



Guidance for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Applicants and Grantees

On Serving Survivors of Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking in Ohio

Human trafficking is defined by the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel victims into performing labor or commercial sex acts. In Ohio, men, women, and children have been exploited in diverse industries, including street-based prostitution, online escort services, agriculture, illicit massage businesses, domestic service, and many other venues involving forced labor and commercial sex.

Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence, Dating Violence & Sexual Assault

Traffickers and perpetrators of domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault use similar tactics to manipulate, control, and abuse victims. Polaris, a national anti-trafficking advocacy organization, developed the Human Trafficking Power and Control Wheel below, which was adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project’s Duluth Model Power and Control Wheel. The wheel demonstrates both the similarities and variances between human trafficking and domestic violence.

Due to the similarities of the abuse experienced by victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grantees are often well suited to meet the needs of human trafficking victims. According to Polaris, domestic violence programs specifically have “unique staff education on interpersonal violence, a nuanced understanding of safety concerns, confidential locations, holistic services (such as counseling and case management), and a focus on trauma-informed services.”

Further, domestic violence programs are often already serving individuals who have been trafficked without knowing it, as victims often do not self-identify as human trafficking victims, and are commonly trafficked by an intimate partner or family member.¹

While there are similarities between the service needs of survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault, it is also important for programs to be familiar with the



¹ Polaris: Myths, Facts, and Statistics. <https://polarisproject.org/myths-facts-and-statistics/>

service considerations unique to human trafficking survivors. The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) seeks to aid VAWA grantees in serving, and particularly housing, this under-served population through the provision of guidance, resources, and training.

Therefore, OCJS encourages domestic violence programs and other programs to use their expertise to meet the housing and service needs of trafficking victims, and to review the resources and service considerations for housing and serving victims of human trafficking.

Guidance for Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, & Sexual Assault Programs

When considering how trauma-informed services are provided for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking who may also be victims of human trafficking, organizations should consider and demonstrate an ability to do the following:

- Connect human trafficking survivors to comprehensive case management services in-house or through partnership(s) with an organization that specializes in serving human trafficking survivors. Organizations can refer to the [map of Ohio's anti-trafficking coalitions](#) to connect with trafficking-specific service providers. Organizations should consider executing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with identified partners.
- Assess whether program services are trauma-informed and culturally-responsive to serving survivors of human trafficking.

The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) houses the State Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and is the lead agency of the Governor's Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force. OCJS is readily available as a resource to Violence Against Women Act/Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (VAWA/FVPSA) grantees seeking to serve trafficking victims. Applicants can also visit www.humantrafficking.ohio.gov for more information on human trafficking in Ohio and Ohio's coordinated response efforts. Applicants can also refer to the *Training Resources* section on page 6 for human trafficking training options.

Barriers and Solutions to Serving Human Trafficking Victims:

Polaris developed the following examples for how domestic violence programs can adapt their policies and practices to meet the service needs of human trafficking survivors. OCJS has provided further resources and guidance within each section for service providers in Ohio *in bold*.

Barrier: Trafficking indicators are missed by staff during screening and intake

Solution: Institute comprehensive staff training on the nuances of human trafficking and domestic violence, including screening questions.

*A list of human trafficking screening tools can be founded at www.humantrafficking.ohio.gov on the "Resources" page. For advanced human trafficking training options, see the *Training Resources* section on page 6.*

Barrier: Organizational definition of “domestic violence” excludes trafficking survivors

Solution: Consider expanding the definition of domestic violence to include victims of all forms of interpersonal violence (e.g. by intimate partners, family members, “pimps”, and employers.)

Barrier: Rejecting survivors with substance use histories

Solution: Research shows [that substance use is heavily linked with the trauma of domestic violence and human trafficking](#). Some abusers and traffickers may even instigate or heavily manage a survivor’s substance use. Instead of disqualifying shelter applicants who have a history of substance use, consider partnering with local substance use disorder treatment programs to equip these residents with additional support.

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)-funded programs cannot impose conditions for admission to shelter by applying “inappropriate screening mechanisms, such as criminal background checks, sobriety requirements, and requirements to obtain specific legal remedies, or mental health or substance use screenings” (45 CFR § 1370). Consult training resources from the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC), such as [Human Trafficking and the Opioid Crisis](#).

Barrier: Gender-specific sheltering

Solution: Trafficking survivors include cisgender men, transgender men and women, and gender non-conforming individuals. As stated under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, domestic violence shelters must “provide comparable services to victims regardless of actual or perceived sex, including gender identity” and should do so for trafficking survivors as well. (For more information, see [VAWnet’s collection of resources](#) on serving trans, non-binary and male survivors).

Federal law puts forth similar requirements for programs using funds made available under the Violence Against Women Act. If sex segregation or sex-specific programming is necessary to the essential operation of a program, grantees may meet the requirements by providing comparable services to individuals who cannot be provided with the sex-segregated or sex-specific programming (34 USC § 12291).

Barrier: Mandatory group counseling

Solution: Trafficking survivors may feel isolated or stigmatized by fellow shelter residents since their experience is not always shared and often misunderstood among domestic violence survivors. Requiring a trafficking survivor to share the details of their experience in a group setting can not only be re-traumatizing, but can further alienate the survivor from the household.

For programs receiving funds made available under the Violence Against Women Act, services must be voluntary and conditions cannot be placed on clients in order to receive shelter.

Barrier: Required chores

Solution: Labor trafficking survivors may feel re-traumatized performing some household work that closely mirrors their trafficking situation. Shelters should consider working with survivors to identify the chores that these residents feel most comfortable performing or incorporating cleaning services in their annual budgets.

Related training resource - [Labor Trafficking and the Intersection with Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault](#) (Webinar), provided by Futures Without Violence.

Barrier: “Locked down” facilities

Solution: Being restricted from leaving the facility can mirror the isolation and confinement their trafficker imposed. Shelters should consider redesigning their policies to allow for private and common areas as well as flexibility around or the elimination of curfews.

For training options on trauma-informed practices specific to human trafficking, see the Training Resources section on page 6.

Barrier: Legal issues

Solution: Trafficking survivors may have complex legal needs that fall outside the scope of domestic violence legal services. Shelters can collaborate with local legal service providers who specialize in trafficking related legal issues (e.g. immigration concerns, crime histories related to their trafficking experience, etc.). The online [National Human Trafficking Referral Directory](#) or the [Human Trafficking Legal Center](#) can help identify local services.

There are several organizations in Ohio that provide legal services for victims of human trafficking, including [Advocating Opportunity](#), [Advocates for Basic Legal Equality](#), and the [Ohio Justice & Policy Center](#). If providing services to undocumented foreign national victims of human trafficking, clients may be eligible for various forms of immigration relief (T Visa, U Visa, Continued Presence, etc.), and may be eligible for Medicaid enrollment in Ohio.

Barrier: Employment requirements for residents

Solution: Many trafficking survivors do not have traditional employment histories or they may have criminal histories preventing employment. Foreign national survivors can be without work permits and some survivors of labor trafficking may be re-traumatized returning to certain forms of work. Shelters should consider alternatives like encouraging school enrollment/GED classes, ESL classes, or providing job readiness training.

Depending on the region of Ohio, there are non-profit organizations and [anti-trafficking coalitions](#) that raise funds to provide scholarships for survivors of human trafficking to pursue educational opportunities.

Service Needs of Human Trafficking Survivors

The continuum of service needs for trafficking survivors does not need to be provided in-house or by one organization. There are many service providers in Ohio that will partner with domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault programs to meet the service needs of trafficked clients. OCJS recommends programs participate in a community collaborative network, such as an anti-trafficking coalition, to meet the comprehensive services needs of trafficking survivors.

Common service needs of trafficking survivors:

Below is a list of common service needs of survivors of human trafficking.² For trafficking-specific providers in your region, contact your local anti-trafficking coalition. If you do not have a coalition in your county, you can contact the State Anti-Trafficking Coordinator at mcbusch@dps.ohio.gov.

- Safety planning
- Food, clothing, and other basic needs
- All forms of housing (e.g. emergency shelter, transitional, long-term)
- Legal assistance, which may include: filing for immigration relief, reunification/repatriation, civil litigation, family, and other civil matters
- Vacating/expunging criminal convictions
- Translation services
- Child care
- Transportation services
- Address confidentiality program
- Victim/witness notification
- Victim compensation
- Medical and dental health services
- Behavioral health services (may include substance abuse treatment)
- Life skills education
- Education
- Job training/employment placement assistance
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate services

Domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault programs are not expected to meet these needs in-house. Rather, programs should be aware of the service needs, and build partnerships with organizations in their respective region(s) that can provide the identified services to survivors of human trafficking.

Trauma-informed care:

Providing trauma-informed care to trafficking survivors requires an understanding of the dynamics unique to human trafficking. To receive training, refer to the [Practical Implementation of Trauma-Informed Care](#) (Webinar), provided by Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and the Freedom Network. Further, social service providers can access the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center's [Understanding Human Trafficking](#) training, which offers foundational learning on trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches to human trafficking. These trainings and other recommended trainings are included in the *Training Resources* section below. To request in-person training on trauma-informed care, organizations can submit a request at www.humantrafficking.ohio.gov on the "Request a Speaker" page.

OCJS also recommends that direct service providers review and adhere to [Ohio's Standards of Service for Trafficked Persons](#) when serving victims of human trafficking.

In order to identify whether or not clients have a lived experience of human trafficking, organizations may opt to use a screening/assessment tool or add trafficking-specific questions to the intake process.

² List of service needs obtained from the Colorado Human Trafficking Council

Organizations may also opt to provide annual human trafficking training to staff on human trafficking victim identification and rely on interpersonal relationships and client disclosure, as trafficking victims often do not self-identify as human trafficking victims.

Training Resources

Human Trafficking Training Sources

- Submit a speaker request to the Governor’s Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force - <https://humantrafficking.ohio.gov/speaker.html>
- SOAR for Social Services (HHS) - <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/soar-to-health-and-wellness-training>
- Futures Without Violence webinars - <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/resources-events/webinars/>
- National Human Trafficking Hotline (Polaris) - <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC) - <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/nhttac>
- Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) - <https://www.ovcctac.gov/views/HowWeCanHelp/dspHumanTrafficking.cfm>
- Freedom Network Training Institute: <https://freedomnetworkusa.org/training/>

Specific Trainings:

- The Governor’s Ohio Human Trafficking Training Video (Human Trafficking 101) for 1 free CEU - <https://www.apps.das.ohio.gov/HT/>
- Office for Victims of Crime - *Understanding Human Trafficking* training: <https://www.ovcctac.gov/understandinghumantrafficking/>
- Freedom Network - *Practical Implementation of Trauma Informed Care*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqS7jiqsR1M>
- Futures Without Violence - *Labor Trafficking and the Intersection with Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault*: <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/labor-trafficking/>
- National Human Trafficking Training & Technical Assistance Center - *Human Trafficking and the Opioid Crisis*

Annual Anti-Trafficking Conferences:

- [The Freedom Network](#) (national conference held at a different location each year)
- [Ohio Attorney General Yost’s Annual Human Trafficking Summit](#) (hosted annually by the Ohio Attorney General’s office)
- [End Slavery Cincinnati](#) Annual Human Trafficking Conference (hosted every January or February by End Slavery Cincinnati and The Salvation Army of Greater Cincinnati)
- Ohio Human Trafficking Awareness Day (hosted annually by members of the Ohio General Assembly)
- [University of Toledo’s Human Trafficking and Social Justice Conference](#) (hosted annually in September)