

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

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Dear Colleague:

Governor Cuomo has declared January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month in New York State. Modern day slavery can take many forms including forced labor, sex trafficking and involuntary domestic servitude. Millions of men, women and children are victims of human trafficking throughout the world, making it the second largest criminal activity in the world. And New York is not immune. As the Governor stated, “close to 500 survivors have been officially identified through New York State’s human trafficking victim confirmation process.”

New York State is a leader in the fight against trafficking and support for victims. In fact, New York has some of the most comprehensive Human Trafficking laws in the country, criminalizing sex and labor trafficking and strengthening penalties. Importantly, New York established the Human Trafficking Interagency Task Force, combining the efforts of many state agencies to address this important issue. The State recognizes the unique challenges in identifying victims and providing appropriate services for them. Moreover, in an effort to further strengthen laws against trafficking, the Governor signed the Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act late last year that, among other things, improves the State’s response to human trafficking and increases the accountability of buyers and traffickers, provides a civil remedy to victims to recover damages and reasonable attorney’s fees, and increases awareness among law enforcement regarding identifying victims and referral of those victims for services.

The Office of Victim Services funds many programs throughout the State that provide services for victims of crime, including trafficking. For more information on OVS funded programs, OVS services and other State efforts to combat trafficking, go to www.ovs.ny.gov and www.otda.ny.gov.

If you suspect someone is being trafficked, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888.

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

Elizabeth Cronin, Director