BREAKING THE CYCLE OF INDIGENOUS TRAFFICKING IN TRANSIT

PREVENTION TOOLKIT

Developed in partnership with the Texas A&M Transportation Institute, South West Transit Association and Community Transportation Association of America.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Human Trafficking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Groups and Trafficking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking and Transportation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking Within Transit: Prevention</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Trafficking Within Transit: Intervention</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where to go for more</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ability of smaller transit operators to improve the lives of their passengers has long been well understood by the leadership and membership of the Community Transportation Association of America. Transit operations in Tribal communities around the nation are often a lifeline to work, school, healthcare, and vital social services. For Tribal passengers, these services are nothing short of essential. This toolkit spotlights another critical role for Tribal transit systems — combatting and preventing all forms of human trafficking.

On behalf of our project team — The Texas A&M Transportation Institute, the Southwest Transit Association, and the Community Transportation Association of America — it is our sincerest hope that this resource not only sheds light on the issue of human trafficking in Tribal lands but that it provides proven tactics and skills to prevent such crimes from ever occurring.

We collectively acknowledge that combatting and preventing human trafficking requires a community-wide approach. This vital toolkit will help Tribal transit agencies fulfill their responsibilities to the communities they so ably serve.

Scott Bogren
Executive Director
Community Transportation Association of America
MODERN DAY SLAVERY

DEFINING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A global industry, impacting 25 million people across the world (Polaris Project, 2018).

$150,000,000,000

Human trafficking, now often referred to as "modern-day slavery," represents a global business that capitalizes on the forced servitude of others (BOTL). This billion-dollar industry's main commodity is people - victimizing an estimated 25 million people worldwide (Polaris Project, 2018).

Research has shown that trafficking succeeds through the unwitting participation of various industries strategically utilized by traffickers to prey on vulnerable individuals and exploit them (Polaris Project, 2018). Industries include transit and other transportation modes, hotels and motels, social media, health care, and financial services.

Transportation, particularly transit, can be a part of all stages of the human trafficking cycle, from recruitment to recovery (BOTL).

Sex trafficking: Commercial sex is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act and includes sex acts with persons that have not attained 18 years of age.

Labor Trafficking: The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

(U.S. Dept. Justice, 22 U.S.S.§ 7102(9))
CONSIDERATIONS FOR NATIVE GROUPS

Currently, there are 574 sovereign tribal nations across 35 states in the U.S., with the largest concentration residing in Alaska (27.9%) (National Congress of American Indians, 2020). Nearly 7% of these tribes are located near international borders, sharing over 260 miles of borders and within a 100-mile distance of Canadian and Mexican borders (Chen, 2019; Riley, 2017).

Human trafficking can affect all groups, ages, and populations, yet research has demonstrated that American Indian/Alaskan Natives (AIANs) are at a higher risk for abuse (Administration for Native Americans). While AIANs represent only 11% of the United States population, they account for nearly 25% of all known trafficking cases in the United States (Pachelli, 2019). This population represents some of the most at-risk and least protected for human trafficking in the United States (GOA, 2021).

ISSUES IMPACTING TRAFFICKING AMONG AIANS GROUPS

The true scope of the problem of trafficking of vulnerable groups and the AIANs populations is difficult, as outlined by a recent report by the U.S. Government of Accountability Office in 2021. Problems such as:

- Jurisdictional control
- Data collection methodologies
- Lack of funding

"...while only 11% of the population, AIANs account for nearly 25% of all known trafficking cases in the U.S." (Pachelli, 2019)

Jurisdictional control: Tribal nations can fall under three jurisdictions - Federal, state, or tribal, which can create significant difficulties in persecuting cases of human trafficking (GOA, 2021).

Data Collection methodologies: Identifying AIANs populations can be difficult due to existing data collection structures that may misidentify or not collect this information (GOA, 2021).

Funding: Funding to support agencies can impact staff time, availability of agents, investigators, resources, and response times, thus significantly affecting the prosecution of cases (GOA, 2021).
SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS CONTRIBUTE TO HIGH RISKS

While these issues may cause complications for human trafficking across all cases, it is particularly important to note the unique and complicated circumstances in which this issue can affect the American Indian/Alaskan Natives (AIANs) populace. Research into human trafficking has identified several risk factors for individuals who may be preyed upon or forced into slavery. AIANs communities and the people that live there are often more vulnerable to human traffickers than others. Affected community conditions may include many variables that AIANs individuals represent higher percentages than other groups.

RISK FACTORS FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Historical trauma and cultural loss
- Generational hardships/poverty/economic needs,
- High numbers of homeless and runaway youth
- Involvement with criminal justice system,
- Person or family member has substance abuse issues,
- Immigrant status is undocumented,
- Discrimination, and
- Inequality

(National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center, 2016)

TRENDS AMONG NATIVE GROUPS

POVERTY

26.8%

Poverty rates within the AIAN population are significantly higher than the national rate - 26.8% vs 4.6% (NCAI, 2020).

YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHIC

Nearly 30% of AIANs is under 18 years of age compared to the U.S. (22%), (NCAI, 2020).

SIGNIFICANT POPULATION GROWTH

The AIANs population has grown by 39% since 2000 compared to 9.7% general population growth across the U.S. (NCAI, 2020).
Human Trafficking and TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION’S ROLE IN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is complex and difficult to track, measure, and scope. According to research from the Polaris Project, there are 25 types of modern slavery that involve human trafficking (2018). It is important to refer to each of these types by name to avoid generalization and to expose the various business models employed by traffickers (Polaris Project, 2018). Among the 25 types of slavery identified by the report, 64% intersects with transportation according to Polaris.

TYPES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING & TRANSPORTATION

- Escort services
- Illicit Massage Businesses
- Outdoor Solicitation
- Residential Sex Trafficking
- Domestic Work
- Bars, Strip Clubs, & Cantinas
- Pornography
- Traveling Sales Crews
- Restaurants and Food Service
- Agriculture & Animal Husbandry
- Health & Beauty Services
- Landscaping
- Illicit Activities
- Arts, Sports & Entertainment
- Carnivals
- Forestry & Logging

64% OF SLAVERY INTERSECTS WITH TRANSPORTATION

Polaris Project

National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
Human Trafficking Within Transit

**PREVENTION**

**TRIBAL TRANSIT CONSIDERATIONS**

Typically, tribal transit operators provide on-demand, fixed route, and long-distance/commuter services as well as connections to other regional and/or interstate transportation providers (e.g., intercity bus and rail services and air passenger service). As outlined above, a majority of human trafficking activity interacts with some aspect of transportation, including transit. Therefore, transit operators in and around tribal communities are well-positioned to combat human trafficking.

Transit operators and other transit employees have the potential to observe trafficking incidents during pickup/drop-off while operating service with riders on board, and while traveling through the community watching others. Transit may facilitate the act of trafficking and victims' exits from trafficking, so connections between organizations providing transit and organizations offering support to victims are critical.

Regardless of whether a crime may be in progress or a victim may require help exiting a trafficking situation, transit operators are the front line of a multifaceted response, and transit agencies should establish:

- standard operating procedures to support drivers (e.g., protocols for radio communication with supervisors/dispatchers)
- decision-making authority to re-route a vehicle or make unscheduled pickups,
- or basic trauma-informed situation management techniques.

**STAGES OF TRAFFICKING**

Transit's role in trafficking occurs in multiple stages, according to Busing on the Lookout (BOTL).

- **RECRUITMENT**
  - Transit pick up points
  - Frequently served destination
  - Transit Centers
  - Community observations

- **EXPLOITATION**
  - Travel to/from work locations
  - Community observations during operation

- **RECOVERY**
  - Travel to/from support groups, family work and social events
  - Established relationships between riders and drivers

- **EXIT**
  - Affordable and anonymous transportation
  - Direct connection to social services
  - Pseudo-authority

**National Human Trafficking Hotline:** 1-888-373-7888
Human Trafficking Within Transit

INTERVENTION

**OBSERVATION SAVES LIVES**

The principle of S.C.A.N. is very simple. It is an acronym to remind you to Survey your environment; Consider what you are observing as human trafficking; Acknowledge what you observed as human trafficking; and Notify the proper authorities to investigate the situation further.

As a transit worker, you must know what to do if you suspect or encounter human trafficking. If you see something you suspect is human trafficking... report it. Detail as much information about the situation as possible, including:

- Persons involved (victim and suspect)
- What you observed
- Location where the encounter took place
- Specify the time and date that the event was observed
- Make sure that you do not involve yourself by physically intervening

Even if the situation is not confirmed as trafficking, it is safer for you, the passengers, and the transit agency to report the incident. Making a “good faith” report of suspected human trafficking will not be held against you, and you may not be disciplined, retaliated against, or discriminated against for making a report.

All suspected incidents of human trafficking should be reported to law enforcement, your supervisor, or the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Calls at the National Human Trafficking Hotline are taken every hour, day, and week of the year.

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**Survey**

Surveying consists of assessing your working environment on every shift. When surveying the terminal, stops, or your mode of transit, always look for possible signs of human trafficking. Most importantly, if you think you see something that may be trafficking, follow your gut and continue gathering information.

**Consider**

Based on your available information, you may be able to form an educated opinion that leads you to conclude that what you are seeing may be trafficking.

- Dive a little deeper into why you are feeling the way you do,
- Make mental or take physical notes on what you’ve observed that leads you to further suspicion, and
- Consider all of the signs you’ve observed in the context of the totality of circumstances.

**Acknowledge**

Acknowledging is the act of concluding that what you have observed is most probably an instance of human trafficking. Based on all of the available information you have considered, does the end summation allow you to conclude that a person may be a victim of trafficking? If so, then acknowledge it and act.

**Notify**

Notification is the final step and requires you to actively reach out to law enforcement or other persons of authority to report you suspicion of human trafficking. If it is an emergency and you suspect a person is in danger or injury or death, immediately call 911 to report the incident to law enforcement.
**Human Trafficking Intervention in Tribal Transit**

**S.C.A.N.** is an acronym to remind you to focus on your environment. All suspected incidents of human trafficking should be reported to local enforcement, your supervisor, and/or to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Calls at the National Human Trafficking Hotline are taken every hour, day, and week of the year.

**Survey**
Surveying consists of assessing your working environment: every shift, every stop, every rider to look for possible signs of human trafficking. If you think you see something that may be trafficking, follow your gut and continue to gather information.

**Consider**
Dive a little deeper into why you are feeling the way you do, make mental or take physical notes on what you’ve observed that leads you to further suspicion, and consider all of the signs you’ve observed in the context of the totality of circumstances.

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As a transit worker, you must know what to do if you suspect or encounter human trafficking. If you see something you suspect is human trafficking, report it. Detail as much information as possible, including:
- Persons involved (victim and suspect)
- What you observed
- Location where the encounter took place
- Specify time and date that the event was observed
- Make sure that you do not involve yourself by physically intervening.
NATIVE TRAFFICKING POSTER/POCKETCARD

STAGES OF TRAFFICKING

Transits role in trafficking occurs in multiple stages, according to Busing on the Lookout (BOTL).

RECRUITMENT
- Transit pick up points
- Frequently served destination
- Transit Centers
- Community observations

EXPLOITATION
- Travel to/from work locations
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RECOVERY
- Travel to/from support groups, family work and social events
- Established relationships between riders and drivers

EXIT
- Affordable and anonymous transportation
- Direct connection to social services
- Pseudo-authority

National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
Where to go for more resources

**Tribal Resources for Human Trafficking**

- **Combating Human Trafficking in Indian Country:**
- **U.S. Government Accountability Office:**

**Transit Resources for Human Trafficking**

- **Busing on the Lookout:**
  https://truckersagainsttrafficking.org/bus-training/
- **Truckers Against Trafficking:**
  https://truckersagainsttrafficking.org/
- **U.S. Department of Transportation:**
  https://www.transportation.gov/stophumantrafficking

**Resources for Human Trafficking**

- **National Human Trafficking Hotline:**
  https://humantraffickinghotline.org/
- **United Nations:**
- **Polaris Project:**
  https://polarisproject.org/
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INPUT RECEIVED FROM REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE FOLLOWING TRIBAL NATIONS:

Cherokee Nation
Chickasaw Nation
Craig Trail Association
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
Ho-Chunk
Hopi
Huslia Tribe (Alaska)
Kaw Nation
Lucero
Manely Village Council
Native Village of Pt. Hope Alaska
Navajo Nation
Ogalala Sioux Tribe
Omaha
OST (Oglala Lulcota Nation)
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
Pueblo of Isleta
Pueblo of Jemez
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma
Upper Mattapori
Yakama Nation
Yavapai-Apache Nation
REFERENCES:


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FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES OR TO DOWNLOAD THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS PUBLICATION, VISIT:

www.safety4transit.org