



Arizona Human
Trafficking Council

Arizona Human Trafficking Council

June 2, 2021, 9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

1700 West Washington Street, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007

A general meeting of the Arizona Human Trafficking Council was convened on June 2, 2021 virtually, 1700 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (21)	Members Absent (5)
Cindy McCain, Co-Chair	David Curry
Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair	Marsha Calhoun
Brian Steele	Rachel Mitchell
Cara Christ	Lois Lucas
Debbie Johnson	Nathaniel Brown
Dominique Roe-Sepowitz	
Doug Coleman	
Tony Mapp (Proxy for Heston Silbert)	
Jennifer Crawford	
Jill Rable	
Dave Saflar (Proxy for James Gallagher)	
Jim Waring	
Joseph Kelroy	
Jeramia Ramadan (Proxy for Michael Wisehart)	
Mike Faust	
Sarah Beaumont	
Sarah Kent	
Sheila Polk	
Tim Roemer	
Zora Manjencich	
Heather Carter	
Staff and Guests Present (9)	
Kim Brooks	Nick Lien
Vianney Careaga	Nick Alamshaw
Claire Merkel	Mike Russo
Joanna Jauregui	Anastasia Stinchfield
	Julia Martin

Call to Order

- **Mrs. Cindy McCain, Co-Chair**, called the Arizona Human Trafficking Council meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. with 21 members and 9 staff and guests present.

Roll Call

- **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, welcomed **Director Tim Roemer**, Arizona Department of Homeland Security, as the newest member of the Council. Prior to this change in leadership, **Director Roemer** served as Arizona's Chief Information Security Officer. With his appointment to Homeland Security, the cyber security operations overseen by **Director Roemer** at Arizona Department of Administration has shifted to Homeland Security, allowing the state to better protect citizens from cybersecurity attacks.
- **Director Fuentes** conducted a roll call of the Council and took note of Councilmember proxies.

Approval of Minutes

- **Mrs. McCain, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the **April 7, 2021** meeting minutes.
 - **Director Debbie Johnson** moved to accept the **April 7, 2021** minutes.
 - **Director Mike Faust** seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed with no dissenting votes at 9:06 a.m.

Update from DCS

- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Director Mike Faust** for an update from the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS). **Director Faust** began his presentation by providing background on the preparations DCS is making for the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act. There has been a lot of effort around creating and certifying qualified residential treatment programs. The treatment programs can be described as higher-level congregate care settings that exist on a level between a traditional DCS group home and a higher-level behavioral health facility. These programs support youth that have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked. DCS has also invested heavily in bed space to expand the programs involved in DCS's human trafficking protocol in Maricopa County.
- **Director Faust** then provided some insight on how the crisis at the Border has negatively impacted the child protection system in Arizona. With the influx of unaccompanied minors entering without inspection into the United States, there is a greater level of competition for the bed capacity in the state that serves youth in foster care. This is due in large part because the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has put out more than \$800M in grant funding to support child welfare homes. This has directed beds away from foster care since the additional funding targets child welfare-licensed facilities and child welfare-licensed foster families. DCS is doing its best to manage this situation and to communicate with ORR, but as this continues, it will have a downstream negative impact on the child protection system. DCS has also had multiple occurrences in which they have engaged directly with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on situations involving smuggling children into the country and trafficking children into the country. **Director Faust** proceeded to provide examples of these situations within the past 45 to 65 days. The first example involved a 10 year old minor that was apprehended while trying to traffic drugs into the country. The minor and his mother are U.S. Citizens. The mother had been residing in Sonora, Mexico to evade an arrest warrant for drug trafficking. The minor has been transitioned into foster care. The second example involved an 11 year old minor and his adult sibling. They were apprehended trying to smuggle money from the United States into Mexico. The minor in this case was also transitioned into foster care. The third example involved a 17 year old female involved in a traffic stop in Yavapai County. She was traveling in a vehicle with six males when the county sheriff pulled the vehicle over. When the female was brought into custody, it was discovered that she was an unaccompanied minor from Guatemala whose parents paid \$10,000 to a "coyote" to bring her across the border into the United States. She was on her way to California to get work so that she could send money back home. **Director Faust** noted that this situation could be termed as smuggling, but borders closely on labor trafficking. The fourth example described situations in which unaccompanied minors that enter without inspection claim to be U.S. Citizens, and produce U.S. birth certificates and Social Security Cards. These

minors are typically apprehended in large groups of other unaccompanied minors. **Director Faust** added that the federal government has been largely silent on how to navigate this process. It is unclear what the repatriation process should look like, how jurisdiction should work, and what is the vetting process when minors present themselves at the border, with or without U.S. documentation, and claim to be trying to get to a relative that resides in the United States. This last concern raises further questions on how those relatives are vetted and how can authorities know the relative's intentions are pure. DCS has encountered 14 minors in this situation with a majority trying to go to Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. To navigate these concerns, DCS has engaged with federal partners to vet the claims of minors being U.S. Citizens, to advocate for the vetting of the host sponsors through in-person home studies, to connect these youth with the proper support, to not unfairly bring these youth into the foster care system, and to help the youth transition to their host sponsor. During this engagement, **Director Faust** raised a further concern on ORR's recent practice of allowing home studies of host sponsors to be conducted virtually instead of conducting them in-person. **Director Faust** noted that in his line of work and even though 99% of peoples' intentions may be pure, it is the job and privilege of those that oversee the child protection system to protect that 1% that are caught up in smuggling and trafficking. He further emphasized the need of policies, particularly from the federal government, to be clearly informed, understood, and communicated.

- **Sheila Polk** inquired as to why youth with proper U.S. documentation cross the border illegally into the United States. **Director Faust** responded by stating that DCS has also been intrigued about this phenomenon since there is a process for U.S. Citizens, who have been out of the country for a period of four or more years, to reenter the country which includes crossing through a port of entry. U.S. Citizens would not typically scale a border fence or cross through a portion of the desert with a large group of undocumented individuals. As mentioned previously, when unaccompanied minors enter the United States without inspection, present documentation of U.S. Citizenship to CBP, and after their citizenship is vetted, those minors are no longer able to be supported by CBP and ORR because of their U.S. Citizenship status. If these minors are then transitioned into DCS custody, then dependency law and interstate-compact law would be triggered to support these youth. There are youth that have been in DCS custody for 60 days, and **Director Faust** estimates that it would take another four months for DCS to successfully navigate interstate-compact law and then transfer those youth to the state they are trying to get to. He further emphasized the importance of policy makers, particularly those in the federal government, to be informed on the realities that are being faced by the individuals and states whom their policies affect. He added the example of a program run through the Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR) that can repatriate U.S. Citizens and unaccompanied U.S. Citizens living abroad who are trying to get back into the United States. However, OHSEPR, like CBP and ORR, cannot help those unaccompanied minors that enter the United States without inspection, are vetted, and confirmed to be U.S. Citizens because they are now on U.S. soil. The crisis at the Border has inundated CBP, especially with all the youth they encounter.
- **Director Joseph Kelroy** inquired for clarification on who conducts the virtual home studies of the host sponsors. **Director Faust** responded that the home studies are conducted when an unaccompanied minor is engaged with ORR. ORR, or a contractor of ORR, will vet and perform the home study for the host sponsor. After this is completed, the youth would then be transferred to the state and home of their host sponsor. There are specific protocols to home studies, one of which requires an in-person home study of a host sponsor who has hosted one or more children on one or more occasions who are not family members or relatives of the youth. Due to the restrictions from the COVID-19 Pandemic, ORR has permitted virtual home studies. **Director Faust** emphasized that policies from federal partners, like the virtual home studies, can directly and indirectly promote trafficking and that they should take appropriate steps to ensure bad actors are caught. This is an area of concern to the protection of the youth and DCS has asked the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and ORR to eliminate the virtual home studies and to go back and do in-person home studies for all the host sponsors that had a virtual home study.
- **Brian Steele** stated that both StreetlightUSA and the Phoenix Dream Center have served youth that fit the examples **Director Faust** has shared and has noticed a common theme of the youth stating that they have a relative in the United States that has invited them to stay with them. He inquired if there was a way to intercept these invitations or if there was some type of public awareness campaign that can be done in the countries from where the majority of unaccompanied minors are coming from and inform them that not all the persons

extending invitations are pure in their intentions. **Director Faust** responded by stating that he does not have the answer to this question, but noted the importance of continuing to raise these concerns. He further added that in conversations with CBP and local law enforcement, they noted that there is a belief that U.S. immigration law was changed in November 2020 among the youth whom they encounter. These youth believe that with the change in Presidential administrations, U.S. immigration laws also changed. It is clear that a different level of messaging to counteract these beliefs is necessary especially as CBP encounters 70 to 80 unaccompanied minors a day. **Director Fuentes** added that as **Director Tim Roemer** works to get in audio capabilities, he wanted to inform the Council that there currently is not a public awareness campaign but would be happy to have a further conversation on this issue.

Phoenix Police Department and Operation Broken Hearts

- **Mrs. McCain, Co-Chair**, introduced **Lieutenant Dave Saflar** for a presentation on the human trafficking operation, Broken Hearts. **Lt. Saflar** began his presentation by briefly touching on a recent human trafficking operation called Just in Touch. The department setup a massage parlor sting which resulted in 47 arrests. While the objective of Just in Touch was to impact the demand reduction of this type of activity in massage parlors, Operation Broken Hearts targets the demand for child sex crimes and human trafficking. Broken Hearts was a multi-agency undercover operation that involved Phoenix Police Department, Chandler Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations, Tempe Police Department, Mesa Police Department and the Arizona Attorney General's Office. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the department had to set up a virtual operation. He further noted that the collaboration helped them be more effective. The operation occurred for a period of one week. Throughout the operational period, officers and undercover detectives placed advertisements on websites and apps which are commonly sought out by suspects seeking illegal sex acts with children. The suspects that solicited and/or brokered deals for various sex acts were subsequently arrested. In total, 37 suspects were arrested and their ages ranged from 21 to 66. In reflecting on the perpetrators law enforcement deals with on human trafficking cases, the department has shifted to a holistic approach to encourage communication between different units due to how interconnected human trafficking can be with other crimes. This approach has helped result in more effective sentencing. The full presentation can be accessed at <https://govff.az.gov/meeting/htc/2021/06/02>.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** commended **Lt. Saflar** and Phoenix Police Department on enhancing their collaboration and the multifaceted approach they have taken to improve their work.
- **Director Tim Roemer** echoed **Dr. Roe-Sepowitz's** comments and let the Council know that if there is anything the Arizona Department of Homeland Security can do to help, do not hesitate to reach out. He added that he is looking forward to serving on this Council and thanked the Council Co-Chairs for their welcome remarks earlier in the meeting.

Mesa Police Department Human Exploitation Unit

- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Sergeant Nick Lien**, Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit of Mesa Police Department, for an update on the recent sting operations within the Mesa Police Department. **Sgt. Lien** shared that Mesa Police Department employs a task force model through the East Valley Human Trafficking Task Force (EVHTTF), which is comprised of one sergeant, three detectives, one civilian investigator, and two Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) special agents. He then proceeded to provide an overview of the operations and investigations his department has conducted or participated in throughout 2021: Leather Mitt, No Name, Labor of Love, On the Flip Side, Trigger Point, and Broken Hearts. Operation Leather Mitt was a cost effective and short operation with limited resources that resulted in six arrests, four for domestic minor sex trafficking and two for luring for child sexual exploitation. Operation No Name is an ongoing operation that got started with a HSA case involving an infant victim. This is a multinational and multi-state investigation with a large Mesa Police Department and Phoenix Police Department involvement. So far the operation has resulted in the issuance of 23 search warrants and 23 arrests. Along with the arrests, 14 victims have been rescued. Operation Broken Hearts, as was mentioned in the previous presentation, was a large multi-agency operation hosted by Phoenix Police Department. **Sgt. Lien** highlighted some of the cases involved in Broken Hearts. He thanked the department's law enforcement, prosecutorial, and non-

governmental partners for their help over the years. The full presentation can be accessed at <https://goyff.az.gov/meeting/htc/2021/06/02>.

- **Mrs. McCain, Co-Chair**, inquired about what happened to the offenders and where they are in the judicial process. **Sgt. Lien** explained that the specifics on those cases depend on the case. Operation Broken Hearts is prosecuted by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office (MCAO), Leather Mitt is prosecuted through the Arizona Attorney General's Office (AGO), and No Name is partially prosecuted by both MCAO and AGO. The hardest thing he has encountered is keeping these offenders accountable for their actions. He has seen a lot of offenders being held on low bond or only requiring the use of an ankle monitor.

Scottsdale Police Department Human Exploitation Unit

- **Mrs. McCain, Co-Chair**, introduced **Sergeant Nick Alamshaw**, Scottsdale Police Department, for a presentation on the newly formed Human Exploitation Unit within the Scottsdale Police Department. **Sgt. Alamshaw** began his presentation by explaining that with the arrival of a new police chief, the creation of a Human Exploitation Unit was made a priority. The mission of the Human Exploitation Unit is to utilize a multidisciplinary approach to proactively and reactively identify and rescue children and adults who are the victims of sex trafficking, computer facilitated sexual exploitation, prostitution, and Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC). The Unit falls under the Crimes Against Persons Section of the department and they work within the Scottsdale Family Advocacy Center. The Unit is staffed with one sergeant and four detectives and engages in the following activities: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Operations, Child Sexual Exploitation Operations/Investigations, Proactive Investigations, Hotel/Parking Lot Operations, Buyer Enforcement Operations, Community Education, First Responder Education, Patrol education and Community Partnerships. Last year the Unit only had one person dedicated to ICAC cases and they will be adding an additional staff member to work on those cases. **Sgt. Alamshaw** also highlighted some of the trafficking cases the department has taken on that involved the following suspects: Prentice Thomas, Denzell Walker, Gregg Kropp, and Dan Marshall. The full presentation can be accessed at <https://goyff.az.gov/meeting/htc/2021/06/02>.
- **Sheila Polk** commended the efforts of Scottsdale Police Department and the leadership of **Sgt. Alamshaw** in getting the Human Exploitation Unit operational.

Chandler Police Department Human Exploitation Unit

- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Detective Mike Russo**, Chandler Police Department, for a presentation on the Human Exploitation Unit within the Chandler Police Department. **Det. Russo** began his presentation by providing background in the creation of the Human Exploitation Unit. This Unit was created in 2015 and he served as one of the founding members of the Unit. The Unit is staffed by a supervisor and four investigators. **Det. Russo** has a breadth of experience that he brings to the unit, having worked with human trafficking violation for approximately 20 years and serving on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Greater Phoenix Area Human Trafficking Task Force. He noted that the Task Force Model and enhanced agency collaboration has put Arizona ahead of the curve compared to many other states. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the department had to shift its operations to a virtual format. In February, the department engaged in a case involving a trafficking suspect who was trying to lure a victim into the life of prostitution in St. Louis, MO by providing the victim with transportation. In coordination with the FBI and other agencies, the suspect was apprehended. In April, the Unit assisted the FBI in training other law enforcement organizations using the techniques Chandler PD employs in human trafficking cases. An example was provided by Det. Russo, that in May, the Unit worked a case involving an inmate using smuggled digital devices to make contact with the outside world to try and traffic women from prison. They were able to seize the devices and are working to extend the inmate's time in prison. Through the FBI, **Det. Russo** was able to also train law enforcement organizations in Idaho as they work to build out their units that specialize in human trafficking cases.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** inquired whether they are seeing an impact from the tablets and devices used in the jails and prisons. **Det. Russo** responded that the number of smuggled devices and the number of inmates on social media has decreased because of the COVID-19 Pandemic restricting visitations as a lot of

the devices are smuggled in by family members and when those resume, he anticipates an increase in this activity.

- **Dr. Roe-Sepowitz** further inquired from the representatives of the police departments that have presented if there is human trafficking training available for new police cadets or training that all law enforcement in Arizona participate in. **Det. Russo** responded that at Chandler PD, they have Human Trafficking 101 training that is conducted at briefings and is designed to help officers recognize the signs of human trafficking and how to respond. He added that the Phoenix Police Department and Mesa Police Department do conduct introductory Human Trafficking 101 training. **Sgt. Lien** added that at their academy, there is a block of instruction that focuses on human trafficking. He also mentioned that they are working on putting together in-service training and hope to disseminate that statewide as well. **Lt. Saflar** shared that law enforcement has done a better job at partnering over the course of the past few years which has enhanced the enforcement mechanisms throughout the state.

CARE 7, City of Tempe

- **Mrs. McCain, Co-Chair**, introduced **Anastasia Stinchfield**, Victim Services Coordinator for CARE 7, and **Julia Martin**, Lead Advocate for CARE 7, for a presentation on the City of Tempe's Crisis Assistance Response Effort (CARE 7) program. **Ms. Stinchfield** and **Ms. Martin** began the presentation by providing background on CARE 7. CARE 7 began in 1997 as a method of responding with Tempe Police Department and Tempe Fire Medical Rescue to calls in the community to address needs outside the scope of law enforcement and emergency medical services. CARE 7 has 42 employees that work in the following areas: Crisis Response Unit, Victim Services, Case Management/Veteran's Services, Counseling, High School Youth Specialists, and Trauma Informed Care. The Crisis Response Unit responds to the scene of a crisis alongside Tempe Fire and/or with Tempe Police Department to provide support to clients and/or victims experiencing traumatic situations. These crisis include, but are not limited to, homicide, human trafficking, sexual assault, robbery, fire, and death. The Victim Services Crisis Response Unit responds to the scene of a criminal investigation at the request of Tempe Fire and/or with Tempe Police Department to provide support and mobile advocacy to victims of crime after an incident. Victim Advocates serve as a confidential resource to all victims of crime and focus on meeting victims where they are at to help them overcome barriers to healing, safety, and justice. They also provide information on victim's rights and victim compensation. CARE 7 recently partnered with the Tempe Department of Housing to provide temporary housing to victims. The counseling services of CARE 7 are free to all victims of crime. They conduct intakes and assessments, assess for their safety, following mandated reporting requirements. Bilingual counseling is also available. Youth Specialists meet with students one on one to provide emotional support, run support groups based on the identified needs of the campuses (Tempe High Schools and Elementary Schools), provide connection to CARE 7 services, referrals to community agencies, supplies, and basic needs. The CARE 7 Case Management/Veteran's Services provide assessments for individuals in need and make appropriate referrals to community agencies for a variety of service needs including VA benefits, mental health, senior, and youth services. The full presentation can be accessed at <https://govff.az.gov/meeting/htc/2021/06/02>.

Director Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair, made a point of information and asked **Joseph Kelroy** to provide some commentary on the Juvenile Justice 2021 Trafficking Update that was distributed to the Council Members prior to the meeting from the Juvenile Justice Services Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts. **Mr. Kelroy** noted that the update provides information on what is being done in the courts with juvenile probation and detention services. He reinforced that the courts are active in combating human trafficking and are open to collaboration with more partners.

Workgroup Updates

- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, provided an update on behalf of **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** from the Data and Research Workgroup. **Director Fuentes** informed the Council that the Workgroup has been busy working on the National Advisory Committee's (NAC) state self-assessment. She added that the deadline for states to submit the assessment has been extended to the end of August.

- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, provided an update on behalf of **Director Debbie Johnson** from the Outreach and Awareness Workgroup. **Director Fuentes** informed the Council that **Director Tim Roemer** had been added as a member of the Workgroup and the Workgroup will be meeting later in the month. The SuperBowl date for 2023 has been released and will be held on February 12, 2023. More information will be forthcoming after the next Workgroup Meeting.
- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Sheila Polk** for an update from the Policy Workgroup. **Ms. Polk** informed the Council that the Workgroup met yesterday. At the suggestion of **Director Fuentes** the Workgroup will review the information gathered from NAC state self-assessment along with the Workgroup's policy survey results to further identity policy areas to work in.
- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Dr. Sarah Beaumont** for an update from the Victim Services Workgroup. **Dr. Beaumont** informed the Council that the Workgroup is developing a matrix to help service providers better identify victims of human trafficking and hopes to make it available to service providers soon.

Upcoming Meeting

- **Mrs. McCain, Co-Chair**, reminded Councilmembers to mark their calendars for the next Council meeting on September 22, 2021 in a hybrid format.

Adjournment

- **Director Fuentes, Co-Chair**, thanked everyone for being part of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - **Brian Steele** moved to adjourn.
 - **Sheila Polk** seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed with no dissenting votes and the meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

Dated 2 of June 2021
Arizona Human Trafficking Council
Respectfully Submitted By:
Vianney M. Careaga
GOYFF