

HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

*NGO Assistance for
Human Trafficking Victims
in VA*

Boat People SOS



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■ Survivor Services
Department Founded in
2001

■ Branch Offices in Virginia,
Texas, Maryland

Victims of Exploitation and Trafficking Assistance (VETA) Services

- Conduct outreach and education to increase awareness in the community regarding services and protections available in the US
- Provide training and technical assistance to service providers regarding cultural competency and legal services
- Provide case management and legal services for trafficking survivors

■ Case Examples of Trafficking in VA

Outreach

- Training of service providers
 - who will be serving our clients
 - who may already be (unknowingly) serving trafficking victims
- Training of LEAs
 - who we will need to call for assistance
 - who may be seeing trafficking crimes already
- Community Outreach- meeting with community groups to increase awareness and identification of trafficking victims; church groups, book clubs, school groups and classes, ethnic media

Why Local NGOs Are Needed

Trafficked individuals have a variety of needs that would require assistance from professionals with special expertise. Some of their needs are:

- ❖ Interpretation
- ❖ Housing, food, clothing
- ❖ Safety planning
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Medical care
- ❖ Mental health services
- ❖ Legal services, including immigration
- ❖ Reintegration

What to expect when encountering a victim

- Heightened sense of general fear
- Lack of trust
- Silence
- Little knowledge of their rights
- Inability to fully describe what happened
- Emotional reaction may not match the story
- Fear of law enforcement and immigration

Under the TVPA Victims Of Human Trafficking Are Entitled To:

- Safety
- Privacy
- Information
- Legal representation
- Be heard in court
- Medical assistance
- Compensation for damages
- Social assistance
- Seek residence
- Return

Case Management: Overview

- Provide assistance in meeting client's immediate and long-term goals
- Assess immediate, emergent needs
 - Housing, food, health care, clothing
 - Locate free or low-cost resources where available (including donations)
 - Provide others using grant funding (apartment, grocery cards, phone cards, medical care)
 - Apply for public benefits as client becomes eligible
- Assess and find resources for intermediate and long-term needs- education, employment, housing, childcare

Legal Services: Overview

- Legal issues may include:
 - Criminal
 - Immigration
 - Civil

Criminal Victim/Witness Advocacy

- Attorney educates victim about:
 - What happens during a criminal case
 - What to expect at each stage of the process
 - Who is involved
 - Victim's rights
- Attorney continues to assist through:
 - Representation during interviews with law enforcement (if client wishes)
 - Continuing advocacy for client during the criminal investigation and prosecution

Immigration Remedies for Victims of Trafficking

Short term:

Continued Presence

Long term:

T-Visa

Trafficking

U Visa

Violent Crimes

Civil Remedies

- Right to Civil Action was granted under TVPRA 2003
- A critical component of legal services
 - compensates victim for lost wages and for damages
 - Discourages would-be-traffickers and employers exploiting trafficked labor
 - Sometimes clients only legal option if law enforcement declines to prosecute
- Involves many of the same difficulties for clients as criminal process – assess risks/benefits

Lack of NGO's Working to Assist Human Trafficking Survivors in VA

- Boat People SOS, Falls Church VA

703-538-2190

- Tahirih Justice Center, Falls Church VA

703-575-0070

Additional NGO's working in the DC Metro Area Providing Direct Social and Legal Services

- Polaris Project, Washington DC
- Ayuda, Washington DC
- Break the Chain, Washington DC
- Casa of Maryland, Maryland

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