



Migration and Refugee Services
ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

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Dear Safe Environment Coordinator:

On behalf of the MRS Anti-Trafficking Program (ATP), I am sending you this letter and accompanying materials as an introduction to human trafficking and its intersection with child abuse and neglect, particularly sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The comments by Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, Utah, address the 10th anniversary of the federal anti-trafficking law. We encourage you to use this letter to promote local conversation across your diocese about trafficking as a form of child slavery in order to build a local commitment toward abating or ending this heinous practice.

USCCB/MRS' Anti-Trafficking Program provides training and technical assistance to assist social service agencies, NGOs, governments, and other stakeholders build capacity for efficient and effective response systems to combat all forms of human trafficking, especially child trafficking, in their communities. ATP staff have expertise in serving both child and adult victims of sexual, labor, and domestic trafficking. The ATP developed a nationally recognized program model to serve foreign born victims of trafficking through a network of service providers "anytime and anywhere" in the United States. After 10 years of successful administration of these programs and provision of services to more than 3000 victims and their family members, this model has now been nationally adopted as the preferred mechanism to deliver services to victims.

Why do you need to know about trafficking?

Human trafficking happens "anytime and anywhere," impacting more than 12 million children and adults worldwide, according to the 2010 U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report. The International Labour Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimate that 1.2 million of these victims are under the age of 18. As many as 17-20,000 foreign national victims may be lured and exploited here the United States each year and, with the recognition that any child or youth victimized through commercial sexual exploitation is a victim of a severe form of human trafficking, the number of US citizen victims could be in tens of thousands.

Children 12 and younger are included in the numbers exploited and abused by traffickers. When children are trafficked, their right to develop in a nurturing and loving environment is stolen from them. Their right to be free and protected from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse is also stolen. At times, individuals whom they perceive as their protectors and caregivers are the ones that prey on them. The consequences – particularly of sexual trafficking - are far-reaching, extending to an inability of the youngster to ever develop the capacity to trust others and the development of mental and behavioral health issues. Children come into contact with sex traffickers and can remain in human bondage through a variety of mechanisms, to include organized labor groups regularly interfacing with foreign national children, peers whose purpose is to serve an intermediary role to gain the trust of a teen who may not have positive community and family connections, pimps, and even family members.

Protecting children from this horrendous reality starts with awareness. While some trafficked youngsters are already protected through national programs and some are in public child welfare programs, dioceses have a key role in helping to identify and protect child victims of trafficking.

What are the indicators of child trafficking?

These indicators were compiled through joint efforts of MRS ATP staff and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Evidence of sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse❖ Engagement in work unsuitable for children❖ Identification/documents confiscated by employer or someone else❖ Isolation - no access to family members or friends❖ Not in school or significant gaps in schooling❖ Threats against family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Working unusually long hours, no access to their wages, and/or little, if any, time off❖ Living in the workplace or with employer❖ Have tattoos or other marks indicating ownership by their exploiter – “branding”❖ Children owing large sums of money❖ Appear unusually fearful or anxious for themselves or family members
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What should you do if you encountered a victim?

- ❖ Contact your local law enforcement or child protection authorities in accordance with your state’s mandatory child abuse/neglect reporting laws. Many cases of trafficking may be prosecuted as child abuse, and vice-versa, depending on local laws. Law enforcement and child welfare agencies cross-report in most jurisdictions; however, it is a good idea to contact both. Keep in mind that if you are a mandatory reporter, many state laws require that you directly report suspected child abuse and neglect and cannot give the responsibility to report to another person.
- ❖ Call the National Trafficking in Persons Information and Referral Hotline 1-888-373-7888 (funded by the Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement) for technical assistance, and to access services in your area.
- ❖ Call the national Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force complaint line 1-888-428-7581 (sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Labor) to begin an investigation of a suspected case by federal law enforcement authorities.
- ❖ Call the USCCB Anti-Trafficking Services Program **1-202-541-3357** for consultation, technical assistance.

In closing, trafficking impacts more than adults – it impacts children and teenagers, the most vulnerable segment of our society and the consequences of trafficking are grave and far-reaching for this population. I hope that you take this opportunity to promote this important conversation across your Diocese and to build a community commitment toward abating or ending trafficking

Sincerely,



Beth Englander
Director, Special Programs