



Executive Summary: Pennsylvania Anti-Human Trafficking Survey

Overview

Every year, hundreds of Pennsylvanians experience human trafficking, and the issue continues to grow.[1] To enhance Pennsylvania's prevention, protection, and prosecution systems, Greenlight Operation surveyed nearly 200 professionals and community stakeholders, including survivors, who participated in the 10 PA Anti-Human Trafficking Policy Forums. The survey was part of an Institutional Review Board Study and provides a university-backed descriptive analysis aligned with forum feedback--offering an evidence-informed strategic roadmap to diminish exploitation in Pennsylvania.

Key Findings: professional and community awareness, preparedness, and capacity

- Participants demonstrated high levels of human trafficking awareness and strongly supported continued public education/community engagement.
- While generally confident in their own ability and willingness to recognize, report, and respond to trafficking, participant confidence lessened in their formal reporting and overall response preparedness.
- Participants further expressed just moderate confidence in organizational capacity and community infrastructure.
 - Nearly half believed their communities lacked sufficient aftercare survivor services;
 - More than two-thirds indicated insufficient funding as a significant limitation;
 - Nine in 10 participants supported coordinated regional human trafficking services such as multidisciplinary task forces (MDT).
- In open-ended survey responses, participants:
 - Consistently identified funding and knowledge limitations, competing organizational priorities, and community engagement challenges;
 - Requested additional professional education, practical response tools, regional resource information, stronger multidisciplinary partnerships, and greater organizational support.

Strategic Implications: coordinating professional and community capacity

- Expand applied, profession-specific education focused on reporting, response procedures, and survivor-centered care.
- Strengthen multidisciplinary partnerships and regional coordination networks.

- Increase survivor aftercare services and referral resources.
- Support organizations in identifying sustainable funding opportunities and building long-term organizational capacity.
- Continue statewide public awareness initiatives that encourage community engagement and prevention, recognition, and coordinated response efforts.

Section 1: Participant Characteristics

The survey included 197 interdisciplinary Pennsylvania Human Trafficking Forum participants: Social service providers, law enforcement, community members, faith-based organizations, educators, lawmakers, and lived experience experts or survivors.

Approximately two-thirds of participants had received formal training and nearly one-third reported 20+ years of professional experience, offering experienced perspectives.

Section 2: Awareness

Most participants recognized human trafficking's prevalence, online grooming/exploitation, that it doesn't require transportation, and, to a lesser extent, that it can be family-facilitated. Foundational human trafficking understanding alone did not ensure strong nor effective identification, reporting, or intervention confidence.

Programmatic recommendations:

- Emphasize human trafficking as a local issue with practical regional examples and locally relevant data that challenge common misconceptions.
- Maintain education on online grooming/digital exploitation while increasing emphasis on emerging technologies, recruitment strategies, family-facilitated trafficking, and exploitation occurring within trusted relationships.
- Build upon participants' strong awareness by shifting future educational programming toward applied recognition, multidisciplinary collaboration, and effective response strategies.

Section 3: Professional Preparedness

Confidence moderated from participant awareness to preparedness. Many believed they possessed the foundational knowledge to initiate reporting procedures, specifically expressing moderate-high confidence in their ability to identify indicators, willingness to respond to suspected trafficking, and file formal reports. However, those with direct response responsibilities only felt moderately equipped. This suggests a willingness to act, but less confidence in knowledge application.

Recommendations for professional educational programming

- Continue reinforcing participants' ability to recognize trafficking indicators through

applied case examples.

- Expand profession-specific training addressing response procedures, reporting requirements, and referral pathways.
- Incorporate scenario-based learning opportunities that allow participants to practice responding to suspected trafficking situations.
- Strengthen multidisciplinary education that promotes coordinated responses.
- Monitor professional preparedness to evaluate the impact of educational initiatives.

Section 4: Organizational Response and Systems

Overall, respondents expressed moderate confidence in staff/departmental abilities to recognize trafficking. Notably, only 25% of law enforcement and first responders felt equipped. Most participants reported insufficient aftercare services and organizational funding and expressed just moderate perceptions of current community engagement. Participants overwhelmingly supported coordinated regional human trafficking services and over 97% support increasing public awareness initiatives.

Recommendations for Organizational and Community Development

- Strengthen multidisciplinary partnerships that connect healthcare organizations, educators, law enforcement, first responders, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and other community stakeholders.
- Expand regional coordination efforts, including MDTs or collaborative service networks, to improve communication, referral pathways, and survivor support.
- Increase investment in survivor-centered aftercare services to strengthen long-term recovery resources within local communities.
- Support organizations in identifying sustainable funding to enhance workforce development, prevention initiatives, and collaborative community programming.
- Continue expanding public awareness and community education initiatives that promote trafficking recognition, community engagement, and coordinated prevention and response.

Section 5: Strategic Education and Training Priorities

In response to open-ended questions, many respondents identified insufficient knowledge, funding, organizational resources, and infrastructure barriers to sustainability. Several respondents also described limited staff time, competing organizational responsibilities, difficulty maintaining initiatives, and limited community awareness or difficulty engaging community members.

Respondents requested additional professional training and response protocols (including practical guidance, case examples, local and regional contacts, and aftercare information), survivor services, funding, leadership support, organizational policies, clear procedures, and regional partnerships and community learning.

Recommendations for Educational Programming:

- Continue expanding multidisciplinary educational programs that integrate healthcare, education, law enforcement, social services, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and community partners.
 - Develop practical training resources emphasizing reporting procedures, referral pathways, survivor-centered care, and profession-specific response protocols.
 - Increase access to regional resource directories, aftercare information, and community referral networks that support coordinated responses.
 - Strengthen public awareness initiatives that encourage community engagement while addressing common misconceptions regarding human trafficking.
 - Support organizations in identifying sustainable funding opportunities and collaborative partnerships that enhance long-term organizational capacity and community response.
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Sources

[1] "National Statistics," National Human Trafficking Hotline, <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics>.