



... unlocking doors that keep secrets silenced and people imprisoned!

## **La Crosse Area Survey of Resources for Victims of Human Trafficking**

The La Crosse Task Force to Eradicate Modern Slavery  
(TFEMS)

December 2016  
La Crosse, Wisconsin  
[www.fspa.org/modernslavery](http://www.fspa.org/modernslavery)

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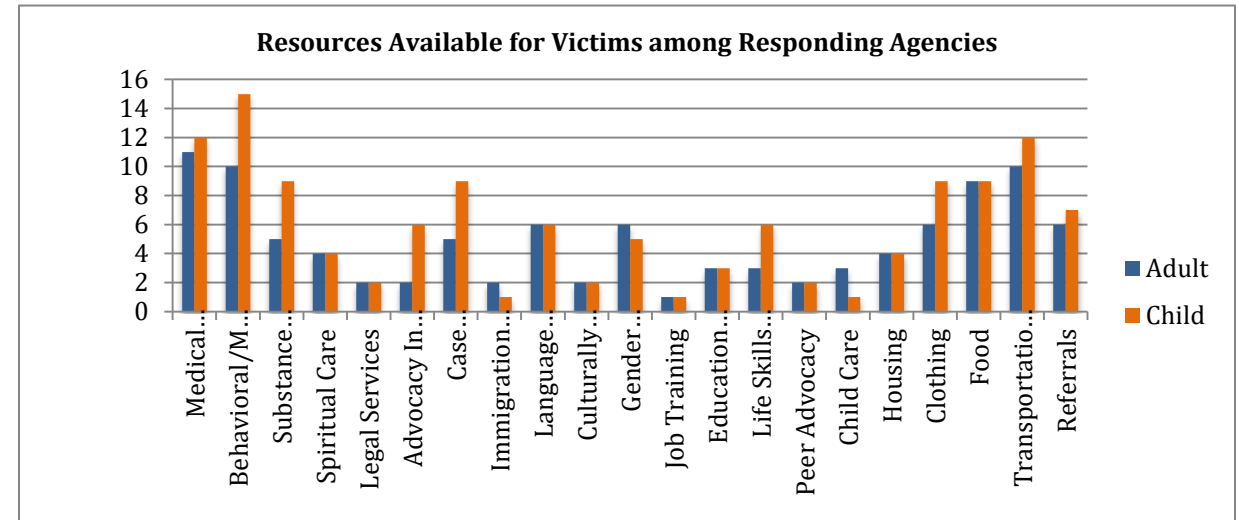
## Executive Summary

Beginning September 2015, the La Crosse Task Force to Eradicate Modern Slavery (TFEMS) developed and implemented a survey among organizations in the La Crosse area that may come into contact with and/or provide services for victims of human trafficking. While both labor and sex markets were considered, more indicators are known locally about the trafficking of persons for sexual exploitation. Goals of conducting the survey included:

- Facilitate communication and support cooperative efforts among service providers in the La Crosse area
- Perform an initial evaluation of service offerings currently available from organizations in the La Crosse area for victims of human trafficking
- Collect information about the training, awareness, and prevention needs for professionals and the community at large

The survey was distributed to 86 different organizations in the La Crosse area, with 39 submitting responses and an overall response rate of 45%. Responding agencies were organized into categories determined by primary service offerings, which included law enforcement, legal services, health care, human services, and school/pupil services. While responses were categorized by the primary description of the organization, many offer services in other areas, with several organizations offering a comprehensive list of resources for victim care.

The following graph illustrates the number of agencies offering various types of services for victims. While there are many organizations that offer behavioral/mental health services, medical assistance, and transportation services, very few offer legal, immigration services, culturally specific services, or job training. Additional write-in responses not listed in the graph included pregnant teen support, day treatment programming, treatment foster care, homeless teens support, healthy family parenting, respite, residential and youth home services, and public education.



In summary, the results of the survey yielded the following conclusions:

- 18 agencies reported encounters with trafficked victims (46.2% of respondents)
- Based on barriers to providing services identified by responding agencies, the greatest needs locally, include:
  - Knowledge, awareness
  - Funding for care of survivors
  - Trauma-informed care (care specific to an individual's earlier trauma, as a child or adult)
  - Coordinated local resources
- 10 of the 39 reporting agencies indicated having no training about human trafficking.
- Greatest identified needs for training included these topics:
  - Basic training
  - Identification of human trafficking
  - Field specific trainings
  - Education for direct service providers
  - Finding speakers willing to assist
  - Manuals, posters, literature, etc.
- 10 of the 39 reporting agencies indicated efforts to provide trauma-informed training for their providers.

- 4 of the 39 reporting agencies have annual training about human trafficking from experts.

The survey data collected indicated a need for more coordination among organizations. This could help each group to focus on specific areas of need. There is also a great need and desire among responding organizations for additional training on the topic of human trafficking. TFEMS hopes to facilitate some general training and awareness campaigns in the La Crosse area, as well as distribute information about additional training opportunities in the form of seminars and conferences hosted by other task forces and trafficking awareness entities in the region.

The results of this survey also offer potential for additional studies or research projects in future years to update information gathered, as well as obtain more detailed information in particular areas of focus. An additional study to consider would be one that gathers more information about the prevalence of human trafficking in the La Crosse area including risk factors, incidence, and prevention methods.

In the event that TFEMS encounters a victim or case of human trafficking, information gathered by this survey will be beneficial to quickly connect the victim to services available. The Task Force may endeavor to compile vital information into a resource directory for use internally and possibly for distribution to other agencies.

## Introduction

In Spring 2015, the La Crosse Task Force to Eradicate Modern Slavery (TFEMS) conducted an informal needs assessment in order to provide direction for continuing efforts. The Data Collection sub-committee created an initial outline to help guide the assessment and identified three key areas which needed further examination: 1.) Resources for victims, 2.) Training needs in the community, and 3.) Prevention efforts.



Another outcome of the needs assessment was the further development of mission and purpose for the Task Force. While TFEMS does not provide direct care or services to victims of human trafficking, it can serve to raise awareness and promote prevention around the broad topic of human slavery and exploitation, as well as facilitate communication and support cooperative efforts among service providers in the La Crosse area. In order to accomplish this, TFEMS recognized the necessity for an initial evaluation of service offerings currently available from organizations in the La Crosse area for victims of human trafficking, as well as collecting information about the training, awareness, and prevention needs for professionals and the community at large. Therefore, it was decided that it would be best to conduct a survey among organizations in the La Crosse area that may come into contact with and/or provide services for victims of human trafficking.

The survey was developed using the three key areas of focus identified in the needs assessment. Questions were designed to recognize both the current status of service offerings, training, awareness, and prevention efforts, as well as ongoing needs in these areas. (See survey example in Appendix.) The survey first asks those responding to include contact information and describe the responder's area of professional expertise within their organization. This information will also be useful to the Task Force in compiling a comprehensive resources directory for the La Crosse area and recommend a protocol in the event that a service provider encounters a victim.

## Survey Development

Prior to distribution of the survey, a comprehensive list was compiled which included names and contact information (phone, email, website, etc.) of organizations that may encounter or serve victims. The spreadsheet was further divided into categories by classification of organizations and types of services offered in primary response to victims. These categories included law enforcement, legal services/advocacy, medical/health care (including pre-natal care, substance abuse services, and behavioral health), human services, schools/pupil services, and spiritual services. This spreadsheet served as a sign-up to enlist members of TFEMS to assist in distribution of the survey to contacts within professional networks.

The survey was created using Google Forms, then distributed digitally through email to TFEMS members and forwarded on to contacts within organizations. Once completed and submitted, data was collected automatically into a Google spreadsheet, which included a time/date stamp for each submission. Some surveys were also submitted directly by Task Force members upon completion of personal appointments/interviews over the phone or in person with key individuals in targeted organizations. The initial contact list/sign-up was comprehensive and not all organizations were contacted due to time constraints and volunteer availability.

## Timeline

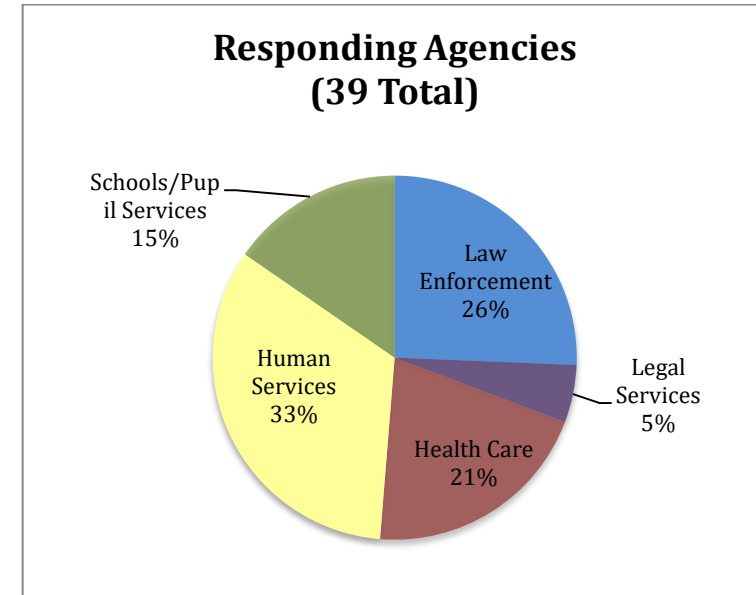
TFEMS implemented and completed the survey project according to the following timeline:

- Sept 2015: Introduced survey to TFEMS group, asked everyone in group to evaluate.
- Sept – Dec 2015: Compiled list of potential service providers using existing lists, divided into categories. Task force members signed up to contact specific organizations on list.
- Dec 2015 – Apr 2016: Distributed finalized survey to assigned organizations to complete via email or through personal appointments with Task Force members.
- Apr – Oct 2016: Reviewed information gathered, formatted and summarized data into report with recommendations for further TFEMS action.

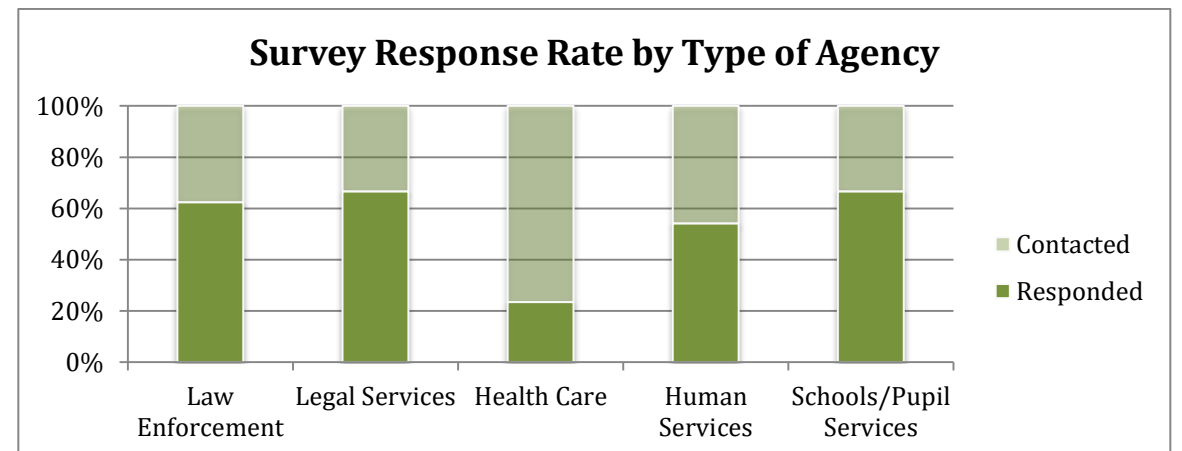
## Response

The survey was distributed to 86 different organizations in the La Crosse area, with 39 submitting responses and an overall response rate of 45%. Responding agencies were

organized into categories determined by primary service offerings. The following graph illustrates the proportion of total responses from each category.



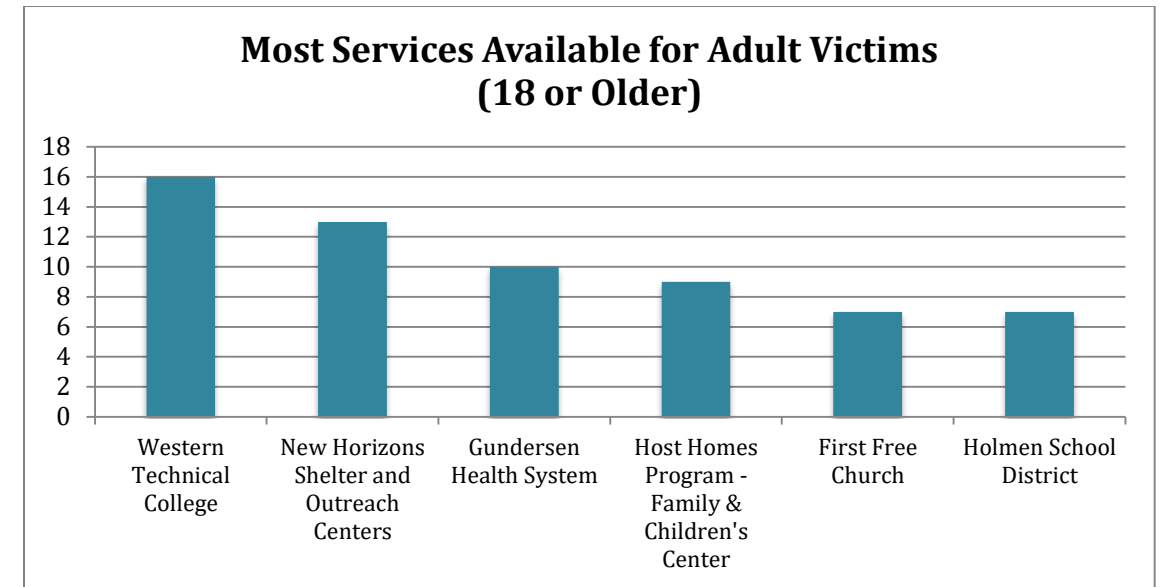
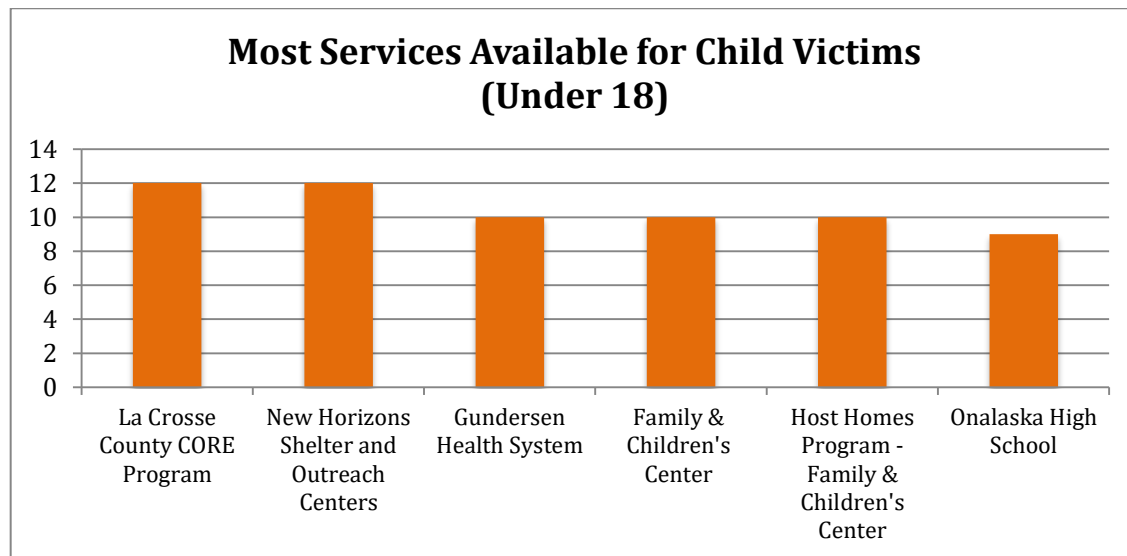
This graph illustrates the ratio of responses to total number contacted within each category of organization.



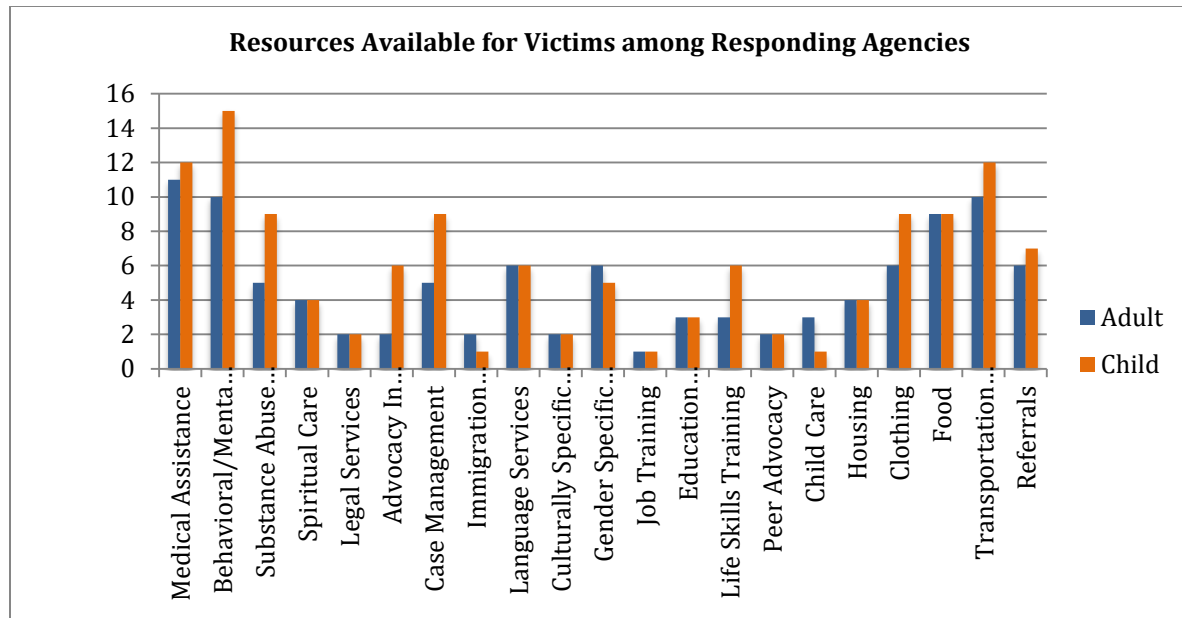
The Health Care category includes primary health/medical services, sexual/reproductive health services, and substance abuse/counseling. Human Services includes spiritual care and religious organizations. Both health care and religious organizations are vast categories with more agencies than were possible to contact for this survey, but a basic sample set was included. While responses are illustrated by primary description of organization, many offer services in other areas, with several organizations offering a comprehensive list of resources for victim care.

### Available Services and Resources

The first three questions of the survey concerned the quantity and types of services offered by the responding organization. The following graphs reflect the agencies that offer the most services for child victims (under 18) and adult victims (18 or older).



Questions 1 and 2 offered a list of potential services for child victims (under 18) and adult victims (18 or older) and responders were asked to “check all that apply”, with an “other” category and space to write in additional resources available. The following graph illustrates the number of agencies offering various types of services for victims. While there are many organizations that offer behavioral/mental health services, medical assistance, and transportation services, very few offer legal, immigration services, culturally specific services, or job training. Additional write-in responses not listed in the graph included pregnant teen support, day treatment programming, treatment foster care, homeless teens support, healthy family parenting, respite, residential and youth home services, and public education.



If the responding organization selected that it offers medical assistance, the agency was asked in Question 3 to further explain and describe the medical assistance offered. The following table includes all responding agencies that offer medical assistance, a description of the assistance, and for what age range the assistance is available. 14 of 39 responding organizations offer medical services in some form, with most offering these services for both children and adults.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Medical services</b>	<b>Child</b>	<b>Adult</b>
Campbell Police Department	Local hospitals	X	X
Town of Shelby Police Department	First Responder	X	X
La Crosse County Public Safety Communications	911 Service for Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services	X	X
La Crosse County CORE (Community Option for Re-Engagement) Program	Youth are automatically enrolled In Medical Assistance. Medical needs are assessed and addressed through their regular care providers, on site nurse, access to and education from Essential Health.	X	
Gundersen Health System	Ambulance Transportation, SANE Exam, Emergency Medical Treatment, Vaccination, Mental Health, Substance Abuse Counseling/Transitional Housing, Inpatient Hospitalization, Follow-up care, Pregnancy/contraception prevention, STD testing, BadgerCare insurance application assistance	X	X
Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers	Family Medical services including Xrays, labs, womens health and some procedures	X	X
Essential Health Clinic	Sexual and reproductive health services	X	X
New Horizons Shelter and Outreach Centers	We can assist the victim in navigating the medical system; provide transportation to and from medical appointments; advocacy/presence during medical appointments and procedures as requested by the victim.		X
Brighter Tomorrows	Assistance in applying for BadgerCare; medical advocacy, medical accompaniment, assistance applying for programs as well as transportation.		X
Host Homes Program - Family & Children's Center	Case managers to assist in the application process and for medical assistance plan maintenance. Medical assistance information provision.	X	X
Western Technical College	Students can receive services at the Student Health Center on campus as it is a paid service through tuition. Evaluations by doctors, gynecology exams, trained SANE, access to doctors who evaluate mental health and substance abuse.		X
Onalaska High School	Referral for MA, limited medical support in school from school nurses and paraprofessionals	X	
Holmen School District	Student Service Support to apply for Medical Assistance.	X	X
Sparta Area School District	(Not specified)	X	

## Incidents of Human Trafficking in La Crosse Area

Question 4 asked the responding agency to indicate and describe any incidents of human trafficking it may have encountered. 18 of 39 responding agencies reported encounters with victim(s) of human trafficking, 46.2% of total responding agencies. The following table includes details of these incidents. Examples of incidents varied from specific victims to more general care provided for cases of trafficking on a regular basis. Multiple agencies expressed that cases may have been human trafficking situations without identification as such.

Name of Organization	Incidents Encountered (As described by service providers)
City of La Crosse Police Department	First to contact suspected victims and suspect, therefore critical in making positive contact to set the tone for the rest of the process. Offer multiple services community has to offer for victims.
Onalaska Police Department	Encountered trafficking of minors. Referred to CPS and juvenile services.
La Crosse County Public Safety Communications	Encountered victims while serving as communications liaison with public safety responders.
La Crosse County Juvenile Justice	Have encountered many youth who display signs often associated with trafficking (running away, drug use, etc.).
La Crosse County CORE (Community Option for Re-Engagement) Program	One female youth reported exchanging sexual acts for places to stay and working as stripper (age 16). - Was given trauma focused therapy and access to advocacy groups via Thrive from Eau Claire. Another male youth (age 17) went on the run, and was being trafficked and required to perform various sex acts at parties. Once found, he was placed in inpatient psych unit, but ran away again.
Legal Action of Wisconsin	Provided legal representation for victims.
La Crosse County (Corporation Counsel)	Many clients (mothers in CPS cases in particular) are involved in sex trafficking through backpage, etc.
Gundersen Health System	Emergency room, ambulance services, inpatient behavioral health, obstetrics (often claiming their "boyfriend" hurt them).
Essential Health Clinic	Victims have presented in clinic setting - provided sexual and reproductive health services.
New Horizons Shelter and Outreach Centers	Encountered trafficked persons each year. Provided secured shelter with meals, clothing, personal care items and 24/7 hour awake staff. Also, transportation, assistance and advocacy with medical, legal, law enforcement, information and referrals, permanent housing, employment, emergency financial assistance, safety planning, etc.
Stepping Stones	Provided child advocacy centers as a resource for a trafficking investigation of a child. Staff interviewed Child and interview was recorded.
The Center: 7 Rivers LGBTQ Connection	Advocated for two men trapped in a situation of indentured servitude, first in La Crosse restaurant, then in gas station. Worked with Catholic Charities and FSPA to help them escape and move to safety.
YMCA La Crosse	Incidents without identification as "human trafficking".
Catholic Charities	Encountered victims and provided various services such as food, clothing, financial help/planning, transportation to shelter, and immigration services.
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration	Encountered (3) individuals at St. Rose Convent seeking money, who showed signs of being trafficked. Also encountered victim in county jail and assisted her when she was released.

First Free Church	Possible cases linked to child abuse/neglect - provided counseling services and referrals.
Western Technical College	Provided mental health counseling to victim(s).
La Crosse School District	Encountered many cases, some not identified as "human trafficking." Multiple cases in which parents were trafficking their children. Student services staff work with children and youth to assess their needs, make referrals, and offer support and case management to individuals based on concerns that arise in the classroom and other settings.

## Barriers to Providing Services to Victims

Organizations were asked in Question 5 to describe any barriers they may face in providing services to victims of human trafficking. Responses were compiled into the following table in order from most to least frequent. The top three barriers, accounting for 16 out of 38 responses, were lack of information on how to identify cases of human trafficking, a shortage of available funding to serve victims, or a general insufficiency in the availability of local resources for victims.



## Barriers to Service

Lack of knowledge on human trafficking identification	6
Funding (lack of)	5
Lack of local resources for victims	5
Small size of agency	3
Lack of skilled direct services	3
Need training	3
Students/youth may not confide victimization	3
Engagement in services from prospective clients/potential victims	3
Do not provide support to individuals	2
Lack of expertise	2
Not Trained in trauma	1
Lack of specific position dedicated to HT	1
Transportation (lack of)	1
Liability for youth without parent consent	1
Lack of mental health services	1
Lack of affordable housing	1
Lack of emergency housing	1
Not a prioritized service	1
Limited time for trainings	1
Lack of community awareness about risks and occurrence of human trafficking	1
Training not offered without incidents	1

## Training

Questions 6 and 7 requested that participants explain current training efforts and identify what training needs exist. This would prepare organizations to better serve victims. 10 of 39 responding organizations indicated no current training being implemented, while the same number listed training in trauma informed care (care specific to an individual's earlier trauma, as a child or adult) currently being applied. 9 of 39 organizations stated a need for basic training in human trafficking awareness, and 8 of 39 reported a need for training in human trafficking identification. The following tables illustrate all current training and training needs listed in descending order of frequency.

## Current Training

No training	10
Trauma Informed Care (care specific to an individual's earlier trauma, as a child or adult)	10
Annual training from experts	4
Cultural competence	3
Continuing legal education	2
Training specifically on topic of human trafficking	2
ACES (Adverse Childhood Experience Study) training	2
In-service training sponsored by the county	1
TFEMS updates	1
Sexual assault training	1
Domestic abuse	1
Child sexual and domestic abuse	1
Legal advocacy	1
911 and non-emergency call takers	1
Local / state conferences	1
UVISAS (non-immigrant visa designated for victims of crimes)	1
TVISAS (non-immigrant visa designated for victims of human trafficking)	1
Ethics training	1
Hmong Advocate training	1
Child safety trainings	1

## Training Needs

Need basic training	9
Human trafficking identification	8
Field specific trainings	7
Education for direct service providers	5
Speakers willing to assist with training	5
Literature/manuals/posters/etc.	5
Resources for referring victims	4
Specific protocol	3
Local training in jurisdiction	2
Area study to access hidden problems	2
La Crosse specific training on prevalence	2
Evidence based model	2
Online interactive training	1

Education for general public	1
TFEMS brochure	1
Funding for direct services training	1
Awareness and prevention education for vulnerable youth	1
Potential collaboration with TFEMS for annual "Barriers to Learning Conference"	1
Suicide intervention training	1

The final question asked agencies to describe what efforts have been endeavored, internally or in the La Crosse community, to raise awareness and/or promote prevention of human trafficking. 6 of 39 responding organizations listed "none," while others described specific efforts. The following table contains a complete list of responses in order from most to least frequent.

## Efforts of Awareness

None	6
Conversations with/ training of staff	3
Community group involvement to spread awareness	3
Stings/"Operation Cross Country"	3
Conference attendance	2
Coordination with Thrive Rescue Homes (Fierce Freedom)	2
Committee participation	1
Co-Sponsored Viterbo's play "Bottom"	1
Participation in TFEMS survey	1
Billboards, radio interviews, websites, etc.	1
Sharing information among peers	1
Distribution of information	1
Attending task force meetings	1
Conference promotion	1
Desire for additional training	1
Dedication to child abuse prevention and child safety	1

## Challenges

Similar to other studies, TFEMS did encounter challenges and constraints in completing this survey project. One example of this is that data results do not include information from several key agencies in the La Crosse area (Mayo Franciscan, UW-L, Viterbo,

Salvation Army, etc.). While the Task Force did its best to widely distribute surveys and allow organizations the opportunity to participate in the project, it may be beneficial to revisit the study in 2-3 years in order to provide a better view of evolving trends and to include additional organizations.

Also, the implementation of this survey project relied heavily on the volunteer efforts of Task Force members. While many were willing to give time and assistance throughout the process, this may have slowed the completion of the project, as volunteers were limited in time and resources beyond existing job responsibilities and other Task Force projects.

## Conclusions, recommendations

In summary, the results of the survey yielded the following conclusions:

- 18 agencies reported encounters with trafficked victims (46.2% of respondents)
- The most abundant resources available for victims include:
  - Medical assistance
  - Behavioral/mental health services
  - Transportation services
- While the most deficient areas of service, and therefore areas of greatest need, include:
  - Job training
  - Immigration services
  - Legal services
  - Peer advocacy
- Based on barriers to providing services identified by responding agencies, the greatest needs locally, include:
  - Knowledge, awareness
  - Funding for care of survivors
  - Trauma-informed care
  - Coordinated local resources

- 10 of the 39 reporting agencies indicated having no training about human trafficking.
- Greatest identified needs for training included these topics:
  - Basic training
  - Identification of human trafficking
  - Field specific trainings (i.e., law enforcement training, emergency/first response training, etc.)
  - Education for direct service providers
  - Finding speakers willing to assist
  - Manuals, posters, literature, etc.
- 10 of the 39 reporting agencies indicated efforts to provide trauma-informed training for their providers.
- 4 of the 39 reporting agencies have annual training about human trafficking from experts.

The survey data collected indicated a need for more coordination among organizations. The graph illustrating total number of agencies offering individual services highlights that while there may be many organizations offering medical assistance, there is a shortage of those offering job training. More coordination among organizations could help each group to focus on specific areas of need.

There is also a great need and desire among responding organizations for additional training on the topic of human trafficking. TFEMS hopes to facilitate some general training and awareness campaigns in the La Crosse area, as well as distribute information about additional training opportunities in the form of seminars and conferences hosted by other task forces and trafficking awareness entities in the region. The results of this survey also offer potential for additional studies or research projects in future years to update information gathered, as well as obtain more detailed information in particular areas of focus. An additional study to consider would be one that gathers more information about the prevalence of human trafficking in the La Crosse area including risk factors, incidence, and prevention methods.

This study could possibly include a focus on the demand side of human trafficking. The demand side of human trafficking is usually ignored or omitted in discussions about the

causes of human trafficking. Instead one hears more about structural inequalities of poverty, racism, and gender bias as the causes. Along with that is the emphasis on at-risk populations that are identified through drug use, prostitution, and gang crime. Viewing “demand” as a cause would highlight social permissiveness, a culture of unbridled freedom, and a view of people as objects, which underlies this powerful means of control in our world. If there were not a demand for it, human trafficking would not exist.

In the event that TFEMS encounters a victim or case of human trafficking, information gathered by this survey will be beneficial to quickly connect the victim to services available. The Task Force may endeavor to compile vital information into a resource directory for use internally and possibly for distribution to other agencies.

## Appendix

### La Crosse Area Human Trafficking Resources Survey

This survey will ask 12 questions about your organization and human trafficking resources. The La Crosse Task Force to Eradicate Modern Slavery (TFEMS) is seeking to evaluate the current status of services related to human trafficking (sex or labor trafficking) available from organizations in our community. Our goal is to coordinate available resources for systematically moving victims to safety and recovery. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have further questions, please visit our website [www.fspa.org/modernslavery](http://www.fspa.org/modernslavery)

Please answer as completely as necessary. The text boxes will expand as needed for paragraphs of text in your responses.

**Name of Organization**

**Name of Contact Person in Organization**

**Area of expertise of contact person**

**Email address**

**What resources does your organization currently offer for child (under 18) victims of human trafficking (sex or labor trafficking)?**

Check all that apply

- medical assistance (please specify in next question)
- behavioral/mental health services
- substance abuse counseling/treatment
- spiritual care
- legal services (pro bono attorneys)
- advocacy to navigate the criminal justice systems
- case management
- immigration services
- language services
- culturally specific services

- gender specific services
- job training
- education scholarships
- life skills training
- peer advocacy
- child care
- housing
- clothing
- food
- bus tickets or other transportation services
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What resources does your organization currently offer for adult (18 or older) victims of human trafficking (sex or labor trafficking)?**

Check all that apply

- medical assistance (please specify in next question)
- behavioral/mental health services
- substance abuse counseling/treatment
- spiritual care
- legal services (pro bono attorneys)
- advocacy to navigate the criminal justice systems
- case management
- immigration services
- language services
- culturally specific services
- gender specific services
- job training
- education scholarships
- life skills training
- peer advocacy
- child care
- housing
- clothing
- food
- bus tickets or other transportation services
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you checked "medical assistance" in either of the previous two questions, please describe specific services offered.**

If this question does not apply to your organization, please respond "N/A".

**Has your organization encountered or provided services for any victims of human trafficking, and if so, in what setting?**

**What barrier(s) to providing service for victims of human trafficking does your organization face?**

**What training is your organization currently implementing for staff persons who may come into contact with victims of human trafficking?**

(i.e., attending conferences, sexual trauma training, trauma informed care, cultural competency)

**Please describe training needs and resources that would be useful for your organization to prepare to provide services for victims of human trafficking within this community.**

(i.e., printed literature/manuals, videos, speakers, field-specific trainings)

**What efforts has your organization endeavored, internally or in our community, to raise awareness and/or promote prevention of human trafficking?**

**Do you have any further comments or questions?**

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING? Modern-day slavery, also referred to as “trafficking in persons,” or “human trafficking,” describes the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-386), as amended, describes this compelled service using a number of different terms, including “involuntary servitude,” “slavery,” “debt bondage,” and “forced labor.”

Human trafficking can include but does not require movement. Under the TVPA, people may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked. At the heart of this phenomenon are the traffickers’ aim to exploit and enslave their victims and the myriad of coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so.

Building Partnerships to Eradicate Modern-Day Slavery

Report of Recommendations to the President

President’s Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships April 2013, page 11

National Human Trafficking Hotline Number/Resource Center  
1-888-3737-888