



Workshop: Outreach and Awareness Through the Business Community



National Association of Secretaries of State
Summer Convening
Rapid City, South Dakota

Secretary Thomas:

Taking Care of (Your) Business



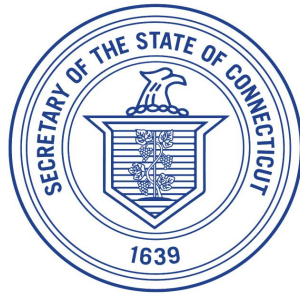
Office of the Secretary of the State

Topics We Will Cover Today

Business Fraud



Human Trafficking



Be a
LIGHT
Learn, Identify and Guard
against Human Trafficking

Civic Engagement





Business Fraud

- **Scams:** what to watch out for, and how to recognize legitimate items from our office
- **Tools:** new state resources to help guard against business hijacking and synthetic business fraud
- **Resources:** suggested resources and steps to take

US-CT.BER:0075518 ACTIVE | CURRENT

ODDFELLOWS PLAYHOUSE, INC.

128 WASHINGTON STREET, MIDDLETOWN, CT, 06457, United States

Principal(s)

Sarah Benson

Telia Rooks

Sigrid Atherton

[View all](#)

Agent

BRIAN WHEELER

Follow business ☐

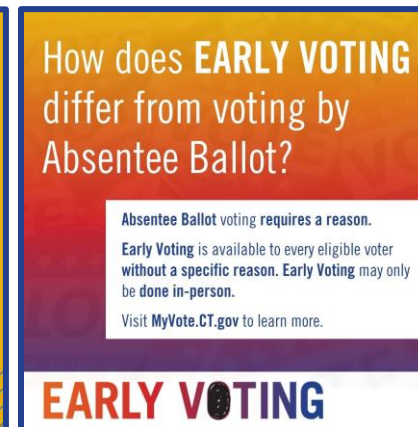
Business.CT.gov



The CEO Program

Civics Made Easy!

- **Toolkit:** educational resources to engage clients, staff, communities
- **350+** businesses already participating
- **Monthly** newsletters with civics info & deadlines



CEOpledge.CT.gov

Civic Engagement ≠ Partisan

Politics



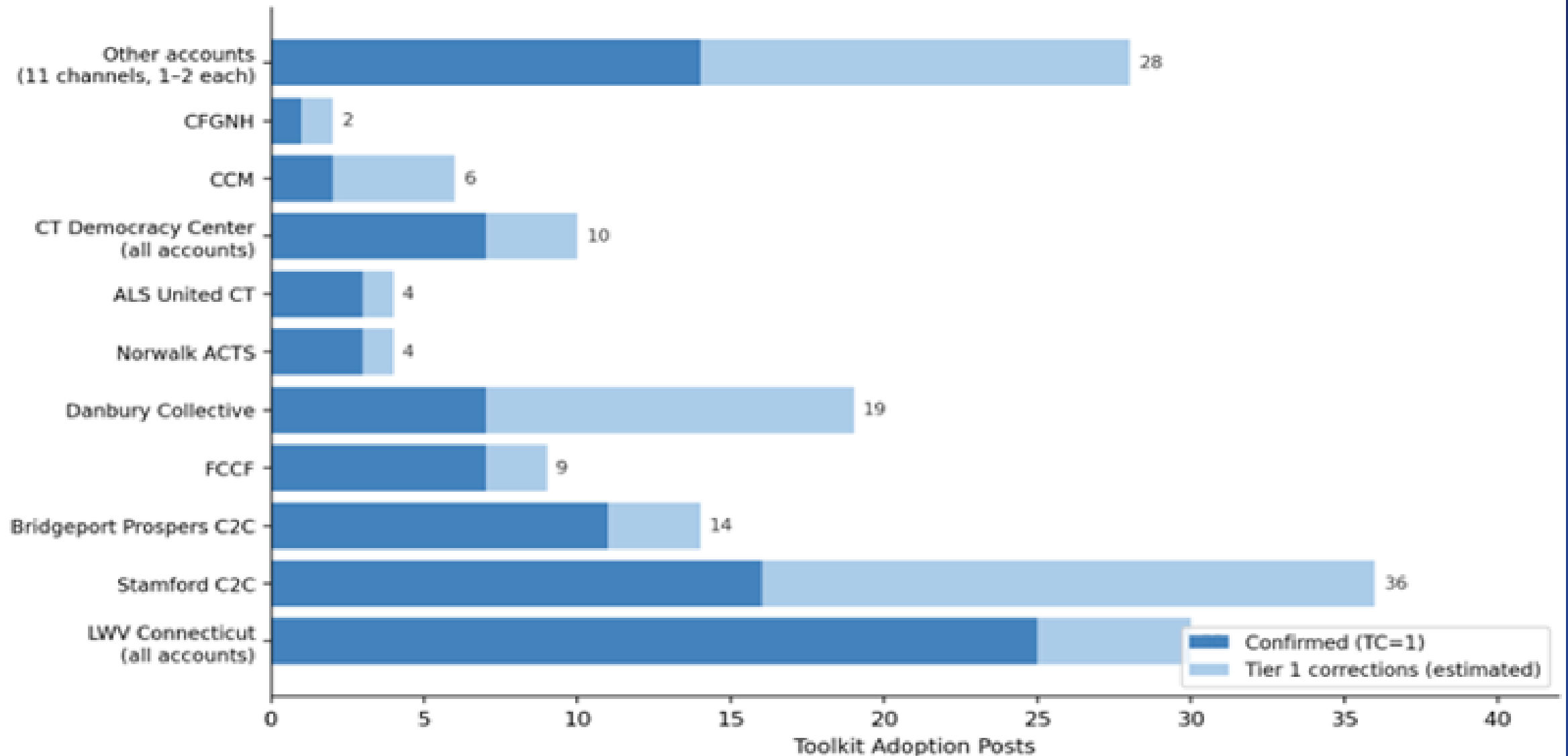
Government



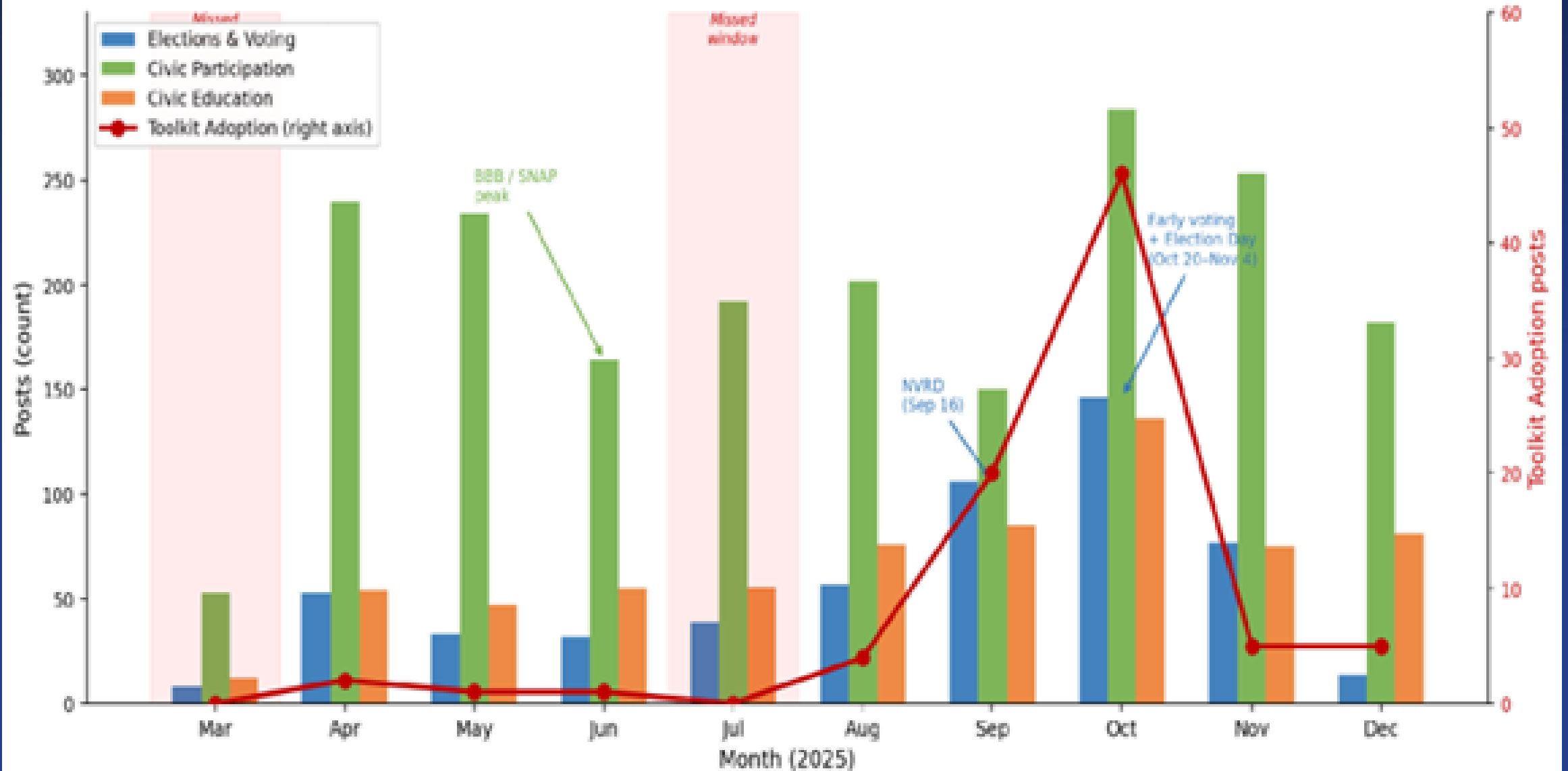
Civics



Toolkit Adoption Posts by Channel: Confirmed vs. Estimated After Tier 1 Corrections



CEO Partner Civic Content and Toolkit Adoption by Month (2025)





Human Trafficking Awareness

PreventHumanTrafficking.ct.gov

Atlanta jury awards human trafficking survivor \$40M after finding Decatur hotel enabled sex trafficking

A woman, identified as J.G. in the lawsuit, alleges she was trafficked as a minor between 2018 and 2019 at the United Inn & Suites.



J.G. v. Northbrook Industries

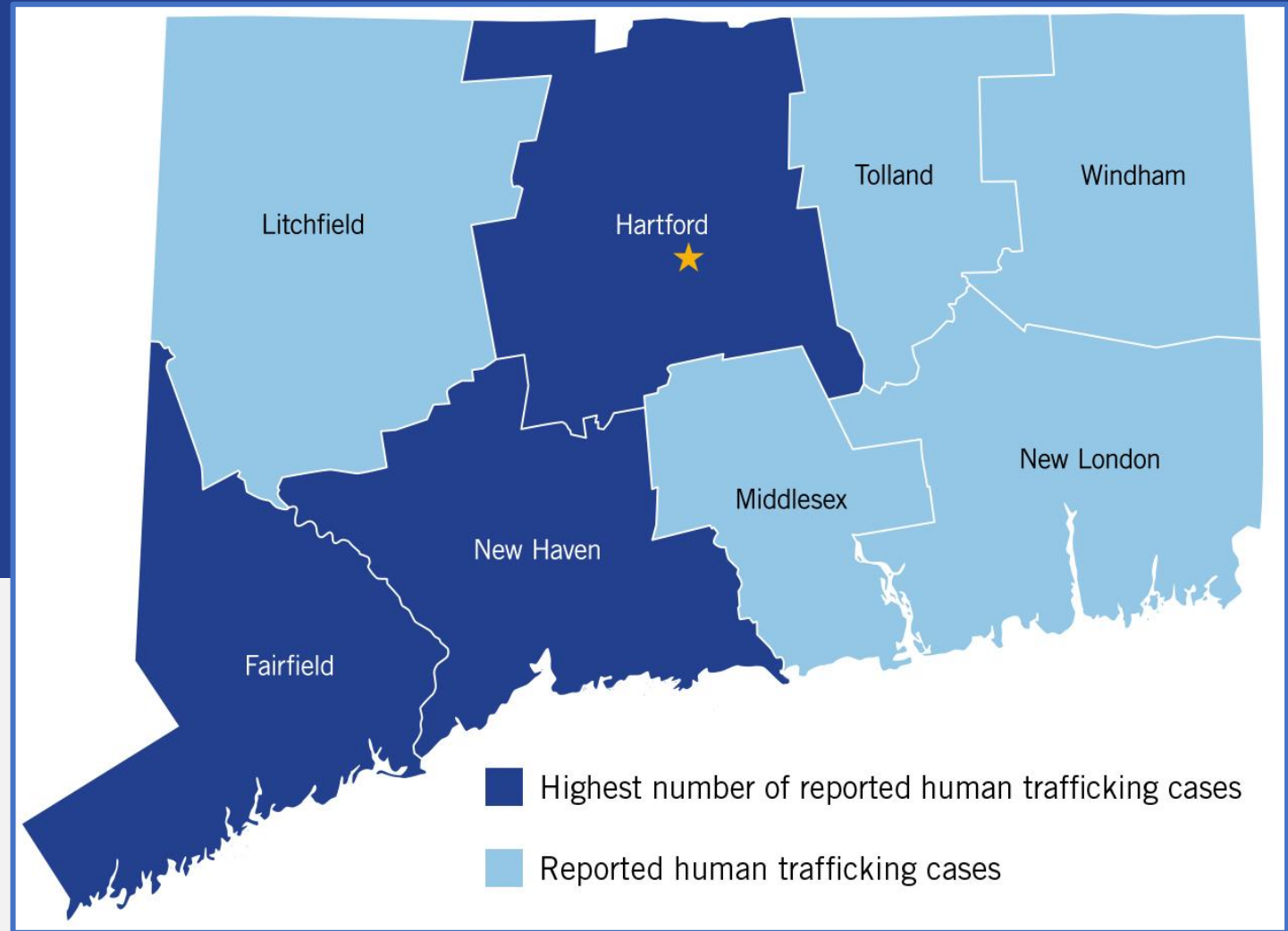
Failure to act on observed warning signs of human trafficking can lead to business liability, **even if there was no direct involvement**

Human trafficking in Connecticut

In 2024:

There were **96** known cases involving **170 victims**

Every county & nearly **every industry** had reported cases



Be a LIGHT Against Human Trafficking

Secretary of the State | Civics Programs

Learn, Identify, and Guard Against Human Trafficking

LIGHT – Learn, Identify, and Guard Against Human Trafficking – is the newest educational initiative of the office. Secretary Thomas is the 7th U.S. Secretary to launch this type of program and the 1st in the Northeast.

Through this online resource hub, businesses learn how trafficking can intersect with legitimate economic activity, how to recognize warning signs, and how to report concerns safely and responsibly. The program also highlights how awareness and staff training can reduce legal, financial, and reputational risk.

By encouraging businesses to share information with employees, customers, and community partners, the initiative also extends awareness beyond individual workplaces. Reaching businesses across industries and regions, the program strengthens Connecticut's ability to identify trafficking earlier, connect victims to support, and disrupt trafficking networks that rely on invisibility. This coordinated, prevention-focused approach helps make Connecticut safer for workers and consumers while reinforcing ethical business practices and a more resilient statewide economy.

Launching January 21, 2026!

Learn more: PreventHumanTrafficking.CT.gov

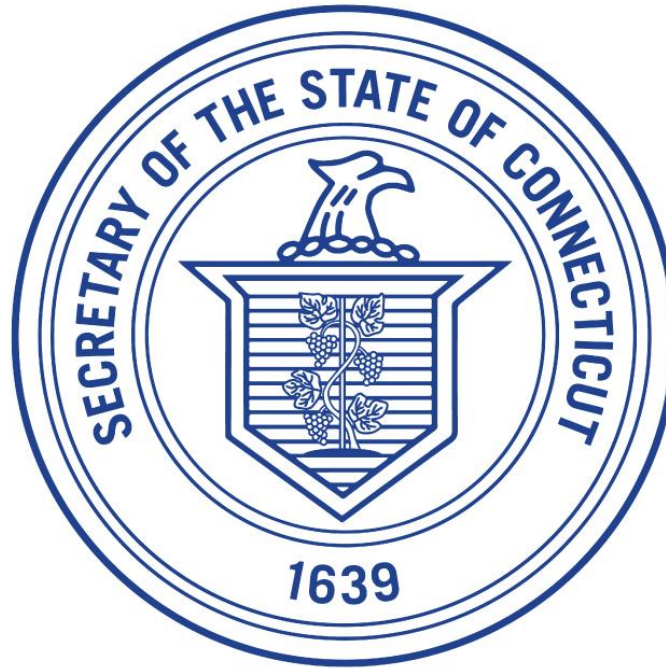


Office of the Connecticut Secretary of the State

MyVote.CT.gov



Since 2007, the
National Human
Trafficking Hotline has
identified
702 cases
of human trafficking
in Connecticut,
including
96 cases
in 2024 alone



Be a
LIGHT

Learn, Identify and Guard
against Human Trafficking

PreventHumanTrafficking.CT.gov



How to Protect Your Business

- **Educate** staff on red flags
- **Choose** ethical vendors & partners
- If you feel someone is in immediate danger, **call 911**

Posters & workplace culture → safe reporting



Recognizing the Signs of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking happens in Connecticut, and businesses can help stop it.

Trafficking often intersects with legitimate business activity, including labor practices, service interactions, and customer-facing environments. Awareness is not about accusation. It is about informed, ethical business practices and knowing how to act when something does not seem right.

Be a
Learn
Identify &
Guard Against
Human
Trafficking

Possible **labor trafficking** indicators include individuals who:

- Appear pressured to stay in a job they want to leave
- Are not paid what was promised, are paid inconsistently, or not paid at all
- Owe money to an employer or recruiter and cannot pay it off
- Do not control their own identification or work documents
- Live and work in isolated or employer-controlled conditions
- Are monitored during conversations or interactions
- Are threatened with deportation, job loss, or harm
- Work in unsafe conditions without proper equipment, breaks, or training
- Live in overcrowded or unsafe housing tied to their employment

Possible **sex trafficking** indicators include individuals who:

- Are under 18 and involved in commercial sex
- Appear fearful, coached, or unable to speak freely
- Live where they work or are transported by another person
- Have a controlling manager, partner, or sponsor
- Express a desire to leave but feel unable or afraid to do so

If You Suspect Human Trafficking

- **Do not confront a suspected trafficker**
- **Do not alert a potential victim to your suspicions**
- **Do not investigate on your own**

Instead, report concerns safely and responsibly.

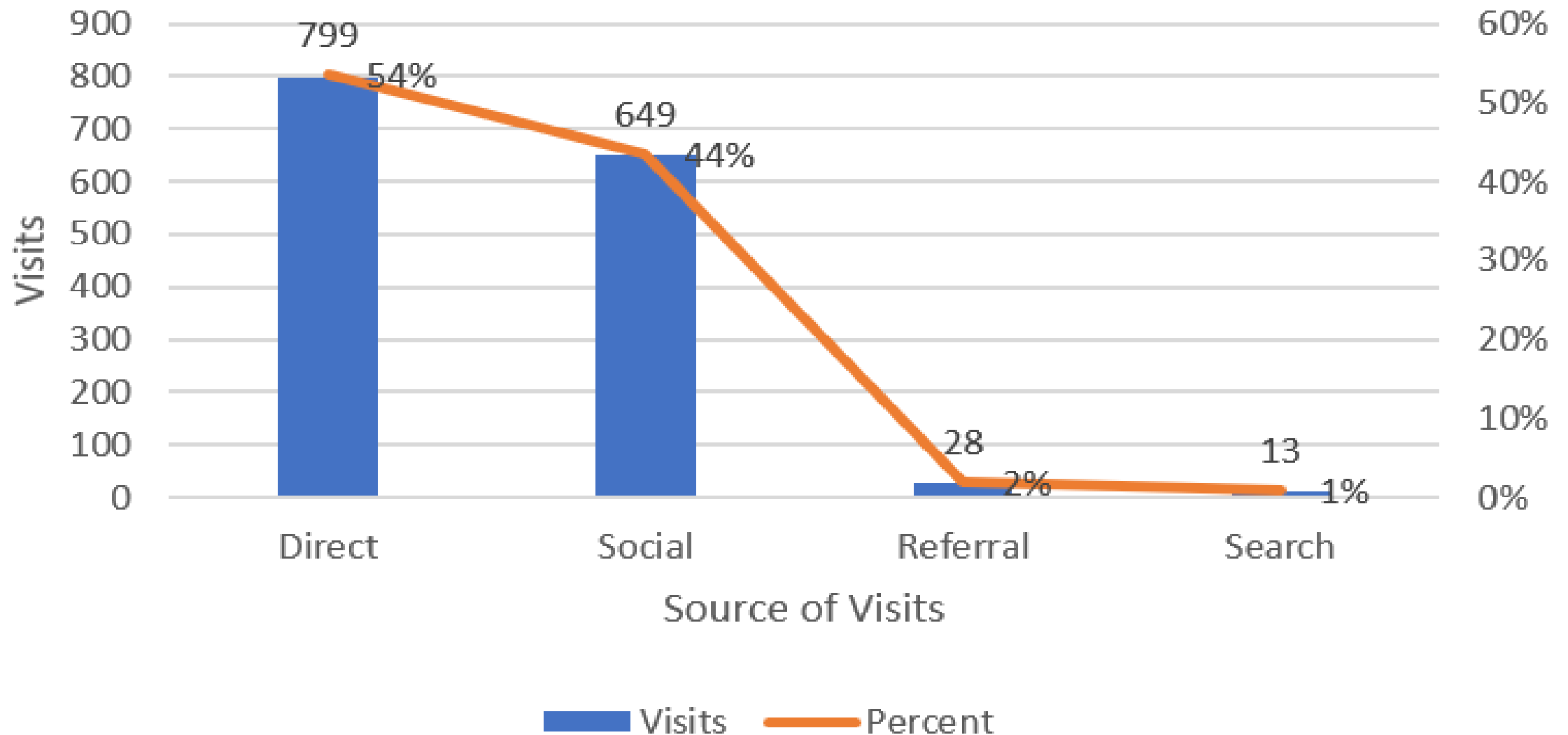
How to Report

- Immediate danger: Call 911
- National Human Trafficking Hotline:
 - Call **1-888-373-7888** | Text **233733** | Report online anonymously
- Reports can be made without proof and confidentially

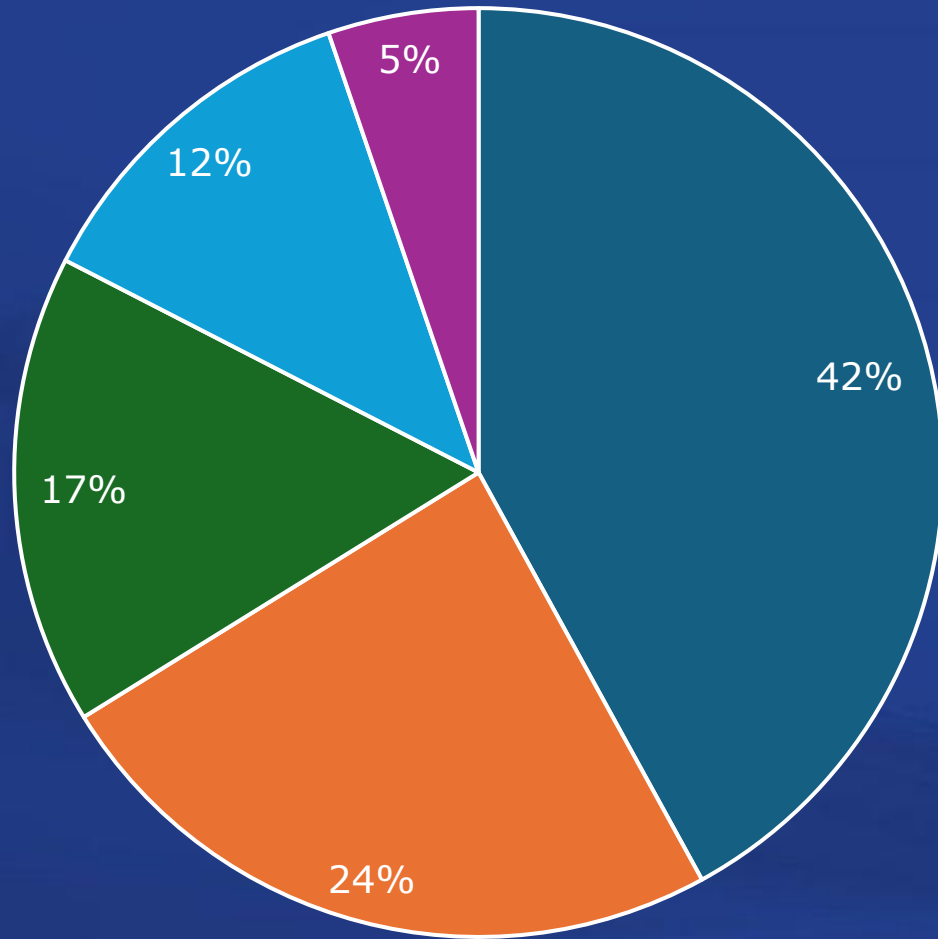


Learn more at [PreventHumanTrafficking.CT.gov](https://www.PreventHumanTrafficking.CT.gov)

How Information Reaches People



Total % of Website Views by Page Subject



Identify



Learn



What is HT

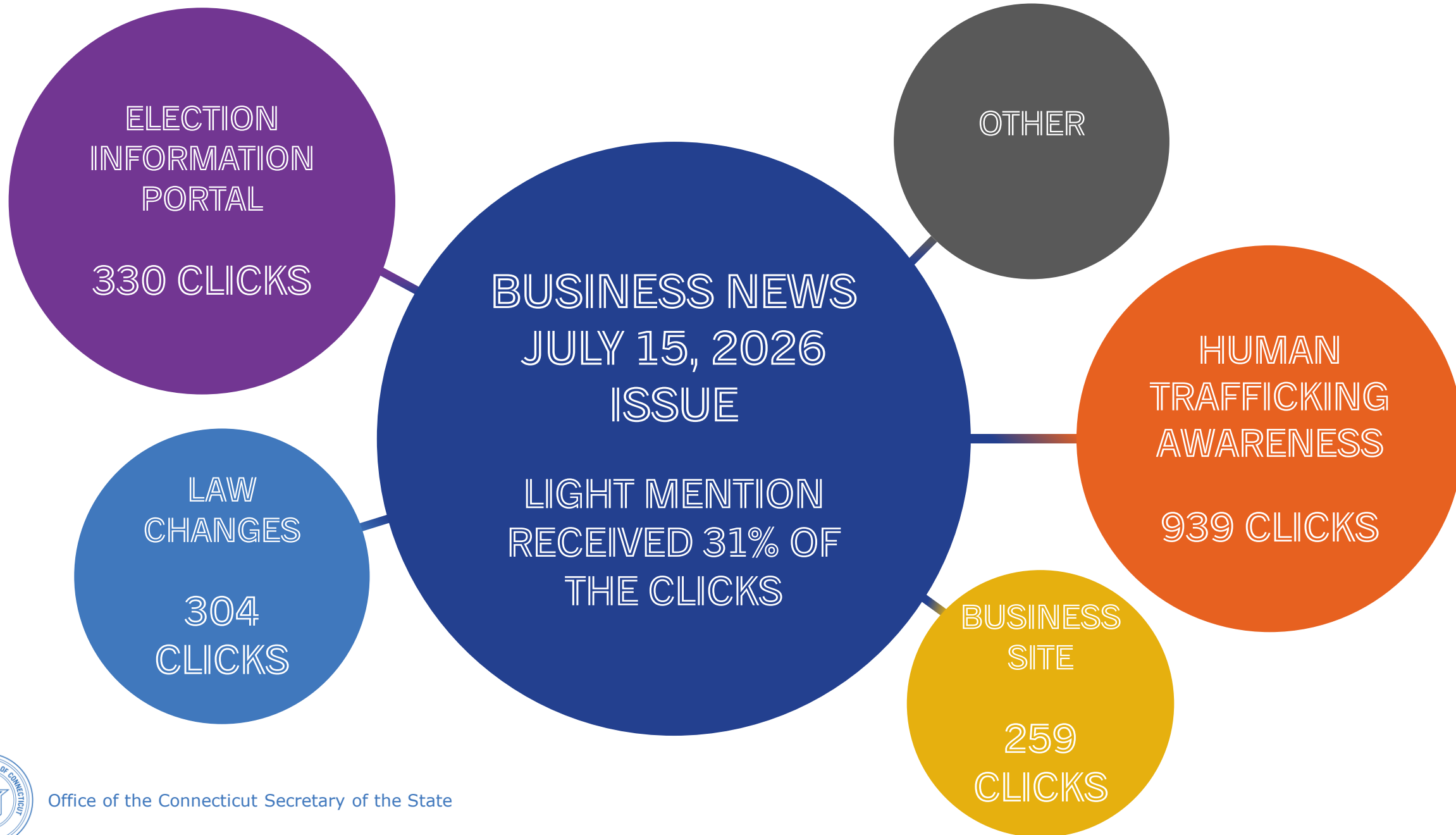


Report Safely



Industry Specific
Resources &
Training





Audiences Visited

**In-Person Visits
to
13 Chambers of
Commerce**

**Connecticut Lodging
Association

Public Housing and
Developer Forum**

**Next Steps

Other Trade
Associations

Recorded Content**





Thank you!

Follow us on social media: @CTSOTS



**Human
Trafficking
Website**



**Business
Services**



**Become
a CEO**