



USCRI

# Identifying, Assessing, and Responding to Trafficking Concerns Involving Refugee & Newcomer Youth

Refugee Youth Resource Center

March 2026



# Introductions

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# Who Are We?



- Refugee Services
- Policy and Advocacy
- Humanitarian Legal Services
- Anti-Trafficking Services
- International Programs
- Children's Services

*\*Note: USCRI is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)*



# Refugee Youth Resource Center

- Building provider capacity to foster refugee youth resilience and child safety
- Services include:
  - Monthly webinars
  - Targeted trainings
  - Case consultation helpline
  - Resource website for clients and providers
  - Community resource directory
- Visit us at [refugee-youth.org](https://refugee-youth.org)

# Learning Objectives

By the end of the webinar, you will be able to...

- ① Identify common forms of sex and labor trafficking of refugee and newcomer children and youth in the U.S.
- ② Recognize warning signs of trafficking unique to refugee and newcomer youth.
- ③ Use trauma-informed approaches for assessment, safety planning, and developing a multidisciplinary support network for youth survivors of trafficking.
- ④ Understand the OTIP Request for Assistance (RFA) process, the benefits available through the HHS/OTIP Eligibility Letter, and services available for youth survivors of trafficking.

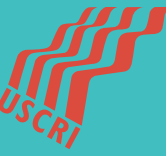
# Introduction

# Defining Terms

- **Newcomer youth** – a refugee or other ORR-eligible youth, including asylee, Cuban or Haitian entrant, survivor of trafficking, Afghan or Ukrainian humanitarian parolee, Afghan and Iraqi special immigrant visa holder, and others ([See Office of Refugee Resettlement \(ORR\) Policy Letter 16-01](#))
  - Ages 0-24
  - Within 5 years of ORR eligibility
- **OTIP** – the Office on Trafficking in Persons, part of the Administration for Children & Families, under the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)
- **RFA** – the Request for Assistance is the process used by OTIP to identify and assist foreign national minor victims of human trafficking



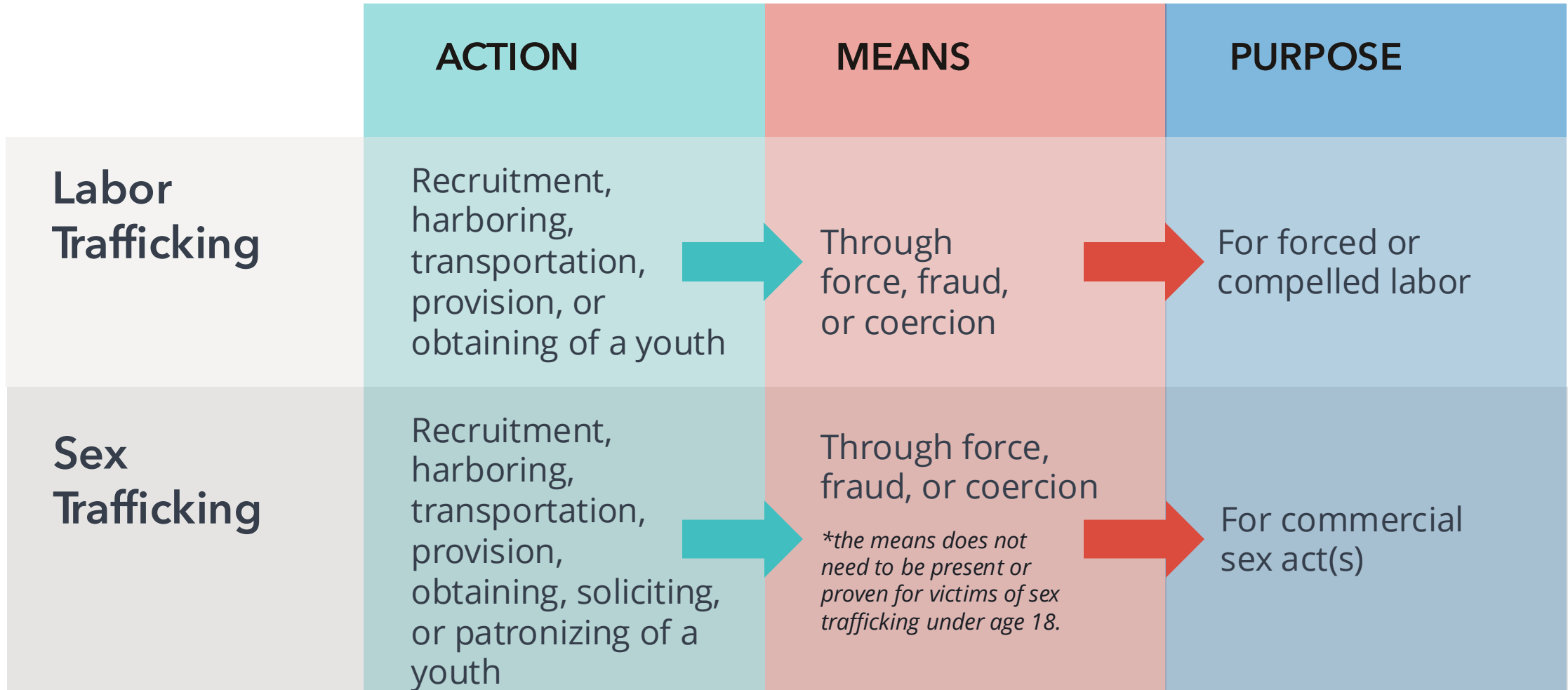
# Trafficking Considerations for Refugee & Newcomer Youth



- Trafficking **may occur at any point** within or outside of the five-year ORR eligibility window for newcomer youth
- **Traffickers often exploit unmet needs of youth**, including economic pressure, housing instability, social isolation, and reliance on help from people and systems they may not know well
- Trafficking **can occur in a newcomer's home country, while migrating** to the U.S., or at anytime **after their arrival in the U.S.**
- Trafficking **can happen anywhere**, though newcomer children and youth may be especially vulnerable when they are geographically or socially isolated

# What is Trafficking?

# The Action, Means, & Purpose (AMP) Model



# The 'Action'



## **Recruiting:**

approaching a youth with an offer; may include persuading, targeting of vulnerability, and/or grooming behaviors

## **Harboring:**

isolation, confinement, monitoring and/or controlling movement

## **Transporting:**

movement or arranging of travel

## **Providing:**

giving the youth to another individual

## **Obtaining:**

forcibly taking, exchanging something for ability to control

## **\*Soliciting:**

offering a youth something of value for sex

## **\*Patronizing:**

offering a third party something of value for sex with a youth

**\*Specific to Sex Trafficking Only**

# The 'Means'



## Force

- Physical restraint, abuse, or assault
- Sexual abuse or assault
- Confinement

## Fraud

- False promises regarding employment, wages, or work conditions
- Unexpected changes in employment or debt agreement
- False promises of love, marriage, or a better life

## Coercion

- Threats of harm
- Blackmail
- Confiscating documents
- Psychological manipulation
- Threats to report to authorities

**Note:** The 'means' does not need to be present or proven for victims of sex trafficking under age 18.

# The 'Purpose'



## Labor Trafficking Purpose:

- Forced or compelled labor

## Involuntary Servitude (including Involuntary Sexual Servitude)

- Youth believes they or someone else would suffer harm, abuse, or legal concerns if they don't comply

## Debt Bondage

- Forced repayment of a debt that is not limited or defined (youth is trapped in a "cycle of debt")

## Peonage

- Involuntary servitude based on real or alleged debt

## Slavery

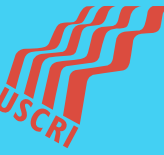
- State of being under the ownership or control of someone and forced to work

## Sex Trafficking Purpose:

- Commercial Sex Acts

## Commercial Sex Act

- Sex acts in exchange for anything of value (does not have to be money)



# Possible Trafficking Situations Involving Newcomer Children & Youth

## **TRAFFICKING IN CONNECTION TO SMUGGLING**

Youth solicited to engage in sex acts or forced to work in exchange for or to repay costs of travel to the U.S.

## **FORCED CRIMINALITY**

Youth forced to perform unlawful services for gangs, criminal organizations, paramilitary groups or others with the threat of harm if they don't comply.

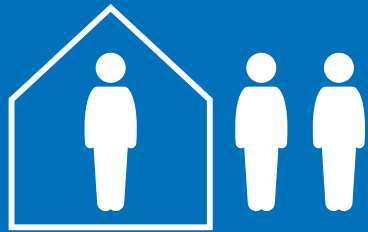
## **FORCED LABOR BY CAREGIVER OR SPONSOR**

Youth forced to work by a caregiver in home country or by a caregiver in the U.S. (often to pay off a debt or other expenses).

## **INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE & FORCED MARRIAGE**

Youth forced to perform domestic labor or engage in sex acts as part of a marriage they did not consent to.

# Signs of Potential Labor Trafficking Among Newcomer Youth



## Control by Caregiver, Sponsor, or Employer

- Youth lives with someone acting as their employer or arranging work for them
- Isolated from outside supports, monitored, or controlled
- Does not have possession of or access to their documents
- Not allowed to enroll in or attend school
- Youth is being singled out for work



## Threats & Coercion

- Must repay migration and/or living expenses
- Pressure to pay for basic needs
- Threats regarding immigration status and/or deportation
- Threats of harm to the youth or their loved ones



## Exploitation

- Works long hours with insufficient pay or pay withheld
- Pay tied to meeting “extra conditions”
- Unable to take breaks
- Exposed to hazardous work conditions
- Working to pay off a debt that keeps increasing

# Signs of Potential Sex Trafficking Among Newcomer Youth



- Appears to be monitored or controlled
- Secretive online behavior
- Has multiple phones
- Does not possess documents



- Sudden financial gain, new clothes, or expensive items
- Age-inappropriate romantic partner
- Frequents locations associated with trafficking
- Highly sexualized behaviors or sexual knowledge beyond their age



- Unexplained injuries or bruises
- Frequent STIs
- Attempts to self-harm



- Leaves and arrives home at unusual hours
- Unexplained absences
- Unaware of the current date, location, time
- Multiple runaway attempts

# Case Scenario: Martin

Martin is a 16-year-old youth from Haiti who arrived in the U.S. with his parents and siblings as Haitian entrants. As parolees, they have legal work authorization in the U.S. Martin disclosed that he had to stop going to school so he could work at the factory his parents have been working at since they arrived in their small, rural town. With the money he and his parents earn, they're left with limited earnings to cover their other expenses, as their employer deducts their wages for rent and transportation.





# What are some potential indicators of trafficking?



**What are some follow-up questions you would ask Martin to get more clarification and assess for trafficking?**

# Possible Follow-up Questions for Martin



- ❓ Tell me more about your job.
- ❓ Explain more about the **decision to work** in the factory alongside your parents. What would happen **if you changed your mind** and decided you didn't want to work anymore?
- ❓ Do your **siblings** work too? Why do you think your siblings don't work, but you do?
- ❓ Explain more about what happens with your **earnings** when you get paid.
- ❓ Is there **anyone** at work or home who makes you feel unsafe? Tell me more about that. Has that person ever **harmed** or **threatened** you?
- ❓ Describe a typical day. How do you spend your **free time**?
- ❓ Tell me more about the decision to stop **attending school**?

Also consider: The youth's parents may also be in an unsafe, controlling, or exploitative situation – important to assess their work conditions and safety.



# Trafficking Prevention

# Prevention Strategies



**Talk about trafficking**

**Assess youth's  
relationships and work  
situations for safety**

**Establish partnerships  
proactively with other  
service providers**

**Teach digital literacy and  
online safety**

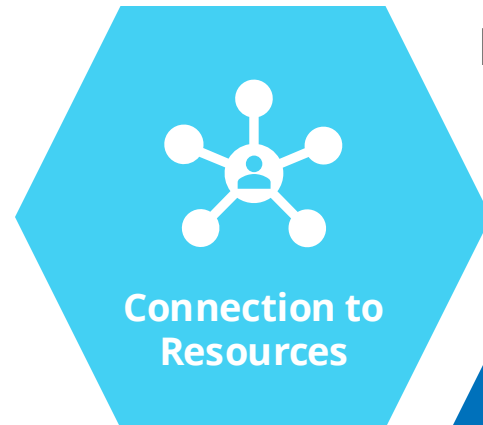
**Address vulnerabilities  
and reinforce strengths**

**Discuss a safety plan**

# Protective Factors



What are some **protective factors** of newcomer youth that you've helped strengthen to prevent trafficking?



# Preventing Trafficking Through Education



HOME ABOUT US



FOR FAMILIES ▾ FOR PROVIDERS ▾

العربية 简体中文 English Français Deutsch Kreyol ayisyen كوردی فارسی پښتو Português Русский Español Afsomaali Kiswahili Українська اردو Tiếng Việt

## REFUGEE YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER

### What You Should Know About Your Rights at Work in the United States

You have rights at work. Learn the laws that protect you and how to identify abuse or exploitation in the workplace.

#### WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

- You must be paid at least minimum wage in the state where you work. In many states, the minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour).
- If you work more than one and a half times you work over 40 hours a week, you must be paid overtime.

#### TEN WARNING SIGNS OF LABOR EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

- If your employer is not paying you the minimum wage in your state.
- If you work more than 40 hours a week and your employer is not paying you overtime.
- If your employer does not allow breaks for meals or the bathroom during the workday.
- If your employer does not allow you to take a day off when you are sick.
- If your employer threatens that you will lose your job if you take a day off.
- If your employer has your identity documents in their possession (such as your passport, work permit, and social security card) and does not allow you to access them.
- If your employer is taking money from your salary to pay for rent or other costs, or to repay a debt.
- If your employer is threatening to call the police or immigration on you for working without legal authorization.
- If your employer is harming or threatening to harm you or your family if you don't work.
- If you feel forced to work out of fear of harm.

#### OBTAINING A WORK PERMIT

For refugee and other ORR-eligible youth in the U.S., it's important to understand that you can only have legal work authorization. If you have not received your employment authorization, you cannot legally receive one.

It's best to speak with a qualified immigration lawyer to learn more about your options for obtaining work authorization in the United States.

Working without legal authorization can carry penalties:

- It can cause future problems with immigration.
- Working without legal authorization can result in mistreatment, or taken advantage of by employer.

refugee-youth.org

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If you find yourself in a similar situation, talk with a trusted adult, your caseworker, or a qualified attorney. You can call the following number for help and information about resources, your rights and benefits, and request access to available resources:

**National Human Trafficking Hotline**  
1-888-373-7888

refugee-youth.org

### What youth need to know about LABOR TRAFFICKING & EXPLOITATION

#### What is labor trafficking?

Labor trafficking is when a person is forced to work or provide services through the use of force, fraud, intimidation, or threats. Most employers in the U.S. do not commit labor trafficking, but it's important to know the signs so you can protect yourself and others.

#### 10 Warning Signs if someone...

- Requires you to pay rent or other household expenses
- Makes you work to pay off a debt or you have debt that keeps increasing
- Forces you to work instead of attending school
- Controls your transportation, where you go, and who you talk to; isolates you from friends and family
- Threatens harm to you or your loved ones, or to call the police or immigration if you don't do what they say
- Withholds your wages or deducts expenses from your pay
- Asks you to do a job that exposes you to toxic substances or hazardous work conditions
- Is in possession of your passport, documents, money, or phone
- Makes you live at your workplace, in poor living conditions, often with many people
- Makes you work many hours without sufficient pay or adequate breaks to eat, drink, rest, or go to the bathroom

### What youth need to know about SEX TRAFFICKING & EXPLOITATION

#### What is child sex trafficking?

A form of severe child abuse that includes a youth under the age of 18 performing a sex act in exchange for money or something of value, regardless of whether any force, fraud, or intimidation is involved.

#### Where does sex trafficking occur?

Trafficking can happen anywhere.

Traffickers are increasingly using social networks and the Internet to recruit young people.

Trafficking can occur in places such as hotels, businesses, or homes. It can also occur on the Internet, using technology, such as taking and sending sexual photos and videos online.

Most adults and places are safe, but it's important to remember that sex traffickers don't always look dangerous and to take note of the signs so you can protect yourself and get help if and when you need it.

#### Who are sex traffickers and buyers?

Traffickers and buyers can be of any gender, nationality, or age. They can include:

- Employers
- Strangers
- Romantic partners
- Family members
- Friends or peers

### What youth need to know about TRUSTED ADULTS

#### How do trusted adults behave?

- A trusted adult is someone whose words and actions make you feel safe. Trusted adults...
  - Listen to you without judging or interrupting
  - Believe you and take your concerns seriously
  - Respect your boundaries, your body, and your personal space
  - Explain things clearly, including what they can and cannot keep private
- Trusted adults should behave like this in real life and on the Internet.

#### How do trusted adults NOT behave?

- Trusted adults do NOT want you to do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- They don't insult you.
- They don't threaten you.
- They don't hurt you.

#### Common questions

**If I need help, how can I tell a trusted adult?**  
Ask to speak privately. Explain your concerns to a trusted adult. If you'd rather not talk in person, send a text message, send an email, or write a letter and give it to the trusted adult.

**What if that person doesn't believe me when I say I need help?**  
You still deserve support. If this happens, it's okay to talk to a different adult whose job is to support you, like a teacher, case manager, or counselor. You can tell as many people as you need until you receive support.

Access these resources in multiple languages at: <https://www.refugee-youth.org/march-2026-identifying-assessing-and-responding-to-trafficking-concerns-involving-refugee-newcomer-youth/>

More multilingual resources available for youth and families at: <https://ucresourcecenter.org/trata-y-explotacion-de-ninos-y-jovenes/>

# Safety Planning



- ✓ Discuss safety plans with youth proactively and preventatively
- ✓ Revisit safety plans regularly and adapt as needed

## SAFETY PLAN

Our Plan for Safety, Stability, and Well-being

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**TRIGGERS** These are the situations or experiences that make me feel upset, stressed, or unsafe:

**WARNING SIGNS** These are signs (such as thoughts, feelings, behaviors, or things happening around me) when things are starting to become unsafe or escalate into a crisis:

**COPING STRATEGIES** These are things I can do to calm down, alleviate stress, distract myself from the problem, and make myself feel better (such as drawing, breathing techniques, listening to music, etc.):

**TRUSTED ADULTS** These are trusted adults who I can call to ask for help. They can help keep me safe.

**SAFE PLACES** If I don't feel safe where I am, I can go to one of these safe places:

**U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS**

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## SAFETY PLAN

Our Plan for Safety, Stability, and Well-being

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

I can call one of these numbers to ask for help if I feel unsafe or am a victim of any type of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment. If I am in immediate danger, I should call 911.

- 911 (for any emergency)**
- Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988
- Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453
- Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
- National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
- Nearest Hospital: \_\_\_\_\_
- Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_
- Case Worker: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUTH'S COMMITMENT**

- I know I can trust my judgment. If a situation or individual makes me feel uncomfortable, I will leave the situation and tell an adult I trust.
- It's important to keep my personal information, including my address, telephone number, and current location, private.
- I will be cautious about what I post on social media, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat. I am aware that cell phone and social media posts, including photos, could reveal my location.
- I know my rights as a child/youth in the United States. These include:
  - To live in a safe environment.
  - To have parents or caregivers who take care of me.
  - To receive meals three times a day, dress in clean clothes, and have a roof over my head.
  - To have privacy when I need it.
  - To go to school in a safe environment, where I'm treated equally to peers.
  - To be disciplined without the use of intimidation or violence.
  - To be included regardless of my race, religion, or mental or physical ability.
  - To live free from physical, verbal, or emotional abuse.
  - To live free from sexual abuse, harassment, or exploitation in any form.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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## SAFETY PLAN

Our Plan for Safety, Stability, and Well-being

**RESPONSIBLE ADULT'S COMMITMENT**

As the adult responsible for the youth, I will do the following to ensure they are safe:

- Provide for the youth's basic needs & promote healthy habits: food, clothing, school, medical care, etc.
- Ensure adequate supervision based on the youth's age and individual needs. Our supervision plan is as follows: \_\_\_\_\_
- Establish consistent rules and expectations for the youth in the home. In our house, the rules are: \_\_\_\_\_
- Support the youth in learning age-appropriate behavior without the use of intimidation or violence. Our behavior plan will include: \_\_\_\_\_
- Support the youth's participation in positive activities, such as: \_\_\_\_\_
- This is our family's code word if the youth needs to alert me to an unsafe situation or safety concern: \_\_\_\_\_
- If I am feeling overwhelmed or frustrated, I will take the following steps to calm down before reacting: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**I have participated in the development of the above Safety Plan:**

Youth's Name	Youth's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Responsible Adult's Name	Responsible Adult's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Case Worker's Name	Case Worker's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

**Keep this plan in a safe place.**

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# Assessing & Responding to Trafficking Concerns

# Trauma-Informed Approach



## Safety

Ensuring both physical and psychological safety



## Trust & Transparency

Setting clear expectations around your role, services, and mandatory reporting



## Peer Support

Connecting to peers with shared experiences



## Collaboration & Mutuality

Recognizing youth as experts of their own lives



## Empowerment & Choice

Involving youth in decision-making and strength-based goal-setting



## Cultural, Historical, & Identity Considerations

Understanding biases, practicing cultural humility

# Creating an Environment of Trust

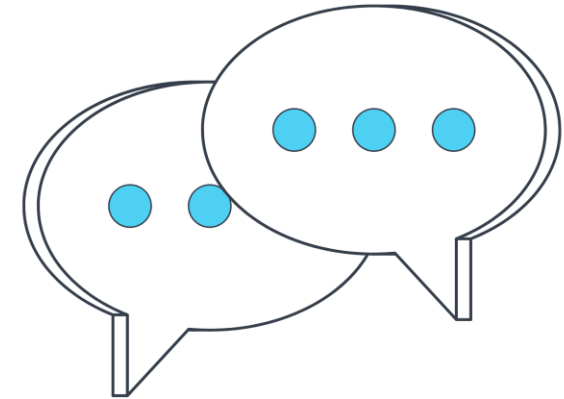


- Youth need to feel safe and secure to share sensitive information
- Prioritize building trust and rapport with newcomer youth
- Build trust through consistency, transparency, and actions, not just words
- Disclosures may be complex when they involve force, fraud, or coercion
- Be prepared to assist the youth should they become overwhelmed

# Assessing for Trafficking with Youth



- Mirror the language of the youth; avoid labels
- Listen compassionately
- Seek to understand and provide support
- Maintain a **non-judgmental** tone/approach
- Ask open-ended, non-leading questions using the **TED Model**:



## T: Tell Me About

Tell me about your job.

## E: Explain

Explain more about why you're not attending school even though you want to.

## D: Describe

Describe the conversation you had when your sponsor told you that you had to work.

# Cultural Considerations: Understanding Barriers to Disclosure



- Family dynamics, roles, and hierarchy
  - **Sense of loyalty**, duty, or obligation to family in home country, or to sponsor/family here in the U.S.
- Economic pressures: youth taking on adult roles and/or **working to support family**
- Financial **dependency** on sponsor/caregiver
- **Social isolation**, seeking a sense of belonging
- **Shame** surrounding exploitation, especially sexual exploitation
- **Language barriers**
- **Fear/mistrust** of authorities
- Uncertainty surrounding **immigration status** and permanency

# Risk-Informed Intervention



## Core principles:

- “Risk” is not solely based on a youth’s disclosure of trafficking or exploitation
- Reducing harm and increasing safety are more important than proving that trafficking or exploitation are occurring



When risk is present, action is warranted – even without a disclosure.

- ✓ **Check in with the youth regularly** on their safety, adjustment, and well-being
- ✓ **Strengthen protective factors** such housing, school attendance, supervision, legal status
- ✓ **Safety plan** without labels, identify safe adults, and provide resources
- ✓ **Provide education** on laws, rights, and protections for youth in the U.S.
- ✓ **Partner with the youth’s caregiver** (where safe and appropriate) to ensure youth safety

# Considerations & Best Practices



- ✓ Where possible, interview the youth in a **private** space, separately from their adult caregiver
- ✓ Inform the youth about **confidentiality** and its limits (including mandatory reporting) early and often
- ✓ Show up **consistently** for youth; assess and support youth **safety** on an ongoing basis
- ✓ Use **plain, concrete language** and qualified interpreters where appropriate
- ✓ Phrase questions in a way that is **age-appropriate** and seeks to minimize the risk of re-traumatization

**Remember:** The goal is not to find out the intimate details of a youth's experience OR force an acknowledgment that the youth identifies as a victim of trafficking, but rather:

- Determine whether there are signs of trafficking
- Explore how you can provide support, ensure safety, and refer the youth to appropriate services

# What to Do If You Believe a Newcomer Youth is Being Trafficked:



Staff the case with your supervisor



Report to Child Protective Services (CPS)



Submit a Request for Assistance (RFA) to the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) through the online Shepherd system



Safety plan with the youth



Explore resiliency topics with the youth through education about their rights, labor laws, healthy relationships, etc.



Coordinate with key stakeholders to ensure youth safety and connection to resources



Consult with the RYRC or TVAP/Aspire on high needs cases

# Case Scenario: Ana

Ana is 17 and arrived in the U.S. as a Ukrainian humanitarian parolee with her mom and younger siblings. She has begun missing school and leaving the home at night to see an older boyfriend she met on social media. She has returned home with new clothes and a smartphone her mom did not buy. As far as her mom knows, Ana does not have a job.

When you talk with her, Ana says her 22-year-old boyfriend has been helping her make money and has offered her a place to live in exchange for the work. Ana shares little information about him, and when you ask follow-up questions, she becomes guarded and states that her boyfriend is the only one who truly cares about her.





**What questions would you ask Ana using the TED model to further assess for trafficking?**



**What might be some barriers to Ana disclosing trafficking or safety concerns to you?**



# What would you include in a safety plan?

# Possible Follow-up Questions for Ana



- ❓ Tell me more about your **relationship** with your boyfriend.
- ❓ I have [this resource](#) to share with you on **healthy and unhealthy relationships** – can we take a look at it together? Describe some of the healthy signs you notice in your relationship with your boyfriend? What about the unhealthy signs?
- ❓ Sometimes people find themselves in situations where they feel **unsafe, threatened, controlled**, or even **tricked** into doing something they don't want to do.
  - ❓ Is there anything about your relationship with your boyfriend that makes you feel **unsafe**? Tell me more about that.
  - ❓ Has your boyfriend (or anyone else) ever touched you in a way you **didn't like**?
  - ❓ Has your boyfriend (or anyone else) ever **pressured** you to have sex or unwanted physical contact?
  - ❓ Sometimes young people can be taken advantage of and asked to do sexual activities in exchange for **something of value** like money, gifts, or a place to stay. This could include dancing, stripping, posing for photos, or sex of any kind. Has anyone ever asked you to do something like that?
  - ❓ If yes to any of the above: If you're comfortable talking about it, can you tell me what happened?

# Additional Cultural Considerations for Sex Trafficking Assessments



For newcomer youth from more conservative/religious cultures:

- Sexual topics may be highly taboo
  - Importance of strong foundation of trust/rapport before exploring these topics with youth
  - Assign a provider of the same sex as the youth when possible
  - Consider more indirect, situational approaches to assessment questions
- Distinguish between trafficking indicators vs. cultural practices such as arranged marriage and chaperoning
  - Focus on:
    - Agency** – Can the youth say no?
    - Safety** – Are they being harmed or threatened?
    - Exploitation** – Is someone benefitting unfairly from the youth?
- Set context to help normalize the conversation with the youth:  
the **ultimate goal is ensuring their safety**

# Resources & Services for Youth Survivors of Trafficking

# How to Submit a Request for Assistance (RFA) to OTIP



Video on Submitting a Request for Assistance to [OTIP](#)

# Child Eligibility Process



An individual has concerns that a foreign national minor may have experienced forced labor or commercial sex at any point in the minor's life.



The individual submits a Request for Assistance on the minor's behalf in Shepherd, OTIP's online case management system, within 24 hours of identifying the potential concerns.



The OTIP Child Protection Team reviews the case, corresponds with the requester, and assesses whether the minor experienced trafficking in accordance with the TVPA of 2000, as amended.



If OTIP determines that the minor experienced trafficking, an Eligibility Letter is issued. OTIP may issue an Interim Assistance Letter if OTIP needs more information, or the trafficking situation is not clear.



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Office on Trafficking in Persons | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/enttrafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/enttrafficking)

HHS Tracking Number: 55555  
DOB: 01/01/2020

Ms. Jane Doe  
c/o John Smith  
100 Glebe Ave.  
Arlington, VA 22202

**ELIGIBILITY LETTER**

Dear Ms. Doe:

We have determined that you were subjected to a severe form of trafficking in persons. In accordance with 22 U.S.C. § 7105(b)(1)(G), this Eligibility Letter confirms that you are eligible to apply for benefits and services to the same extent as a refugee. This letter does not confer immigration status.

You can start applying for benefits and services on **February 3, 2020**.

If you wish to apply for benefits and services, it is important that you seek assistance as soon as possible because some of the benefits are time-limited and may expire. When you access benefits, bring the original copy of this letter to the benefit-issuing agency.

See the attached packet for further information on accessing benefits and services, descriptions of the benefits and services you are eligible for, and information about the comprehensive case management services that are available to support you in this process.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to connect you with available services in your area.

Sincerely,

Katherine Chon  
Director  
Office on Trafficking in Persons

**Benefit-issuing agencies:** To verify the validity of this letter, you may call the toll-free HHS Trafficking Victim Verification Line at 1-866-401-5510 during regular business hours.



The HHS/OTIP Eligibility Letter grants youth survivors of trafficking access to the **same services and benefits as a refugee.**

# USCRI Anti-Trafficking Programs



**Aspire** serves foreign national minors (under 18) who have OR are seeking HHS/OTIP Eligibility



**TVAP** serves foreign national adults (18+) who have HHS/OTIP Eligibility OR are pursuing a T-visa or Continued Presence (CP)

- Not already receiving federally funded trafficking-specific case management services
- Needs cannot be met solely through their current services
- Youth has complex needs or concerns that require additional support (e.g., youth is potentially in an active trafficking situation)

# ASPIRE & TVAP Services



## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Regional Coordinators that can assist with:

- Staffing complex trafficking cases
- Assisting with access to benefits
- Addressing placement breakdowns
- Identifying trafficking-specific contacts or community resources
- Coordinating with stakeholders



## CASE MANAGEMENT

- National network of partner service providers
- Trauma-informed, strengths-based, and survivor-centered
- Focus on assessing and addressing needs while prioritizing self-sufficiency

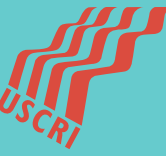
# Other Services for Youth Survivors of Trafficking



- **OVC (Office for Victims of Crime):** services for victims of trafficking
- **Post Release Services (PRS):** case management services for former unaccompanied children under 18
- **Refugee Services** (available to all ORR-eligible populations, including survivors of trafficking with an HHS/OTIP eligibility letter or certification letter):
  - **Preferred Communities (PC):** case management for newcomers, including vulnerable youth
  - **Matching Grant (MG):** employment focused case management program
  - **Public benefits:** Medicaid, CHIP, TANF, and others

*Note: Services are available regardless of immigration status or cooperation with law enforcement.*

# Services for Youth Survivors of Trafficking



**Contact USCRI TVAP and  
Aspire:**

<https://refugees.org/trafficking/>

**Search OVC's Victim Services  
directory:**

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/directory-crime-victim-services>

**Request PRS for a former  
unaccompanied child:**

<https://acf.gov/orr/outreach-material/office-refugee-resettlement-national-call-center>

**Find your local resettlement  
agency (RA):**

<https://acf.gov/orr/map/find-resources-and-contacts-your-state>

**Contact your State Refugee  
Coordinator:**

<https://acf.gov/orr/grant-funding/key-state-contacts>

**Request case consultation  
with the Refugee Youth  
Resource Center:**

<https://www.refugee-youth.org/>

# Key Players to Involve in Multidisciplinary Coordination on a Youth Trafficking Case



Child welfare professionals



Mental health professionals



Immigration attorney



PRS, TVAP/Aspire, RA, or other case worker



School staff

# Organizing & Connecting in Advance

Service providers supporting newcomer youth can prepare to meet the needs of survivors of trafficking by **collaborating around prevention efforts**:

- **Build standing relationships** with trafficking-informed providers before a crisis occurs
  - May include refugee services, legal, medical, mental health, education, and anti-trafficking providers
- Establish clear **referral and communication pathways**
  - Warm handoffs (as opposed to referrals alone) can improve follow-through and outcomes
- Develop or **join your local anti-trafficking taskforce**



# Case Scenario: José

You work with a refugee resettlement agency and just received a case referral from a partner organization looking to enroll a youth in case management services. José, a 17-year-old Salvadoran youth, is experiencing difficulties related to inconsistent school attendance and financial challenges at home. José is living with his adult cousin and working to support his family in El Salvador. Through this referral, you learn the youth is a former unaccompanied child with an HHS/OTIP Eligibility Letter.



# Case Scenario: José

You work with a refugee resettlement agency and just received a case referral from a partner organization looking to enroll a youth in case management services. José, a 17-year-old Salvadoran youth, is experiencing difficulties related to inconsistent school attendance and financial challenges at home. José is living with his adult cousin and working to support his family in El Salvador. Through this referral, you learn the youth is a former unaccompanied child with an HHS/OTIP Eligibility Letter.

Let's think through an initial referral and service plan. **In the chat:**

- What services and programs offered by your resettlement agency could you enroll José in as a survivor of human trafficking?
- What community resources or external partners would you refer him to?

# Conclusion & Resources

# USCRI TVAP Toolkits



**TOOLKIT**

FEBRUARY 2021

**Safety Planning with Foreign National Children and Youth Survivors of Trafficking**

USCRI-TVAP TRAFFICKING TOOLKIT SERIES



**TOOLKIT**

JUNE 2021

**Trauma-Informed Case Management with Foreign National Children and Youth Survivors of Trafficking**

USCRI-TVAP TRAFFICKING TOOLKIT SERIES



**TOOLKIT**

January 2023

**Special Considerations for Foreign National Children & Youth Survivors of Trafficking**

USCRI-TVAP TRAFFICKING TOOLKIT SERIES



Access these toolkits at: <https://refugees.org/trafficking/>

# Additional Resources



## Trafficking Trainings and Resources for Providers:

- [Training: SOAR Online – Practical Skills for Recognizing, Responding to, and Supporting Individuals Impacted by Human Trafficking](#) (OTIP)
- [Training: Understanding Human Trafficking](#) (OVC)
- [What is Human Trafficking?](#) (U.S. DOJ)
- [Definitions and Principles to Inform Human Trafficking Prevention](#) (OTIP)
- [Traumatic Stress Among Refugee Children: Responding to Abuse, Exploitation, and Trafficking](#) (Switchboard [Webinar](#) and [Guide](#))
- [Combating Child Labor Trafficking: A Resource Collection for Providers Serving URM and Other Youth](#) (Switchboard)
- [UC Resource Center: Child Trafficking Resources for Providers](#) (USCRI)
- [Child Trafficking Resources](#) (NCTSN)

## Multilingual Resources for Families:

- [UC Resource Center: Trafficking and Exploitation Resources for Families](#) (USCRI)
- [Refugee Youth Resource Center](#) (USCRI)
- [Am I in a Dangerous Working Situation? Anti-Trafficking Resource](#) (IRC)

## OTIP Request for Assistance (RFA) and Eligibility Letter:

- [Video: How to Apply for an Eligibility Letter for Foreign National Minors Who Experienced Human Trafficking](#)
- [Shepherd Case Management System to Submit RFA](#)
- [Shepherd User Guide](#)
- [RFA Instructions](#)
- [OTIP Child Eligibility Toolkit](#)

# Thank You!

**Contact Us:**

[refugeeyouthrc@refugees.org](mailto:refugeeyouthrc@refugees.org)

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The production of this material was supported by Grant #90RB0054 from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) and do not necessarily represent the official views of ACF.