REGIONAL COMMUNITY PROFILE:

REGION THREE


In 2000, the United States, along with the majority of countries around the world, declared “human trafficking” a transnational crime. Prior to 2000, practices that are now understood as human trafficking included forced prostitution, forced migration, or were categorized as other crimes. Drawing from the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000), states passed legislation to bolster prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership efforts (4Ps). Colorado’s anti-trafficking movement emerged in 2005, with non-profit organizations, law enforcement, and coalitions documenting hundreds of cases.

What would it take to end human trafficking in Colorado?

Since 2005, the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking (LCHT) has endeavored to answer that question more effectively while advancing anti-trafficking efforts across the state. With an array of partners - survivors, advocates, law enforcement, and practitioners – we developed methods to measure Colorado’s progress in addressing human trafficking. The Colorado Project to Comprehensively Combat Human Trafficking 2.0 (CP2.0) is a summary of anti-trafficking efforts across the state of Colorado as of 2018. CP2.0 builds from the original research conducted from 2010-2013 (our baseline assessment). For more information on CP2.0, please see LCHT’s Report and Action plan at combathumantrafficking.org/coloradoproject

Colorado communities differ in their characteristics, strengths, gaps, and opportunities; these regional differences led researchers to create demographic profiles as tools for communities seeking more specific recommendations based on data collected during CP2.0. The aim of these regional profiles is to provide specialized feedback on combating human trafficking in seven regions across the state. These regions, defined by LCHT, are geographic areas grouped by judicial district and county, with a review of industries, population demographics, and the physical landscape that influence the root causes and vulnerabilities to trafficking. Direct quotes from study participants are included below that pertain to this region.

Region 3: Population and Geography

Region 3 includes the 1st, 2nd, 17th, 18th, and 20th Judicial Districts and the major cities of Denver, Boulder, Aurora, Lakewood and Limon. This is the most densely populated, urban part of the state but also includes surrounding rural areas. These districts were grouped together as a hub of resources, anti-human trafficking task forces, demand for both sex and labor, and arguably the strongest judicial response to trafficking. According to U.S. Census data, the estimated population of Colorado is around 5.7 million, Region 3 holds a little over half of that population at around 3.1 million and contains six of the ten highest populated counties in Colorado. Denver, Arapahoe, Jefferson, Adams, Douglas and Boulder counties account for more than three million people; the remaining three counties in this region are more rural and collectively contain about 100,000 people.

Denver and the surrounding areas that comprise Region 3 are the geographic epicenter of Colorado and the mountain west. Denver International Airport (DIA) is the only international airport within a 500-mile radius and also one of the busiest airports in the country. Because of its large and growing population, Region 3 has the highest demand for goods and services. Construction, retail, waste management/remediation services and service/hospitality are the four largest industries in all of the largest counties in this region, industries known
to be potentially exploitative. It is also the largest transportation hub in the State, with thousands of jobs in the transportation industry due to DIA as well as over-the-road since two major interstate highways connect, I-25 and I-70. Healthcare is another major industry in this region, in all of the larger counties healthcare is a significant employer.

Population Demographics and Industries

As Region 3 contains the majority of the state’s population many of the statistics that are true for Colorado are also true for Region 3. According to the American Immigration Council, nearly 1 in 10 Colorado residents is an immigrant, and a similar share of residents are native-born U.S. citizens who have at least one immigrant parent. In 2015, the top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (43.3 percent of immigrants), India (4.4 percent) and Vietnam (3.2 percent). Of note, more than 140,000 U.S. citizens in Colorado live with at least one family member who is undocumented. In the City and County of Denver about 30% of the population is Hispanic according to the census bureau, and this percentage varies between 10-40% in the other Region 3 counties. The rest of the population is considered overwhelmingly white, with an African-American population significantly smaller than the Hispanic population.

One in nine workers in Colorado is an immigrant, making up an integral part of the state’s labor force in a range of industries. The largest shares of immigrant workers were in the following industries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>IMMIGRANT SHARE (% OF ALL INDUSTRY WORKERS)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSTRUCTION</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; SUPPORT; WASTE MANAGEMENT; AND REMEDIATION SERVICES</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MANUFACTURING</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING &amp; HUNTING</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
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*ANALYSIS OF THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU’S 2015 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 1-YEAR PUMS DATA BY THE AMERICAN IMMIGRATION COUNCIL.

The top four industries in this list are also four of the largest industries in Region 3. According to an analysis by the Pew Research Center, the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood metro area is home to an estimated 130,000 unauthorized immigrants, ranking seventeenth in the country with 55,000 living in Denver alone. Immigration status not only marginalizes the large Hispanic population, it also puts them at greater risk for exploitation.

In regard to immigration, a respondent stated, “we miss out on so much information because these organizations, these minority groups that are out there that we work with, they don’t feel welcome.” Another respondent reflected,

When I go out, working with those communities that nobody wants at the table, they know they don’t want to be sitting at the table because they’re not heard. And if we don’t hear those service providers, how are we going to make any changes in the human trafficking field when you’re missing 50% of the voices.
Cost of Living

Region 3 has grown considerably in the last decade, the City and County of Denver has experienced a 17% increase in population since 2010, meaning an additional 450,000 people. The average statewide population change since 2010 is 13.2%. In the City and County of Denver, the median household income is around $60,000; however, 15% of Denver residents still live in poverty. Adams County is similar, with a median income of $65,000 and about 12% of its residents living in poverty. In Arapahoe County, the median household income is higher, at nearly $70,000, with about 10% of its population living in poverty. Jefferson County has a median household income of over $75,000, and about 8% of its residents living in poverty. Douglas County has the highest median income with about $111,000 and about 4% of its population living in poverty. Elbert, Gilpin and Broomfield Counties have between $75,00-90,000 median incomes and about 6% of the population living in poverty. This is in stark contrast to Lincoln County’s median income of $45,000 and 14% of its residents living in poverty. It’s worth mentioning that Lincoln has a population of only 5,500 residents, and about 3000 jobs. The statewide median household income is $65,458 with an average of 10.3 % of people living in poverty.

Human Trafficking in Colorado

A central theme emerges from the CP2.0 research: trafficking is happening across the state and the problem is worthy of time and attention. Overall, participants note that there is little agreement on the root causes of trafficking. Communities do not share the same definitions or understanding of trafficking, and participants worry that average citizens may not have the tools to identify the signs of trafficking. Colorado’s legislation, updated in 2014 with House Bill 14-1273, highlighted force, fraud or coercion as the definition of trafficking. Overwhelmingly, Coloradans believe human trafficking to be sex trafficking; however, our current research shows that we are beginning to characterize nuances to include labor trafficking descriptions.

In Colorado, adults and children, foreign-nationals and US citizens, men and women, have all been identified as victims. Colorado sits at a geographic crossroads and is accessible via an international airport and by two major interstates. Denver and Colorado Springs have a disproportionately large number of youth experiencing homelessness compared to other urban centers. Much of the state is used for agriculture, ranching, and tourism, necessitating seasonal/migrant workers. Such circumstances may result in the exploitation of many particularly vulnerable populations including immigrants on temporary visas, refugees, people experiencing homelessness, and victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Ending human trafficking requires collective action and collaborative efforts among all stakeholders. Focusing collaborative community efforts on root causes will support efforts to decrease trafficking. As the anti-trafficking movement reflects upon 19 years since the passage of the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (2000), the crime expanded and the response has become more sophisticated. The following sections highlight regional characteristics, the vulnerabilities to trafficking, and successes occurring across the 4Ps of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership.

Trafficking Vulnerabilities/Root Causes

Participants believe that human trafficking decreases in Colorado communities when agencies that provide resources understand the unique circumstances facing their local communities. Participants’ responses emphasize that point, “I think that to truly be more effective, you have to be very locally grounded and understand what’s happening in the different communities.” Additionally, another participant noted, “Every community is very different, and so, how each community handles an incident of human trafficking is going to be unique to that community.”
The realities of human trafficking are challenging for all communities to recognize and address throughout the nation. Rural communities in Colorado have particular challenges regarding human trafficking. These challenges come as a result of factors such as geographical isolation, interstate transportation routes, industries that hire seasonal workers (like tourism, agriculture, energy, and ranching), lack of economic/employment security, lack of victim resources and support, and a lack of training for front line professionals or law enforcement. Geographical isolation can contribute to a delay in intervention and lack of opportunities to identify human trafficking.

Root causes are preexisting social, cultural, and family conditions that create vulnerability for people to be trafficked such as trauma in the home setting, poverty, homelessness, addiction, violence in the home or local community, lack of education, lack of citizenship status, and marginalization from one’s LGBTQIA identity. We asked communities to describe root causes they believe contribute to human trafficking, and these were responses from Region 3 participants:

It’s everywhere. It doesn’t matter where you live, you can live in Highlands Ranch, Cherry Creek, Adams County, Federal Heights, it doesn’t matter where you live, it’s everywhere and it’s – it looks different based on where you’re at, I mean, you could have parental pimping, you can have traditional pimping, you can have the familial pimping, you can have gang pimping…

So, I would describe it as again what I said before that it’s really, human trafficking is a symptom of a problem, it is of course a horrible problem but it really is a symptom and it’s a symptom of the ways that we as a society regard the vulnerable and the ways that we tolerate exploitation of the vulnerable. And women are unfortunately are vulnerable, and children are vulnerable, and trans people are vulnerable, and gay people are vulnerable, and disabled people are vulnerable -- all of the things that create vulnerabilities are the factors that create the potential for exploitation. So, it’s exploitation of human beings for money, for power and control. And it’s well tolerated in our culture.

I think the biggest one that we found is just our runaway population, so we have a lot of runaways for whatever reason, we don’t know but we do have a lot of youth running away, getting picked up in our community or running away from our community up here in Jeffco, so I think that’s one of our – that’s our biggest contributing factor at this point.

I think in all of our jurisdictions we have hotels and motels that cater to the lower income but it also caters to drug usage, open-air drug markets, and hotels, and motels, and inns, as long as cities, counties, allow – it’s all because of money because tax base, its how counties get their money and that’s how they pay the salaries of the – of the cops and all the government workers. It’s from the revenue, they get back from taxes. So we have situations with all of the motels, and hotels, all of our jurisdictions that you have trafficking going on as well as drug use and other forms of crime going on, yet municipalities and counties don’t want to do anything about taking down and fighting against, or charging, or doing something with these hotels and motels holding them accountable….At the end of the day, no one wants their jurisdiction to be known as an area where juveniles are being exploited because that’s going to bring down tourism and tourism is going to bring in money.

I think local, I-25/I-70 corridor.
In my personal community, I live in a low-income area of Denver and there’s a high rate of gang activity, and there’s also a lot of youth labor trafficking up and down the streets, selling things door to door, and I feel like that’s due to the low-income base in that neighborhood.

So, I’m in suburbia so I would say, in the Denver area, a lot of it, it’s those - just different vulnerabilities and whether it’s poverty or simply a bad home life that’s pushing young men and women on the streets.

I mean, realistically, it’s anywhere and everywhere but more specifically in our community, it – there’s a Colfax Corridor that has long running been a problem but I think more recently it’s moving away from sort of that person to person and the internet has become a much broader form for us that I think we’re trying to figure out.

We haven’t touched the hotels, we haven’t touched the restaurants, we haven’t touched this... look the more we have young people coming here with some sort of dream of working in the pot industry which they can’t, and they end up needing survival, the more that there are people ready to prey on them.

Vulnerabilities and root causes as outlined by participants in the above quotes are diverse and complex. Ranging from runaway youth, the service industry, tourism, the marijuana industry, location and proximity to major highways, and poverty. As Region 3 has notable diversity in population demographics, industries, and cost of living; vulnerabilities to trafficking in the metropolitan area are significant and are happening in places of great wealth and great need.

GREATER METROPOLITAN REGION CHALLENGES

Too Few Resources and Barriers to Access

The national median household income is around $56,000, but while Region 3 appears to be doing well comparatively, the rate of rising housing costs of housing in the Denver area and in Region 3 are having a significant negative impact on those living in poverty and the working poor. According to an article in Forbes, the amount of money needed to live comfortably in Denver rose 23% in 2018, from $62,000 to $77,000, far out of reach for the 15% living in poverty and for those living just above the poverty line. Long-time residents of Region 3 are being pushed out of their homes due to this cost of living increase. Shelters are full most nights and the Urban Camping Ban in the City and County of Denver forces individuals to choose between finding a safe spot to crash on the street (and possibly getting arrested) or taking risks that could possibly lead to exploitation. Several participants commented on this problem as one of the root causes of trafficking in Region 3. “Well, I whittle things down to probably just the growth that we’ve seen in Colorado, so I think leads to a lot of everything related to human trafficking.” When asked what contributes to trafficking here, one said: “Rising costs of housing in Denver.”

The partners who manage and operate the CoNEHT Human Trafficking Hotline report a lack of resources to support those who have experienced exploitation and are looking for shelter in this region. While generally resources are concentrated in the greater Denver area, housing (both emergency, short and long term) is still an issue for all those in need, especially specialized housing for survivors of exploitation as illustrated by the following participant quotes.
Where do you put a kid? That’s the problem. We don’t have enough places. We have the governor’s council and god bless them and all these laws to say its child abuse and someone has to do something, and we recover them and then we have nowhere to put them. Nowhere to keep them safe… People are like yay you recovered a kid and it’s like no… they need a lot more than that. And we put the cart before the horse sometimes. We put all the stuff in place... we’re like ok go crush evil ok well now we got all these kids now what do we do with them?

You know, I think the one thing everyone is in agreement about is the absence of housing. And it’s like, so it can be a divisive topic because everyone is so frustrated by it and whose responsibility it may be to solve the housing crisis.

Coming from child protection, with the caseload of primarily human trafficking girls, I don’t have any placements for them that are secure, so um, so if I place them, they usually run immediately, and then we’re just starting back over. So, having that option of places to place them that are safe, supportive, and give them a little bit of options in terms of living a normal life would be really helpful.

There are only a handful of shelters specifically designated for trafficking victims in the entire state of Colorado; there is only one in Region 3. All of the housing that is specifically dedicated to human trafficking victims are for underage, female identified victims of sex trafficking. There is a lack of services for adult women, transgender, and men and a similar lack of services for underage boys as evidenced by the following quotes:

A goal that doesn’t seem to be being addressed in Colorado or at least not that I’ve heard of is working with boys.

I definitely reiterate the boys component, I think that’s really lacking and additionally I think that LGBTQ youth and especially trans youth are not focused on enough especially given the data that LGBTQ youth are five times more likely to be trafficked than not, so I think that that’s a really big hole as well.

Personally I would prefer that they have a greater acknowledgement that boys are victims of trafficking. Work towards encouraging all agencies, nonprofits, and charities, and all the rest of them, something about it. There is absolutely no difference between the male and female victims of trafficking. You’re not treating their gender, and you’re not treating their sexuality, you’re treating their victimization. We now have a girl’s court in Denver, a recovery center for girls. Um, What you’re doing is you’re teaching the traffickers how to traffic better. Because, well then great just traffic all boys because nobody is going to do anything about it.

Boys are trafficked too. It’s my broken record, stop ignoring the boys.

Increase Attention on Labor Trafficking

While there is a persistent focus on female survivors of trafficking, especially youth, in our data there is also a heavy focus on sex trafficking to the detriment of labor trafficking. The following quotes discuss the lack of attention paid to labor trafficking cases and lack of support for labor trafficking survivors in Region 3.
There’s a lot of times labor trafficking isn’t recognized by local jurisdictions, it gets charged as drugs or auto theft, or it gets charged as shoplifting. Same with sex trafficking, it gets charged as these survival crimes or whatever, and we never even hear about it. I’m like oh my god you have these kids, they’re 14 or 15 years old. Where are their parents? They don’t even live here. They live with 12 people in one apartment in Aurora. This should make you ask more questions. They can’t tell you what they’ve eaten in the last 5 days. Well I didn’t ask that question. Well why didn’t you?

Current cases reflect mainly sex trafficking, but I believe a significant amount of labor trafficking is happening, it’s just not reflected in current cases.

Everybody focuses on sex trafficking, right? That’s the common theme, and yet our workload, we’re usually, like right now were 90% labor trafficking. And nobody to this day talks about this as much.

All of those things are still in flux, there’s no real finished product of a policy on how we view that as a society let alone as a system. We haven’t touched on labor trafficking. What we’re seeing that is far more complex than what I saw in the early days, or criminal enterprises that are trafficking, so young males who are selling heroin on the 16th street mall are not their own entrepreneurs, they are being run by someone. The car theft rings that used to just be car theft rings that are now doing strong arm work for gangs, that are doing identity theft and are creating their own turf about car theft organization are multinational in nature, and they are not kids joy riding.

One of the things we talked about at the last DATA meeting is doing a better job of identifying labor trafficking in Denver, which I think everyone is failing at. And across the board. We had a symposium of all the prosecutors doing trafficking cases across the state when I took over because I thought why isn’t everyone getting together? So we all got together and we kind of talked about … what are you doing well, what are you not doing well, and what are your challenges, and no one had a labor trafficking case. Not a single person. Because they just don’t.. now there are civil cases, and Colorado Legal Services has done a great job with migrant farm worker cases, and restitution. But nobody is adequately addressing labor trafficking from a criminal perspective. That is one of the things we’ve talked about in DATA as a whole. How do we do a better job of seeing it, combating it, and holding people accountable?

The recognition of the lack of attention and resources given to labor trafficking demonstrated by these quotes is a promising start to shift the conversation to be more inclusive of the diversity of experiences of trafficking survivors in Colorado

Regional Resources for Trafficking Survivors

One of this region’s major strengths is the overwhelming number of anti-trafficking task forces and/or partnerships that focus on Region 3 or have a wider geographic scope but are still based in Region 3. As of August, 2018, there were ten: Collaborative State-County Response to Human Trafficking Task Group (HTTG, affiliated with Colorado Department of Human Services); Colorado Human Trafficking Council (Council); Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking (CoNEHT); Colorado Trafficking and Organized Crime Coalition (CTOCC); Denver Anti-Trafficking Alliance (DATA); Front Range Anti-trafficking Coalition (FRAC); Rocky Mountain Innocence Lost Task Force (RMILTF); 18th Judicial District Human Trafficking Task Force; Jefferson County Human Trafficking
Sub-committee; and the 17th Judicial District Human Trafficking Task Force (HTTF). Since August 2018, two additional groups have formed, one human trafficking task force in Boulder County and a law enforcement-led human trafficking unit within the Denver Police Department. In addition, several multidisciplinary teams in the region have taken human trafficking into their purview in the last few years even though trafficking is not their primary focus.

As noted above, this region has significantly more access to resources than others in the state. Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA), Asia Pacific Development Center (APDC), Colorado Legal Services (CLS), and Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN) are all federally funded to support victims of human trafficking specifically and are therefore this region’s largest assets when it comes to victim assistance and access to resources. In this region there are about 110 resources listed in the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking Resource Directory, which is in addition to the support and referrals that can be facilitated through the many coalitions and task forces previously listed. These resources cover a number of potential survivor needs including long- and short-term housing, transportation, case management, legal assistance, mental health, clothing and food, medical health services as well as long-term survivorship needs like continuing education, job placement and skills building, and literacy education. While the diversity of resources and the sheer number of them may seem promising, there is still a dearth of human trafficking-specific resources available for survivors. The CoNEHT hotline continues to struggle to find safe and reliable placements for those who have suffered from exploitation and if resources are available for survivors, the barriers to entry for some are challenging.

Here is what one participant said about resources for survivors:

We don’t have the resources in place yet to offer that change of life option to people and support them through that and support them through the trauma or whatever it was that led them there in the first place, let alone help them build whatever life they want to go towards.

**Human Trafficking Response in Region 3**

Community responses are driven in part by the ways in which the cause of the crime is framed, availability of local resources, how resources interact with each other, and how communities talk about the innovative work that is successful in their local community. We asked professionals and community members across the state to explain what is working in their communities, as well as to share their ideas for the future.

**PREVENTION**

Compared to other parts of the state, Region 3 is doing a formidable job at educating both their local community members and specific sectors that more frequently come into contact with victims and survivors of human trafficking. Still, like most of Colorado, there is a long way to go, as illustrated by this quote:

The overall, the overarching first reaction is my god I didn’t know this happened ya know. I didn’t know that this happened in Douglas County ya know. I didn’t know that this happened in Centennial or even Aurora which is a much more urban area.

Partnerships like the Council, DATA, and RMILTF; agencies like the Colorado Department of Human Services; and community organizations like Colorado Legal Services, COVA, and the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking have taken up the mantle of sector-specific trainings focused on healthcare providers, child welfare, and
Regional Community Profile:

Law enforcement. The Council’s online train-the-trainer program has allowed more accessibility to those trainings. Additionally, there have been public awareness campaigns at the federal level that have reached Colorado, mostly focusing on Region 3. There has been a notable increase in the number of requests for trainings for sectors like service and hospitality, transportation, and private industry. There has also been an increase in calls to the CoNEHT 24/7 Human Trafficking Hotline; each year for the last three years there has been an increase of 30-40% in calls to the hotline. In 2018, there were 608 total calls, up from 423 in 2017. Of the 608 calls, when the county was specified, 233 of them came from Region 3.

Protection

While there are resources in Region 3, few of them are specific for trafficking survivors. All the organizations and agencies in the CoNEHT Hotline Resource Directory are vetted and trained in trafficking and willing to offer services to victims of trafficking if they present in their setting. Unfortunately, that does not mean they have sufficient funding or ability to create trafficking-specific programming or services. Overwhelmingly, those organizations that offer protective services to victims of crimes, including but not limited to trafficking, are overwhelmed with need and underfunded. Occasionally a shelter offers to reserve a few beds for victims of trafficking, but it is much more likely that trafficking victims would be lumped into other victim populations and not offered the distinctive services that they would need due to their complex traumatic experiences. And, like in many parallel issues, generally speaking housing is a problem.

Engaging the medical community to respond to human trafficking is one of our main promising practice takeaways from the CP2.0 study. As mentioned under prevention, several organizations have been facilitating trainings for medical professionals in Region 3. These are quotes acknowledging that need:

I know that in conversations with survivors, about 80% of them present for medical treatment during the course of victimization. I know [one individual] who is [a local medical professional] is a friend of mine who I kind of tagged to corral a number of his doctoral students and some other medical professionals to bring them to the table to start talking about gaps in education and awareness and programs in the medical community.

Trainings for medical professionals will certainly fall under both prevention and protection, as medical professionals are uniquely positioned to respond to both at-risk individuals and those who may be already being trafficked and need protective services.

Prosecution

Anti-trafficking prosecution efforts in Region 3 have matured considerably since the passing of the 2014 Human Trafficking legislation with an increase in trafficking-specific law enforcement task forces, increased awareness and trainings for law enforcement and an increase in prosecutions, but efforts differ across judicial districts.

The 18th Judicial District is the most populated in the state (containing Douglas, Arapahoe, Elbert and Lincoln counties) and has seen a 13% increase in population growth over the last few years. What makes the 18th Judicial District unique are its five problem solving courts that offer a non-traditional approach to integrating treatment
provision and criminal justice case processing. The courts rely on collaboration of multidisciplinary teams that coordinate with courts to help reduce recidivism, support recovery and promote public health. None of these courts are specific to anti-trafficking efforts however some may intersect with trafficking in their work. The 2nd Judicial District serves Denver’s 700,000 residents, the state of Colorado government, as well as the many people who work in the City and County of Denver. They too have a unique approach and several problem-solving courts. One of their juvenile treatment courts is specific to victims of trafficking, called REST Court (Restore, Educate, Support, Treat), it is for minor victims sex and labor trafficking. What is unique about REST court is that it doesn’t require the youth to be in the judicial process, a youth can also be referred to this court through child welfare. There are no other trafficking-specific courts in this region, however several of the other specialized courts may intersect with victims of trafficking due to overlapping vulnerabilities and the intersectionality of survivors’ experiences. Here is one participant’s experience with the shifting focus of law enforcement:

Yeah, and I think that, at least from my perspective in seeing the way armed with having DATA as sort of the vehicle to move things forward, it’s to me, in my perspective, it looks like Denver is back to collaborating and moving forward, particularly from my perspective. I am hearing things from police where they are not using the same types of language that they used to. Where they are not arresting women for prostitution. That change has happened, and it’s a big change and it’s a recent change. They are understanding why when they are going to illicit massage businesses they have to have community-based victims services there because you’re displacing people. That was not the case recently. That is tremendous. So that change is happening within law enforcement, it is happening from the commander down. They’re asking us to make referrals, they’re asking about education and resources, we’re working on putting together a great handout to give patrol officers, a survey, a list of what to look for, things you should be doing. So that they are not just responding to domestic violence calls, seeing it as such, writing it up as such, and walking away.

As noted throughout the Colorado Project 2.0 Report, there is an overwhelming focus on youth and less so on adults in exploitative situations. That is also evidenced by REST Court, which only serves minor victims of trafficking. One law enforcement officer told us this:

Yeah, well I think one of the challenges is, right, and one of the things that has been really frustrating for me that I’m working on changing, and it looks like it’s in the process of changing, but it looks like there is this great mechanism with juvenile victims. Things go to Innocence Lost [RMILTF], they investigate it, they’re doing a good job. There is not a similar protocol in Denver for adult trafficking victims, neither sex nor labor. There is no one designated detective, and that’s appalling. So what’s happening is if you make a referral to DPD it goes to whomever. So they’re not necessarily investigating it with the right lens.

In the CP2.0 report we also found that most participants either believe human trafficking to be sex trafficking (and leave labor trafficking out of the conversation completely) or believe that their communities define trafficking as sex trafficking only. We saw that within this region as well. As the overwhelming majority of trafficking cases that have been tried in Region 3 have been sex trafficking cases.

This table sums up filings and cases in each of the seven regions since 2014 Colorado Human Trafficking Legislation:
This is what participants said about labor trafficking cases in Region 3:

I can say certainly from the DA’s office perspective at this point in time our current cases all look like sex trafficking because it’s just more recognized. Anecdotally, I believe there is a significant amount of labor trafficking that is happening, but it’s not reflected in our current cases right now.

In terms of how labor trafficking is discussed, I think it is further discussing or furthering the conversation around that there can be an urban side of labor trafficking. Often times we talk about the agricultural side, which is incredibly important and needs to be addressed, but the city needs to talk about what we are not seeing on the urban side of the labor trafficking support.

One promising practice that we are seeing in law enforcement as well as in protection services is the use of databases. For now, these are mostly isolated to individual communities but that is hopefully changing. Here is what one participant said:

I think we’re doing really well with databases in Jefferson County and records management...But most of the agencies in the metro area – once the case is complete it’s in Lumen and everybody can see that there’s ties and it connects people pretty well. Starting with the facial recognition. But what we’re talking intelligence database is we’re keeping initial information. We’ve got the one in Jefferson county.

Additionally, we are seeing law enforcement from across the region come together to address illicit massage parlors. As the city of Aurora has focused on this issue in Aurora, the problem has grown in Denver as those businesses that are shut down in Aurora are moving into Denver. One government employee told us this:

So I think that has been productive, bringing everyone together from the city of Denver to talk about ok how do we do a better job in this arena because illicit massage businesses are growing and it’s crazy and then applying that to residential brothels and how do we use the same regulatory framework to inspect, shut them down, fine them, impact them in a different way, a more creative way than just pulling out women and charging them.
Region 3 has the most anti-trafficking partnerships, with coordinated efforts first beginning in 2005. A quote from a participant from one of the longest running partnerships illustrates this point:

"It started from the formal partnerships about five or six years ago when we created this subcommittee or task force to address human trafficking and really as a – as a county, one of the first counties in Jeffco that kind of stayed or one of the first counties in Colorado to essentially say this is a problem and we want to tackle it, and we’re getting together as a county and as these entities, DA’s office, law enforcement, human services, county attorney’s office, etc. to work collaboratively to address it."

Most of the early partnerships were law enforcement-led; that has changed over the years to include community-led and non-profit-led partnerships.

While Region 3 potentially excels with its partnerships, there is still a feeling of isolation among some partners as shown here:

"To add on to that, a lot of agencies in Denver appear to work in silos, we talk about this all the time, and so if we could, I get that there needs to be MOUs and confidentiality and lawful [practice], but we’re not sharing information, and it’s not helpful, what we’re doing is not helpful."

"And there’s just a lot of development that needs to be done. People need to be willing to give up their turf. I use turf as a much larger term. Their authority, you know they have that scale where you go from networking to cooperation to collaboration to partnership. We still have a long way to go on the partnership side of true partnership."

Others were more optimistic. Researchers repeatedly heard mention of the value of partnerships, of sharing information, of breaking down barriers between sectors and of increasing trust among partners, as evidenced by this quote:

"I think actually it’s a real value of this Council, as a prosecutor I tend to see more sex trafficking cases that tend to be Denver centric, because that’s where the proactive investigations are happening, in large part, but the council has made me acutely aware of the trafficking that’s happening all around our state, and as noted, it is very different in the northern rural areas or on the Western Slope, or in the Four Corners area, or on the Eastern plains, versus what’s happening right in Denver, and, so the partnerships that are developing in the council help us have awareness of those different types of trafficking, and allows us the opportunity to explore those in investigations and outreach to help, provide services to those who are being exploited."

"It also supports some of our core values as an organization, one of them being community in that we can’t combat human trafficking alone and that it has to be done with other community members and other community organizations."
Recommendations for Region 3 to Comprehensively End Human Trafficking

These regional profiles should spark conversation, discussion, and ultimately, action. We encourage each community to gather in partnership and create goals related to these location-specific questions:

1. How are you measuring the effectiveness of your efforts to end human trafficking? What data would you need to collect to understand your impact? How would you like to share and protect this data? How will you know your efforts are directly impacting the root causes of trafficking in your community?

2. How are your efforts to end trafficking addressing the root causes of trafficking? How can we partner with parallel movements to more effectively address the housing crisis?

3. How can new judicial districts develop their problem solving and diversion courts to be more inclusive of the survivor population?
THE COLORADO PROJECT

THE 4PS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- STRENGTHS: WHAT EXISTS
- GAPS: WHAT’S MISSING
- RECOMMENDATIONS: ACTION PLAN
- ADVANCE COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS
- EVALUATE
- REFINE PROMISING PRACTICES
- END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

THE COLORADO PROJECT TIMELINE

2010-2013
Colorado Project 1.0
- National Survey (2011)
- Statewide Survey, Focus Groups (2012)
- Report Publication (2013)

2018-2019
Colorado Project 2.0
- Statewide Survey, Interviews, Focus Groups (2018)

2013
Colorado Action Plan 1.0
- State Advisory Board
- 14 Recommendations
- 48 Activities
- State Policy Recommendations

2019
Colorado Action Plan 2.0
- Survivor-Informed Committee
- State Advisory Committee
- 10 Recommendations

2014-2017
Colorado Anti-Trafficking Movement
- Updated Human Trafficking Laws
- Governor’s Council Established (2014)
- Colorado Anti-Trafficking Exchange (2017)
The 4P Framework

The Colorado Project Regional Community Profiles frame their recommendations through the “4P” (Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnership) definitions, which were shaped by five global and federal protocols and legislation. The 4P framework recognizes that there are multiple sectors engaged in efforts to combat trafficking, as well as necessarily diverse strategies. Using the 4Ps helps us better understand both strengths and gaps in Colorado, and to develop a more comprehensive response.

**Prevention** measures increase awareness, advocacy, and education towards addressing a community’s systemic vulnerability to a continuum of exploitation, including human trafficking. Prevention plans recognize that exploitation and human trafficking are symptoms of root causes like poverty, gender inequality, and other forms of oppression which create vulnerable populations in the first place.

**Protection** measures ensure that survivors of human trafficking are provided access to (at a minimum) health care, legal aid, social services, and education in ways that are not prejudicial against victims’ rights, dignity, or psychological well-being. Protection also means creating an environment (social, political, and legal) that fosters the protection of victims of trafficking.

**Prosecution** measures ensure the creation and implementation of laws that address the continuum of labor exploitation and the pursuit of criminal punishments for such cases, treating human trafficking as exploitation of victims rather than recruitment/transportation of workers or people in prostitution. This includes not just criminal prosecution, but law enforcement officers and the creation of legislation.

**Partnership** measures acknowledge that combating human trafficking requires a comprehensive response through the cooperation of multiple sectors. Partnerships bring together diverse experiences, amplify messages, and leverage resources. An anti-human trafficking partnership refers to a cooperative relationship between two or more organizations established for the purpose of jointly combating human trafficking in some way (LCHT, 2013, p.8).
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The Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking (LCHT) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in Denver, Colorado and an established leader in the national anti-trafficking movement. Since 2005, LCHT has trained over 30,000 professionals and community members; conducted research to drive action and inform policy change; operated Colorado's 24/7 human trafficking hotline; and developed over 150 future human rights leaders.