

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN CALIFORNIA**  
**California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery**  
**(CA ACTS) Task Force**

**FACT SHEET**

**What is human trafficking?**

- Human trafficking is controlling a person through force, fraud or coercion – physical or psychological – to exploit the person for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or both.
- Human trafficking is a violation of fundamental human rights, and is often referred to as “a modern form of slavery.”

**How does human trafficking differ from past slavery?**

- In the past, slavery involved publicly buying and selling human beings for forced labor.
- Human trafficking is a hidden crime. Traffickers often lure victims into the United States with deceptive promises of good jobs and better lives, and then force them to work under brutal and inhuman conditions and deprive them of their freedom.
- Once in this country, many suffer extreme physical and mental abuse, including rape, sexual exploitation, torture, beatings, starvation, neglect, death threats and threats to family members. (U.S. Department of Justice, *Trafficking in Persons: A Guide for Non-Governmental Organizations*)

**What are some examples of the work trafficked victims perform?**

- Victims of human trafficking often work in sweatshops, forced prostitution, domestic household services and restaurants. Some may work as agricultural laborers. Some may be “mail-order brides.” Human trafficking victims may also perform construction labor, hotel and motel cleaning services and a variety of other services.

**How extensive is human trafficking in California?**

- California is a top destination state for human traffickers. (*Freedom Denied: Forced Labor in California*, University of California, Berkeley, 2005) However, because of the hidden nature of the crime of human trafficking, the exact extent of the problem is difficult to quantify.
- California’s five anti-trafficking regional Task Forces funded by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance report that between December 1, 2005 and March 12, 2007, 599 potential victims of human trafficking were identified.
- Between 1998 and 2003, human trafficking operations were found in almost a dozen cities in California, including Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose. (*Freedom Denied: Forced Labor in California*, University of California, Berkeley, 2005)

### **What is the extent of the problem nationally?**

- The federal government estimates between 14,500 and 17,500 victims of human trafficking in this country. (U.S. Department of State) However, exact numbers are difficult to determine due to the hidden nature of this crime.
- Approximately 80 percent of victims trafficked from other countries are women and girls and up to 50 percent are minors. (*Trafficking in Persons Report*, 2007, U.S. Department of State)
- As of October 30, 2007, there were 1,303 federally certified victims of human trafficking, from 80 countries (U.S. Department of Justice). Because victims fear retaliation, and because of the difficulties of undertaking the application process, the actual number of victims is undoubtedly much higher.

### **What is the California Alliance to Combat Trafficking and Slavery (CA ACTS) Task Force**

- The CA ACTS Task Force was established by the California Trafficking Victims Protection Act (Lieber, 2005) and the Human Trafficking Collaboration and Training Act (Kuehl, 2005).
- The Task Force consisted of 19 members representing agencies and organizations mandated by the law, including law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders, the judiciary, non-governmental organizations, health services, social services, mental health, domestic violence and sexual assault services, researchers, farm workers, immigrants' rights groups and labor.
- The law charged the Task Force with examining California's progress against trafficking and reporting its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Attorney General and the Legislature.
- The Attorney General's Office was charged with chairing and administering the work of the Task Force.

### **What laws has California enacted to combat human trafficking?**

- The California Trafficking Victims Protection Act (Lieber, 2005) made human trafficking a felony in California, provided measures to assist victims in rebuilding their lives and established the CA ACTS Task Force.
- The Human Trafficking Collaboration and Training Act (Kuehl, 2005) required the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to develop a curriculum on human trafficking for law enforcement, and also helped establish the CA ACTS Task Force. POST has completed and distributed the curriculum.
- The Access to Benefits for Human Trafficking and Other Serious Crime Victims Act (Kuehl, 2006) made California the first state in the nation to enact a law providing a "bridge" of temporary services to offer immediate assistance to victims as they await approval for federal benefits.