

The Basics of Human Trafficking

What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a crime in which force, fraud, or coercion is used to compel a person to perform a commercial sex act or forced labor. The two most common forms of human trafficking in persons in the U.S. are:

- Sex trafficking
- Labor trafficking (also called forced labor)

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 defines **severe forms of trafficking in persons** (TIP) in 22 U.S.C. 7102 (11) as:

- A) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which a person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; OR
- B) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, using force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Sex trafficking means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. -22 U.S.C. 7102 (12)

The term **commercial sex act** means any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person. - 22 U.S.C. 7102 (4)

Labor trafficking includes involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, and slavery.

Where are victims of human trafficking found?

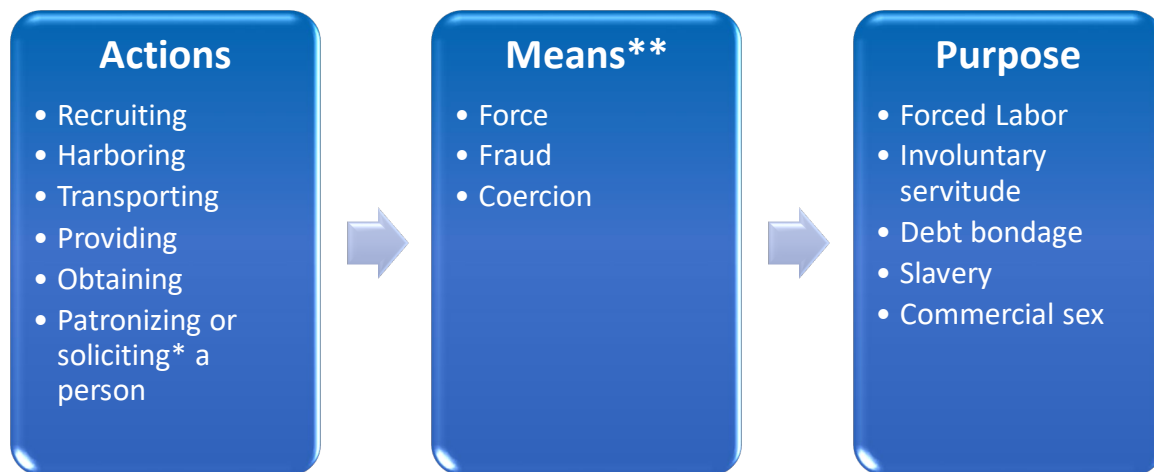
Victims of sex trafficking can be found anywhere, but are often found on/at:

- The Internet
- Private Parties
- Bars and brothels
- Dance clubs and strip clubs
- Massage parlors and spas
- Escort services
- Pornography industry

Victims of labor trafficking can be found anywhere, but are often found in labor intensive industries such as:

- Food services (restaurants)
- Hospitality industries (hotels, tourism)
- Factories (garment factories, meat, and poultry factories)
- Janitorial and cleaning services
- Spas, nail salons, and massage parlors
- Truck and driver services
- Construction and landscaping work

How Trafficking in Persons Occurs



* for sex trafficking only

** Minors induced into commercial sex are TIP victims, regardless of force, fraud, or coercion.

Force, Fraud, and Coercion

Traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion to compel victims to perform labor or services or commercial sex acts. Here are some examples of force, fraud, and coercion drawn from actual cases. Please note, these examples do not comprise an all-inclusive list.

Force:

- Physical assault such as being hit, kicked, punched, stabbed, strangled, burned, shot, raped
- Confinement such as being locked in a room or closet, handcuffed, tied up, bound, or otherwise physically prevented from moving or leaving a situation
- Drugging a person to incapacitate him/her

Fraud:

- False promises of a better job, good pay, new life in the U.S.
- Use of fraudulent travel documents such as passports or visas
- False advertising

Psychological Coercion:

- Threats or intimidation against the victim or victim’s family
- Blackmail (such as threatening to release nude photos of a person)
- Threats of deportation or sending someone to jail

Physical Coercion:

- Putting a gun to someone’s head
- Holding a person at knifepoint
- Threatening to hit or hurt someone

Who are the victims?



Victims can be:

- Any gender, age, race, nationality, social status, economic background, or immigration status
- Female or male
- An adult or child
- A foreign national or U.S. citizen
- Homeless youth
- Undocumented migrants
- People displaced by civil conflicts and natural disasters

Vulnerabilities Associated with TIP

Traffickers prey on victims with little or no social safety net. They look to exploit victims for cheap labor or commercial sex by preying on individuals in difficult situations due to economic hardship, illegal immigration status, age, political instability, natural disasters, and other vulnerabilities.

Some common vulnerabilities include:

- Poverty or economic hardship
- Economic or political instability
- Natural disasters
- Childhood abuse or neglect
- Children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems
- Runaway and homeless youth
- Victims of violence
- Migrant or undocumented individuals
- History of substance abuse
- Racial, ethnic, and other minorities
- Physical or cognitive disabilities
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals

Traffickers prey on victims with little or no social safety net. They look to exploit victims for cheap labor or commercial sex by preying on individuals in vulnerable situations due to economic hardship, illegal immigration status, political instability, natural disasters, and other causes. Traffickers also exploit people who are vulnerable because of their age.

Who are the traffickers?

Traffickers can be:

- Any gender, age, race, nationality, social status, economic background, or immigration status
- Male or female
- Foreign national or U.S. citizen

Traffickers are often:

- Members of organized crime groups
- Gang members
- Pimps
- Terrorist organizations
- Business owners
- Family members



Signs and Indicators of Human Trafficking

- No identification: Driver's License, passport, social security card, other papers
- Escorted or guarded by someone
- Someone else speaks for the client
- No identifiable address or home
- Disoriented, unable to identify whereabouts, unable to identify family and friends
- Wearing inappropriate clothing for the season or place
- Age inappropriate partner or significant other
- Signs of physical abuse: bruises, cuts, burns, broken bones
- Signs of self-harm: e.g., scars from repeated cutting
- Clear Demonstration or articulation of fear, agitation, anger or other hyper-emotion

What Can I Do to Stop Human Trafficking?

- Learn the signs and indicators of human trafficking.
- Stay informed. The Office of Population Affairs has a Specialized Training on Human Trafficking for Title X Clinics, as well as a Resource Guide on Human Trafficking for Family Planning Providers and other supplementary materials.
- Report suspected incidents of human trafficking to your local anti-trafficking organizations or to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.