

Fighting Human Trafficking in Ohio:

The AmeriCorps Prevention and Awareness of Trafficking in Persons (PATH) grant program



What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others. In Ohio, there are an estimated 1,000 children who are trafficked every year into the sex trade and 3,000 more are at risk of becoming victims.¹ In March 2012, Governor John R. Kasich signed an Executive Order creating the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, charging the group with marshaling state resources to put a stop to human trafficking.

What is the AmeriCorps PATH Grant Program?

In August 2014, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) was awarded a \$197,000 grant from ServeOhio and AmeriCorps to implement an 11-month grant program supporting Ohio's anti-trafficking efforts in Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo and Akron. With additional support from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, four anti-trafficking organizations in these cities host full-time AmeriCorps Members who are educating and engaging the public on the prevalence of human trafficking in Ohio.

The PATH program's three main objectives are:

- Capacity building and strengthening - supporting local efforts to build and strengthen anti-trafficking coalitions
- Human Trafficking Education and Awareness - raising awareness by developing, contributing, and coordinating local trainings that educate the public about human trafficking
- Strengthening and building volunteer base - assisting non-profit partners in building and managing a volunteer base

Who are PATH's local partners?

AmeriCorps PATH Members assist their partner non-profit organizations in building and maintaining the community's volunteer base. These partners are:

- The Central Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition (CORRC) housed at The Salvation Army of Central Ohio in Columbus
- End Slavery Cincinnati (ESC) housed at The Salvation Army of Greater Cincinnati
- Victim Assistance Program in Summit County
- Toledo Area Ministries (TAM) located in Toledo, which works closely with the Lucas County Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition

How do AmeriCorps PATH Members contribute to Ohio's anti-trafficking efforts?

Through the grant, the four partners are hosting a total of seven AmeriCorps Members to cultivate a new mindset within the major regions of Ohio; through their work, these individuals embody civic responsibility and are equipping local communities to respond to the needs of some of Ohio's most vulnerable individuals. Specifically, AmeriCorps Members work with their host organizations to:

¹Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission Research and Analysis Sub-Committee Report on the Prevalence of Human Trafficking in Ohio to Attorney General Richard Cordray, page: 4.

- Provide trainings specifically geared towards coalition building with community stakeholders
- Recruit members of the community to become active members in the local coalition
- Train community members on human trafficking identification (both foreign and domestic), laws, prevention and other related information
- Recruit and train volunteers to provide community outreach and awareness events

PATH grant program highlights

Throughout Ohio, PATH grant AmeriCorps Members are making a difference as team members of local organizations serving victims of human trafficking. For example,



... In *Akron*, AmeriCorps Members successfully advocated for the City of Akron to issue a proclamation declaring January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

... In *Toledo*, legal advocacy organization Advocating Opportunity (AO)'s AmeriCorps Member is focusing on education and training key stakeholders on Ohio's human trafficking laws, as well as providing direct legal support and representation to adult and youth survivors of trafficking.

... In *Cincinnati*, AmeriCorps Members partnered with End Slavery Cincinnati to help plan and host a regional human trafficking conference with the mission of educating and engaging the Cincinnati community. Over 200 people attended the conference.

... In *Columbus*, AmeriCorps Members hosted by the Salvation Army of Central Ohio have significantly contributed to the Central Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition's ability to effectively manage and recruit volunteers interested in serving with local anti-trafficking efforts. Their efforts have included developing a volunteer database and hosting the coalition's first-ever volunteer appreciation day.

To learn more about Ohio's anti-trafficking efforts and how you can join the fight, please visit <http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov>

