



# SECTION 1

## Year in Review

In January, the Colorado Human Trafficking Council (the Council) held its annual retreat and reflected on its proposed scope of work for 2025 and the formation of advisory committees. Through a process of gallery-style voting, led by the Human Trafficking Team (HTT)—a subset of staff from the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ), Office for Victims Program—Council members added their preferences to various topics for consideration.

The Council chose to focus its 2025 work on three key areas: (1) to reinstate the Prevention Task Force from 2018, with a focus on the education sector; (2) to form a new task force, the Service Provider Partnerships Task Force; and (3) to conclude the important work of the *Connecting Colorado: Building Effective Anti-Trafficking Systems* project under the *Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking* grant, funded by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), that ended on September 30. Additionally, several of the proposed focus areas became the subject matter for the Council’s continuing education during five of their monthly meetings.

**Service Provider Partnership Task Force:** The Council established this task force to strengthen the overall response to service provision for all victims and survivors of human trafficking. This enhanced response required relationship-building between programs with a specific human trafficking focus and direct service providers that do not have this focus. Efforts included creating guidance for referrals as well as increasing direct care providers' knowledge and confidence in serving this population.

Task Force Chairs: Anchal Jain and Jo-Ann O'Neil

**Prevention Task Force 2025:** Building off the Education Task Force's work in 2023, this task force developed and sent direct communications to superintendents of each Colorado school district to pitch the delivery of school-specific human trafficking 101 training to school personnel, including administrators, counselors, psychologists, educators and any staff who have direct contact with students. Additionally, the task force actively applied to present this same training at school-focused conferences around the state whose audiences included school administrators, counselors and psychologists, with the intention that attendees would then invite trainers to present to their staff.

Task Force Chairs: Rebekah Layton and Hava Simmons

## Council Continuing Education

As in past years, the Council maintained a strong emphasis on continuing education topics that helped its members stay well-informed on the latest research and trends in the anti-trafficking field. At its annual retreat, the Council was honored to work with Suleman Masood, Esq. Masood is a subject-matter expert and former chair and member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, with over 10 years of experience building cross-agency partnerships. Masood led the primary session of the retreat, a training titled *The Language of Healing: Understanding and Applying Trauma-Informed Care*. This session focused on recognizing the signs of trauma in individuals and professionals, how to create an integrated agency response to trauma, understanding the specific needs of survivors, review of concepts for building trust between providers and survivors, and ideas for language use and how language choice can set the tone for engagement with survivors.

In April, the Council hosted a Harm Reduction Panel with Charlee Borg, Executive Director of Framework; Zach Jenio, Program Manager of Bee the Vibe; and Savannah Sanders, Executive Director of Applejack's Ranch. The panel provided insight to the Council on the definition and history of harm-reduction work, how harm reduction and risk mitigation relate to primary prevention work, and examples of strategies to use when working with individuals with lived experience in human trafficking.

In May, the Council received a mini-training on motivational interviewing by Dr. Ersaleen Hope. Hope provided an overview of the evidence-based practice of motivational interviewing to help individuals explore ambivalence and acquire motivation for positive behavior change. She covered the three key components of motivational interviewing: (1) spirit—how and what influences a person to authentically show up to a conversation, (2) skills—the specific tools to use to enhance communication and outcome, and (3) strategy—what guides the flow of the conversation using a methodological approach.

In June, the Council participated in a human trafficking language workshop led by HTT member Camerron Resener, titled *Human Trafficking Language: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. The workshop aimed to discuss language use within the human trafficking field, the general public's understanding of human trafficking and the common misconceptions that exist. Through the review of two recent news articles on human trafficking, Council members were asked to identify sensitive language. This exercise was followed by a group discussion about why the identified language may be sensitive and why it might be challenging to use or may help fuel misconceptions about the crime of human trafficking.

In July, the Council received a presentation on the important role of healthy relationship education as a form of human trafficking prevention work from Carra Gilson and Jessie Purcel from Thriving Families. The presenters focused their talk on their MotherWise program, which provides a series of group-based workshops to new mothers on topics such as self-awareness and standards, effective communication in all close relationships, problem-solving, managing family conflict, safely exiting unhealthy relationships and intentional future planning. The speakers provided information on the positive impact of

this program and how healthy relationship education can increase knowledge and skills and empower decision-making.

## Leadership

As in prior years, the Council and DCJ staff continue to demonstrate leadership in anti-human trafficking efforts locally, nationally and internationally.

## Cross-National Collaboration in Anti-Trafficking Work

Since the inception of the Council, DCJ staff and Council members have hosted international delegations from the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership program. These delegations have been coordinated by WorldDenver, which organized visits with several anti-trafficking organizations in the state for delegates to dialogue with, learn from and share ideas on how best to address human trafficking in their respective communities. In July 2025, the Council was invited to host two delegations. The first was an international delegation with an interest in both human trafficking and missing and murdered

Indigenous relatives, two program areas that DCJ focuses on. This delegation had representatives from countries worldwide, including Bangladesh, Brazil, Denmark, Jordan, the Philippines, Taiwan, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, and Uzbekistan. The focus of this meeting was on U.S. state government strategies to address human trafficking and missing and murder Indigenous relatives,



**Pictured: (first row) Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, Mohannad Mayyas, Aybek Khalmuratov, Duncan Gitagno, Amy Barcenas, Maria Trujillo, Melody Delmar (second row) Ishita Rony, Fang Chun Chu, Emmylou Detango Bendanillo, Ana Paula Marcal, Jill Brogdon, Irma Jaimes-Alonso, Dominique LaCroix, Livia Mendes Moreira Miraglia, Valerie Hansen, Camerron Resener (third row) Lasse Bjoernskov Rasmussen, Caleb Stewart, Austin Paul, Andrew Lorensen**

including how international law enforcement can cooperate when investigating these types

of cases. The delegation was also interested in examining the various roles that government, law enforcement, and the courts and communities play in detecting, preventing, and prosecuting these crimes and providing services for victim recovery.

The second meeting, held in July, was with a delegation from the country of Tajikistan. This delegation had a specific interest in the Council’s public awareness campaign, *This Is Human Trafficking*. In response to this interest, the HTT invited two guests to join the conversation: the campaign communication partner, Tonya Peters, owner of Orange Circle



**Pictured: Tajikistan Delegation – Nagzibek Chiniev, Parvina Hakimova, Zulfiya Kasimova, Parvina Navruzova, Ben Nichols, Jill Brogdon, Austin Paul, Kelly Kissell, Tonya Peters, Katlyn Pryshlak**

Consulting, and hotline and advocacy manager at the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking, Katlyn Pryshlak, who runs and operates the state human trafficking hotline. Peters provided the delegation with an overview of the campaign—from its origins, through three years of formative research, to its implementation into media markets across the state—

along with information about the overall impact and evaluation results of the campaign. Pryshlak provided further insight into how the campaign impacted calls to Colorado’s Human Trafficking Hotline, including the increase in overall calls and in survivors contacting the hotline, among other key indicators.

### National and Local Partnerships

On a local level, the Council and the HTT received several partnership requests from boards and organizations to provide education on the topic of human trafficking and the work of the Council. Both the Sex Offender and Domestic Violence Offender management boards

invited the HTT to their board meetings to present on human trafficking and how it intersects with their work.

In August, the HTT was invited to speak on a panel at the virtual Forum on Criminal Justice, hosted by the National Criminal Justice Association. The HTT represented the work of the Council and how it is addressing human trafficking in Colorado along with counterparts from Ohio doing similar work.

In September, the Council partnered with TAT (Truckers Against Trafficking), the Colorado Attorney General's Office and Phillips 66 to host a coalition build for the energy sector in Greeley, Colorado. Designed to motivate energy-sector leaders to take an active role in addressing human trafficking within their industry, the half-day event provided education on the topic and introduced them to local community partners they could work with, such as law enforcement and service providers. During the event, the HTT provided a short introduction to human trafficking and participated on a panel with other anti-trafficking leaders from the area.

Finally, in October, the HTT was invited to present two sessions at the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference hosted by the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance. At this three-day conference, HTT members presented on two topics. The first was *Stronger Together: A Regional Approach to Rural Anti-Trafficking Response*, which highlighted the work of the HTT's first OVC *Improving Outcomes* grant to establish regional specialists in rural communities and its continued implementation in the field by the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking. The second topic, *Bridging the Gaps: Equipping Colorado Communities to Combat Trafficking of Children and Youth*, gave an overview on the HTT's second *Improving Outcomes* grant that leverages community guidance to establish multidisciplinary teams to better identify and respond to child and youth trafficking. Additionally, due to the high quality and national reputation of the Council's work, the HTT provided consultation to three states—Illinois, Michigan and Virginia—on various aspects of their anti-trafficking work.

## **Continued Visability of the Council's *This Is Human Trafficking* Campaign**

Despite no longer having large grant dollars to pay for statewide media for the *This Is Human Trafficking* campaign, visibility of the campaign continues. In partnership with the regional anti-trafficking collaboration Bringing our Valley HOPE in Buena Vista, the campaign's radio ads aired on the Heart of the Rockies radio stations in both English and Spanish over the summer. These included Eagle Country 104.1 FM, The Peak 92.3 FM, Hippie Radio 97.5 FM and The Valley 102.9 FM. Bringing our Valley HOPE was able to raise funds to pay for the media buy with Heart of the Rockies radio stations.

Additionally, seven organizations requested campaign materials for distribution in their communities, which included 611 English and 653 Spanish posters, 2,300 English and 1,200 Spanish clings, 6,000 English and 5,000 Spanish stickers, along with the remaining supply of lip balms designed for direct victim outreach given to Stride Community Health to distribute across their various health clinics in the Denver metro area.

Finally, in partnership with Colorado Legal Services and the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, the Council distributed 800 bandanas—containing a discreet QR code for direct connection to the Spanish language version of the *This Is Human Trafficking* website—to Spanish-speaking agricultural workers during peak work season. This allowed these workers to connect to information about human trafficking and resources.

