

Human trafficking is a crime that is not confined to a specific industry, locality, or area of law. It crosses boundaries and jurisdictions. An effective response to this crime can only be built when stakeholders with a variety of expertise participate. Law enforcement, prosecutors, service providers, relevant agencies such as Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services, and survivors must all work together to eradicate human trafficking. A dedicated human trafficking task force is an invaluable tool for the coordination of efforts. Task forces provide an opportunity for stakeholders to meet and coordinate efforts. Coordinated strategies result in more investigations and prosecutions, as well as better assistance for survivors and greater awareness amongst the general public.

### **Current Policy**

At the federal level, the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (PITF) was established by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. The PITF serves a vital role in coordinating the anti-trafficking efforts of various agencies and facilitates a comprehensive and cohesive approach to address trafficking in the United States. In addition to the PITF, the Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office of Victims of Crime within the U.S. Department of Justice provide funding to local task forces that bring together local law enforcement and service providers. The Administration of Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds local coalitions in states.

At the state level, twenty states have enacted legislation requiring or encouraging the creation of a statewide task force. There are many more state or local task forces that are not legislatively mandated. While these non-statutorily mandated task forces serve a valuable role, they are more vulnerable to disbandment when priorities change or a convener of the task force is no longer present. A statute can create a more permanent and stable structure.

The activities of state task forces vary by state, but there are some common trends. Many states establish task forces that are responsible for investigating human trafficking and evaluating the current approach. States also use task forces to coordinate law enforcement activities and the provision of social services. Some task forces are also required to collect and report on data relating to trafficking in the state.

In 2013, the Uniform Law Commission released a Uniform Act on the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking (Uniform Act), which includes a section on the creation of a state-wide council. The Uniform Act serves as a guide for state legislators and may help to encourage the adoption of these types of laws.

### **Suggested Language from Uniform Act on the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking**

Section 19. Human Trafficking [Council].

- (a) The [Governor] shall appoint the chair and members of a [council] on human trafficking the [state department], including designees from [state, local, or tribal agencies] that have contact with victims or perpetrators, nongovernmental organizations that represent or work with victims, and other organizations and individuals, including victims, whose expertise would benefit the [council].
- (b) The [state department] represented on the [council] created under this section shall provide staff to the [council].

(c) The [council] created under this section shall meet on a regular basis and:

- (1) Develop a coordinated and comprehensive plan to provide victims with services;
- (2) Collect and evaluate data on human trafficking in this state and submit an annual report to the [Governor] [and legislature];
- (3) Promote public awareness about human trafficking, victim remedies and services, and trafficking prevention;
- (4) Create a public-awareness sign that contains the [state, local, and] National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline information;
- (5) Coordinate training on human trafficking prevention and victim services for state [and local] employees who may have recurring contact with victims or perpetrators; and
- (6) Conduct other appropriate activities.