

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month!



2023 NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Spring Training Series

Registration Instructions:

- **Registration is directly through each workshop's individual Webex link.**
 - The Webex registration links are listed in "Quick Links" on p. 2. Workshop descriptions: pp. 3 - 5, Presenter Bios: pp. 6 - 9 and Resources: p. 10.
 - The registration link will take you to a webpage where you will enter your name, title, agency, city and email. Attendees should always register at least 30 minutes before the workshop start time in case troubleshooting is needed. Early registration is always appreciated to be able to view prospective participation.
 - You can register in advance, or you can register right before a workshop.
 - After you register, "ACSFPS6" will send an email with the workshop entry link.
 - **Save the email with the Webex workshop entry link** to enter the workshop on its scheduled day. The email will come directly from the ACSFPS6 Webex account. A reminder email will be sent on the morning of a workshop.
 - The **password** should be auto-filled for you when entering the workshop, but if requested, use **OCTPP2023**.
 - Each workshop's Webex room will be opened one hour prior to the start time so attendees can test their connections.
 - Attendees should enter a workshop at least 20 minutes before the workshop start time in case troubleshooting is needed. We cannot assist with troubleshooting after a workshop has started.
- All workshop hours are scheduled for Eastern Standard Time (EST).
- For all questions: Email Traffickingtraining@acs.nyc.gov



2023 NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Spring Training Series

Registration Quick Links:

April 17 (Mon) from 2:00 pm to 4:00pm, EST:

Professional’s Workshop: Healthy Relationships and Dating Violence Among Youth

Webex Registration Link:

<https://acsnyc.webex.com/weblink/register/r88646258c58f75b72e596a4051dd2c13>

April 18 (Tues) from 10:00 am to 12:00pm, EST:

Newton’s Law: Secondary Traumatic Stress

Webex Registration Link:

<https://acsnyc.webex.com/weblink/register/re2802abfa148b47c2bf727feff885d31>

April 21 (Fri) from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, EST:

Re-victimizing the Victim: Sara’s Law and the Preventing Unfair Sentencing Act - Case Review and Panel

Webex Registration Link:

<https://acsnyc.webex.com/weblink/register/rd0f0802b6b10938f16a3870b97cb44a1>

April 26 (Wed) from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm EST:

"Where We From": A Film and Panel Discussion

Webex Registration Link:

<https://acsnyc.webex.com/weblink/register/r763ea445b4efa2c1da5f277c11091ad3>

April 27 (Thurs) from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm EST:

NYC’s Child Welfare Trafficking Policy and Screening Children for Sex Trafficking in ACS’ Child Trafficking Database (CTDB)

Webex Registration Link:

<https://acsnyc.webex.com/weblink/register/ra09e708a5787016c4a66466129d5fbfd>

April 28 (Fri) from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm EST:

“Take It Down” and Other NCMEC Tools to Prevent Further Victimization

Webex Registration Link:

<https://acsnyc.webex.com/weblink/register/r780c12880749573e910f1d9e1d62bc6b>



2023 NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Spring Training Series

Workshop Descriptions:

April 17 (Mon) from 2:00 pm to 4:00pm, EST:

Professional's Workshop: Healthy Relationships and Dating Violence Among Youth

- **Kimara Lucius**, Training and Curriculum Specialist, NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence

This Youth Centered workshop will focus on power & control activities, healthy relationships, barriers to support and engagement. By the end of the session participants will be able to define dating violence, identify effective ways to engage with young survivors, begin modeling conversations about healthy relationships, respond to disclosures and discuss resources.

April 18 (Tues) from 10:00 am to 12:00pm, EST:

Newton's Law: Secondary Traumatic Stress

- **Melissa Kaiser, LBSW**, MelKai Consulting, LLC

Law enforcement, service providers, and medical responders experience sustained exposure to child maltreatment, sexual assaults, and human trafficking. The resulting effects can be devastating and include substance abuse, increased rates of suicide, marital distress, depression and anxiety, and decreased physical wellness. This session will primarily focus on learning more about our personal secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, PTSD, burnout and moral injury, and gaining tools to assess personal secondary trauma to improve our wellbeing. Discussion regarding personal experiences, cultural changes within the workplace, and the normalization of secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue will be a main priority during this session.

April 21 (Fri) from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, EST:

Re-victimizing the Victim: Sara's Law and the Preventing Unfair Sentencing Act - Case Review and Panel

- **David Weiss, JD**, Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit, Kings County District Attorney's Office
- **Jessica L. Melton, JD**, Inaugural Chief of the Human Trafficking Bureau, Queens County District Attorney's Office
- **Justin McNabney, JD**, Chief of the Special Victims Division, Manhattan District Attorney's Office
- **Laura Riso, MA**, Victim Specialist & Victim Services Division Relief Supervisor, Federal Bureau of Investigation New York Field Office & JFK Airport Resident Agency
- **Yasmin Vafa, JD**, Co-founder and Executive Director of Rights4Girls
- **Ross M. Kramer, JD**, Director, Incarcerated Gender Violence Survivors Initiative, Sanctuary for Families
- **Selina Higgins, LCSW-R**, Executive Director, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy, NYC Administration for Children's Services

Sara Kruzan, Pieper Lewis, Chrystul Kizer, Cyntoia Brown – what do they all have in common? They were all youth trafficking survivors who were re-victimized with extreme sentences for killing their exploiters. This panel will provide an overview of child histories from a bio-psycho-social perspective focusing on how support deficits and experiential trauma resulted in trafficking vulnerability. Experts will then provide perspectives on why child



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trafficking survivors have been repeatedly re-victimized, the rights of children (or lack thereof), the repercussions of incarceration and what it will take to mitigate this selective disparity.

April 26 (Wed) from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm EST: "Where We From": A Film and Panel Discussion

- **Melody Joanne Centeno, LMSW**, Founder, Foster Care Unplugged (FCUP)
- **Possible Surprise Guest(s)**

Melody Centeno, LMSW, motivational speaker, public advocate, actor, director and former foster care recipient founded Foster Care Unplugged (FCUP), a 501(c)(3) in 2016 to focus on enriching the lives of youth in foster care and at risk of being placed in the child welfare system by promoting positive spiritual, emotional and physical outcomes for disadvantaged individuals. The organization's mission is to identify foster care youth, meet them where they are in their life journey, and help develop their emotional-social skills as they build resiliency into adulthood. FCUP's focus is on promoting positive outcomes for young people who are navigating through their personal journey of healing. We recognize that each person's journey is unique, and we offer personalized support to help them overcome the challenges they face.

"Where We From" is a 20-minute film directed by FCUP Founder, Melody Centeno. She has merged Therapy with Acting into a new medium called Performance-based Practice as an alternative to traditional mental health services. This has provided an opportunity for lived experienced experts in child welfare to have found a home to share their stories. During the film production process, the youth/alumni were involved in Foster Care Unplugged's therapeutic performance-based program, through Deus Beni Academy. They received guidance and support from a team of professionals. This team included a cast therapist, and professional acting coaches, writers, including film crews who work with the youth to bring their stories to life on screen through storytelling.

This workshop will provide a viewing of the film, followed by a panel presentation by Ms. Centeno and schedule permitting, some of the (over age 18) youth associated with Foster Care Unplugged, with an opportunity to ask and receive responses to questions. Guaranteed you will cheer and cry at the same time. <http://fostercareunplugged.org/>

April 27 (Thurs) from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm EST: NYC's Child Welfare Trafficking Policy and Screening Children for Sex Trafficking in ACS' Child Trafficking Database (CTDB)

- **Selina Higgins, LCSW-R**, Executive Director, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy
- **Clifton Robertson, LMSW**, Child Trafficking Specialist Residential Social Worker, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy

Administered by ACS' Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy (OCTPP), and platformed in Microsoft Dynamics, the Child Trafficking Database (CTDB) allows assigned staff to electronically complete the mandated NYS sex trafficking screening tools, thereby alleviating the use of paper tools. The CTDB allows staff to view child trafficking screening histories of children on their caseload, input screenings and view



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caseload demographics relevant to screenings assigned, enter service referrals and generate two types of reports (Child Screening History Report and Area Compliance Report). The CTDB permits every screening to be recorded and saved in the system for future access by a worker assigned to a child (and only when a worker is assigned to a child), and for administrative research and reporting needs.

In September 2020, ACS released Policy and Procedure 2020/05: Identifying, Assessing, and Safety Planning with Child Sex and Labor Trafficking Victims, which articulates guidelines and procedures for all NYC child welfare staff in identifying children and youth for sex and/or labor trafficking, and for safety planning, coordinating with law enforcement, and providing referrals for appropriate services. The policy mandates the use of the CTDB as the mechanism for ACS and all provider agency (foster care, prevention services, juvenile justice) staff to use in screening children for sex trafficking.

This training will provide an overview of child trafficking, a description of the legislation that led to mandated sex trafficking screenings for children in the NYS and NYC child welfare systems, a detailed overview of the policy and a step by step walk through of CTDB screening procedures, concluding with a live, hands-on demonstration on how to complete CTDB screenings. This training is a must for all NYC child welfare staff and any other professional who needs (or wants) to understand ACS' trafficking policy, NYC's electronic child sex trafficking screening process and how to perform screenings correctly.

April 28 (Fri) from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm EST:

“Take It Down” and Other NCMEC Tools to Prevent Further Victimization

- **Debra Ortiz-Pardi**, Senior Outreach Manager
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

In 2023, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children launched a new program called Take It Down – a free service for people who have images or videos of themselves nude, partially nude, or in sexually explicit situations taken when they were under the age of 18 that they believe have been or will be shared online. This presentation will walk participants through the service and share additional NCMEC resources to prevent the further victimization of children.



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Presenter Bios:

Bios provided by presenters have been listed alphabetically by first name.

Clifton Robertson, LMSW is the Residential Child Trafficking Specialist with the ACS Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the State University of New York College at Old Westbury, and a Master of Social Work degree from Adelphi University. He is accredited as a Licensed Master Social Worker. As the Residential Child Trafficking Specialist, Clifton is the point person for the residential and group home staff that support and provide services to trafficked youth and youth at-risk for trafficking. He also works directly with vulnerable youth, providing psychoeducational awareness, Dialectic Behavioral Therapy groupwork sessions, and a variety of prevention strategies individualized as per each child's needs and strengths. In addition, he provides support, guidance and training to NYC child welfare stakeholders. Clifton has over a decade of cumulative experience in the fields of mental health, developmentally disabled and other vulnerable populations.

David Weiss, JD is the Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit at the Kings County District Attorney's Office and is also the law enforcement lead for the Department of Justice funded Enhanced Collaborative Model, Brooklyn Human Trafficking Task Force. He has been investigating and prosecuting Human Trafficking cases since 2014. After starting his career in 2006, he previously handled cases involving all types of violent crime. In 2015, David led a multi-agency investigation and prosecution which resulted in the takedown and closure of two hotels and the arrests of the owners of for promoting and permitting prostitution at the hotels in Brooklyn and Queens. In 2017, David was cross-designated as a Special Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York to bring federal sex trafficking charges in a case involving the trafficking of several underage girls. David regularly conducts trainings and outreach to the public, and presents on Human Trafficking investigations and prosecutions throughout NY State and around the United States, for Federal, State, Local and International law enforcement officials, focusing on evidence-based prosecutions, prosecuting without a victim, and prosecuting in a true victim-centered manner.

Debra Ortiz-Pardi serves as a Senior Outreach Manager with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) from the New York Regional Office in Rochester, NY. A seasoned trainer and community educator, she leads outreach efforts locally, regionally, and nationally to increase awareness of NCMEC's services, resources, and programs. Debra's career in the child safety and prevention field spans over 24 years, presenting to and empowering youth, caregiver and professional audiences on NCMEC's resources and prevention messaging. Debra's training and facilitation experience also includes: Kids & Co. Together for Safety, the NYS Identification and Reporting of Child Abuse and Maltreatment Course, and Darkness to Light Stewards of Children.

Jessica L. Melton, JD Assistant District Attorney Jessica L. Melton graduated from St. John's University School of Law, cum laude, in 2000. She serves as the Inaugural Chief of the Human Trafficking Bureau of the Queens County District Attorney's Office which was established in 2020 by District Attorney Melinda Katz. Jessica Melton has been a prosecutor with the District Attorney's Office for the past twenty-three years. Since 2007, when New York State's first Sex and Labor Trafficking laws took effect, she has focused her career solely on the prosecution Human Trafficking and related crimes and successfully advocated for the creation of a specialized Human Trafficking Unit which she led. In 2013, she was awarded the prestigious Thomas E. Dewey medal by the New York City Bar Association for her work in combating Human Trafficking.



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Justin McNabney, JD is the Chief of the Special Victims Division at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. He supervises the work of the office's Domestic Violence Unit, Sex Crimes Unit, Elder Abuse Unit, Child Abuse Unit, Human Trafficking Response Unit, and Witness Aid Services Unit. Justin joined the Manhattan District Attorney's Office in 2011, and has prosecuted a wide variety of cases including sex crimes and homicides. In 2019, Justin became a supervisor of the Human Trafficking Response Unit, where he has been working exclusively on human trafficking cases until moving into his current role in 2022. Beginning in January 2022, Justin spearheaded the office's implementation of the Survivors of Trafficking Attaining Relief Together ("START") Act, a ground-breaking new law that allows trafficking survivors to vacate convictions for any crime that they committed as part of their trafficking. To date, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, working together with defense attorneys across the country, has vacated convictions for more than twenty trafficking survivors.

Kimara Lucius is a Training and Curriculum Specialist at the Mayor's Office to End Domestic & Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV). Kimara develops and facilitates trainings at ENDGBV and provides support for youth-focused prevention programming and initiatives that elevate voices of survivors of gender-based violence. Her work is rooted in her six years of violence prevention education with young people as an adult facilitator for ENDGBV's Youth Leadership Council and in her previous role, as a Community Educator.

Laura Riso, MA Victim Specialist Laura Riso started her FBI career in 1998 and currently works in the New York Field Office. For the past 16 years she has provided tailored direct services to over 1,000 federal crime victims, in over 500 FBI investigations, as a highly experienced and skilled victim services provider. As a Victim Specialist, Laura coordinates and provides direct services to victims and survivors of the following federal crimes: Human Trafficking, Violent Crimes Against Children (i.e. Child Sexual Abuse Materials, Sextortion, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children), Violent Crime (i.e. Stalking, Threats, Bank Robberies, Sextortion), Domestic and International Terrorism, Civil Rights Violations (i.e. Hate Crimes, Color of Law), Fraud (i.e. Identity Theft, Mortgage Fraud, Securities Fraud, Romance Scams, and Telemarketing Fraud), Cyber Crime (i.e. Internet Fraud, Business E-mail Compromises, and Computer Intrusion), Transnational Organized Crime, and Crimes Aboard Aircraft and Cruise Ships. Laura Riso is also an active participant on two anti-trafficking task forces in NYC and serves as a relief supervisor in the FBI's Victim Service Division.

Melissa Kaiser, LBSW is an independent consultant in the anti-human trafficking field. She was the first Human Trafficking Navigator hired for Eastern North Dakota, contracted with the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force. Melissa was employed with the Bureau of Criminal Investigations as their first Victim/Witness Specialist, and assisted in creating the integrated victim services and law enforcement program in ND. Melissa graduated with a bachelor's degree in social work from Minnesota State University Moorhead. She was a member of the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force for six years, and during that time she was the vice chair of the Labor Trafficking Subcommittee. Melissa has been involved in additional committees and task forces specific to underserved populations, and is a trained facilitator in Compassion Fatigue, Green Dot, SHARP, GEMS, My Life My Choice, and Stand to Protect. She has additional training in Child Welfare, Pride and Safe Zone. Melissa is a board member for the Fargo Police Department's Badges of Unity program and was a nominee for the YWCA's Women of the Year 2020. She is a skilled facilitator working with groups within foster care systems, psychiatry and addiction patients, and human trafficking multi-disciplinary teams. She has experience in team supervision, protocol development, team development and maintenance, crisis management, public speaking, training development, prevention/education, advocacy, and case management. Melissa has trained over 11,000 professionals and students, and has trained at GRIT, IHTSJ/GAHTS, NCPTF, Shared Hope/JuST and IAHTI conferences on the topics of human trafficking and secondary traumatic stress.



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Melissa assisted in creating a summer food service program for children in Fargo, ND, and studied abroad the social welfare system of Ireland. She currently lives in Clearwater, FL, and working nationally and internationally in the anti-human trafficking field. Melissa was born and raised in North Dakota.

Melody Joanne Centeno, LMSW Melody Joanne Centeno is a Licensed Master Social Worker, motivational speaker, public advocate, psychodrama practitioner and former foster youth who in 2016 founded Foster Care Unplugged, a 501 (c) (3) agency, to enrich the lives of children in care through development of positive resiliency skills. She has produced many youth focused projects, including “Foster Care Unplugged: The Stage Play” and annual events including a toy drive, the “Slay the Runway” fashion show, “Operation Foot Soldiers” (youth speaker drive), the Deus Beni Academy Short Films Project and a basketball game for youth with the NYC Police Dept. She has expanded her focus to assist trafficked foster youth through co-creation and facilitation of the grant funded Mitigating Trauma Through Drama group model which fuses psychodrama techniques with trafficking awareness. She is also an Applied Behavioral Analyst, working primarily with Autistic children.

Ross M. Kramer, JD joined Sanctuary for Families in February 2020 as the Director of the Incarcerated Gender Violence Survivor Initiative. Before joining Sanctuary, Ross was a Partner at Winston & Strawn LLP in the White Collar Criminal Defense group. During his career, Ross has represented clients at every stage of a criminal case, from investigation through plea, trial, cooperation, sentencing, and appeal. Ross attended Fordham Law School and served as a law clerk to Hon. Richard M. Berman, United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

Selina Higgins, MAFP, MSW, LCSW-R has been the inaugural Executive Director of the NYC Administration for Children’s Services’ Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy (OCTPP) since its creation in 2015 as the first office within a NYC public agency dedicated to trafficked and at-risk youth. OCTPP coordinates all aspects of policy and practice concerning children involved in human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, including identification, prevention, and service provision for the entire NYC child welfare system. OCTPP also consults with and supports other City and community-based agencies, provides training for professionals and communities, facilitates a variety of trafficking awareness and prevention groupwork models for youth and administrates the NYC Safe Harbour Program.

Selina has worked in the field of child welfare for 30 years in a variety of administrative and clinical roles. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW-R) with a Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology, a Master of Social Work, and post-graduate certifications in Infant-Parent Dyadic Therapy and Trauma Assessment, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Social Work Administration. She is certified in a variety of anti-trafficking curricula, and since 2016, has trained/co-trained over 28,000 professionals, youth and community members. Selina has been an MSW Field Instructor for over 20 years. She is an honorably discharged and decorated veteran of the United States Army.

Publications include a variety of articles, the *Child Trafficking and What YOU Can Do About It: Tools for NYC Child Welfare Professionals* toolkit and co-authoring *Human Trafficking in the Foster Care System* for the Springer Nature 2020 textbook, *Medical Perspectives on Human Trafficking in Adolescents: A Case-Based Guide*. Presentations include international, national and local conferences, including original workshops at the International Association of Social Work with Groups’ annual symposiums and Shared Hope International’s Juvenile Sex Trafficking (JuST) conferences, the largest and most renowned annual conference of its type in the United States. In 2020, the NYC’s Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender Based Violence honored



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Selina as an Advocate of New York City. Selina was also recognized as a Finalist for the 2023 Liberator Awards.

Yasmin Vafa is co-founder and Executive Director of Rights4Girls, a national human rights organization dedicated to ending gender-based violence against young women and girls in the U.S. An award-winning human rights attorney and advocate, Yasmin's work focuses on the intersections of race, gender, violence, and the law. A nationally recognized expert on gendered violence, Yasmin has successfully advocated for several laws at the federal and state levels, testified before the U.S. Senate and international human rights bodies, and co-authored several reports exposing the criminalization of girls and young women of color, particularly, survivors of sexual violence.

Yasmin and her work have been featured in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, National Public Radio, PBS NewsHour, ABC News, NBC News, and more. She currently serves on the U.S. Federal Advisory Committee on the Sex Trafficking of Children and Youth, is an adjunct judicial educator for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges where she is lead faculty for the National Judicial Institute on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking, and served on both the U.S. Department of Justice National Girls' Initiative Advisory Committee as well as the National Task Force on the Use of Restraints on Pregnant Women and Girls Under Correctional Custody.

About the NYC Administration for Children's Services:

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster care services for children not able to safely remain at home. Each year, the agency's Division of Child Protection conducts more than 55,000 investigations of suspected child abuse or neglect. In juvenile justice, ACS manages and funds services including detention and placement, intensive community-based alternatives for youth, and support services for families. In early care and education, ACS coordinates and funds programs and vouchers for close to 100,000 children eligible for subsidized care. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/about.page>

About the Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy:

The Office of Child Trafficking Prevention & Policy (OCTPP) primarily works with ACS and provider agency professionals who help trafficked and at-risk youth, but also works with other City agencies, community partners and colleagues across the United States and beyond. OCTPP provides direct services to youth through training, groupwork, individual anti-trafficking counseling and through its lived experience Credible Messenger Program. OCTPP raises awareness of trafficking and identifies services to help survivors, at-risk youth, and their families. OCTPP produces events, provides training, offers free tattoo removal referrals for youth, manages the Child Trafficking Database, a cloud based application where staff complete NYS mandated sex trafficking screenings for children ages birth through 18 and administrates the NYC Safe Harbour Program, which provides guidance for all trafficked NYC youth, both internally and externally to the NYC child welfare and juvenile justice systems. <https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/traffickedyouth.page>



Download our free **NYC Trafficking Prevention App:**

- Electronic version of *Child Trafficking and What YOU Can Do About It: A Toolkit for NYC Child Welfare Professionals*
- Policies, Training Handouts, Videos
- Posters, Brochures and Tattoo Removal Cards in 12 Languages



Visit our Preventing Youth Trafficking **Webpages:**

Preventing Youth Trafficking: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/traffickedyouth.page>

Resources for Professionals: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/child-trafficking/resources.page>

What to Do and Who to Contact: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/identify.page>

Visit our
Human Trafficking Prevention Virtual Resource Fair (link)

for information, resources and downloads from local and national trafficking related expert agencies and programs.

Download our Awareness Campaign posters and brochure in 12 languages!

Please send workshop questions to Traffickingtraining@acs.nyc.gov

Please send child/case notifications to Child.trafficking@acs.nyc.gov

Help us stop child and adult trafficking.

