



# OVCTTAC



## Labor Trafficking Case Study: Domestic Servitude

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3:15 – 4:15 PM EST

**Presenters:**

Kathleen Morris, WARN Program Manager, International Rescue Committee – Seattle

Megan Bruneau, Human Trafficking – VICE/High Risk Victims Unit, Seattle Police Department

Ashley Garrett, Human Trafficking Team Lead, OVC TTAC

The material presented during today's webinar session will be available on the Human Trafficking Learning Community.

*The session will be recorded and will begin shortly.*

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**OVCTTAC**



## Tip of the Month:

Customized Training and Technical Assistance  
OVC TTAC

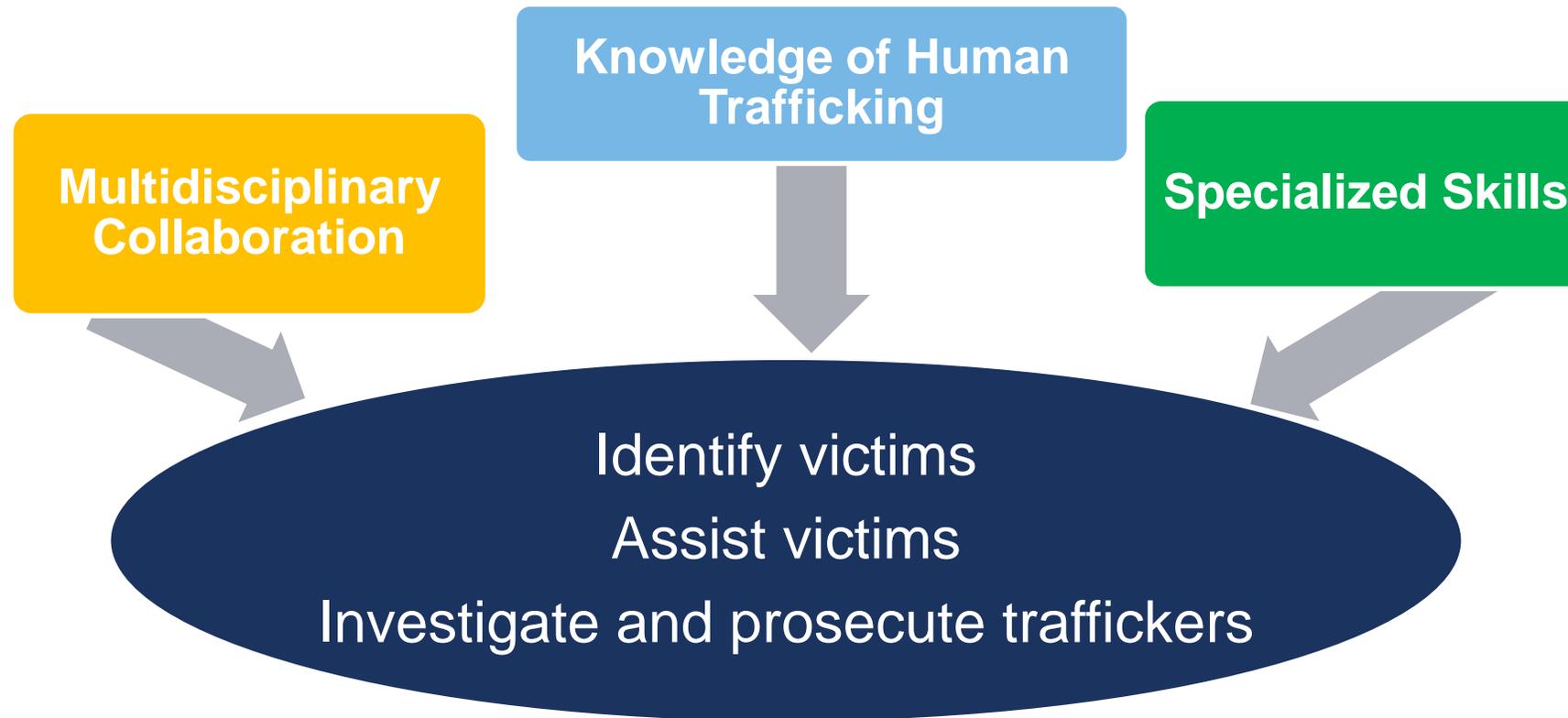


## Customized training and technical assistance

- In-person trainings, workshops and
- Peer to peer mentoring
- Strategic planning facilitation
- TA in needs assessments, program design and development, evaluation
- Webinars and conference calls
- Phone/email consultation
- Information and referral



## OVC TTAC Task Force Capacity Framework





## CTTA Eligibility Criteria

- TTA will help build capacity and response to crime victims
- Victim service providers, criminal justice professionals, and allied professions that serve victims of crime
- Requesting organization contributes resources or funds to the delivery of requested assistance



## CTTA Application Process

- Collaborate with respective OVC or BJA grant monitor on request
- Call OVC TTAC prior to application to discuss needs
- Complete on line application – [www.ovcttac.gov](http://www.ovcttac.gov)
- **MUST** submit 90 days in advance of request

# **Victim-Centered & Multi-Disciplinary Response to Human Trafficking Case Study: Domestic Servitude**



**Detective Megan Bruneau**  
Human Trafficking Vice/High Risk Victims Unit  
Seattle Police Department

**Kathleen Morris**  
Program Manager  
Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network  
International Rescue Committee in Seattle

# Presentation Overview



## I. Introductions

- WashACT Collaboration

## II. Case Study: United States v. Almeda

- Initial identification
- Stabilizing survivor
- Victim-centered interviews
- Investigation
- Prosecution
- Ongoing Support
- Outcomes

# Introductions



**Seattle Police Department** (BJA grantee) takes a victim-centered approach to investigating human trafficking cases through a dedicated human trafficking detective and its Vice High Risk Victims Unit

**Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN)**, a coalition of non-governmental service providers lead by the International Rescue Committee in Seattle (OVC grantee), provides comprehensive services to victims and survivors of human trafficking in WA and educates communities to allow better access to services for victims of human trafficking

# Poll Question: Introductions



- What best describes your professional role in anti-trafficking work?
  - Non-governmental victim service provider
  - Law enforcement
  - Law enforcement or system-based victim specialist
  - Federal prosecutor
  - State/local prosecutor
  - Federal government staff (non-law enforcement)
  - State/local government staff (non-law enforcement)



## Mission Statement

The Committee's mission is to ensure that victims of trafficking receive all resources available to them; and that human traffickers are identified, investigated and prosecuted to the utmost extent of the law.



## Co-chairs:

Seattle Police Department (BJA grantee)

WARN (IRC Seattle) (OVC grantee)

U.S. Attorney's Office

## Member organizations:

- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): WARN Partners and other Service Providers; Community Activism Groups
- Federal Law Enforcement: HSI, FBI, IRS-CID, DOL, State Dept.
- Local Law Enforcement Agencies: Seattle PD, King County Sherriff, State Patrol, Tacoma PD; Lakewood PD, etc.
- State & Federal Governmental Agencies: Department of Labor/Wage and Hour; Washington State Attorney General's Office, Health and Human Services/ACF
- County Prosecuting Attorney's Offices & Other County Agencies
- And more...

# WashACT Collaboration at Work



Client Identification & Referral

WARN Response

Law Enforcement Response

Investigation & Prosecution

Survivor Outcomes

- Conviction of Traffickers?
- Restitution?
- Safety
- Short-term benefits
- Long-term housing
- Immigration Relief
- Family reunification
- Job Training & Job Search Assistance
- Education
- Self-sufficiency?

# Poll Question: Collaboration



- Do you work as part of a multi-disciplinary task force to respond to human trafficking cases?
  - Yes
  - No

# United States v Almeda



**A CASE STUDY OF FORCED LABOR**

# Initial Contact



- Referral from Seattle PD
- WARN reached out to survivor to assess needs
  - Immediate needs
- WARN worked to explain rights and options
- Survivor was extremely fearful and traumatized
- Safety concerns
- Connected survivor with pro bono immigration attorney to discuss options
- Survivor decision to report to law enforcement

# Advocacy with Law Enforcement Process

- Interpreter
- Advocacy and support around victim interview with law enforcement
- Explanation of rights and options
- WARN responded to law enforcement requests for victim cooperation with investigation and supported victim through process
- WARN's support allowed victim to provide key evidence to support investigation and prosecution

# Poll Question



- What are the main reasons for using trusted, vetted, court-certified interpreters in law enforcement interviews? (Check all that apply)
  - Quality evidence collection
  - Victim-centered approach
  - Allow victim to fully express themselves
  - Your NGO partners want you to ...

# Victim-Centered Interviews



- **Interpreter**

Interview conducted at IRC's (NGO) office

- WARN advocate present
- AUSA, HSI agent, and SPD detective

- **Topics discussed**

- Role of prosecutor
- Explanation of investigation
- Charging decisions
- Victim rights
- Safety
- Immigration relief
- Continued Presence

# Victim-Centered Interviews



- Explain role of interpreter as neutral person
  - Safety issues related to interpreter
- Allow victim to tell story in her own voice
- May need to conduct multiple interviews to develop rapport, comfort, safety, and understanding of factual evidence
- Victim may not tell story in narrative or linear fashion
- Allow victim to take breaks during interview, to be comforted, and to be silent
- Do not make promises, other than desire to thoroughly investigate and prosecute
- Offer referrals to immigration relief and civil legal services

# Mambukal Barangay - Murcia, Philippines



# Initial Interview



- Life in the Philippines
- Job offer and immigration paperwork
- Arrival and control
- Work requirements and conditions
- Restrictions and barriers to escape
- Eventual escape

## Forced Labor – Domestic Work



- Working conditions
- All cooking, cleaning, landscaping and childcare
- Physical and emotional toll
- No independence and no freedom of movement
- Kept hidden from outsiders
- Sleeping arrangements

# *United States v. Almeda*

## Initiation of Investigation



- Survivor's fear of retaliation and family's safety.
- Victim-centered investigation
- Treated as a missing person case
- Contacting Almeda family members
- Locating witnesses
- Interviewing "rescuers"

# Locations where forced labor occurred



# Law Enforcement Response



- **Partnership and collaboration**
  - SPD, HSI, USAO, WARN
  - HSI in the Philippines utilized
  - Department of Labor
- **Victim-Centered Approach throughout**
- **Evidence gathered**
  - Money transfers to Survivor's family by Almeda's wife
  - VISA paperwork (both submissions) filled out for Survivor
  - House montage
  - Phone records of Survivor's texts to the Nurse
- **Some Almeda family members re-interviewed**
- **Grand Jury utilized**

# Stabilizing Survivor



- Emotional support
- Explanation of rights and options
- Housing, food, medical care, counseling, ESL, connection with community, and other needs
- Intensive case management
- Immigration legal advocacy
- Safety Planning! Safety Planning! Safety Planning!
- Survivor was highly traumatized and afraid. WARN made sure process was explained thoroughly and repeatedly so that victim could make informed decisions

# Supporting Survivor



- Day to day case management
- Continued emotional support and explanations
- Immigration status and rights explanation
- Meetings with attorneys, DOL
- Negotiating restitution
- Support and advocacy at all law enforcement meetings
- WARN's support allowed victim to feel safe and work to recover, make decisions and envision a better life

# Prosecution



- Meeting to discuss prosecution
  - AUSA
  - Investigators: SPD & H.S.I.
  - WARN advocates
- Considerations
  - How strong is the case?
  - What does the survivor want?

# Criminal Judgments



- Romulo Almeda Sr pled guilty to knowingly hiring an alien for employment and did so with knowledge that she was not authorized for any employment in the US. All in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324a(a)(1)(A)
- All 7 other Almeda family members considered “payors” with Almeda Sr to Survivor (payee) for restitution of over \$90,000 (owed wages).

# Supporting Survivor Long-term



- Continuing case management
- Continued emotional support and explanations
- Building community
- Immigration status and rights explanation
- Education, life skills, alternative housing, victim advocacy, supporting choices
- WARN's support allowed victim to feel safe, pursue safe employment, and plan for future
- Advocacy and support throughout prosecution and beyond

# Outcomes



- Conviction
- Sentence
- Survivor Restitution (!)
- Safety
- Self-sufficiency
- Long-term immigration status
- Community awareness
- Excellent case study ;-)

# Contact



Detective Megan Bruneau  
Human Trafficking – VICE/High Risk Victims Unit  
Seattle Police Department  
[megan.bruneau@seattle.gov](mailto:megan.bruneau@seattle.gov)

206.684.8667

Kathleen Morris  
WARN Program Manager  
IRC in Seattle  
[kathleen.morris@rescue.org](mailto:kathleen.morris@rescue.org)

206.623.2105