

Meeting Summary for NAHT Monthly Board Meeting May 13, 2025

Quick recap

The group welcomed Erin Kuehl, the new part-time coordinator for the Siouxland Coalition Against Human Trafficking, and discussed various legislative efforts related to safe houses and human trafficking. They also reviewed and approved the minutes from the previous meeting, and planned for future meetings, including inviting the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District to present annual statistics on human trafficking cases. The group also discussed recent developments with a new anti-trafficking sticker created by the Secretary of State's office and plans to update the t-shirt design with a law enforcement tip line.

Next steps

George to include Senator Grassley's letter of concern about the National Human Trafficking Hotline in the next newsletter.

George to include information about Safe House Project's new app in the next newsletter.

Tom to purchase 100 new human trafficking t-shirts for \$950.

John to invite the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District to give an annual report for 2024 at the next meeting.

John to invite representatives from DHS, Attorney General's office, and Jessica Rohrs (Iowa Victim Service Call Center) to provide statistics at a future meeting.

John to invite Kristen from the Family Resource Center in the Quad Cities to provide call statistics at a future meeting.

Board members to participate in the 20th anniversary fundraising drive by making donations (suggested amounts of \$20 or \$200).

Board members to wear NAHT t-shirts to public events to promote awareness and fundraising.

Tom to send a fundraising letter template to board members for sharing on their social networks.

Summary

Erin Kuehl Joins Siouxland Coalition

The group welcomed Erin Kuehl, the new part-time coordinator for the Siouxland Coalition Against Human Trafficking, marking the first paid administrator among

Iowa's 14 anti-trafficking coalitions.

Legislative Session Update and Budget Allocation

Teresa Harms provided an update on the legislative session, which is nearing its end. She reported that the definitions Bill (House File 649) has passed and awaits the governor's signature, while the Attorney General's constitutional amendment bill has passed and will be filed with the Secretary of State's office. The Lohse Bill (House File 1036) passed the House unanimously but may not complete the process this session. Despite budget constraints, \$150,000 has been allocated for human trafficking victim services through the Attorney General's office. Teresa emphasized that this is a significant achievement given the current budget situation and suggests building upon it in the future.

Sexual Exploitation of Minors Prosecution

The board discussed Senate File 150, which changes how sexual exploitation of minors is counted and prosecuted. Karl explained that the bill would allow for separate counts for each incident or depiction, potentially increasing sentences. Teresa Davidson raised questions about the distinction between sexual exploitation of minors and human trafficking, leading to a discussion about the definitions and prosecution of these crimes. The board agreed that while the current bill is an improvement, there is more work to be done to clarify definitions and ensure appropriate penalties for human trafficking offenses.

Legislation and Funding Outcomes Discussed

The group discusses the recent legislation and funding outcomes. John explained that there's a good chance they will receive \$150,000, which is seen as a positive outcome given that no new money was allocated for other initiatives. Kim brings up a case in Dubuque involving child sexual exploitation charges against a former sheriff's department employee, highlighting the need for clearer definitions between human trafficking and sexual exploitation. The group discussed the importance of having consistent and comprehensive definitions for various related offenses, with suggestions to look at definitions from organizations like the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Shared Hope International.

House File 1036

The group discussed the status of House File 1036 and clarified that it does not contain appropriations. The bill stalled in the Senate due to Lohse's vote on a bill contrary to the desires of Republican leadership. The group then moves on to reviewing the minutes from April, with George suggesting some changes and making corrections to the legislative report section, including clarifying that both Lohse's human trafficking bill and his Fentanyl testing strip bill were blocked as a result of his vote on the trans rights issue.

Board Approves Treasurer's Reports

The board reviewed and approved the minutes from the previous meeting with a minor correction to George's statement. George then presented the treasurer's reports for March and April, highlighting significant income in March, including a large gift from Maggie through an endowment. April showed minimal income and some expenses, including payments for a new webmaster and Mailchimp fees. The board accepted both treasurer's reports after a motion and vote.

Stacy Besch follow up

The board followed up on last month's discussion about Stacy Besch, a human trafficking awareness presenter associated with Team Iowa. Members share experiences of her presentations, noting that while she provides valuable information on human trafficking, there are concerns about how the message is delivered and the ages of the younger audiences. The board considers how to address these concerns and agree to continue monitoring the situation and suggest providing additional resources at her presentations to ensure communities have comprehensive support and information.

Human Trafficking Awareness and Fundraising

Tom congratulated the board on the upcoming 20th anniversary of the National Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery, emphasizing the need for fundraising. He encouraged board members to donate, suggesting amounts in increments of 20 like \$20 or \$200, and to wear the organization's t-shirts at public events to raise awareness. Tom also mentioned plans to update the t-shirt design with the new law enforcement tip line. Maggie added that human trafficking is a bipartisan issue, supporting the fundraising efforts.

Human Trafficking Reporting and Stickers

The group discussed recent developments with a new anti-trafficking sticker created by the Secretary of State's office. The sticker now includes both the OCHT law enforcement tip line and the victim services line, addressing previous concerns. The group debated the merits of a uniform statewide sticker versus localized versions. They also discuss various hotlines and reporting methods for human trafficking, including the Iowa Victim Service Call Center, the National Human Trafficking Hotline, and a new app released by Safe House Project. Concerns were raised about potential confusion with multiple reporting options and the impact on data collection for grant purposes.

Safe House and T-Shirt Approval

The group discussed Safe House, an organization that provides referrals and residential programs, and is involved in data-driven grant-making and setting national standards for survivor services. They approved the inclusion of Safe House's information in their outreach efforts. Tom requested approval to purchase 100 new human trafficking t-shirts for \$950, which is granted by the board after a formal motion and vote. The t-shirts will be sold for donations, with a minimum of \$20 per shirt, contributing to the organization's funds.

Future Meeting Plans and Updates

The group discussed plans for future meetings, including inviting the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District to present annual statistics on human trafficking cases. They also considered collecting data from the Family Resource Center in the Quad Cities, which has a high number of trafficking-related calls. Shirley shares positive news about Lila May's house, where residents are making progress and moving towards independence. The meeting concludes with plans to reconvene next month.