

Hyde County Hotline, Inc.

24-Hours Crisis Line 252-925-2500

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February

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked worldwide - including right here in the United States. It can happen in any community and victims can be any age, race, gender, or nationality. Traffickers might use violence, manipulation, or false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships to lure victims into trafficking situations. Trafficking is often referred to as modern-day slavery.

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The Victims

The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 40.3 million victims of human trafficking globally, with hundreds of thousands in the United States. The victims of this crime in the U.S. are men and women, adults and children, and foreign nationals and U.S. citizens. As defined by U.S. law, victims of human trafficking can be divided into three populations:

Children under the age of 18 induced into commercial sex

Adults (age 18 or over) induced into commercial sex through force, fraud, or coercion

Children and adults induced to perform labor or services through force, fraud, or coercion

Human trafficking victims have been identified in cities, suburbs, and rural areas in all 50 states, and in Washington, D.C. They are made to work or provide commercial sex against their will in legal and legitimate business settings as well as underground markets. Some victims are hidden behind locked doors in brothels and factories. In other cases,

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victims are in plain view and may interact with community members, but the widespread lack of awareness and understanding of trafficking leads to low levels of victim identification by the people who most often encounter them.

There is no single profile for trafficking victims; trafficking occurs to adults and minors in rural, suburban, or urban communities across the country. Victims of human trafficking have diverse socio-economic backgrounds, varied levels of education, and may be documented or undocumented. Traffickers target victims using tailored methods of recruitment and control they find to be effective in compelling that individual into forced labor or commercial sex.

While human trafficking spans all demographics, there are some circumstances or vulnerabilities that lead to a higher susceptibility to victimization and human trafficking. While not inclusive of all vulnerabilities, the following highlights a few risk factors for victims of human trafficking.

Runaway and homeless youth are vulnerable to trafficking. A study in Chicago found that 56 percent of prostituted women were initially

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runaway youth and similar numbers have been identified for male populations. Runaway and homeless youth lack a strong supportive network and runaway to unfamiliar environments are particularly at risk of trafficking. Runaway youth are often approached by traffickers at transportation hubs, shelters or other public spaces. These traffickers pretend to be a boyfriend or significant other, using feigned affection and manipulation to elicit commercial sex or services from the victim.

Foreign nationals who are trafficked within the United States face unique challenges that may leave them more susceptible to trafficking and exploitation. In 2013, 32 percent of calls with high indicators of human trafficking to the NHTRC referenced foreign nationals.

Recruiters located in home countries frequently require such large recruitment and travel fees that victims become highly indebted to the recruiters and traffickers. These fees are inflated far beyond cost in order to create economic instability and dependency on the new employer or trafficker. Traffickers leverage the non-portability of many work visas as well as the lack of familiarity with surroundings,

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laws and rights, language fluency, and cultural understanding in order to control and manipulate victims.

Individuals who have experienced violence and trauma in the past are more vulnerable to future exploitation, as the psychological effect of trauma is often long-lasting and challenging to overcome. Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, war and conflict or social discrimination may be targeted by traffickers, who recognize the vulnerabilities left by these prior abuses. Violence and abuse may be normalized or beliefs of shame or unworthiness lead to future susceptibility to human trafficking.

The needs of victims of trafficking are among the most complex of crime victims, often requiring a multidisciplinary approach to address severe trauma and medical needs, immigration and other legal issues, safety concerns, shelter and other basic daily needs, and financial hardship.

Source: <https://humantraffickinghotline.org>

