



Houston Police Department Vice Division



Human Trafficking Information Brief



WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS

modern day slavery.

exploiting a person through force, fraud, or coercion.

sex trafficking, forced labor, and domestic servitude.

happening everywhere, even in the United States, and victims can be U.S. Citizens or of any nationality, age, socioeconomic status, or gender.

any person under the age of 18 involved in a commercial sex act.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING VS. HUMAN SMUGGLING

- Crime against a person
- No international border crossing required
- Involuntary
- Commodity = **person**
- **Trafficking** involves exploitation



- Crime against a border
- Requires international border crossing
- Voluntary
- Commodity = **transportation**
- **Smuggling** involves transportation



While **not** the same, the two are sometimes very difficult to distinguish.

THE A-M-P MODEL

Action

Induce
Recruits
Harbors
Transports
Provides
or
Obtains

Means*

Force
Fraud
or
Coercion

Purpose

Commercial Sex
(Sex Trafficking)
or
Labor/Services
(Labor Trafficking)

*Minors induced into commercial sex are human trafficking victims—
regardless if force, fraud, or coercion is present.



MISCONCEPTIONS

- Sex trafficking and prostitution are not the same thing – although all child prostitution is human trafficking.
- Not all victims are immigrants – about half are U.S. citizens and half foreign nationals.
- Human smuggling and human trafficking are not the same thing – human trafficking crimes do not require any smuggling or movement of the victim.
- Trafficking victims are not all destitute individuals – they come from all income levels, even higher socioeconomic status.



EXPLOITERS

- Males and females of all races, ethnicities and socioeconomic levels.
- Use various methods to trap vulnerable individuals such as violence, threats, fraud, coercion, blackmail, false promises, deception, manipulation, and debt bondage.
- Act alone or as part of a larger network.



VICTIMS

- Males and females of all races, ethnicities and socioeconomic levels.
- Many young victims are homeless, runaways or victims of abuse.
- The average victim is 12 years old.
- They may not realize they are being exploited.
- They are often hidden in plain sight.



INDICATORS

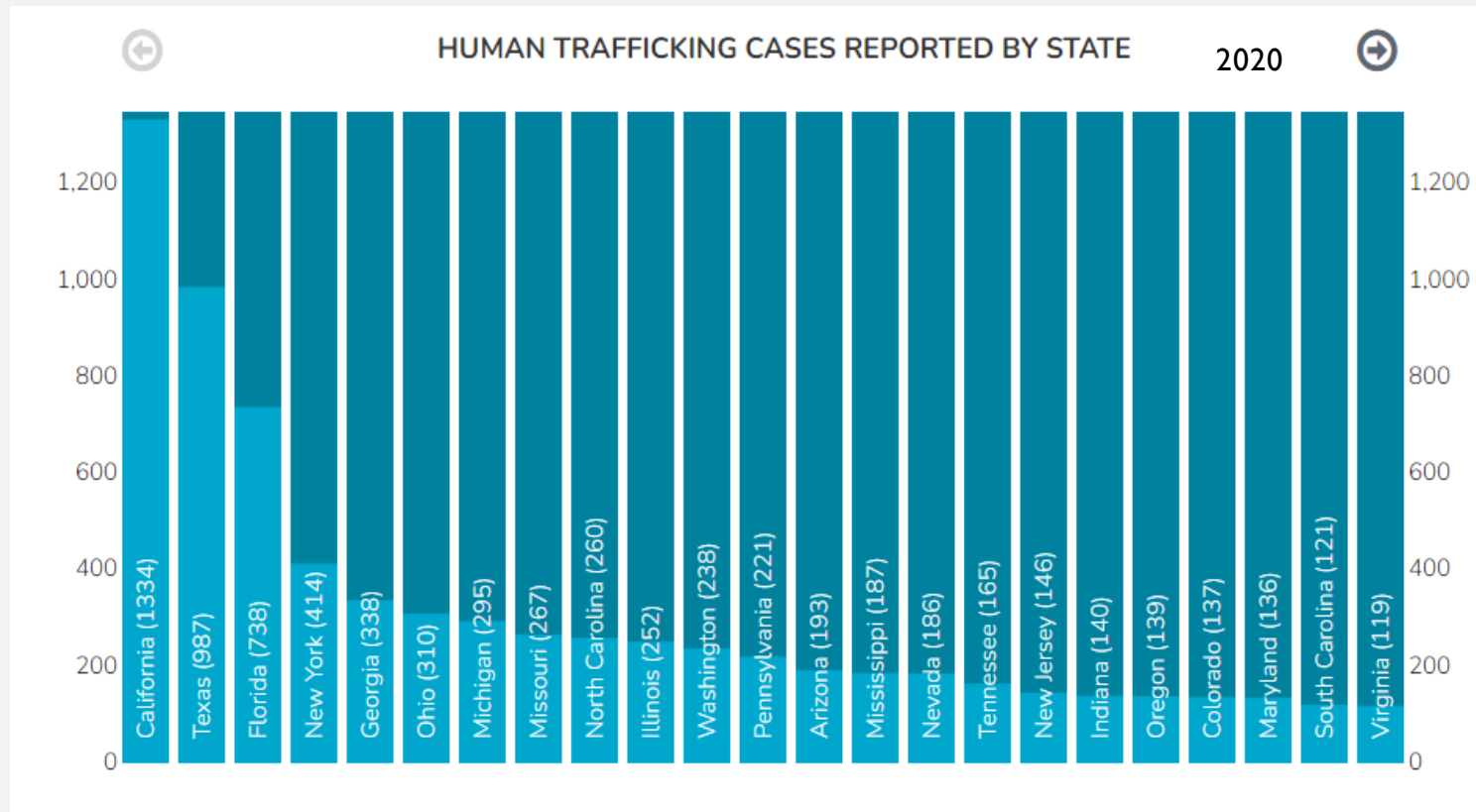
- Lives with their employer.
- Unpaid or paid very little.
- Inability to speak to individuals alone.
- Submissive or fearful.
- Avoids eye contact.
- Employer holding identity documents.

WHY HOUSTON?

- Department of Justice declared Houston one of the most intense trafficking jurisdictions in the country
 - Proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border
 - Major international airport, seaport, and interstate roadways (I-10, US-59)
 - Constantly expanding population
 - Diverse labor sector
 - Large sex industry (limited regulations)
 - Popular destination for runaways



HOUSTON, COMPARED



The National Human Trafficking Hotline, Texas Data by Region

2016

Region	% of Tips
Greater Houston	41.6%
Dallas/Fort Worth Metro Area	23.6%
Greater Austin	7.3%
Greater San Antonio	6.5%
Corpus Christi Metro Area	2.6%
McAllen–Edinburg–Mission	1.6%
El Paso Metro Area	1.0%
Other and redacted*	15.6%

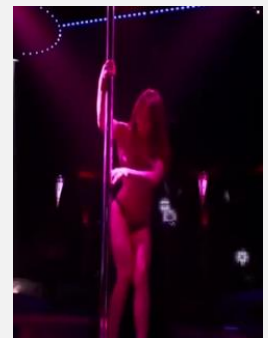
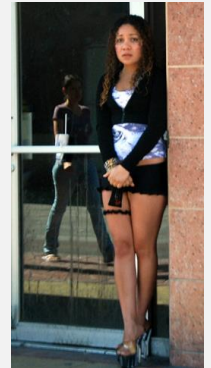
HOW HPD FIGHTS HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Community Outreach and Awareness
- Trainings for LE/Medical/Providers/Dispatchers/Businesses
- Proactive Demand Suppression Initiatives (Sex Buyer)
- Proactive Prostitution Seller Operations (outcry victims)
- Diversion Program (HCDAO)
- State vs. Federal Prosecution
- Increased Criminal Penalties
- Victim Services
- Nuisance Abatement/Code Enforcement
- Holding business owners liable
- Local, State, and Federal LE Collaborative Effort

SEX TRAFFICKING



- Focus on proactive investigations to identify victims and traffickers in the field,
- Comprehensive reactive investigative response using available LE tools, open source intelligence, and working with advocates and other NGO partners
- Proactive demand suppression operations (ie targeting buyers/Johns)
- Concentrating efforts on identifying and investigating traffickers while attempting to recover victims and address needs from a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach



LABOR TRAFFICKING

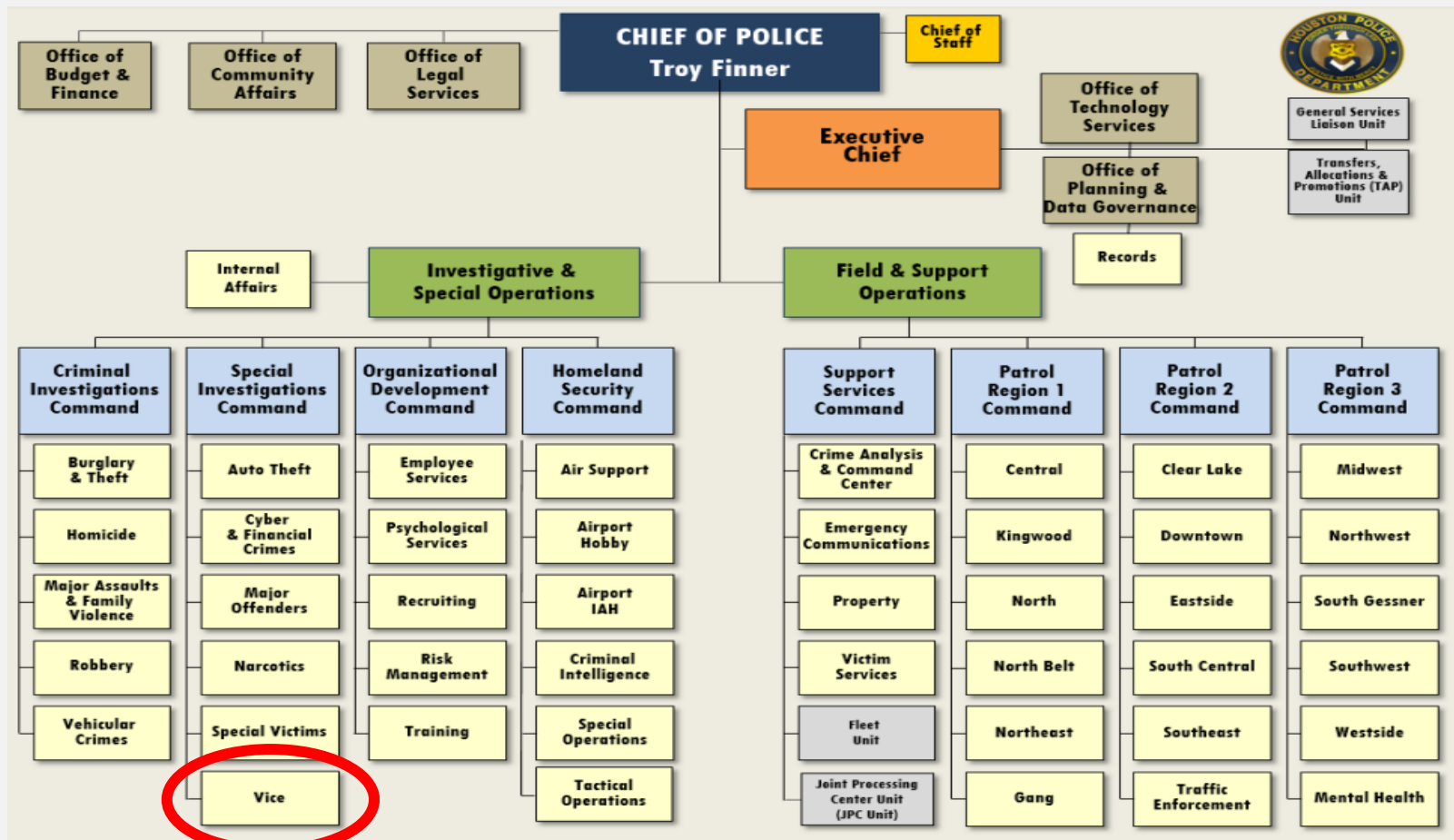
Where is it?

- Panhandling sites
- Residential Homes
- Restaurants
- Landscaping Sites
- Agricultural Locales
- Sweatshops
- Constructions Sites
- Factories
- Shipping Ports
- Traveling Sales Crew



HPD: VICE DIVISION

The Vice Division falls under the Special Investigations Command, within Investigative & Special Operations



VICE DIVISION: INVESTIGATIONS



HT & HSI

- Streets
- Internet
- Hotels
- Brothels
- Escort Services
- Massage Estab. / Spas
- Adults
- Juveniles
- Int'l
- Domestic

Prostitution

- Streets
- Internet
- Hotels
- Brothels
- Escort Services
- Residences / Apartments
- Massage Estab. / Spas
- Human Trafficking
- Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexually Oriented Businesses

- Topless / Nude
- Hostess / Bikini / Taxi
- Adult Novelty
- Adult Arcades
- Adult Video
- Adult Bookstores
- Human Trafficking
- Prostitution
- City Ordinances

Gambling

- Game Rooms
- Behind the Scenes Locations
- Money Laundering
- Tax Laws
- City Ordinances

Clubs

- Clubs & Bars
- Unregistered / Hidden locations
- Human Trafficking
- Prostitution
- Liquor Law Violations
- Ordinance Violations

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESCUE ALLIANCE – SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

- The Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance Task Force (HTRA) is a joint project of the Houston Police Department and the YMCA International Services of Greater Houston.
- It is jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office for Victims of Crime.
- It is co-led by the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Southern District of Texas.
- By bringing together law enforcement and non-governmental agencies, HTRA works to combat human trafficking in the Greater Houston Metro area.



HPD VICTIMS SERVICES DIVISION

- Work closely with VSD employees to identify and address needs, both immediate and long-term
- VSD is embedded with HTU
- HPD Victim Services can help with:
 - The Criminal Justice System
 - U Visa Law Enforcement Certification
 - Crime Victims' Compensation
 - Property return
 - Protective Order Information
 - Referrals to Shelters, Social Services and Legal Resources

HOUSTON POLICE
DEPARTMENT



VICTIM SERVICES
DIVISION
713-308-0080

WHERE DO WE GET CASES?

- **Proactive, Covert Operations**
 - Street Sweeps; Decoy Operations; Business Locations
 - Complaints or Tips (public and patrol)
 - Hot spot or high frequency
 - Investigative means
 - **Reactive Investigations**
 - Complaints/Tips
 - Case management – review of other HPD cases
 - Ex. domestic violence report actually involves trafficker/victim
 - Follow-up on arrests and interactions from proactive investigations
 - U/C ground work
 - **Call-outs**
 - Outcry or identification on scene; notification from family member

OPERATIONS

Goals

- Address community complaints
- Shape the environment – public & criminals
- Target “Johns” (demand side) & “Pimps” (traffickers)
- Identify and assist trafficking victims & non-victims

Types

- Street sweeps
- Hotels
- Decoy operations
 - Street, Spas
- Business locations
 - Massage establishments
 - SOBs
 - Clubs



CHALLENGES

- Hidden nature of the crime
- Victims may not believe that they are victims
 - Sex: traffickers is boyfriend or protector
 - Labor: not aware of rights
- Fear, isolation, dependence on trafficker
- Distrust the system
- Long-term investigations

OTHER TOOLS/RESOURCES: VICTIMS SERVICES/ADVOCATES/NGOS



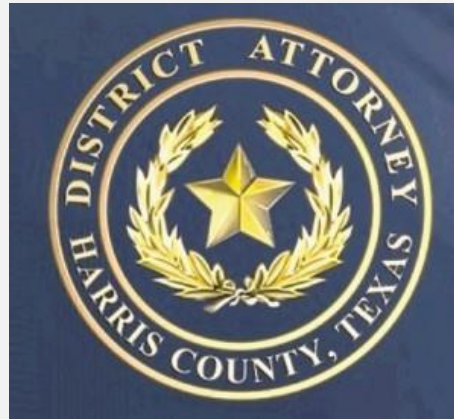
- HPD relies heavily on our partnerships with various advocacy and victims services groups to provide help, resources, and services to victims of human trafficking to help them out of the life and to ensure identification and prosecution of the traffickers

**OTHER TOOLS/RESOURCES:
PROCESSING VICTIMS & NON-VICTIMS
ASSESS NEEDS & ASSIST**

Harris County Jail



**Determine
Victim Status**



Drop Charge & Release



Pretrial Diversion



Serve Time



TRAUMA - INFORMED APPROACH

Trauma-Informed Care is defined as and includes:

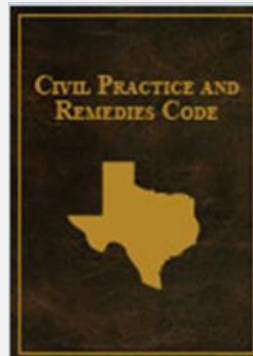
- A basic knowledge of trauma and its impact
- Understanding trauma triggers (victims' and one's own) to minimize re-traumatization
- Providing information about trauma to victims
- Helping victims manage feelings; feel in control of their situation; give input
- Supporting emotional safety for victims

OTHER TOOLS/RESOURCES: NUISANCE ABATEMENT (CH. 125)

- **A nuisance abatement suit is a civil action filed against a property and/or person who maintains it, when the property serves as a safe haven for crime**

Proper Defendants

- Property owners
- Business owners
- Managers
- The property itself
(in rem)



Types of Properties:

- SOBs
- Apartments
- Hotels
- Motels
- Clubs
- Any property with high Ch. 125 criminal activity

Remedies

- Injunction ordering Defendant to abate the nuisance
- Reasonable requirements to prevent maintenance of the place as a nuisance (eviction of tenants, lighting, security, video surveillance)
- If brought in rem and judgment is in favor of the Plaintiffs, the property shall be closed for one year

OTHER TOOLS/RESOURCES HOTEL ORDINANCE

Houston is the first major US city to have an anti-trafficking ordinance and to require human trafficking training certification of hotels and motels.

- The ordinance requires all hotels in the city of Houston to:
 - Require sex and labor trafficking training to all employees
 - Certify that the training was indeed provided to the city's ARA Department
 - ARA Inspectors will enforce and visit all hotels annually
 - Post a mandated 11×17 city-developed sign in employee areas
 - Empowers the employee to report tips to the National Hotline and Houston Police
 - Provides list of pre-approved trainings to choose from, 1 available in 17 languages
- Generates tips to HPD

OTHER TOOLS/RESOURCES:
WWW.NOTRAFFICKINGZONE.ORG

No Trafficking Zone (NTZ) is an anti-sex/human trafficking initiative. Its purpose is to engage sports organizations, entertainment venues, faith communities, schools, government leaders, corporations, and key influencers in the work to end the scourge of trafficking.

Launched in January 2020, **NTZ** was envisioned and developed by Dr. James Dixon (Community Of Faith Church) and Jacquelyn Aluotto (Break the Cycle Foundation / Real Beauty Real Women). Together, they've actively collaborated with a robust group of advocates, activists, civic leaders, elected officials, and business leaders.



OTHER TOOLS/RESOURCES: ADDITIONAL NEW LAWS

- Solicitation of Prostitution
 - Prostitution/Seller and Prostitution/Buyer used to be same charge and same level of offense
 - Effective September 1, 2021 HB 1540 separates sex buyers into a new offense
 - Solicitation of Prostitution
 - 1st time sex buyer = FELONY
 - Sex buying fuels human trafficking!
- Coercion
 - HB 1540 also moved the definition of “coercion” to a new subsection so that there is a broader definition that applies to ALL trafficking cases, not just certain adult sex trafficking cases.

BISSONNET



- Continued attention on the Bissonnet Corridor after passage of this law.
- While interest was renewed in the media and elsewhere, our operations had never ceased.
 - Partner with Westside Patrol to support covert and overt street operations
- Initial decrease in traffic on Bissonnet following passage of the new law; however that does not seem to have had a sustained impact
- Bissonnet requires continued, long-term proactive attention by both law enforcement and other stakeholders
- Continued enforcement efforts

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Operations (POAs) & Call-Outs – <i>specifically related to Prostitution and HT</i>	480
Victims (i.e., those who make an outcry; juveniles)	76
	65* Potential
	144 Smuggling
Prostitution/Buyers	534 (Males)
Prostitution/Sellers	369 (Females)
Hotel tips (re: hotel ordinance/signage)	8
Email tips from MOHT&DV	17

Jan 2021 - Dec 2021
****Unofficial stats****

SUMMER VIOLENT CRIME INITIATIVE

Felony Arrest	Misdemeanor Arrest	Felony Warrant	Misdemeanor Warrant	City Warrant	Other Charges
83	104	5	4	7	4

- These arrests (June-October) include the recovery of weapons, UCW, a Felony Child Endangerment charge, Employment Harmful to a Minor, and numerous PCS charges.
- Sunny Star Spa – Decoy Operation
 - Over the course of 5 days, 60 suspects were arrested.
 - The youngest arrested was 17, the two oldest were both 71.

HT UMBRELLA

"Trafficking of persons" means any offense that results in a person engaging in forced labor or services and that may be prosecuted under Section [20A.02](#), [20A.03](#), [43.03](#), [43.031](#), [43.04](#), [43.041](#), [43.05](#), [43.25](#), [43.251](#), or [43.26](#), Texas Penal Code.

- Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 56B.003(13)

- Trafficking in Persons
- Continuous Trafficking in Persons
- Promotion of Prostitution
- Aggravated Promotion of Prostitution



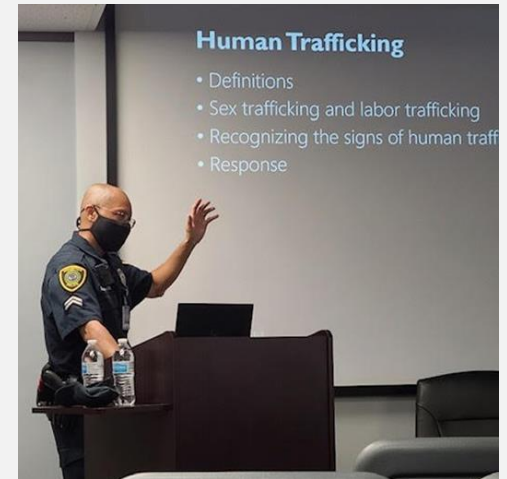
- Compelling Prostitution
- Sexual Performance of a Child
- Employment Harmful to Children
- Possession of Child Pornography

CONSIDERATIONS

- We are trying to move toward a **solutions-based** approach, rather than stats-based
- Prostitution arrests are trending to a more even split among buyers and sellers, due to an increase in demand suppression operations.
- In 2021, Vice had approximately 1,400 complaints assigned

TRAINING & OUTREACH

- Vice personnel participated in nearly **300** engagements in 2021
 - Training of officers
 - Presentations to various neighborhood associations, schools
 - Meet with and provide training to businesses, such as hotels, hospitals, etc
- Use Twitter and social media to educate and raise awareness
 - @HPDViceHTU



EDUCATION & AWARENESS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH



HUMAN TRAFFICKING CAMPAIGN OUTLINE

Intro to Trafficking

- Kickoff to campaign with Cmdr. Jessica Anderson vignette, quick overview of purpose to educate/inform about what Vice HTU does and issues with sex and labor trafficking.
- What is Human Trafficking? – Vignette defining human trafficking, red flags, types of trafficking, etc. English and Spanish

Human Trafficking Awareness Day

- Survival story vignette
- Advocate for Human Trafficking vignette

Meet the Vice/HTU Officers

- HPD Vice: Human Trafficking Unit - Street level ops vignette
- HPD Vice: What is Labor Trafficking? (English and Spanish versions)

There is help and a way out

- Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA)
- Victim's Services Liaison assigned to Vice, resources for survivors vignette



REPORTING

“The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”-Edmund Burke



HPD Vice Division

(713) 308-8600

National Human Trafficking Hotline

(888) 373-7888

Text: “BeFree” (233733)

Email: nhtrc@polarisproject.org

**NATIONAL
HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
HOTLINE**

QUESTIONS?

Commander Jessica Anderson
Houston Police Department
Vice Division
713-308-8638 (Office)

