



BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking involves the use of *force, fraud, or coercion* to compel another person to perform a profitable labor or sex act. Victims can be adults or children, foreign or domestic born. The trafficking can involve purely labor or purely commercial sex, or be a blend of both.

The following are examples of how force, fraud, or coercion can show up in trafficking. It is not an exhaustive list of strategies that might be employed by traffickers.

- Force:** Restricted access, restricted movement, permission required for access or communication, locks, guards, guard dogs, physical threats or abuse, etc.
- Fraud:** Exorbitant or new charges incurred for job placement, transportation, food, or other services; wage and hour violations; “bait and switch” tactics regarding job duties and compensation.
- Coercion:** Threats of deportation, reporting to law enforcement, harm to family members, or blacklisting from future employment; sexual harassment; confiscation of passport and visa; shaming; debt bondage.

If the trafficking victims are foreign-born, the threat of deportation is omnipresent.

Vulnerabilities that Traffickers Exploit: These vulnerabilities can be social, physical, political, financial, or situational, taking many different forms. Here are some examples:

- Family conflict/instability
- Financial stress
- Social isolation
- Homelessness
- Limited English proficiency
- Addictions
- Immigration status
- Unsafe community or living conditions
- Natural disasters
- Sexual orientation/gender identity
- Lack of transportation
- Rejection by family or community
- History of physical or sexual trauma
- Foster care placement; aging out of the child welfare system
- Political instability
- Cultural background

Environmental Conditions that Enable Trafficking:

- Tourist destinations
- Large public events
- Seasonal farm work
- Online advertising opportunities
- Interstate highways
- Truck stops
- Highway rest stops
- Military bases
- Factories
- International borders
- Colleges and Universities



The Indicators of Trafficking: To employ a common description, human trafficking is often “hidden in plain sight” in our communities. Whereas Hollywood regularly employs imagery of physical restraints and kidnapping, the reality is that the indicators of trafficking can be much more subtle and situational.

This list of “red flags” is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Different forms of trafficking generate variations in the indicators that might be visible to outsiders. The presence of any single indicator is not necessarily proof of human trafficking. However, the presence of several indicators should generate attention and reporting to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, law enforcement, or the local Rapid Response Team.

Behaviors and physical characteristics of the victims:

- Fearful, timid, or submissive actions; avoid eye contact
- Appear to lie about their age, identity, or relationship with others
- Matching tattoos
- Bruises indicating abuse or restraint
- Malnourishment; extreme fatigue
- Drug use
- Have injuries that should have been treated earlier
- Are not allowed adequate food or sleep
- Repeated pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases
- Are not allowed control of their own finances or identification documents
- Are not allowed to contact friends or family
- Are not allowed to come and go as desired
- Have a large debt that cannot be repaid
- Claim to be ‘just visiting’ or are unable to clarify where they live or where they are
- Might not know exactly where they are, how long they have been there, or what the date/day is.
- Appear to be living at their worksite
- Have little personal property



Behaviors and physical characteristics of the trafficker:

- Lies about identification, relationships, purpose of travel, nature of work, hours worked
- Tries to stay with the victims and speak for them
- Tries to distract observers away from the work site, the indicators, or the victims
- Verbally or physically intimidate, manipulates, or controls the victims
- Keeps control of the victims' identification documents

Property in the setting:

- Multiple cell phones, numerous hotel key cards, condoms, pornography, sex toys, sexy costumes
- False identification cards
- Handcuffs or other forms of restraint
- Tools of intimidation, such as a rod for beating,
- Beds, food, personal items that indicate people are living on the premises
- Lack of normal furniture or household items
- Food delivery, storage, or preparation that appears to be set up to feed more than the average household.
- The amount or content of trash generated does not seem typical
- Guard dogs, or dogs in pens in between the work site and the exit door or highway

Vehicle characteristics:

- Multiple unrelated people traveling together
- Passengers unsure of where they are or where they are going
- Conflicting accounts of the purpose of the travel or nature of the group.
- Overcrowded or unsafe conditions for passengers; hidden compartments

Situational characteristics:

- Locks on the wrong side of doors to confine people; buckets in locked rooms for body waste.
- Too many cameras, particularly on exits
- Windows are covered or barred.
- Massage parlors/nail salons/spas are open late hours. Personnel change regularly.
- Customers are provided tokens that the employees collect in order to prove they have provided services.
- Personnel rarely leave the premises or only leave under the supervision of a manager.
- Personnel report exorbitant fees associated with holding the job or with regular living expenses.
- Tips must be handed to management, not the employee.
- Lack of paychecks, personnel records, identification documents
- Ownership and/or licensing of the business is vague or not documented.
- The business advertises on commercial sex websites.



The School of Government Public Management Bulletins:

- [PMB No. 12](#) introduces the issue of human trafficking to city/county managers and elected officials. **“Human Trafficking in North Carolina: Strategies for Local Government Officials”**
- [PMB No. 14](#) explains how government works at the local, state, and national levels and offers advice to community advocates on working with local government officials in addressing human trafficking. **“Ten Questions about Local Governments: A Primer for Anti-Human Trafficking Advocates”**
- [PMB No. 15](#) focuses on the business models traffickers use to manage their human trafficking enterprises and reports on focus group discussions with local government officials to determine how greater awareness of these models and their various signs within the community might be incorporated into their daily work. **“Exploring the Intersections between Local Governments and Human Trafficking: The Local Government Focus Group Project”**
- [PMB No. 16](#) shares basic information about labor trafficking, describes how it shows up in NC, and offers distinctions between labor and sex trafficking. **“Labor Trafficking – What Local Governments Need to Know.”**
- *Coming soon: New briefs on the indicators of forced marriages and traveling sales crews.*

Online Educational Resources:

- The School of Government resource page: www.sog.unc.edu/resource-series/human-trafficking
- Project NO REST www.projectnorest.org
- The National Human Trafficking Hotline humantraffickinghotline.org
 - North Carolina statistics are available here.
- The Polaris Project polarisproject.org
 - Creates data-driven reports on the typologies and incidence of various forms of trafficking, as well as “disruption strategies.”
- Emergency Disaster Response Toolkit from the City of Houston. humantraffickinghouston.org
- Human Trafficking ELearning, Curricula for health care, first responders, safety officers, etc.
 - Michigan Public Health Institute, <http://humantraffickingelearning.com/>
 - SOAR online modules, with CME credit, www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/soar-to-health-and-wellness-training/soar-online
- Truckers Against Trafficking truckersagainstrafficking.org
 - Check out both their model of intervention and their educational resources.
- An excellent 2.5 minute [PSA from Michigan State Police](#) on how workers might see the indicators of trafficking, a useful tool for introducing the topic to an audience.
 - Search for “MSP Look Again” on YouTube
- **“Take a Second Look”** PSA and other resources from Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign, at <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>
- On Facebook, follow the **“NC Coalition Against Human Trafficking”**