



West Virginia Human Trafficking Statistics

WEST VIRGINIA HUMAN TRAFFICKING FACTS AND RESOURCES

- ❖ West Virginia's newly enacted human trafficking law considers minors victims of trafficking without evidence of force, fraud, or coercion, but requires that two or more persons be trafficked in one year to establish the offense.
- ❖ West Virginia has limited options to prosecute demand and lacks laws designed to protect minor victims, who potentially face a punitive response for crimes committed as a result of their victimization.
- ❖ In 2015: The state reported 10 cases; 48 calls were made to the NHTRC Hotline

HUMAN TRAFFICKING NEWS FROM WEST VIRGINIA

Undercover Frederick police team makes human trafficking arrest (The Frederick News-Post, January 15, 2016) - A team of undercover Frederick police officers charged a West Virginia man with human trafficking after following up on a tip police received Thursday night. Using "confidential" information and a website frequently used to solicit prostitution, a plainclothes officer from the department's Street Crimes Unit knocked on a door at the Motel 6 on West Patrick Street around 8:45 p.m., according to charging documents. A woman opened the door and apparently mistook the officer for a client, said Lt. Clark Pennington, a department spokesman.
http://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/crime_and_justice/cops_and_crim_e/undercover-frederick-police-team-makes-human-trafficking-arrest/article_ceb5642b-cda8-52bf-9af9-baac6c52a7f8.html

FBI Joins Forces with Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement Agencies to Target Commercial Child Sex Trafficking in Western Pennsylvania and Northern West Virginia (The Federal Bureau of Investigation, October 13, 2015) - Operation Cross Country IX is the largest in the nine-year history of the initiative, with 53 FBI field offices and 73 Child Exploitation Task Forces, which include federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, taking part in the operation in 135 cities across America. Locally, FBI Pittsburgh coordinated efforts in the City of Wheeling in West Virginia.
<https://www.fbi.gov/pittsburgh/press-releases/2015/fbi-joins-forces-with-federal-state-and-local-law-enforcement-agencies-to-target-commercial-child-sex-trafficking-in-western-pennsylvania-and-northern-west-virginia>

Groups work to combat rise of human trafficking in W.Va (wvpublic.org, July 30, 2014)

In Morgantown, law enforcement officials met to learn about human trafficking in West Virginia. Thom Kirk, director of the WV Intelligence Fusion Center said, "Both the drug dealers and now human traffickers are finding out that this is easy territory because law enforcement isn't really beefed up on the red flags to look for." The state plans to bring more training for law enforcement and local businesses to fight human trafficking throughout the state.

<http://wvpublic.org/post/groups-work-combat-rise-human-trafficking-wva>

State Grade

D

*Shared Hope Report Cards grade each state on 6 key principles which set a national standard of protection against domestic minor sex trafficking. Graded from A-F: 'A' being most protected, 'F' being least protected.

Flash Points

10 out of 15

*Trafficking is a complex issue influenced by several underlying factors, such as transportation, entertainment, or tourism. Each state is assessed based on the 15 major factors that contribute to trafficking. These determine the influences present in each state that increase residents' risk of being trafficked. 10 of the 15 flash points are found in West Virginia.

Tier

2 of 4 (Yellow)

*Polaris Project rates all 50 states on a 4 tier scale based on 10 categories of laws which are critical to a basic legal framework that combats human trafficking, punishes traffickers and supports survivors. Tier 2 indicates the state has made efforts to pass laws to combat human trafficking and should take steps to improve and implement its laws. West Virginia meets 5 of the 10 categories of laws necessary to combat human trafficking.

www.warinternational.org - info@warinternational.org - 616-855-0796

Trafficking Tip Line: 1.877.END.SLAVERY

National Trafficking Hotline 1.888.373.7888

U.S. Dept. of Justice Trafficking and Workers' Exploitation Hotline 1.888.428.7581

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING NEWS FROM WEST VIRGINIA

Law 'next step' in addressing human trafficking (Metro News, May 6, 2013)

Del. Barbara Fleischauer was at the state capitol Monday afternoon for the ceremonial signing of a bill that will provide compensation for victims of human trafficking in West Virginia. Fleischauer said the law provides three new forms of assistance to victims: compensation from the state's crime victim's fund, an opportunity to seek damages against traffickers, and a chance to have their criminal records cleared if it happened while they were a victim of trafficking. Del. Fleischauer called the new law a good follow-up to 2012 legislation that made human trafficking a felony in West Virginia.

<http://wvmetronews.com/2013/05/06/new-law-next-step-addressing-human-trafficking/>

WVU Campus Crusade for Christ sets out to raise anti-human trafficking awareness (*The Daily Athenaeum*, March 15, 2013)

A group of students came together to sponsor a 27-hour stand, which represented the 27 million slaves in the world currently. The protestors asked passersby to sign their petition to make anti-human trafficking legislation a priority in government, and the petition will be sent to President Barack Obama. "We really want there to be a government-funded program that will go toward finding these people and making towns a safe place," said Claire Cottrill, WVU student and member of WVU Campus Crusade for Christ. The group's goal is to raise money and awareness about modern-day slavery. "It's not just a foreign problem," Cottrill said. "We have about 200,000 of those slaves in our country."

<http://www.thedaonline.com/news/wvu-campus-crusade-for-christ-sets-out-to-raise-anti-human-trafficking-awareness-1.3010179#.UgEVcdSd4zZ>

West Virginia Becomes 49th State to Criminalize Human Trafficking (Polaris Project Press Release, April 5, 2012)

At a signing ceremony this morning, Governor Earl Ray Tomblin officially made West Virginia the 49th state to pass criminal laws against human trafficking. Last month, the state legislature passed the state's first anti-human trafficking bill (HB 4053), which criminalizes both labor and sex trafficking and authorizes the training of law enforcement to identify and effectively investigate cases of human trafficking. Prior to the bill's passage, West Virginia was only one of two states in the nation without criminal laws against human trafficking. With the governor's signature, Wyoming is the only state left that has no criminal laws against sex or labor trafficking.

<http://www.polarisproject.org/media-center/news-and-press/press-releases/589-west-virginia-becomes-49th-state-to-criminalize-human-trafficking>

Belmont Co. Man Pleads Guilty In Child Prostitution Case (*WTOV News*, Oct. 26, 2011)

A Belmont County man pleaded guilty Monday in federal court to one count of transportation of a person for purposes of unlawful sexual activity. Barry Youst, 55, of Shadyside, entered a guilty plea after he was accused of being sexually involved with a school-aged child when he left Ohio and drove into West Virginia, according to court statements. According to a news release from U.S. Attorney Carter Stewart's office, the plea was part of an investigation that previously led to the arrest and conviction of Robin Newell, 32, of Harrison County. Newell was accused of prostituting three school-aged children after she was arrested in August 2010. Newell admitted in court that she was "fueling a drug habit by selling sex to Youst" and is serving a 36-month prison sentence. According to court statements, Newell drove a child from Cadiz, Ohio, to West Virginia to meet Youst. She then allegedly allowed him to touch the child in exchange for an undisclosed amount of money. According to the news release, the meetings happened several times.

<http://www.wtov9.com/news/news/belmont-co-man-pleads-guilty-child-prostitution-ca/nFMYw/>

Assistant public defender arrested on child prostitution charges (*The Charleston Gazette*, July 20, 2011)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Police arrested a Kanawha County assistant public defender for allegedly trying to prostitute children as young as 5 years old over the Internet. After a weeks-long investigation involving the FBI, local detectives and police in Asbury Park, N.J., Charleston police officers escorted Steve Conifer to Kanawha County Magistrate Court, where he was arraigned. Conifer was charged under a section of state law titled "receiving support from prostitution; pimping; penalty; prostitute may testify." Last week, police searched Conifer's apartment at 1424 Kanawha Blvd. E. after Asbury Park police told Charleston police that Conifer had an online conversation with a man in New Jersey and tried to sell him young children for sex.

<http://www.wvgazette.com/News/201107200932?page=1>