



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
**SAFE CENTER**  
FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS  
**EMPOWERING THE STATE**

---

SUPPORT, ADVOCACY, FREEDOM, AND EMPOWERMENT CENTER

# Presentation to Maryland Legislators Women's Caucus

Ambassador Susan Esserman  
Founder and Director

# Human Trafficking in Maryland

- **Top 12<sup>th</sup>** state for reports of human trafficking
- **396** survivors of human trafficking served by organizations
- **15** labor trafficking survivors
- **381** sex trafficking survivors

*(Data from the Victim Services Committee of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, and National Human Trafficking Hotline)*

- Pass through & destination state: **I-95** facilitates trafficking, connects major East Coast cities
- Major highways also mean numerous **rest stops, truck stops, and bus stops**—primary locations for traffickers
- Major **airports** (BWI, Thurgood Marshall, etc.) are destinations for victims and hotspots for victims and “johns”

# Where Does Trafficking Occur in MD?

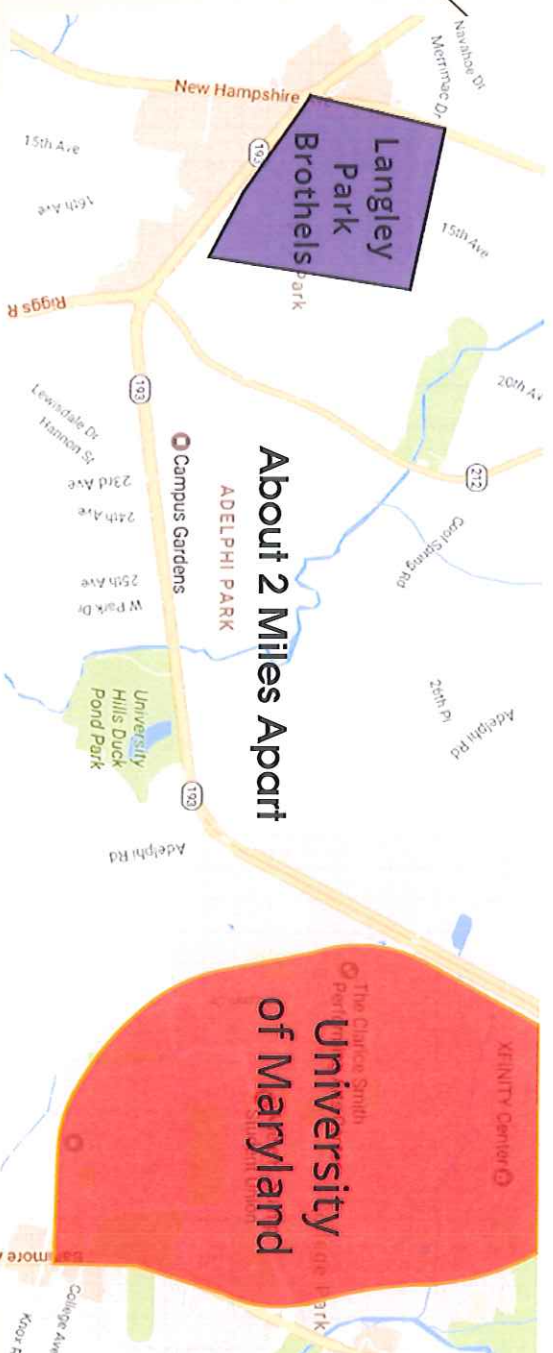
## Sex Trafficking

- ▶ Hotels/motels
- ▶ Residential brothels
- ▶ Strip clubs
- ▶ Massage businesses
- ▶ Street prostitution
- ▶ Truck/rest stops
- ▶ Private residences
- ▶ Escort Services
- ▶ Online

## Labor Trafficking

- ▶ Domestic work
- ▶ Restaurants
- ▶ Agriculture
- ▶ Construction

There are around **40 brothels** within **two miles** of the border of the University of Maryland campus. Some of our clients have been **trafficked in commercial sex** in these brothels.



# University of Maryland Support, Advocacy, Freedom and Empowerment (SAFE) Center

## OUR MISSION

- To provide comprehensive survivor-centered and trauma-informed **services** that empower trafficking survivors to heal and reclaim their lives.
- To help prevent trafficking and better serve survivors through **research** and **policy advocacy**.
- To **raise awareness** and train a new generation of skilled advocates and service providers with expertise in trafficking issues.



# Who We Are

- The **first university-based center** that combines comprehensive direct services, research, and advocacy to address the issue of human trafficking.
- An initiative of the University of Maryland, Baltimore and the University of Maryland, College Park, through the **MPower program**.
- **Direct service provider** for U.S. and foreign-born adult and child survivors of sex and labor trafficking.
- Provides services to victims of trafficking from the state of Maryland and metropolitan regional area, with an initial focus on **Prince George's and Montgomery counties**.

# What We Do

- **Comprehensive direct services** (intensive case management, legal, primary medical, dental, and mental health services), as well as connections to housing and public benefits, to survivors of trafficking through in-house services and collaboration with partners.
- **Research** to fill gaps in knowledge on human trafficking and to improve our services.
- **Advocacy** to support and empower trafficking survivors and promote justice.

# Leveraging UMD Expertise

<b>School of Public Policy</b>	Research on mission-critical SAFE Center policies.
<b>School of Social Work</b>	Expertise in domestic child trafficking, program evaluation, services implementation
<b>School of Law</b>	Expertise through Gender Violence and Immigration Law Clinics.
<b>School of Public Health</b>	Bilingual family therapy services through Center for Healthy Families
<b>College of Behavioral and Social Sciences</b>	-Faculty-run doctoral student psychology clinics. - Student interns from MLAW undergraduate law and policy program
<b>School of Nursing</b>	Nursing School's Governor's Wellmobile primary medical care clinic in Prince George's County
<b>College of Arts and Humanities</b>	- Pro-bono interpretation and translation services - Student-run public awareness and fundraising annual event for SAFE Center
<b>School of Business</b>	Graduate student consulting project on economic empowerment programming



## SAFE Center Client Statistics

- ▶ Since opening in May, we have had **41 client referrals** from law enforcement, other service providers, and the national anti-trafficking hotline.
- ▶ Our current client caseload is: **29 clients** (24 open cases and 5 awaiting intake).

## Profile of SAFE Center Clients

Women	21
Men	3
Labor Trafficking	75%
Sex Trafficking	25%
Under 18	1
18-24	3
24 and older	20
Prince George's County	8
Montgomery County	8
Metropolitan region	8

# Client Needs

## ➤ Crisis Intervention

- Food, Emergency Shelter, Clothing, Medical Care, Interpretation Services, Transportation

## ➤ Active Engagement Phase

- Legal Services, Education, Employment, English as a Second Language, Transportation, Mental Health, Transitional Housing, Medical Insurance, Supportive Community, Document Obtainment, Assisting in Trafficker's Prosecution, Court Advocacy, Protective Order, Address Confidentiality

## ➤ Transition and Termination Phase

- Sustainable Employment, Stable and Safe Housing, Language Proficiency, Legal Status, Stable and Healthy Support System, Trafficker Prosecuted, Family Reunification

## SAFE Center's Role in the Community

- ▶ **Leadership** on the development of Prince George's county-wide collaborative **crisis intervention protocol** on human trafficking.
- ▶ **Co-Chairmanship** of the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force Victim Services Committee.
- ▶ **Active membership** on the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Task Force.
- ▶ **Training** for community organizations, professional associations, and faith communities on human trafficking



## Student Participation

- Under the supervision of SAFE Center staff, students:
  - Provide client services
  - Develop programs and curricula
  - Conduct outreach to human trafficking task forces and community organizations
  - Provide research
- Since it began operations, the SAFE Center has hosted 27 student interns in social work, law, public policy, public health, criminal justice, psychology, economics, art, and women's studies.

## Critical Building Phase: SAFE Center's Immediate Needs

- Resources to meet increasing client needs.
- Resources to develop mission-critical economic empowerment services incorporating practical experience, related scholarship, and best practices.
- Resources to engage in effective policy advocacy and policy implementation in our programs and services.

## Contact Us

**Tel: (301) 314-7233 (SAFE)**

**[esserman@umd.edu](mailto:esserman@umd.edu)**

**[www.umd safecenter.org](http://www.umd safecenter.org)**

**Thank You**