



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**The Arizona  
Attorney General's  
Office**

[www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov)

2005 N Central Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
**602.542.2123**

400 W Congress  
South Building, Ste. 315  
Tucson, AZ 85701  
**520.628.6504**

Outside Phoenix  
or Tucson  
Metro Area:  
**800.352.8431**

---

# Letter from the Arizona Attorney General's Office

Parents and law enforcement share a responsibility of working together to protect children from those who intend to do them harm. One of the most dangerous threats to children in Arizona is human trafficking. Often, when we hear about these types of horrific crimes we think that it could never happen to our family, but it is imperative to understand that human trafficking is occurring daily right here in our communities. Predators are developing new tactics to recruit children online, in our neighborhoods, and at our schools.

The Arizona Attorney General's Office wants you to know we take this threat seriously. Human trafficking is more than just a crime, it is a profound tragedy for all of those who fall victim. That's why it is vital for parents to know how to identify possible threats to their children, and how to respond if you see the warning signs.

This booklet is a great place to start; it provides helpful tips to protect your loved ones and what to do if you suspect someone is at risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking. You can access additional resources on how to safeguard your family from human trafficking at our website, [www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov).

Working together, we can do a lot to keep our children safe.

Sincerely,  
**The Arizona Attorney General's Office**



---

## Contents

What Is Human Trafficking? .....	<b>1-6</b>
How Trafficking Breaks Down.....	<b>7</b>
Human Trafficking vs Human Smuggling .....	<b>9</b>
Should Arizonans Be Concerned? .....	<b>11</b>
Sex Trafficking: Victims' Stories .....	<b>13</b>
Who Can Be a Victim? How and Where Does It Happen?.....	<b>17-22</b>
Basic Stages of Grooming. ....	<b>23</b>
Sex Trafficking: Myth vs Reality .....	<b>25</b>
Warning Signs .....	<b>27</b>
How Can You Protect Your Children? .....	<b>29-36</b>
Responding to the Growing Issue of Sex Trafficking .....	<b>37-40</b>
What Should You Do If You Suspect Your Child May Be Involved In Human Trafficking? .....	<b>41</b>
Resources .....	<b>43-44</b>



# What Is Human Trafficking?

There are TWO types of human trafficking:

## Sex Trafficking Labor Trafficking

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers use **force**, **fraud**, or **coercion** to control victims.

---

**Force:** Physical restraint or violence, sexual assault.

**Fraud:** Intentionally misleading a victim, providing false offers of employment, marriage, or a better life.

**Coercion:** Threats, psychological abuse, debt bondage, taking and/or destroying legal documents, abuse of the legal process.

---

# Sex Trafficking

**The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines the crime of sex trafficking as:**

The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by **force, fraud, or coercion**, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. (22 USC § 7102)

---

Sex trafficking is any sex act that is traded for something of value, including but not limited to:

- a place to stay
- drugs and alcohol
- money
- gifts or valuables
- food

Source: ASU Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, TRUST (Training and Resources United to Stop Trafficking)





---

# Labor Trafficking

**In the United States, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines labor trafficking as:**

The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of **force, fraud, or coercion** for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery. (22 USC § 7102(9))

---

Labor trafficking involves using force, fraud, or coercion to get individuals to work for little or no compensation.

This includes forced labor in underground economies and sweatshops, as well as seemingly legitimate enterprises such as restaurants, hotels, traveling sales crews, construction sites, farming, landscaping, and nail salons.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice



**Human trafficking is the second largest criminal enterprise in the world.**

# How Trafficking Breaks Down:

The Act-Means-Purpose Model (AMP) describes the elements that must be present for an act to be considered human trafficking. Human trafficking occurs when an individual uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel a victim to perform commercial sex acts or labor services.



Source: National Human Trafficking Resource Center



# Human Trafficking VS Human Smuggling



**Centers on exploitation**

**Involves elements of force, fraud, or coercion**

**Does not require crossing an international border**

**Persons trafficked are considered victims**

**Not voluntary**

**Centers on transportation and always involves crossing an international border**

**Persons are complicit in the act of smuggling, not necessarily victims**

**Those complicit in smuggling may eventually become victims depending on the circumstances in which they are smuggled**

**Human trafficking** is the exploitation of a person for sex or labor. Human trafficking does not require movement or transport across borders - the exploitation is what makes the person a victim.

**Human smuggling** involves bringing (or attempting to bring) a person into a country in violation of immigration or other laws.

Source: Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign



# Should Arizonans Be Concerned?

Is this really a problem in our state?

**Yes.** Based on data gathered by the U.S. State Department, Arizona is a prime transit and destination area for both sex and labor trafficking in the United States. Sex trafficking is a high-profit, low-risk crime where the commodity, a human body, can be sold repeatedly, unlike drugs or weapons, where the product can only be sold once.

Source: TRUST (Training and Resources United to Stop Trafficking), Phoenix Police Department VICE Unit, ASU Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research

**The average age of entry into the sex trade in Arizona is 14 years old. Law enforcement has seen girls as young as 9 sold for sex.**

**Many of the factors that make our state a popular tourist destination also fuel sex trafficking, including:**

- Geographic location; close proximity to the border and interstate highway networks
- Warm weather
- Home to an array of conferences and professional sporting events
- Close proximity to other tourist destinations, including Las Vegas and San Diego



---

# Sex Trafficking:

## Victims' Stories

A teenage girl was having a fight with her parents. She left the house upset and went to a neighborhood restaurant. While she was crying, an attractive man in his 20's approached her table. He was friendly, and offered to buy her dinner. After she finished eating, he suggested she stay at his place for the night to avoid her parents and "cool off." The girl agreed, and he drove her 50 miles away to a part of town where she had never been. He took her phone away from her so she was unable to contact her parents or call for help. Eventually he told her that she owed him, and he began trafficking her for sex.



---

## Victims' Stories

A teen girl in the Phoenix metro area became a victim of human trafficking when she met a woman who promised her something her family couldn't provide. The girl had wanted a cell phone for as long as she could remember and she was jealous of the other students at her school who already had them. The girl met a woman who promised to give her a cell phone, and in turn, the chance to fit in at school. After she gave the girl the phone, the woman demanded payment in the form of sex acts with men at a nearby apartment. The woman threatened to take away the phone and tell the girl's mother what she had done if she did not do as the woman demanded. Day after day, the teen went to the apartment and performed sex acts in exchange for keeping her cell phone and her secret.

Occasionally, the girl was able to talk her way out of these situations, but ultimately she was forced to do things no one should be required to do.

Throughout the month that the teen was forced into this activity, she still maintained good grades and continued attending school regularly. She even came home in time to meet her curfew and managed to keep up appearances, so it was nearly impossible for her mother to know that her daughter was involved in something so dangerous.

Fortunately, the teen's traffickers were eventually caught and she was removed from the situation. The girl's mother was completely shocked that her daughter had been victimized for weeks, and she was left looking for answers and ways to help her daughter. Unfortunately, there are still barriers to victims seeking help in dealing with the trauma of being trafficked.



---

# Who Can Be a Victim?

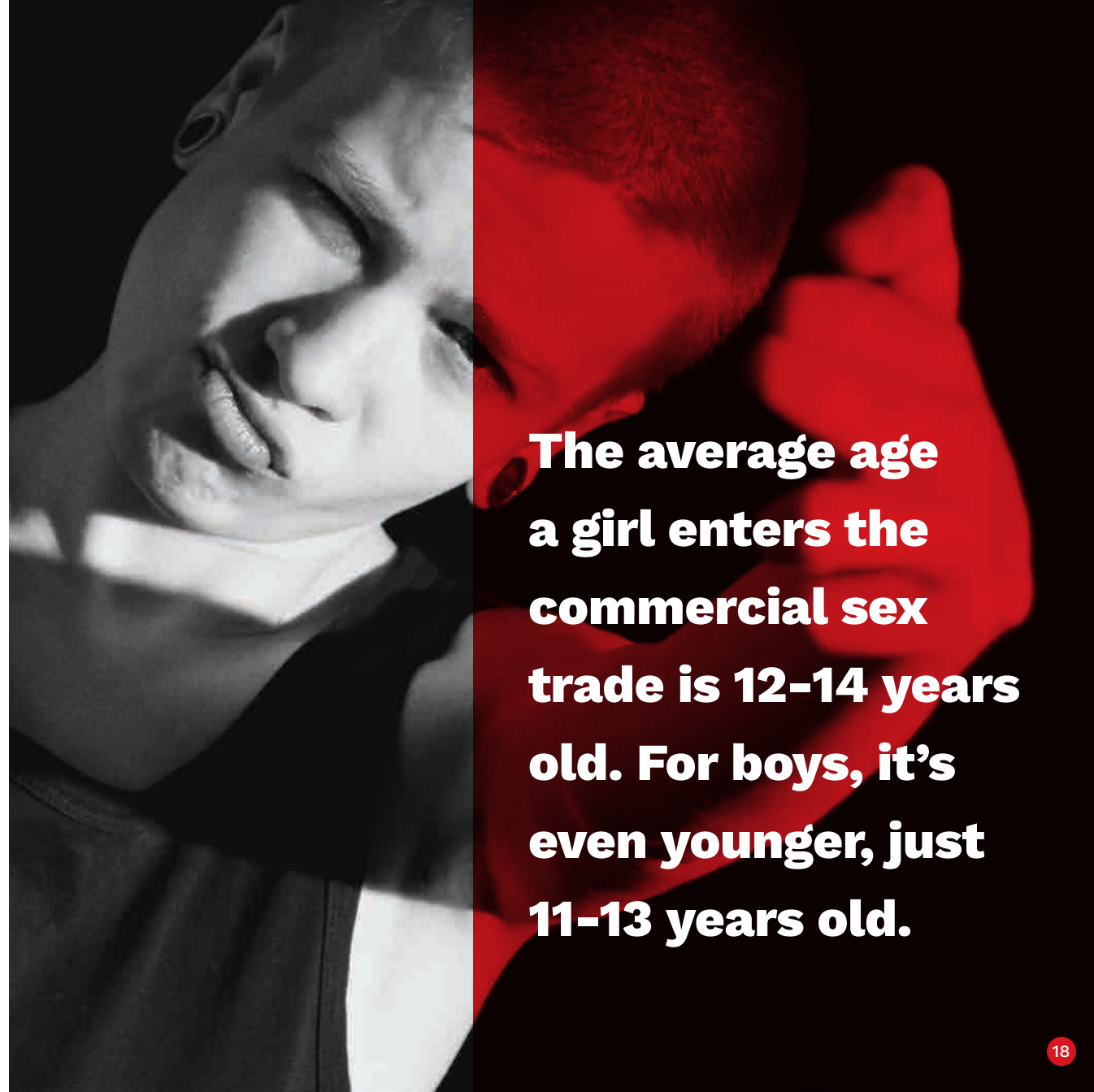
**Anyone can be a victim of sex trafficking, including men, women, and children.**

In 2020, an estimated 1 out of 6 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children were likely child sex trafficking victims.

**90% of children trafficked in the United States are U.S. citizens.**

**50% of trafficking victims are under the age of 16.**

Sources: U.S. Department of Justice, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



**The average age a girl enters the commercial sex trade is 12-14 years old. For boys, it's even younger, just 11-13 years old.**

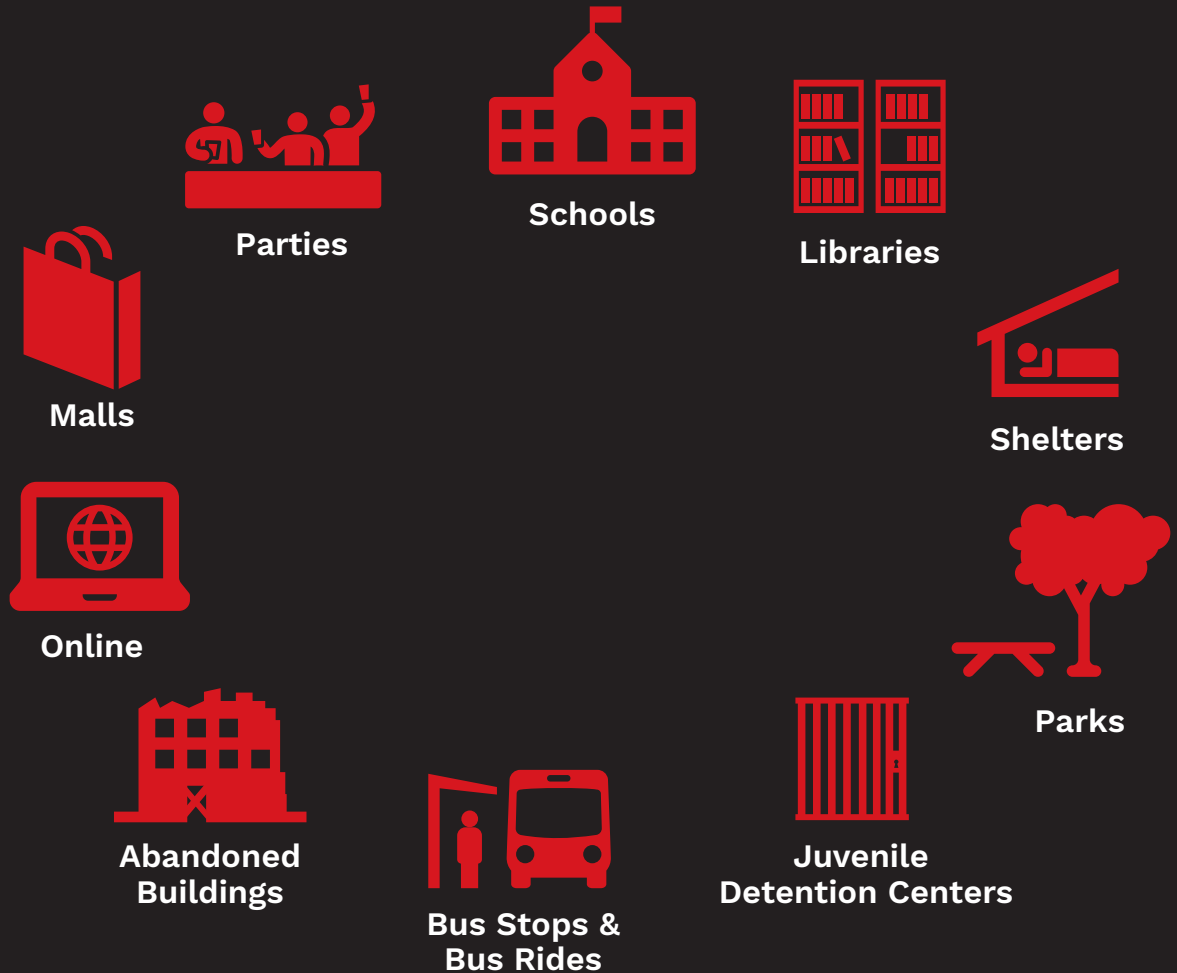
# Where Does It Happen?

Traffickers, also known as pimps, recruit their victims through a variety of means, including:

**Social media:** websites such as Facebook, Instagram, and chatrooms like Omegle, YesIChat, and E-Chat

**Places:** shopping malls, bus stops, school, after school events, parties, shelters, parks, and anywhere that teens frequent

# Recruitment Locations





---

## How Does It Happen?

Traffickers may use psychological manipulation, deception, physical violence, threats, and/or sexual assault to get their victim to feel vulnerable, trapped, and powerless.

Oftentimes, the pimp will threaten to harm people close to their victim, such as family members or friends, as a way to isolate their victim and maintain their compliance.

They may also take suggestive photos or videos of their victims to use as both blackmail and advertisements for sexual services.

Sources: ASU Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, The McCain Institute, Thorn



**Victims are often recruited by a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend,” but may be solicited by a friend, peer, family member, or gang member.**

**75% of underage sex trafficking victims said they had been advertised or sold online.**

# Basic Stages of Grooming

## for Sexual Exploitation



**TARGETING:** Traffickers target victims who have some noticeable vulnerability: emotional neediness, low self-confidence, or economic stress.



**GAINING TRUST & INFORMATION:** Obtaining information about the victim is key. This can be done through casual conversations with the victim or with parents. Traffickers often mix well with other adults.

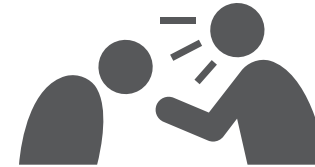
**“Up to this point, they had never tried to touch me, never made me feel uncomfortable or unsafe, or that they would harm me.”**



**FILLING A NEED:** The information gained allows the trafficker to fill a need in the victim’s life, making the victim dependent on them in some way: buying gifts, being a friend, beginning a romantic relationship, or providing drugs and alcohol.



**ISOLATION:** The trafficker creates times to be alone with the victim. The trafficker will also begin taking a major role in the victim’s life and will attempt to distance the victim from friends and family.



**ABUSE BEGINS:** The trafficker begins claiming that gifts or services given to the victim must be repaid, whether it be money, drugs, car rides, or mobile phones. In most cases, the trafficker demands sex as the method of repayment.

**“I trusted them, they were my friends as I saw it, until one night my main perpetrator raped me, quite brutally as well, in front of a number of people.”**



**MAINTAIN CONTROL:** In many cases the trafficker maintains control of the victim through threats, violence, fear, or blackmail.

**“Well if I didn’t go out and see them they are going to get my mum and are going to rape her.”**



# Sex Trafficking: Myth **VS** Reality

Human trafficking only occurs within and between foreign countries.

Human trafficking happens everywhere, including within the United States and does not require crossing an international border.

Human trafficking involves a form of travel, transportation, or movement across borders.

Trafficking does not require transportation and is not the same as human smuggling. However, human smuggling can become human trafficking.

Victims will immediately ask for help or assistance.

Victims often do not seek help and may not self-identify as victims of crime.

Victims always come from situations of poverty or from small rural areas.

Poverty alone is not a single causal factor or universal indicator of being a victim. Anyone can be a victim, regardless of their socioeconomic status, location, or gender.

---

# Warning Signs

**A victim of sex trafficking may:**

- **talk about an older boyfriend/girlfriend**
- **have expensive gifts from a new friend / boyfriend / girlfriend**
- **be inexplicably absent from school**
- **run away from home**
- **show signs of physical injury such as bruises or fractures**
- **be inappropriately dressed**
- **indicate signs of drug addiction**
- **exhibit malnutrition**
- **reference traveling to other cities**
- **exhibit changes in demeanor: fear, anxiety, depression, nervousness**
- **have a new tattoo of a person's name, barcode, or other strange symbol**

\*It is important to note that this is by no means a comprehensive list of all signs of human trafficking, nor are all youth who exhibit these signs trafficking victims. Rather, this list is best used as a guide to help determine if further action is appropriate.





---

# How Can You Protect Your Children?

**Spot red flags. Foster open lines of communication with your children and know what to do if you suspect they may be in danger or involved in sex trafficking.**

**Make it a habit** to communicate with your child. Ask questions about their internet use and who they talk to online. Set aside time each day to ask them what is happening at school, in their life, and with their extracurricular activities.

**Know the people** in your child's life, meet their friends and get to know their friends' parent(s)/guardian(s).

**Ask questions** about what your child's friends are up to. If your child makes a new friend, be sure to meet that new friend and their family.

**When you see instances** of "stranger danger" in pop culture, be it television, movies, or news articles, point out those examples to your child and discuss the scenarios together.

**Talk to your children** about healthy and unhealthy relationships. Help them understand that sometimes a boyfriend or girlfriend may seem great, when in reality they may be displaying unusual or dangerous behavior.

**Take notice** if your child suddenly has new clothing, jewelry, or other possessions. If they can't reasonably explain how they acquired these items, it may be a sign that something is not right.

If your child ever tells you that they may be a victim of human trafficking or any crime that puts their welfare in danger, try to remain calm and contact your local police department. Your child will be more likely to tell you what has happened if you have a calm demeanor and they don't feel like they may get in trouble for what has happened.




# Talking with Kids and Teens about Internet Safety

New apps and websites pop up every day, making it difficult to stay on top of what kids and teens are accessing on the internet. Below are tips for staying ahead of the game when it comes to the internet, including how to make sure your child isn't accessing dangerous material online.

- **Establish household rules regarding internet use, and make sure that parental controls are set up on all devices.**
- **Familiarize yourself with the websites and apps your child uses.**
- **Both you and your child should understand: how the app or website works, the age requirements, and the various capabilities it may have (photo sharing, video, messaging, etc.).**
- **Over half (56%) of kids sexually solicited online were asked to send a picture; 27% of the pictures were sexually-oriented in nature.**

Source: "Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later," published in 2006 by the University of New Hampshire Crimes Against Children Research Center, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention, and National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

A hand holding a smartphone. The screen shows a black and white photo of a young man with dark hair, smiling broadly with his eyes closed. The phone's camera interface is visible, including a red shutter button and various icons at the top and bottom.

**1 in 7 youth online have received a sexual solicitation or were approached over the internet. 56% of the youth who received solicitations did not tell anyone.**

## **If your child/student uses social media:**

- **Communicate with them about their experiences.**
- **Let them know that most social media sites have blocking or reporting capabilities to report any harassing or unwanted contact.**
- **Explain to them why they should not display or give out personal information and why it is dangerous.**
- **Insist that your child/student never meet anyone in person that they have communicated with solely online.**



---

# Helpful Conversation Starters

It can be uncomfortable to start a conversation about serious and difficult topics, including human trafficking. Here are a few helpful guidelines to get the conversation started.

**Ask: What do you know about “trafficking?”**

No adult should ever ask a young person to do things that make them uncomfortable or demand sex in exchange for clothes, jewelry, money, food, or a place to stay. When a situation like this occurs, the adult is taking advantage of that young person, the victim, even if the child seemed like they wanted to do what they were asked.

**Ask: What would you do if you were in a dangerous situation and it wasn't safe to call 911?**

Safe Place operates TXT 4 HELP, which can be used in situations where calling 911 may pose immediate danger.



---

# Helpful Conversation Starters

**Ask:** Do you know where you can go or what to do if someone approaches you?

If your child is in immediate danger, they can always call 911 or get to a safe location to call for help. Many businesses and organizations also participate in Safe Place, which means anyone in crisis or in danger can go there for help. Every QuikTrip gas station and light rail station is a Safe Place, in addition to many hospitals, police stations, libraries, fire stations, and banks. All Safe Place locations display the yellow sign below.



---

# How Does It Work?

**Step 1** A young person enters a Safe Place and asks for help.

**Step 2** The site employee finds a comfortable place for the youth to wait while they call the licensed Safe Place agency.

**Step 3** Within 20-30 minutes, a qualified Safe Place volunteer or agency staff member arrives to talk with the youth and, if necessary, provide transportation to the agency.

**Step 4** Once at the agency, counselors meet with the youth and provide support. Agency staff makes sure the youth and their family receive the help and professional services they need.





# Responding To the Growing Issue of Sex Trafficking

Over the last several years, the state of Arizona has made significant strides toward both eradicating human trafficking and educating law enforcement officials and civilians about the very real and dangerous impact human trafficking has on the people of Arizona.

One of the major accomplishments we have made as a state is the passage of a new law in 2014, which targets those who purchase sex in Arizona and individuals who force victims to provide those services. The law, HB2454, addressed the four main groups that are involved in human trafficking: johns, traffickers, advertisers, and victims. HB2454 increased penalties for johns and traffickers, created new laws for advertisers, and instituted new protections for victims. On the next page, you will find a summary of HB2454 and the new sentencing guidelines for perpetrators of this crime.

## HB 2454 — Effective July 21, 2014

### JOHNS

Raised the presumptive sentencing for such cases mentioned above and subjects all offenders who knew “or should have known” to a Class 2 Felony.

### TRAFFICKERS

Creates a higher sentencing range for traffickers in cases involving minors that increases the presumptive sentence:

From 10.5 years to 13.5 years for a first offense,

From 15.75 years to 24 years for a trafficker with a prior felony conviction,

From 28 years to 31 years for a trafficker with two or more prior felonies.

### ADVERTISERS

Visual depiction of a minor in an ad for prostitution is now a Class 2 Felony.

Required licensed escorts, escort agencies, massage therapists, and massage therapy businesses to include license number in any advertisement.

### VICTIMS

Protects victims by limiting the amount of identifying information released in court documents and to the general public. Adds child prostitution and sex trafficking to list of acts that allows anti-racketeering fund monies to be used for victim services.



---

# Working Together To Make Our Neighborhoods Safer:

## A Community Response to Human Trafficking

Beyond talking to your children about the issue of human trafficking and monitoring their internet use, there are many steps your neighborhood or parent group can take collectively to make sure your children stay safe.

**Education:** You have already read the important information provided in this booklet about the dangers of human trafficking and its prevalence in our state. This is a great start, but educating your network of fellow parents, school officials, and neighbors is the next step to making sure everyone is involved in protecting Arizona's children.

**Get involved:** Join a parent group, PTO, or find another opportunity to be involved in your child's school. This is a great way to find out what other parents and educators are hearing and observing.

**Observe:** Having open eyes and ears in your community is essential to making sure that suspicious activity in your area doesn't go unreported or unrecognized. As individuals, we aren't always going to be able to notice everything that goes on in our neighborhoods. Joining a local Block Watch and encouraging others to do the same will ensure that there is a collective effort to keep our kids safe.

If your neighborhood doesn't have a Block Watch program currently, you can always start one! Contact your local police department for more information on how to get started.

You can always request a presentation about human trafficking from the Arizona Attorney General's Office, our Community Outreach Section will present to any group and can go anywhere within the State of Arizona. There is never a charge for this service. You can also request copies of this booklet for those who are interested.

Requests for presentations and publications can be made at <https://www.azag.gov/outreach> or by calling 602.542.2123.





---


# What Should You Do If You Suspect Your Child May Be Involved In Human Trafficking?

The first thing you should do if someone is in immediate danger is call **911**.

You can also call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline at **1-888-373-7888**

Or text HELP to: BeFree (233733).

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline is a national, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls from anywhere in the United States, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in more than 200 languages.



**If you suspect your child may be a victim of human trafficking, try to remain calm and talk to them about what they have experienced. Try to avoid interrogating them, as this often makes victims feel that it is their fault.**

**Encourage your kids who have cell phones to program BeFree (233733) into their contacts. If they are ever in a situation where they cannot make a phone call, texting HELP to this hotline can connect them to people who can help.**

# Other Resources



www.polarisproject.org  
Text INFO or HELP to BeFree (233733)



humantraffickinghotline.org



socialwork.asu.edu/stir



www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign



www.sharedhope.org



www.phxdreamcenter.org



www.trustaz.org



www.nationalsafeplace.org  
Text the word "safe" and your current location (city/state/zip) to 69866



umom.org

# Community Outreach and Education



## For more information contact

Community Outreach and Education,  
Arizona Attorney General's Office

2005 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Phoenix

602-542-2123

Outside Phoenix Metro Area

1-800-352-8431

[communityoutreach@azag.gov](mailto:communityoutreach@azag.gov)

[www.azag.gov/outreach](http://www.azag.gov/outreach)

## Publications available from the Arizona Attorney General's Office include:

- Human Trafficking
- Internet Safety
- Life Care Planning Packets
- Consumer Scam Alert Cards
- Suicide Prevention
- Opioid Awareness

## Presentations available from the Attorney General's Office include:

- Human Trafficking for Students and Parents
- Vaping and E-Cigarettes for Students and Parents
- Consumer Scams
- Task Force Against Senior Abuse (TASA)
- Life Care Planning
- Internet Safety for Parents and Students
- Anti-Bullying for Parents and Students
- Suicide Prevention for Parents and Students
- Opioid Awareness and Prevention for Parents and Students