

# ***Enhancing Federal Collaborations to Address Sex Trafficking in Indian Country and Alaska: The Federal Approach***

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# *Objectives of Presentation*

- Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit
- National and DOJ Action Plans to Address Human Trafficking in Indian Country and Alaskan Native Communities
- Specific Actions of HTPU and DOJ
  - Increase detection, investigation, and prosecution
  - Enhance collaboration
- Case Studies of Effective Collaboration

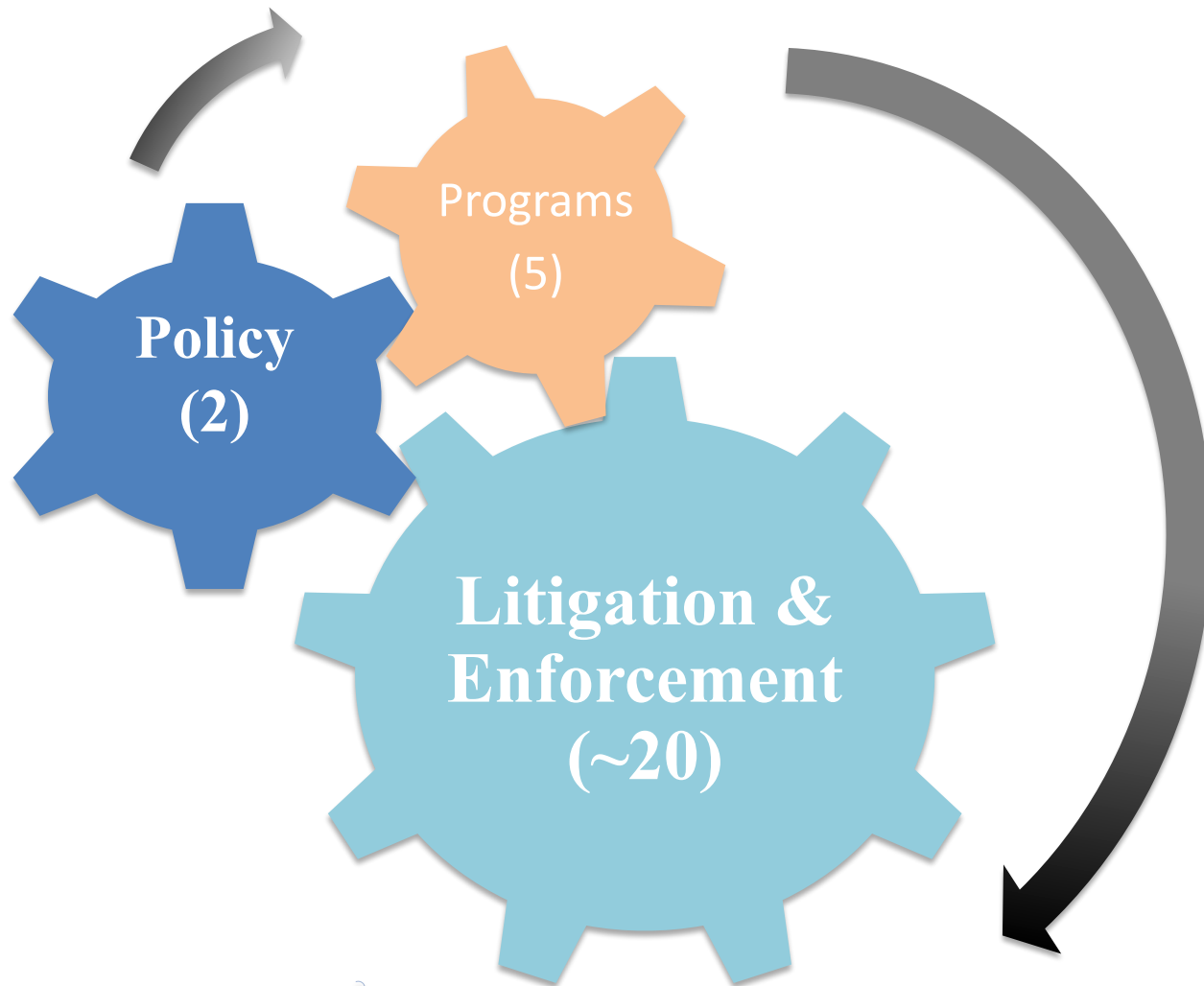
HTPU

# *Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit*

## Trafficking Victim Protection Act of 2000

- Adopted an internationally recognized definition of trafficking in persons
- Established the “3 4 Ps” – *a comprehensive approach*
  - Prosecution
  - Protection

# *Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit*



# ACTION PLANS

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“The Justice Department is committed to partnering with Tribal communities, governments, courts, and law enforcement agencies to help reduce crime and support victims.”

—Merrick B. Garland,  
*United States Attorney General*

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# THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

DECEMBER 2021



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



U.S. Department of Justice

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# National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking





# **Federal Law Enforcement Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against American Indians and Alaska Natives, Including to Address Missing or Murdered Indigenous Persons**

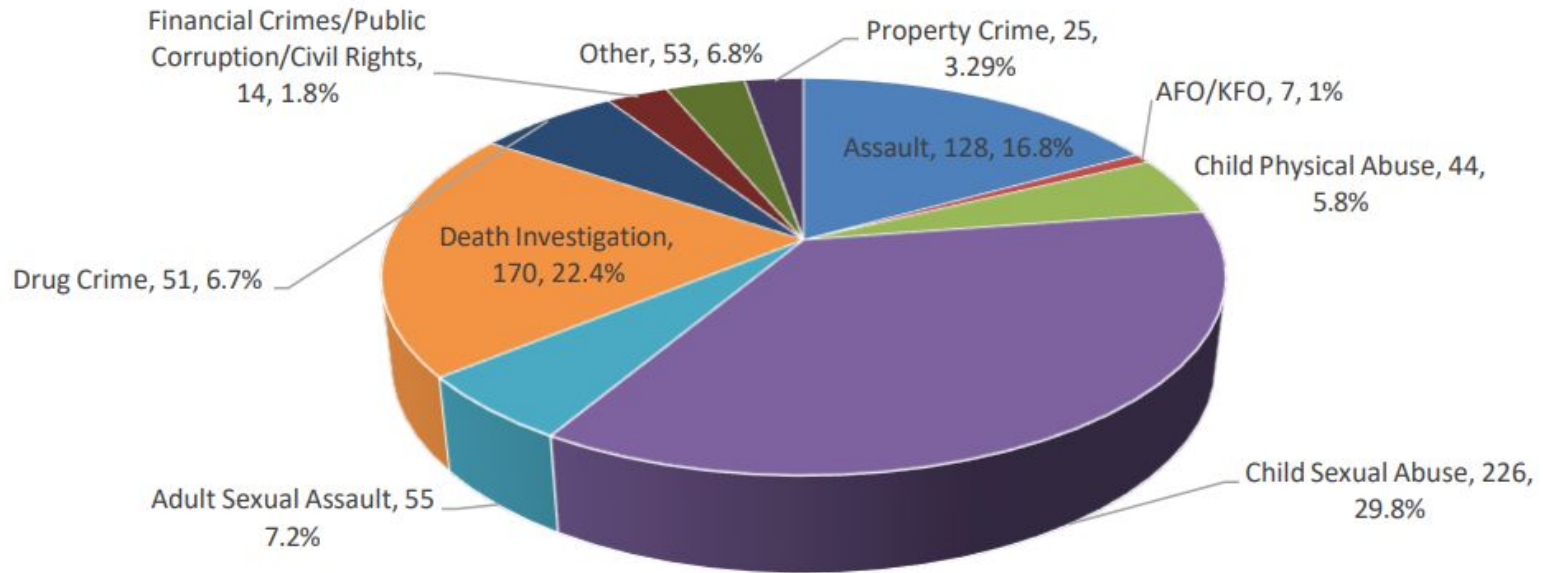
**July 2022**

# *Victim Screening Protocol*

- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Substance dependency use disorder
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Limited access to education/history of being expelled from schools, and
- Contacts with the foster care system

# *Victim Screening Protocol*

## Federal Crime Data



# *Victim Screening Protocol*

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# CASE STUDY

# United States v. Fulton

- Family Facilitated Forced Labor WDLA

NEWS

## **Pineville man accused of trafficking girls and forcing them to work agrees to plea deal**

*Darnell Fulton took kids out of school and forced them to bake brownies, meet daily quotas to support him*



**Melissa Gregory**

Alexandria Town Talk

Published 2:41 p.m. CT Nov. 11, 2022 | Updated 2:41 p.m. CT Nov. 11, 2022



# United States v. Fulton

In May 2019, DCFS and Law Enforcement opened investigations

Investigation revealed that mistakes were made, and the system had failed the children multiple times.





PRESS RELEASE

## Louisiana Man Sentenced to 35 Years for Conspiracy to Commit Forced Labor and Transporting a Minor for Criminal Sexual Activity

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When his sentence is served, Fulton will be on supervised release for life. He also was ordered to make restitution to the victims — \$342,200 each to the sisters and \$295,400 to the brother.

Fulton also must report as a sex offender to whichever registry is appropriate upon his release.



## Victims speak

The first victim began her statement again, saying Fulton wasn't going to admit to what he did but that he was guilty whether he liked it or not.

She recalled bandaging the wounds Fulton had given her younger siblings and watching her brother's skin peel when he poured microwaved water on him.

"I know what he did wasn't right," she said.

She also spoke about their mother, how she struggles because she didn't protect them. And she said when their situation was reported to child services officials, caseworkers interviewed her with Fulton present — and she wasn't able to tell them what was happening.

The next victim's statement was read into the record. She said she sometimes wishes she'd never met Fulton, but is grateful for the younger siblings he and her mother gave her.

Their mother — now a nurse — carries on, even though she's paranoid Fulton or his family will hurt them. She said there is no leader in their family now, that they make decisions together.

What they've accomplished isn't because of Fulton, but in spite of him, she said. She told Fulton that she hates him and everything he put them through. No punishment is fair enough, she said.

A Victim's *Right* to Speak

**IMPACT Statements**

A Nation's *Responsibility* to Listen



# *Expanded Interagency Collaboration*



# *Jurisdiction*

18 U.S.C. § 1589 – Forced Labor

18 U.S.C. § 1591 – Sex Trafficking

- Crime of General Applicability: DOJ/FBI
- 25 U.S.C. § 1304/VAWA 2022: Tribes
  - *Any* defendant or victim
- *Oklahoma v. Castro-Huerta*: States
  - Only non-Indian defendant



# *Human Trafficking Task Forces*



# Human Trafficking Task Forces



# *Human Trafficking Task Forces*

NOVEMBER 1, 2023

## NOT ONE MORE

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NOT INVISIBLE ACT COMMISSION





# *Human Trafficking Task Forces*

## **FY24 OVC ECM solicitation**

- Both federally recognized tribes AND tribal organizations (other than Fed recog tribes) are eligible, and
- Language encouraging tribes to apply and/or be included as key partners.

OVC encourages Tribal applicants to apply as task force lead applicants or, where appropriate, encourages ECM task force applicants in jurisdictions with Tribal communities to include American Indian or Alaska Native participation in their ECM task forces.



# CASE STUDY

# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

## Montgomery PD - Special Ops Unit

Convinced he's a drug dealer so target him as one.



# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

- Bounces between hotels in a 2-mile area
- Different vehicle each time with a female driver
- Never caught with more than user amount
- Rumors:
  - **Has “stable” of 5 regular girls and others to whom he sold drugs.**
- No one will say a bad word against him



# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

## Narrow investigation

- MPD didn't adjust from their initial assessment of target as “drug dealer.”
- MPD didn't share info with other agencies or ask for help.
- 3 years of investigation with nothing to show for it.



# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

Meanwhile...

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

“He’s affiliated with a gang...”



# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell





# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

1st: Met target at 15 years old, being trafficking by her mom, drug user.

2nd: Being trafficking by rival pimp, addicted to heroin.

3rd: Romantic relationship ended, just released from jail, homeless, drug addiction.

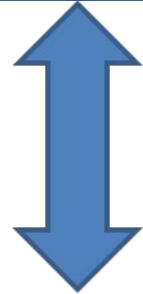
4th: Drug addiction, lost custody of child, no family support

5th: Addicted to meth, no family support, lost custody of children, romantic relationship ended, homeless.



# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

Investigation



Victim Services



# United States v. Lonnie Mitchell

**60 years in prison**

**Restitution = almost a million dollars**



**ASK HTPU**

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