

Wilmington Ministry Gets \$500,000 Grant To Assist Human Trafficking Victims

By Administrator

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First Fruit Ministries based in Wilmington will receive \$500,000 grant from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP). Attorney General William Barr and Ivanka Trump, special advisor to the president, awarded \$35,104,338 in grant funding to provide safe, stable housing and appropriate services to victims of human trafficking. "In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, combating human trafficking in the U.S. and abroad is critical work. DOJ's grant recipients are on the frontlines of this fight, ensuring that survivors across our country are afforded safe and stable housing and empowered with the support and resources they need to rebuild their lives. I am incredibly honored to join Attorney General Barr to highlight these organizations and their tireless and vital work" said Ivanka Trump, Special Advisor to the President.

The grants will go to 73 organizations across the United States to provide six to twenty-four months of transitional or short-term housing assistance for trafficking victims, including rental, utilities or related expenses, such as security deposits and relocation costs. The grants will also provide funding for support needed to help victims locate permanent housing, secure employment and receive occupational training and counseling.

"Human trafficking is a barbaric criminal enterprise that subjects its victims to unspeakable cruelty and deprives them of the most basic of human needs, none more essential than a safe place to live," said Attorney General Barr. "Throughout this Administration, the Department of Justice has fought aggressively to bring human traffickers to justice and to deliver critical aid to trafficking survivors. These new resources, announced today, expand on our efforts to offer those who have suffered the shelter and support they need to begin a new and better life."

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"Human traffickers dangle the threat of homelessness over those they have entrapped, playing a ruthless game of psychological manipulation that victims are never in a position to win," said OJP Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan. "These grants will empower survivors on their path to independence and a life of self-sufficiency and hope."

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OVC works to enhance the nation's capacity to assist crime victims and to provide leadership in changing attitudes, policies and practices in ways that will promote justice and healing for all victims. OVC strives to uphold the intent of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and its subsequent authorizations to ensure that all trafficking victims receive support in accessing the services they need.

OVC provides grant funding and training and technical assistance in an effort to develop, expand and strengthen programs for victims of human trafficking. In 2018, OVC hosted listening sessions and roundtable discussions with stakeholders in the field and launched the Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center. From July 2018 through June 2019, 118 OVC human trafficking grantees reported serving 8,375 total clients including confirmed trafficking victims and individuals showing strong indicators of trafficking victimization.

Human trafficking offenses are among the most difficult crimes to identify, and the scope of human trafficking victimization may be much greater than the limited data reflect. A new report issued by the Department's National Institute of Justice found that the number of human trafficking cases captured in police reports may represent only a fraction of all such cases. Expanding housing and other services to trafficking victims remains a top Justice Department priority.