

Dept. of Children and Families: Encourages communities to talk about human trafficking during national awareness month

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MADISON – In recognition of Governor Tony Evers [proclamation](#) declaring January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is encouraging residents to continue the fight against human trafficking by raising awareness and reporting tips to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates trafficking to be a \$150 billion-a-year global enterprise and is the world's fastest growing criminal activity. An estimated 25 million people worldwide are victims of human trafficking.

“Human trafficking is not just an international problem. It happens here in Wisconsin, from big cities to rural towns,” said DCF Secretary Emilie Amundson. “Yet many in our communities don’t even know a problem exists. If we are going to put an end to this terrible form of child abuse, we need to talk about it, educate ourselves on the signs, and feel comfortable reporting suspicious activity.”

DCF and local child welfare agencies play a daily role in combatting the human trafficking of minors. In 2021, there were 445 allegations of child sex trafficking reported to local child welfare agencies across Wisconsin. Through collaborative efforts with other system partners, such as the Department of Justice and Department of Public Instruction, DCF has undertaken several comprehensive initiatives to assist in the prevention of child sex trafficking and support survivors.

One of the newer resources available is the 'It Happens Here' documentary, which highlights the lived experience of local child sex trafficking survivors and their families. The documentary, along with supporting curriculum, provides communities with the resources needed to have open discussions with both youth and adults about the risk factors and warning signs of trafficking and what they can do to assist individuals who may be at risk of, or affected by, trafficking.

To learn more about DCF's efforts in combating the human trafficking of minors in Wisconsin, visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/aht> or follow @WisDCF on Twitter and Facebook.