

Human Trafficking Prevention Month

January 2026 Guide

Light the Way



End Human Trafficking

TexasEndHumanTrafficking.org



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services
Human Trafficking

Light the Way



End Human Trafficking

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) invites faith and secular communities to stand with us during National Human Trafficking Awareness month this January. DFPS has made the fight against human trafficking a priority, and strives to improve awareness, services, and prevention efforts to eradicate trafficking in Texas.

The Participation Guide for Human Trafficking Prevention Month provides ideas that anyone can do – individuals, groups, organizations, businesses, and communities of faith. This guide provides a variety of activities hosted by DFPS, and highlights efforts and information from the Governor's Office and the Office of Attorney General, as well as, the Blue Campaign. This Guide by no means captures all of the anti-trafficking work and January activities that are happening in the great State of Texas.

Please feel free to research and participate in your local community's events.

- **Answer the call**

Learn and understand the signs of Human Trafficking.

- **Challenge Injustice**

Report if you suspect child abuse or human trafficking at 800-252-5400.

- **Show your support**

Email your Wear Blue and Blue Lights of Texas photos to HumanTrafficking@dfps.texas.gov

- **Follow Us**

Be sure to tag DFPS on social media by using the handle @TexasDFPS

- **Hashtags**

#HumanTraffickingPreventionMonth

#LightTheWayEndHumanTrafficking

#WearBlueDay

#TXPraysToEndHT

#TXBlueLights

#BeTheOne

#TXHTPCC



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services
Human Trafficking

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain labor or commercial sex. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked in countries around the world. This serious crime is not just a problem in other countries – it is also happening in the United States in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Human trafficking is a hidden crime as victims rarely come forward to seek help because of language barriers, fear of the traffickers, and/or fear of law enforcement. The need to increase public understanding and awareness about the prevalence of human trafficking is another factor contributing to its hidden nature.

There are different types of human trafficking:

- **Sex Trafficking**

Victims of sex trafficking are manipulated or forced to engage in sex acts for someone else's commercial gain. Sex trafficking is not prostitution. Anyone under the age of 18 engaging in commercial sex is considered to be a victim of human trafficking. **No exceptions.**

- **Forced Labor**

Victims of forced labor are compelled to work for little or no pay, often manufacturing or harvesting the products we use and consume every day.

- **Domestic Servitude**

Victims of domestic servitude are forced to work in isolation and are hidden in plain sight as nannies, housekeepers, or other domestic help.

What is the Difference Between Sexual Assault and Sex Trafficking?

- Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the consent of the recipient. It includes sexual acts against people who are unable to consent either due to age or lack of capacity.
- Sex trafficking means recruiting, harboring, transporting, patronizing, soliciting, obtaining, or providing a person to engage in a sex act in exchange for money or something of value. A victim of sex trafficking may also be a victim of sexual assault.

GRACE

Governor's Response Against Child Exploitation

Week of Prayer to End Human Trafficking January 5–11

The Office of the Texas Governor, the Office of the First Lady, and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and faith communities across Texas are working together to fight child sex trafficking.

Faith communities are encouraged to unite in prayer, become better educated about human trafficking, help prevent exploitation, and support survivors.

Check out and share the [GRACE website](https://gov.texas.gov/GRACE) (gov.texas.gov/GRACE) to see daily prayer intentions and more information about this week-long initiative.

Join us!

January 5–11

gov.texas.gov/grace



GRACE

Governor's Response
Against Child Exploitation



TEXAS

Department of Family
and Protective Services

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY SYMPOSIUM



2026 OAG

Human Trafficking Awareness Day Symposium

January 12

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Capitol Extension Auditorium

1101 Congress Avenue

In recognition of Human Trafficking Awareness Day, the Human Trafficking Division of the Office of the Attorney General is hosting a full-day symposium, focusing on the realities and myths of human trafficking in Texas.

Symposium speakers have tailored their presentations for an audience beyond those working in the human trafficking environment. Anyone interested in learning more about human trafficking is welcome to attend this special event. Topics include the myths of human trafficking, social media, artificial intelligence, child sexual abuse material, and the illicit massage business industry.

Click [here](#) to register.

Light the Way



End Human Trafficking

National Wear Blue Day January 11th

Join DFPS staff and take photos of friends, family, yourself and colleagues wearing blue clothing and then share them on social media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram – along with the **#WearBlueDay** hashtag.

**Anyone can participate –
all you need is some blue clothing!**

Be sure to tag DFPS in your post on social media by using the handle **@TexasDFPS**

Email your photos to **HumanTrafficking@dfps.texas.gov**



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services
Human Trafficking

Lunch & Learn Series – 2026



Human Trafficking Prevention Month

DFPS will host weekly webinars with subject matter experts during the lunch hour (starting at noon central) to speak about various human trafficking intersections and topics. Please plan to attend, bring your lunch and learn with us on the following Thursdays:

January 8, 2026

The Illicit Massage Business - Trafficking in Plain Sight
Assistant District Attorney Alicia "Ali" R. Crowley

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1488789773745456215>

Reminder: Wear Blue Day January 11th #WearBlueDay  

January 15, 2026

Human Trafficking Enforcement Challenges & The Texas Program
Tyler Dunman

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/9125608313164705117>

January 22, 2026

Youth System Approaches Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth
Sedoo Ijir, MPH and De'Asia Wiggins

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4170655864059326304>

January 29, 2026

Leading with Curiosity and Care:
Trauma-Informed Interactions with Youth
Sarah Hall, LPC-Associate

Register: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/874101201175446106>

For more information Email:
HumanTrafficking@dfps.texas.gov





Office of the Texas Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team

Child Sex Trafficking Team January Webinar

Mind the Gap: Using Civil Remedies
as a Creative Approach to Combating Crime

January 21

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Register for the webinar [here](#).

Join **Shantal Ortega, Assistant County Attorney** with the **El Paso County Attorney's Office** as she discusses using the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies code to address common nuisance properties in El Paso communities including those where suspected human trafficking is occurring. This webinar will address how this tool can aid in bridging the gap between criminal prosecution and addressing the crimes occurring on a particular property. This webinar will also include a discussion on working with different law enforcement and regulatory agencies in Texas to build a case and how prosecutors can bring different agencies to the table who share in the same goal of addressing criminal activity.





TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Stop Human Trafficking Texas License Plate

Proceeds support the *Stop Human Trafficking* donation account.



Available for purchase at MyPlates.com

– Five Ways – Faith-Based Organizations Can Help Fight Human Trafficking

1. Empowerment through Education

Learn and share the facts about how labor and sex trafficking effect your community. You can find educational resources at the following websites:

- Office on Trafficking in Persons, An Office of the Administration of Children and Families
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip>
- National Human Trafficking Hotline
<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
<http://www.missingkids.com/home>
- Department of Homeland Security
<https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>
- Shared Hope International
<https://sharedhope.org/>

2. Identify and Report

If you believe you have information about a potential trafficking situation call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Hotline advocates are available 24/7. All reports are confidential and you may remain anonymous. Promote the National Hotline by posting the hotline number and include it in community resource lists.

- Call - **1-888-373-7888**
- Text - **HELP to BEFREE (233733)**
- Email - help@humantraffickinghotline.org

3. Sponsor an Awareness event

Increase awareness by sponsoring opportunities to educate your faith community on how to identify, respond to, and prevent trafficking by hosting experts from the field (including survivors), sharing materials, or discussing films and documentaries about sex and labor trafficking.

- Be the One
<https://vimeo.com/244718411>
- Look Beneath the Surface to End Human Trafficking
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l76cqmHI_k0

4. Partner with local anti-trafficking coalition or task force

Texas has multi-disciplinary task forces or coalitions that need faith-based and community organizations to provide their particular expertise to strengthen efforts to combat local trafficking. For information on local groups, email: help@humantraffickinghotline.org or humantrafficking@dfps.texas.gov

5. Educate your Congregation

Shared Hope International offers resources for congregations to learn how to protect the youth in their church, and to equip them with tools in protecting their community. Faith Community Resources (Faith in Action Kit, Slaying the Giant). <https://sharedhope.org/store>





TEXANS ARE NOT FOR SALE

Human Trafficking Ends Here.

Los Texanos No Estan a la Venta. La Trata De Personas Termina Aqui.

Human Trafficking is a crime that involves exploiting a person for forced labor, services or commercial sex.

La Trata de Personas es un delito que implica la explotación de una persona para obligarla a realizar trabajos, servicios o comercializar sexo.

Human Trafficking RED FLAGS:

- Person appears submissive, fearful, tense, or paranoid.
- Person has physical injuries or branding such as a name tattoo.
- Person defers to another person when answering questions.
- Person lacks control over their money or identification documents.
- Person is unsure about who they are with or what they are doing.
- Person works excessive hours and lives where they work.

SEÑALES DE ALERTA ROJA de Trata de Personas:

- La persona parece sumisa, temerosa, tensa o paranoica.
- La persona tiene lesiones físicas o está marcada, como con un nombre tatuado.
- La persona se defiende a otra persona cuando responde preguntas.
- La persona carece de control sobre su dinero o documentos de identificación.
- La persona no está segura de con quién está o qué está haciendo.
- La persona trabaja demasiadas horas y vive donde trabaja.

REPORTING TRAFFICKING

To report suspected Human Trafficking, contact iWatchTexas at
844-643-2251 or www.iWatchTx.org

To obtain services for a Human Trafficking victim, contact the
National Human Trafficking Hotline at
888-373-7888

In any emergency, including Human Trafficking, **Dial 911**

Or learn more at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/human-trafficking



PARA DENUNCIAR LA TRATA DE PERSONAS: Para reportar sospechas de Trata de Personas, comuníquese con **iWatch-Texas** al **844-643-2251** o www.iWatchTx.org. **Marque el 911** en caso de emergencia, incluida la Trata de Personas. Para obtener servicios para una víctima de Trata de Personas, comuníquese con la **Línea Nacional de Trata de Personas** al **888-373-7888** o Más información en: www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/human-trafficking



Human trafficking is a crime that involves exploiting a person for forced labor, services or commercial sex. This is a list of signs or "red flags" that might indicate that sex trafficking is occurring.

Sex Trafficking **RED FLAGS:**

- Person seems overly fearful, submissive, tense, or paranoid.
- Person is deferring to another person before giving information.
- Person has physical injuries or branding such as tattoos about money, sex, pimp phrases or names.
- Clothing is inappropriately sexual and/or not appropriate for weather.
- Minor is unaccompanied at night or falters in giving an explanation of who they are with and what they are doing.
- Identification documents are held by another.
- Person works long hours or is always available "on demand."
- Person is overly sexual for age or situation.
- Person has multiple phones or social media accounts.
- Person has signs of unexplained wealth—new jewelry, shoes, phones, etc.

Women, men and children are trafficked in your hometown every day.



To learn more,
scan here.

Report suspicious activity to the National Human Trafficking Hotline
Call (888) 373-7888 or TEXT "BE FREE" (23373)

Learn more at: www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/human-trafficking
For questions, contact: humantrafficking@oag.texas.gov





Human trafficking is a crime that involves exploiting a person for forced labor, services, or commercial sex. An Illicit Massage Business (IMB) is a massage establishment that serves as a front for a commercial sex operation, often involving victims of human trafficking.

Human Trafficking **RED FLAGS** for Illicit Massage Businesses:

- Primarily female employees.
- Workers living at the business.
- Workers transported to the location by the owner or manager and all arriving and leaving at the same time.
- "Massage therapists" who are unlicensed.
- Mostly male customers.
- Customers parking away from the business, and watching for law enforcement.
- Business hours after 9 p.m.
- Massage prices below general market rates.
- Showers or shower tables.
- Multiple surveillance cameras.
- Window coverings that block the view of everything inside.
- Locked front door, must be buzzed in to enter; entrance is through side or back door of the establishment.
- Employee indicating a need for a large tip and showing distress when they don't get it.
- Employees working long hours, or always available "on demand."
- Researching the phone number brings up illicit advertisements or reviews.

IMBs have an estimated **\$2.5 billion** annual revenue.



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Call (888) 373-7888 or TEXT "BE FREE" (23373)

Learn more at: www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/human-trafficking
For questions, contact: humantrafficking@oag.texas.gov



TEXAS WORKERS

ARE NOT FOR SALE

Labor Trafficking Ends Here.



Men, women and children are trafficked
in your hometown every day.



Learn more at
www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/humantrafficking



BETHEONE

IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Please call the 24-hour hotline
to report suspicious activity

1-888-3737-888

or

text: 233733

PREVENT ★ RECOGNIZE ★ REPORT



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL *of* TEXAS



FAMILIAL TRAFFICKING WARNING SIGNS

Educators • Medical Professionals • Community Members



What we need to know:

- Trafficking usually begins with a family member. Traffickers can be a parent, grandparents, cousin, aunt, uncle, etc.
- Many commercial sexually exploited children in the United States have been sexually abused in a family situation
- Males are just as likely as females to be trafficked by their family
- Most kids who are sex trafficked don't consider themselves victims, many of them have been conditioned to normalize their situation
- Although 14-16 is a common age for victims to be trafficked, with familial victims typically the abuse starts at a much younger age
- Often emotional, psychological, physical, and relational isolation is a hallmark factor to familial trafficking
- Children come from many backgrounds: there is no standard socioeconomic situation, race, gender, creed or religious indicator to predict who will be trafficked over another child in a family situation

What we need to look for:

- Poor mental health, abnormal behaviors, and lack of control
- May be fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
- Tries to please adults or get inappropriate attention from them
- Tries to act older than peers or mental age
- Inconsistent behavior, frequent mood swings
- Behaviors that appear to be sexually promiscuous
- May have vague answers; have been taught to hide secrets
- May have non-evident injuries that affect physical activity
- Isolated and does not socialize normally with peers; poor communication skills
- Appears tired and unable to keep up in studies
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves (a third party may insist on being present and/or translating during school meetings, medical appointments, church, etc.)
- Constant cover up for abuser, self-shaming/blaming
- Lack of understanding and education about bodily functions, rape, incest, sexual abuse
- May have poor hygiene, be unaware of body odor or common practices

TO REPORT A TIP OR CONNECT WITH ANTI-TRAFFICKING SERVICES IN YOUR AREA, CONTACT:

⚠ If you see something suspicious, MAKE THE CALL.

You don't have to know all the details to be helpful.

**National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678**

If you have information about a missing child or suspected child sexual exploitation, call to report it or visit their website.
cybertipline.com

**National Human Trafficking Hotline
1-888-373-7888**

A national, toll-free hotline, available from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

IN AN EMERGENCY: 911

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND TRAUMA

Some of the most significant injuries suffered by human trafficking victims are often the least visible. Traffickers can use a victim's pre-existing relationships, immigration status, built-in trust, alcohol or drug use, or engagement in criminal activity to create vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities and the trauma associated with the experience coupled with feelings of guilt, self-blame, embarrassment, fear, and/or shame may have long-lasting psychological wounds. These emotions can have a significant impact on the ability to assist victims in their own personal healing process. Emotional distress may cause victims to return back to their trafficker numerous times while receiving services or assistance in their recovery.

The majority of trafficking situations are the culmination of many traumatic experiences, most of which are untreated. **Trauma affects how victims see themselves** ("I am helpless," "worthless"), their worldview ("the world is dangerous," "no one can protect me"), and relationships ("I cannot trust anyone"). **A trauma-informed approach is mindful of how to create a situation in which the victim is safe, makes his or her own choices, and feels understood.**

Key components of trauma-informed approaches:

- Realize (acknowledge) how trauma affects people
- Recognize the signs of trauma (fear, sadness, anger, mistrust, anxiety, self-harm, etc.)
- Respond by changing or improving tone, delivery, and language ("What's wrong?" becomes "What happened?")
- Resist re-traumatization by addressing trauma and toxic stress in the lives of both family/friends and people served



Professional training on trauma & trauma-informed approaches is essential and strongly encouraged.

VICTIM SERVICES

Knowing the services within your community before a victim comes forward can prepare you to offer immediate assistance and help reduce re-traumatization for the victim. Collaborate with organizations and agencies ahead of time to be aware of the services offered within your community. Some of the services that victims of trafficking may need include:



Emergency Services

- Crisis Intervention and Counseling
- Emergency Shelter and Referrals
- Urgent Medical Care
- Safety Planning
- Food and Clothing



Social Services

- Case Management
- Interpretation
- Housing
- Job Training and Education
- Court Accompaniment
- Employment Assistance
- Transportation
- Healthcare



Legal Services

- Immigration Status
- Criminal Case Services
- Civil Case Services
- Witness Protection
- Family Court Services
- Legal Representation
- Vacate Convictions

For more information about the services available to victims of human trafficking, including comprehensive service referrals in the U.S., visit the [National Human Trafficking Referral Directory](https://www.samhsa.gov).

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