



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Chesterfield County

Program Title: Human Trafficking Enforcement

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Joseph P. Casey, Ph.D.

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 



Virginia Association of Counties
Achievement Awards
Chesterfield County Police Department
Online Human Trafficking Enforcement
Submitted by
Colonel Jeffrey S. Katz
Chief of Police

ABSTRACT:

Protection of the Vulnerable: The Chesterfield County Police Department's Special Victims Section was recently expanded to address the influx of additional criminal investigations surrounding vulnerable populations, and to combat against those who attempt to pervert the innocence of the youth in our community. This expansion also included two uniformed Community Engagement Officers to assist in the education of community partners in identifying and reporting issues of abuse, neglect, and human trafficking. Furthermore, two additional detectives were assigned to the FBI-Richmond Divisions Human Trafficking Task Force in our effort to collaborate with others within our region and enhance our ability to reach across state boundaries in online sex trafficking operations.

THE PROBLEM:

Human trafficking is an ongoing problem in Virginia. Accordingly, the National Human Trafficking Hotline identified 140 cases in 2021, 120 cases in 2020, and 188 in 2019. Human trafficking affects between 150-300 victims every year. Unfortunately, over 80% of the cases each year involve sex trafficking, with females being the most affected gender. The venues that recorded the most cases were illicit massage/spa business, hotel/motel-based commercial sex, residence-based commercial sex, and escort services. Victims of human trafficking can be of any gender, race, age, nationality, or ethnicity. They are not easy to identify, which makes human trafficking a hidden crime. Traffickers target people in vulnerable situations such as poverty, homelessness, drug addiction, or domestic violence. Those who engage in online sex trafficking will often use Dark Web, or venues that are known to previously convicted sex offenders as a way to surreptitiously communicate and arrange for services with adult and at times underage victims of trafficking.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

To combat this ongoing problem, the CCPD Special Victims Section has expanded the number of detectives used to investigate these criminal enterprises. To demonstrate our departments commitment to this effort, one of our department's SMART Goals for the year was to increase the number of operations by 100 percent. As an agency, we chose this goal because online child exploitation is prevalent problem, and we want to make it clear that CCPD will endeavor to deter exploitation in our community through proactive enforcement and relentless investigation.

Detectives assigned to this section routinely and successfully target human traffickers and those that would prey upon human trafficking victims using online undercover operations. The initiative to expand the Special Victims Section was due in part to the increasing caseloads among detectives. This expansion was department driven and is in line with the department's playbook for why we exist. Specifically, the department exists to preserve life, protect the vulnerable, engage in problem-solving partnerships, and recruit, retain, and develop top tier personnel.

These operations and community presentations will not only continue; but increase in the future in an effort to further stop these criminal enterprises from victimizing these vulnerable populations.

PROGRAM COST:

Currently, there is no cost to the program. The additional detective positions and Community Engagement Officers were originally included within the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant through the Department of Justice (DOJ); but, have since been absorbed into the police department's budget.

PROGRAM RESULTS/SUCCESS:

In 2022, personnel conducted a total of ten operations that resulted in 21 suspects being identified and arrested. These resulted in a total of 47 felony and misdemeanor charges. Of note, Chesterfield Police arrested several members of the military, a school counselor, and a Pastor. While the operations yielded a wide range of ages and socio-economic status, the arrests of those in positions of care or influence of children were concerning by any standard. Several of the operations were targeted specifically towards individuals interested in a sexual encounter with youth between the ages of 16, but under 18. Furthermore, the addition of Community Engagement Officers to the Special Victims section has resulted in at least half a dozen presentations to various community groups to educate our community of the signs and indicators of human trafficking to be aware of. While difficult to measure the amount of human trafficking our operations have deterred, we can only look to the subjects we have identified and arrested as ones that will be brought to justice for their actions. The publicity garnered by local media sources further enhances our ability to bring awareness as well as advertise the fact that anyone who attempts to prey upon the vulnerable in Chesterfield County will be held accountable.

BREAKING TOP STORY

**Chesterfield police
arrest 16 in online
operations involving sex
solicitation of minors**

TOP STORY

**Ex-school counselor
arrested in Chesterfield
sting charged with lying
on sex offender list**

Virginia pastor arrested in prostitution sting

“Monday, the [Chesterfield County Police Department released](#) the names of the arrested suspects. On the list was 51-year-old Virginia Beach pastor John Blanchard. Blanchard has served as the senior pastor of Rock Church International in Virginia Beach with his wife, Robin, since October 2013. According to a statement from the police, “During the two-day operation, detectives intercepted suspects who believed they were soliciting sex from minors through online and social media platforms. The suspects communicated with people they believed to be underage members of our community and arranged to meet them at a location to have sexual relations. When the suspects came to the location, they were met by police and arrested.”

WORTHINESS OF AWARD:

The worthiness of the award is rooted in the deep desire of our personnel to impact and protect the community. The expansion of our Special Victims Section, and more specifically, the operations they conduct to identify those that would do harm to our vulnerable populations are in line with our department’s playbook and how we base all our decisions. The efforts of our detectives assigned to the Special Victims Section make positive impacts on the community and deter the criminal element from taking hold. Their actions continue to make Chesterfield County, Virginia one of the safest and most secure communities of its size.