



Governor's Council  
to Combat Human  
Trafficking in Arizona

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ARIZONA**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**June 5, 2024, 9:00 AM**

A general meeting of the Governor's Council to Combat Human Trafficking in Arizona convened on **June 5, 2024**, notice duly given.

<b>Members Present (13)</b>	<b>Members Absent (8)</b>
Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair	Lt. Nick Alamshaw
Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair	Lois Lucas
Dr. Angela Salomon (proxy for Dr. Sarah Beaumont)	David Lujan
Nathaniel Brown	Maj. Andrew Orozco
Gina Read (proxy for Sarah Chung)	Sophia Philis-Ortiz
Doug Coleman	Senator T.J. Shope
Erin Garcia	Brian Steele
Maj. Frank Griego Jr. (proxy for Col. Jeff Glover)	Jim Waring
Tonya Hamilton	
Steve Selover (proxy for Joseph Kelroy)	
Kaleigh Jenkins (proxy for Rachel Mitchell)	
Jill Rable	
Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz	
<b>Staff &amp; Guests Present (5)</b>	
Amy Peep, GOYFF	Anastasia Stinchfield, Presenter
Chantel Hutchinson, GOYFF	Sarah Way, Presenter
Emily Uline-Olmstead, GOYFF	

#### Call to Order

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, called the Governor's Council to Combat Human Trafficking in Arizona meeting to order at **09:05 AM** with 13 members and eight staff/guests present. She reviewed meeting procedures and thanked members for joining via Zoom.

#### Approval of Minutes

- With a quorum met, **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, requested a motion to approve the **April 17, 2024** meeting minutes.
  - **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** moved to approve the **April 17, 2024** minutes.
  - **Jill Rable** seconded the motion.
    - Members requested no amendments or changes.
- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, requested a vote, and at **9:11 AM**, the motion to approve the meeting minutes as drafted was approved with no dissenting votes.

#### GOYFF Program Administrator Update

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, announced that **Amy Peep**, the [Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family \(GOYFF\)](#) Human Trafficking Specialist and the Council's Program Administrator, will give an update.
- **Amy Peep** explained that all Council members must complete the Conflict of Interest training. After completing the training, members should email her their completion certificate. If members have a conflict that affects their role on

the Governor's Council to Combat Human Trafficking in Arizona, they must also fill out the [Disclosure Statement Form](#).

- She noted that if members do not have any conflicts of interest at this time but circumstances change in the future (e.g., job description changes or becoming a member of a new board), members will need to complete this form.
- Members must complete the training and the disclosure statement (if needed) before the next Council meeting on September 4, 2024.
- If members sit on multiple [GOYFF-administered councils and commissions](#), they do not need to complete the online training more than once. However, they must confirm if they have any conflicts with this Council.
- In addition to the training, she instructed Council members to review the [Arizona Open Meeting Law Handbook](#).

## CARE 7

- **Maria Cristina Fuentes, Co-Chair**, introduced **Anastasia Stinchfield** to discuss [CARE 7](#) and the services it provides to victims and survivors of human trafficking.
  - **Anastasia Stinchfield** is a professional social worker with nearly a decade of direct advocacy service and five years of supervision and program development. Her career began as a high-needs case manager for Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care, where she assisted families with children placed in foster care.
  - After graduating with a bachelor's degree in social work from Arizona State University, Anastasia started working as a crisis intervention specialist for CARE, the City of Tempe Crisis Response Team. In this role, she offered on-scene de-escalation, stabilization, needs assessment, and community referral. Anastasia is the Sr. Social Services Coordinator for CARE 7 Victim Services. She has worked diligently to develop close relationships and programs with Tempe PD and Tempe Municipal Court to assist victims of crime better, aid in developing improved investigative techniques, and provide expert guidance and training for city staff and stakeholders. In January 2023, the City of Tempe established a new Family Advocacy Center, where Anastasia oversees all operations and victim services.
- **Anastasia Stinchfield** explained that CARE 7 prides itself on its "Continuum of Care." They encounter clients at their point of crisis and continue to support, assist, and refer throughout the healing and recovery journey.
  - When dispatched by [Tempe Police Department](#) or [Tempe Fire Medical Rescue](#), CARE 7 will respond to incidents including domestic violence, auto accidents, sexual and physical assaults, suicides, homicides, residential fires, drownings, and other unexpected deaths. They provide on-scene assistance, support, and resources, including help with filing for victims' financial compensation, orders of protection, and counseling referrals.
  - CARE 7 Programs:
    - CARE 7 Crisis Response Unit.
    - Mental Health Response Team.
    - High School Youth Specialists.
    - Case Management/Veteran's Services.
    - Victim Services.
    - VS276 Crisis Response Team.
- **Anastasia Stinchfield** explained that Tempe Family Advocacy Center (FAC) serves all victims of crime in a centralized, confidential location with services that address immediate and long-term needs. The center opened in 2022 in partnership with Arizona State University (ASU) and offers comprehensive victim services and advocacy. Students, residents, and visitors of all ages can meet with victim advocates to access resources in a safe and healing environment.
  - The other services the FAC offers:
    - Available 24/7
    - Bilingual advocacy services
    - Specialized Advocacy-SVU/DV/HT
    - On-Call Advocate- Available on all holidays
    - Mobile Advocacy Services
    - Comfort Canine- Sully

- The FAC partners with the City of Tempe's [Community Health and Human Services](#), Tempe Police Department, and ASU.
- **Anastasia Stinchfield** continued her presentation by explaining that CARE 7's victim advocate interacts with victims and families to provide ongoing assistance and emotional support. Advocates accompany victims to court hearings and assist with Orders of Protection and Injunctions Against Harassment. They liaise with the Tempe Police Department and Tempe Municipal Court. Advocates provide information regarding the victims' investigation and assistance with the criminal justice system. They also provide information on the [Victim's Rights and Victim Compensation program](#).
- **Anastasia Stinchfield** explained that the Victim Services Crisis Response Unit responds to the scene of a criminal investigation at the request of the Tempe Police Department or Tempe Fire Medical Rescue to provide support and mobile advocacy for victims of crime. They assess the client's physical and mental health needs and provide on-site resources or referrals to meet those needs. They also coordinate follow-up services with CARE 7 Victim Services, provide case management, and collaborate with other City of Tempe departments and community agencies. Additionally, they create safety plans when necessary.
- **Anastasia Stinchfield** explained that CARE 7 serves all victims of crime, including both sex and labor trafficking victims and survivors.
- **Claire Sechler-Merkel, Co-Chair**, inquired about the percentage of the victims served who are victims of human trafficking. She also asked whether those victims were residents of the ASU campus or not, including campus-related individuals.
  - **Anastasia Stinchfield** answered that trafficking victims represent a small percentage of the individuals they serve. She explained that CARE 7's focus on human trafficking is a recent development. The Tempe Police Department would be the best resource for more information about on-campus or off-campus rates of human trafficking.
- **Steve Selover** inquired whether CARE 7 has previously partnered with ASU STIR.
  - **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** thanked Steve for the suggestion and mentioned that ASU STIR and CARE 7 have partnered at the Drop-In Events. She noted that she would send over information about attending future events.
- To view **Anastasia Stinchfield's** presentation, [click here](#).

### 2021-2023 Mercy Care Report

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, introduced **Sarah Way** and **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** to present the 2021-2023 Mercy Care Child Sex Trafficking Report, discuss its purpose, and insights identified throughout this period.
  - **Sarah Way** serves as Mercy Care's Human Trafficking Project Manager. In this role, she works with communities to build collaborative processes for treating sexually exploited children. She brings extensive knowledge about Domestic Sex Trafficking, having worked directly with approximately 300 survivors of sex trafficking and the commercial sex industry during her tenure as the Human Trafficking Victim Advocate with the Phoenix Police Department Human Exploitation and Trafficking (HEAT) Unit. Sarah is also a consultant for ASU STIR, where she trains about best practices for street outreach to sex trafficking victims.
  - **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** is an ASU School of Social Work professor and the ASU STIR Director. She has a master's and doctorate in social work and is a researcher, professor, and forensic social work practitioner.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** began their presentation by explaining that the project received funding from the [America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response \(AMBER\) Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program](#) and the [National Science Foundation](#). A statewide medical and behavioral health insurance provider for youth in the care of the State of Arizona collected data for this report to gain a better understanding of the experiences of child sex trafficking survivors. The report describes the Arizona Statewide Collaborative Process for identifying victims of child sex trafficking, how they identified victims, and the characteristics of the victims identified.
  - From January 2021 to May 2023, there were 309 suspected or confirmed victims of sex trafficking identified.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** gave a summary of the findings from the previous research. Notably, there were 291 identified cases of child sex trafficking over three years, with all but four cases reported in Arizona. The average age of the victims was 15.3, and African American youth constituted over a third of these cases. Additionally, running

away was a common factor in most of these cases.

- The research began primarily in Maricopa County. It has since expanded to be statewide.
- **Sarah Way** explained that the Collaborative Process has three steps: crisis stabilization, medical clearance, and mental health evaluation. She emphasized that trafficking looks different in different communities, and meeting the victims where they are is essential.
  - This process occurs within 24 hours, during which they strive to identify the most suitable placement for the victim.
  - Overall, they are seeing better outcomes using the Collaborative.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained that 309 children were involved in this study. Of that, there were 196 suspected, and 113 confirmed victims of child sex trafficking. 2021 accounted for 97 individuals, 2022 accounted for 173, and 2023 (January through May) accounted for 39.
  - Demographic results:
    - The average age was 15.1, compared to 15.3 in the first study. **Sarah Way** mentioned that as the expansion goes outside of urban trafficking, other demographics (e.g., younger children) are more common. Service providers in rural areas also identify younger children.
    - The average age was 15.1, compared to 15.3 in the first study. **Sarah Way** noted that expanding beyond urban trafficking means other demographics become more common, such as younger children. Service providers in rural areas also identify younger children.
    - Female: 92.2%; Male: 4.5%; and transgender: 3.2%
    - Non-white races were 71.6%, and 28.4% were white.
    - Most children were under the [Arizona Department of Child Safety \(DCS\)](#) guardianship.
    - In the previous study, most referrals came from law enforcement. The latest study found that referrals came from various sources, such as DCS, behavioral health, and crisis providers.
    - Received reports from 5 counties in 2021, 11 in 2022, and 8 in 2023 (January through May).
      - In 2023, Maricopa and Pima County were the two highest-reporting counties.
  - Victim characteristics:
    - Runaway: 59.2%
    - History of sexual abuse: 18.8%
    - History of drug and alcohol use: 45%
      - **Sarah Way** mentioned that historically, the focus has been on pimp-controlled trafficking. Recently, the majority of kids are not pimp-controlled—rather buyer-facilitated, substance-involved.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** provided the overall takeaways from the report. Those being:
  - There is an overrepresentation of youth of color, exceeding 50% of the child sex trafficking (CST) victims.
    - This disproportionality, not uncommon in sex trafficking victimization research, points to limited opportunities for awareness and prevention, especially in communities of color.
  - Identified victims of sex trafficking living in non-Department of Child Safety situations: 29%
  - Female child sex trafficking victims represented 92.2% of the victims in this study.
  - Nearly one in five (18.8%) child sex trafficking victims had a history of childhood sexual abuse.
  - This study found a significant increase in drug use over the 2.5-year study period. Victims of sex trafficking showed substantial increases in their use of alcohol and Fentanyl, with a 153 percent and 125 percent increase from 2021 to 2022, respectively.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** stated that Arizona needs to continue raising awareness and prevention, enhance detection and intervention capabilities, and provide services for guardians of CST victims not in DCS care.
- **Steve Selover** asked **Sarah Way** to elaborate on buyer-facilitated means compared to pimp-controlled.
  - **Sarah Way** explained that buyer-facilitated substance-involved was more trauma-informed. This term emphasizes that the buyer is the perpetrator and the adult is liable and referred to previously as no third-party sex trafficking.
- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, expressed gratitude for **Sarah Way's** and **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz's** work. She mentioned that Arizona is at the forefront and that this information will be helpful when applying for grants to further this work across Arizona.
- **Dr. Angela Salomon** mentioned that the Victim Services Workgroup has a list of organizations and their screening

tools. She asked if this would be a helpful distribution resource to inform this data going forward.

- **Sarah Way** responded that various stakeholders have different guidelines for using screening tools. However, offering the option might be beneficial if they are interested.
- **Jill Rable** commented that this work is fantastic and is pleased to see its sustainability and functionality.
- To view **Sarah Way** and **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz's** presentation, [click here](#).

## 2023 Youth Experiences Survey (YES)

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, introduced **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** to present the 2023 Youth Experiences Survey (YES) findings.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** stated that the Youth Experiences Survey (YES) studies the experiences of unsheltered young adults in Arizona. The study has been conducted for the past ten years, starting in 2014. The YES Study is a survey administered to unsheltered young adults, focusing on understanding their life experiences and how these experiences relate to human trafficking. It targets explicitly unsheltered young adults between the ages of 18 and 25.
  - The study's information will help identify the best ways to help unsheltered young adults in Arizona, such as adapting current services to meet their needs better and developing new programs based on the study's findings.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained that 177 homeless young adults from Phoenix, Tucson, and Flagstaff completed the survey at eight agencies across the state.
  - Participant Demographics:
    - Female: 44.6%; Male: 44.6%
    - The average age was 20.9; ages ranged from 18 to 25.
    - White: 26.6%; Nonwhite: 75.7%
    - Identify as LGBTQIA+: 48.1%
    - Born and raised in Arizona: 59.3%; Lived in Arizona for less than a year: 12.1%
  - Homelessness:
    - The participants reported being homeless between 1 and 30 times during their lifetimes.
    - The average age of the first homeless experience was age 17.
    - Nearly half (46.9%) experienced homelessness for the first time as a child.
    - The most common reasons for youth homelessness are family conflict, poverty, drug use, and disapproval of sexual orientation.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained that the study participants reported various challenges, including dropping out of school, drug use, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, mental health diagnoses, and medical issues. For a more detailed breakdown, please refer to slide 9.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained the study asked the participants about their experience with sex trafficking.
  - Participants reported having experienced sex trafficking: 27.7%
    - Male: 46.9%; Female: 44.8%
    - LGBTQIA+: 59.2%
    - White: 34.7%; Non-white: 65.3%
    - The participants reported their first sex trafficking experience ranged from age seven to 21 years old. The average age was 15.7 years old.
      - Sex trafficked before age 18: 10.7%
  - Sex trafficked participants were:
    - Report having Autism: 6.8 times more likely
    - Report having been sexually abused or raped between the ages of 13-17: 5.5 times more likely
    - Report that they saw a parent hit or beat another parent: 5.4 times more likely
    - Received medical treatment for their medical issues: 5.4 times more likely
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained that the study also asked about the participant's experience with labor trafficking.
  - 31.1% of participants reported having been labor exploited.
    - Male: 52.7%; Female: 32.7%
    - LGBTQIA+: 50.9%



- White: 40%; Non-white: 58.2%
- The participants reported their first labor exploitation experience ranged from age 10 to 24 years old. The average age was 17.1 years old.
  - Under 18 years old the first time they were labor exploited: 25.5%
- Labor trafficking experiences:
  - Promised work, but the work or payment differed from what they expected: 50.9%
  - Someone they worked for had ever controlled the money they earned or kept the money they earned in exchange for money, drugs, food, a place to stay, clothing, or protection: 41.8%
  - They had, at some point, a labor trafficker: 34%
  - Currently have someone exploiting them: 5.5%
- Labor trafficked participants were:
  - Had negative experiences with law enforcement: 6.5 times more likely
  - Experienced Depression: 4.5 times more likely
  - Experienced emotional neglect by a parent: 4.1 times more likely
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained there had been a steady increase in the incidence of human trafficking among Arizona's unsheltered young adults from 2021 to May 2023. The study shows that reports of sex trafficking victimization rose by 17.4%, and reports of labor trafficking increased by 31.8% during this period.
  - The number of participants who reported sex trafficking over the past three years has changed, with an increase in the number of victims of sex trafficking identifying as male by 146.8%.
  - LGBTQIA+ orientation remained high among the sex-trafficked, unsheltered young adults.
  - The reasons for exchanging sex during their sex trafficking experiences varied. There was a decrease in exchanging sex for a place to stay, money, protection, clothes, and drugs. Those reporting exchanging sex for food remained steady.
  - The dynamics of the relationship between sex trafficking victims and their traffickers have undergone significant changes in the last three years. There has been a substantial increase in cases where the trafficker is a family member (652.6% increase) or a stranger (265.3% increase) and a decrease in cases where the trafficker is a boyfriend (dropping by 48.7%).
  - In the last three years, there has been a decrease in drug use and addiction reported by unsheltered young adults involved in sex trafficking. However, on average, 74.6% of them reported using drugs. Additionally, an average of 69.2% of the participants reported using drugs before the age of 18.
  - Average adverse childhood experiences (ACE) score of 7.
- **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** explained that the study found an overrepresentation of people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community, early experiences of homelessness, and high rates of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Based on the study's findings, **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** recommended paying more attention to homeless prevention, early substance abuse deterrence, family mediation, dating violence prevention, runaway youth, mental health services access, and healthcare access (vision and dental).
- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, thanked **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** for her time and efforts and appreciated the labor trafficking data collected in this study. She acknowledged the novelty and scarcity of the research.
- **Nathaniel Brown** commented that this is excellent work; he appreciated gathering data on the Native American population.
- To view **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz's** presentation, [click here](#).

### Workgroup Updates

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, 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:
    - On April 26, 2024, the Sex Trafficking Summit in Page, Arizona. [Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network \(AATN\)](#), [Victim Witness Services of Northern Arizona](#), and ASU STIR facilitated this training.
    - On May 18, 2024, a Phoenix 1st Step Pop-Up Drop-In Center occurred. 25 clients received services.
    - The 2024 Sex Trafficking College and University Summit occurred on June 4, 2024, and is for law

enforcement, victim services, and professional support staff to address issues such as sugar babies and the involvement of exotic dance clubs in sex trafficking.

- Arizona Human Trafficking Summit 2024 will be held from September 29 to October 2 at Harrah's AkChin Hotel and Casino. [Click here](#) for additional information.
- The Juvenile Sex Trafficking (JuST) Conference is October 22-24 in Phoenix. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, introduced the Victim Services Workgroup Co-Chair, **Dr. Angela Saloman**, to share any updates with the Council.
  - **Dr. Angela Saloman** reported that the Victim Services Workgroup recently met and has started reaching out to new members to have better representation. They are specifically looking to include a male member with lived experience. She anticipates submitting the recommendation by the end of July.

#### Upcoming Meeting

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, reminded members to mark their calendars for the next meeting on **September 04, 2024, at 09:00 AM**. The meeting will be in person at the Executive Tower, but it will also be available virtually on a hybrid platform for Council Members and the public to join.

#### Adjournment

- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, thanked everyone for participating and requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.
  - **Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz** moved to adjourn the meeting.
  - **Erin Garcia** seconded the motion.
- **Claire Sechler Merkel, Co-Chair**, requested a vote. At **10:49 AM**, the motion to adjourn was approved.

Dated 06 of June 2024  
Governor's Council to Combat Human Trafficking in Arizona  
Respectfully Submitted By:  
Amy Peep  
GOYFF