

HUMAN TRAFFICKING UPDATE

NOW-NJ STATE BOARD MEETING

February 19, 2026 (Updated April 3, 2026)

Susan J. Waldman

WORLD CUP ACT (ACTION COLLABORATIVE AGAINST TRAFFICKING)

NOW-NJ is officially signed on as a “Partner” in the World Cup ACT. In the words of the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking (NJCAHT), this is an “exciting collaboration of organizations and entities in New Jersey to work together to prevent trafficking ahead of the FIFA World Cup next summer.”



Monthly meetings are scheduled, the first two meetings, which I attended, were on September 24, 2025, and December 3, 2025. An October 22nd meeting was cancelled.

At the September 24th meeting we were welcomed by the following:

- Honorary Chair - Ginny Lyttle
- NJCAHT Executive Director - Kate Lee
- NJCAHT Administrator - Andrea Longo; and
- Survivor Consultant & Vice President of the NJCAHT Board of Trustees - Gina Cavallo.

All attending partners introduced themselves, followed by the guest speaker from the NJCAHT World Cup Committee - John-Michael Lander. A discussion of ideas for the weekend of May 30-31 rounded up the meeting.

DATES FOR ACT MEETINGS IN 2026

- Wed. February 25 @11am.
- Wed. March 25 @11am.
- Wed. April 29 @11am - [REGISTER HERE](#)
- Wed. May 27 @11am (Final Meeting) - [REGISTER HERE](#)

All are welcome to attend. Use the link to register. These meetings take place a week after the Coalition's World Cup Committee (WCC) meetings. The WCC is a survivor-majority team which has been convening since March and recommending actions such as the campaign #BEFREEWORLDCUP.

The World Cup ACT Partner Committee will hear from different members of the WCC at each meeting, learn what the latest survivor-recommended actions are, and share their own ideas for engaging their groups, e.g., receiving training ahead of the World Cup ACT Weekend (May 30-31, 2026). That weekend's events will take the place of the annual gala. There will be trainings and SOAP outreach, specialist afternoon

trainings, and a Saturday night party with a special T-shirt dress code. Sunday repeats the training in the Camden area. All 2026 events will be planned with a focus on the World Cup games.

The FIFA 2026 World Cup (June 11-July 19) will be like having 8 super bowls in Northern NJ (with 8 matches including the final held at the MetLife Stadium) and 6 super bowls affecting Southern NJ (with 6 matches held nearby at the Lincoln Financial Stadium in Philadelphia) totaling 14 major sporting events in our region over 39 days in the summer of 2026.

Large sporting events like the World Cup are known to increase the demand for sex trafficking victims, and the World Cup in particular has also been associated with labor trafficking cases (including the construction, hospitality and retail industries, etc.) So it is critical to educate our communities and raise awareness before, during, and after this event. There is more information at this link: <https://www.safernj.org/events/world-cup-act>.

PROCLAMATION PROJECT 2026

To engage municipalities we have created **PROCLAMATION PROJECT 2026**. We first started our Proclamation Projects back in 2014, but now, to specifically address World Cup Awareness, and also to widen the scope of the proclamations, the new PROCLAMATION PROJECT 2026 engages towns during January and beyond. It is not too late to get involved. To make this project a measurable success, and in order to uplift and amplify all town efforts, towns (or anyone representing a town, or looking to bring a proclamation to their town) should use [THIS FORM](#) to request the template, along with instructions if they want us to help share their efforts on social media.

COMMUNITY TOOLKIT FOR WORLD CUP EVENTS

The Community Toolkit for the upcoming World Cup events is available at: <https://www.safernj.org/uploads/documents/World-Cup-ACT-2026-Community-Awareness-Toolkit.pdf>

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE

The Coalition's Law Enforcement Training is a great example of survivor-informed and survivor-led training and it is open to all so that other professionals can experience this level of training. More information is available: <https://njlawenforcementconference.com/>

"People don't heal because we identify them, they heal when they feel safe."

Many victims of trafficking, abuse, and violence are unable to self-identify or safely disclose what they are experiencing. Yet systems often rely on red flags, checklists, and direct questioning, placing the burden of disclosure on those least able to carry it. Presented by the NJCAHT and HEAL Trafficking, with funding from RWJ Barnabas Health, this survivor-informed webinar shifts the focus from identification to safety. Through lived experience and survivor perspective, participants will explore what helps people feel safer in moments of care and interaction, even when disclosure never happens. The conversation centers on language, environment and responses that reduce harm, build trust and open pathways to support.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Susan J. Waldman

NOW-NJ Liaison to the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking