

July 26, 2024

Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs Michlewitz and Rodrigues:

I am writing on behalf of the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) and the Victim and Witness Assistance Board, relative to the Victims of Human Trafficking Trust Fund.

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 10 §66A, the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance (MOVA) is submitting this letter to the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees to detail Victims of Human Trafficking Trust Fund (VHTTF) funding and activities during FY24 (July 1, 2023- June 30, 2024).

Reporting

No awards were granted in FY24 due to a lack of available, sustained funding to support respective programming.

More specifically, there have been no reversions from, nor additional deposits into, the VHTTF in FY24. The fiscal year-end balance for the VHTTF in FY24 was: \$66,890.89. The FY24 year-end balance remained the exact same as that of the prior fiscal year's ending balance (Please see Table 1).

The VHTTF is funded through collected fines, assets, and forfeitures from convicted traffickers and penalties from offenders convicted of purchasing or soliciting illegal sex services. Deposits into the VHTTF have remained stagnant or minimal in recent years. As a result, there has been a shortage of funds available for programming.

Table 1: VHTTF Deposit and Award Amounts FY17-FY24

Fiscal Year (FY)	Deposits	Awards	End of FY Balance
2017	\$15,295.04	-	\$16,431.71
2018	-	-	\$16,431.71
2019	\$100,306.44	-	\$116,738.15
2020	\$40,667.79	-	\$157,405.94
2021	-	\$132,849.00	\$24,556.94
2022	-	-	\$66,890.89
2023	-	-	\$66,890.89
2024	-	-	\$66,890.89

To date, MOVA has administered a grand total of \$132,849.00 in funding from the VHTTF, which occurred in FY21. These funds were awarded to 12 government and community-based agencies, providing trafficking survivors with specialized services such as shelter/relocation, transportation, and legal assistance. If additional funds became available, MOVA would eagerly award similar initiatives to aid human trafficking survivors across the Commonwealth. MOVA also intends to utilize the VHTTF to supplement reduced Victim and Survivor Service (VSS) grant funding, maximizing resources for victim services, and specifically for trafficking survivors. MOVA is appreciative of the state legislature's ongoing partnership and investment of supplemental state dollars through the *VOCA Bridge* to mitigate federal funding shortfalls for victim service programs. However, despite the VOCA Bridge investment, many funded programs are still facing reduced VSS grants due to significant federal funding cuts to Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) dollars. MOVA is hopeful that VHTTF dollars can be used to help alleviate some of these challenges for programs serving trafficking survivors in the near future.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. If MOVA may provide further documentation or information to the committees with respect to the VHTTF, please do not hesitate to contact MOVA's Chief of Staff, Stephanie McCarthy, at: stephanie.i.mccarthy@mass.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Liam T. Lowney", with a stylized, flowing script.

LIAM T. LOWNEY
Executive Director