

# Human Trafficking

**Categories :** [Criminal Justice System](#), [Legal and Protective Services](#)

The following is excerpted from the website of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' website on Human Trafficking, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip>

Human trafficking is a form of slavery where victims are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor.

**The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA)** defines “Severe Forms of Trafficking in Persons” as:

**Sex Trafficking:** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act , in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years; and

**Labor Trafficking:** 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 subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.

Human traffickers use force—rape, beatings and/or confinement—to control their victims, especially during the early stages of victimization.

Human traffickers make false offers that induce people into trafficking situations. Women and children who reply to advertisements for jobs as waitresses, maids and dancers in other countries are sometimes forced into prostitution once they arrive at their destinations.

Human traffickers coerce victims with threats of serious harm to them or their loved ones back home. Victims are also led to believe that they will be arrested or deported if they don't follow the traffickers' demands.

Human traffickers sometimes loan money to people to entice them to move to another country. To repay these transportation fees victims fall into debt bondage. Victims do not realize that their debts may be legally unenforceable and that it is illegal for anyone to dictate how to pay off debts.

Traffickers may also take away the victims' travel documents and isolate them to make escape more difficult. Victims are usually not allowed to have the money they are supposed to be earning and may not know the amount of their debt. Victims who realize that their bondage is illegal or unjust are often unable to obtain help because of language, social, or physical barriers.

## DOMESTIC TRAFFICKING WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

Victims of human trafficking include U.S. citizens and residents trafficked within its borders. Similar to other countries, the U.S. has a large domestic component of human trafficking – both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. According to the Polaris Project, a U.S. anti-trafficking organization (<http://www.polarisproject.org/>), one of the largest forms of domestic sex trafficking in the U.S. involves traffickers who coerce women and children to become part of the commercial sex industry. Traffickers use a variety of techniques, such as unlawful debt incurred through their transportation or recruitment and their “sale” to customers of sexual services, to force them to work in strip clubs, street-based prostitution, escort services, and brothels. Domestic sex traffickers, also known as pimps, target vulnerable youth, especially runaways and homeless youth. Labor trafficking of U.S. citizens occurs primarily in

restaurants, the agricultural industry, traveling carnivals, peddling/begging rings, and traveling sales crews.

## **IDENTIFYING VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Common Work and Living Conditions of Victims:

(See “Recognizing the Signs,” Polaris Project

at <http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/recognizing-the-signs>)

- Is not free to leave or come and go as he/she wishes
- Is under 18 and is providing commercial sex acts
- Is in the commercial sex industry and has a pimp / manager
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off
- Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of his/her work
- High security measures exist in the work and/or living locations (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.)

### **Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behavior**

- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement
- Avoids eye contact

### **Poor Physical Health**

- Lacks health care
- Appears malnourished
- Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture

### **Lack of Control**

- Has few or no personal possessions
- Is not in control of his/her own money, no financial records, or bank account
- Is not in control of his/her own identification documents (ID or passport)
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves (a third party may insist on being present and/or translating)

### **Other**

- Claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where he/she is staying/address
- Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in
- Loss of sense of time
- Has numerous inconsistencies in his/her story

## **HELP FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

- The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) is a national, toll-free hotline available to answer calls and texts from anywhere in the country 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. The NHTRC is a program of Polaris Project, a non-profit, non-governmental organization working



exclusively on the issue of human trafficking. You can call 888-373-7888 or text HELP to 233733 (BEFREE) or online Chat is accessible from: [www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org)

- To report a tip;
- To connect with anti-trafficking services in your area; or,
- To request training and technical assistance, general information or specific anti-trafficking resources.
- Victims of human trafficking who are not U.S. citizens are eligible to receive benefits through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000. Furthermore, victims of human trafficking are eligible for a “U Visa” which gives noncitizens temporary legal status and work eligibility if they are victims of criminal activity that occurred in the United States or a U.S. Territory, or that violate U.S. law. If you think someone is a victim of human trafficking, call the Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline.

The Connecticut Department of Children's and Families HART (Human Anti-trafficking Response Team) program is a multi-disciplinary team within DCF that developed a system to respond to victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. HART Liaisons include child treatment teams, specialized providers including law enforcement, and the medical community which provide appropriate medical and mental health services to victims of human trafficking. Services and programs have been developed that respond to domestic sex trafficking, with statewide training, awareness and educational programs and tools. — Visit the website for a listing of HART Liaisons, free educational events listing and materials available, Information on the Federal Blue Campaign, and state and federal legislation addressing human trafficking, <https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/HART/Home>

For a list and summary of Connecticut Human Trafficking Laws, see this document link: [Human Trafficking Laws \(ct.gov\)](#)

A2021 updated bill establishing a “Human Trafficking”, can be found at this link: [AN ACT CONCERNING HUMAN TRAFFICKING.](#)

## **TO FIND PROVIDERS IN CONNECTICUT’S COMMUNITY RESOURCES DATABASE**

Search by service names:

[Human Trafficking](#)

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SOURCES: Polaris Project: *Domestic Trafficking within the U.S.*; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: *Fact Sheet: Human Trafficking*; Office of Victim Services, State of Connecticut Judicial Branch and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: *Brochure: Look Beneath the Surface; Connecticut Legislative Trafficking Laws*

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