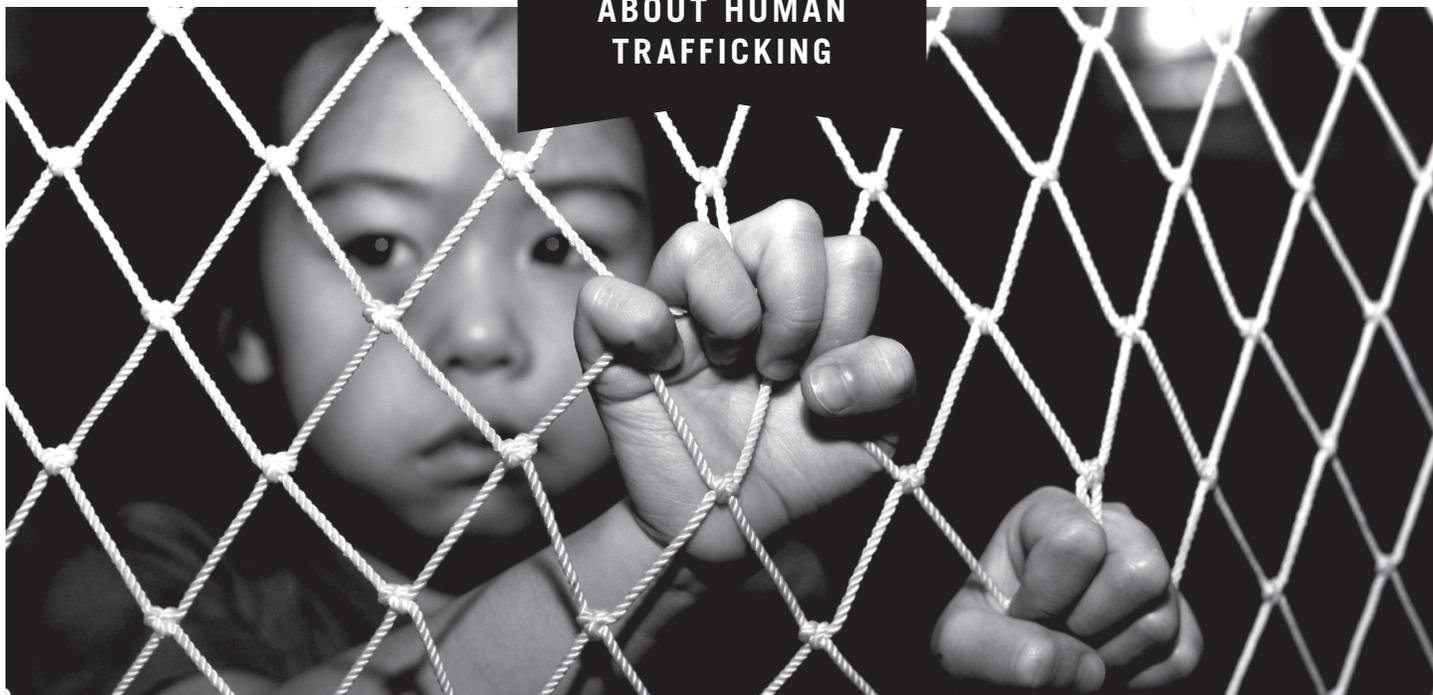


## COMMON MYTHS ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING



### **MYTH Human trafficking is the same as human smuggling**

Smuggling requires an illegal border crossing and is a crime against a country's border. Human trafficking is a crime against a person and involves commercial sex acts or labor or services that are induced through force, fraud or coercion, regardless of whether or not transportation occurs.

### **MYTH Trafficked persons can only be foreign nationals**

The federal definition of human trafficking includes both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. A common form of domestic trafficking includes persons under pimp control. It is estimated that approximately 100,000-300,000 U.S. children are trafficked or are vulnerable to human trafficking.

### **MYTH Persons who knowingly engage in illegal activities cannot be considered victims of trafficking.**

Initial consent to commercial sex or labor prior to acts of force, fraud or coercion is not relevant to the crime. If a person is forced, defrauded or coerced to perform commercial sex acts or labor against his or her will, he/she might be a victim of trafficking.

### **MYTH A person receiving payment for commercial sex acts or labor cannot be a victim of trafficking.**

Whether a person receives payment or other forms of compensation for commercial sex acts or labor has no effect on whether a person is trafficked. If a person is forced, defrauded, or coerced to perform commercial sex acts or labor against their will, he/she might be a victim of trafficking, regardless of payment.

### **MYTH Human trafficking requires the victim to be physically restrained, physically abused, or held in bondage.**

The legal definition of trafficking does not require physical restraint, bodily harm, or physical force. Psychological means of control, such as threats, fraud or abuse of the legal process, are sufficient elements of the crime.

### **MYTH All foreign national trafficking victims are undocumented immigrants**

While some foreign national trafficking victims are undocumented, immigrants with legitimate visas are also trafficked.

### **MYTH Only females are trafficked**

Men and boys are also victims of trafficking. Most males are not only trafficked to perform acts of labor but also trafficked in the commercial sex industry.

### **MYTH All trafficking situations include commercial enterprises, companies, business entities or organized crime rings**

Trafficking can exist even when the trafficker is not associated with a commercial enterprise or an organized crime ring. Any person who receives compensation or benefits from forcing a person to perform commercial sex acts or labor is a trafficker. For example, parents who force their child to perform sex acts with a landlord in lieu of rent may be considered a trafficker under law.

### **MYTH Victims will immediately ask for help and identify themselves**

Due to an extreme lack of trust, self-blame, shame, fear of arrest, threats of harm to family and/or other "grooming" methods used by the traffickers, victims tend not to immediately ask for help. This allows trafficking to occur in the open.