



HSI Human Trafficking and Victim Assistance Programs

December 6, 2017

Fiscal Year 2017 Report to Congress



Homeland
Security

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Message from the Office of the Director

December 6, 2017

I am pleased to present the following report, "HSI Human Trafficking and Victim Assistance Programs," which has been prepared by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

This report was compiled pursuant to Senate Report 114-264, which accompanies the Fiscal Year 2017 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 115-31).

Pursuant to congressional guidelines, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:



The Honorable John R. Carter
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable John Boozman
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

Inquiries related to this report may be directed to me at (202) 732-3000 or to the Department's Deputy Chief Financial Officer, Stacy Marcott, at (202) 447-5751.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Homan", written over a horizontal line.

Thomas D. Homan
ICE Deputy Director and Senior Management Official
Performing the Duties of the Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Executive Summary

ICE's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) conducts more than 1,000 human trafficking investigations annually. Many case referrals come from working in local task forces and from nongovernmental organizations (NGO) providing community and victim services. Specialized HSI victim assistance personnel provide victims with emergency assistance and referrals to NGOs that provide short-term and long-term direct services.

The HSI Victim Assistance Program currently comprises a headquarters unit, 27 victim assistance specialists (VAS), and 6 forensic interview specialists (FIS) to assist victims in HSI investigations conducted by 6,400 HSI special agents worldwide. With an estimated current budget of \$8 million, VASs referred 2,289 victims to NGOs and faith-based organizations, including 379 human trafficking victims from October 1, 2016, through August 28, 2017. FISs received 657 requests and conducted 462 forensic interviews during the same period.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017 proposes to expand the existing HSI Victim Assistance Program, increasing the number of HSI victim assistance personnel to an effort commensurate with the victim assistance efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys. The creation of an HSI Office of Victim Assistance would ensure that all HSI human trafficking investigations would have benefit of the HSI victim assistance effort by locating a VAS where there is a human trafficking and/or child exploitation task force in which HSI participates and an FIS in each of the 26 HSI special agent-in-charge offices nationwide. The legislation specifically states that the newly created office also would "collaborate with other federal, state, local and tribal governmental, nongovernmental, and nonprofit entities regarding policy, outreach, and training activities."

It would be feasible for HSI victim assistance personnel to increase NGO engagement, training, and referrals as part of the personnel expansion and funding at an estimated \$25 million in FY 2018.



HSI Human Trafficking and Victim Assistance Programs

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I. Legislative Language

This report was compiled in response to legislative language in Senate Report 114-264, which accompanies the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 115-31).

Senate Report 114-264 states:

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ICE plays a critical role in investigating criminal organizations trafficking individuals into and within the United States. The Committee encourages DHS to continue working with appropriate nonprofit organizations and victim service providers to improve the training of ICE officers in the field assisting in the identification of human trafficking victims, especially children, and provide appropriate referrals to victim service organizations. The Committee also directs ICE to report not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this act on the feasibility and costs associated with partnering with appropriate non-governmental organizations on a human trafficking victim witness coordinator program.

II. Background

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) conducts more than 1,000 human trafficking investigations annually. Many case referrals come from working in local task forces and from nongovernmental organizations (NGO) providing community and victim services. Specialized HSI victim assistance personnel provide victims with emergency assistance and referrals to NGOs that provide short-term and long-term direct services. This section provides an overview of the HSI Human Trafficking Program, as well as the HSI Victim Assistance Program (VAP), and how HSI partners with NGOs.

HSI Victim Assistance Program & Partnering with NGOs

HSI is not a direct service provider, but relies upon an extensive network of NGOs to provide services to victims assisting in HSI investigations. Fundamental to HSI VAP's mission is building partnerships with NGOs, which play a critical role in identifying victims, providing victim services, restoring victims' well-being, and stabilizing victims, all of which also contribute to a victim's ability to become an effective witness. Healthy relationships between law enforcement agencies and NGOs involve recognition of what each brings to the table, clarity in roles and responsibilities, and focus on common shared goals, while respecting each other's limitations.

At the onset of a criminal investigation when a potential victim is identified, the victim assistance specialist (VAS) will contact an NGO service provider directly and coordinate a smooth transition for the victim to receive the services needed, all the while maintaining contact with the victim for the duration of the investigation and subsequent judicial process. Service providers work to meet victims' short-term and long-term needs, including but not limited to housing; food; clothing; medical; dental and mental health care; legal aid; long-term immigration relief, including T and U nonimmigrant visas; case management; English language training; and job skill training.

Over the years, VASs have developed strong partnerships and liaise with more than 200 domestic and international NGOs, faith-based organizations, medical/mental health professionals, and other federal law enforcement agencies, ensuring that each group has the latest information about federal resources that are available within the community. Through August 28, 2017, VASs conducted 618 outreach events providing training to more than 16,000 participants, including NGOs, and federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The focus of these events was to:

- Raise awareness on human trafficking and victim identification;
- Recognize best practices in rescuing and interviewing victims;
- Educate law enforcement and NGOs on immigration relief; and
- Provide a forum for information exchange and collaboration.

HSI domestic and attaché offices also conduct outreach and provide training to NGOs and to federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement partners regarding: 1) human trafficking indicators; 2) short-term immigration options for victims of trafficking; and 3) HSI's expertise and role in human trafficking investigations.

III. Feasibility & Expenditure Plan

A. FY 2017 Expenditures

As described, VAP relies upon an extensive referral network of NGOs that provide direct services to victims and witnesses in HSI investigations. With current staffing levels, VAP referred 2,289 victims to NGOs and faith-based organizations, including 379 human trafficking victims from October 1, 2016, through August 28, 2017. During this same period, forensic interview specialists (FIS) received 657 referrals and conducted 462 forensic interviews of victims in support of HSI investigations. Crime victimization included not only human trafficking, but child exploitation, traveling sex offenders, white collar crime, and human rights abuse, including female genital mutilation.

The table below accounts for current VAP expenditures. Salaries for the VASs are paid by the HSI special agent-in-charge (SAC) office in which the VAS is located. The six FISs are considered HSI Headquarters employees, but are embedded in SAC offices located in Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta, Denver, Houston, and Chicago. Travel for FISs to conduct forensic interviews of victims identified in HSI investigations is covered by HSI’s general expenditure fund.

Position Description, Title,				
Unit Chief (0343-GS-15)	Non-1811-GS-15	1	1	\$260,330
Section Chief (0101-GS-14)	Non-1811-GS-14	2	2	\$458,037
Forensic Interview Specialists (0101-GS-13)	Non-1811-GS-13	6	6	\$1,216,800
Victim Assistance Specialists (0101-GS-13)	Non-1811-GS-13	28	0	\$5,637,100
Personnel Salary Totals		37	9	\$7,572,267

B. Expansion Proposed Through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017¹ proposes to expand the existing HSI VAP consisting of 27 VASs and 6 FISs to assist 6,400 HSI special agents in more than 200 offices, subject to the availability of funds. The creation of an HSI Office of Victim Assistance would ensure that all HSI human trafficking investigations would have the benefit of HSI victim assistance efforts. The proposed expansion positions a VAS in every location where HSI participates in a human trafficking task force and an FIS in each of the 26 HSI SAC offices nationwide. The legislation specifically states that the newly created office also would “collaborate with other federal, state, local, and tribal governmental, nongovernmental and nonprofit entities regarding policy, outreach and training activities.”²

¹ Trafficking Victims Protections Act of 2017, S. 1312, 115th Cong. (2017) (as reported to Senate, Aug. 1, 2017).

² Trafficking Victims Protections Act of 2017, S. 1312, 115th Cong. § 302(d)(3)(G) (2017).

The expansion, as illustrated in the table below, would increase the number of victim assistance personnel to an effort commensurate with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with more than 200 victim specialists and the Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) with 213 victim coordinators, specialists, and advocates.³ As part of the personnel expansion, it also would enable HSI victim assistance personnel to increase NGO engagement, training and outreach activities, and referrals.

Position Description, Title, Series, & Grade	Position Type	FTEs	HQ FTEs	FY 2018
Unit Chief (0343-GS-15)	Non-1811-GS-15	1	1	\$263,339
Section Chief (0101-GS-14)	Non-1811-GS-14	1	1	\$231,576
Victim Assistance Specialists (0101-GS-13)	Non-1811-GS-13	118	0	\$18,877,934
Forensic Interview Specialists (0101-GS-13)	Non-1811-GS-13	26	26	\$4,200,763
Regional Program Managers (0101-GS-14)	Non-1811-GS-14	4	0	\$638,197
National Program Managers (0101-GS-13)	Non-1811-GS-13	4	4	\$650,611
Mission Support (0343-GS-14)	Non-1811-GS-14	1	1	\$231,576
General Attorney (0905-GS-14)	Non-1811-GS-14	1	1	\$231,576
Personnel Salary Totals		156	34	\$25,325,572

³ In FY 2016, EOUSA received funding for 213 victim coordinators, specialists, and advocates and positions providing administrative support for victim services through the Crime Victims Fund. FBI receives funding for victim specialists assigned to field offices across the country to personally assist victims of federal crimes and to provide information on criminal cases as they progress and throughout court proceedings. (Source: <https://ojp.gov/ovc/grants/types.html>).

IV. Conclusion

HSI will continue to play a critical role in investigating criminal organizations trafficking individuals into and within the United States. Essential partners in our efforts are NGO victim services organizations that provide case management and social services that help to stabilize victims. ICE will continue to develop strong partnerships with NGOs and other direct service providers, while continuing to train HSI special agents in the field who assist in the identification of human trafficking victims. It is a fundamental premise that NGO partnerships also help to ensure that the community is aware of human trafficking and understands trafficking indicators in order to provide assistance and report it to law enforcement.

HSI VAP is poised to increase the number of victim assistance personnel working alongside 6,400 HSI special agents worldwide. This increase would serve all victims in HSI investigations, including human trafficking victims, and would, in turn, lead to an increase in HSI's NGO engagement, training, and referrals. The creation of an HSI Office of Victim Assistance would ensure that all HSI human trafficking investigations would have benefit of the HSI victim assistance effort by locating a VAS where there is a human trafficking and/or child exploitation task force in which HSI participates and an FIS in each of the 26 HSI SAC offices nationwide. If enacted, the legislation specifically states that the newly created office also would "collaborate with other federal, state, local and tribal governmental, nongovernmental, and nonprofit entities regarding policy, outreach, and training activities."