



NEWS RELEASE –

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Denver DA's Office Keeps Spotlight on Human Trafficking Month with New Grant Funding and New Human Trafficking Unit Director

DENVER—One of Denver DA Beth McCann's priorities is to maintain a robust human trafficking unit that is built around a victim-centric philosophy. With January being National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, the office is pleased to announce the receipt of a renewed three-year grant. In addition, Senior Deputy District Attorney, Ashley Morgan is now directing the office's Human Trafficking Unit. Morgan has been an attorney for more than a decade and is moving from the office's Organized Crime Unit.

The grant totals more than \$1.42 million and was awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs and Office for Victims of Crime. The Denver District Attorney's Office and the [Asian Pacific Development Center \(APDC\)](#) jointly requested and were awarded the Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) grant to support collaboration and the work of the Denver Anti-Trafficking Alliance (DATA) human trafficking task force. The overall goal of the grant is to augment and sustain a multidisciplinary co-leadership task force approach to identify human trafficking, provide access to comprehensive services, and proactively investigate and prosecute traffickers.

"We are very honored to receive this second round of federal funding for which our share is approximately \$750,000. The money will enable us to expand our capacity and operational effectiveness to prosecute human traffickers," said Denver DA Beth McCann. "I am also confident that with Senior Deputy District Attorney Ashley Morgan now at the helm, our Human Trafficking Unit is in capable hands as former lead, Lara Mullin takes on a new role heading our office's training program."

"APDC is eager to continue this partnership with the Denver District Attorney's Office as the lead service provider on the grant. These funds will allow us to continue to support human trafficking survivors' access to services and continue their journey to recovery," said APDC Manager of Victim Services, Reiko Anderson Williams M.Ed.. "This new round of funding will allow us to add a housing navigator position to our team. This position will help our victim advocate and clients navigate eligibility compliance and secure affordable permanent housing."



“Human trafficking harms some of the most vulnerable members of our community, which is why funding programs like the Denver Anti-Trafficking Alliance Task Force with the Denver District Attorney’s Office and the Asian Pacific Development Center is a priority for the Department of Justice,” said United States Attorney Cole Finegan. “This collaborative approach will help identify human trafficking networks, as well as provide services to victims.”

The DATA human trafficking task force was established in 2012 as a special program in the Denver DA’s Office and has grown to include representation from more than 60 agencies and organizations including law enforcement, service providers, advocacy, and prevention organizations and more. The Advisory Committee consists of leadership and key partners including the Denver Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, APDC, and [Voluntad](#) and will expand membership in the next three years. Specifically, the funding will support:

- an additional full-time criminal investigator (DA employee)
- a grant coordinator (shared employee between DA’s Office & APDC)
- a full-time human trafficking victim advocate (APDC employee)
- a full-time housing navigator (APDC employee)
- lived experience/survivor consultant(s) (contracted through APDC)
- training (both for staff and for the community)
- research and evaluation, (Colorado State University contracted with DA & APDC) and
- victim assistance funds.

“When addressing an issue as complex as human trafficking, strong partnerships and collaboration are imperative,” said Denver Police Chief Ron Thomas. “We value our relationships with these partners to ensure best practices and enforcement to combat human trafficking, while also taking a victim-centered approach.”

[About the Denver DA’s Office:](#)

Our mission is to professionally and competently prosecute crimes and investigate criminal activity on behalf of the people of the State of Colorado and to seek equal justice for all in the criminal justice system. Our mission includes the prevention and deterrence of crimes, support of the well-being of victims, participation in the community, transparency, accountability, and improvement of the criminal justice system to provide fair alternatives to incarceration in appropriate cases.