



Applied Policy Project Prepared for the Joint Legislative Audit Commission

Sex Trafficking Prevention in Virginia

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INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is the second-largest criminal industry in the world, generating an estimated \$150 billion each year internationally for traffickers (ILO, 2014). Commonly referred to as “modern-day slavery”, “victims of human trafficking are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor”(DHHS, 2004). The negative consequences are felt primarily among victims who are deprived of their human rights and freedoms and suffer from emotional, physical, and psychological abuse. Trafficking networks pose an additional burden to society by inviting other types of criminal activity, placing more strain on local and state police departments and criminal justice systems.

The United States ranks poorly in the world for human trafficking. In 2018 a report by the State Department placed the United States among the top three nations of origin for victims of human trafficking (DOS, 2019). Among the states, Virginia is particularly vulnerable due to the intersection between interstates 64,95, and 295 which have become hotspots for trafficking. Given its unique positioning and trends in victims counts, this Applied Policy Project is focused on sex trafficking prevention in Virginia. In this paper I first provide an overview of sex trafficking in Virginia, why it is an important policy problem, and present background on the current policy arena as well as existing evidence on anti-human trafficking policies. Following this analysis and based on best practices among existing anti-human trafficking programming, we will consider three policy options aimed at sex trafficking prevention in Virginia: (1) An FBI partnership with a local task force, (2) A prosecutorial training office, and (3) a Training program for healthcare professionals. After considering these policy alternatives and measuring them against the most relevant criteria, alternative two will be presented as the final recommendation, followed by an implementation plan.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are too many victims of sex trafficking in the state of Virginia annually. In 2019, Virginia ranked 16th in the nation for total reported cases of human trafficking with 189 cases that year (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2019).

CLIENT OVERVIEW

My client organization is the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC). JLARC is an agency that conducts program evaluation, policy analysis, and oversight of other state agencies for the Virginia General Assembly (JLARC, n.d.). JLARC’s staff work on a variety of policy topics and publish reports to aid in different stages of the policy making process ranging from preliminary research to program evaluations. Agency evaluations make up a sizable portion of JLARC’s published reports which in turn help Virginia’s General Assembly make decisions on oversight and appropriations. As an agency JLARC’s stated goals include helping contribute to an informed legislature, ensure compliance with legislative intent, and promote effectiveness, efficiency, and cost

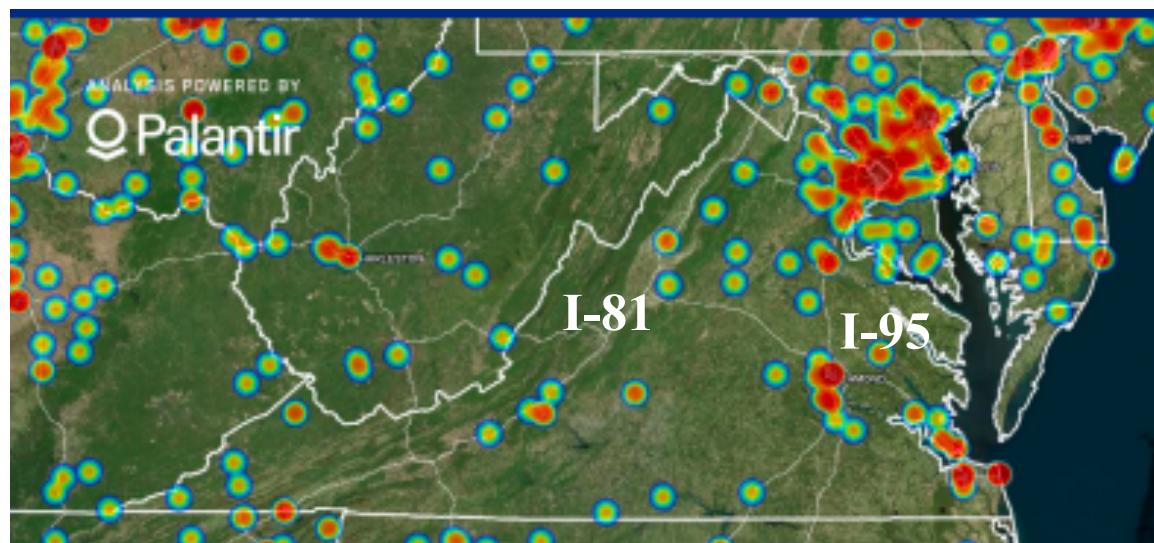
savings in their recommendations. Their work is also governed by four principles: integrity, rigor, objectivity, and nonpartisanship.

BACKGROUND

In 2019 the Federal Human Trafficking Report cited 13 active federal criminal human trafficking cases in Virginia, only two of which were newly reported that year. Of the active cases, 92% were classified as sex trafficking cases with just 8% as labor trafficking. Seven defendants were convicted in federal courts in Virginia in 2019, ranking the state 12th in the nation for defendants convicted (Human Trafficking Institute, 2020). Virginia ranks high on the nationwide list of federal active cases, coming in at 13th, more than neighboring West Virginia which ranked 39th with three cases but less than Maryland which ranked 6th with 21 cases.

Virginia's human trafficking problem is exacerbated by the underground sex industry at the confluence of Interstates 64, 95, and 295. The evidence on case counts suggests that intersections of interstates are associated with a higher number of calls that report human trafficking (Human Trafficking Institute, 2020). In addition to the I-95 corridor, Interstate 81 has been reported as a route for trafficking in the United States, making parts of central and northeastern Virginia increasingly vulnerable to traffickers (See Figure 1). Highways tend to facilitate trafficking due to the large number of truck stops situated along the road which make it easier to transport victims to other areas and harbor them.

Figure 1: Locations of Cases around I-95 Corridor and I-80



Source: humantraffickinghotline.org/state/virginia

Trends in Sex Trafficking in Virginia

Looking at trends over the past 20 years, Virginia experienced a steady increase since 2008 followed by a peak in 2014-2017 in new federal criminal human trafficking cases, and a decline from 2018 until now (Human Trafficking Institute, 2020). From 2017 to 2019 there was an 85.7% drop in new federal human trafficking prosecutions, and only two new cases were reported in 2019. However, this data comes from The Human Trafficking Institute which does not capture state prosecutions or reports, so the data does not accurately reflect trends in the state. The National Human Trafficking Hotline only publishes data dating back to 2015 and up to 2019, however, we can see from this more comprehensive data pool that active cases of human trafficking have slightly increased in Virginia since 2015 with roughly 150 cases reported in 2015, a slight peak with 199 cases in 2018 and 189 reported cases in 2019 (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2019). Data reported by Virginia law enforcement also shows a decline in the prevalence of sex trafficking in the State (See Table 2).

Who is Trafficking?

Human traffickers are made up of a wide variety of criminals who organize, implement, and profit from human trafficking victims. It is a multi-stage crime involving the recruitment or abduction of victims, transferring, or transporting them, and the actual sex or labor exploitation. Given this, the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe best approaches trafficking “as a process rather than a single offense, a process involving different stages or nodes through which victims pass and involving different persons at each stage of the process.”(Human Rights First, n.d.). The lucrative nature of trafficking is what motivates the perpetrators, as the International Labor Organization estimates that traffickers earn more than \$150 billion each year from the exploitation of victims (ILO, 2014).

Who is being trafficked?

The two main types of human trafficking are sex and labor trafficking, each presenting its own set of victim typologies and costs to society. Sex trafficking involves the use of force or coercion to induce a commercial sex act or for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Perpetrators can lure victims by targeting vulnerable individuals who lack interpersonal relationships, love, respect, or physical support (food, clothing, shelter) in their lives (NVHTTF, n.d.). Top venues for sex trafficking in Virginia include commercial-front brothels, hotel/motels, escort services, online advertisements, and residential brothels (Polaris & Health, Education, Advocacy, Linkage (HEAL) Trafficking, 2017).

Labor trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation... or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.”(DOJ, 2015) Labor traffickers lure victims by targeting vulnerable individuals seeking employment in the U.S, passage to the U.S, funds, or physical support (NVHTTF, n.d.). Top venues for labor trafficking in Virginia include domestic work, traveling sales crews, restaurant and foodservice, health and beauty services, and retail work (Polaris & Health, Education, Advocacy, Linkage (HEAL) Trafficking, 2017). Victims of trafficking in Virginia tend to be female, with an even distribution between U.S citizens and foreign nationals.

Legislative History

Federal

The first comprehensive federal law addressing human trafficking in the U.S was the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000. This recognized sex and labor trafficking and offered an approach to tackle the prevention, protection of victims, and the prosecution of the perpetrators of human trafficking (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2014). Since then, two major trafficking laws have been passed in Congress, mainly focusing on victim protection and rehabilitation services, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Countering Human Trafficking enforces and regulates trafficking in the US and oversees DHS's mission to combat the importation of goods produced with forced labor as well (ICE, n.d.). However, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is the primary investigative agency for federal cases, accounting for 71.6% of the criminal cases (Ross, 2020). Since 2017 the number of federal human trafficking prosecutions has dropped by 33.5%, coupled with a 33.7% drop in the number of charged events. The main funding mechanism for victim's services comes from the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). In Virginia, the Department of Criminal Justice Services uses VOCA funding to support local child abuse service programs, victim/witness programs, and other victim-serving organizations (Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2019).

State and Local

Virginia was the last state in the nation to adopt standalone human trafficking laws in April 2015. They passed a commercial sex trafficking bill that defined sex trafficking, established penalties, and criminalized child sex trafficking without the need to prove force or coercion. This law also establishes provisions to help identify and protect sex trafficking victims (Commercial Sex Trafficking; Penalties, 2015)

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) works to improve the criminal justice system in Virginia and coordinates human trafficking prevention efforts in the state. Human trafficking prevention efforts within the state fall under their direct jurisdiction and are one criminal industry they have been working on addressing over the years. Most recently, a "State of Human Trafficking in Virginia" report was published by the DCJS in October of 2019 which outlines the current rates of trafficking and gaps in data collection, initiatives that were already taken to address sex and labor trafficking, and the development of new ones.

Since 2011 the Office of the Attorney General has partnered with the Department of Criminal Justice Services to combat human trafficking in Virginia. Together they train prosecutors, law enforcement, and victim coordinators on investigating and prosecuting human trafficking in Virginia (*Laws Against Human Trafficking*, n.d.). On the grounds coordination between federal, state, and local law enforcement as well as victim support services happens via local human trafficking task forces across the state. Virginia has four task forces located in Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia,

Richmond, and Western Virginia. Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia forces receive federal grants that help law enforcement and prosecutors collaborate on investigations and offer additional services such as community outreach (Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2019).

CONSEQUENCES TO VICTIMS AND SOCIETY

Data on the number of human trafficking victims is hard to obtain due to the nature of the crime. Reported cases are the only data directly obtained through police departments, but the full prevalence of human trafficking is expected to be much higher. The Polaris Project is a nonprofit NGO that collects and analyzes data from the U.S National Human Trafficking Hotline. This is the largest known U.S dataset on human trafficking cases and victims. In 2019 they estimate that 370 victims were identified in Virginia (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2019). This data is based on all the contacts made to the Human Trafficking Hotline, including phone calls, texts, webchats, and emails.

Direct Costs

The primary direct cost born from victims of human trafficking is in the rehabilitation process. Rescued victims suffer from a series of mental health problems including anxiety, fear, trauma, and high levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Medical costs to treat STD infections and substance abuse should also be factored in, as well as access to mental health professionals. Sex trafficking presents the potential for widespread transmission of STIs stemming from the sexual exploitation of victims. Evidence suggests that greater activity in sex trading may increase the prevalence of STIs by spreading infections quickly and more widely (Martin & Lotspeich, 2014).

Additional direct costs include those borne by the criminal justice system, partly due to the criminalization of victims since oftentimes they are forced to engage in criminal activities and do not always benefit from victim protection. The cost to the justice system because of the investigation and prosecution of these criminal cases should be estimated and accounted for.

The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work has estimated the net present value of the cost of care because of sex trafficking in their study on the prevalence and economic impact of human trafficking in Texas. This cost includes the estimated lifetime cost that both society and the victims can expect to incur including physical and mental health costs, costs to the public health system, and costs to law enforcement. Our estimate builds off a cost-benefit approach in Martin & Lotspeich (2014) and Busch-Armendariz (2016) and adjusts their model to inflate NPV from 2016 dollars to 2021 dollars.

- Number of sex trafficking victims in Virginia in 2019: 132
- NPV of Cost of Care as a Consequence of Human Trafficking (Lifetime) Adjusted to 2021 dollars: \$95,795

$$132 \cdot 95795 = \$12,644,940$$

Opportunity Costs

The lost labor of victims of sex trafficking and the estimated value of wages lost from labor trafficking are two main opportunity costs to observe. Of the estimated cases of trafficking in Virginia in 2019, 132 were identified as sex trafficking and 31 as labor trafficking (the rest were not specified).

- Number of Sex trafficking victims in Virginia in 2019: 132
- Minimum wage: \$7.25¹
- The average number of hours worked per worker in 2019: 1,777²

$$132 \cdot (7.25 \cdot 1777) = \$1,700,589$$

Total Cost Estimate:

$$12,644,940 + 1,700,589 = \$14,345,529$$

EXISTING ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING PROGRAMMING MODELS

While investigating the existing evaluative studies on anti-human trafficking efforts an evaluation vacuum was uncovered. While many programs have been developed and implemented at the international, national, and local levels, very few have undergone rigorous evaluation to determine the policy's effectiveness at reducing the human trafficking (Davy, 2016). Most of the approaches I have evaluated come under the “three P” paradigm-prevention, protection, and prosecution. This is the fundamental international framework used around the world and adopted by the United States to combat forms of human trafficking.

Training Police Departments

A common approach to anti-human trafficking policy has been to implement training programs within police departments to help police and investigators better understand victim typologies and thus improve victim identification in different contexts. Due to the nature of human trafficking, police are likely in contact with many networks or encounter victims when investigating other criminal activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking, etc. These training programs hope to improve law enforcement's abilities in identifying and investigating suspected trafficking cases. Existing program evaluations of different police training initiatives have produced mixed results, with some showing success in identifying victims while others have measured the potential negative effects of no training

¹ (Virginia - May 2020 OEWS State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates)

² (Employment - Hours Worked - OECD Data)

C.M. Renzetti et al. (2015) studied the effectiveness of a training module for local law enforcement officers in the state of Kentucky, evaluating its effectiveness at “raising awareness of human trafficking in their jurisdictions, increasing their self-reported likelihood of identifying and investigating suspected human trafficking cases, and disseminating knowledge gained through training from high-level officers to patrol-level officers. Through their research, they found that policing on human trafficking is also hindered by a lack of knowledge about the crime, leading them to assigning it low priority on the “investigative hierarchy”. The most common points of confusion surrounded the differentiation between sex trafficking and prostitution and questions of consent or coercion (Farrell & Pfeffer, 2014).

They used survey responses to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program, finding that training did increase the levels of reported prevalence for all types of human trafficking in their jurisdiction. The results also showed that officers were more aware of Kentucky’s state law against human trafficking after the training compared to before (Renzetti et al., 2015). However, the researchers do note that survey responses post-training were very low, undermining the internal and external validity of the study. In addition, the survey respondents were self-selected, so there is some self-selection bias, and the respondents were promised anonymity, so the researchers were not able to match responses to track individual changes. Together these constraints limit the generalizability of the study’s findings.

While C.M. Renzetti et al (2015) produced positive but weak results, an earlier assessment of human trafficking training among law enforcement agencies in Georgia found that current efforts demonstrate a need for more human trafficking training to meet local goals for awareness and investigations among law enforcement. Grubb et al. (2012) use survey responses to study Georgia’s law enforcement agency’s (local, county, and state) awareness on human trafficking laws federally and Georgia’s statute, and the participation of human trafficking training within the agencies. They found that over 75% of all respondents reported that no human trafficking training took place within their agencies in the last four years but showed interest in receiving training in the future. Coupled with this finding, is that the majority of respondents indicated that human trafficking either did not present a problem or it was unknown if it was a problem in their jurisdiction at the time (Grubb & Bennett, 2012). Some limitations discussed include the overall low response rate, causing validity and generalizability concerns among the data.

Training Prosecutors

Training prosecutors are part of the three-P paradigm, aimed at supporting and funding prosecutions for human trafficking cases. Since human trafficking cases can overlap with many different, more well-known crimes, prosecutors will tend to peruse those crimes for ease and convenience since they, as well as judges and juries, tend to be more familiar with the related

sentencing laws. We can look at evaluations of similar state-funded targeted prosecution policies to gauge the effectiveness of this approach.

The Virginia Exile Program, implemented in 2000, provided grant funding to support the prosecution of firearm offenses. The program's main goal was to reduce gun violence by increasing arrests, convictions, and the sentencing of individuals to violate the state firearm laws (Sherri Johnson et al., 2003). 10 sites across the state participated in the Exile program, with a sample size of 646 cases where Exile charges were brought up against a defendant (i.e. possession of a firearm and of Schedule I or II drugs, possession of a firearm by a nonviolent felon, etc).

Interviews conducted by Johnson et.al suggest that prosecutors and staff in participating offices had positive views of the program but case-specific data shows that the true deterrent effect of the program may be limited. Certainty of conviction as well as evidentiary issues were the main problems found to be impacting the prosecutorial and judicial process. While this program is designed for firearm-related crimes, it does shed some light on the effectiveness of a prosecutorial-based program. Given that the findings are from a Virginia state program, the results demonstrate a need for stronger case development to create more conviction certainty as well as improved evidence collection methods should be generalizable to human trafficking crimes within the state.

A similar program in Minnesota focused on evaluating new sentencing guidelines showed similarly promising results. The Minnesota felony sentencing guidelines were enacted in 1980, establishing recommendations influencing charging, plea bargaining, and sentencing decisions over time. The policy was found to increase “uniformity, neutrality, and proportionality of criminal sanctions.”(Miethe et al., 1987) When applying these results to human trafficking, it could suggest that strengthening sentencing guidelines within the state could aid prosecutors and judges in the prosecutorial and sentencing process. The results were found to have diminished by 1984 however, limiting the study’s validity and generalizability to human trafficking in Virginia today.

Generating more public awareness

A key barrier to preventing the spread of human trafficking is raising awareness among the public on key drivers and vulnerabilities that traffickers look for among its victims. This type of information, including where individuals are most likely to be trafficked, and the prevalence of the crime in your area can help reduce victim counts by producing more vigilant populations.

Thainiyom (2011) evaluates the effectiveness of such an awareness and prevention campaign in the MTV EXIT Campaign that was distributed in Asia. The EXIT campaign was a series of documentaries that were designed to “build knowledge and influence attitude and behavior of the target audience on human trafficking.”(Thainiyom, 2011). They found based on quantitative data collected before and after exposure to the documentary that exposure did raise awareness on human trafficking and helped break a ‘denial’ barrier to make people realize that they could be at risk

despite a false sense of security. While the results are based on exposures to Asian Pacific and South Asian populations, researchers did not deduct any cultural variables that would change the program's success in other regions. In fact, the variation among countries within Asia that were surveyed could be evidence of greater generalizability and validity of the positive results.

Teaching screening to relevant professionals/victim identification

Training professionals in the workforce (i.e. health care professionals, teachers, etc.) on human trafficking cases and victim identification is another policy response governments and NGOs have utilized. Healthcare professionals are of particular importance given the health risks and negative health consequences involved in trafficking. Studies on human trafficking training for health care professionals are limited, but results are positive in showing greater knowledge in victim identification after training (Powell et al., 2017). A randomized control trial conducted in California evaluated a training program for human trafficking in pediatric hospitals, with results showing increased provider knowledge and recognition of human trafficking victims (Grace et al., 2014). The proportion of participants in the trial who suspected their patient was a victim of human trafficking increased from 17% to 38% in the treatment group while remaining the same in the delayed intervention group. All results in Grace et.al were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, demonstrating validity on the effectiveness of training health care professionals.

CRITERIA

The policy alternatives will be weighed against four evaluative criteria:

1. **Effectiveness:** capability in reducing sex trafficking prevalence in Virginia. The main outcomes to measure will be human trafficking prosecutions in Virginia as well as victim counts measured by the National Human Trafficking Hotline.
2. **Ease of Implementation:** How easily is the program implemented, measured by the number of agencies an alternative involves, the degree of cooperation required, the time frame of its implementation, and the number of staff and distribution of workload that will be required.
3. **Compliance with legislative intent:** alignment with the enforcing agency's mission and statement of intent under the Virginia legislature.
4. **Equity:** capability of administering the policy to all jurisdictions and sub-groups in Virginia.

POLICY OPTIONS

POLICY OPTION 1: FBI-Partnership

Alternative one will send a team of four FBI investigators trained in anti-human trafficking efforts in the US to partner with the Northern Virginia Anti-human trafficking Task Force on a rotational basis. This partnership is intended to impart greater skills on victim identification and knowledge base on human trafficking laws to better catch and investigate cases of trafficking when they come under police radar. The FBI officers will be sent to the Northern Virginia Task Force as a trial since it is the most affected region in Virginia before seeing if other task forces would benefit from a similar intervention. Officers will partner with the Northern Virginia Task force members under a six-month trial visit before doing a first round of evaluations to see what was accomplished.

Effectiveness: Medium Effectiveness

This policy alternative responds directly to the staffing and knowledge base variations discovered among police departments in other states in the region (Georgia, Kentucky). In Virginia, a lack of state capacity to address human trafficking has also been identified by the states human trafficking coordinator, supporting the need for such a partnership to build skillset within the state among its law enforcement (DCJS, 2021). This effectiveness of this policy lies in intelligence-led policing, a strategy which has shown positive results in anti-terrorism and anti-trafficking led efforts around the U.S and Europe (Downing, 2009; Friesendorf & Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2009; Gibbs et al., 2015). Since this training will initially be on a trial basis with only the Northern Virginia task force, it gets scores a medium for effectiveness.

Ease of Implementation: Low Ease of implementation

This policy option scores low on ease of implementation due to the level of federal cooperation necessary. It requires coordination between the FBI, Northern Virginia Task Force, and DCJS to oversee the partnership. The training will in the short term create additional workload for Virginia state police as well as taking away trained FBI investigators from their daily duties.

Compliance with legislative intent: High compliance

Under § 9.1-102 of the code of Virginia, the DCJS has the power to establish and maintain police training programs, initiate educational programs for criminal justice agencies, and establish minimum training standards for law enforcement.

Equity: Medium equity

This policy option scores a medium in equity for the training will likely have no effects on the sex trafficking in southern or eastern Virginia due to its focus on the Northern Virginia Task Force.

POLICY OPTION 2: Prosecutorial Training

Authorize appropriations for a prosecutorial and sentencing training office to improve accuracy of charges and sentencing length for human trafficking perpetrators. In comparison to alternative one, this focuses resources on prosecutions and the specific laws that human trafficking cases are tried under. Despite the passage of state human trafficking laws, only a small number of human trafficking cases have been prosecuted. The literature review found that state prosecutors in the region reported feeling uncertain their ability to get conviction if they prosecuted on the less familiar anti-human trafficking law. In addition, the level of evidence required to prosecute under trafficking laws are something prosecutors are not used to investigating. As a common metric for how a state's anti-trafficking response is assessed, making sure we have accurate prosecution data is necessary as an anti-trafficking effort.

Effectiveness: High effectiveness

This policy scores high for effectiveness, as prosecutorial training on human trafficking laws and sentencing would help target more traffickers directly without having to prosecute on a related charge instead. It could help produce more accurate prosecution data as well, which can be helpful in gaining resources to combat trafficking in the future.

Ease of Implementation: Medium ease of implementation

This policy option scores a medium for ease of implementation because it is limited to the coordination of state agencies and relies on existing relationships and agencies to structure the training.

Compliance with legislative intent: High compliance

The Virginia DCJS offers a series of law enforcement grants for different purposes (body-cameras, COVID emergency funding, anti-hate crimes, etc). The DCJS has the authority to make available \$4 million in state general funds for prosecutorial and sentencing training on anti-human trafficking laws in prosecution offices around Virginia.

Equity: High Equity

This policy option scores high in equity as it will address the needs of all regions in Virginia and has the potential to improve victim and prosecution data across the state.

POLICY OPTION 3: Mandatory Training of Healthcare Professionals

Alternative three will authorize the use of a \$4 million state grant to support DCJS in developing and administering relevant training materials for healthcare professionals when in contact with victims of human trafficking. Research shows that more than half of victims of human trafficking will interact with a healthcare provider during their exploitation, so they are a key profession to help track the victims. The training materials will help health care professionals identify common markers of human trafficking victims and establish a protocol on how to get in contact with authorities.

Effectiveness: Medium effectiveness

This policy option scores a medium in effectiveness as the data demonstrates the high contact rate of victims of human trafficking with healthcare professionals. Training them on victim identification techniques would help bridge the gap of contact with police officers and help build a more accurate data set of sex trafficking prevalence. However, there is room for variation in the quality of care and attentiveness among care providers that can limit the effectiveness of this option.

Ease of Implementation: Medium ease of implementation

This policy option scores medium in ease of implementation, since the DCJS already has program, the Sexual Exploitation and Treatment Training Services for Clinicians (*Sexual Exploitation Treatment & Training Services (SETTS) for Clinicians | Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services*, n.d.). Adapting this guide will be a very minimal task, however making it mandatory may require more enforcement among DCJS and coordination with all clinics and hospitals in the state.

Compliance with legislative intent: High compliance

Under § 9.1-102 of the code of Virginia, the DCJS is responsible for improving services for crime victims, including the allocation of state funds to do so.

Equity: High equity

This policy option scores high in equity as it targets healthcare professionals across Virginia, with the potential to impact and identify victims all around the state.

RECOMMENDATION

After evaluating the alternatives, I recommend policy option 2, prosecutorial training. It has the advantage over both alternative 1 and 2 in effectiveness by both targeting all regions of Virginia while keeping the burden of work and implementation within Virginia's department of criminal justice, reducing the likelihood of a principal agent problem. Compared to option one, the degree of inter-agency cooperation and staff distribution of workload is minimal, as the DCJS will oversee the whole training program without need for federal involvement. Policy option 2 is the most ideal at achieving an effective and equitable solution to increasing the states capacity to respond to sex trafficking while maintaining compliance with the Virginia state law and keeping low barriers to implementation.

IMPLEMENTATION

To begin implementing these strategies, JLARC will need to recommend the Virginia General Assembly secure appropriations for the Virginia Attorney General's office in the 2022-2024 budget bill for a new office focused on prosecutorial training. In their report to the general assembly,

specific recommendations on how to streamline and improve existing training programs and thus increasing funding will be made. One strategy is to leverage the program evaluations of similar programs in other states (Grona-Robb & Pierce, 2021).

Main stakeholders include the Virginia General Assembly, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, and the Office of the Attorney General. The DCJS will need to facilitate the transfer of some existing programs to under the purview of the new prosecutorial training office.

JLARC should recommend a Human Trafficking and Organized Crime (HTOC) section of the Virginia Attorney General's office to help prosecutors around Virginia with sex trafficking cases. The HTOC office would run all prosecutorial training in the state and would be staffed with a team of 5 prosecutors with extensive human trafficking prosecution experience. They will be primarily responsible for prosecutors and investigators training on human trafficking related information as well as assist with human trafficking investigations by serving as second chair and assisting with prosecutions.

In the 2020-2022 appropriations, \$1,001,074 in the first year and \$1,001,074 in the second year was made available from the general fund and \$1,649,315 in the first year and \$1,649,315 in the second year from non-general funds to support regional training academies for criminal justice training. This option will recommend \$4,000,000 in the first year and \$4,000,000 in the second year from the general fund for the creation of the HTOC office and staff hiring.

One potential challenge will be establishing a need for such a training program since the prevalence of trafficking is hard to determine. In response, this office should serve to fill that evaluation hole and allow for more accurate depictions of prevalence once prosecutors and investigators are more competent and versed with sex trafficking laws and prosecution tactics.

Specifics for the HTOC office that can be included in the appropriations are these recommendations...

- Streamline prosecutor and investigator training on human trafficking in a separate office from the DCJS.
- Incorporate feedback mechanism for program evaluation (ex. Surveys of individuals who go through training) to identify weak points in the trainings.
- Create frameworks and manuals for training that highlight victim identification.
- Office prosecutorial expertise to state prosecutors by aiding on cases.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1: Contacts made with the National human Trafficking Hotline, 2014-2020

Year	Contacts*	Sex Trafficking Cases Reported	(Total) Human Trafficking Cases Reported
2014	749	118	175
2015	679	107	145
2016	681	114	156
2017	586	119	160
2018	567	157	199
2019	563	138	189
2020	578	82	119

*Contacts made to the hotline include phone calls, texts, online chats, emails, and webforms received by the NHTH that reference Virginia.

TABLE 2: Number of arrests of adults in Virginia for assisting or promoting prostitution, for prostitution, and for human trafficking-commercial sex acts

Arrest Year	Prostitution	Assisting or Promoting Prostitution	Human Trafficking, Commercial Sex Acts*	Total
2012	540	285	n/a	825
2013	462	397	n/a	859
2014	407	560	n/a	967
2015	418	273	n/a	691
2016	405	497	n/a	902
2017	266	355	n/a	621
2018	196	198	n/a	394
2019	207	302	5	514
2020	139	129	9	277

*Arrests for human trafficking commercial sex acts were first reportable in 2019