

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ILLINOIS FACT SHEET

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*"It would be naive to think that human trafficking is not occurring here in Cook County"*

- Lt. Paul Kusinski, Chicago Police Trafficking Team, 2007

*"In the 'Land of Lincoln' slavery is alive and well"*

- Carol L. Adams, IDHS Secretary, 2005

## WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. It is the business of exploiting vulnerable women, men, and children in conditions of sexual and labor servitude. Traffickers use fraud, deception, coercion, threats and force to transport, harbor or obtain people to perform commercial sex or labor acts against their will.
- Forms of trafficking include: sex trafficking, labor trafficking, child trafficking, domestic servitude, international trafficking, and domestic trafficking.
- Human trafficking is a global problem. More than \$40 billion in profits are generated worldwide from trafficking in human beings. It is the second largest and the fastest growing criminal industry in the world today, after drug dealing.
- 600,000-800,000: The number of people trafficked across international borders each year, according to the State Department (U.S. DOS, 2008). Persons do not have to have been transported internationally to be considered victims of trafficking.

## EXTENT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE U.S.

- 14,500-17,500: The number of people who are trafficked into the United States each year (U.S. DOS, 2008).
- The U.S.A. is the second highest destination in the world for trafficked women (NOW-NYC, 2007). \$250,000 can be made from one trafficked woman in the U.S.A (Sweeney, 2005).
- The Salvation Army estimates that up to 150,000 foreign victims of slavery are in the United States from 49 countries in Africa, the Arab world, Southeast Asia, and nations formerly part of the Soviet Union, and that about 325,000 children are commercially sexually exploited in this country annually (Frederick, 2007).
- Of the foreign victims trafficked into the U.S., approximately 50% are under the age of 18 years, and 80% are female (U.S.D.O.J., 2003).
- An unknown number of U.S. citizens and legal residents – victims of domestic trafficking – are trafficked within the United States for sex trafficking, and forced labor.

## EXTENT OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ILLINOIS

- In a 2003 article, The New York Times labeled Chicago as a national hub for human trafficking. In 2005 the FBI designated Chicago as one of thirteen locations of "High Intensity Child Prostitution (Tanagho, 2007).
- Among other Midwest ports of entry, Chicago experiences the highest volume of arriving immigrants and as such is more likely to be a point of entry for trafficking victims (Jones, & Yousefzadeh, 2006).
- Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, because of its strategic location and importance, is considered a highly used transit location by traffickers to transport victims and disperse them as needed to other cities and states. Latin American and Asian trafficking victims are mostly likely to be located in the Chicagoland area (Tanagho, 2007).
- Traffickers seize opportunities for increased profits by trafficking greater numbers of women for sexual exploitation into Chicago during events where the city is filled with large numbers of spectators and tourists (Tanagho, 2007).
- In metropolitan Chicago, 16,000 to 25,000 women and girls are involved in commercial sex trade annually, with one third of them first getting involved in prostitution by the age of 15 years, and 62% by the age of 18 years.
- In Cook County, places such as massage parlors and strip clubs, often serve as a front

for trafficking and involve victims of the sex trade (C CC WI, 2007).

- In Rockford, on February 7, 2005, federal authorities uncovered seven underground brothels operating there under the guise of "spas", where traffickers locked Chinese and Korean women and used them as sex slaves (Tanagho, 2007).
- In 2002, Russian-born Alex Mishulovich was sentenced to 9 years in prison for bringing several Latvian women into the country and forcing them to work in Chicago-area strip clubs. This was the only case of prosecution of trafficking case in Illinois.
- Forced labor networks thrive in highly populated states with large immigrant communities, like Illinois (Tanagho, 2007). Those found in Illinois manifest themselves in forced begging, domestic servitude, and forced labor of unaccompanied minors in restaurants.
- While tens of thousands of people work as forced laborers in the United States, it is unknown exactly how many of these victims are in Illinois. Between 2003 and 2005, the Heartland Alliance uncovered and assisted over sixty victims from rural, suburban, and urban areas of Illinois (Jones & Yousefzadeh, 2006).
- The Paoletti case, involving forced begging in Illinois, illustrates the nature and potential of this form of modern-day slavery. In the 1990s, the Paoletti family trafficked over 1,000 deaf and mute Mexican men and women from Mexico to Chicago and other U.S. cities, and forced the victims to peddle trinkets and beg on subways and buses (Tanagho, 2007).
- Domestic servitude occurs in Illinois; women often agree to come to the United States to be maids, but are then physically abused, exploited, and enslaved upon arrival.
- Women and children are trafficked and held in domestic servitude as nannies and maids in homes in wealthy Illinois suburbs.
- While approximately 5,000 to 7,000 unaccompanied minors enter the United States each year, it is unknown how many are present in Illinois. In addition to the many women and children forced into domestic servitude, unaccompanied minors are also trafficked into forced labor in Chicago (Tanagho, 2007).

## LEGISLATION

- The United States passed the Trafficking Victim Protection Act (TVPA) in 2000, making human trafficking a federal crime. It was followed by the Trafficking Victim Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 (TVRA 2003), the TVRA 2005 and the TVRA 2008.
- The Illinois Trafficking of Persons and Involuntary Servitude Act went into effect on January 1, 2006.
- Any person under the age of 18 years who is involved in Cook County's commercial sex trade is recognized by the Illinois law as a trafficking victim
- The Illinois Predator Accountability Act was enacted on July, 3 2006. It allows victims of the sex trade to sue their abusers.

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