



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NEW MEXICO

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NM Legislature Indian Affairs Committee

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# The Life Link

- Since 2008, The Life Link, a nonprofit community health center, has worked with the New Mexico Office of the Attorney General on awareness and outreach campaigns for victims, as well as being the primary referral agency and service provider for victims in our state.
- The Life Link has provided leadership to the New Mexico Human Trafficking Task Force since 2015.
- The Life Link provides comprehensive “wraparound” services to victims that include emergency, transitional, and long-term supportive housing; intensive case management; mental health and substance abuse treatment; benefit and employment assistance; crisis intervention; transportation; interpretation; employment support; rights-based advocacy; and navigation, training, consultation and countless other services.
- Referrals to the program come from from all over New Mexico, including pueblos and reservations, and 19 states in the US.

# Victim Services

- Data from the last three years show that we provided 34,833 service units to **149** victims in 2019, 37,024 service units to **137** victims in 2020, and 30,865 service units to **187** victims in 2021
- In 2013, The Life Link started the 505-GET-FREE human trafficking hotline, which was the first voice and text hotline in the United States. This was in response to hearing from victims that they were never left alone by their traffickers to make a private call for help. In 2014 the NM Legislature passed House Bill 181, requiring the posting of the 505-GET-FREE hotline number in all places of business. Over the past 12 months, the hotline has been contacted by **988** unique individuals looking for information or assistance.
- Over the past two years, the focus of our work has expanded to include more labor trafficking cases in addition to the sex trafficking cases we have addressed for years, as illustrated by the dozens of Chinese nationals we have helped who were identified in a cannabis farm raid in the Four Corners area.



# Partners

- Significant dearth of victim resources in New Mexico, with the only providers including significant services being The Life Link, First Nations Community Health, and NM Dream Center.
- Major law enforcement providers with whom we have partnered, received referrals, and actually participated in victim rescue operations with include SFPD, Santa Fe County Sheriff's Department, NM State Police, APD, Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, FBI, US Department of Homeland Security, US Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement, and many others.
- The Life Link has a very robust partnership with the New Mexico Crime Victims' Reparation Commission, who supports us with funding for a 24-month community-based transitional housing program for up to 30 survivors, as well as some support for hotline activities and program staffing.

# Funding Needs

- Additional partners
- Staffing
- Hotline support (office, on-call, software)
- Training support (travel, consultation, collaboration)
- Outreach material (handouts, billboards, advertising)
- Victim needs (housing, short-term financial support, crisis needs)

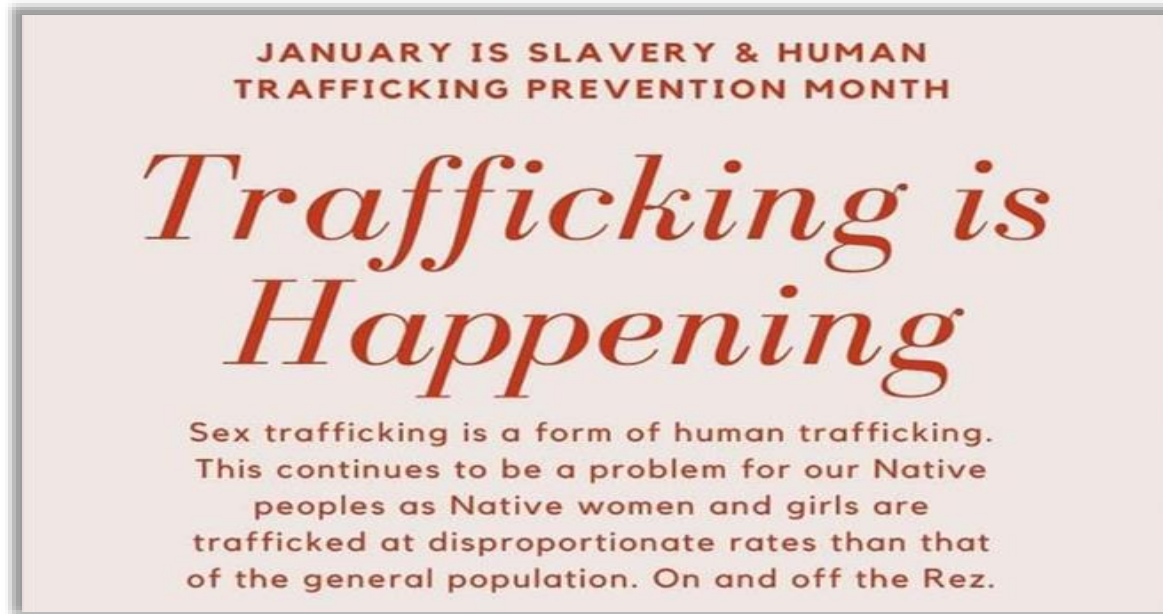




# **MMIP INTERSECTING WITH HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**A SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEXICO**





- According to the Urban Indian Health Institute, New Mexico reported 78 cases of Missing and Murdered Women and Girls in 2017.
- New Mexico ranks the highest in unsolved cases.
- NM Indigenous Women and children are at highest risk for exposure to domestic violence and substance abuse in the country. This is due to rural areas, lack of law enforcement and resources.
- NM has appointed a taskforce on this topic but has little data to show how many individuals are actually reported missing.





# Historical Trauma and Cultural Assimilation

- **Native American Genocide**
  - Early settlers and Colonization from the British, The French, and the Spanish
  - Indian Wars with The US Military; The Trail of Tears, Sand Creek Massacre, Wounded Knee Massacre, Camp Grant Massacre, The Pueblo Revolt and many more...
  - Bounties for Native American scalps issued by the American Colonies to white settlers in the 1670s and again during the Gold Rush in 1840s.
- **Reservations and Boarding Schools**
  - After the Indian Wars of America, in the 1850s Congress passed the Indian Appropriations Act. Reservations were formed to “control” tribes. Tribes were not allowed to leave their assigned reservation without permission from the US Government.
  - Boarding school were formed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the 19th Century, where children were stripped from their families and placed in institutions to, “Kill the indian, Save the Man.”

# Post Trauma in Communities

- Cultural Genocide and Colonization
  - Takes on many mental and physical forms. Racism, poverty, substance abuse and violence contribute to issue in our communities. Provoking negative stereotypes of alcoholics, prostitution and “the lazy native”
  - Social stigmas around mental health in Indigenous communities prevents those in need of services. Community shaming for seeking services for substances, domestic violence, trauma leads to outsourcing from the tribe; revictimizing.
  - Education around ongoing trauma is overlooked or avoided. The indigenous youth do not have a lot of knowledge or tools they can utilize for trauma. Learned behavior in communities are often labeled “troubled” or discriminated against depending on what family they come from.

***“When I am gone, she will have no one because she will have been labeled.***

***Nobody forgets and they will rub it in your face...”***

# Service and Needs for Communities

- **Law enforcement and emergency responder coordination**
  - Education around identifying victims and recognizing repeated visits or offenses
  - Cultural Competence; language and demeanor, familiar to the area, appearance and health
  - Safe/Wet housing VS Detention
- **Community services and ongoing treatment**
  - Does the individual have support services in their community and has that worked for them?
  - Evaluation of trauma and other co-occurring disorders
  - Emotional support and services around cultural dynamics
- **Family services/relocation**
  - Family trauma history
  - Support services with the family and is it safe to return to the community
  - What does relocation mean to the individual and what barriers may they encounter?

# Healing from Trauma

- **Traditional Healing**
  - Engaging in ceremonies and traditional practices
  - Prayer and meditation
- **Peer Support**
  - Case management from peers who have similar experience and knowledge of resources in the community to help navigate a safe road to recovery.
  - Role modeling and coaching how to re-integrate back into the community.
- **Community Healing**
  - Able to talk about trauma and educate coping skills for the community
  - Unity and availability for individuals who seek help from elders and support of healing.



# CVRC's Approach to Human Trafficking

- 2013 Enumerated Crime
- 2015 State Appropriation
- 2016 State Funding Received
- 2016 Meeting With Stakeholders
- 2019 VOCA Funded Transitional Housing

# **CVRC's Crisis Stabilization Funding**

- The Life Link - \$88,671.
- Albuquerque Rape Crisis Center - \$108,689.
- La Pinon Rape Crisis Center - \$88,671.
- New Mexico Immigrant Law Center - \$61,320.

# CVRC's Addressing "Missing Person"

- Counseling for Family
- Travel Expenses
- Loss of Wages
- Funeral Expenses

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING CRISIS STABILIZATION EXPENSE INFORMATION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

To qualify for crisis stabilization, the individual must be identified as a victim of human trafficking with immediate safety concerns and with the last victimization having occurred within the last two (2) years in New Mexico. A victim service provider who is assisting with services, must certify the victims' needs. In cases that exceed the two-year requirement, reasonable justification must be provided with this certification.

A. Victim/Claimant Name:

B. Victim/Claimant Phone/Cell Number:  C. Victim/Claimant Date of Birth:

D. Victim Service Provider Name and Contact Number:

**REQUIRED: Type a description of WHAT and WHY this funding is needed. Include facts of the case and immediate impact of the crime on the victim. Attach additional pages if needed.**

**REQUIRED: Copies of all signed leases, contracts, agreements, or itemized receipts must be submitted. Provide dollar amounts of each expense for which assistance is being required.**

Expenses: Temporary Lodging (Hotel), Rental Deposits, Utility Deposits, Storage Unit, Transportation (Air, Bus), Support Services. Attach additional pages if needed.

Example: Hotel	La Quinta Inn, 6200 Avenida de Mesilla, LC NM 88002 Beginning 1-2-2002 to 1-5-2022 3 nights, \$75.00	\$225.00 +TAX
		\$
		\$
		\$
TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED		\$

### CERTIFICATION:

I acknowledge and certify these funds are for a victim of human trafficking with immediate safety concerns. I am requesting assistance for crisis stabilization funding due to the crime, and the attached itemized list of expenses are true and correct. I agree to provide CVRC with all the receipts available to verify payment(s). I understand that misuse of these funds may result in the denial of further financial assistance, closure of the claim, repayment to CVRC of any funds accepted and/or possible prosecution for fraud.

Victim Service Provider Signature & Date:

Approved by Administering Agency Signature & Date:

Thank you  
for the  
opportunity  
to present.

