



Office of the District Attorney
Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office



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News Release

District Attorney and Sheriff Awarded Combined 1.3 Million Dollar Grant to Combat Human Trafficking in Santa Barbara County

Santa Barbara – Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office and Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office have been awarded a total of \$1.34 million by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs to enhance the efforts of the Human Trafficking Task Force. The funding will increase efforts to combat human trafficking in our county.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. Victims include not only sexually exploited individuals, but also those forced to provide labor by means of force, fraud or coercion. California is one of the top four U.S. human trafficking destinations. Our central coast has been identified as a natural transit corridor for trafficking activity between major metropolitan areas to the south and north. As a tourist destination with conference venues, a transitory population and migrant labor, Santa Barbara County is vulnerable to trafficking activity.

In response to this alarming trend, the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office established the Human Trafficking Task Force in 2013. The goal was to convene stakeholders, assess the local problem, increase public awareness, and develop and implement effective strategies. In May 2016, the District Attorney and Sheriff's Offices submitted coordinated grant applications in response to the Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking grant opportunity administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. This was a highly competitive opportunity that was open to cities and counties throughout the United States. This grant funded project will provide \$740,737 to local law enforcement and \$600,000 to the District Attorney's Victim-Witness Assistance Program. The funding will provide the investigative resources necessary to proactively investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases. In addition, this funding will enable victim and rape crisis advocates to provide victim services 24/7. This will better allow them to deliver critical services for both adult and minor domestic and international trafficking victims. This funding will also enable the Task Force to build upon its early efforts to collect, share, and analyze data which will increase its ability to make data-driven decisions and improvements.

District Attorney Dudley states, "The funding provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs recognizes the foundation built by the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Human Trafficking Task Force. It has been a model of collaboration, and has implemented nationally-recognized intervention strategies. This funding is critical to our ability to enhance our investigative and intervention efforts to help victims, prosecute offenders, and end the cycle of exploitation."

Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown also expressed his appreciation to the Department of Justice for recognizing the importance of dedicating resources in Santa Barbara County to this important issue. He said, "Human trafficking is the 21st century equivalent to slavery and includes crimes that for too long have been in the shadows. With this grant, we will be able to proactively help victims of illegal servitude and bring those responsible for their abduction to justice."