

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



OFFICE TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Annual Report 2026

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Iowa Office to Combat
Human Trafficking

www.stophtiowa.org



**2026 ANNUAL REPORT
of the
OFFICE TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

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PREFACE

“Human trafficking uniquely affects Iowa given our proximity to major metropolitan areas (like Kansas City and Chicago) and the intersection of two major interstate systems. Our goal is to provide the knowledge and tools to quickly identify and respond to human trafficking so together we can prevent this from happening in our state – because even one victim is one too many.”

**DPS Commissioner
Stephan Bayens**

The Office to Combat Human Trafficking was designed to facilitate a more effective enforcement response, to raise public awareness of the issue, and to coordinate the efforts of the many dedicated professionals and volunteers who are committed to the reduction and ultimate elimination of human trafficking.

Any successful effort to combat criminal activity requires engagement from many groups. Law enforcement may begin the process of holding traffickers accountable, but simply knowing what has occurred will not stop it. Even as cases proceed through the legal system, and some individual offenders are imprisoned and fined, there are many others who are willing to take their place in the trafficking arena.

Genuine efforts to address human trafficking require commitment from:

- *Government officials who address child welfare and labor issues;*
- *Community-based groups that raise public awareness and assist in raising funds for community programming;*
- *Medical and legal professionals who encounter victims and traffickers and can assist in ensuring fair and just outcomes; and*
- *Religious and educational groups and charitable organizations that work to shape community values and expectations, and also provide assistance in prevention, deterrence and broad-based community efforts to combat human trafficking.*

The Department of Public Safety takes seriously the obligation to seek out all who engage in human trafficking, and to play a role in the coordination of resources and efforts to combat human trafficking in Iowa and elsewhere.

II. UPDATE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Coordinated public and private efforts have improved awareness among members of the public, advocacy groups, justice system officials, health providers and social service providers. In FY2026, the Office to Combat Human Trafficking (OCHT) made considerable efforts to educate and raise awareness of human trafficking issues with law enforcement, prosecutors, advocacy groups and the public, and these efforts spurred action in many different arenas. Law enforcement agencies are sharing information with each other at an increased pace, which leads to more investigations, and several cases have been successfully prosecuted as a result.



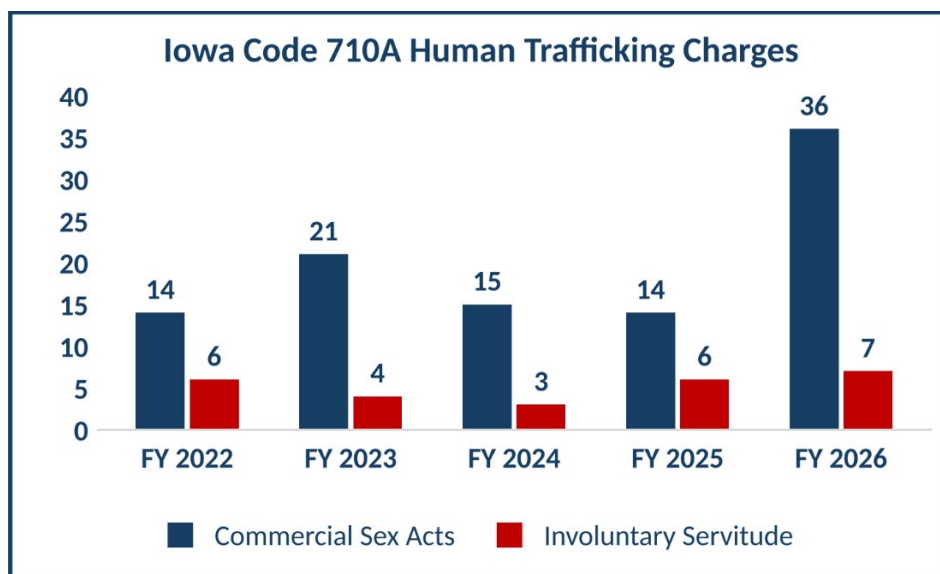
Legal Advancements

In 2023, Governor Kim Reynolds signed bill HF 630 into law. The bill increased the penalty for those found guilty of human trafficking from a class “D” felony to a class “B” felony, and if convicted of trafficking a person under 18 years of age the penalty was increased from a class “C” felony to a class “A” felony. If a person is convicted of knowingly engaging in human trafficking by causing or threatening to cause serious physical injury to another person, the penalty increased from a class “C” felony to a class “A” felony. HF 630 also barred those convicted of human trafficking from receiving a deferred judgement or suspended sentence.

- In September 2025, a Hiawatha man was the first person sentenced under the new law. The Linn County Attorney’s Office charged the defendant with one count of Human Trafficking Involving a Minor, Sexual Abuse in the Third Degree, and Conspiracy to Commit a Forcible Felony. The defendant was found guilty of all three counts and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

In 2026, the legislature passed HF 1036, as amended by HF 2800, which made changes to forensic screening processes for children, the civil statute of limitations, restitution, and modified several definitions relating to human trafficking. The legislature also passed HF 2598 requiring an applicant for an initial class A, B, or C commercial driver’s license to certify to the Iowa Department of Transportation that the applicant successfully completed an approved human trafficking prevention training. The full text to these recently enacted statutes can be found in Appendix B.

According to Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) data, 43 criminal charges were filed under Iowa's human trafficking statutes during the 2026 fiscal year (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026).¹ The UCR data further shows human trafficking charges increased from 20 in FY 2025 to 43 in FY2026.



Over the past several years, a number of human trafficking cases have been prosecuted in Iowa's federal courts. The United States Attorney's Office in the Southern District of Iowa charged one (1) defendant and convicted two (2) defendants in FY2026. The United States Attorney's Office in the Northern District of Iowa opened one (1) case during that same time period. Iowa's United States Attorney's Offices reported several recent court-related convictions and indictments.

- On June 11, 2026, the United States Attorney's Office in the Southern District of Iowa reported a federal jury convicted a Des Moines man of three (3) counts of sex trafficking, conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, obstruction of a sex trafficking prosecution, distribution of a controlled substance to a person under 21, conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance, and interstate travel in aid of racketeering. Records show the defendant and a co-defendant targeted homeless young women struggling with drug addiction, provided shelter and drugs, and then used violence, threats, the withholding of drugs, and a coercive debt scheme to cause three (3) victims to engage in commercial sex acts. The defendant and co-defendant advertised the victims online, set prices, communicated with buyers, rented hotel rooms, and kept most of the proceeds. The co-defendant, a Des Moines woman, pleaded guilty to sex trafficking on November 25, 2025.
- On July 21, 2025, the United States Attorney's Office in the Northern District of Iowa reported a Des Moines man was indicted on eight (8) counts, including four (4) counts of

¹ In 2021, the Iowa UCR program updated its technical specifications or reporting requirements and developed the current state crime database. As part of this transition, data was migrated for 2016 through 2020. Due to the differences in the technical specifications for historical data, any report containing data for 2016-2020 should be interpreted with caution. The data queried only contains results from Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) who have completed a certification process to ensure data is entered accurately. This does not include all Iowa LEAs and may not contain all of a certified agency's data depending on their certification date.

sex trafficking by force, fraud or coercion and four (4) counts of interstate transportation for purposes of prostitution through coercion and enticement. The indictment alleged the defendant used force, fraud, and coercion to cause four (4) adult victims to engage in commercial sex acts in the Northern District of Iowa and elsewhere between 2009 and 2015. The indictment further alleged the defendant transported women from Iowa to Illinois and North Dakota for the purpose of engaging in prostitution.

Human trafficking may be underrepresented in our judicial system as ancillary criminal offenses are frequently charged that do not readily implicate trafficking even if said activity is occurring. Often, human trafficking is accompanied by other types of crimes, such as fraud, financial crimes, identity theft crimes, drug offenses, and other vice offenses (e.g., pimping, pandering, or prostitution). These other offenses may be alleged in lieu of trafficking charges in order to hold offenders accountable, without requiring the vulnerable trafficking victims to testify.

While it would be ideal to always prosecute human trafficking crimes, trafficking victims often struggle to regain their lives and may find participation in the criminal process counterproductive to their healing process. Sometimes survivors may be justifiably concerned for their own safety, or the safety of loved ones should they testify. More and more, prosecutors are sensitive to the risks involved in victims' participation, and prosecutors may choose other avenues to prosecute offenders besides human trafficking offenses. This approach can hold offenders accountable while protecting the interests of the crime victims.

III. IOWA PERSPECTIVE

Human trafficking is a crime involving the exploitation of youth under the age of 18 for commercial sex; the exploitation of adults for commercial sex through force, fraud, or coercion; and the exploitation of any individual for compelled labor.² Human trafficking does not require the transportation of individuals across state lines or that someone is physically restrained. Signs associated with trafficking can include working excessively long hours, unexplained gifts, physical injury, substance abuse, running away from home, isolation from others, or being controlled or closely monitored by another.

Like most crimes, human trafficking may be hidden from public view, and it can be challenging to determine the incidence and prevalence of the crime.³ Many public and private sector agencies and concerned stakeholders have made concerted efforts to focus on public awareness, to include enhanced media attention.

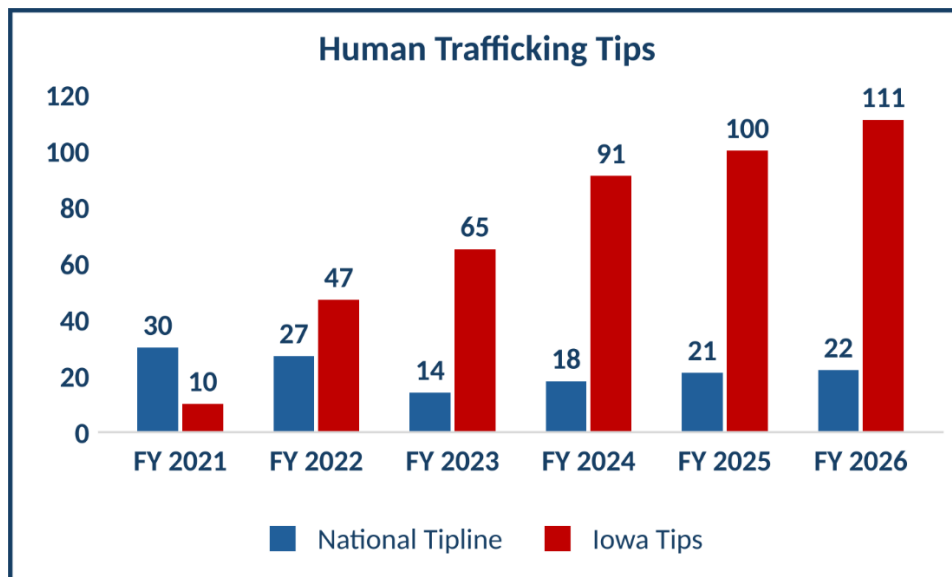
Law enforcement awareness and training efforts in Iowa have likely impacted the volume of human trafficking reporting. Historically, Iowa tips and leads from the National



² Hilinski-Rosick & Lee, *Contemporary Issues in Victimology: Identifying Patterns and Trends* (Lexington Books, 2018).

³ Incidence refers to how many crimes occur during a particular period of time. Prevalence measures how many people experience a particular crime during their lifetimes. National Institute of Justice, *Measuring Frequency*, <https://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/rape-sexual-violence/campus/Pages/measuring.aspx>

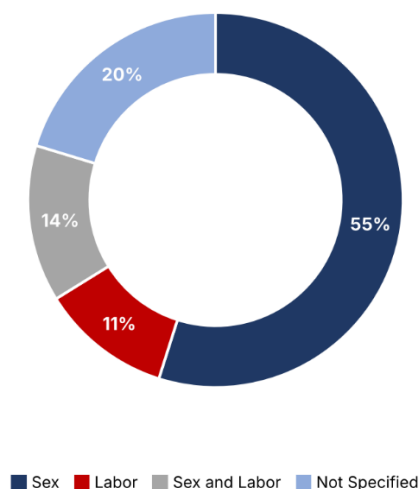
Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) have typically exceeded those from other sources. However, OCHT has seen a shift in reporting with the majority of tips and leads coming from other sources. In 2022, OCHT added a tip reporting mechanism to the **stopthiowa.org** website to facilitate the reporting of suspected human trafficking information.⁴ In January 2025, OCHT also added a toll-free phone number, (855) 614-4692, to report potential human trafficking information.



In May 2024, OCHT created a multi-jurisdictional task force designed to combat human trafficking. The task force has proactively conducted four (4) human trafficking operations designed to identify traffickers and rescue victims of human trafficking.

- The OCHT documented 133 tips and leads on human trafficking during the reporting period. Only 22 of those tips came from the NHTH.
- In roughly five (5) months, OCHT received 21 tips from its new toll-free phone number.
- Overall, there was a 10% increase in tips and leads during this reporting period.
- Iowa tips and leads from other sources increased by 11% compared to the previous reporting period.

**Human Trafficking Tips
July 2025 - June 2026**



⁴ The OCHT designed the stopthiowa.org website for Iowans to understand, identify, and report human trafficking.

- During the reporting period, OCHT conducted 66 training sessions for approximately 5,524 people in law enforcement and public and private sector entities.
- In October 2025, the Iowa Fusion Center coordinated and executed Operation Coast to Coast with the Human Trafficking Training Center (HTTC). The operation involved more than 150 law enforcement agencies across 15 states and resulted in 34 arrests and the identification of 71 trafficking victims (68 adults and three (3) minors).
- In April 2026, Iowa participated in a second Operation Coast to Coast operation, led by HTTC. Nationwide, the operation involved more than 250 law enforcement agencies across 30 states and resulted in 139 arrests and the identification of 129 victims.

The Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation employs two full-time agents to investigate human trafficking. These agents provide expertise and resources to local and federal law enforcement agencies by developing investigations, identifying victims, and assisting in the prosecution of traffickers. In October of 2025, the DCI, Perry Police Department, Dallas County Attorney's Office, and other agencies collaborated to charge a subject with Human Trafficking in the First Degree, a class "A" felony.

IV. HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION TRAINING

In July of 2020, the Iowa Legislature passed legislation designed to enhance the reporting, training, and prevention of human trafficking.

Iowa Code section 80.45A requires OCHT, in collaboration with other entities, to develop a human trafficking prevention training program. The legislation requires lodging providers to certify their organizations have completed human trafficking training before receiving any governmental funds. The training must focus on accurate and prompt identification and reporting of, or response to, suspected human trafficking. At a minimum, the training must include the following:

- A general overview of human trafficking.
- A general overview of state law on human trafficking.
- The definition of human trafficking and the commercial exploitation of children.
- Guidance on the difference between labor trafficking and sex trafficking.
- Guidance on how to recognize potential human trafficking victims.
- Guidance on how to recognize potential human traffickers.
- Guidance on how to identify activities commonly associated with human trafficking.
- Safe and effective responses to human trafficking situations, including but not limited to how to report suspected human trafficking to proper law enforcement officials.



The Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety is charged with approving the training curriculum and adopting rules to implement and administer the training as necessary under Iowa Code chapter 17A.

Since the implementation of Iowa Code section 80.45A, OCHT has certified more than 782 lodging providers and provided training to approximately 31,900 individuals. During the reporting period, OCHT enacted renewal processes for lodging providers with expired certifications. The OCHT has renewed the certification for 83 lodging providers during FY2026.

The OCHT is in the process of developing a multi-media outreach campaign to notify and educate businesses and the public on how to identify human trafficking victims. The OCHT worked with On Media to promote a multimedia advertising campaign. The OCHT has partnered with the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union and the Iowa High School Athletic Association to educate Iowa high school athletes and school officials on the dangers associated with human trafficking and how to identify and report human trafficking incidents. A website was created (stophtiowa.org) to provide a training platform, resource information, approved lodging provider information, and a tip reporting system, which has generated actionable tips and intelligence information to combat human trafficking.

In March of 2022, OCHT added a Human Trafficking Coordinator who is tasked with conducting outreach to lodging providers that have not sought certification and performing random audits on certified lodging locations to verify continued compliance and to answer any questions regarding the certification process.

The OCHT has focused on outreach to the public/private sector and law enforcement partners to educate, train, and share intelligence information regarding human trafficking in hopes of identifying organizations, businesses, or subjects who are trafficking victims.

In FY2026, OCHT provided in-person training to over 5,524 people from various law enforcement, public, and private entities.



In February of 2026, OCHT partnered with local law enforcement and the Human Trafficking Training Center for a two-day training in Sioux City. The training focused on the identification and investigation of human trafficking cases for law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim service organizations.

In July 2025, OCHT supported the Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) Freedom Drivers Project mobile exhibit at the Ruan facility in Ankeny.

The OCHT has also partnered with the Secretary of State's program - Businesses Against Trafficking; the Iowa Department of Transportation; the Iowa Attorney General's Office; the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services; Iowa Law Enforcement Academy; Rotary Multi-Club Committee of Greater Des Moines; Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery (NAHT); Dorothy's



House; Chains Interrupted; Wings of Refuge; Hope for Justice; Braking Traffik; Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT); and Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) across Iowa.

The OCHT presented at the Iowa Attorney General's Law Enforcement and Prosecutors training; Southeast Iowa Jailer's School; The Rotary Club; Capri Club; Dallas County Jail, Blackhawk County law enforcement, the Iowa DPS Academy, Focus Youth Crisis Center, Greater Regional Health, and the University of Dubuque.

OCHT Training Initiatives FY2026

- Iowa Certified Lodging Facilities – 42
- Renewal of Iowa Certified Lodging Facilities – 83
- Current Number of Certified Lodging Facilities – 824
- Number of certified lodging staff who successfully completed the Human Trafficking Prevention Training Certification – 8,121
- Number of law enforcement and the public/private sector individuals trained in identifying human trafficking – 5,524
- The Iowa State Patrol continues to be proactive, and each commercial motor vehicle inspection form contains information on how to identify and report human trafficking – 39,318 inspections

Appendix A

Iowa Code Chapter 710A: Human Trafficking

710A.1 Definitions.

As used in this chapter:

1. “Commercial sexual activity” means any sex act or sexually explicit performance for which anything of value is given, promised to, or received by any person and includes, but is not limited to, prostitution, participation in the production of pornography, and performance in strip clubs.
2. “Debt bondage” means the status or condition of a debtor arising from a pledge of the debtor’s personal services or a person under the control of a debtor’s personal services as a security for debt if the reasonable value of such services is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined.
3. “Forced labor or services” means labor or services that are performed or provided by another person and that are obtained or maintained through any of the following:
 - a. Causing or threatening to cause serious physical injury to any person.
 - b. Physically restraining or threatening to physically restrain another person.
 - c. Abusing or threatening to abuse the law or legal process.
 - d. Knowingly destroying, concealing, removing, confiscating, or possessing any actual or purported government identification of another person.
 - e. Knowingly providing or facilitating the provision of a forged, altered, or fraudulent license purportedly issued pursuant to chapter 152C or 157, or a forged, altered, or fraudulent government identification, to another person in order to force, coerce, entice, assist, facilitate, or permit the other person to perform labor or services.
 - f. Knowingly forcing, coercing, enticing, assisting, facilitating, or permitting another person in possession of a forged, altered, or fraudulent license purportedly issued pursuant to chapter 152C or 157, or a forged, altered, or fraudulent government identification, to

produce such license or government identification to a peace officer upon request of the peace officer pursuant to section 152C.5B or 157.4A.

g. Knowingly forcing, coercing, intimidating, or compelling another person to perform an act in violation of state or federal law through the use of debt bondage or servitude or as a condition of being allowed to remain in the United States.

4. a. “Human trafficking” means participating in a venture to recruit, harbor, transport, supply provisions, or obtain a person for any of the following purposes:

(1) Forced labor or service that results in involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

(2) Commercial sexual activity through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, except that if the trafficked person is under the age of eighteen, the commercial sexual activity need not involve force, fraud, or coercion.

b. “Human trafficking” also means knowingly purchasing or attempting to purchase services involving commercial sexual activity from a victim or another person engaged in human trafficking.

5. “Involuntary servitude” means a condition of servitude induced by means of any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that if the person did not enter into or continue in such condition, that person or another person would suffer serious harm or physical restraint or the threatened abuse of legal process.

6. “Labor” means work of economic or financial value.

7. “Maintain” means, in relation to labor and services, to secure continued performance thereof, regardless of any initial agreement on the part of the victim to perform such type of services.

8. “Obtain” means, in relation to labor or services, to secure performance thereof.

9. “Peonage” means a status or condition of involuntary servitude based upon real or alleged indebtedness.

10. “Services” means an ongoing relationship between a person and the actor in which the person performs activities under the supervision of or for the benefit of the actor, including commercial sexual activity and sexually explicit performances.

11. “Sexually explicit performance” means a live or public act or show intended to arouse or satisfy the sexual desires or appeal to the prurient interest of patrons.

12. “Venture” means any group of two or more persons associated in fact, whether or not a legal entity.

13. “Victim” means a person subjected to human trafficking.

710A.2 Human trafficking.

1. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking is guilty of a class “B” felony, except that if the victim is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “A” felony.

2. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking by causing or threatening to cause serious physical injury to another person is guilty of a class “A” felony.

3. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking by physically restraining or threatening to physically restrain another person is guilty of a class “B” felony, except that if the victim is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “A” felony.

4. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking by soliciting services or benefiting from the services of a victim is guilty of a class “B” felony, except that if the victim is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “A” felony.

5. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking by abusing or threatening to abuse the law or legal process is guilty of a class “B” felony, except that if the victim is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “A” felony.

6. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking by knowingly destroying, concealing, removing, confiscating, or possessing any actual or purported government identification of another person is guilty of a class “B” felony, except if that other person is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “A” felony.

7. A person who benefits financially or by receiving anything of value from knowing participation in human trafficking is guilty of a class “B” felony, except that if the victim is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “A” felony.

8. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking by knowingly providing or facilitating the provision of a forged, altered, or fraudulent license purportedly issued pursuant to chapter 152C or 157, or a forged, altered, or fraudulent government identification to another person, to force, coerce, entice, assist, facilitate, or permit the other person to perform labor or services is guilty of a class “D” felony, except if that other person is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “B” felony.

9. A person who knowingly engages in human trafficking by knowingly forcing, coercing, enticing, assisting, facilitating, or permitting another person in possession of a forged, altered, or fraudulent license purportedly issued pursuant to chapter 152C or 157, or a forged, altered, or fraudulent government identification, to produce such license or government identification upon request of a peace officer pursuant to section 152C.5B or 157.4A, is guilty of a class “D” felony, except if that other person is under the age of eighteen, the person is guilty of a class “B” felony.

10. A person’s ignorance of the age of the victim or a belief that the victim was older is not a defense to a violation of this section.

11. A person who is found guilty or who enters a plea of guilty to a violation of this chapter shall be ineligible for a license pursuant to chapter 152C or 157 for a period of not less than five years from the date of conviction, plea, judgment, or sentence.

12. A person who is sentenced under the provisions of this section shall not be eligible for a deferred judgment or a deferred or suspended sentence.

710A.2A Solicitation of commercial sexual activity. A person shall not entice, coerce, or recruit, or attempt to entice, coerce, or recruit, either a person who is under the age of eighteen or a law enforcement officer or agent who is representing that the officer or agent is under the age of eighteen, to engage in a

commercial sexual activity. A person who violates this section commits a class “D” felony.

710A.2B Premises used for human trafficking.

1. A person who owns, rents, leases, or uses any part of a building, structure, boat, trailer, or other place offering shelter or seclusion, and who knows, or has reason to know, that the building, structure, boat, trailer, or other place offering shelter or seclusion is being used for the purposes of human trafficking, commits a class “D” felony.

2. It shall be an affirmative defense to a prosecution of a person pursuant to subsection 1, if immediately upon acquiring knowledge that the building, structure, boat, trailer, or other place offering shelter or seclusion is used for the purposes of human trafficking, the person notifies a law enforcement agency with jurisdiction and fully cooperates with any subsequent investigation.

3. a. If a law enforcement agency notifies a person who owns, rents, leases, or uses any part of a building, structure, boat, trailer, or other place offering shelter or seclusion of an investigation pursuant to chapter 152C or 157 that may involve the building, structure, boat, trailer, or other place offering shelter or seclusion, the person shall have an affirmative duty to fully cooperate with the investigation. b. A person who fails to fully cooperate with an investigation pursuant to paragraph “a” commits a serious misdemeanor.

710A.3 Affirmative defense. It shall be an affirmative defense, in addition to any other affirmative defenses for which a defendant may be eligible, to a prosecution for a criminal violation of section 152C.5B, 152C.5C, 157.4A, 157.4B, 710A.2, 710A.2A, or 710A.2B, that the violation directly resulted from the defendant’s status as a victim of any human trafficking crime under chapter 710A.

710A.4 Restitution — restorative expenses.

1. For purposes of this section, “restorative expenses” means the projected costs of education, vocational training, medical health, mental health, transportation, housing, child

care, or other projected costs that will aid in a victim’s recovery.

2. The gross income of a defendant or the value of labor or services performed by a victim of the defendant shall be considered when determining restitution pursuant to chapter 910. For purposes of this section, restitution may include restorative expenses for a period not to exceed three years as approved and ordered by the court.

3. A defendant’s ability to pay shall not be a factor in the court’s decision to order restorative expenses.

4. A defendant’s obligation to pay court-ordered restorative expenses shall not be dischargeable in any proceeding under the federal Bankruptcy Act of 1898, as amended.

710A.5 Certification. A law enforcement agency investigating a crime described in section 710A.2 shall notify the attorney general in writing about the investigation. Upon request of the attorney general, such law enforcement agency shall provide copies of any investigative reports describing the immigration status and cooperation of the victim. The attorney general shall certify in writing to the United States department of justice or other federal agency that an investigation or prosecution under this chapter has begun and that the person who is a likely victim of a crime described in section 710A.2 is willing to cooperate or is cooperating with the investigation to enable the person, if eligible under federal law, to qualify for an appropriate special immigrant visa and to access available federal benefits. Cooperation with law enforcement shall not be required of a minor victim of a crime described in section 710A.2. This certification shall be made available to the victim and the victim’s designated legal representative.

710A.6 Outreach, public awareness, and training programs. The crime victim assistance division of the department of justice, in cooperation with other governmental agencies and nongovernmental or community organizations, shall develop and conduct outreach, public awareness, and training programs for the general public, law

enforcement agencies, first responders, potential victims, and persons conducting or regularly dealing with businesses or other ventures that have a high statistical incidence of debt bondage or forced labor or services. The programs shall train participants to recognize and report incidents of human trafficking and to suppress the demand that fosters exploitation of persons and leads to human trafficking.

710A.7 Peace officer referral. If during the course of an investigation or prosecution under this chapter a peace officer has reason to believe that a person who purports to be licensed pursuant to chapter 152C or 157 does not possess a valid license or is in violation of any other state or federal laws, the peace officer may report such noncompliance to the appropriate licensing board under the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing, and to the appropriate state or federal authorities.

Appendix B

House File 1036 (as amended by HF 2800)

Section 1. Section 80.45, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:

NEW PARAGRAPH. i. Hold an annual meeting of stakeholders to develop legislative proposals to combat human trafficking, and submit a report, by December 15, 2025, and annually thereafter for a period of five years ending with the submission of the report in 2030, to the governor and general assembly.

Participants shall include the following:

- (1) A representative of the department of public safety.
- (2) A representative of the office to combat human trafficking.
- (3) A representative of the attorney general's office.
- (4) A representative of the department of health and human services.
- (5) A representative of juvenile court services.
- (6) A chief of police or head law enforcement official of a city in this state.
- (7) A county sheriff.
- (8) A county attorney who serves on a child protection assistance team under section 915.35, subsection 4, paragraph a .
- (9) A public defender or criminal law attorney with experience working on human trafficking cases.
- (10) A member of the public, or the person's legal representative, who is a former human trafficking victim.
- (11) A representative from the Iowa network against human trafficking.
- (12) A representative from a nonprofit organization whose primary focus is services for human trafficking survivors.
- (13) A representative from state court administration with expertise in child welfare law.

Sec. 2. Section 232.2, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 7A. "Commercial sexual exploitation" refers to a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value including monetary and nonmonetary benefits given or received by any person.

Sec. 3. Section 232.28, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

2. a. The court or its designee shall refer the complaint to an intake officer who shall consult with law enforcement authorities having knowledge of the facts and conduct a preliminary inquiry to determine what action should be taken.

b. The court or its designee shall order every complaint to be reviewed using a standardized human trafficking indicator list. The court or its designee may order the child

subject to the complaint with the presence of an indicator to be screened for commercial sexual exploitation using a standardized, evidence-based, trauma-informed screening tool.

Sec. 4. Section 232.71B, subsection 1, paragraph a, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

If the department determines a report constitutes a child abuse allegation, the department shall ~~promptly have the child subject to the child abuse allegation screened for commercial sexual exploitation using a standardized, evidence-based, trauma-informed screening tool, and shall~~ commence either a child abuse assessment within twenty-four hours of receiving the report or a family assessment within seventy-two hours of receiving the report.

Sec. 5. Section 614.8, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

2. Except as provided in section 614.1, subsection 9, or section 614.8A, the times limited for actions in this chapter, or chapter 216, 659A, 669, or 670, except those brought for penalties and forfeitures, are extended in favor of minors, so that they shall have one year five years from and after attainment of majority within which to file a complaint pursuant to chapter 216, to make a claim pursuant to chapter 669, or to otherwise commence an action.

Sec. 6. Section 614.8A, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

614.8A ~~Damages~~ Commencement of action for child or minor sexual abuse or human trafficking — time limitation.

1. Notwithstanding section 614.8, subsection 2, and the times limited for actions in this chapter, the time to file an action related to sexual abuse or human trafficking that occurred when the injured person was a minor is extended to five years beyond the minor's attainment of eighteen years of age.

2. ~~An~~ In addition to the extension of the time provided in subsection 1, an action for damages for injury suffered as a result of sexual abuse which or human trafficking that occurred when the injured person was a child, but not discovered until after the injured person is of the age of majority, shall be brought within four five years from the time of discovery by the injured party of both the injury and the causal relationship between the injury and the sexual abuse or human trafficking.

Sec. 7. Section 710A.1, subsection 4, paragraph a, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

"Human trafficking" means ~~participating in a venture to recruit, harbor, transport, supply provisions, or obtain~~ recruiting, harboring, transporting, supplying provisions to, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting a person for any of the following purposes:

Sec. 8. Section 725.1, subsection 1, paragraph b. Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

b. If the person who sells or offers for sale the person's services as a partner in a sex act is under the age of eighteen, the county attorney may elect, in lieu of filing a petition alleging

that the person has committed a delinquent act, ~~to refer that person~~ that the person shall not be arrested, charged, or prosecuted for an offense under this section, but instead may be taken into temporary custody under section 232.78 or 232.79 or shall be referred to the department of health and human services for the possible filing of a petition alleging that the person is a child in need of assistance.

Sec. 9. Section 910.1, subsections 1 and 2, Code 2025, are amended to read as follows:

1. "Category "A" restitution" means fines, penalties, the payment of crime victim compensation program reimbursements, and surcharges.

2. "Category "B" restitution" means the contribution of funds to a local anticrime organization ~~which~~ that provided assistance to law enforcement in an offender's case, ~~the payment of crime victim compensation program reimbursements~~, payment of restitution to public agencies pursuant to section 321J.2, subsection 13, paragraph "b", court costs, court-appointed attorney fees ordered pursuant to section 815.9, including the expense of a public defender, and payment to the medical assistance program pursuant to chapter 249A for expenditures paid on behalf of the victim resulting from the offender's criminal activities including investigative costs incurred by the Medicaid fraud control unit pursuant to section 249A.50.

Sec. 10. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES — RESTORATION FACILITIES. The department of health and human services shall develop a plan in consultation with nonprofit service providers who provide restoration services to victims of human trafficking to increase the availability of restoration facilities and protective services available to juvenile victims of human trafficking, including juvenile victims who are not, at the time of victimization, either a child in need of assistance or otherwise involved in the juvenile court system. The department shall consider developing a network with other states to provide housing outside of the state for victims at risk of returning to the person involved in the victim's trafficking. The department of health and human services shall present a report detailing the plan to the governor and the general assembly by December 15, 2025.

Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE. The following takes effect July 1, 2026; The section of this Act amending section 910.1.

House File 2800

Division XV

Sec. 78. Section 232.71B, subsection 1, paragraph a, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

If the department determines a report constitutes a child abuse allegation, the department shall promptly commence either a child abuse assessment within twenty-four hours of receiving the report or a family assessment within seventy-two hours of receiving the report. During a child abuse assessment, if the department identifies known risk factors for commercial sexual exploitation, a screening shall be conducted by a trained child protection worker,

considering the child's age, cognitive and emotional functioning, and the specific circumstances of the case.

Sec. 79. 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 1036, section 11, if enacted, is amended to read as follows:

SEC. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE. The following takes effect July 1, ~~2026~~ 2027: The section of this Act amending section 910.1.

Sec. 80. REPEAL. 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 1036, sections 1 and 4, if enacted, are repealed.

Sec. 81. REPORT. Notwithstanding 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 1036, section 10, if enacted, the report described in that section is due by December 15, 2026.

Sec. 82. CONTINGENT EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act takes effect July 1, 2026, if 2026 Iowa Acts, House File 1036, is enacted.

House File 2598

Section 1. NEW SECTION. 321.175 Human trafficking prevention training — commercial drivers.

1. An applicant for the initial issuance of a class A, B, or C commercial driver's license must certify to the department that the applicant successfully completed a course of instruction regarding human trafficking prevention.

2. A course of instruction regarding human trafficking prevention must last at least thirty minutes and include training based on the department's approved human trafficking prevention training materials. The course must be offered in the English language.

3. The department shall approve, in cooperation with the department of education and the state board of education, human trafficking prevention training materials regarding the recognition, prevention, and reporting of human trafficking. The departments may collaborate with other entities that specialize in and produce training materials regarding the recognition, prevention, and reporting of human trafficking particularly for persons who operate commercial motor vehicles. The departments shall make the approved human trafficking prevention training materials available to the public. The departments shall review and update the departments' approved human trafficking prevention training materials to account for changes and trends in human trafficking at least once every three years.

4. The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer this section.

Sec. 2. Section 321.188, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:

NEW PARAGRAPH. h. For a person applying for the initial issuance of a class A, B, or C commercial driver's license, certify that the applicant has completed a course of instruction regarding human trafficking prevention in accordance with section 321.175.

Sec. 3. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies on and after March 1, 2027, or the date the department of transportation submits to the Iowa administrative code editor for publication in the Iowa administrative bulletin a statement by the director of transportation that the applicable phase of the department of transportation's new records system is implemented, whichever is earlier. The department shall also forward a copy of the statement to the Iowa Code editor.

Appendix C

Human Trafficking Indicators

The following list of indicators is has been published by the Polaris Project.⁵ Please note that not all indicators will be present in all situations. The type of trafficking and the content or environment are all important to take into account.

Common Work and Living Conditions: The individual(s) in question

- Is under 18 and is providing commercial sex acts
- Is in the commercial sex industry and has a pimp / manager
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off
- Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of his/her work
- High security measures exist in the work and/or living locations (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.)
- Is living and working on site
- Experiences verbal or physical abuse by their supervisor
- Is not given proper safety equipment
- Is not paid directly
- Is forced to meet daily quotas

Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behavior

- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement or immigration officials
- Shows signs of substance use or addiction

Poor Physical Health

- Shows signs of poor hygiene, malnourishment, and/or fatigue
- Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture

Lack of Control

- Has few or no personal possessions
- Is frequently monitored
- Is not in control of their own money, financial records, or bank account
- Is not in control of their own identification documents (ID or passport)
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves (a third party may insist on being present and/or translating)

⁵ <https://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/recognize-signs>

Other

- Claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where they are staying/address
- Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in
- Appear to have lost sense of time
- Shares scripted, confusing, or inconsistent stories
- Protects the person who may be hurting them or minimizes abuse

This list is not exhaustive and represents only a selection of possible indicators. The red flags in this list may not be present in all trafficking cases. Each individual indicator should be taken in context, not be considered in isolation, nor should be taken as “proof” that human trafficking is occurring. Additionally, cultural differences should also be considered.