



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
SAFE CENTER
FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS
MPOWERING 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 12th state for reports of human trafficking
- 396 survivors of human trafficking served by organizations
 - 15 labor trafficking survivors
 - 381 sex trafficking survivors
- 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”

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

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.

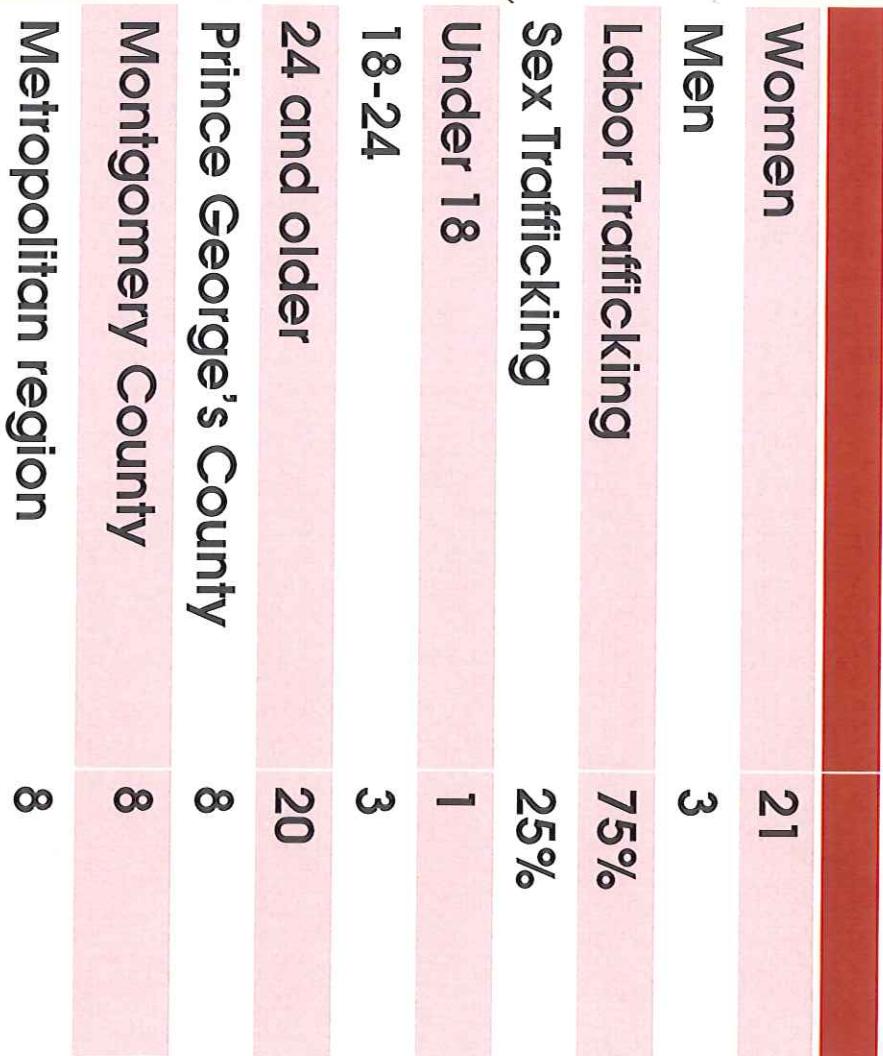
Leveraging UMD Expertise

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



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

www.umdsafecenter.org

Thank You