
PARTNERING TO
FIGHT HUMAN
TRAFFICKING





Human trafficking and its victims aren't all the same. Two of the most common forms of human trafficking are sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age (22 USC § 7102).

Labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery, (22 USC § 7102).

- Some victims are children as young as 1 year old.¹ Unbelievably, teens enter the American sex industry at an average age of 18.²
- Some are women and girls (55% worldwide); some are men and boys (45% worldwide).³
- Some are trafficked across international borders — 80% are female, and 50% of those are children.⁴
- Some are runaways or homeless, and have been victims of abuse, violence, or sexual assault.⁵

1 "Child Trafficking Statistics: U.S. & International"; available online at <https://arkofhopeforchildren.org/child-trafficking/child-trafficking-statistics>.

2 "2018 Statistics from the National Human Trafficking Hotline"; available at https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Polaris_National_Hotline_2018_Statistics_Fact_Sheet.pdf

3 "11 Facts About Human . . ."

4 "11 Facts About Human . . ."

5 "Sex Trafficking."

Human trafficking victims are forced into four types of slavery:

- 80% of trafficking victims are forced into sexual exploitation, and possibly prostitution and pornography — all forms of sexual slavery.⁶
- 19% of trafficking victims are forced into labor exploitation. This includes domestic work positions in which they are abused and mistreated (a form of domestic slavery) and into hard labor in sweatshops, agriculture, mines, and restaurants (a form of labor slavery).⁷
- Others are forced as children into arranged marriages and lives of forced servitude.

All four of these areas of human slavery include children, teens, and adults. All have lost their freedom to others who have taken control over their victims' lives. The numbers stagger the imagination: An estimated 24.9 million people are enslaved worldwide.⁸ Internationally, human trafficking is a \$32 billion-a-year industry — and growing. In the United States, human trafficking victims can now be found in all 50 states.⁹ Between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. every year.¹⁰

Sadly, the human trafficking industry will thrive as “it continues to go underreported, due to its covert nature, misconceptions about its definition, and a lack of awareness about its indicators.”¹¹ While the situation seems hopeless, governmental agencies and organizations focused on human trafficking in America are coordinating their work with international agencies to put an end to human trafficking worldwide.

Could you be called to join the fight to end human trafficking? Keep reading to see how you can make a difference in the lives of human trafficking victims.

6 “11 Facts About Human . . .”

7 “11 Facts About Human . . .”

8 Suzanne Dworak-Peck, “7 Facts You Didn't Know about Human Trafficking”; available at <https://dworakpeck.usc.edu/news/>.

9 “Child Trafficking Statistics”; available at <https://arkofhopeforchildren.org>.

10 “11 Facts About Human . . .”

11 “Sex Trafficking.”



Discover the Needs in your Community

Before you begin any new ministry, it is important to first take time to discover and understand the unique needs within your community. Explore the physical community, listen to and learn from people living and working in the area and seek God's guidance by prayer-driving and prayer-walking the neighborhood.

Remember that human trafficking is found in all 50 states, and in cities, small towns and rural areas. If you don't discover human trafficking in your specific community, you can be assured it is nearby. Keep reading! We have practical steps to help you participate in the crucial battle of ending human trafficking in America.

To learn more about how to identify needs in your community, download [How Can You Serve? An In-Depth Guide to Discovering Community Needs.](#)

If not, [check out some of our other ministry guides](#) for opportunities that fit for your church's gifting and community's needs.



Human Trafficking Victims in America

Human traffickers target people who are most vulnerable. *Children often are targeted because they are viewed as easier to control than adults would be.*¹² The most targeted children are the “runaway, thrown away, or homeless American children who use survival sex to acquire food, shelter, clothing, and other things needed to survive on America’s streets.”¹³ Traffickers have found they can make more money off younger girls and boys, especially virgins, through sexual exploitation. The younger the children are when they become victims, the greater their earning potential for traffickers will be.¹⁴

Other children and teenagers are targeted because of areas of low self-confidence and little self-esteem. When an FBI agent interviewed a pimp on how he located his girls, he said he looked for a girl by herself in the shopping mall. He would tell her she had really pretty eyes. If the girl looked at him to say thanks, the pimp moved on. But if the girl looked down and responded that she didn’t have pretty eyes, the pimp said he knew he had her.¹⁵

Teenagers are especially vulnerable as they struggle to develop individual freedom and identity. Human traffickers target those vulnerabilities as well. Brianna was a 17-year-old high school student, a cheerleader, worked part-time in a restaurant and was already working on college-level courses toward a degree in nursing. Brianna “had no idea that friendly conversations she had with a regular customer could end with a trafficking ring planning to transport her to Arizona, likely to be sold.”¹⁶

Not all victims are U.S. citizens. A military official from Qatar and his wife moved to San Antonio, Texas, with two domestic servants. The servants were kept in primitive conditions, repeatedly threatened with arrest and imprisonment and not allowed phones, passports or visas.¹⁷

A trafficking ring in the U.S. recruited workers from Guatemala, some as young as 14, *with the promise of good jobs and education in America.* The workers were smuggled into the U.S. and taken to a trailer park in Marion, Ohio. They were forced to live in dilapidated trailers and work 12-hour days in physically demanding work on local farms. They were paid minimally for “cleaning chicken coops, loading and unloading crates of chickens, de-beaking chickens and vaccinating chickens.”¹⁸

One might wonder: Why do victims not escape if they have an opportunity? Human traffickers have become adept at keeping victims under their control. They will not hesitate to use “physical and emotional abuse, sexual assault, confiscation of identification and money, isolation from friends and family and even renaming victims” as control techniques.¹⁹ Traffickers also use “victims’ vulnerabilities to create dependency...[and] impose control. Victims become trapped and fear leaving for myriad reasons, including psychological trauma, shame, emotional attachment or physical threats to themselves or their children’s safety.”²⁰

The bottom line is this: People who have been trafficked are all around you, usually hidden in plain sight. You, and your church, can make a difference to these victims and to the thousands more who could become victims in the years to come!

¹² “Child Trafficking Statistics,” p. 5.

¹³ “Child Trafficking Statistics,” p. 5.

¹⁴ “Child Trafficking Statistics,” p. 5.

¹⁵ Melissa Withers, “How U.S. Citizens Become Human Trafficking Victims,” p. 3; available at www.psychologytoday.com

¹⁶ “Why Her? What You Need to Know about How Pimps Choose,” April 10, 2013; available at www.sharedhope.org

¹⁷ “Human Trafficking,” p. 6; available at www.ice.gov

¹⁸ “National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking,” p. 5; available at www.justice.gov/humantrafficking

¹⁹ “The Victims & Traffickers,” p. 2; available at www.polarisproject.org

²⁰ “The Victims & Traffickers.”

Collaborative Partnerships to Fight Human Trafficking

According to the U.S. Department of Justice,

“It is impossible for any single agency or organization to respond comprehensively to all the elements of human trafficking. Traffickers range from opportunistic individuals to sophisticated criminal organizations with multijurisdictional scope. The resulting victimization is extreme and involves diverse populations with a host of needs. Responses to human trafficking are most effective, coordinated, and efficient when they are multidisciplinary and collaborative in their problem solving.”²¹

The FBI also strongly supports the work of partnerships in the fight against human trafficking: “The most effective way to investigate human trafficking is through a collaborative multi-agency approach with our federal, state, local and tribal partners. In concert with the concept, FBI investigators participate or lead task forces and working groups in every state of the U.S.”²²

No one questions whether human trafficking is evil. No one argues that human trafficking should be eradicated from the planet. However, the issues are complex, the problem gigantic. The Justice Department notes that “effective multidisciplinary teams find that partnerships are the greatest strength in fighting crime and supporting victims.”²³ The effort to fight human trafficking and provide for trafficking victims must focus on six different areas:

- Developing awareness of how to prevent human trafficking locally and nationally through educational programming and community efforts.
- Learning how to identify human trafficking victims.
- Supporting law enforcement agencies in rescuing human trafficking victims.
- Supporting organizations that provide assistance to rescued trafficking victims.
- Supporting organizations that provide counseling and restoration needs to rescued trafficking victims.
- Coordinating efforts to reform laws and policies that govern human traffickers and their victims.

The list of possible partners in this work will differ from community to community, but could include:

- Law enforcement agencies
- Child welfare systems
- Juvenile justice systems
- Child advocates
- Rape crisis centers
- Domestic violence shelters

21 “Building Effective Collaborations to Address Human Trafficking,” U.S. Department of Justice, December 2015; available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov.

22 “Human Trafficking/Involuntary Servitude,” Federal Bureau of Investigation; available at <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/human-trafficking>.

23 “Building Effective Collaborations . . .”

- Legal service providers
- Immigrant agencies
- Mentoring programs
- Courts
- Public defenders
- Human trafficking service programs
- Hospitals and urgent care clinics
- Schools, school resource officers, and counselors
- Student groups
- Service organizations (such as Kiwanis or Chamber of Commerce)
- Homeless shelters
- Faith-based organizations (such as churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues)
- Business leaders²⁴

While these groups and organizations may seem inaccessible, the Department of Justice has documented a direct connection between law enforcement officers' success when they have "the resources they need for identifying and responding to labor trafficking cases. Non-profits and non-governmental organizations are able to provide resources for victims and survivors such as language services, shelters, training and general victim assistance."²⁵

The church has been uniquely designed and equipped to be a part of the team against human trafficking. The local church already knows its community well, and its members are engaged in serving the community daily. In addition, many churches have ministries in place (such as clothing closets, backpack ministries and food pantries) that can be used in the fight against human trafficking and the support of human trafficking victims.

Freedom Church Alliance in Houston, Texas provides a great example of developing partnerships.

It's founder, Leigh Kohler, is a member and Sunday school teacher at Houston First Baptist Church, who became overwhelmed and heartbroken when she learned about the evils of human trafficking. Leigh gathered a group of friends to tour the city and see the evidence of human trafficking firsthand. That group of ladies then met weekly for nearly two years, in prayer for the city and for the victims of human trafficking. When asked by one of the staff members to represent the church at a human trafficking conference, Leigh didn't hesitate.

Out of that season of prayer and the opportunity to attend that conference, Leigh began the Freedom Church Alliance to unite churches in the fight against sex trafficking in Houston.²⁶ The Freedom Church Alliance is one example of working through partnerships to a common goal—to eradicate slavery in the world today.

24 Adapted from "Building Effective Collaborations . . ."

25 "The Intersection of Local Law Enforcement and Labor Trafficking," U.S. Department of Justice, January 2018; available at https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/01-2018/Local_Law_Enforcement_and_Labor_Trafficking.html.

26 Freedom Church Alliance; available at <https://www.freedomchurchalliance.org>.

Another example of developing partnerships is the Anglican Alliance, which was formed by Anglican churches and the Salvation Army churches in Africa “to build a common vision of how to tackle human trafficking and modern-day slavery.”²⁷ June Nderitu, a member of the alliance, has spoken on the hope the coalition has provided: “What strikes me most is the strength of partnership, because we realize there is no church or organization which can deal with this issue on their own. We have explored how we can bring our skills and resources into this partnership, so that together we can tackle this problem of modern-day slavery and human trafficking.”²⁸

Consider how could God provide for human trafficking victims through your congregation:

- How could your congregation provide prayer support for those working to help trafficking victims in your area?
- How could your congregation provide resources to support law enforcement officers in their work to rescue human trafficking victims?
- How could your congregation provide needed resources for rescued human trafficking victims in shelters?
- How could your congregation become a voice for human trafficking victims with government agencies and legislative representatives?
- How many trafficking victims could experience God’s love for them because you’ve demonstrated that love in the tangible ways?

God has placed this need before you. What will you and your congregation do with this opportunity?

²⁷ “Equipping churches to respond to Human Trafficking,” June 1, 2016; available at <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/06/equipping-churches-to-respond-to-human-trafficking.aspx>.

²⁸ “Equipping churches to respond . . .”



Developing Partnerships to Fight Human Trafficking

Earlier in this document, six different areas in which the fight against human trafficking must take place have been presented. Review the suggested actions listed below each area as you consider which area(s) your church could work in as it joins this fight.

Developing educational awareness and prevention programs that target human trafficking locally and nationally.

- Start a coalition of churches to work together to fight human trafficking.
- Reach out to your local media (TV, radio, and newspapers) about focusing attention on human trafficking issues.
- Develop a mentoring programming for at-risk children and teens, such as the [Arise2Read program](#) the [Sports Camp/After-school Program](#) and the [Community Garden Ministry](#)
- Participate in [Freedom Sunday](#) to bring attention to the congregation and the community about human trafficking issues.
- Teach how to become responsible consumers by reducing the number of products used that have been produced with slave labor. Encourage members to log on to [slaveryfootprint.org](#) to see how many products they use that are made with slave labor.

Learning how to identify human trafficking victims.

- Train members of the congregation to identify human trafficking victims and how to avoid human traffickers. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (call at 1-888-373-7888) is the main source for resources, training, and service providers in your area.
- Distribute the [human trafficking hotline](#) phone number to be used when a human trafficking victim is identified.
- Encourage members who travel for business to download the TraffickCam app. This app allows travelers to share photos of their hotel rooms, so those photos can be used to identify the location of human trafficking victims being sold on the internet.
- Encourage members who work in the trucking industry to investigate how they can make a difference in the human trafficking fight through [Truckers Against Trafficking](#).
- Develop a relationship with local schools to make sure they know how to watch for human traffickers and human trafficking victims.
- Develop an educational program for parents, children, teens, and teachers, on what to watch for with human traffickers in order to keep children and teens safe.
- Encourage members to activate “Amber Alert” on their phones and to look for those missing children as they drive and shop.
- Become aware of the resources provided through the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#). Save the phone number on your phone to use in an emergency (1-800-843-5678).
- Encourage members to create reading groups to read and discuss one of the following books:

- The Slave Next Door: Human Trafficking and Slavery in America Today, by Kevin Bales
- Rescuing Hope: A Story of Sex Trafficking in America, by Susan Norris

Supporting law enforcement agencies in rescuing human trafficking victims.

- Develop relationships with law enforcement agencies and human trafficking task forces.
- Provide resources to help law enforcement officers when they rescue a human trafficking victim, such as [backpacks with emergency supplies](#) needed immediately, and soft stuffed animals, blankets and socks that can give comfort to children.
- Supplies that law enforcement need regularly can include food, clothing, and hygiene items; shelter; funds for a hotel when a shelter is not available; and transportation.
- Volunteer your church members to partner with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and become a poster partner when someone is abducted.

Supporting organizations that provide assistance to rescued trafficking victims.

- If no safe shelter is available for rescued victims, consider working with other churches to develop a facility to meet the immediate needs of trafficked victims.
- Become a source of supplies and resources for your local shelters by collecting food, clothing, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, household items and bedding.
- Host a fundraiser that brings attention to the plight of human trafficking victims and raises funds to support local shelters or provide victims with legal counsel.
- Join the human trafficking task force in your area.
- Provide backpacks with supplies for rescued victims. See sendrelief.org for list of backpack supplies.
- Create a resource manual to keep in your church office for referrals and include numbers for these often-requested services for trafficking survivors:
 - Medical assistance
 - Mental health services and counseling
 - Shelter
 - Legal/immigration services
 - Transportation
 - Child care
 - Education and employment services
 - Interpreter services
- Create a welcoming environment at your church for trafficking survivors.

Supporting organizations that provide counseling and restoration needs to rescued victims.

- Develop relationships with shelters and therapeutic homes that provide places for rescued

victims to stay, and find out how you can help.

- Raise funding to provide counseling, therapy and legal assistance for rescued victims.
- Provide gift cards to directors of shelters and therapeutic homes that can be used to meet the immediate needs of rescued victims as they transition into restorative care.
- Provide Bibles, devotional guides and other encouraging literature to rescued victims. For an inexpensive paperback edition that also includes the plan of salvation and can be purchased at a discount in bulk, see the Time to Revive Bible ([New Testament only](#) or [complete Bible](#)). Spanish editions are also available.
- Provide ESL classes to help foreign nationals who are rescued victims; provide HiSET classes so a person can get their GED for rescued victims who didn't complete high school.

Coordinating efforts to reform laws and policies that govern human traffickers and their victims.

- Learn about human trafficking laws on both your state and the national level by [accessing your state's report card](#).
- Learn about how government systems such as the Department of Human Services and the juvenile justice court system work.
- Explore how your church can help the government systems when they have no resources for specific situations.
- Join the human trafficking task force in your community.
- Research national organizations and join their mailing lists to keep informed on the fight against human trafficking. Some possibilities include:
 - [Polaris Project](#)
 - [Shared Hope International](#)
 - [Department of Homeland Security "Blue Campaign"](#)
 - [Truckers Against Trafficking](#)
 - [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)
 - [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#)
 - [In Our Backyard](#) Nita Belles
 - [S.O.A.P.](#) Theresa Flores



Strategically Considering Ministry Opportunities

Take the next step by enlisting a small group of people within the congregation to assess ministry opportunities within your community by working through the following questions:

- **What partnerships in your community could you connect with to meet this need and use this resource?** These could include government officials, school officials and teachers, other community churches and leaders, local shelters or other pre-established programs addressing human trafficking victims.
- **Who in your church is passionate and equipped to lead or participate in this ministry?** Consider children's workers, parents or families, teenagers or your youth group, Sunday School classes, senior adults — anyone with a desire to help human trafficking victims.
- **What resources and relationships has God given your church to support this ministry?** Consider missions offerings, other financial resources, church members connected to local schools, those with the gift of couponing, and Sunday school classes as places to start.

The questions above can lead your enlisted volunteers to determine whether or not:

1. There a desire within the congregation to fight against human trafficking.
2. There are resources of people, space, and money to fight against human trafficking.
3. There is a passion within the congregation to fight against human trafficking over time.
4. God is leading the congregation in this direction.

Where to Start in the Fight Against Human Trafficking

God may be moving you to be the catalyst of developing partnerships to help fight human trafficking in your community. If so, where do you start? We've provided six steps that can lead you to successfully engaging this much-needed ministry:

1. **Pray.** Spend time in prayer. Enlist prayer warriors to pray with you for God's guidance and wisdom. You should move forward only when you have a clear understanding that God is calling you to this work.
2. **Learn everything you can about Human Trafficking in America.** Research online the needs and issues of human trafficking in America and the world. Two sites to begin are [AFRJ](#) (Alliance for Freedom, Restoration, and Justice) and the [Polaris Project](#).
3. **Learn the indicators of human trafficking.** Search for available awareness training for individuals and groups such as first responders, law enforcement, and educators.
4. **Meet with local organizations involved with victims of human trafficking.** Find out what is being done and what help is needed. Carefully determine which organization meets the ministry needs your congregation has identified. If there are no local groups already involved in addressing human trafficking, move outward geographically by looking for possible ministry partners in your state, region, or nation.
5. **Research governmental efforts on the local, state, and national levels.** Find out what is being done and what help or support these agencies need.
6. **Enlist volunteers to lead the church's efforts.** You'll need volunteers who are passionate about the plight of human trafficking victims, are willing to work to end human trafficking, and have a desire to help human trafficking survivors.
7. **Based on your findings, lead the team of volunteers to create a plan for building these partnerships and a budget for making this happen.** The work in human trafficking ministry can include any or all of the six strategies already discussed:
 1. Developing awareness of how to prevent human trafficking locally and nationally through educational programming and community efforts.
 2. Learning how to identify human trafficking victims.
 3. Supporting law enforcement agencies in rescuing human trafficking victims.
 4. Supporting organizations that provide assistance to rescued trafficking victims.
 5. Supporting organizations that provide counseling and restoration needs to rescued victims.
 6. Coordinating efforts to reform laws and policies that govern human traffickers and their victims.

WHAT NEXT?

As national awareness of human trafficking has grown, churches throughout the nation have joined the battle to end it. Churches have found ways to make a difference — some have held community walks to raise awareness and fundraisers and one church raised funds to build a recovery shelter in Bangladesh for rescued victims, just to name two ways. In one church that entered the fight, a young girl has raised over \$50,000 in five years to fight human trafficking — from a lemonade stand at her town's fairs! Richard Lee of International Justice Mission said, "These stories compel me, because everything from the huge, bold initiatives to something small, steady, and significant has borne fruit."²⁹

You, too, have the opportunity to join the battle against the evil of human trafficking. Is God calling you to begin this work in your church?

²⁹ Breaking the Cycle of Human Trafficking, March 25, 2019; available at <https://outreachmagazine.com/>.



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