

JUDICIAL



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Recognizing and supporting victims in the courtroom

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Victims May Be in Plain Sight

As a member of the judicial system, you may encounter victims of human trafficking. It is imperative that judges, lawyers, and court personnel recognize the indicators of human trafficking. Individuals who appear before the court as “prostitutes” or “assault victims” actually may be human trafficking victims. In some cases, their perpetrator the person who has been exploiting them may be present in the courtroom. As a result, bailiffs and court reporters may observe interactions that others do not, particularly when the judge is in chambers. You may be in a unique position to identify victims of human trafficking, report your suspicions, involve the proper authorities, and connect victims with important support services.

Trafficking victims can be any age, race, gender or nationality, including U.S. citizens

They may or may not have legal immigration status. Victims may be fearful and unable to speak freely, so it is best not to make assumptions about what you see. For example, don’t assume that because a person has a cell phone he or she is “free to leave.” Don’t assume that all individuals charged with prostitution are participating in the sex trade voluntarily. Instead, when handling these cases, recognize that defendants may actually be human trafficking victims. Under federal law, any person under the age of 18 induced to engage in commercial sex is always considered a human trafficking victim, regardless of force, fraud, or coercion.

Signs of Human Trafficking

Recognizing key indicators can save a life. This is the first step in identifying victims. If you see these indicators, human trafficking may be happening. Not all indicators listed below are present in every human trafficking situation. The presence or absence of any indicator is not necessarily proof of human trafficking.

- Does the person respond to questions as if he or she has been coached?
- Has the person been forced to perform sexual acts?
- Is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex acts?
- Is the person disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- Does the person show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Is the person in the company of a pimp to whom he or she defers to, or a representative of the trafficker who seems to be in control of the situation?
- Is the person in possession of his or her identification documents?
- Does someone, who is not a lawyer, appear to be invoking the person’s legal rights?

What You Can Do

1. **Get educated and spread the word.** Take the online awareness training available through the Blue Campaign website: www.dhs.gov/bluecampaign. Help educate all members of the judicial system, especially the prosecution and defense bar, about all aspects of human trafficking.

2. **Report human trafficking tips.**

To report human trafficking tips to law enforcement contact the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Tipline:

- (866) 347-2423 (toll-free from the U.S. & Canada)
- (802) 872-6199 (non-toll-free from anywhere in the world)
- www.ice.gov/tips (from anywhere on the internet)

Highly trained law enforcement specialists are always available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to receive human trafficking tips and to quickly disseminate leads directly to on-duty human trafficking investigators throughout the nation and around the world.

Call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) at 1-888-373-7888 to:

- Get help and connect with a service provider in your area;
- Provide information on potential human trafficking activity; or
- Learn more by requesting training, technical assistance, or resources.

3. **Direct victims to services in your area.** Many non-profits, grassroots organizations, houses of worship and faith-based groups provide services to human trafficking victims. From counseling and shelter, to legal representation, find out how to connect victims with the programs and service providers they need. Both the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services support direct services for victims through local providers. Visit www.usdoj.gov and www.hhs.gov to learn more.

4. **Get to know the task force in your area.** Court personnel, such as probation officers and bailiffs, might be able to sit on a task force. Human Trafficking Task Forces exist across the country. These task forces comprise federal, state, local, county, and tribal law enforcement and prosecutors, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide victim services. Find out whether there is a Human Trafficking Task Force in your area by visiting www.bja.gov.

5. **Visit the Blue Campaign website.** For more training, outreach materials, victim assistance materials, and information on how you can join the fight to end human trafficking. Go to: www.dhs.gov/bluecampaign. “Like” us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/bluecampaign. Or, contact us at: BlueCampaign@hq.dhs.gov.