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News

Human trafficking: Denver police get \$300,000 federal grant to help combat growing issue

By [Melanie Asmar](#) Fri., Oct. 14 2011 at 2:59 PM
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The Denver Police Department has received a \$300,000 federal grant to help combat human trafficking.

The money will pay for a few officers to work full-time in conjunction with the FBI on cases in which women and, more rarely, men are forced into prostitution, says Denver vice Lieutenant Aaron Sanchez.



Flickr

"We wanted the grant so we could free up detectives to work on long-term investigations," Sanchez says.

A 2006 Colorado law defines human trafficking as selling, exchanging, bartering or leasing a person for money or any "thing of value." Most law enforcement agents and advocates recognize that trafficking also involves a level of force, fraud or coercion. In other words, the person being sold was forced or coerced into it.

"Generally, a trafficking victim starts out as prostitution suspect," Sanchez explains. Sometimes that suspect is as young as thirteen-years-old and is giving all of the money she makes to a pimp, who beats her if she doesn't do what he wants. To complicate matters, victims are often protective of their pimps, advocates say. In some cases, a pimp may have been the first man to show a young girl attention or affection, despite the abuse.

"We have to help them realize they are victims," Sanchez says.

But that process takes time, he says. "You have to talk to the girls," Sanchez says. "Prostitutes are not friendly. It's not like you're talking to a child-abuse victim or a fifteen-year-old sex assault victim who wants to cry out and wants to explain what happened or is just scared. These girls just flat out say, 'Nope, that's not what's happening.' The officers have to be savvy to figure out who they are, what their age is. They have to have compassion to want to help them rebuild their lives."

Currently, human trafficking investigations are done by three detectives in the DPD's vice squad, Sanchez says. But they don't work on trafficking full-time; the vice squad is also

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responsible for liquor-license violations, illegal gambling and ticket scalping.

Now, at least one detective and possibly more will be reassigned to the FBI's Safe Streets Task Force, which was formed in 2004 to bring together local, state and federal law enforcement agents to combat violent crime. Thus far, the task force has largely [focused on robberies](#). With the DPD's \$300,000 grant, a small portion of that focus will now shift to human trafficking -- and Sanchez suspects the currently small number of cases will increase. Estimating the [scope of the problem](#) of human trafficking has long been an issue.

"I can guarantee you the numbers will increase," Sanchez says.

"I just don't know by how much."

More from our News archives: "Darrell Havens: Expert challenges police version of shooting that left 19-year-old paralyzed."

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Aphoenix

Apr 6, 2012

This situation looks like rich fodder for inventing victims who are not. It reminds me of the scourge of social service workers in the nineties on up to the present, who snatch kids from their parents and throw them in foster care when parental abuse is far from confirmed...all to keep their agencies funded.

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**Go_murr**

Oct 16, 2011

What a load of crap. You obviously don't get what happens to a young girl who is forced to sell her body by the same person who may be her only anchor in life and her only source of affection. Woman and children of both sexes are trafficked daily all over the world. They are a huge business, and men who try to convince themselves and others that most do it willingly (and really LOVE it) do so because they want to believe that while they are forcing themselves on that 13 year old girl, she's really digging it becauseGod....they are just so desirable. You want to know about human trafficking? Start with MKUltra, the CIA and UN forces. What a bunch of sick @^%\$#^%\$s.

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**tell the truth**

Oct 15, 2011

"We have to help them realize they are victims," Sanchez says.

So... the police are trying to invent victims? Where no victim exist?

The prostitutes say that no one is forcing them and the police don't believe them?

So the police want the prostitutes to lie? and the police are forcing the prostitutes to lie about being forced?

This doesn't make sense.

Here is a good website about this:

<http://bebopper76.wordpress.co...>

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**tell the truth**

Oct 15, 2011

There is a lot of controversy over the topics of sex trafficking, sex slavery, human trafficking and forced prostitution. Regarding what the definition is, the research methods used to find statistics, what the definition of a victim is, the number of child and adult victims involved, forced vs. unforced sex, how the actual prostitutes themselves feel about it, and legal vs. illegal prostitution. There is a growing number of well respected researchers, journalists, scientists, professors, that have concluded in their research that the sex trafficking, sex slavery concept is based on emotion, morals, and monetary funding rather than facts, evidence and proof. They state that very few kidnapped, forced against their will, physically abused, raped sex slave prostitutes for profit have been found throughout the world. Their research concludes that women who enter into this type of work do so of their own free will. They also state that there are many anti-prostitution groups who simply do not like the idea of consensual adult prostitution and have distorted the facts in order to push their agenda and receive funding and money into their organizations in the form of donations, grants and to change the laws about prostitution. They state that these anti-prostitution groups use made up child sex trafficking statistics which they have no proof or evidence of in order to gain public acceptance for their cause.<http://sextraffickingtruths.blogspot...><http://bebopper76.wordpress.co...>

<http://the-myth-of-sex-traffic...>

Washington post article: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/...>

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Prostitution and Sex Workers

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