

2021 Sex Trafficking Outreach Projects (STOP) Phoenix, Arizona

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Summary: In response to COVID-19 and the serious issue of sex trafficking impacting the City of Phoenix, in a unique partnership the Phoenix Police Department, the City of Phoenix Human Services Department, and Arizona State University, Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research worked together to address the impact of COVID-19 on prostituted and/sex trafficked persons in Phoenix. This partnership created two new modalities to provide access to services directly to victims entitled the Sex Trafficking Outreach Project (STOP). Funding for the materials for this project was provided by the CARES Act Fund allocated by the Phoenix City Council in July 2020.

Through these two modalities the STOP served 79 adult sex trafficked clients between January and May 2021. The STOP modalities were developed from a focus group with sex trafficking survivors in September 2020 seeking new ways of serving adult sex trafficking victims during COVID-19 in Phoenix, Arizona. The focus group was conducted with sex trafficking survivor leaders in the Phoenix community. New outreach materials were created from the focus group with targeted resource information and increased focus on crisis supports and STI testing resources. Survivor leaders served as co-leaders of each of the STOP events.

Hotel STOP

The first modality involved a hotel setting where the focus was to identify sex trafficking situations via a regularly organized internet-based outcall system conducted by law enforcement. Social services including 7 agencies were available to work with victims as identified during the operation. This provided face-to-face instant service connection and transportation with housing, sign up for intensive case management, access to mental health clinics for SMI services, access to drug detoxification, onsite HIV and Hep C testing, and crisis mental health stabilization services. Clients were also provided with backpacks containing hygiene kits and new clothing. Partners at the STOP events included Community Bridges Inc., TRUST, A New Life Center, A New Leaf Programs, Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., and Terros.

During the first five events in 2021, 34 adult clients were offered services. Three potential clients were ineligible due to having arrest warrants. One potential client was ineligible due to her underage status of age 17. Three clients declined services.

Twenty-seven individuals were eligible and accepted services. Of the 27 clients who received services, four identified as transgender women, 22 identified as cisgender women, and one identified as a cisgender male. The clients ranged in age from 20 to 51 years-old. Fourteen (51.8%) clients identified as African American, nine (33.3%) clients identified as Caucasian, two (7.4%) clients identified as mixed race, one (3.7%) identified as Hispanic, and one (3.7%) identified as Asian.

Services Provided at the Hotel STOP events:

Case Management engaged 9	Community Resources/Referrals 10	Gift Cards-Food 19	Drug Detox center 1	Gift Cards-Gas 19
Backpacks with hygiene products 16	Shelter housing 1	Feminine Products 16	Transportation to services 2	HIV/Hep C testing 14

Static Street STOP

These events were a single location-static street outreach marketed to persons who have been prostituted or sex trafficked in an area with high-frequency report rates of street prostitution in Phoenix. Information cards were printed in English and Spanish about the event and were distributed by service partners in the area local to the event location. Marketing material was distributed on the day before the event, the day of the event, and during the event to recruit participants.



ARE YOU IN THE LIFE AND NEED HELP?

DATE/TIME: THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25, 2021
6:00 PM TO MIDNIGHT
LOCATION: 27TH AVENUE JUST SOUTH OF
NORTHERN AVE (BETWEEN AUGUSTA AVE AND
HAYWARD AVE) EAST SIDE

No cops. 100% Confidential.



¿BUSCANDO UNA SALIDA? ¿NECESITAS AYUDA?

FECHA/ HORA: JUEVES 25 FEBRERO, 2021
6:00 EN LA NOCHE A MEDIANOCHE
LOCALIZACIÓN: 27TH AVENUE SUR A NORTHERN
AVE (ENTRE AUGUSTA AVE Y HAYWARD AVE) ESTE

Sin policía. 100% Confidencial.

Survivor leaders screened possible clients at the entrance of the event and introduced the clients to various social service and medical providers who then provided an overview of their program at their own tables at the site. Partners at the Static Street STOP events included Community Bridges Inc., TRUST, A New Life Center, A New Leaf Programs, Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., Phoenix Children's Hospital Cruisin' Mobile, Sojourner Center, and Terros- PREP and HIV testing services.

At the two Static Street STOP events, dozens of adults approached the event and were screened by survivor leaders. Those not qualifying for the services were offered water and snacks and written referral and resource materials. During the two events, there were a total of 52 clients who self-identified to the survivor leaders as having experienced prostitution/and or sex trafficking and were provided with services at the events. The 52 clients ranged in age from 18 to 63 years old with an average of 35.1 years. Forty-six (88.5%) clients identified as cisgender females and six clients identified as cisgender males. Seventeen (32.7%) identified as Caucasian, 13 (25%) identified as Hispanic, 11 (21.2%) clients identified as African American, three (5.8%) identified as Mixed Race, one (1.9%) identified as Native American, one (1.9%) identified as Asian, and one (1.9%) identified as Pacific Islander. Five (9.6%) did not report their race. Of the 41 clients that reported their housing status, 30 (57.7%) reported that they were currently homeless.

Among the clients served, 23 percent (n =12) of the 52 clients expressed that they had experienced sex trafficking during their childhoods (before age 18). From this group, the age of first sex trafficking spanned from age 12 to 17 with the average first sex trafficking experience reported at 15.4 years old. It is noted that this data does not include two clients who reported that they had been trafficked for 'their whole life'.

Services were delivered on-site and included HIV testing, medical consultation and services, housing placement, assistance connecting to SMI clinics, engagement in case management, crisis mental health placement, food cards, gas cards, backpacks with hygiene products, period packs, clothing, masks and hand sanitizer, and temperature stable food/snacks.

Case Management engaged 9	Community Resources/Referrals 28	Gift Cards-Food 31	Drug Detox center 2	Gift Cards-Gas 8
Backpacks with hygiene products 50	Shelter housing 3	Feminine Products 48	Transportation to services 4	HIV/Hep C testing 4

Lessons Learned

Static Street Outreach

- ❖ The initial event was scheduled from 6pm to 12am. All but one of the 24 clients were served at the event between 6pm and 8pm with one client arriving at 9:15pm. For the second event, we altered the hours of operation to 12:30pm to 8pm and served 11.6% more clients (28).
- ❖ Outdoor outreaches are approachable for our target population (persons who have been sex trafficked/prostituted).
- ❖ Ensure marketing materials are clear regarding who will be served at the event to avoid turning people away for not qualifying for the services.
- ❖ Stable food items (like Vienna sausages and packets of tuna) as well as underwear and socks were in high demand. The number provided was doubled from the first to second event.
- ❖ Clients presented with serious dental issues and were most interested in soft foods.
- ❖ The clients preferred backpacks with multiple pockets.
- ❖ The focus group information that formed the basis for these events was highly accurate and applicable.
- ❖ Having law enforcement available and close by was necessary for the safety of the clients and the service providers.
- ❖ 94.3% of the clients stated that they were ready to get out of their current situation (including sex trafficking/prostitution).

Hotel STOP

- ❖ Keep the service team directly providing information to each client small and nimble, only include those who can answer questions about specific services or conduct intakes or testing into the space where clients are being engaged.
- ❖ Provide private space for interviews and services being provided.
- ❖ Survivor-led teams of two were well received by all clients who accepted services.
- ❖ Having services like HIV and Hep C testing on site was practical.
- ❖ Having agencies provide on-site intakes and transportation to services instantly was well received by the clients.
- ❖ 89.3% of the clients stated that they were ready to get out of the 'life'.
- ❖ Have cisgender male clothing and hygiene products available.

Overall

After each event the lead organizers including Phoenix Police Department HEAT Unit, Arizona State University, and the City of Phoenix Human Services Department reviewed the event activities and made modifications for the next one using continuous evaluation tools and feedback from the clients and service agencies. Because of these modifications, lead organizers developed innovative plans and general goals for each following outreach and updated the partner organizations about the outreach progress and milestones met along with solutions devised to troubleshoot previous challenges. For instance, the lead organizers agreed there needed to be designated logistics contact and a communication person to ensure agencies providing unique services are present in the next event.

Lead organizers collected data and evaluated the services received by clients and progress made during outreaches to respond to changing needs by clients in a particular community. For example, there were instances where outreach workers contacted the same client twice in two different events and it was recognized that the client needed more bus passes and gift cards after 30 days of making no contact with outreach workers.

- ❖ The seven events provided by the STOP in Spring 2021 provided face-to-face service access to 79 individuals.
- ❖ These events were held during the COVID-19 pandemic and each event took courage and bravery for all involved.
- ❖ The service partners were well selected and well matched with the needs presented to the participants.
- ❖ Providing services where individuals are being bought and sold is possible.
- ❖ The connections made between the service providers have long lasting implications for improved services for sex trafficked/prostituted persons in our community.

The strength and innovation of the Phoenix, Arizona anti-sex trafficking community was clear during these events. A number of organizations from other parts of Arizona and neighboring law enforcement agencies (Chandler Police Department and Scottsdale Police Department) observed the events to begin the process of replicating the victim-centered, trauma-informed methodology.

Partners on the Sex Trafficking Outreach Projects

Phoenix Police Department- Human Exploitation and Trafficking Unit
City of Phoenix Human Services Department
Arizona State University- Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research
TRUST
Community Bridges Inc.
A New Life Center
A New Leaf Programs
Chicanos Por La Causa
Phoenix Children's Hospital Cruisin' Mobile
Sojourner Center
Terros- PREP and HIV testing services

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