



TIMOTHY J. CRUZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
PLYMOUTH DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

MAIN OFFICE:
166 MAIN STREET
BROCKTON, MA 02301
TEL: (508) 584-8120

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CONTACT: BETH STONE
(508) 584-8120

**PLYMOUTH COUNTY DA'S OFFICE, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
RESOURCES RECEIVE \$1.5 MILLION GRANT TO COMBAT HUMAN
TRAFFICKING**

BROCKTON – The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office for Victims of Crime has awarded the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office and victim service provider Family and Community Resources, Inc. (FCR) \$1.5 million in funding to bolster efforts to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases and get victims vital services.

Last month, the Office for Victims of Crime awarded more than \$104.5 million to state, local and tribal jurisdictions, service providers and task forces all over the country to support efforts to strengthen the response to human trafficking. DOJ's National Institute of Justice awarded an additional \$2.4 million to support research and evaluation on human trafficking. The Plymouth County District Attorney's Office (PCDAO) and FCR, Inc. were each awarded \$750,000 as part of the grant. FCR, Inc. has provided victim services to vulnerable populations and survivors of trauma in the greater Brockton area since 1977, with the vision to inspire healthier communities free from family and community violence.

"My office continues to aggressively prosecute those who manipulate, abuse, and sell human beings for profit," DA Cruz said. "At the same time, we work just as hard to provide access to trauma-informed services to help victims recover and return to a healthy and safe life. We are grateful to the Department of Justice for once again funding our innovative initiatives here in Plymouth County, and we believe our strong partnerships, with agencies like FCR, puts us in the best position to receive these funding opportunities."

Patricia Kelleher, President and CEO of Family and Community Resources said, "Family and Community Resources, Inc. is thrilled to partner with District Attorney Tim Cruz and his team as we work together to stem the tide of labor trafficking throughout Plymouth County. An often invisible crime, FCR advocates and clinicians will provide confidential services to victims who have been forced to work due to their immigration status, or for those victims who have had their passports confiscated by abusive partners,

providing case management, community education and outreach and crisis services. Any individual who may be a victim of labor trafficking may reach FCR by calling 508-583-6498. "

Human Trafficking is one of the fastest-growing criminal enterprises in the United States and is a pervasive issue in Massachusetts, one of the last states to implement human trafficking legislation. While the law has brought much needed publicity and a sense of urgency to the issue, communities continue to struggle with a lack of resources and training on trafficking investigations, prosecutions, and victim services.

Three years ago, DA Cruz formed the Plymouth County Human Trafficking Task Force. The Task Force includes members from law enforcement, service providers, state agencies, healthcare, faith communities and other key stakeholders. The task force seeks to combat human trafficking through multidisciplinary collaboration and coordination, community education and outreach, comprehensive victim services, and offender accountability.

PCDAO and FCR will utilize the funding to strengthen the Task Force's existing structure and expand collaborative partnerships. A Labor Trafficking working group will be developed and will be comprised of grassroots organizations, the Department of Labor, and additional agencies that work with vulnerable populations in high-risk labor sectors. To increase Plymouth County's awareness and education on the realities of human trafficking, PCDAO and FCR will provide trainings for task force partners and host events for the community at-large.

To increase Plymouth County's capacity to investigate and prosecute human trafficking, the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office will provide specialized training for law enforcement and cross-train PCDAO staff on recognizing the signs of sex and labor trafficking.

FCR will utilize funding to increase their capacity to serve survivors of trafficking by developing a Human Trafficking program within their organization. The program will include two Case Managers, who will work with survivors to address any specific needs and link them to an array of community resources and supports. Not only will this program be a resource when someone first discloses victimization, but it will also support the ongoing work of survivors to achieve safety, independence, and overall wellness.

Through the grant, FCR will serve as the primary referral agency for victims of trafficking that are identified by local law enforcement and other task force partners. By utilizing this collaborative approach, investigations of human trafficking crimes will occur through a victim-centered lens and survivors will be offered immediate access to trauma-informed services.