists with additional trainings planned.
- Regular participation in the Cochise County MDT where 3-4 cases are staffed monthly and followed up with as appropriate.
- Specialist bridges communication gaps or issues that arise with DCS or the Advocacy Center that serves crossover and at-risk youth.
- Created a Sex Trafficking Specialist's Manual that provides information, guidance, and resources for all staff.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Rebecca Yvonne Thorington.

Coconino County

- Partnering with community providers, the probation department will begin offering "My Life My Choice" programming in July 2021.
- Department has started collaborative discussions with local law enforcement and other community groups to identify local sex trafficking needs and issues.
- Protocols and training to aid in the identification of trafficked victims are in development and anticipated to be rolled out to probation and detention in July 2021.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Lionel Scott.

Gila County

- There have been no suspicious cases nor have there been any sex-trafficking cases reported in the last year.
- Interim County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Rob Keefe.

Graham County

- In March 2021, a juvenile was identified as a trafficked victim that resulted in a multi-agency effort to address their needs. This juvenile was identified as being a victim by Phoenix PD, who contact the probation officer who then contacted DCS who interviewed the juvenile. The juvenile was later transferred to Pinal County Detention Center for court matters. They received a court-ordered psychological evaluation and was recommended for inpatient services that provides intensive trauma therapy.

- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Herman Andrews.

Greenlee County

- County Specialist has participated in trainings made available by JJSD and system partners.
- Department will collaborate with Graham County Juvenile Probation and local DCS office to address victim needs when warranted.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Kacie Kane.

La Paz County

- In January 2021, a juvenile was detained for a delinquent offense. The juvenile's mother provided information that she was a runaway for more than two years in CA, lived with an older male, was possibly sex trafficked and returned home with an STD. The information was turned over to La Paz County Sheriff's Office for further investigation by Mohave County Detention Center who had custody of her. This matter remains under investigation.
- Although its suspected that adult sex trafficking is occurring at the Blue Water Resort and Casino in Parker there is little available information.
- Department collaborates and participates in trainings with La Paz County Sheriff's Office, Parker Police Department, Lake Havasu City Police Department, and Colorado River Indian Tribe.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Karla Contreras.

Maricopa County

- Training provided to detention intake officers and newly hired probation officers on the use of the Sex Trafficking Pre-Screener and steps to take if a juvenile is identified as a possible trafficking victim. This training also offered an overview of the Maricopa County Collaborative process.
- Strong collaboration between Sex Trafficking Specialists in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal Counties and increased communication with other county specialists has aided in cross-county assistance and coordination with trafficked victims. Working together, county specialists coordinate case movements and share information to the right person quickly which ensures that juveniles are receiving the most appropriate services and supervision without delay.
- The Sex Trafficking Specialist worked with the McCain Institute on the statewide Collaborative expansion and had a lead role in juvenile justice discussions during multiple meetings and with participants around the state.
- A specialized sex trafficking position was created with the probation officer supervising a caseload of juveniles identified as trafficked victims. This newly created position will work closely with the STRENGTH Court and STRENGTH DCS workers to create a more cohesive, stable team for juveniles involved with the STRENGTH calendar.
- Collaboration continues with Mercy Care, Phoenix HEaT, and the FBI. There has been an uptick in cases in the last year and this collaboration has been extremely important for interviewing and identifying trafficking victims to get them in services as quickly as possible.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Amanda Arvizu.

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

Continued

Mohave County

- Department workgroup developed and finalized protocols and actively discuss cases and service gaps, blending the work with done by local and statewide coalitions. This group includes probation officers, leadership, clinicians, and adult probation.
- Participation in the Mohave County Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking Coalition *Futures Without Fears*.
 - As part of the coalition, probation officers were able to share information about sex trafficking at a local high school. The school also allowed this topic and others to be played on school TV for a week.
 - Future activities for community engagement through prosocial activities are planned for youth and families.
- Human Trafficking Awareness training provided to juvenile probation staff with additional trainings planned for juvenile and adult probation and for DCS staff.
- The department hosted an annual retreat for judges, probation officers, mental health staff, law enforcement and others that celebrated *Kids at Hope* and also brought in a community partner to educate about what trafficking looks like and an action plan when they believe someone was trafficked.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Natalie Eggers.

Navajo County

- Two Sex Trafficking Awareness trainings were provided to a total of 54 people.
- Departmental collaboration with DPS when a high-risk juvenile runs away and to provide DPS with Wanted Posters when a sex offender absconds.
- In last year, three high-risk juveniles have been on probation, all received residential treatment. One of these juveniles has completed her program and is back in the community where she attends life skills program at The H.U.B.
- Collaboration with schools, DCS, and law enforcement to identify and support trafficked victims.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Lynda Wilson.

Pima County

- Increased and improved collaboration amongst County Sex Trafficking Specialists was a positive, unintended result of the pandemic.
- Regular participation in multiple meetings, including: High-Risk Juvenile (SAATURN), AzCH-CCP Collaboration, Pima County Stakeholder Engagement, and Pima County Collaborative Model Expansion.
- Working with Dr. Roe-Sepowitz, Maricopa and Pinal County Sex Trafficking Specialists to identify trafficking indicators with potential to implement a statewide trafficking screening tool.

- Partnered with the McCain Institute to develop “Child Sex Trafficking: The Role of Juvenile Justice Systems” training that was provided to 98 Pima County Juvenile Court and outside agencies.
- Additional trainings provided include: Sex Trafficking 101 and a training to Intermountain Foster Care providers.
- Within Pima County Juvenile Court, one juvenile was confirmed to have been trafficked although there are many who are considered high-risk youth.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Meghan King.

Pinal County

- New probation hires have received Human Trafficking Awareness training and ongoing training opportunities are available to the MVST CORE Team to enhance their awareness and spread information and assistance in their units.
- MVST CORE Team assisted in coordinating trainings for DCS OCWI Joint Investigations Liaisons, EMS Gila River, and local law enforcement agencies.
- Training materials have been updated and the department continually adds enhancements to its internal database to track patterns and data for victims.
- Regular meetings with county stakeholders are occurring to bring the Collaborative Expansion to the county. Attendance at these meetings has grown in number with the use of a virtual platform and now includes representatives from probation, Family Advocacy Center, County Attorney’s Office, DCS, Mercy Care, local law enforcement, City of Maricopa, and Sex Trafficking Specialists from Pima and Maricopa Counties. These meetings have resulted in improved communication and collaboration.
- Two MDTs have staffed potential trafficking victims and brings agencies together to close gaps and move forward.
- 2020 County Data: 4 confirmed, 8 suspected, 19 at-risk, 17 DCS involved, 28 had at least one instance of runaway, average age was 15.
- 2021 County Data (through March): 3 suspected, 2 at-risk, 4 DCS involved, 5 had at least one instance of runaway, average age was 15.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Stacie Blackburn.

Santa Cruz County

- There have been no suspicious cases nor have there been any sex-trafficking cases reported in the last year.
- Interim Sex Trafficking Specialist, Luis Fimbres.

Yavapai County

- Departmental Human Sex Trafficking Workgroup developed with goals of creating an assessment checklist and runaway safety plan, identify community resources, provide education to stakeholders, implement STAR group programming in detention, and write policies that support these goals.
- Sex Trafficking Specialist will be a co-facilitator at the National Conference of Correctional Education for a “Fighting Human Trafficking with Collaboration” workshop.

- Two probation officers volunteered at March 2021 Sex Trafficking Outreach Pop-Up event coordinated by Dr. Roe-Sepowitz.
- Yavapai County Human Trafficking Taskforce paused during pandemic and is preparing to resume meetings soon with new team members and a goal to continue to expand educational outreach to various local community industries and to develop training program for all line level law enforcement. Taskforce is also working with the McCain Institute on the statewide Collaborative expansion.
- Sex Trafficking Specialist is identified as a resource within the Anti-Trafficking Resource Network.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Vienna Welch.

Yuma County

- Sex Trafficking Awareness training is provided to all new staff as a part of New Employee Orientation with three trainings held in March and April 2021. Awareness training also a part of internal Detention Academy curriculum.
- Department is in planning stage to implement STAR Group curriculum.
- When detained, all runaways and juvenile who had been on warrant status are screened for sex trafficking.
- Two juveniles have been confirmed as sex trafficked. Although juveniles were from Yuma County, one was trafficked in Pinal County and the other in Maricopa County. The trafficking of these juveniles is still under investigation and both are receiving treatment services, with the Pinal County trafficked victim now living with a parent in Pinal County.
- County Sex Trafficking Specialist, Edna Lugo.

Thank you to the Governor's Council on Human Trafficking
Thank you to all our County Sex Trafficking Specialists!