

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

PROCLAMATION NO. 2024-002

Proclaiming January 2024 as Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in Multnomah County, Oregon.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. Human Trafficking is the use of force, fraud or coercion by a third party to extract labor for economic gain. Victims and survivors of trafficking are often facing a multitude of challenges and are likely frequent users of justice and emergency health care systems provided through Multnomah County.
- b. Inherently tied to systemic oppression, victims tend to be those who are in vulnerable circumstances. This is primarily children in our welfare and juvenile justice systems, including foster care; runaway and homeless youth; and unaccompanied youth from other countries. American Indians and Alaska Natives, particularly women and girls; individuals with substance use issues; individuals without full citizenship and/or are in the process of obtaining legal status, persons with limited English proficiency; persons with disabilities; LGBTQI+ individuals; and victims of intimate partner violence or other forms of domestic violence are disproportionately impacted by human trafficking.
- c. While human trafficking has historically been addressed through the criminal justice system, victims of human trafficking experience higher levels of poor health outcomes; a public health approach must be used to address the mental and behavioral health issues such as depression, PTSD, substance abuse challenges, and other diseases caused by human trafficking.
- d. The voices and expertise of those most impacted must be front and center in every aspect of our effort to prevent and respond to human trafficking. When we follow the lead of survivors, we follow trauma-informed best practices ensuring that solutions are built around the needs of those who are most impacted.
- e. It is essential that residents of Multnomah County work together to raise awareness in a way that honors those impacted. We must educate ourselves about the myths and facts of trafficking, spread the word about prevention and intervention resources and join formal campaigns to end trafficking.
- f. Multnomah County's engagement in local and regional partnerships, such as New Avenues for Youth, UNICA, Volunteers of America, Self Enhancement Inc., and others in the Coalition of Advocates Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, is critical to successfully prevent and respond to human trafficking.
- g. An effective response to human trafficking must include the collaboration of elected officials, governmental departments, law enforcement, and service providers, because without collaboration amongst stakeholders, survivors can fall through the cracks as they

seek safety and services throughout their journey. This vulnerability can allow traffickers to elude accountability and prevention for future harm becomes ineffective.

h. It is critical that we believe people when they tell us they have been harmed; failure to do so may lead to victim self-blaming, self-harming, and will prevent the victim from seeking help or reporting in the future.

i. The root causes of human trafficking include poverty, systemic oppression, imperialism, and the criminalization of people who trade sex. Our strategies to end trafficking must address these root causes.

j. In fiscal year 2022-23, the New Day program, which is funded by the County and operated by New Avenues for Youth, worked with 197 unique youth who were identified as sex trafficking victims or at high risk of being trafficked.

k. This month of January 2024, the County will be releasing a Human Trafficking Prevention Toolkit. This toolkit will be a free resource to people throughout Oregon by providing best practices for trauma-informed and anti-oppression trafficking prevention strategies.

l. The County will continue to prioritize investment in education and prevention services to address human trafficking with a survivor-focused approach and continue to collaborate with partners to provide crucial services such as mental, behavioral health, and housing, and rental assistance services.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:

January 2024 as Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month in Multnomah County, Oregon.

ADOPTED this 11th day of January, 2024.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

REVIEWED:

JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By _____
Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Commissioner Sharon Meieran