
THE FOLLOWING IS A BROADCAST EMAIL TO ALL OVS FUNDED VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Dear Colleague:

January 2015 has been declared National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. As President Obama stated, “no country can claim immunity from the scourge of human rights abuses, or from the responsibility to confront them.”

Human trafficking is a \$32 billion global industry, the fastest growing and second largest criminal activity in the world, right after drug smuggling. Modern slavery takes many forms, including forced labor, sex trafficking and involuntary domestic servitude. There is no one type of victim. Men, women, and children are all vulnerable. From every corner of our nation to every part of the globe, we must stand firm with victims and survivors.

New York State has been a leader in addressing this issue. In fact, New York has one of the most comprehensive Human Trafficking laws in the country, criminalizing sex and labor trafficking and strengthening existing penalties. Moreover, the State recognizes the unique challenges we face with identifying victims and providing appropriate services for them. Importantly, New York established a Human Trafficking Interagency Task Force of 9 state agencies to address this important issue.

Please join the New York State Office of Victim Services in commemorating this important month by educating and engaging your community in discussions about Human Trafficking. We need to work together with all of our partners including government, law enforcement, schools, health care, community leaders, businesses, religious communities, social service groups and advocates to recognize and end modern day slavery. Each of us must take responsibility to heighten awareness of this terrible problem and strengthen our response.

As a show of support for this important issue, I call on all of you to join the movement and “**Wear Blue**” on Tuesday, January 13th as a sign of your continuing commitment to end modern day slavery.

On behalf of the New York State Office of Victim Services, thank you for your commitment to providing the highest quality services to innocent victims of crime in New York State.

Elizabeth Cronin, Director

For more information on New York State efforts to combat human trafficking, go to www.ocfs.ny.gov or www.otda.ny.gov.