

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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Human Exploitation and Trafficking Institute Convenes in Los Angeles

District Attorney Jackie Lacey welcomed Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O'Malley today at the Los Angeles Regional Information Summit for the H.E.A.T. Institute. The institute is a newly created California research-based think tank committed to ending all forms of human trafficking in the state. Six regional information summits are assembling over a six-month period to gather information on how California's diverse communities are responding to human trafficking.

A Blue Ribbon Commission, comprised of a broad base of statewide leaders, has been created to learn from professionals, service providers and survivors of sex trafficking throughout California. At the conclusion of all six events, the Commissioners will review the gaps and challenges in responses and services, as well as identify best and promising practices.

In her opening remarks, District Attorney Jackie Lacey said, "With this summit and the work of our local prosecutors' offices, we want to send a clear message to human traffickers and buyers of child sex that we know they exist and we are after them. I hope we also send a clear message to the victims of human trafficking, who are still in bondage, that we care about them and are looking for ways to help free them."

Today's event was co-sponsored by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and the Board of Supervisors with support from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Following today's summit, the H.E.A.T. Institute Commission will meet at additional summits in Orange County (San Bernardino and Riverside), Central Valley (Fresno), North East California (Sacramento) and the Bay Area.

In February 2015, District Attorney O'Malley was presented with the prestigious James Irving Foundation Leadership Award for her work in combating human trafficking. The award included funding to further that work and with those funds DA O'Malley created the H.E.A.T. Institute. The California Endowment also supports the institute.

“Three of the nation’s 13 high-intensity child sex trafficking areas are in California,” explains DA O’Malley. “Phase I of the H.E.A.T. Institute is bringing together county leaders, child welfare, education, law enforcement, criminal justice, health, the nonprofit sector, and survivor voices, to be part of a Blue Ribbon Commission. We will focus on regional responses to and understanding of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and other victims of human trafficking. We will assess our strengths, gaps and needs in order to develop a visionary strategy to put an end to this criminal enterprise of pandemic proportion.”

The Blue Ribbon Commission will hear from several panels of experts from Los Angeles County. The H.E.A.T. Institute Commission will produce a comprehensive blueprint that will enable cities and counties throughout all of California to effectively and collaboratively respond to human trafficking, as well as strategies for preventing human trafficking in California and across the nation.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.