



**Arizona Human Trafficking Council
April 13, 2023, 9:00 AM
Hybrid Meeting**

1700 West Washington Street, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
A general meeting of the Arizona Human Trafficking Council was convened on **April 13, 2023**,
notice having been duly given.

Members Present (14)	Members Absent (5)
Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair	Lt. Rick Leyvas
Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair	Brian Steele
Barbara Marshall (Proxy for Rachel Mitchell)	Nathaniel Brown
Joseph Kelroy	Jim Waring
Tonya Hamilton	Senator T.J. Shope
Lt. Nick Alamshaw	
Lois Lucas	
Sarah Chung	
Jennifer Crawford	
Dr. Sarah Beaumont	
Doug Coleman	
Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz	
Jill Rable	
Sophia Philis-Ortiz	
Staff and Guests Present (7)	
Amy Peep, GOYFF	Betsy Griffin Jones, LAVIDGE
Emily Uline-Olmstead, GOYFF	Stephen Heitz, LAVIDGE
	Antonio Casian, LAVIDGE
	Valentina Restrepo Montoya, Project ALWAYS
	Dr. Angela Saloman, StreetLightUSA

Call to Order

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, called the Arizona Human Trafficking Council meeting to order at **09:04 AM** with 14 members and 6 staff/guests present. She reviewed meeting procedures, welcomed all those joining via Zoom, and thanked them for their flexibility.

Approval of Minutes

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the **March 1, 2023** meeting minutes.
 - **Joseph Kelroy** moved to accept the **March 1, 2023** minutes.
 - **Doug Coleman** seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes at **09:06 AM**.

DEMA Anti-Trafficking Grant Fund Update

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, gave a brief update to the Council. She explained that per [SB 26-106](#), the Anti-Human Trafficking Grant Fund was established consisting of monies appropriated by the Legislature. DEMA administers the fund and distributes monies to programs to reduce human trafficking in Arizona.

Approximately \$10 million was appropriated, \$8 million of which are to be distributed to city, town, and county law enforcement agencies. Each agency is limited to \$500,000, over five years (maximum).

- ACTIC was allocated \$2 million to develop the local Arizona Tipline. **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz's** office is supporting.
- To date, 15 applications have been submitted and a total of \$5.4 million have been distributed. Approximately \$2.6 million still remains in the fund.
- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, mentioned that another bill, [SB 1311-561R](#), has been submitted to the Arizona Legislature to replenish the fund with another \$10 million.
- Review the DEMA Anti-Human Trafficking Grant Fund [program](#) for more information. The program includes a frequently asked question section.

Anti-Human Trafficking Media Campaign | LAVIDGE Final Report

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, introduced **Betsy Griffin Jones, Stephen Heitz, and Antonio Casian** to speak to the Council.
 - **Betsy Griffin Jones** is the Media Director at [LAVIDGE](#). She is responsible for planning paid traditional media, negotiating value add, and working with the creative team to ensure use of the most appropriate, effective media venues for each project.
 - **Stephen Heitz** is the Chief Innovation Officer at LAVIDGE. He leads LAVIDGE's unification of client service, digital strategy, media and technology. Stephen provides the vision innovation and strategy across paid, owned and earned media efforts.
 - **Antonio Casian** is the Digital Media Strategist at LAVIDGE. Along with strategizing and managing digital services for a variety of clients including the Arizona Lottery and a coalition to mobilize registered Latino voters, he has directed and led campaigns, managed blog and social content, oversaw web development, and developed and implemented digital marketing programs.
- **Stephen Heitz** began the presentation by explaining that the campaign launched in December 2022 and finished in March 2023. All media was launched mid-January and the billboards continued being displayed until March.
- **Betsy Griffin Jones** noted the the tactics used to achieve a holistic approach throughout the campaign:
 - Static/digital billboards, gas station TV, gas pump toppers, mall/bar restrooms, convenience store videos, Arizona lottery screens, and radio stations are all examples of media used. The digital tactics used were geo-fencing (ads within a geographical boundary - airports), contextual (explicit content), searches (key work advertisements), and paid social media ads (targeting teens through Snapchat and TikTok specifically).
 - Static billboards were deployed for 12 weeks. The placements were focused on major transportation corridors as well as domestic/international entry points to Arizona.
 - Digital billboards were focused in the Phoenix metro area, as well as in Yuma and Mohave County. In Yuma specifically, both the human trafficking and labor trafficking awareness materials were utilized. These were also placed in major transportation corridors as well.
 - Geo-fencing was determined to be the most cost-efficient digital channel. The parameters were set around the Phoenix International Airports, select malls and shopping centers, and high activity areas.
- **Antonio Casian** explained, in detail, the digital aspect of the campaign. Overall, the digital campaign delivered approximately 300 million impressions. Over 80,000 landing page visits. 57 clicks on the resource links.
 - To target younger audiences, they utilized awareness material (i.e. videos) on Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram. In total, over 11 million impressions and over 5,000 engagements were generated across social platforms, with TikTok leading landing page visits. There were also over 88,000 video completion views.
 - Geofencing was heavily pushed in targeted areas where human trafficking was likely to occur (i.e. malls, airports, etc.)
 - Contextual: Awareness material was pushed onto sites of explicit content and related keyword searches through Google advertisements. This achieved 47 million impressions.

- Women, ages 25-34, was the largest age demographic searching for information regarding human trafficking. The second largest demographic was women, ages 45-54.
- **Antonio Casian** noted that the campaign garnered close to 60% impression share.
 - Every time someone searched using human trafficking keywords, 60% of the time, the campaign's ad was showing.
- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, commented that she was extremely impressed with the number of engagements this campaign had.
- To view LAVIDGE's presentation, click [here](#). To view the second part of the presentation, click [here](#).

Project ALWAYS

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** to speak to the Council.
- **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** is the Executive Director of [Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services \(ALWAYS\)](#). Prior to joining ALWAYS, Valentina was a Mental Health Attorney with the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project where she represented individuals in deportation proceedings. Before moving to Arizona, she practiced as an Assistant Public Defender, largely on behalf of Latinos in the Deep South and people suffering from serious mental illnesses.
 - Valentina's first job after graduating from Berkeley Law was as an attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center, suing the Alabama Department of Corrections for inadequate medical care, mental health care, and noncompliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. She comes from a Colombian family and is particularly passionate about women's rights, mental health, and justice for immigrants and their families.
- **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** began her presentation by explaining the background of ALWAYS. ALWAYS was founded in 2013 by January Contreras and is a nonprofit community legal center committed to balancing the scales of justice for vulnerable and young Arizonans. They open doors to opportunity by providing no-cost legal services for vulnerable children and youth, and survivors of human trafficking. Working through referrals from our social service partners, they help clients lift the legal barriers that stand in the way of opportunity, stability, and self-sufficiency. **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** mentioned that ALWAYS is free and they pay for all costs associated with the case. Some examples given: passport photos, costs associated with requesting criminal records, costs associated with obtaining a N400 (Application for Naturalization), citizenship, etc.
 - They serve:
 - Trafficking survivors of all ages
 - People under 25 who have experienced crime, homelessness, and/or involvement in the foster care system
 - They help with family law issues such as:
 - Orders of Protection
 - Divorcements and Annulments
 - Legal Decision Making and Parenting Time (aka "custody")
 - Child Support
 - They help with immigration applications such as:
 - T-Visas for trafficking survivors
 - U-Visas for crime survivors
 - Protection under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
 - Special Immigration Juvenile Status
 - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Renewals
 - Employment Authorization Documents (i.e. becoming an educator)
 - Lawful Permanent Residence (aka "Green Cards")
 - US Citizenship (N400s, N600s)
 - They have found that a lot of their trafficking survivors have come into contact with the criminal justice system during the course of their exploitation and they don't believe that charges and convictions should hold them back from housing, employment, and educational opportunities. Because of this, they help with criminal history repair such as:

- Good Cause Exceptions for Fingerprint Clearance Cards
- Dropping Down Undesignated Felonies to Misdemeanors
- Sealing Records
- Expungements
- **Valentina Restrepo Montoya** stated the organization offers services in both English and Spanish.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** commented that ALWAYS and [Starfish Place](#) overlap quite often with the clients that they serve and ALWAYS comes to Starfish Place once a month because of this. She thanked them for what they do and the services they offer.
- To view Valentina Restrepo Montoya's presentation, click [here](#).

2022 Y.E.S. Study

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, introduced **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** to speak to the Council.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** is a social scientist focused on developing innovative and impactful research on emerging social issues, especially those affecting girls and women. She is an Associate Professor at the Arizona State University (ASU) of Social Work and the founder and director of the [ASU Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research \(STIR\)](#). She leads numerous initiatives working with community partners including law enforcement, social service providers, and survivor support organizations in multiple states.
 - **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** is also an appointed member of the Arizona Human Trafficking Council and the City of Phoenix Human Trafficking Task Force.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** began her presentation by explaining that ASU STIR receives a donation from the [Kindness Foundation](#) and although the Youth Experiences Survey (Y.E.S) is a relatively low-cost study, with this donation, they are able to purchase gift cards for the participants.
 - This study survey's Arizona homeless youth who are 18 to 24 years of age.
 - It is a 6 page survey, including a Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) survey as well.
 - Overall, **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explains that one of the main objectives of this study is for organizations to use these findings when applying for grants.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** mentioned that they had 107 individuals participate in the study over a two week period.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained the findings from the study.
 - More females represented than males; This fluctuates year to year.
 - The average age of the respondents was 20.
 - People of color were disproportionately represented within the study compared to the population of the state.
 - Less than 36% of unsheltered youth reported to be heterosexual. Again, finding that LGBTQIA+ was disproportionately represented.
 - The age of respondents first experiencing homelessness was 16.5, ranging from 2 to 25. More than half (51.4%) first experienced homelessness under the age of 18.
 - Respondents were sheltered via couch surfing. However, they are not only couch surfing, it might vary day-to-day due what is available to them at that time.
 - Over half of respondents were raised in Arizona and stayed for a long period of time. Overall, kids are not coming to Arizona to be unsheltered.
 - Only 52% successfully graduated from high school. Less than half (41%) reported having dropped out of school at one point in time during their educational journey.
 - Respondents reporting haven dropped out of school due to moving around a lot, being homeless, academic difficulty, supporting themselves (job/money), bullying, pregnancy, expulsion, and substance use.
 - More than half (53.3%) of respondents reported drug use.
 - The average age of first drug use was 14.8, ranging from 5 to 22. Of the 53.3%, 87.7% reported their first drug use before the age of 18.
 - Respondents reported having used fentanyl (9.3%), marijuana (32.7%), and even having an addiction to alcohol (8.4%). Of that, 22.2% became addicted after becoming homeless.

- A little over half (54.2%) reported engaging in some form of self-harming behavior (cutting, burning, risk taking, having sex with strangers); A little under half (44.9%) reported attempting suicide.
- More than half (61.8%) reported having *diagnosed* mental health issues and 52.3% reported having a current medical issue.
- Three respondents reported being pregnant while homeless, 25 respondents had children, and 13 had their children in their care.
- Half of respondents reported that they were kicked out of their home before the age of 18 with an average age being 16.6 years old.
- Less than half (38.3%) reported having witnessed domestic violence in their household as a child.
- Almost half (49.5%) reported having a steady job and 22.4% reported having side jobs for cash.
- Respondents were 12x more likely to experience four or more ACEs.
 - The average number being 5.1 ACEs.
- Less than half (40.2%) reported experiencing at least one form of exploitation with 17.8% reported experiencing both sex and labor trafficking.
 - Experiencing sex trafficking was reported by 36.4% of respondents. The age of first experience was 16.9, ranging from 3 to 25. Of those who experienced a sex trafficking situation, 23.1% were under 18 at their first experience.
 - Reported rates of trafficking were 61.5% for females and 25.6% for males.
 - Reported rates of trafficking for individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+ is 43.6%.
 - Participants reported needing a place to stay, money, *food*, drugs, clothing, and protection as reasons for their sex trafficking experiences.
 - Respondents reported their friend as their sex trafficker at 30.8% with 25.6% reported their boyfriend.
 - Technology was used to facilitate the exploitation of 46.2% respondents.
 - Sex trafficked youth are seen to be more likely to engage in drug use, less likely to eat, more likely to report one mental health diagnosis, dental problems, vision problems, etc. They were also significantly more likely to report all of the ACEs.
 - Experiencing labor trafficking was reported by 29% of respondents.
 - Of those who experienced a labor trafficking situation, 41% were under the age of 18 when they were first labor trafficked.
 - The reasons reported to why they were labor trafficked: money, place to stay, food, drugs, protection, clothing, forced to shoplift, forced to take care of children that were not theirs, steal from grocery stores (forced criminality), etc.
 - Respondents reported their friend as their labor exploiter at 79%.
 - At least one form of human exploitation was represented in 40% of 107 participants.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** mentioned that this will continue in 2023 and ASU STIR is looking for more partners to make the study more representative of the state (population/county).
- To view **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz's** presentation, click [here](#).

Special Education Project

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** to speak to the Council.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** began her presentation by explaining the [STOP \(Services • Training • Officers • Prosecutors\) Violence Against Women Grant](#) funded special education project was created in response to the understanding that 22% of those who have been sex trafficking have been involved with special education at some point in their life.
 - Reasons as to why these individuals would be targeted by traffickers:
 - More naive, less likely to have been taught about intimacy and prevention of misconduct in relationships, not expecting them to have intimate relationships at all, easy to lie to, displaced from their home, etc.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained that as a result of the findings above, ASU STIR developed a program to target educators, giving them the knowledge and signs to look out for (IEP or 501).
 - Created a website [Sex Trafficking & Special Education](#) and a [Brochure](#) for special educators.

- To view **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz's** presentation, click [here](#).

Workgroup Updates

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, explained that herself and the former Outreach and Awareness Workgroup Chair, Debbie Johnson's, main objective was the Statewide Anti-Human Trafficking Campaign in partnership with LAVIDGE, as well as the tipline in preparation for the Super Bowl.
- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced the Data and Research Workgroup Chair, **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz**, to share any updates with the Council.
 - **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** reported the following:
 - From February 1st to March 31st, 11 calls were made to the tipline.
 - **Scenario 1:** Call from Yuma, connected them to [Amberly's Place](#)
 - **Scenario 2:** Person was stopped at a bus station, being transported by people she did not trust. After calling the hotline, they were able to get her into the [Phoenix Dream Center](#) for two nights. She then was transferred to a facility where she is participating in a sex trafficking recovery program.
 - **Scenario 3:** Someone called the tip line and was connected to [Starfish Place](#). She was then moved into an apartment on April 1st.
 - Provided sex trafficking training to 56 people from the Arizona Department of Public Health (AZDHS).
 - The World Without Exploitation Event at ASU had 55 people in attendance.
 - Held two virtual trainings for juvenile corrections, juvenile justice, and for anyone providing youth services in Pima County and 146 people were in attendance.
 - Provided sex trafficking training to all victim compensation council's across the state.
 - Provided sex trafficking training to 46 people from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO).
 - Completed a sex trafficking training for the Eastern Arizona Human Trafficking Coalition.
 - Completed a sex trafficking training for the National Prosecuting Attorney's Office.
 - Provided sex trafficking training to 48 Phoenix Public Defenders.
 - Upcoming events:
 - [2023 Pima County Summit](#) - 04.17.2023
 - [Drop-In Center](#) - 05.06.2023
 - Project Alto - Spring/Fall 2023
 - Working to develop a shoe card for service providers across the state.
- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced the Victim Services Workgroup Co-Chairs, **Dr. Sarah Beaumont and Dr. Angela Saloman**, to share any updates with the Council.
 - **Dr. Angela Saloman** reported that the Victim Services Workgroup had no updates for the Council.

Upcoming Meeting

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, reminded members to mark their calendars for the next meeting on **June 14, 2023**, at **09:00 AM**. The meeting will be held in person at the Executive Tower but also available in a hybrid platform for Council Members and the public to join virtually.

Adjournment

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, thanked everyone for being part of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn.
 - **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, moved to accept the motion.
 - **Joseph Kelroy** seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes at **10:42 AM**.

Dated 14 of April 2023
Arizona Human Trafficking Council
Respectfully Submitted By:

Amy Peep
GOYFF

FINAL