

Human Trafficking

How Can Our Community Respond to this Growing Problem?

A COMMUNITY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Many Americans are unaware of the extent to which human trafficking is an issue in their communities.

Others may be aware of some aspects of the problem, but may feel powerless to do anything about it. But as law enforcement and others document a growing industry in human trafficking across the country, what can and should our community do to combat the problem?

So, whose job is it to address these issues? And how can we realistically take on such a big and complex problem?

- The Department of Justice has identified Phoenix as one of the top human trafficking jurisdictions in the country.⁵
- Sex Trafficking generates \$32-91 billion in profits worldwide.¹
- Arizona has many factors that make it a profitable market for sex trafficking including:
 - Transportation corridors enabling easy, anonymous movement throughout the state and across state lines,
 - A large resort community, and mild climate that brings conferences and other tourist attractions year round.¹
- Homeless, runaway, throwaway and foster children are the most vulnerable population of youth at risk for trafficking. Over 1.68 million American children run away each year.³
- At least **100,000 U.S. children** are exploited in prostitution every year in America.³
- Sex trafficking of minors is a severe form of child abuse with lasting physical and health effects for victims, families, and society.³
- Immigrants in this country without legal status are prime targets for forced labor, especially since they are less likely to know their legal rights or what resources are available to help them escape from human trafficking situations; and may have incurred huge debts to arrive here.

Sex Trafficking:

Recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining a person through force, fraud, or coercion... for the purpose of benefitting financially from the commercial sex act of that person.¹

Trafficking vs. Smuggling⁷

Human Trafficking is defined as:

- sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by **force, fraud or coercion**, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- 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.

Human Smuggling is defined as:

The importation of people into the United States involving deliberate evasion of immigration laws. This offense includes bringing illegal aliens into the United States, as well as the unlawful transportation and harboring of aliens already in the United States.

These are not interchangeable terms:

Smuggling is *transportation-based*

Trafficking is *exploitation-based*

APPROACH 1: Focus on Families' and the Community's Roles

Before becoming sexually exploited, many victims commonly have experienced problematic family circumstances, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; parental alcohol and drug use; domestic violence, neglect, or abandonment. Many have run away from home and experienced homelessness, or have had other experiences with economic need and poverty.¹ Therefore, this approach represents people who think we should be focused on how to identify and intervene with children in trouble, and support families struggling to provide a safe and healthy home for their children.

Many community members may not be aware that human trafficking is a problem in their community, thinking that it only happens in other countries or in “bad parts of town”.³ Or, they may believe that prostitution is

a victimless crime. Others may be less concerned with the victimization of undocumented immigrants than with other public safety and law enforcement concerns.

Approach 1 argues that parents, family members and the community at large should be educated about human trafficking, including risk factors and warning signs; and know what to do if they suspect that someone is being victimized or forced into sex trafficking or into coerced or unpaid labor.

1 out of 3 teens living on the street will be lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.⁶

Possible Actions:	Trade Offs and Concerns:
Local and state government, schools, and community organizations all need to commit to raising awareness about human trafficking issues. They need to help people understand how they are personally affected by the problem.	Public awareness campaigns may be expensive and not always very effective. It's easy to ignore commercials, bulletin boards, and fliers. These strategies are more expensive and less effective than ever before.
Create “citizens’ brigades” similar to neighborhood watch, to raise awareness and look for signs of human trafficking at the local level.	These efforts may be hard to initiate or sustain at the neighborhood level, and may not be effective without regular training and oversight.
Schools and community organizations should offer workshops for parents and others to learn the warning signs of human trafficking and know how to respond and support victims.	Teen sex trafficking can be difficult to detect unless people who interact with victims are trained to recognize the signs. ²
State and local government should invest more resources in programs to help vulnerable families to provide adequate nutrition, clothing, and care for their children.	Programs that provide assistance to needy families and other support programs have faced steep budget cuts in recent years. It is unrealistic to expect significant increases in funding support.
Government and nonprofit agencies should offer more free training and support for parents struggling with discipline and childcare issues.	These programs are expensive to offer, and many parents who most need assistance and training on parenting skills are unlikely to seek it.
All immigrants, whether here legally or not, should be made aware of their basic rights and how to seek help if they are being subjected to forced labor, unpaid labor, or indentured servitude.	The nature of undocumented immigration makes it very difficult to gather information about or provide information to these communities. They may be very distrustful of information coming from government agencies, or fearful of the consequences of speaking out or seeking help.

APPROACH 2: Focus on Schools, First Responders and other Professionals

Although families and community members should be informed about human trafficking, some people believe that trained professionals are best equipped to spot the warning signs and respond to possible incidences of human trafficking. School personnel, health care and mental health professionals, police and fire departments should bear the primary responsibility for addressing human trafficking issues.

This approach also argues that school administrators and teachers, in particular, should be trained and given resources to know how and when to alert authorities to potential cases of abuse or neglect. Schools should also educate students about human trafficking and encourage them to speak out if they or others are being trafficked or are at risk.

These professionals should also be made aware that drugs often play a role in sex trafficking situations – sometimes as a way to cope, or victims sometimes enter “the Life” to support a drug habit.³

Only 4.8% of Emergency Room doctors and nurses, and hospital social workers felt some degree of confidence in their ability to identify and **7.7%** to treat a trafficked patient, according to a recent study.⁴

Possible Actions:	Trade Offs and Concerns:
Schools should take a leadership role to promote awareness, prevention, and intervention strategies to combat teen sex trafficking. ³	Schools are challenged to fulfill their existing responsibilities, so this may be an unrealistic expectation. Also, administrators and educators may feel uncomfortable discussing subjects related to sex, and may lack training and expertise to respond effectively and appropriately. ³
Teachers and school officials should be aware that pimps use social media to recruit victims. Students should be told to turn off their location services function on their phones, and not disclose personal information online. ³	Many students are unlikely to adhere to such rules and guidelines about use of cell phones and social media. School officials and teachers may not realistically be able to monitor or enforce such guidelines.
Improve quality and availability of crisis hotlines.	These services exist but are under-funded and have high staff turnover.
Provide more “safe zone” spaces for teens to hang out after school.	These programs are expensive and may be difficult to maintain.
Mental health professionals have a unique opportunity to identify, report, and assist victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. ⁴	The majority of mental health providers have a limited understanding of the issue of sex trafficking and how it may present with their clients. ⁴
Paramedics, firefighters, and police are often the first to encounter victims of human trafficking and should be trained to recognize these situations; gather information and provide initial support.	These first responders have many critical priorities when responding to a call; expecting them to become human trafficking experts may be unrealistic.
Instead of arrest and deportation, police and prosecutors should have authority and resources to better deal with undocumented immigrants who may be victims of human trafficking.	Recent political trends have shown growing support for increased enforcement of laws to combat undocumented immigration; there may be little support for easing of laws to assist immigrant victims of human trafficking.

APPROACH 3: Reform Laws and Policies

Training professionals, schools, and families about human trafficking may not be enough to meaningfully deal with the root of the problem. This approach argues that laws and policies contribute to the circumstances that lead to human trafficking, or may make it more difficult for victims seek help.

Youth who have been arrested or are currently on probation are at a higher risk for trafficking. Juveniles are most commonly arrested for related crimes such as loitering, curfew, runaway or minor in possession of drugs or alcohol.³ We should change how we deal with minors in law enforcement situations in order to decrease likelihood of them becoming trafficking victims.

82% of sex trafficking victims on probation in Maricopa County have alcohol or drug addiction (Nov. 2014).⁶

Gangs are increasingly using prostitution as a means of income. While drugs or guns can be sold just once, a human body can be sold over and over. Some girls are told they must sell their bodies as part of gang initiation, membership or for protection.³ Rethinking how we deal with youths involved in gangs may help identify more effective solutions to the trafficking problem.

Youth in foster care move around a lot, and are prone to victimization because they may not have someone looking out for them or making sure they are safe. They may crave the attention a pimp can provide.³ We need to provide better oversight and support for foster children to keep them “falling through the cracks.”

There is no such thing as a willing child prostitute.³ The Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act defines anyone under 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act as a **trafficking victim**.³

Possible Actions:	Trade Offs and Concerns:
Police agencies should stop arresting minors for prostitution and instead treat them as crime victims in need of help.	If pimps know minors won't be arrested, it may encourage them to increase their reliance on and recruitment of minors into the sex trade.
Address fear and stigma victims might have about coming forward and talking to the police or other authority figures.	Trafficking victims may feel like they got themselves into the situation and may not see themselves as victims; others may fear their safety of the safety of their loved ones if they say anything or seek help.
When potential human trafficking victims are arrested for immigration- or gang-related crimes, they should be provided with counseling and support to get out of the situation they are in safely, rather than prosecuted and penalized.	Gang members and undocumented immigrants may pretend to be victims of human trafficking in order to avoid prosecution. This can tie up vital resources that are needed to help real victims.
Do more to enforce existing laws against prostitution to deter buyers from commercial sex. ⁶	As long as there remains a demand for a commercial sex industry, there will remain a supply of individuals willing to profit from its sale. ⁴
Increase oversight of foster care programs to ensure children are being cared for adequately.	These programs are already underfunded and understaffed. Increasing oversight is unrealistic.
To help victims get jobs, create a process to expunge criminal charges from the records of human trafficking victims.	This process may lead to false testimony, abuses of prosecutorial authority, or other unintended consequences.

Closing Reflection:

1. How has your thinking changed about this topic?

2. As a result of this discussion, is there something you feel that you are able to do to combat human trafficking?

3. Based on today's discussion, what is the most important change or action that needs to take place to address human trafficking in our community?
How will that be accomplished?

Sources:

This discussion guide relied heavily on the following sources and has utilized several verbatim quotes from these sources as annotated throughout.

1. "Introduction to domestic sex trafficking" (handout), Arizona State University School of Social Work, Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, 2015.
2. "Domestic Violence (DV) and Sex Trafficking (ST) Venn diagram" (handout) , Arizona State University School of Social Work, Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, 2015.
3. "What you need to know: Teen Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation – A Training Tool for School Educators and School Administrators" (handout) , Arizona State University School of Social Work, Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, 2015.
4. "What you need to know: Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation – A Training Tool for Mental Health Providers" (handout), Arizona State University School of Social Work, Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, 2015.
5. "Sex Trafficking Power and Control Wheel" (handout), Arizona State University School of Social Work, Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, 2015.
6. "Human Trafficking in Arizona & US: Facts, Figures, Trends" (slideshow), The McCain Institute for International Leadership, accessed from: www.endsextraffickingaz.gov/about-human-trafficking.html, October 21, 2015.
7. "Trafficking vs. Smuggling" (Indicator Card), EndSexTraffickingAZ.gov, accessed from www.endsextrafficking.az.gov/materials.html, October 21, 2015.

Resources

Arizona Human Trafficking Council

An inter-agency state task force
www.endsextrafficking.az.gov
tel:(602) 542-4043

Arizona League to End Regional Trafficking (ALERT)

Provides comprehensive case management services to trafficking survivors
tinyurl.com/PhxAZALERT
1-(888)-60-ALERT (25378).

Project ALWAYS

Provides comprehensive legal representation to survivors of all forms of human trafficking
alwaysaz.org
(602) 248-7055

Sold No More

Faith-based Tucson organization raising awareness of sex trafficking
soldnomore.org
tel520) 917-6528

Southern Arizona Against Slavery

A community coalition fighting all forms of human trafficking in Arizona and around the world
saastucson.com
southernazagainstslavery@gmail.com

Streetlight USA

Residential facility in the Phoenix area where sex-trafficked girls can go to heal
streetlightusa.org

Training and Resources United to Stop Trafficking (TRUST)

Information resources & coordination of anti-trafficking efforts of organizations statewide
www.trustaz.org
1.844.TRUSTAZ (1.844.878.7829)

Willow Way

Survivor-led and survivor-driven organization helping prostituted and trafficked people escape "the life"
tinyurl.com/fbWillowWay
(520) 488-7399

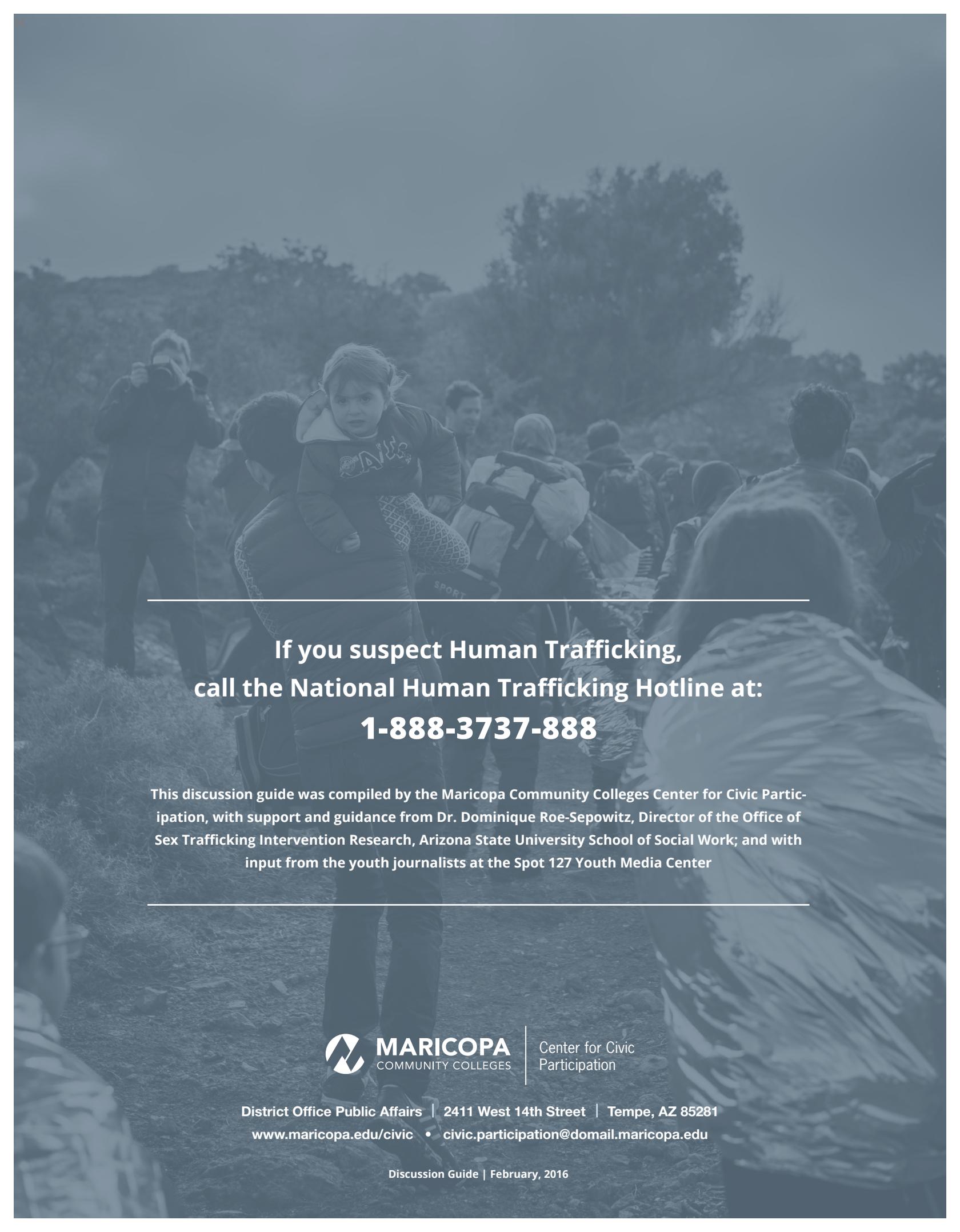
Organizational contact listings were provided by the Southern Arizona Against Slavery website and current as of January 22, 2015.



If you suspect Human
Trafficking, call the
**National Human
Trafficking Hotline:**

1-888-3737-888





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This discussion guide was compiled by the Maricopa Community Colleges Center for Civic Participation, with support and guidance from Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, Director of the Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, Arizona State University School of Social Work; and with input from the youth journalists at the Spot 127 Youth Media Center



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