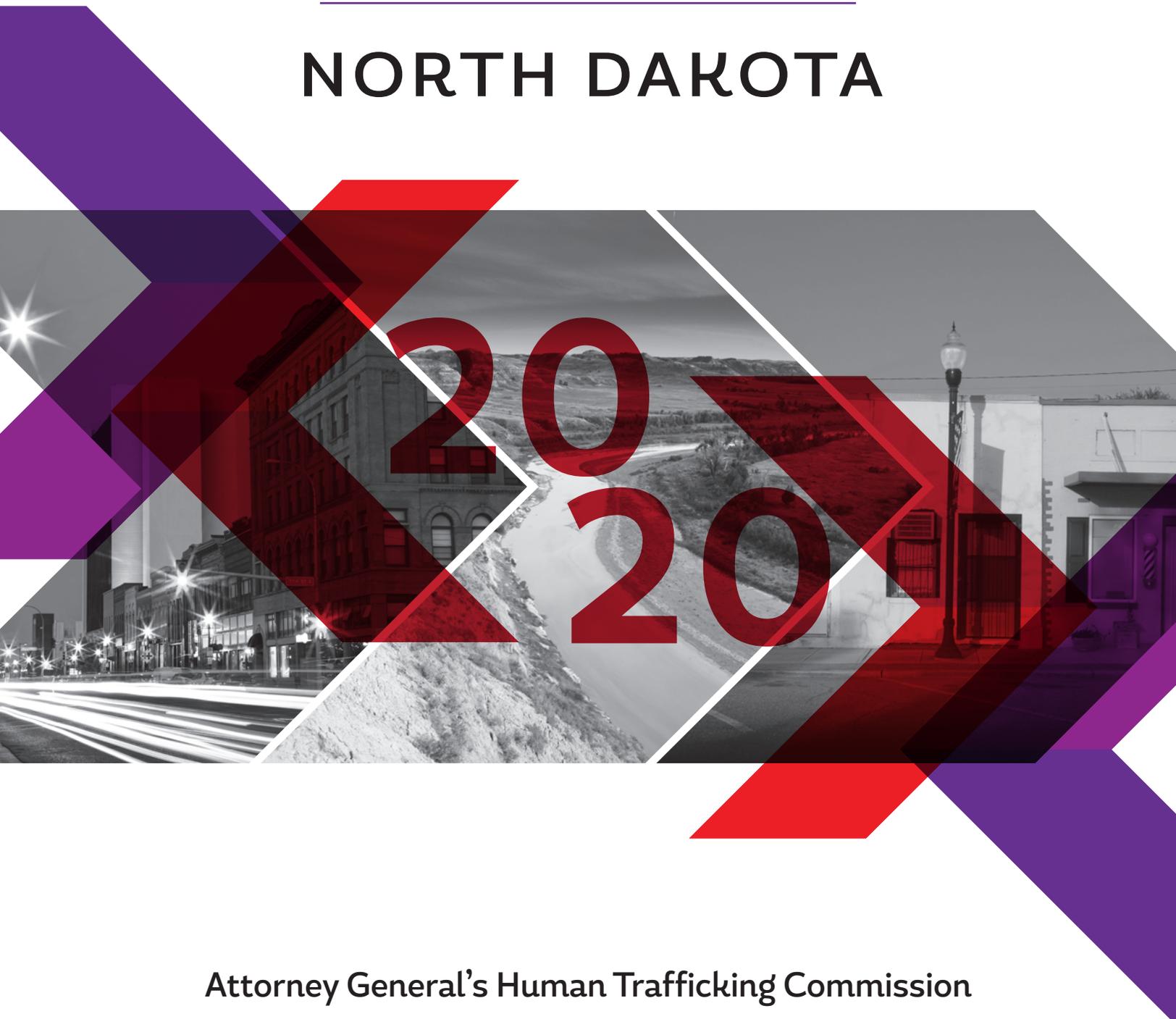


HUMAN TRAFFICKING

IN THE STATE OF

NORTH DAKOTA



Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission

North Dakota Office of Attorney General

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING



OVERVIEW

Human trafficking is a crime involving the exploitation of someone for the purposes of compelled labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking affects individuals across the world, including here in the United States, and is commonly regarded as one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. Human trafficking affects every community in the United States across age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic backgrounds.

As defined under North Dakota and U.S. law, victims of human trafficking can be divided into three populations:

- Children under age 18 induced into commercial sex.
- Adults aged 18 or over induced into commercial sex through force, fraud, or coercion.
- Children and adults induced to perform labor or services through force, fraud, or coercion.

FORMS OF TRAFFICKING

Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age (22 USC § 7102).

Labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (22 USC § 7102).

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

overview

EXPLOITATION VS. TRAFFICKING

Exploitation is the exchange of a sex or labor act for money, shelter, drugs, or anything of value, between two parties. This includes survival sex, stripping, sextortion, pornography, and numerous fields of work.

- A youth runs away from home or is kicked out of their home, and someone offers them a “safe” place to stay in exchange for a sexual act. That is survival sex.
- An individual works for a business in exchange for shelter, which may be shared with other individuals.
- A youth is coerced into sending a nude photo to someone via social media and that person blackmails the youth, forcing them to provide additional photos.

Trafficking is exploitation involving force, fraud or coercion, or is facilitating the exploitation of a minor victim. A party acts as a trafficker, using force, fraud or coercion to procure sex or labor acts for themselves, or a purchaser. The party profiting from the act is the trafficker.

- Parents cannot afford rent and the landlord agrees to waive rent in exchange for a sexual act from the child. Those parents are now the traffickers.
- A boyfriend/girlfriend coerces them to have sex with their friends in exchange for money, drugs, a new cell phone, clothing, etc. That boy/girlfriend is their trafficker.
- An employer forces an employee to work long hours for little/no pay, withholds payment, falsely claims that the employee owes money to the employer, and physically abuses and threatens the life of the employee, telling them that if they leave or report the exploitation, their family will be harmed. **This is a form of labor trafficking.**

TRAFFICKING IN NORTH DAKOTA



HISTORY

In response to the presence of human trafficking in North Dakota, a Human Trafficking Commission was created by the 64th Legislative Assembly and established within the Office of Attorney General. N.D.C.C. § 54-12-33. The Commission was originally charged with developing a coordinated and comprehensive plan to provide victims with services; collecting and evaluating data on human trafficking in this state and promoting public awareness about human trafficking, victim remedies and services, and trafficking prevention. During the 65th ND Legislative Assembly, the authority and duties of the Commission were narrowed in order to focus on the collection and evaluation of data, and to promote public awareness on human trafficking and victim services. The Attorney General's office partners with the federal North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force on these efforts.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: VICTIM TREATMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES FUNDING

The 66th Legislative Assembly approved an appropriation of \$1.4 million to organizations involved in providing prevention and treatment services to human trafficking victims. The appropriated funds were awarded through an open, competitive process to organizations that demonstrated involvement in providing prevention and treatment services related to human trafficking victims, in coordination with state and local governments.

The grant award period commenced on September 1, 2019 and continues through June 30, 2021. Additional information on the grantees can be found on the [Criminal Justice Resources](#) page of the Attorney General's website.

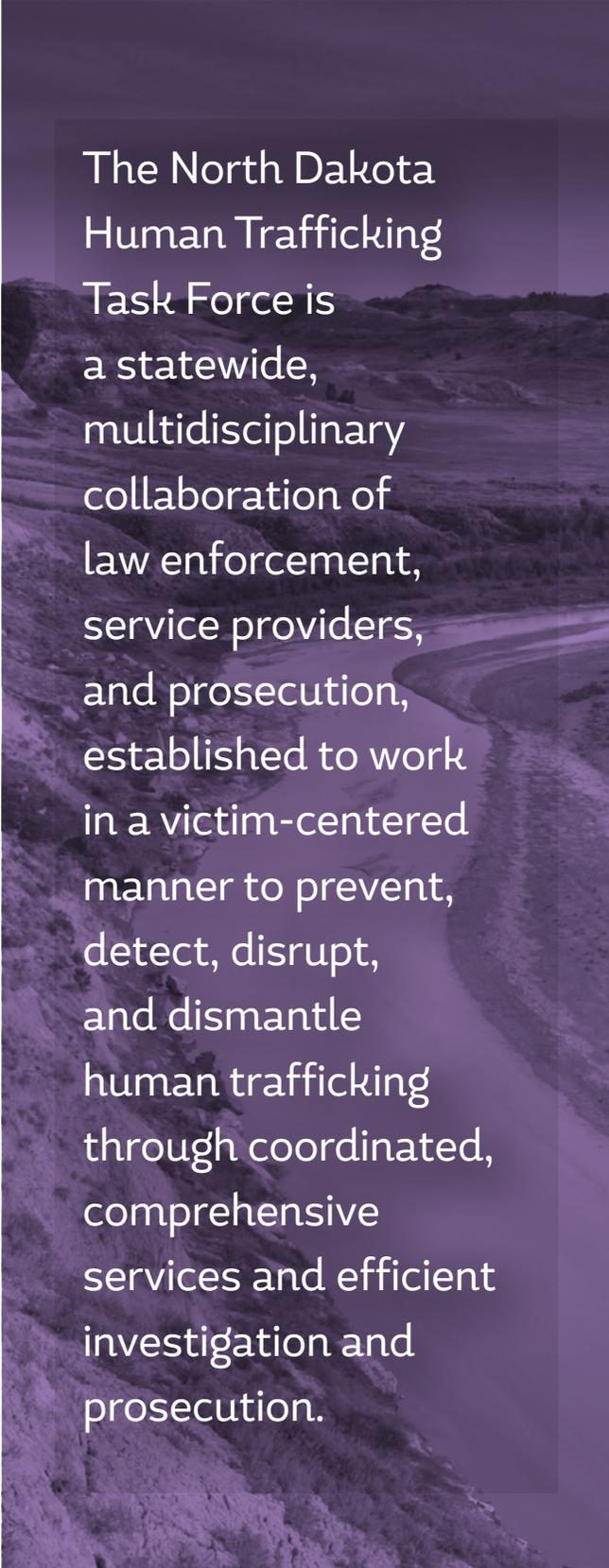
NORTH DAKOTA HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

Since 2015, the Attorney General and the Human Trafficking Commission have been working closely with the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force (NDHTTF) to build a coordinated response to human trafficking in the state. The NDHTTF was founded in late 2015 through the North Dakota Office of Attorney General, CAWS North Dakota (CAWS ND), and the U.S. Attorney's Office in North Dakota (USAO).

OVERVIEW OF NDHTTF

The North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force is a collaborative team made up of law enforcement, prosecution, and service providers at federal, state, and local levels. The NDHTTF responds to victims of sex and labor trafficking, providing comprehensive services, investigating traffickers and solicitors, and prosecuting offenders. The NDHTTF is the nexus for a network of law enforcement and service providers to work in tandem to build capacity and combat trafficking statewide.

The NDHTTF does this through the following methods: Training communities to identify exploitation and trafficking and providing points of contact upon identification, training local multidisciplinary teams to respond to victims and investigate trafficking-related crime, assisting response agencies and communities with development of response protocol, providing technical assistance to local response teams upon request, running operations and investigating trafficking related crimes, prosecuting offenders and providing victims with restitution, engaging in national anti-trafficking best practices and sharing of resources, and building networks for victims to access services and resources.



The North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force is a statewide, multidisciplinary collaboration of law enforcement, service providers, and prosecution, established to work in a victim-centered manner to prevent, detect, disrupt, and dismantle human trafficking through coordinated, comprehensive services and efficient investigation and prosecution.

NORTH DAKOTA HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

continued

The core of the NDHTTF model involves three components: **1)** Multi-disciplinary teams across the state (*operating in 9 communities*) that provide immediate response to trafficked individuals; **2)** A task force Director, Grant Tech, and Operational Team coordinating the activities of the task force and providing training and technical assistance to the local MDTs; and **3)** Five subcommittees including Law Enforcement, Legal, Tribal Engagement, Labor Trafficking, and Victim Services, help drive progress in developing best practices, solving common problems, and facilitating cooperation across the state.

The NDHTTF also developed a Human Trafficking Fund that is accessible to agencies across the state to support victims of sex and labor trafficking. Funding is accessed by completing a request form outlining the type of trafficking, basic demographic information, and a brief description of the client's need related to trafficking. This funding provides services to victims throughout their recovery process, from the moment someone is recovered through their steps toward self-sufficiency. These services fall into one of the following categories:

Immediate Response/Relief



basic needs items, emergency food assistance, medical care, emergency shelter

Recovery



therapeutic/mental health services, transitional housing, legal services

Resilience



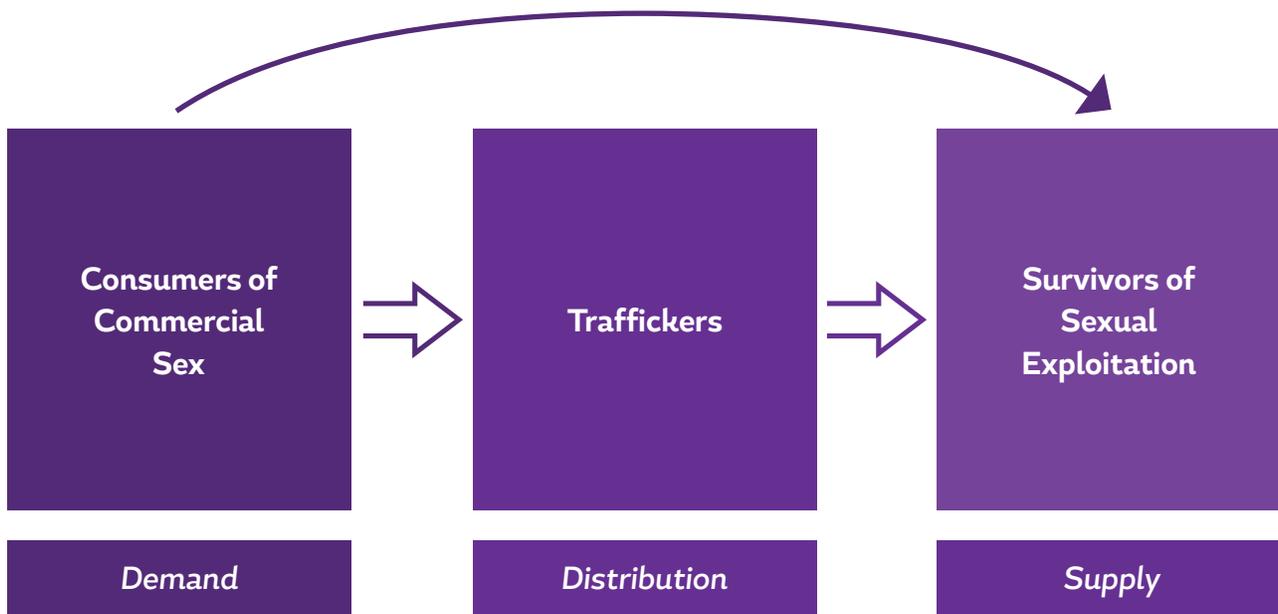
education, job training, life-skill building (*finances, self-care, etc.*)



DEMAND REDUCTION PROGRAM

Demand Reduction Programs (DRPs), sometimes referred to as “John Schools”, are targeted at reducing recidivism rates for participants. These programs target the buyers of sex instead of targeting the seller. DRPs educate participants on the impact of prostitution and sex trafficking on communities, survivors, spouses, and children.

A Flow Model of Commercial Sex Markets



Source: Michael Shively, P. K. (2012). A National Overview of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Efforts, Final Report. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/238796.pdf>

“
I hope this education can continue to be a mainstream program in our community.”

- Demand Reduction Program Participant

The Human Trafficking Commission’s Demand Reduction Committee worked with the University of Mary to create a comprehensive intermediate sentencing, diversion, and education option for ND offenders charged with purchasing prostitution. The program was rolled out in July of 2017. The educational courses are offered quarterly, and are held in the following communities, as need dictates: Fargo, Bismarck, Grand Forks, Watford City, or Minot. Since the inception of the program, twenty-four offenders have completed the program. Attendees ranged in age from 20-54 years old.

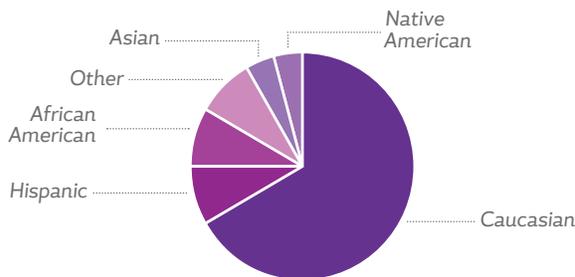
DEMAND REDUCTION PROGRAM

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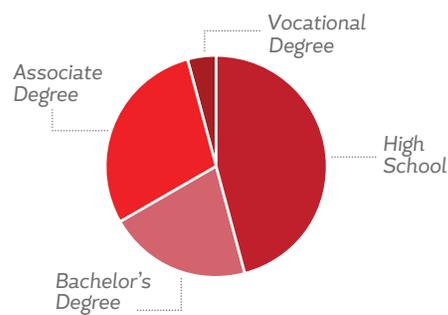
To increase awareness about the program among judges, attorneys, and law enforcement officers, the Demand Reduction Program Coordinator conducts outreach and education to individuals around the state, reaching over 1,000 people in 2020. As a result, there has been an increase in referrals to the program through law enforcement, probation officers, and prosecutors recommending the DRP as a sentencing option for judges. This program also incorporates input from survivors of human trafficking.

2020 DRP DEMOGRAPHICS

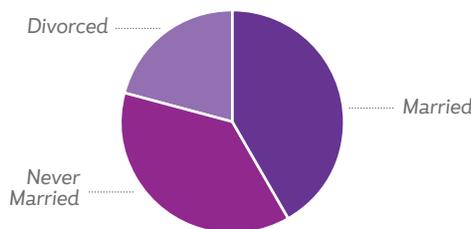
BY RACE



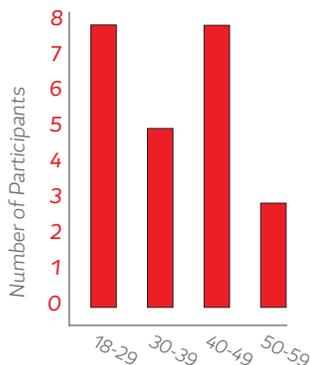
BY EDUCATION



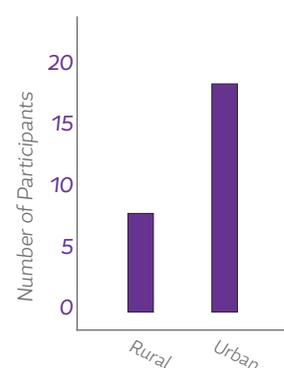
BY MARITAL STATUS



BY AGE



RURAL vs URBAN



DRP demographics reflect sample size of 24 offenders within the state of North Dakota, who have been charged with purchasing prostitution and sex trafficking related misdemeanors.

NORTH DAKOTA BY THE NUMBERS

Since its inception in 2015, the NDHTTF has trained communities to identify signs of trafficking, provided response and advocacy for victims, and investigated and prosecuted crimes related to trafficking.

IN 2020, THE NDHTTF

- Served 99 victims of human trafficking—56 adults, and 43 children; 79 were North Dakotans
- Continued services to 149 victims from 2016
- Investigated 93 cases of human sex trafficking, resulting in 13 victims being identified.
- Five (5) arrests were made
- Trained 1,718 professionals on human trafficking identification
- Held 54 community-based response meetings to combat human trafficking

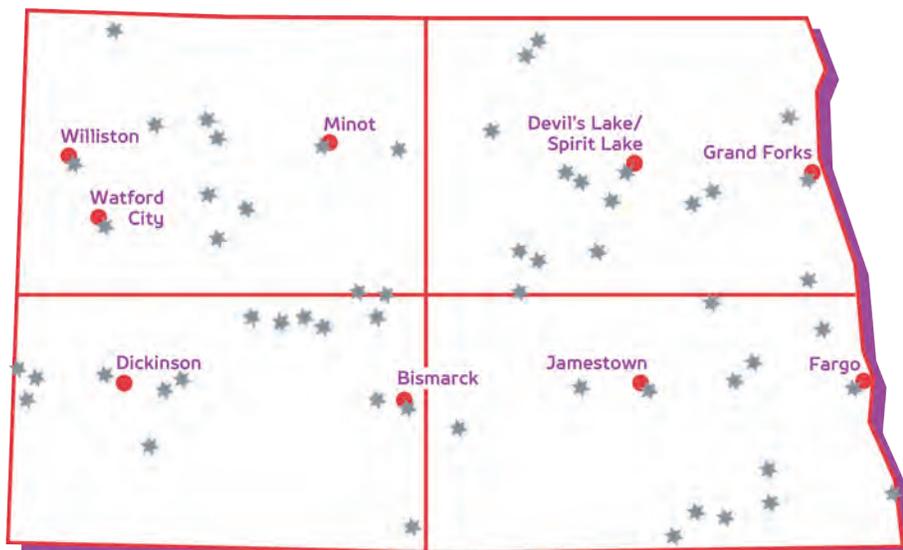


80%

**VICTIMS
SERVED**

were North Dakota
residents

Trafficking Cases in North Dakota



● MDT Community ★ Communities Where Trafficking has been Identified

Of Victims Served

57%
adults

43%
minors

NORTH DAKOTA BY THE NUMBERS

SINCE 2015, THE TASK FORCE HAS

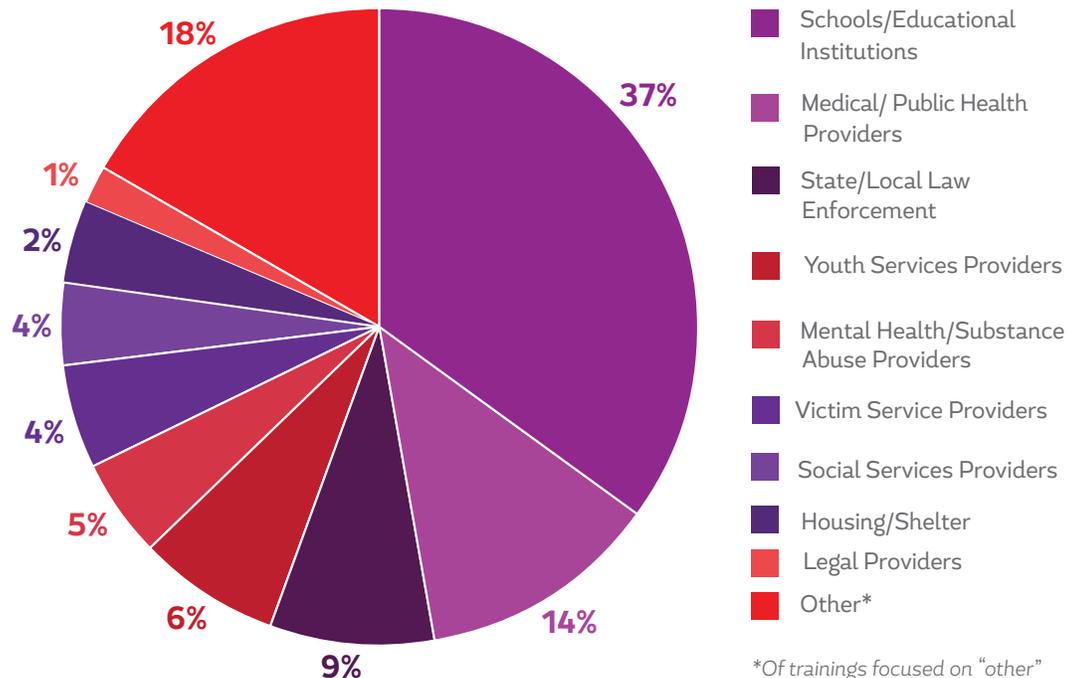
SERVED

535 victims of human trafficking

➤ 383 adults 152 children

TRAINED MORE THAN 14,150 PEOPLE

Trainers reported the single target audience of each training and the number of people in attendance from that group. This chart displays the top 10 audiences reached by percentage.



*Of trainings focused on "other" target audiences, most reached unknown/unreported audiences, potential homes for survivors, or students



There are more people affected by trafficking and exploitation in North Dakota than current data reflects. The NDHTTF is the only statewide organization currently compiling comprehensive data around human trafficking in the state. Victims served by agencies outside of the NDHTTF may not be reflected in current data.

LOOKING FORWARD

In 2020, the NDHTTF conducted a survey of partner organizations and identified ten goals the task force will work towards over the next three years to advance anti-trafficking efforts. These goals are outlined below, and include the following:

Goal 1: Use funding and training to increase shelter staff's capacity for providing trauma-informed care to trafficking victims.

Goal 2: Design and implement a proactive public awareness plan to increase North Dakotans' understanding of both sex and labor trafficking.

Goal 3: Develop and nurture engagement by trafficking survivors in the work of the NDHTTF.

Goal 4: Improve response to labor trafficking with increased legal services, stronger case management, and improved understanding of legal options.

Goal 5: Provide support to strengthen navigators' roles as highly valued partners in local responses to human trafficking.

Goal 6: Enhance relationships among law enforcement, prosecution, and victim service providers so that Task Force members work together effectively on human trafficking investigations.

Goal 7: Collaborate and consult with Tribal Nations and communities in North Dakota to provide culturally responsive services to Native victims of human trafficking.

Goal 8: Use funding and training to increase trafficking survivors' options for aftercare for long-term independence and healing.

Goal 9: Facilitate training and collaboration to strengthen prosecutions of human trafficking cases.

Goal 10: Establish consolidation of specialized federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel and victim service specialists at a single site to enhance information sharing and cross-occupational team building and cooperation.

SUCCESS STORY

The NDHTTF is grateful to have the consent of a client to share her story of trafficking for the Commission report. This testimonial demonstrates the need for ongoing prevention, service provision, and investigation for trafficking clients throughout the state. The NDHTTF is grateful to the survivor for her bravery in recounting her experience to better inform the public on human trafficking.

The client arrived in North Dakota as a single mom from Michigan, optimistic about the opportunities North Dakota would offer her and her family. She remembers her first sight of the expansive horizon and the landscape, which made her feel both excited and scared. She met some kind, helpful people who gave her a cleaning job. Initially she transitioned well into her new life, but quickly found herself low on energy and stressed to make ends meet. The client met a neighbor who appeared to be a reliable businessman with a family. This neighbor befriended her and then began to manipulate her. She did not realize until later that the dynamics of this relationship were that of human trafficking. Eventually, the client relocated elsewhere in North Dakota, yet found herself involved with another individual connected to human trafficking. The client stated that until people are educated and there are enough agencies and individuals working to prevent trafficking, human trafficking will continue to affect North Dakotans. Her traffickers manipulated her into thinking that service providers were out to get her. Her traffickers scared her into believing she owed them for the drugs they forced her to use. The client had nowhere else to go, but she knew she was not safe.

The client shared the following:

“Living somewhere that allows for opportunities and raising a family is what I found in North Dakota, but I also see it as a dark place. There is money and power here, and that brings a lot of opportunities for human trafficking. If no one was paying for it, it wouldn't be here. This is a community issue. I know I would have gotten out sooner - or maybe not gotten involved in human trafficking at all - if the community understood or accepted this as a problem. People shun me when I talk about my story. It's not socially acceptable here, and people victim-blame me for my experience. They put me in a category of 'whore' or 'drug addict'. On the outside, traffickers seem like normal people. My perpetrator was a family man who did not use drugs or alcohol. A lot of these men who traffic women and men use the women and men to take the blame for them. Traffickers promise vacations, love, and drugs to get you to do the dirty work. I did not realize I was being used this way until later when I was pulled over and took the fall for my trafficker.”

The client finally reached out to an advocate after she was raped. She reported the rape to law enforcement, but she still returned to her trafficker, which she says is a common behavior due to fear and not having anyone else to rely on.

The client revealed, “Traffickers aren't always bad, because then their victims wouldn't return, but they are manipulative. My traffickers would plan 'accidents' where I was harmed. I was trapped and under constant supervision. I started recognizing something was not right, and I am thankful for having contacts I could trust.”

It wasn't until the client ended up in a hospital with injuries from her perpetrator that people started believing her story. North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force staff assured her that she was being heard and she would get help. The client found motivation through her advocates and Human Trafficking Navigators. She said that the case managers were always available to help, but that she

SUCCESS STORY

continued

had to put in the work too and make an effort to regain control of her life. The client stated that task force staff and survivor advocates want the best for victims and are effective in helping survivors and their families feel safe. She felt that her probation officer also made her feel safe and could tell when she was struggling. Along with the community, she feels that her sons motivate her to work even harder.

The client stated, “The Human Trafficking program and task force advocates and navigators are amazing. I was able to open up to them when I was struggling, and I felt a bond with them. This program saved me. I knew that the navigator on the other end of the phone was a good person, especially when I struggled with PTSD. The navigator took time to get to know me in the hospital and rediscover my true self and bring out my creative side again. In order to heal, I had to forgive myself, and I never knew how to do that before.”

The client still struggles to trust people because of her experience, but states that she believes it was her partner, friends, and community who helped to get her out. They provided her with support and a place to stay. She feels she owes her life and her story to her friends and community. “We all deserve opportunity here. It is hard, but I am here and I am doing it. I am putting in the work and I show up. I may not get it right every time, but I show up and I give my all. I love North Dakota, North Dakota is my home and I want people to know they do not need to run away. Keep going, sign up for school, keep learning and educate yourself on your experience. It is bittersweet to connect with people on this level.”

She continues, “We also need training in technology. We need to teach hotel staff, law enforcement, teachers, convenience store employees, and healthcare workers. North Dakota needs more prevention training to teach kids that it’s not just ‘stranger danger’. It used to be ‘go and tell an adult’, but that is not always realistic for youth. If you feel like something’s wrong, check in with people. Being checked in on from people who cared about me saved my life. We need funds to educate younger generations and their parents. By turning away from the problem, it is going to make it worse.”

The client wants to use her experience to give back to victims in her community. She is thankful to law enforcement agencies that worked with her and gave her time to process, never leaving her behind. State funding assisted with her medical bills from the ‘accidental’ injuries inflicted by her trafficker, and she is incredibly grateful for all of the assistance. She says “I want women and men to know that there is help out there. We get written off as ‘false reporters’ or ‘crying wolf’, but people do not understand the mental health and trauma aspect. I learned that women and men can get out and there are good people to help. We are someone’s wife, daughter, mom, or sister. People are not property. I may not be able to save the whole world at once but I will do it one girl at a time, that is my goal. I believe there is a higher power watching over me. Love always prevails, good will always outweigh evil.”

RESOURCES

Additional information related to work of the NDHTTF can be found at:

www.ndhttf.org

<https://attorneygeneral.nd.gov/public-safety/human-trafficking>

CONCLUSION



The Attorney General's Office and the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force continue to *work together to shed light on the state of human trafficking in North Dakota*. Turning the tide on exploitation and trafficking will take the continued attention and commitment of our elected leaders, law enforcement and non-profit partners. The Attorney General's Office urges elected officials, non-profit leaders, federal partners and all law enforcement jurisdictions to remain steadfast in their commitment to working collaboratively to end human trafficking in North Dakota.