

BUSINESSSAFE

BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.

Florida Fusion Center 21-008

January 2021, Issue #42

BusinessSafe Threat Topic: Human Trafficking

January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Human trafficking in Florida is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. In 2019, the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) reported the most common locations in Florida for sex trafficking tips included illicit massage/spa establishments, residence-based commercial sex facilities, and hotels/motels. For labor trafficking tips, the top venues/industries included domestic work (nanny or a cleaning services), agriculture, and construction.

The number of different tactics and techniques used by traffickers both in-person and via online communications continue to evolve even during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the impacts of COVID-19 on human trafficking activities remain largely unknown, it is believed that online recruitment of victims has increased.

The number of ways a victim can be contacted online by traffickers is virtually limitless. Traffickers are very likely to use the internet to contact victims. Victims may be contacted many different ways, including on social media platforms, gaming applications, dating websites, and job/recruitment websites. Some of the tactics traffickers may use when communicating with victims are offering them a better lifestyle, fake employment opportunities, or pretending to be the victim's friend or potential romantic partner. Vulnerable populations may be targeted, including those dealing with homelessness, poverty, drug or substance abuse, developmental disabilities, runaway youth, or undocumented immigrants/migrant workers.

- [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\) March 2020 Public Service Announcement – Human Traffickers Continue to Use Popular Online Platforms to Recruit Victims](#)
- [17-Year-Old Florida Boy Charged with Sex Trafficking of a 14-Year-Old Girl on Social Media](#)
- [Florida Man Recruited and Groomed Victims via Online Advertisements](#)

Sex trafficking and labor trafficking are an ongoing challenge in Florida. Sex trafficking offenses in Florida are reported more frequently than labor trafficking. There are many myths associated with sex trafficking. Common myths include: only foreign nationals are trafficked in the United States, only women and girls are trafficked, and traffickers only target victims they do not know. None of these are true.



Florida Fusion Center
(800) 342-0820

FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us

Author: FL8791, Approval: FL8600, HSEC-1, FSIN-3

Labor trafficking is a major concern associated with large scale events, increases in tourism, and the large amount of agricultural lands in the state. Common labor trafficking tactics include unlawfully garnishing workers' wages, forcing victims to live in unhealthy conditions, and not allowing them proper equipment and/or training to remain safe on the job. It is believed that throughout the state labor trafficking is occurring with much more regularity than what is actually reported.

- [Six People Arrested and Five Victims Recovered in a Human Trafficking Operation in Hillsborough County, Florida](#)
- [Delray, Florida Man Trafficked Women and Girls for Sex and Labor in 2019](#)
- [Two Members of a Church in California Plead Guilty to a Labor Trafficking Scheme](#)

Human Trafficking Resources and Reporting Mechanisms:

- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides online safety tips as well as indicators to help spot sex or labor trafficking victims based on different types of trafficking.
 - [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Blue Campaign Online Safety](#)
 - [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Blue Campaign Human Trafficking Indicators Reference Guide](#) – *Reference Guides Available in Multiple Languages (PDF)*
- The Polaris Project, which is part of the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), has resources on different types of labor trafficking.
 - [Polaris Project Labor Trafficking Additional Resources](#)
- Report known or suspected trafficking to one of entities referenced below:
 - Local Authorities (Police Department or Sheriff's Office)
 - National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888
 - Text HELP to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at BeFree or 233733
 - Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE or 1-888-962-2873, if you suspect the victim is a minor (under 18 years of age)
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation – Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at www.IC3.gov, if you suspect human trafficking activities online
 - Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Exploitation at 1-800-633-3572, if you suspect the victim is being labor trafficked
 - Dial 9-1-1 for emergency situations

To sign up to receive *BusinessSafe* directly to your email, visit our [website](#).



Florida Fusion Center
(800) 342-0820

FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us

Author: FL8791, Approval: FL8600, HSEC-1, FSIN-3