



VICTIM ASSISTANCE FACT SHEET



Human trafficking¹ is a modern-day form of slavery. After drug-dealing, human trafficking is tied with the illegal arms industry as the second largest criminal industry in the world today, and it is the fastest growing.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) provides a means for non-citizen victims in the U.S. to apply for a special visa and other benefits and services so that they can safely and securely rebuild their lives. Among the social services that qualified victims can access are legal, housing, job placement, health care and educational assistance programs. Victims who are U.S. citizens are already eligible to receive many of these benefits.

Assistance Available to Victims of Human Trafficking

Adult victims of human trafficking (age 18 and over) who are certified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) can receive Federally-funded services and benefits to the same extent as refugees. To receive certification, an individual must:

- Be a victim of human trafficking as defined by the TVPA;
- Be willing to assist with the investigation and prosecution of traffickers; and
- Have completed a bona fide application for a T visa; **or**
Have received Continued Presence status from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Child victims of human trafficking (under age 18) are immediately eligible for benefits – they do not need to apply for a T visa or get Continued Presence status. For such victims, HHS issues – once it has received proof that the child is a victim of trafficking – a “letter of eligibility.” The victim or the victim’s advocate may then present the letter to social service providers as proof of eligibility. Certified and eligible victims of human trafficking can receive benefits and services necessary for the safety and protection of their lives including:

- Housing or shelter assistance
- Food assistance
- Income assistance
- Employment assistance
- English language training
- Health care assistance
- Mental health services
- Assistance for victims of torture

See the reverse side for a list of some specific benefits available to certified-adult and eligible child victims of human trafficking.

Immigration Status

The TVPA signified a shift in the immigration law policy, which had previously resulted in many victims of human trafficking being deported as illegal aliens. The TVPA established the T visa to give victims of human trafficking temporary status in the United States. It recognizes that returning victims to their country of origin is often not in the best interests of victims and that victims need the opportunity to rebuild their lives without facing the threat of deportation.

After three years, a T visa recipient can apply for permanent residence status. In certain situations, it enables victims of human trafficking to get T visas for family members.

Following are some of the specific benefit programs for which victims can apply:

¹ The TVPA defines the crime of human trafficking as:

- A. The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age, **or**
- B. The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

TVPA, PL 106-386, § 103, 22 USC 7102.



Program	Description
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	A cash benefit and work opportunities program for needy families with children under age 18.
Food Stamp Program	Used like cash to pay for food at most grocery stores.
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	A monthly benefit for people who are blind, have severe disabilities, or are at least 65 years old and have limited income and resources.
Torture Treatment Program	HHS-funded social, legal, health and psychological services for victims of torture.
State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)	The public health insurance program for low-income, uninsured children 18 years of age or younger who do not qualify for Medicaid.
Unaccompanied Refugees Minor Program	Assists unaccompanied minor refugees and trafficking victims in developing skills to enter adulthood and achieve economic and social self-sufficiency. Provides family reunification assistance where appropriate.
Medicaid	The public health insurance program for people with low income and limited resources.
Health Screening	Provided by the State Department of Public Health for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of any illness (includes screening for TB, parasites, and hepatitis and vaccinations for children).
Refugee Cash and Medical Assistance (RCA & RMA)	HHS program available to victims who are ineligible for other cash or medical assistance programs such as TANF, SSI and Medicaid. Victims may receive this assistance for the 8 months following issuance of the letter of certification/eligibility.
One-Stop Career Center System	Free job search and employment centers that provide information and assistance for people who are looking for a job, or who need education and training in order to get a job.
Job Corps	DOL residential and job education program for youth aged 16-24.
Matching Grant	HHS-funded self-sufficiency program administered by private agencies. Provides job counseling and placement, case management, cash and living assistance.
Housing	Eligibility for public housing authority assistance.
State-specific Programs	Individual states offer additional programs. Contact the HHS Refugee Coordinator for a specific state for more information: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/partners/coordina.htm

For more information on human trafficking visit www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking.

Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline 1.888.3737.888