



Building Effective Collaborations To Address Human Trafficking

It is impossible for any single agency or organization to respond comprehensively to all of the elements of human trafficking. Traffickers range from opportunistic individuals to sophisticated criminal organizations with multijurisdictional scope. The resulting victimization is extreme and involves diverse populations with a host of needs. Responses to human trafficking are most effective, coordinated, and efficient when they are multidisciplinary and collaborative in their problem solving.



Why Is Collaboration Important?

Effective collaboration is more easily conceptualized than accomplished; nevertheless, it is essential. Working through initial or longstanding challenges is a difficult but worthwhile endeavor. Everyone wants to make a greater impact on the problem. Effective multidisciplinary teams find that partnerships are the greatest strength in fighting crime and supporting victims.

Who Should Be Included in Your Partnership?

Addressing human trafficking requires the ability to identify and serve victims and to investigate and prosecute traffickers. Community education and awareness can contribute to these efforts by increasing support and funding as well as generating leads on potential victims and traffickers. Therefore, it is important to think creatively about all of the agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals who might be able to contribute something to your effort.

Partnerships will depend on what is available in your community, but here are some common members:

- Local, state, tribal (if applicable), and federal law enforcement.
- Child welfare systems.
- Juvenile justice systems.
- Child advocacy centers.
- Rape crisis centers.
- Domestic violence shelters and service providers.
- Civil legal service providers.
- Immigrant-serving agencies.
- Youth and mentoring programs.
- Courts.
- Public defenders.
- Human trafficking service programs.
- Hospitals and urgent care clinics.
- Schools, especially school resource officers and counselors.
- Student groups.

- Service organizations (such as Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce).
- Faith-based organizations (such as churches, mosques, temples, synagogues).
- Business leaders.

What Services Do Trafficking Survivors Need?

Trafficking survivors have a wide range of potential needs based on their age, type of victimization, level of trauma, immigration status, health, family structure, education level, skill level, criminal history, plans for the future, and many other factors. Organizations involved in addressing human trafficking—including law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers—need to build strong partnerships to ensure that all needs of all victims can be met.

Needs of victims of human trafficking may include—

- Case management.
- Child-specific (dependent) assistance.
- Clothing.
- Crisis intervention.
- Cultural and community support.
- Dental care (emergency and long-term).
- Education and GED classes.
- English as a Second Language classes.
- Financial literacy and education.
- Family contact or reunification.
- Food.
- Housing (emergency, transitional, permanent).
- Identification documents.
- Job preparation and placement.
- Legal representation (immigration, criminal, civil).
- Medical care (emergency and long-term).
- Mental health care (emergency and long-term).
- Public benefits assistance.
- Religious and spiritual assistance.

- Repatriation assistance.
- Safety planning.
- Sexual assault trauma services.
- Substance abuse services.
- Translation and interpretation.
- Transportation.
- Victim advocacy.

What Are the Necessary Elements To Be Able To Stop Traffickers?

Traffickers can be individuals or international gangs, first-time offenders or seasoned criminals, locals or international diplomats. Communities that have worked to develop a coordinated, collaborative approach to human trafficking will be in the best position to share the information, strategies, and resources needed to identify, investigate, and prosecute traffickers.

Needs of the criminal justice process include—

- Aggressive prosecution.
- Appropriate authority.
- Cross-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Effective equipment.
- Effective laws.
- Evidence.
- Expert witnesses.
- Informed judiciary.
- Interagency cooperation.
- Operational intelligence.
- Suspect identification.
- Training (ongoing to address turnover, and more advanced topics).
- Understanding of victim-centered investigations.
- Victim identification.
- Victim support services.
- Witness support for victims and nonvictims.

For more information, please visit www.ovc.gov/trafficking and www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide.

