

What should I do if I think I have identified a child victim of trafficking?

Remember that your client is a victim of a crime even if she or he lacks legal status in the United States. She or he is eligible for services and has legal rights that must be protected. In addition to providing your services, there are other ways you can help your client:

- **Contact LIRS or USCCB** for assistance in obtaining benefits for your client. See the back panel of this brochure for contact information.
- **Call the Trafficking in Persons Information and Referral Hotline** (funded by the Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement)—**1-888-373-7888**—to help suspected victims to access services in your area.
- **Call the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force complaint line** (sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Labor)—**1-888-428-7581 (voice and TTY)**—to begin an investigation of a suspected case by federal law enforcement authorities.
- **Contact local child protection authorities in accordance with your state's mandatory reporting laws**, particularly if the child needs emergency care in a licensed foster home or facility.
- **Find a reputable attorney** to talk to your client about legal immigration issues and ensure that his or her rights are protected.

Where can I get more information or assistance with serving a trafficked child?

LIRS and USCCB staff can assist with guidance in navigating law enforcement referrals and eligibility for services. Contact one of the following for more information:

Program Coordinator
LIRS Trafficked Children Initiative
410-230-2758 trafficking@lirs.org

Children's Services Specialist
USCCB/MRS
202/541-3462 mrstvics@usccb.org



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410/230-2700, lirs@lirs.org, www.lirs.org
and

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Migration and Refugee Services**
3211 4th Street, NE, Washington, D.C. 20017
202/541-3352, mrs@usccb.org, www.usccb.org/mrs

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Assistance for Trafficked Children

Information for Social Service Providers

What is trafficking?

In 2000 Congress passed the **Trafficking Victims Protection Act**, which provides immigration relief and social services to eligible victims of trafficking. Congress defines trafficking as...

- sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform the act is under 18 years of age; or
- 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.

Any child under the age of 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is a victim of trafficking, as a minor cannot consent to such acts.

Are children trafficked to the United States?

In cities throughout the United States, women, men, and children are subjected to forced prostitution, domestic servitude, debt bondage, or labor for little or no pay. The U.S. government estimates that as many as 17,500 persons are trafficked into the country each year for these purposes. They may come from almost any region in the world.

How will I recognize a victim of trafficking?

If you wonder whether a child you know is a victim of trafficking, consider that he or she...

- may be from outside the United States
- must be a victim of one of the acts identified by Congress (at left).

In addition, a child victim...

- may not have any immigration or identification documents because these may have been confiscated by the traffickers
- may have believed he or she was coming to the United States to be united with family, to work in a legitimate job or to attend school
- may owe a significant debt to a trafficker
- may have been subject to psychological intimidation or threats of physical harm to herself or her family members
- may have been referred to you by another social service agency, a healthcare provider or a law enforcement agency but may not have been identified by the referring agency as a victim of trafficking
- may have been sexually abused and traumatized
- may have been trafficked by family members or family friends
- may have family members that are also enslaved in their home country
- may have legitimate fears for the safety of herself and family members

What help is available for child victims of trafficking?

Child victims of trafficking may be eligible for federally funded, specialized services. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) are nonprofit voluntary agencies that work with the Office of Refugee Resettlement to place eligible child trafficking victims in culturally appropriate family foster care, small group care, or independent living, appropriate to the youth's developmental needs.

These specialized programs are known nationally as the **Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Programs**, and are located in cities across the United States. The URM Programs provide comprehensive services, such as...

- care within a family or group environment
- mental health services
- education
- medical care
- intensive case management services
- legal representation for immigration needs
- family reunification, if appropriate
- cultural orientation
- tutoring and career guidance
- independent living skills training

A law enforcement officer or other concerned party must send a referral to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in order for a trafficked child to enter a URM program.