

UNDERSTANDING

LABOR TRAFFICKING



Overview

Labor trafficking is the exploitation of an individual for financial gain. It involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person to provide labor or services against their will. A victim of labor trafficking is not free to make their own basic life choices, such as where and when to work or where to live.

Federal Definition of Labor Trafficking

In 2000, the passage of the Trafficking Victim's Protection Act (TVPA) made human trafficking a federal crime and defined labor trafficking as—

- The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subsection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Realities of Labor Trafficking

Labor trafficking can occur in any industry and is an underreported crime. Victims often fear for their safety and wellbeing. Industries more frequently subject to labor trafficking include agriculture, domestic work, construction, landscaping, factories and manufacturing, and healthcare. Traffickers often target vulnerable populations such as foster children, homeless and runaway youth, foreign nationals, and individuals living in poverty.

WHO WE ARE

The Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center is a coaching and development hub assisting organizations and tribes with: (1) building their capacity to aid victims of all forms of human trafficking, (2) navigating the broad range of resources available to support their missions, and (3) strengthening human trafficking service networks.

Labor Trafficking Indicators

Labor trafficking occurs when an action, means, and a purpose are all present. An action may be thought of as the “what”, the means as “how”, and the purpose as “why”. The Action, Means, Purpose (AMP) Model can be used to identify victims of labor trafficking.

Action – What

- **Recruiting** – proactively targeting someone’s vulnerabilities (homelessness, poverty, age, immigration status, unsafe home environment) and grooming, or befriending, of a minor with the intention of abuse.
- **Harboring** – keeping someone in isolation, confinement, and/or monitoring movement.
- **Transporting** – moving and/or arranging unwanted travel of someone.
- **Providing** – the giving of someone a commodity to another individual.
- **Obtaining** – forcibly taking someone or exchanging something to control that person.

Means – How

- **Force** – physical assault, sexual assault, isolation, and confinement of a person.
- **Fraud** – false/deceptive offers of employment, sham marriages, lying about work situation or living conditions, withholding wages and/or documentation.
- **Coercion** – threats of violence against a person or the person’s family, threats of arrest/deportation, debt bondage, withholding legal documentation.

Purpose – Why

- **Involuntary servitude** – forcing a person to work against their will by creating a climate of fear.
- **Debt bondage** – a pledge of services by a person to work for a debtor to pay down real or unknown charges. The amount of the debt and the length of services are undefined, creating a cycle of debt that can never be absolved.
- **Peonage** – involuntary servitude of a person based on real or alleged debt.
- **Slavery** – being under the ownership or control of a trafficker, complete lack of personal freedom.

To learn more about indicators of labor trafficking, take the [*Understanding Human Trafficking*](#) online training course available from the Office for Victims of Crime.