

CALVIN BALL
County Executive



LISA D. MYERS
Chief of Police

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

DATE: October 22, 2020

FROM: Lisa Myers *ADM*
Chief of Police

TO: Lonnie Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Human Trafficking Grant – New Corporal Position

The Howard County Police Department (HCPD) has worked collaboratively with the County Executive, other County Departments and allied agencies to focus needed resources to combat human trafficking. Over one million dollars in federal grant funds was just awarded to support county-wide efforts.

As Chief of Police, I offer this testimony on the need to utilize \$502,264 of the funding to add a full-time police Corporal position focused solely on human trafficking. Grant funding will provide three years of salary costs. The funding will also significantly enhance training and equipment for our investigators and allow us to conduct more frequent operations to target traffickers in our County.

The grant affords us to send our human trafficking detectives to out-of-state training which has not been available due to budget constraints. This will include the Crimes Against Women Conference, in Dallas, Child Sex Trafficking training, and Interrogation Techniques for Child Sex Traffickers. We will also be sending the detectives to several trainings required by the grant itself. This includes training in how to combat Human Trafficking with a Multi-disciplinary approach. In addition, the grant will cover tuition fees and training for one detective in the Cellebrite system. This system conducts cell phone downloads, so we can recover digital forensic evidence vital to these types of cases.

The new position will be a Detective Corporal within the Vice and Tech Support Section of our Vice and Narcotics Division. The Corporal will take the lead on efforts which involve the proactive criminal investigation of violations of State and local Vice & Human Trafficking laws. This assignment involves plainclothes activity, which emphasizes complex criminal investigations and covert duty assignments. Once the position is authorized and created, an experienced Corporal will be selected and assigned.



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Testimony from Chief Myers on new HT Corporal Position

During calendar year 2017, the HCPD made 9 human trafficking arrests, identified 15 adult victims of human trafficking, 4 juvenile victims and arrested 28 people attempting to buy sex during 4 reversal operations. In 2018, there were 6 human trafficking arrests, 10 adult victims of human trafficking identified, 2 juvenile victims and 33 arrests during four operations. In 2019, there were 11 human trafficking arrests, 24 human trafficking victims identified, 3 juvenile victims and 23 people arrested attempting to buy sex during 8 reversal operations. Having a Corporal to directly coordinate human trafficking cases full-time will significantly enhance our efforts and results.

A detailed plan for Trafficking Investigations and prosecutions has been developed by the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordination Council. The core team consists of HCPD Human Trafficking Section, the Office of Human Trafficking Prevention and HopeWorks of Howard County. One important aspect of the plan relies on this new Corporal's position to coordinate efforts to attempt to identify more sex and labor trafficking victims through victim-centered outreach and civil enforcement initiative at the twelve massage establishments in our County suspected to have illicit commercial sex work occurring on site. This effort is informed by the Polaris Project's 2018 report, *Human Trafficking in Illicit Massage Business*,¹ as well as research on efforts made by jurisdictions around the country, like San Jose and San Francisco, CA, Houston, TX, and other suburban jurisdictions in Maryland.

During the course of our standard periodic inspections of these establishments for state massage licenses, the new Corporal will, for the first time, begin coordinating expanded inspection for County fire and building violations, such as sleeping beds found on site. The new Corporal will also be coordinating efforts to distribute materials to workers. The Corporal will use HCPD officers who speak Korean and Mandarin Chinese and who are trained in appropriate trauma-informed interview techniques.

The new Corporal will be instrumental in enhancing new human trafficking task force initiatives that will utilize grant funding to help us take our efforts against trafficking to the next level.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

¹ Polaris Project, *Human Trafficking in Illicit Massage*, published Jan. 1, 2018. Available at: <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Human-Trafficking-in-Illicit-Massage-Businesses.pdf>