

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 26-70—sHB 5476
Government Oversight Committee
Appropriations Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT OF EFFORTS TO PREVENT
HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE USE OF CONFIDENTIAL CRISIS
HOTLINES AT CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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Requires DOC to (1) issue an RFP for a confidential crisis hotline for reporting sexual violence and report on it to the legislature and (2) revise its policy on using these hotlines to report sexual violence and post it on the department's website

BACKGROUND

SUMMARY: This act makes several changes related to preventing and responding to human trafficking in the state and requires the Department of Correction (DOC) to revise its policy on confidential hotlines to report sexual violence, as described in the section-by-section analysis below. It also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see below.

§§ 1 & 14 — OPM HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION COORDINATION

Broadens OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division's responsibilities to include advising and helping coordinate trafficking prevention efforts; requires the division to (1) evaluate state agency and law enforcement coordination of related efforts and (2) develop a plan for how the efforts should be coordinated

Existing law requires the Office of Policy and Management's (OPM) Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division to promote a more effective and cohesive state criminal justice system through certain specified actions. The act expands the list of activities the division must perform to include advising and helping develop coordination of trafficking prevention efforts among state executive branch agencies and other multidisciplinary partners, including helping provide associated training (see § 10 below).

The act relatedly requires the division to (1) evaluate the coordination of efforts among state executive branch agencies and law enforcement agencies to prevent human trafficking in the state and (2) develop a comprehensive plan for how the state agencies' and other multidisciplinary partners' activities and programs should be coordinated for this purpose. It requires the state agencies to give the division any information, data, or assistance it needs, if state or federal law permits it. The division must submit a copy of its plan, including any related recommendations for legislation, to the Appropriations, Government Oversight, and Judiciary committees by January 1, 2027.

Under the act, "human trafficking" refers to all acts involved in recruiting, abducting, transporting, harboring, transferring, selling, or receiving people within national or across international borders using force, coercion, fraud, or deception, to place them in situations of slavery or slavery-like conditions; forced labor or services, such as forced prostitution or sexual services; domestic servitude; bonded sweatshop labor; or other debt bondage.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 2 — TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

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Increases the Trafficking in Persons Council's membership by adding the secretary of the state or her designee

The act increases the Trafficking in Persons Council's membership by adding the secretary of the state or her designee. By law, among other things, this council coordinates human trafficking data collection and analysis and consults with government and non-government organizations in developing recommendations to strengthen efforts to prevent trafficking, protect and help victims, and prosecute traffickers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§§ 3-5, 10 & 11 — AGENCY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

Requires, within available appropriations, (1) DCF employees and contracted service providers who have regular contact with children to be trained on identifying and reporting human trafficking, (2) the judicial branch to develop and give certain employees training on trafficking, and (3) DCF to help POST develop trafficking training; requires POST's and municipal police departments' basic and review training to include training on human trafficking

DCF (§§ 3 & 4)

Existing law requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF), with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, to develop initial and refresher training programs on accurately and promptly identifying and reporting human trafficking.

The act requires the DCF commissioner, within available appropriations, to give this training, which may be in a recorded format, to all department employees and its contracted service providers who have regular contact with children as part of their job or while providing their services. It correspondingly explicitly includes this training in DCF's listed statutory responsibilities for developing and training staff.

Under the act, each employee and service provider must complete (1) an initial training program by the later of July 1, 2027, or six months after beginning their employment or the applicable contract date, and (2) refresher training every three years. But it requires social work trainees, beginning January 1, 2027, to have done this training before they are assigned to a case.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the inclusion of the training in DCF's responsibilities and the social worker training requirement is effective October 1, 2026.

Judicial Branch (§ 5)

The act requires the chief court administrator, within available appropriations, to develop and provide training for all judicial branch Court Support Services Division (CSSD) employees on the trafficking of minors and adults. The trainings must at least include:

1. awareness of and compliance with the laws and protocols on trafficking;
2. how to identify, access, and provide services for trafficking victims; and

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3. techniques for (a) de-escalating and reducing harm when encountering victims and (b) receiving trauma disclosures from minors.

Under the act, each CSSD employee must complete (1) an initial training program by the later of July 1, 2027, or six months after beginning their employment, and (2) refresher training every three years. The act allows for the use of a recorded training curriculum to meet these requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Law Enforcement (§§ 10 & 11)

Under prior law, DCF could, within available appropriations, train law enforcement officials on the trafficking of minors with information about the laws and protocols on trafficking and how to identify, access, and provide services for victims.

The act instead requires DCF to help the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) develop this training, which the act expands to include trafficking of adults. DCF must do this within available appropriations and in collaboration with OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division.

The act also requires the law's required basic and review police training programs administered by POST or a municipal police department to include this trafficking training.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the requirement for police basic and review training to include trafficking training is effective October 1, 2026.

§ 6 — CONGREGATE CARE RESIDENCE OPERATOR REQUIREMENTS

Sets policy, plan, and security measure requirements for DCF-licensed congregate care residence operators

The act sets policy, plan, and security measure requirements for DCF-licensed congregate care residence ("child care facility") operators, who are the people responsible for total facility operation. By law, these facilities are used for out-of-home placements of:

1. children or youths under age 18;
2. people under age 21 who are (a) homeless or at risk of homelessness or (b) enrolled full-time in a secondary or technical school, college, or state-accredited job training program; or
3. people who require special education, until the end of the school year during which they reach age 22.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Policies

First, the act requires each operator to have clearly stated written policies of its plans, program, and services, which must be reviewed at least annually for any needed updates. It requires operators to give DCF evidence of the annual review, if it asks and in its prescribed format.

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The act also requires each operator to have personnel policies on employee, temporary worker, volunteer, and intern training and education. The policies must include introductory orientation, ongoing training and development, supervision, and annual evaluations.

Plans

Under the act, the operators must develop a plan for ongoing training, review it at least biennially, and update it as needed to be consistent with best practices. The plan must have a written curriculum and an annual minimum amount of training hours. Operators must document the training's implementation as DCF requires.

The act requires each operator to give DCF, at least biennially, a written quality assurance plan for its facility. The plan must describe (1) how facility services quality will be monitored and (2) the facility's compliance with its stated purpose, program objectives, security requirements, and other requirements from DCF, such as evidence of the plan's implementation, with findings and, if applicable, an improvement plan. Plan revisions must be immediately available to facility staff and DCF.

Security Measures

Lastly, under the act, these facilities must also have (1) the internal and external security measures needed to ensure the residents' safety and (2) supervisory staff that can ensure each child's health, safety, security, and well-being and appropriate facility security while keeping a home-like atmosphere.

§ 7 — CHILD ADVOCATE REVIEWS OF CHILDREN'S PLACEMENT

Specifies that the child advocate's responsibility for reviewing where children are placed by a state agency or department includes reviewing STTAR Enhancement Plan homes

The act specifies that the child advocate's existing responsibility for periodically reviewing where children are placed by a state agency or department includes reviewing Specialized Trauma-Informed Treatment Assessment and Reunification (STTAR) Enhancement Plan homes. (STTAR is a short-term group home program for children DCF removes from their homes due to high-risk situations.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 8 — HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION AND RESPONSE SUBCOMMITTEE

Requires creating a subcommittee on human trafficking prevention and response to implement certain recommendations on the state's trafficking response efforts

The act requires the Division of Criminal Justice's Statewide Steering Committee of the Regionalized Human Trafficking Recovery Taskforce (RHTRT)

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to create a Human Trafficking Prevention and Response Subcommittee. RHTRT is a greater-Hartford-area partnership to combat trafficking, bringing together law enforcement, prosecutors, advocates, and service providers to investigate cases, help victims, and increase prevention efforts.

Under the act, the subcommittee (1) is made up of members RHTRT appoints and (2) works as a public-private partnership to implement the recommendations from the RHTRT report “A Blueprint to Strengthen Connecticut’s Response to Human Trafficking.” The act specifies that the subcommittee does not take over any of the Trafficking in Persons Council’s responsibilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

Purpose

To implement the recommendations, the act requires the subcommittee to work on the following:

1. advancing development of a permanent statewide entity to coordinate anti-trafficking response across agencies and service providers to help minor children and adult trafficking victims, including creating associated standards;
2. creating and implementing a standard, cross-disciplinary training framework and centralized learning management system;
3. developing and implementing a unified statewide data collection process with shared definitions, standard reporting fields, and secure data-sharing protocols;
4. designing and implementing standard, trauma-informed screening questions and referral methods for consistent identification of and response to victims across systems;
5. expanding and strengthening statewide service capacity by mapping and verifying providers, identifying service and funding gaps, and supporting the creation of a vetted resource directory; and
6. reviewing trafficking trends, identifying systemic gaps, and developing policy recommendations for submission to the Trafficking in Persons Council.

§ 9 — MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS FOR ABUSED, NEGLECTED, OR TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

Requires, instead of allows, DCF and the state’s attorneys to set up multidisciplinary teams to help abused, neglected, or trafficked children

The act requires, instead of allows, DCF and the state’s attorneys to set up multidisciplinary teams to, among other things, review cases, coordinate intervention and prevention, and ensure treatment of abused, neglected, or trafficked children. By law, these teams include various professionals, including, among others, DCF and the appropriate state’s attorney or designee, law enforcement, health care workers, a victim advocate, and a forensic interviewer.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§§ 12 & 13 — DOC CONFIDENTIAL CRISIS HOTLINE FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Requires DOC to (1) issue an RFP for a confidential crisis hotline for reporting sexual violence and report on it to the legislature and (2) revise its policy on using these hotlines to report sexual violence and post it on the department's website

The act requires the DOC commissioner, by October 1, 2026, to issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a confidential crisis hotline so that correction officers and incarcerated people can report sexual violence incidents. By January 1, 2027, the commissioner must report the RFP's results, including any appropriations request for the hotline, to the Appropriations, Government Oversight, and Judiciary committees.

The act also requires the commissioner, by December 1, 2026, to (1) revise the department's policy on using confidential crisis hotlines for correction officers and incarcerated people to report sexual violence incidents and (2) post it on the department's website. Under the act, the revised policy must ensure that incarcerated people can access the hotline for free and in a location that makes using it confidential, without supervision of, or permission from, a DOC employee.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, for the RFP provision, and October 1, 2026, for the crisis hotline policy revision.

BACKGROUND

Related Act

PA 26-26, § 7, also requires DCF to develop and provide a mandatory training program for its employees about human trafficking and how to interact with victims.