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## **Massachusetts Gaming Commission Awards Funds to Bolster Human Trafficking Research and Enforcement**

*Grants Will Fund Research Focused on Human Trafficking and Support Law Enforcement Resources*

In an effort to combat human trafficking in regions housing casinos, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) has announced the allocation of grants to enhance law enforcement efforts as well as the study of casino related crime impacts in the state. Evidence has shown that traffickers utilize casinos, and given that increased risk, the MGC has pledged its ongoing commitment to address this critical issue.

Grants awarded through the Community Mitigation Fund will be aimed at increasing capacity of law enforcement agencies and providing agencies with the necessary resources to expand their teams, enabling them to handle a greater volume of cases and address the issue both regionally and statewide. By investing in additional staff, these agencies will be better equipped to investigate, prosecute, and prevent instances of human trafficking. The Commission awarded grants to the Attorney General's Office and Suffolk County District Attorney's Office. These awards will help the ongoing fight for those involved in human trafficking while looking to identify and address its root causes.

The Commission's work also includes an ongoing commitment to study and assess the social and economic impacts of casino gambling. As part of its annual research agenda, the MGC has awarded \$160,000 to Safe Exit Initiative to conduct a study to investigate the influence of casinos and casino-resorts on sex trafficking in the Commonwealth. The scope for this study was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders from state and local public safety, the Human Trafficking Division at the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, advocacy services, health services, research, and human services. Funding for the Commission's research comes from the Public Health Trust Fund.

"These initiatives underscore the MGC's unwavering dedication to prioritizing the safety and well-being of individuals within our communities by prosecuting human trafficking and protecting vulnerable populations," said Interim MGC Chair Jordan Maynard. "These grants represent a significant investment in our collective efforts to combat human trafficking by providing agencies with the necessary information and resources."



Massachusetts Gaming Commission

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In collaborating with law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders, and funding critical research, the Commission continues to develop comprehensive strategies to address human trafficking effectively. Through this collaboration and proactive measures, the Commission aims to mitigate the impact of human trafficking and uphold the integrity of casino communities.

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