



The Truth About Human Trafficking:

Human trafficking comes in many forms. **Sex trafficking** is a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud or coercion or if the person is not yet 18 years of age. **Labor Trafficking** is recruitment or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of slavery.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- It is the second largest criminal enterprise in the world, and the fastest growing one. There are an estimated 27 million slaves in the world today, with some 293,000 American youth currently at risk for commercial sexual exploitation. *It is estimated that less than one percent of traffickers are ever convicted*

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- Most human trafficking victims are runaway or throw-away youths who live on the streets and become victims of prostitution. These vulnerable victims generally come from homes where they have been abused or from families who have abandoned them. Often, they become sexually exploited by traffickers in order to survive. The average age at which these children first become victims of prostitution ranges from 12 to 14. While trafficking does not require movement, criminal networks often transport trafficking victims to meet demand throughout the United States by car, bus, van, truck, or plane. Traffickers often provide victims with counterfeit identification to use in the event of arrest, or force victims to lie about their age.

HOW DOES HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORK?

- Trafficking victims are usually controlled by a pimp who can make more than \$1,000 a night, and \$500,000 a year from human trafficking alone. Income from Human trafficking is so high because, unlike drugs or guns, human beings can be sold for sex numerous times a night. The pimp attains authoritative levels of control and obedience from his victims through a combination of intense psychological manipulation and feigned affection, brutal violence, and verbal and/or emotional abuse. These harsh methods of control severely impact the victims both physically and mentally. Pimps and traffickers are often very organized in their criminal activity, and many have a hierarchy system similar to that of other criminal organizations.



What are possible signs of human trafficking?

- There are many possible indicators of a human trafficking victim or a trafficking operation. Some of the most prominent ones include (but are not limited to): Individuals with restricted or controlled communication and transportation; persons frequently moved; a living space with a large number of occupants; people lacking private space, personal possessions, or financial records; injuries from beatings or weapons; signs of torture and malnourishment; someone else possessing an individual's legal/travel documents, and men frequently coming and going from the same location.

In what industries might human trafficking be found?

- Never assume that human trafficking is restricted to operating under a set number of industries; however, there are some where the risk for human trafficking is especially great. These include massage parlors, escort services, strip clubs, domestic services, agricultural businesses, and manufacturing plants.

What should you do if you see a person you believe is a victim of human trafficking?

- If you see a person you believe is a victim of human trafficking, seek immediate help. Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline toll free at 1-888-3737-888. Hotline call specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to take reports from anywhere in the country related to potential trafficking victims.

About the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force

The Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force (MHTTF) was formed in 2007 as an umbrella organization of federal, state and local agencies and private organizations designed to work collaboratively to identify and restore victims of human trafficking while investigating and prosecuting offenders. Led by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Task Force serves to coordinate activities, develop policy, and implement strategic plans to combat human trafficking in the State of Maryland. Please go to <http://sharedhope.org/events/event/maryland-lobby-day-to-end-human-trafficking/> for updates on bills throughout the 2014 session.