



**Office of Human Trafficking Prevention of Howard County
Labor Trafficking Project:
Dispelling Myths and Establishing Collaborations**

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Executive Summary

Choice Research Associates (CRA) was engaged by the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention for Howard County Government in June of 2024 to conduct an exploratory evaluation of human trafficking within the jurisdiction. The goal of this research was to develop a better understanding of the prevalence of human trafficking in Howard County, with an emphasis on labor trafficking to identify gaps in knowledge and/or resources, and develop recommendations for future consideration. The descriptive nature of this study should enhance the understanding and identification of human trafficking survivors and offenders in Howard County, training and service-area needs, and potential partnerships and resources.

Methodology

This research project includes both a review of existing literature and one-on-one qualitative interviews with experts located in the District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) region. This project highlights the lack of available data, describes frequent myths about human trafficking, and provides recommendations for increasing awareness, enhancing training, and effectively meeting the needs of survivors.

The current analysis is a snapshot – a picture in time from the vantage point of six providers in and around Howard County. Given the short period of study and the small sample interviewed, the findings should be thoughtfully considered, and any policy or program implications should be done in conjunction with further discussions with local providers, criminal justice agencies, legal advisors, and stakeholders.

Findings

Through interviews with six individuals identified as experts by Office of Human Trafficking Prevention for Howard County Government, seven key themes emerged:

- Human trafficking survivors are living and working in Howard County.
- Survivors do not fit a single “profile.”
- Labor trafficking is largely missing from discussions on human trafficking, awareness campaigns, and trainings.
- There are resources and services available across the DMV region, but these services are often underutilized.
- Training can be enhanced and expanded to additional disciplines.
- Collaboration is a key component for jurisdictions working to combat trafficking.
- Success for any program should be defined by meeting the needs of the survivor.

Recommendations

Overall, the findings shed light on those victims hiding in plain sight (Hepburn & Simon, 2010). In order for Howard County to effectively move forward with a comprehensive approach to human trafficking, enhanced education and intentional collaboration will be paramount.

Based on the findings of this study, the Howard County Office on Human Trafficking Prevention should consider the following next steps:

- Enhanced training for criminal justice professionals, inspectors, school personnel, and human trafficking education for students.
- Development of robust language services to include adequate interpretation services and translation of written materials based on local needs (i.e., languages are most common in and around Howard County), particularly for employee rights materials and victim services materials.
- Establishment of community awareness campaigns to bust myths and provide resources.
- Development of a continuum of care with the local health department, community affairs agency, and other relevant practitioners and policymakers in Howard County.
- Development of performance measures and data collection tools to more accurately assess the prevalence and incidence of trafficking, as well as monitor intervention efforts.

Introduction

Choice Research Associates (CRA) was engaged by the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention (HCHTP) for Howard County Government in June of 2024 to conduct an exploratory evaluation of human trafficking in the jurisdiction. This report is designed to provide a better understanding of the prevalence of human trafficking, identify gaps in knowledge and/or resources, and develop recommendations for future consideration. The experiences and knowledge of service providers across the District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) region can help guide practitioners in Howard County in establishing effective policies, developing realistic practices, and identifying appropriate resource allocations. Overall, this study aims to enhance the understanding and identification of human trafficking survivors and offenders in Howard County, training and service-area needs, and potential partnerships and resources.

Methodology

This project incorporates a brief description of available literature along with detailed qualitative exploratory interviews with six human trafficking experts/practitioners from the DMV region. This project highlights the need for better data, effective education and training, and county-wide collaboration relative to human trafficking – particularly for labor trafficking.

An initial review of available literature was intended to frame the prevalence of, and best practices for, addressing human trafficking in the United States, ideally allowing the research team to focus on jurisdictions similar to Howard County. However, searches for “human trafficking” revealed a significant gap in data and research surrounding the field of study. Both searches for “sex trafficking” and “labor trafficking” suggested underreporting, consistent with other power-based violence victimizations. Data and research are sparse for both types of trafficking, and a review of available studies confirmed most studies have been done on specific towns (e.g., Midwest, a small town in North Carolina), providing limited use for jurisdictions hoping to address human trafficking locally. Though research has steadily increased around sex trafficking during the last two decades, data remain inconsistent. This is likely due, in part, to varying reporting requirements within and across jurisdictions, and local buy-in (i.e., community and political support). Simultaneously, labor trafficking continues to be widely ignored by communities and in the research. Most the data available are victim-based reports and organizational reports captured by specific organizations using data collected by the authoring organization. Since the literature review provided minimal relevant data and support, the CRA team recommended combining the findings with input from local experts working in an around Howard County.

Qualitative exploratory interviews were conducted with the six experts/practitioners identified by the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Manager and Task Force Coordinator. Participants included Chief Executive Officers/Executive Directors, organization founders, lawyers, project management staff, and a survivor-leader. Cumulatively, interview participants had approximately 60 years of experience, representing organizations serving a range of survivors – including, but not limited to, juveniles, adults, non-English speaking individuals, and migrant workers. Collectively, the participants represented the greater DMV region and spoke about

trafficking in general terms of their experience in their various roles. While some participants commented on specific activities and initiatives in Howard County, much of the information shared was not unique to the jurisdiction. This does not make the information less informative, but instead, the details should be considered as providing an understanding of a larger geographic area – i.e., the Washington metropolitan area., rather than focused on Howard County.

Interviews involved one-on-one discussions via video (i.e., zoom), utilizing a semi-structured questionnaire. (The data collection instrument created for this project can be found in Appendix A). With consent from the individual participants, each interview session was recorded (video) and transcribed using Otter AI software. To process the interview data, each interview was reviewed, and themes were identified among participant responses, as well as key examples and concepts relevant to identifying and addressing human trafficking in Howard County. These points were coded into various categories using NVivo 15 software. Codes included, for example: collaboration, training, awareness, victim identification, industries, etc. Once coded, the examples and information were consolidated and summarized for this report.

Existing Literature

Introduction. Human trafficking includes sex trafficking (e.g., prostitution and pornography), labor trafficking (e.g., working in industries such as agriculture and construction), and domestic servitude (i.e., working in private homes) of adults and children through the use of force, fraud, or coercion¹. The true extent of human trafficking is difficult to determine due to the hidden nature of the crime, underreporting by victims, and a lack of comprehensive and standardized data collection. However, research studies, government agency reports, and non-profit statistics suggest human trafficking in the United States is pervasive. For example, the Department of Homeland Security (2024) indicated there were 1,300 human trafficking related investigations in 2023 (resulting in over 2,300 arrests) and over 10,000 trafficking situations were reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2021 (Polaris Project, 2022).

Locally, evidence suggests that the DMV region ranks 10th in the U.S. for reports of trafficking (National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), n.d.). In fact, since inception, the NHTH has identified more than 3,000 victims in over 1,800 human trafficking cases in Maryland. In 2023 alone, the hotline received over 500 signals (i.e., hotline calls, SMS messages, online reporting, web chat, and/or email correspondence) leading to the identification of 253 victims in 152 cases of human trafficking. Cases included labor trafficking cases, sex trafficking cases, and cases involving both labor and sex trafficking. Victims included females and males, juveniles and adults, foreign nationals and US citizens.

Although these figures sound robust at both the national and state levels, the extent of the problem is likely much greater as the majority of these figures *only* capture reported incidents. A recent research study by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) (2020) examined the incidences of human trafficking at three research sites. Their findings suggest that official numbers from law enforcement or social service agency records represent a severely acute number of potential trafficking victims (i.e., 14 to 18% of potential trafficking victims at one site; 6% or less of potential trafficking victims

¹ Note: There are many different definitions of human trafficking from both a legislative and academic perspective. Therefore, this literature review describes the extent of the problem, but does not go into each separate definition and how they can impact the final figures of the incidence and prevalence of human trafficking overall.

at the other two sites). As such, the true magnitude of human trafficking is unknown. The extent of this underestimation has been replicated in other studies (see Farrell et al., 2019). The aforementioned issues with understanding the prevalence and incidence of human trafficking are further complicated when trying to understand the scope of the problem for labor trafficking specifically. The following outlines how the intersection of economics, politics, and existing power dynamics create an environment ripe for hiding extent of human trafficking in plain sight, and more specifically, how these dynamics impact the visibility of labor trafficking most of all:

1. **Underreporting by Victims:** In general, crime victims significantly underreport their experiences and this contributes to what is known as the “dark figure” of crime to criminologists. The “dark figure” of crime refers to the amount of criminal activity that goes unreported, undetected, and unrecorded in official records by law enforcement agencies (Biderman & Reiss, 1967; Skogan, 1977; Yoon, 2015). A victim’s decision not to report can be influenced by many factors including fear of retaliation, disinterest in participating in the criminal justice system, potential stigma related to victimhood, lack of support and resources, and more. The reasons for non-reporting are further nuanced for trafficking victims for those who are undocumented may be fearful of the risk of their own deportation and/or arrest if they were to report. Further, they may be unaware or unsure² of the existing protections available to them as survivors of trafficking (Polaris Project, 2024). Additionally, not all survivors see themselves as experiencing human trafficking due to a variety of reasons, but commonly, due to the complex power dynamics between themselves and their trafficker which often involve misplaced loyalty to, and manipulation by, their traffickers.
2. **Hidden Nature of Trafficking:** Human traffickers make significant efforts to hide their crimes and obscure the visibility of trafficking from the public and law enforcement authorities. Human trafficking involves organized criminal activity where traffickers leverage diverse networks to recruit, transport, and exploit victims, resulting in a \$32 billion annual industry worldwide (Owen et al., 2015; United Nation’s Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). Many of these industries are even public facing—not just illicit or underground—such as in restaurants and in cleaning services yet, the acts of trafficking go unnoticed (Polaris Project, 2024).
3. **Data Collection Issues:** To date, there is no comprehensive and uniform system for reporting and recording incidents of human trafficking in the United States. The NHTH organized by the Polaris Project has tried to address this gap, but their figures only include those incidents voluntarily reported to their hotline. Additionally, many existing governmental bodies and law enforcement agencies that collect human trafficking data are siloed, so that information is not centralized and often operates under different definitions and priorities, making it impossible to create a comprehensive picture of reported trafficking in the United States (even if combined). For example, Anderson and colleagues (2020) documented their effort to integrate human trafficking data from multiple agencies in one state -- Ohio. Evaluating data from eight official sources, the definitions of human trafficking utilized varied substantially, from leveraging Ohio state definitions (50%), federal classifications (37.5%), and no clear definitions or classification schema (12.5%). Their work shows there is critical need to align both the conceptual and operational approaches to

² This lack of awareness can be exacerbated when the information and materials provided by government agencies are unavailable in a survivor’s primary language.

human trafficking data (on both a state and national level) in order to uncover the true scope of human trafficking victims.

It is not only data collection that is impacted by the fragmented nature of government and policing in the United States. Intervention efforts to combat trafficking often take this same approach and there does not exist sufficient coordination between local, state, and federal government efforts, along with non-profits and other community-based partners, to organize a collective response (Long et al., 2018). This lack of coordination can impact data collection and effective deterrence and adjudication of trafficking incidents in the community.

4. **Added Difficulty for Labor Trafficking:** Labor trafficking takes on diverse forms of exploitation in a variety of industries; from one organization to the next, personnel may not issue spot the same situations or scenarios as labor trafficking incidents. For example, labor trafficking may overlap with voluntary work and legitimate employment. This may make it difficult to distinguish between labor trafficking and other types of workplace exploitation, immigration violations, and/or labor disputes. Additionally, it can be argued that labor trafficking also gets less attention from the media and larger public discourse due to the fact that it is less of a headline grabber issue, as well as the fact that many of us benefit from it, in comparison to its sex trafficking counterpart. We detail these differences below.

First, labor trafficking is considered a less obvious and less sensational type of abuse as it often does not include signs or evidence of physical violence. A factsheet from the Office on Trafficking in Persons (n.d.) describes patterns and/or behaviors to observe for the identification of labor trafficking that may be less apparent to the untrained eye. For example, responses from workers that sound “coached” and individuals that appear to be isolated, escorted, or guarded by others (i.e., traffickers) may signal a concern for forced labor. Furthermore, while direct physical injury or assault may be less common than sex trafficking, there are physical symptoms which may be related to a negative or unhealthy work environment such as headaches, hearing loss, and respiratory illness.

Additionally, media attention plays a significant role in our understanding of larger social problems. This means the stories covered, issues focused on (i.e., labor trafficking versus sex trafficking), and the overall portrayal of survivors can impact official policies, funding allocation, and public perceptions of human trafficking overall (Riffe et al., 2014; Vance, 2012). For example, Sanford and colleagues (2016), reviewed over 400 human trafficking related articles published in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* from 1986 to 2006. Their content analysis found that the minority of articles focused on labor trafficking alone (11%) and/or mentioned labor trafficking within the context of sex trafficking (13%). This lack of attention on labor trafficking is consistently found in other studies (*see* Farrell & Fahy, 2009; Gulati, 2012); yet, research suggests labor trafficking is likely the larger issue (International Labour Organization, 2005; United Nation’s Office on Drugs and Crime, 2014). Research also notes that labor trafficking events do not result in equally attention-grabbing headlines as sex trafficking (e.g., “Human Trafficking Around the World” (Tirman, 2013) or “She has a Pimp’s Name Etched on Her” (Kristof, 2012)) which may further explain the media’s selective emphasis on sex trafficking overall. Studies that focus on the portrayal of human trafficking in the media provide insight into how the need to “entertain” or create an emotional response is often prioritized over the need to inform. As such, this impacts

governmental action for both policy and intervention responses to trafficking overall (Vance, 2012).

Second, most of us benefit from labor trafficking in some way and this may be without realizing it. The US Department of Labor (2024) published a list of 204 goods (e.g., garments, food items) from 82 countries and areas which are produced by child labor and/or forced labor. This report highlights how although there may be legislative efforts to reduce the production and importation of goods manufactured by labor trafficking, there are still many products on U.S. markets that come from exploitative labor. Research notes that it is difficult to identify the extent of products U.S. consumers purchase that come from forced labor, but some studies describe a 5 to 15% buyer savings for produce items overall, manufacturing cost savings of 40% for garments, for example (Food Chain Workers Alliance, 2024; International Labour Organization, 2019). As a result, consumers access cheaper products, and businesses maintain larger profit margins, when labor trafficking is involved in the manufacture and delivery of consumer goods and services.

To gain a better understanding of labor trafficking in the United States, some labor trafficking studies have focused on specific regions or states, such as North Carolina, Georgia, and midwestern states. Such studies suggest that migrant farm workers, for example, most commonly report experiencing exploitative labor practices, fraud, and deception (Zhang et al, 2019). One study of a major Midwest city found that labor trafficking (agriculture, construction, and landscaping) was more common than sex trafficking when evaluating tips and potential victims (Koegler et al., 2019).

On a more global scale, the estimates of labor trafficking are staggering. In 2022, the International Labour Organization estimated that 27.6 million people were in forced labor. Additionally, their findings highlight how labor trafficking is a global issue, and no part of the world is immune to this hidden pandemic.

Conclusion. Overall, researchers and public officials acknowledge how the complex nature of human trafficking makes it difficult to study, and consequently difficult to increase awareness and develop effective policies and programs (Wright et al, 2021). While human trafficking research has generally focused on sex trafficking, particularly international cases (Zhang, 2012), there is no doubt sex trafficking and labor trafficking occurs in communities across the United States, and in our communities in the DMV. Engaging in meaningful policy and program discussions is tricky. At best, however, researchers and policymakers must rely on the limited data available. Without the ability to illustrate the scope of the problem, policymakers are left struggling to address human trafficking in their local jurisdictions. As a result, service providers become increasingly frustrated, and victims continue to hide in plain sight. As one researcher stated over ten years ago:

The movement against human trafficking has an urgent and yet schizophrenic problem to solve - government agencies, international organizations, and advocacy groups claim that modern slavery has never been so serious and so deserving unprecedented resources to mobilize counter measures, and at the same time they also claim that scarce empirical data are available to verify the extent of this problem. (Zhang, 2012, p. 480)

Qualitative Findings

Through semi-structured interviews³ with six experts/practitioners⁴, several consistent and important themes emerged which help to dispel trafficking myths and stereotypes. Specifically, the analysis of the interviews revealed the occurrence of human trafficking within Howard County and noting there is no single “profile” of a survivor or perpetrator. The analysis also highlighted the importance of appropriately identifying what defines “success” for a survivor. The need for more training and intentional collaborations was also consistently noted, particularly related to labor trafficking, which is often missing in conversations surrounding trafficking efforts. Interpretation of these qualitative data findings should be considered with caution as each participant brings their own unique perspective, opinions, and experiences to the discussion.

Dispelling Myths: Human Trafficking is Limited to Sex Trafficking

Trafficking, by design, removes an individual’s ability to say “no” or to leave their situation. Although it remains an underrecognized crime, and services for victims continue to be insufficient, recognition and service availability have increased for sex trafficking victims, whereas labor trafficking victims remaining largely unserved and unseen. Unfortunately, labor trafficking remains missing from the discussion. As one participant phrased it, “[W]hen it comes to labor trafficking, everyone benefits, and that’s why it gets less focus, less concern, right? More of a blind eye to it, because you know, how did your food get to your plate, and who was involved in the process.” Collectively, participants suggest labor trafficking lacks the support sex trafficking has found for three main reasons: everyone benefits from labor trafficking in some way, victims have a continued lack of awareness and knowledge because they do not know their employment rights in the US, and labor trafficking is not sensationalized in the same manner as sex trafficking - it gets less attention in the public eye.

Succinctly stated by one participant, “[A] lot of our labor trafficked people, they knew they were coming to this country to work. They wanted to work. They just didn’t realize that they were being sold to someone who was going to exploit them, abuse them and not give them any money, right?” Individuals, particularly those from other countries or those living in poverty, can be susceptible to accepting poor working conditions. This is especially true for individuals who do not speak English, lack sufficient literacy skills, and/or fear the criminal justice system. These recruitment systems often involve a third-party broker connecting vulnerable individuals and communities to employers in the US.

Furthermore, participants frequently described a reluctance by some employers to engage in anti-trafficking efforts and a lack of enforcement by government agencies fueled by a lack of training on how to identify and respond to labor trafficking situations. Across Maryland, there are cases of employees being treated in slave-like conditions where employers are “not paying them, denying medical, necessary medical treatments, those sorts of things.”

The following are true examples of situations relayed by interview participants based on survivor experience:

³ See Appendix A, “Data Collection Instrument.”

⁴ Due to privacy constraints, the data are deidentified, thus our analysis does not provide names of participants or organizational names.

“[H]ousekeepers or someone to take care of their children or their elderly parents, and they don’t let them leave the house, and they make them work maybe 16 hours a week for very little pay, they’re under fed, and they don’t have freedom to leave.

“...[T]eachers as well, multiple of them and from DC public schools. They get their degree in their home country because it’s much cheaper than getting a degree here. Then, through the promise of these great jobs at these great salaries and the American way of life, they come over here only to be not paid appropriate wages, longer hours, and it’s basically like indentured servitude. ‘You have to do this for at least three years at low to no pay to pay back your debt for us getting you over here’, type of the thing... So it’s these, like Talent Recruitment organizations...but they’re exploiting the people.”

Dispelling Myths: Profile of a Survivor/Victim

Human trafficking is a diversified crime. Participants reported that although obvious victimizations (e.g., white van kidnapping, groups of underage girls found in a hotel) occur, human trafficking survivors are often not who one would *assume* they would be. Participants consistently noted the negative impact of profiling survivors of human trafficking – assuming trafficking only occurs among certain subcultures, within certain occupations, and always under the express physical control of their traffickers. Perpetuation of such myths create an environment where law enforcement officers and service providers struggle to accurately identify at-risk individuals and/or victims.

As detailed below, participants reported trafficking cases in the DMV region included survivors who were:

- **Legal immigrants and illegal immigrants**

One participant noted the following, *“[W]e’re seeing a lot of Chinese and South American born people being exploited, and they’re actually entering this country legally through temporary like student or work visas and being sold...”* Furthermore, Asian communities face what one participant referred to as the “model minority myth” where Asian residents believe, *“...we come here and we work hard and we don’t get into trouble. We are not the ones that are victims. We’re not the ones that are in need of public services or the police.”* The participant continued, *“A lot of times, they’re even afraid of the police, because the countries they come from, the police aren’t to be trusted. A lot of them come are escaping from authoritarian regimes and they don’t trust the government, so they wouldn’t trust the police, they wouldn’t trust social services to help them get out of their situation.”*

- **US citizens**

Although there is a misconception that labor trafficking only happens to foreigners, one participant confirmed that approximately 10% of victims of labor trafficking served by their organization are US-born.

- **Men and women**

One participant noted that approximately three quarters of the people their organization serves are women. Another indicated that although male and female survivors are most often identified or referred by law enforcement officers, males are less likely to self-identify than female survivors, which is consistent with research that indicates gender stereotypes, associated stigma, and lack of awareness and understanding regarding male victimization are factors that reduce the likelihood of males reporting victimization (Office to Monitor and Combat

Trafficking in Persons, 2023). Relative to Howard County, one participant suggested, “[O]ne of the things in Howard County that is somewhat unique, also from what we’ve seen is we’ve had more male survivors of trafficking identified here, mainly around labor, but some around sex, because, again, it’s just, it’s something that folks don’t talk about...it’s probably more common that we realized in these communities.”

- **Youth and adults**

All participants reported serving mostly adult survivors. However, as one participant noted of sex trafficking: “There a lot of online recruitment. We worked with the FBI - there’s a ring in Baltimore, and they probably draw from people from Howard County...they get a lot of youth or young adults who are invited to parties, raves or whatever, at a nightclub in Baltimore. They are offered all kinds of alcohol and fancy foods and, you know, a great time. And once the people get there, they’re actually trafficked, and they’re manipulated into getting into a kind of a relationship, and sometimes a romantic relationship, and then they’re pimped out or whatever. So, we see a lot of online solicitations for young adults or even teenage children.”

- **English and non-English speaking**

Language barriers were identified by the majority of participants as a risk factor for victimization and a roadblock for individuals in need of services. Participants note that victims who do not speak English as a first language may be unable to read and/or comprehend information such as legal notices regarding employee rights and processes for filing complaints and government forms regarding requests assistance, if they are only provided in English. Since many victims already distrust government and law enforcement, which is reinforced by the trafficker, this language barrier ultimately creates a barrier to services.

- **Youth in foster care or adults previously in foster care**

Half of the participants reported youth in foster care being at higher risk for victimization. The transient nature of individuals who age-out of foster care can make them vulnerable to street life. One participant stated: “Foster care is attached to money, and for some well-meaning people, it’s a great system where kids do get access to support, like the movie *Shazam*. And the other side, you have kids that are being abused by the system. So inherently, they go into these homes. People are collecting a paycheck, and the kids are going into the basement and not having access to food, and there’s so few people that are monitoring it that you end up with kids in those situations for years. So, it is an inherently broken system, and it’s part of the reason that we have so much vulnerability in this country.”

Another participant expanded on the connection to trafficking within the foster care system by broadening the discussion to the entire child welfare system as:

“... [I]t’s built on this model that the child has to have a parental or guardian...what often happens is a child is potentially like, let’s say that that’s even true. I am a victim of sexual abuse by my dad, and based on models that come from the national level, like not individualized for this kid, I am not taken from the home because there’s a child, there’s a home first, right? Model now where a child is not taken out of the home. Taking kid out of the home is extremely problematic. We also have dad that’s an abuser, that family does not get complete access to services because I’ve not been taken from the home. Every step of the model that we created this government system is not based on what’s reality, what in reality is happening in these communities. Instead, it’s based on often criminalizing poverty, and folks are dealing with the fact that, like, don’t call CPS, because you’re going to be taken out of your home. When these kids need access to things like

basic food they need access to, you know, their parents are working three jobs. They need access to childcare. Like this system itself is kind of this inherent gotcha, and it's really focused on impoverished communities."

- **Transient**

One participant highlighted the transient nature of traffickers and victims of trafficking, stating: *"...[T]hey are very transient, or the population they're exploiting is very transient. I mean, the some of the trends right now is traffickers are finding these middlemen or or just using electronic media to exploit and get their money so that they're not as often having direct contact with the survivors...they're using Whats.App and like all the different chats to exchange money, because they don't want to ever get caught...They are very adept at moving their victims all around. So, if they feel like, oh, [the police department] is on to us, they're going to move to the next county, or they're going to move to the next state."*

- **Socioeconomic Status**

Wealthy families are not immune from victimization. In fact, one participant recalled that, *"[T]he first trafficking survivors identified in Maryland were trafficked into Howard County from Baltimore County. It was twins. They were they are twins, and they came from extremely affluent neighborhood, extremely affluent family in northern Baltimore County, which is...like farms and people got lots of money up there, the Hereford zone. So... it does happen. We do see it."*

However, particularly for foreign-born victims, poverty, political instability, and/or desperation push people to want to "get out" of their home countries. As one participant framed it, *"[T]raffickers take advantage of that and offer them this great place. You know, come to the United States, make a lot of money, make money to send back to your family members back in your country. So, it's just the allure of, you know, coming to America and making money and having freedom. A lot of times, there's a lot of oppression from where they're coming from, and that that kind of makes them more willing to accept poor treatment here, because they've already had poor treatment there. A lot of times they're escaping a government that's very authoritarian. And so, they already don't have that that much freedom. And so, anything seems better. So, they want to come over here, but then they're taken advantage of here."*

In addition to characteristics and types of survivors identified above, participants recognized various professions as industries where victimization is occurring in and around the DMV area. These industries include, but are not limited to:

- **School personnel**

While one participant explained how janitors and other school staff can be victims of trafficking, two participants noted how traffickers use the lure of teaching in America as a tool to traffic victims from other countries, particularly the Philipppians.

"...[A] lot of times in the Philippines, for example, they will advertise for teachers, and they'll hire people who are actually qualified, who have credentials to be educators back in their country and advertise and give them a contract to come to the United States to teach at a private school. And they will come over here and then find that there is no teaching job, really, and they're just kind of farmed out to do domestic labor and things that they didn't sign up to do. But once they're here, they don't really have a choice. And they're also in that situation, a lot of times, we find that they're kind of indentured servitude and they aren't paid because they're supposed to pay back the huge agency fees, or they've even borrowed money from people back home, and then they need to pay back the people back home for that..."

- **Medical staff – nurses, health aides**

Three participants reported how traffickers advertise for nursing staff, and other positions within the medical field, when recruiting individuals the trafficker intends to victimize.

According to one participant, *“We had a case where they brought over people who were trained...nurses, licensed nurses, and they came over and had to work in a kind of a nursing home type of thing. But it wasn’t a licensed nursing home. And again, they were put to work for many hours doing, you know, things that they didn’t sign up to do, really menial labor when they came here to be a professional nurse.”*

Another participant stated, *“... Philippine Embassy, and they’re very concerned, because a number of nurses that are coming in from those communities are being trafficked in the state. And I would assume that that also happens here. It’s just the nature, I think, of these like third party business brokers or labor brokers that are bringing people into the country and then labor trafficking them.”*

- **Carnival workers**

Though mentioned by only one participant, the transient nature of carnival work is another industry where human trafficking can occur. When discussing opportunities for identification of victims, intentional outreach, and focused awareness campaigns, one participant stated:

“[F]or example, you know, if we have a worker in the carnival industry who’s working 80 hours a week, who has really terrible living conditions, who, you know, is under, like, constant, you know, risks to health and safety. That might be a worker where we’re like, hey, like, we wonder, like, what might be, what might be their reason for staying in this position? Like, do they know that there are other opportunities available, and they might have a lot of reasons for staying in that position, but there also might be some kind of threat there that we don’t know when we’re immediately looking at the situation right. There might be that those workers passports have been retained. There might be, you know, another situation of trafficking in place. And so I think that’s where we start to ask more questions, is kind of, you know, like, what is making this worker stay, even if the conditions that are in place seem to be like very difficult working conditions...I’ll give an example of Carnival workers, um, who are only in town for a few weeks at a time, and are then moving on to another location. And what we’ve done is done some targeted Facebook ads for those workers, so that we will do a radius around the fairgrounds, so that we know we’re able to, you know, reach the workers in that targeted frame.”

- **Illicit massage businesses employees**

Participants (4) identified illicit massage businesses as one of the many ways trafficking victims exist within the local community. Specifically, one participant suggested, *“There’s a lot of people who will travel outside of DC. They want to go to a slightly more remote place, like a Montgomery county, and [Prince Georges] County, I’m sure, probably Howard County, if they can access it, so they can stay a little bit more anonymous and say that they’re going to get a massage when there’s other things going on, and the rings that the traffickers set up either whether it’s a massage parlor or even at the different hotels, like the Red Roof Inn and stuff. I mean, as soon as there’s a couple busts in the area, they move around this general DMV area because it’s hard to track them down.”*

Another participant indicated, *“We also see it in massage parlors that are advertised as massage parlors, but they’re actually like brothels or sometimes karaoke bars or nail salons are also fronts for sex trafficking.”*

- **Domestic service employees**, including those serving in homes of diplomats and other government officials

Five (5) participants confirmed domestic servitude as the leading type of labor trafficking in the region. Specifically, participants noted au pairs, housekeepers, and individuals providing childcare services in homes of diplomats as common situations where victimization occurs. As one participant explained, *“We have clients that were forced into this country, brought into this country by diplomats.”* Situations can include, for example, a group of young females accompanying officials to the United States to provide 24/7 care and services for a diplomatic family. Since these families often operate under the protection of diplomatic immunity, identification of such cases can be difficult. One participant also noted that there can be confusion regarding culturally acceptable behaviors – *“[T]hey need to have more training on both sides, both sex and labor, right? Because ... the police came in the house, but ... they didn't ask the right question. They didn't know. They just thought it was a community thing, right? That it was normal for a little girl carrying a baby on the back and cooking, right?”*

- **Hospitality staff**

One participant identified cases of labor trafficking occurring in hospitality fields, such as maids and other hotel staff.

- **Restaurant staff**

Similar to hospitality staff, participants (3) also noted cases of human trafficking occurring locally within the restaurant industry. Examples included kitchen and wait staff, and participants reported both sex and labor trafficking occurring within the industry.

- **Construction workers**

Another field one participant indicated survivors have been victims of human trafficking includes construction. Language barriers and immigration status makes certain individuals particularly vulnerable. Specifically, *“[T]here's so many different circumstances...I've seen, and these are these construction cases...they're taking advantage of new immigrants, so no prior relationship, and really going to recruit among vulnerable populations.”*

- **Agriculture/farming workers**

The majority of participants (4) expressed concern regarding victimization within the agricultural and farming industry, noting Maryland is particularly prone to such victimizations on the Eastern Shore and in rural areas. Participants noted crab pickers on the Eastern Shore, and one participant spoke directly about programming previously used to engage farm workers in Howard County: *“[S]pecifically here in Howard County, where they go out and ensure that...the folks that work on the farm, typically that are either undocumented or here on H-1B visas, that they were knowledgeable of their rights, so they understood...[It was] both prevention and also, like [an] interdiction-based model that were being used. I think there was some issue, and I can't remember if it was with service provider or if it was a funding issue that that stopped maybe two years ago...[I]t seemed like a really unique and effective model.”*

Participants also noted other situations that were not explored in depth but warrant recognition, such as: international forced marriages, victimization among homeless populations, and commercial sex workers. In addition to the varying types of victims and industries where victims are trafficked, a

few other key themes emerged. For example, four or more participants reported that victims with prior sexual abuse, were isolated, and had language barriers were at a higher risk to be trafficked.

Participants also dispelled the myth that trafficking victims are always locked away in a room, being held captive from the world. Instead, victims are not always directly under the supervision or physical control of their trafficker, and can often be found in forward facing businesses, interacting with the public. However, due to necessity, poverty, and/or the effects of long-term or severe trauma, the victim may not be willing or able to leave, nor choose to seek help. This not only results in continued trauma for the victim, but it also leads to underreporting of trafficking cases. This, in turn, fuels a community's ability to deny that trafficking is occurring in their neighborhoods or businesses. This issue is explored more in the next section.

Dispelling Myths: It Does Not Happen Here

Acknowledging that trafficking is occurring in and around Howard County, one participant noted: *"I think funders largely in this space [anti-trafficking] are...in that Savior mindset, which is really dangerous... I think, there is an inherent misunderstanding with funders about what trafficking is. And I think some of it actually plays back...to how the person looks and whether they meet, kind of what we idealize is which trafficking is...But I think when they don't, when you don't see it and you believe it happens to that community over there, it's a lot easier to otherize people."*

Another participant indicated: *"[P]eople think they have a general knowledge about trafficking and what it looks like and the shape it takes. I don't think people are truly aware of how often it's happening right in your community."*

All six participants acknowledge there are various reasons communities can be reluctant to acknowledge trafficking is occurring in their jurisdiction, including:

- **Lack of data**

Consistent with CRA's review of the literature, participants reported a lack of data available to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. This gap permits communities to deny the existence of underreported crimes, minimizes the impact of these crimes within their communities, and prevents resource allocation for anti-trafficking efforts across many jurisdictions, including Howard County.

- **Victim-blaming**

Human trafficking can involve, but does not always involve prostitution. As one participant noted, *"I think because it's hard to quantify. I think it's, there is a lot of victim-blaming. I mean, we know that a lot of people think that, oh, that's, that's just somebody wanting to be a prostitute. Um, well, that's not always the case."*

- **Wealth and prestige of the community**

"I think that there's a lot of very wealthy, very powerful people engaged in this type of behavior, and they don't want it to come to light."

"...our typical community response is that people know it's a bad problem, but they don't really think that in the more affluent areas that that could possibly happen, or they think that it's all foreign nationals and not they don't really think of American people being trafficked."

Another reported, “[W]e have a survivor right now who was recovered from a very powerful foreign diplomat’s home, personal home...there’s a lot of money in it. Anywhere that there’s a lot of money, people don’t want to rock that boat. And so, they’re willing to downgrade it in their mind for what it really is like, oh, it’s not that bad. They’re still giving them a safe place to sleep. And so, they’re, you know, working 24/7, cleaning their house, you know?”

Specific to Howard County, one respondent stated: “I think the other thing that happens specifically in Howard County is you see...the demographic that makes up Howard, which is mainly kind of these suburbanites that are like upper middle class to upper class. They’re the ones that are out at the mall, they’re the ones that are out at Whole Foods, right? And I think that we completely ignore in this county, the folks that are behind the counter, so to speak, that, and I think that is, in my opinion, probably the most untapped, identified group of trafficking survivors. Are the folks that seem to be somewhat invisible and counties of high influence... trafficking is not just a young girl being sold into prostitution on the streets...it can look a lot of different ways...like the nurses is one, certainly folks that work in domestic servitude is one that I think is probably very, very common here... I also think one of the things in Howard County that is somewhat unique, from what we’ve seen, is we’ve had more male survivors of trafficking identified here, mainly around labor, but some around sex, because, again, it’s just, it’s something that folks don’t talk about. And so, I think it’s probably more common that we realized in these communities.”

Overall, the denial that human trafficking occurs across the region, and the misconception that human trafficking only involves sex (and not labor) trafficking, hinders advocates, service providers, and policymakers from effectively recognizing and addressing trafficking in their communities.

Dispelling Myths: Survivors All Want and Need the Same Things

Survivors of human trafficking each have a unique story, combining their childhood experiences, how their victimization began, what caused them to stay, and when and how they decided to get help. Though pieces of each story may appear similar, the needs and wants of each survivor differ. Participants explained how the goal for successful intervention and services should always focus on each individual survivor. As one respondent stated, “[T]he survivor is in charge, and the survivor is...determining the course of their services and what matters most to them.” Reportedly, some survivors are focused on short-term services while others are interested in obtaining long-term stability. Some will need literacy training and others may need translation support. While many may need legal services, some may be focused on “getting out of the life” and others may be pursuing charges against their trafficker(s). One survivor may be looking to obtain safe, legal employment while another might prioritize safe, stable housing.

Overall, according to participants, empowering survivors to make decisions for themselves, preventing revictimization/re-traumatization, and meeting the physical and mental health needs of survivors is critical. A participant explained one program’s approach to survivor support: “[F]rom the moment a survivor walks in the door, they’re empowered to make decisions for themselves, and we support them in that, including serving individuals when they’re continuing to engage in sex work or even going back to an abusive situation, if we’re talking about labor trafficking...the first step, you’ve got to get somebody out of that crisis mode to be able to really effectually think about what’s next.”

By acknowledging human trafficking includes both labor and sex trafficking, communities and policymakers can develop a more robust and accurate understanding of the problem.

Misinformation about the profile of a trafficking survivor/victim, for example, can be detrimental not only to the victim and future victims, but also to the community in which the trafficking is taking place (i.e., workplace, neighborhood). Instead, it is crucial to recognize that anyone can become a victim of human trafficking - dispelling the belief, for example, that victims are only teen runaways or that domestic servitude is culturally acceptable. As communities become more willing to acknowledge the existence of trafficking in their neighborhoods and businesses, advocates, service providers, and policymakers will be able to establish effective collaborations in an effort to combat trafficking in the DMV region. One way to build collaboration is through training. We discuss the importance of the training below, followed by an exploration of the types of partnerships ideal for building a strong network.

Establishing Collaborations: Training is Crucial

Participants affirmed various training programs are provided across the DMV region for non-government organizations, criminal justice agencies, etc. Generally, trainings were reported to be effective, but the need for additional training was a recurring theme throughout the interviews. For example, one participant referenced the two annual conferences (one for human trafficking professionals and one for law enforcement) in Ocean City, Maryland, where there is good representation from every county. One participant confirmed the usefulness of law enforcement trainings and having at least one or two subject matter experts within the agency. However, the participant also noted the importance of ensuring patrol officers and those responding to domestic violence cases are trained to recognize when trafficking might be occurring – both labor and sex trafficking. Another participant suggested training of law enforcement officers would be beneficial since, “...[T]he police are not as sympathetic as they should be, and a lot of times it's [related to] language barriers.” Participants also noted the importance of training labor inspectors and medical staff.

With respect to labor trafficking, another participant noted that although they work with local law enforcement agencies, they have never received a labor trafficking case from a local law enforcement agency, suggesting that training on identification of labor trafficking situations may be beneficial throughout the DMV region. One concern arising out of the emergence of general work-place diversity and inclusion training is ensuring that this training is not reinforcing false beliefs regarding culturally acceptable behaviors (i.e., young girls cooking, cleaning, and caring for children 10+ hours a day). Understanding the difference between cultural norms and indicators of trafficking is critical to properly identifying victims of human trafficking. Finally, the need for improved training regarding trauma-informed practices, as well as processes for helping victims with limited English proficiency is paramount. Ultimately, understanding that not every case of trafficking involves the same type of situation (e.g., ten young girls in a hotel room) is critically important. Training is necessary to dispel the idea of one-size-fits-all. Traffickers can be a landlord, broker, or farmer, and in a variety of industries including medical facilities, schools, spas, and restaurants. The key is to remember that survivors are “the experts of the situation” and thus should help frame trainings across disciplines.

Participants also supported expanding community awareness campaigns and education in schools. Education provided at local churches, libraries, and community centers can inform diverse groups, and connect individuals to services across a jurisdiction. Participants noted that one area for growth in Maryland, as a whole, is education and training on human trafficking in schools. Since much of this component is handled by local providers, the scope and quality of the training varies by jurisdiction. Some counties provide excellent training for staff and/or education to students, while

training and education other counties is lacking. In addition to enhanced education and training, inter-jurisdictional and intra-jurisdictional collaborations are vital to successfully combating trafficking in Howard County.

Establishing Collaborations: Partnerships Create an Environment for Success

Ensuring agencies and organizations can serve the most survivors possible, while appropriately stewarding available resources, requires coordination and collaboration. One participant explained that victims in Maryland will often seek services in Washington DC, because they are more robust and easier to access. In addition, shelters and mental health services are in generally short supply, as are interpreters (particularly for law enforcement agencies and relative to specific dialects where general language lines are not always staffed to address a specific need). In addition, local service providers often lack the necessary education for how to serve survivors/victims of human trafficking (i.e., trauma-informed care).

Collaborations between service providers and connections to organizations such as those listed below were identified as critical components of a comprehensive, holistic approach to addressing human trafficking:

- County Executive
- Mayor's Office
- County Office of Community Affairs (or similar)
- Local survivor-specific programs and/or service centers
- Substance abuse treatment centers
- Homeless shelters
- Law enforcement agencies
- State's Attorney's Office
- Public Defender's Office
- Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) legal providers
- County health and human services agency
- Local hospitals and urgent care centers

Developing a robust continuum of care has worked effectively in nearby Prince George's County: *"[T]heir continuum of care, really made an intentional effort to develop out human trafficking resources within that. So, everything from housing to service provision and the continuum of care through the county has really kind of led that up - built the relationships with the different NGOs and with the different whoever was getting money to run these programs and really pulling everybody together to develop out what's missing. Where can we plug in the pieces that are needed for the human trafficking population?"*

Advice from participants focused on ensuring that Howard County is equipped to serve victims residing and/or working in Howard County included: *"if you can come to the table and lay out what needs to be done and what your role is in that identification or aftermath process, it can work really effectively."* To that end, this project can be a launchpad for intentional collaboration for agencies and organizations across Howard County. As one participant noted, *I think that what often goes wrong or goes awry with these*

partnerships and collaborations is that the expectations are completely unclear and unrealistic, and you end up in a scenario where you're constantly like, assuming the worst and blaming your partner organizations. If you can get past that and understand that everyone actually is here for the right reasons. They just have a role that's really different than yours. You can make the partnership work."

Furthermore, in developing a one-stop-shop mentality for identifying and serving survivors within Howard County, the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention for Howard County Government can also assist agencies and organizations in developing data collection tools and creating specific and measurable project performance measures collectively defined by the Office. These tools and associated data will be pivotal in Howard County's fight against human trafficking. By uniting service providers, appropriate government agencies, and community stakeholders, Howard County can begin to accurately and effectively measure the prevalence of trafficking in the jurisdiction, determine the usefulness of various interventions and programs, and make responsible decisions regarding future resource allocation.

Recommendations: Opportunities Going Forward

The following recommendations are based on themes identified during interviews:

1. Enhanced training for criminal justice professionals, inspectors, school personnel, and human trafficking education for students.
2. Development of robust language services to include adequate interpretation services and translation of written materials based on local needs (i.e., languages are most common in and around Howard County), particularly for employee rights materials and victim services materials.
3. Establishment of community awareness campaigns to bust myths and provide resources.
4. Development of a continuum of care with the local health department, community affairs agency, and other relevant practitioners and policymakers in Howard County.
5. Development of performance measures and data collection tools to more accurately assess the prevalence and incidence of trafficking, as well as monitor intervention efforts.

Study Limitations

This study is a starting point for understanding human trafficking within the DMV area. Since limited data are available to providers, policymakers, and researchers, analyses fail to fully, or even closely, articulate how extensively human trafficking, particularly labor trafficking, is prevalent and the impacts on the community. As such, the focus of this effort is descriptive, noting only information available via individual interviews with practitioners and experts. Though limited, the information gleaned can enhance the understanding and identification of human trafficking survivors and offenders in Howard County, detail gaps in services and training, and highlight potential partnerships and resources.

In terms of interviews conducted, this report is based on the experiences and opinions of experts/practitioners identified by the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Manager and Task Force Coordinator. CRA interviewed six experts/practitioners. Given the small sample size, it

is important not to overstate or extrapolate these findings too broadly. The information detailed in this report should be largely regarded as anecdotal, until such time when additional data are collected and can be incorporated. Further study should include a broader spectrum of experts, the inclusion of local service providers, as well as community leaders and policymakers in Howard County.

Conclusion

Through a literature review and interviews with providers and experts in the DMV region, this study presents various perspectives and recommendations to enhance anti-trafficking efforts in Howard County. It was apparent the need for services in the region is great, and developing partnerships is paramount to effectively addressing labor and sex trafficking. An important undercurrent emerged around understanding who victims can be and how to best serve them. As one participant suggested, “[J]ust because it’s not readily in in your face, like, you know, the gun industry or the drug industry. It’s more powerful than both of those actually, and it’s more lucrative than both of those combined now.” As such, continued support for anti-trafficking efforts is crucial to combating this growing crime.

Although the perspectives of six individuals alone may be seen as purely anecdotal, their sentiments are supported by the existing research literature. First, anyone can be a survivor of human trafficking (i.e., regardless of age, gender, citizenship, industry, etc.) and for some, their appearance and their circumstances may make their trafficking experience “less visible” or obvious (Project Polaris, 2024). This means that those that work to combat human trafficking must have a strong understanding of the behaviors, experiences, and awareness of the less recognizable signs of trafficking in persons. Second, human trafficking does occur in the United States, and is happening in the local jurisdictions of the DMV, even if official statistics do not describe significant levels of trafficking incidents. This is especially evident for labor trafficking and how the intersection of economics, politics (e.g., immigration laws), and power dynamics has the potential to influence the visibility of this issue overall. Lastly, sex trafficking is not the only type of labor trafficking taking place. Local organizations are working with survivors from industries including construction workers, food laborers, massage parlors, salons, and more, and it is critical for both conscious consumers (i.e., those that want to be conscious in their role in the labor trafficking product supply chain) and law enforcement to screen and issue spot for situations of trafficking in these often public facing industries.

Commensurate with efforts to enhance awareness of human trafficking, development and implementation of performance metrics and data collection tools should be considered as a foundational next step. Enhanced data collection and analysis will be central to effectively evaluating the scope and impact of human trafficking in Howard County, as well as ensuring appropriate stewardship of resources. Until such data are available, programs, policies, and resource allocation rely heavily on anecdotal evidence, which is difficult to sustain.

In sum, while there is much work to be done⁵, the interest and support by the Howard County Office of Human Trafficking Prevention for this project is evidence that Howard County is interested in effectively addressing the needs of survivors within the local community. By

⁵ Additional resources can be found in Appendix B.

addressing gaps in services, enhancing training protocols and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders in various disciplines, as well as developing robust awareness campaigns, performance metrics and data collection tools, Howard County can evolve as a leader and partner in anti-trafficking efforts across the region.

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Appendix A: Data Collection Instrument

Trafficking in Howard County: Semi-Structure Interview Instrument

Introduction. The Office of Human Trafficking Prevention for Howard County Government is working to expand the understanding of human trafficking, particularly within the industries of domestic labor, agriculture, illicit massage businesses, and construction. Your expertise and knowledge can significantly enhance our current efforts to understand how trafficking manifests, the populations it impacts within and surrounding Howard County, and the strategies being utilized to address it.

Consent to Be Interviewed. Please confirm you understand that you may not directly benefit from taking part in this informational interview. You are free to skip any questions you do not want to answer. You can also end the interview at any time.

1. We would like to audio record the interview so that we can better transcribe your responses. Do we have your permission to audio record our conversation and to use the information we learn in your responses in our analysis? This will be done without your personal identifiers.
 - a. Yes – I consent to participate in the interview and to be audio recorded.
 - b. Yes – I consent to participate in the interview but not to be recorded.
 - c. No – I do not consent to participate in the interview.

Rapport Building Questions (Get-to-Know-You)

2. What is your title/role?
3. What organization do you work for/with?
4. Please describe your duties within the organization.
5. How would you describe your agency/organization's responsibilities relative to human trafficking?
6. How long have you worked in this role?
7. Did you work in a prior similar role, if so for how long?

Questions of Interest by Topic Area

General Trafficking Questions [High priority]

8. How do you or your organization define the problem of human trafficking?
 - a. Can you describe the how the offenses of sex trafficking and labor trafficking are similar? And different?
 - b. Has this understanding changed over time?
9. Based on your experiences with human trafficking in Howard County, can you describe the impact trafficking has on the community?
 - a. How about on the trafficking survivors?
 - b. And what about on the enforcement and treatment of those cases?

10. Based on your experience, do you notice any relevant patterns or trends related to location, demographics, or something else?

Understanding the Problem in Howard County & Surrounding Jurisdictions

11. Based on your experience, can you describe the **occurrence or prevalence** of sex trafficking in Howard County?
12. Based on your experience, can you describe the **occurrence or prevalence** of sex trafficking in other surrounding jurisdictions?
13. Based on your experience, can you describe the **occurrence or prevalence** of labor trafficking in Howard County?
14. Based on your experience, can you describe the **occurrence or prevalence** of labor trafficking in other surrounding jurisdictions?

Howard Country Efforts General

15. Can you please describe any current anti-trafficking efforts taking place in Howard County?
16. Can you discuss the availability of human trafficking training in Howard County?
 - a. Can you describe the type(s) of training and who has access to it?
 - i. Local law enforcement?
 - ii. Prosecutors?
 - iii. Medical Professionals?
 - iv. School and other education professionals?
 - v. Anyone else?
 - b. How does the content of the curriculum define the problems of sex trafficking versus labor trafficking? Or are they treated as one in the same (i.e., human trafficking in general)?
 - c. Is there anything you would change about the content/curriculum of the training?
 - d. Or is there anything you would change about the deployment of the training?
17. Based on your knowledge, can you describe any established relationships with local medical programs, facilities, or physicians relating to anti-trafficking efforts in Howard County?
18. Are you aware of any hospital-based anti-trafficking programs?

Howard County & Labor Trafficking

19. *[High priority]* Based on your experience, how would you describe a positive result for survivors of labor trafficking?
 - a. Can you describe what response practices produce a positive result for labor trafficking survivors/victims?
20. *[If time allows]* What are your recommendations for trauma-informed for awareness, identification, and response efforts?

21. *[If time allows]* What are best practices?
22. Where are the gaps? Where are things lacking? What has been harmful?
23. *[If time allows]* What would you like to see Howard County do?
24. What are helpful prevention practices that law enforcement or the county can take?
25. *[If time allows]* Please discuss any labor trafficking awareness efforts you are familiar with in Howard County. By **awareness efforts**, we are specifically asking about efforts that engage and/or educate the community. These may include, for example, media campaigns, education programs in schools, or trainings for businesses.
 - a. Based on your experience, what is the impact of these efforts?
26. *[If time allows]* Please discuss any labor trafficking identification efforts you are familiar with in Howard County. By **identification efforts**, we are specifically asking about efforts designed to identify possible labor trafficking situations and/or victims of labor trafficking. These may include, for example, site visits or outreach events to identify victims or high-risk situations.
 - b. Based on your experience, what is the impact of these efforts?
27. *[If time allows]* Please discuss any labor trafficking response practices (i.e., legal assistance for victims) you are familiar with in Howard County. By **response practices**, we are specifically asking about efforts designed to assist or help victims or survivors of labor trafficking. These may include, for example, providing shelter and/or legal assistance.
 - c. Based on your experience, what is the impact of these efforts?
28. *[High priority]* What practices do you find effective at building collaborations with other organizations and agencies to address labor trafficking?
29. Have you or your organization experienced any challenges with anti-trafficking efforts? If so, how?
 - a. How are the challenges **similar** for labor trafficking versus sex trafficking efforts?
 - b. How are the challenges **different** for labor trafficking versus sex trafficking efforts?

Concluding Remarks *[High priority]*

30. Have you or your organization experienced any challenges with anti-trafficking efforts? If so, how?
31. What do you wish others understood about your job/title? And more specifically about working on anti-trafficking efforts?

Appendix B: Additional Resources

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- Santos, A.P. (2014). When diplomats are traffickers, migrant domestic workers are enslaved. Pulitzer Center. <https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/when-diplomats-are-traffickers-migrant-domestic-workers-are-enslaved>

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