PARI: PREVENTION OF ADOLESCENT RISKS INITIATIVE

State-Wide Strategic Plan

Key Informant Interview Summary Report

September 2024

Introduction & Approach

Purpose of the Key Informant Interviews: These interviews gathered qualitative information about the experiences and perspectives of people working in the anti-human trafficking field in Maryland.

The information gathered is intended to inform the strategic plan and help guide how the state approaches anti-human trafficking work going forward.

Overall Approach: The interviewer worked with the project team at the University of Maryland Baltimore School of Social Work (UMBSSW) to identify parties with relevant perspectives from diverse facets of the anti-trafficking field in Maryland.

During the interviews, participants discussed their role, successes in the field, challenges, and opportunities to improve.

Not all details from the interviews are included in this summary as this report is intended to give a high-level overview of the themes discussed. If you would like access additional information from the interviews, please contact the project team at UMB SSW PARI to discuss which data may be available for review.

Participants

Participants were selected to gather a variety of perspectives from across the state.

Many participants are involved with or were representing their work with local and statewide anti-human trafficking task force groups.

However, participants who are involved with groups that currently partner with or whose work intersects with UMBSSW were likely oversampled due to having existing relationships with the project team.

This also means that perspectives representing grassroots stakeholder perspectives may have been under-sampled.

Participant "Fast Facts":

- **# Interviews:** 20
- **Fields Represented:**
  - Social services
  - Mental health
  - Law enforcement
  - Legal representation
  - Juvenile justice
  - Medical
  - Nonprofit organizations
  - Immigration/Immigrant support
  - Task force participants
  - Municipal employees
- **Avg. Years in HT Field:** 10.5
- **Median Years in HT Field:** 8.25
- **Years-in-Field Range:** 1-43

Themes

The table summarizes the themes mentioned across the interviews. The challenges, successes, and other commentary noted are not listed in a specific order according to any perceived level of importance.

Primary Themes	Description/Notes
Housing	**Challenge:** The lack of sufficient housing resources was most consistently stated as a gap in the anti-human trafficking landscape. Suggestions included partnering with local, state, and national housing authorities (incl. HUD).
Data Collection & Information Sharing	**Success:** Increased collaboration and coordination (in the context of interpersonal and organizational relationships) was a primary success in recent years. **Challenge:** Coordinated data collection and information sharing seems to hinge on organizations and individuals having relationships rather than systematic sources for sharing data and current trends.
Humanization of Survivors	**Success:** Some participants indicated that the use of trauma-informed approaches and holistic responses have improved over the years. **Challenge:** Training survivor-facing stakeholders (law enforcement, social services, etc.) on trauma-informed approaches is needed. Service providers sometimes ask survivors for personal details that may be unnecessary to receive services or will route survivors through judicial systems (like family court). These approaches may deter some survivors from seeking/following through for help.

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Primary Themes	Description/Notes
Labor Trafficking	**Challenge:** While responses to labor trafficking survivors and labor trafficking networks has improved in a relative sense, sex trafficking remains the field's primary focus and labor trafficking is underreported/under-investigated.
Coordination of Services/Resources	**Mixed:** Across all themes, this topic had the most inconsistent commentary from interviewees. Some interviewees highlighted the overall success of programs like the "Blue Dot" program and of the Regional Navigator programs across the state. Others described significant challenges coordinating responses across agencies. Several described instability when moving survivors from one provider/organization to another describing that survivors might slip through the cracks.
Legislation/Policy	**Success:** The passage of policies like Safe Harbor and Regional Navigators benefitted the anti-human trafficking field. Many of these policies use a victim-centered approach. Additional policies enacted against perpetrators (ex. asset forfeiture, etc.) have been useful. **Challenge:** Enacting policies can strain (already under-resourced) service providers. Policies don't work if not enforced. Enforcement can be inconsistent, which is underscored when stakeholders do not recognize trafficking/aren't aware of the laws. Repercussions against perpetrators should be strengthened.

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Primary Themes	Description/Notes
Training/Professional Development	**Mixed:** Some interviewees indicated satisfaction with the amount of training on sex trafficking issues and they say these can be accessed through a variety of sources.
	Others indicate that advanced/specific training and booster-style training are insufficient to maintain awareness of human trafficking.
	There should be more trauma-informed approaches training for law enforcement and social services. Some successes related to audiences trained include expanded training for various first responder organizations, faith-based groups, and hotels.
	Broadly, it is recognized that there is not enough training on labor trafficking. This impacts how well stakeholders can identify labor trafficking when they see it.

Participant List

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Anamari Anderson	Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center
Susan Ahlstrom	Four All Seasons INC
Julia Aviles Zavala	UMD Safe Center
Robert Basler	Arrow Child & Family Ministries
Lindsey Carpenter	Frederick County State's Attorney's Office
Andrea Carroll	Anne Arundel County Human Trafficking Collaborative, Board of Child Care
Jennifer Collins	Frederick County Human Trafficking Response Team
Jessica Dickerson	Dept. of Juvenile Services
Ashley Dilonno	Tahirih Justice Center
Erica Fielder	Cecil County Human Trafficking Task Force
Jodi Finkelstein	Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee
Rebeca Garcia-Gil	Ayuda
Chelsea Haverly	Anchored Hope Therapy
Steve Hess	Retired USAO
Jasmine Mayo	Everstand
Ashton Petta	Howard County Office of Human Trafficking Prevention
Tom Stack	Human Trafficking Coordinator, MONSE
Danielle Thomas	Life Crisis Center
Ed Thomas	Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force
Joyce Williams	Stevenson University, MHTTF Medical Subcommittee