



Media Kit

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Definitions

Sex trafficking occurs when a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion if the victim is 18 years of age or older. Any minor who performs a commercial sex act is defined -- under federal and Tennessee law -- as a victim of sex trafficking, regardless of the use of force, fraud, or coercion.

The term “commercial sex act” is the giving or receiving of anything of value (money, drugs, shelter, food, clothing, etc.) to any person in exchange for a sex act. Commercial sex acts may include prostitution, pornography, and sexual performance. Some forms of sex trafficking include pimp-controlled trafficking, gang-controlled trafficking, or familial trafficking. In some cases, minors engage in ‘survival sex’ in order to meet basic needs such as food or shelter.

Basic Facts

(Various Sources)

- Worldwide, more than 27 million people are enslaved by traffickers today.
- 25% of children who run away from home are propositioned by a sex trafficker within 48 hours of leaving home.
- Every year, more than 1.2 million children are trafficked for the purpose of being sold for sex.
- On average, a child trapped in sex trafficking will remain enslaved for at least four years.
- Human trafficking is the second-fastest growing criminal industry, just behind drug trafficking.
- Human trafficking is an industry worth an estimated \$32 billion every year.
- In the United States, every two minutes, a child is bought or sold for sex.
- The average age of a child sold for sex is 13 years old.

Shared Hope International, a leading nonprofit working to address the issue of human trafficking, offers the following insightful graphic explaining the issue and contributing factors in detail.

<http://sharedhope.org/the-problem/what-is-sex-trafficking/>

Tennessee-Specific Research

In partnership with Vanderbilt University, TBI conducted two extensive research projects to understand human trafficking in Tennessee.

The first, in 2011, was primarily an anecdotal survey, which involved feedback from a variety of individuals – from law enforcement officers, to District Attorneys General, to DCS case workers – who had the potential to encounter cases of juvenile human trafficking

Among the findings:

- 85% of the state's counties (78 counties) reported at least one case of human sex trafficking in the previous 24 months.
- Eight counties reported more than 100 cases in the same time period: Shelby, Madison, Lawrence, Davidson, Coffee, Franklin, Hamilton, and Knox.
- 72% of the state's counties (68 counties) reported at least one case of minor human sex trafficking in the previous two years.
- Four counties reported more than 100 cases in the same time period: Shelby, Davidson, Coffee, and Knox.
- 30% of survey respondent reported they were not aware of services available for victims in their geographical area.
- 79% of respondents indicated they were not adequately trained to handle human sex trafficking.

The full study is available for review on the TBI's website.

<http://tn.gov/assets/entities/tbi/attachments/2011%20Tennessee%20Human%20Sex%20Trafficking%20and%20its%20Impact%20on%20Children%20and%20Youth.pdf>

In 2013, the TBI issued a follow-up study, detailing the geography of human trafficking, in an attempt to understand where trafficking occurs. This report profiled the 21 Tennessee counties reporting the highest numbers of minor human sex trafficking to show the socioeconomic conditions and characteristics of each county. The report also detailed the nature of technology – namely the online space – and how it impact the ability to identify the crime of trafficking.

The full study is available for review on the TBI's website:

<http://tn.gov/assets/entities/tbi/attachments/2013%20The%20Geography%20of%20Trafficking%20in%20Tennessee.pdf>

Tennessee's Approach

Tennessee leads the nation in its comprehensive work to addressing human trafficking. In recent years, Shared Hope International, a leading nonprofit in the fight against human trafficking has ranked Tennessee #1 or #2.

Read the recent report cards and see how Tennessee compares nationally online:

<http://sharedhope.org/what-we-do/bring-justice/reportcards/>

The state's Human Trafficking Task Force meets regularly, bringing law enforcement, invested state agencies, nonprofit agencies, and other stakeholders together to discuss best practices, policy needs, and the growing network of wraparound services for survivors.

TBI's Approach

As the state's lead law enforcement agency, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is uniquely positioned to address the issue of human trafficking.

In 2015, the Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation, signed into law by Governor Bill Haslam, granting the agency original jurisdiction over human trafficking. In other words, the TBI can embark on cases as it sees fit, without the request of a local District Attorney General.

The General Assembly also allocated funding for four designated TBI Special Agents, who work investigations of this nature across the state. They also train law enforcement officers on the fundamentals of human trafficking, how to recognize a potential victim or trafficker, and how to connect the victim with vital services.

The TBI also regularly embarks on specialized operations, under the name of "Operation Someone Like Me." The ongoing effort focuses on demand reduction (including those seeking sex with minors), along with the recovery of victims of human trafficking. The operation has resulted in the arrests of several hundred men, including several alleged traffickers, along with the recovery of girls and young women identified as victims of human trafficking.

Recent news releases about Operation Someone Like Me can be found on the TBI Newsroom blog: <https://tbinewsroom.com/?s=someone+like+me>.

The ITHasToStop Campaign

As part of its effort to educate the public about the issue of human trafficking, the TBI launched its ITHasToStop campaign in 2014.

The campaign seeks to educate the public about this type of crime and the warning signs of potential victims, and what to do to end it.

In 2016, grant funding from the State of Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs vastly expanded the message of ITHasToStop, with a PSA campaign on Tennessee television and radio stations, along with a statewide billboard campaign.

The billboard campaign continued in 2017, along with a re-launch of ITHasToStop.com, the centerpiece of the TBI's public awareness campaign.

Video Assets

The TBI offers several videos on its YouTube channel to support the ITHasToStop campaign. All are available for download and rebroadcast.

- 15-second PSA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHhFOClcylo>
- 30-second PSA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nh9VL77F8Q>
- 60-second PSA: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBbqY72U8-s>
- Operation Someone Like Me Explainer (TRT 3:36):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXwXeRi-aRE>
- TBI ASAC Margie Quin, speaking about Tennessee's response to human trafficking, at the Shared Hope International Conference (2014):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JX8updAbAY>
- TBI Assistant Special Agent-In-Charge Margie Quin discusses the problem of human trafficking during a presentation at Vanderbilt University on May 21, 2013:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wg0sWgjZY>

Media Inquiries

Questions about human trafficking in Tennessee, the TBI's approach, or the ITHasToStop campaign should be addressed to TBI.Media@tn.gov.