



## THE ISSUE

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) says 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 purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.” In Florida, coercion is not required in labor trafficking of minors (787.06(3) FS).

## OVERVIEW

Labor trafficking is a form of human trafficking in which individuals perform labor or services by force, fraud, or coercion. The Office on Trafficking in Persons states some forms include debt bondage, forced labor and involuntary child labor. This can include domestic servitude, farmworkers harvesting crops under threat or violence, or factory workers forced to work in horrible conditions with little or no pay.

- **Bonded labor or debt bondage** occurs when a laborer must work as repayment for a loan or service in which the victim has no chance of ever repaying the loan. Food, rent, and any other daily living expenses are added to the victim’s tab. Imagine trying to pay off a car loan in which the balance never diminishes but instead increases every time you get gas, or service the car.
- **Forced labor** happens when victims are forced to work against their will, while being threatened by violence or punishment. We have all heard the phrase, “that’s not in my job description” when we were asked to perform duties that we did not know about or agree upon when we took the job. The workers exploited in forced labor do not have the opportunity to refuse or get help.
- **Child labor trafficking** involves force, fraud and coercion and may also involve children of immigrants. Giving your child an allowance for doing small jobs around the house is not involuntary child labor, but if someone else forced your child to work, and you had no control or authority, that would be.

## WHAT TO DO

Report to the Polaris Project  
National Human Trafficking Hotline  
**1-888-373-7888**

BeFree Textline Text “BeFree” to 233733

Palm Beach County Human Trafficking Task Force  
For additional information or to request training  
**(561) 687-6838**

Department of Children and Families Hotline for  
children under 18 years old:  
**1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)**

Palm Beach County Victim Services  
**(561) 833-7273 (24/7)**

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Palm Beach  
Bakihta Empowerment Program  
**(561) 345-2008**

## RESOURCES

Labor Trafficking  
National Human Trafficking Hotline  
[https://humantraffickinghotline.org/  
type-trafficking/labor-trafficking](https://humantraffickinghotline.org/type-trafficking/labor-trafficking)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office  
on Trafficking in Persons  
[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/otip/fact-sheet/  
fact-sheet-labor-trafficking-english](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/otip/fact-sheet/fact-sheet-labor-trafficking-english)

U.S. Department of State-Bureau of Consular Affairs  
[https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/  
employment/temporary-worker-visas.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html)

Indicators of Human Trafficking Homeland Security  
[https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/  
indicators-human-trafficking](https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/indicators-human-trafficking)

Child Labor Trafficking HEAL Trafficking: Health,  
Education, Advocacy, Linkage  
<https://healtrafficking.org/child-labor/>

*This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-VT-BX-K018 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime. The Office for Victims of Crime is a component of the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

If you cannot read the material, please contact PBSO  
at 561-688-3080 to request an alternate format.

PBSO #0335 Rev. 06/21

# LABOR TRAFFICKING



Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office  
Ric L. Bradshaw, Sheriff

## FORMS OF LABOR TRAFFICKING

According to a study by the Polaris Project based on calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, in 2019 the top three areas of labor trafficking in Florida were:

1. Agriculture and Animal rearing
2. Domestic work
3. Traveling sales crews

Goods and services we take for granted may come with a heavy price tag for people who have been forced to work against their will without protection for fair pay and humane conditions. It can happen anywhere, but being enshrouded in secrecy and silence, labor trafficking can be misunderstood and invisible. That makes it hard for authorities, law enforcement, and the public to recognize it, even when it is hiding in plain sight.

- Victims are often kept isolated and are watched or guarded by their traffickers.
- They may be “coached” to answer questions, and identity/travel documents are often held by the trafficker.
- Foreign born victims may be blackmailed by traffickers using their status as undocumented immigrants or their participation in an “illegal” industry.
- Traffickers keep foreign born victims silent by threatening to report them to law enforcement or immigration officials. Language is often a barrier for foreign born victims.
- Foreign born children may not be deprived of basic needs, and they work to send money home to their families. Sometimes our solutions are not seen as their solutions if they are cut off from working to help their families. These children may be angry and run away from the safe places they have been placed and refuse intervention on their behalf.

## PREVALENCE

Between December 7, 2007, and December 31, 2016, the Polaris operated Human Trafficking National Hotline received 32,208 cases of potential human trafficking and 10,085 potential cases of labor exploitation in the United States. The top categories for labor trafficking included domestic work, traveling sales crews, restaurants and food services, peddling & begging, agriculture & animal rearing, health & beauty, and construction. In a ranking of the top 10 states, Florida ranked #3 as a location for trafficking, right behind California and Texas.

Polaris 2019 data has reported that the top five forms of force fraud or coercion for that year were: 1) withholding pay/ earnings, 2) excessive working hours, 3) threatening to report to immigration, 4) verbal abuse and 5) withholding/denying needs.

Nearly half of the victims of labor trafficking reported to the National Hotline during the period between January 1, 2015-December 31, 2017 whose immigration status was identified were foreign nationals holding legal visas.

Individuals who have come here on a Visa, such as H-2A (Agricultural) or H-2B (Non-agricultural) may be vulnerable to traffickers. In Palm Beach County, they may find themselves in rural environments and kept away from individuals who might help. Many have come to the United States seeking opportunities, and in many cases, wanting to make money to send to their families in their home countries. What they find when they get here may be a trafficker looking to control and exploit them.

A sponsored individual who has a G-5 (Domestic worker) Visa is controlled by their sponsor. They are unable to work for someone else or leave upon penalty of deportation. Both documented and undocumented workers may be employed by sub-contractors of a particular industry. These sub-contractors may be committing illegal acts but remain under the radar for detection and scrutiny.



# STOP TRAFFICKING

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- *Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?*
- *Does the person show signs of having been deprived of food, water, sleep, or medical care?*
- *Is the person often in the company of someone who seems to be in control of the situation, including where they go, who they talk to, and speaking for them?*
- *Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?*
- *Does the person appear not to have a stable, suitable living situation or personal possessions?*
- *Can the person come and go as they wish? Are there extreme security measures?*

During your daily activities, pay attention to where you go and what you see. For example, if you see what appears to be living quarters in a massage parlor or nail salon, this may be a sign of trafficking. If children are coming to your door trying to sell items or magazine subscriptions, are they part of a trafficked sales crew? Are the lawn maintenance companies you see in your community providing safe working conditions and fair pay for their workers? At a hotel, are the workers who clean the rooms living on the property with no means to leave and deprived of fair pay and working standards?

