

**2024 VICTIM SERVICES CONFERENCE**

**Identifying and Serving  
Labor Trafficking  
Survivors In Our  
Communities**

# THE OBJECTIVE



## EXPLORE

Explore The primary sectors in which labor trafficking take place.



## DIFFERENTIATE

Diffrentiate between Labor Trafficking, Labor Exploitation, and Labor Laws.



## GUIDE

Provide guidance on how to effectively identify and serve survivors through the lens of a trauma informed approach.

“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, debt bondage or slavery.”

# Labor Trafficking is often found in industries such as:

Agriculture  
Domestic  
Construction  
Landscaping  
Hospitality  
Manufacturing  
Sales Crew  
Carnival  
Massage Therapist

# Vulnerabilities to Labor Trafficking

Immigration Status

Lack of Education

Mental and/or Physical Disabilities

Unemployment or Lack of Job Training

Substance use Disorders

Family Obligation

Homelessness or Home Instability

History of Domestic/Sexual Abuse

Criminal Histories

Lack of Access to Social Services

Age and Maturity

Poverty

**Victims are *usually* recruited through their social networks in their home countries, under the hope of opportunity for themselves or their families.**

In-Person

Rehab

Prision

Visas

Family Members

Advertisements



## Domestic Work in Marriage



**Recruitment and grooming:** A man from a conservative, patriarchal society promises a poor girl's family he will marry and take care of her in the United States. She has been raised her whole life knowing she will have an arranged marriage.

**Coercion and control:** Once here, the wife is forced to take care of the husband's children from another relationship, keep the house, work in the family business and not leave the house. She has no money and does not speak the language. Her husband tells her complaining will bring shame on her family and ruin her sister's chances of a good marriage.

**Outcome:** The wife befriends someone in her religious community – the one place she is allowed to socialize – and the friend helps her find a lawyer.

## Exploitation of Disabilities

**Recruitment:** A couple befriends a woman with a developmental disability and promises her safety and shelter in return for help around the house.

**Coercion and control:** The victim is put to work in a family business for long hours every day and not paid. She is told if she doesn't like it, they will send her to a halfway house that is more like a prison. They cash her disability check monthly.

**Outcome:** The victim's family, who has lost track of her, finds her and brings her home.







**Recruitment and grooming:** A 25-year-old man from an Indigenous community in Mexico learns on social media about a job at a farm in the United States. The job comes with a legal, temporary visa and is well paid. In his hometown, most of the adults take these kinds of jobs overseas for half the year to support their families.

**Coercion and control:** He is told by the recruiter that it costs \$5,000 for the visa but the advertised wages make it worthwhile, so the worker borrows the money from his new employer. When he gets here, he is told he is working off the debt the business owner incurred bringing him here and will not be paid for the first several months of work. Soon, his boss begins charging him for water, lunch, and transportation to and from the work site. His debt is increasing at a rate that will be extremely difficult to pay back. If he leaves, he will have no way to pay back the money he borrowed. The boss tells him he will be barred from ever returning on a legal visa. Although there is no such thing as an official blacklist, the worker knows that his boss knows many of the recruiters who come to his town, so it would be impossible to get work in the future. He feels he has no choice but to stay and try to pay off the debt.

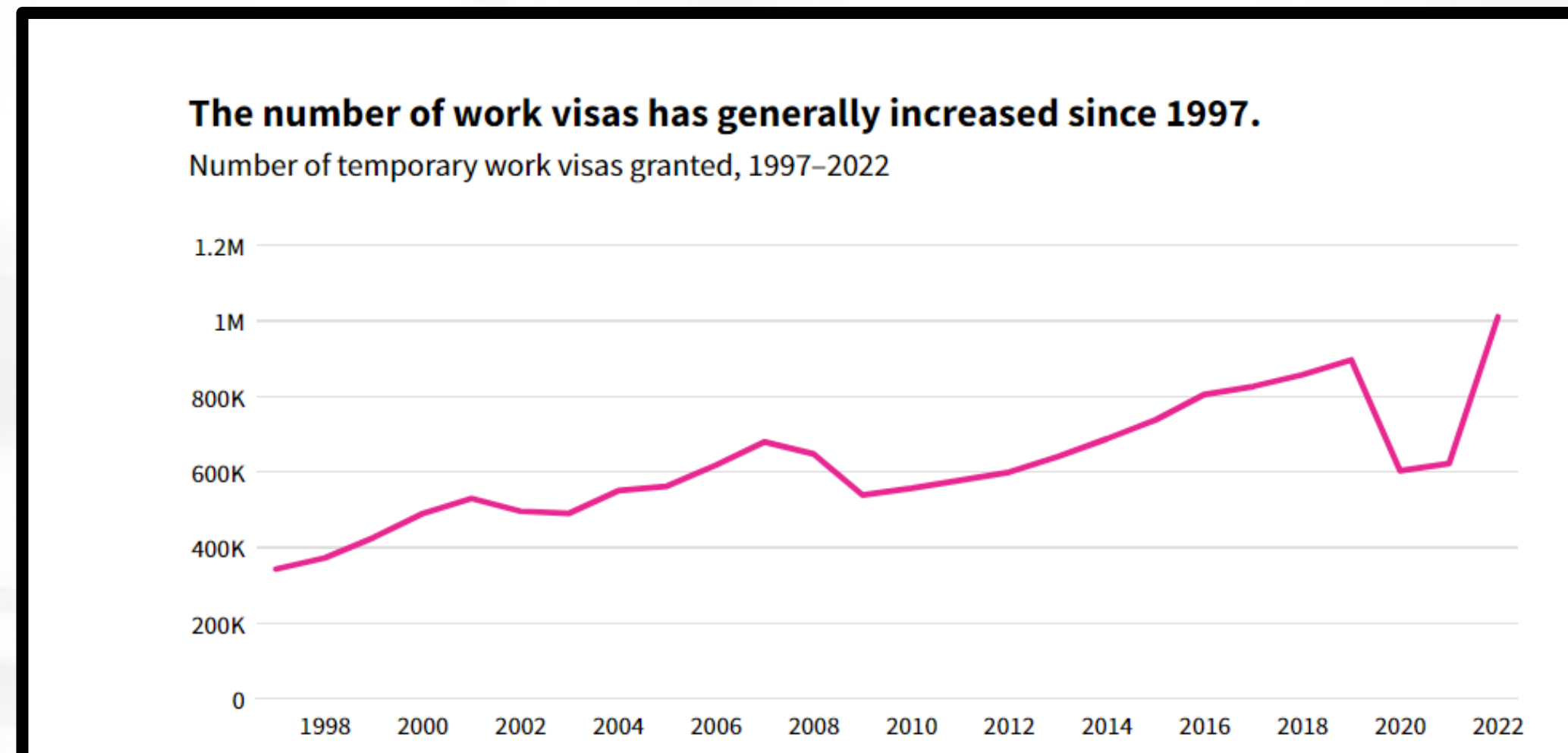
**Outcome:** Too concerned about being blacklisted for the future, the worker decides to just get through the abusive situation and try for a better position next year. His parents have to sell their home and move in with relatives to pay their debt.



# Mechanisms of Labor Trafficking Involving Temporary Work Visas

I have a client who was brought here on a H2B visa (work Visa) in March of this year. The contract rate was \$17.82 per hour. She arrived with another 39 people from Mexico to work.

All 40 people are living in one apartment in Wilmington. They are not working consistently or at all. An H2B visa will not allow persons to work for any company other than the one that contracted them. Those that are working find themselves receiving a lower rate of pay, only to be extorted \$150 a week for lodging and most recently, he has informed them that they need to cover food expenses as well.



# Labor Exploitation

Less Pay Than Promised  
Withheld Pay  
Under Minimum Wage  
Denial of Pay  
Illegal Deductions  
No Written Earning Statement  
No Safe Water or Bathroom  
Hazardous Work Environment

## **Civil**

**Fair Labor Standard Act  
(FLSA) OSHA, DOL ( Wage & Hour)**

# Labor Trafficking

Threat to Report to Immigration  
Threat to Blacklist  
Verbal Manipulation  
Withholds or Destroys Documents  
Misrepresentation of Job No  
access to medical care  
Monitoring or Stalking  
Physical Abuse

## **Criminal**

**Acts that may constitute  
Labor Trafficking**

# Trauma Informed Approaches

Trauma-informed care approaches the survivors needs in a manner that takes into account any trauma that they may have experienced. A key goal of trauma-informed care is to prevent any re-traumatization that could prevent individuals from continuing to seek care. When used effectively, trauma-informed care enables providers and professionals to ensure that the processes, procedures and settings protect patients and staff from re-traumatization.

It is important that professionals who practice trauma-informed care attempt to fully understand the effect of trauma and devise a treatment plan to aid in recovery. When quality care, compassionate responses, and essential services are provided, victims will be more empowered to meet their individual goals along their healing journey, understanding that certain survivor behaviors are a response to trauma.



# 6 Principles of Trauma-Informed Care



## Safety

Throughout the organization, patients and staff feel physically and psychologically safe



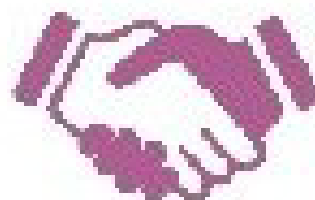
## Trustworthiness & Transparency

Decisions are made with transparency, and with the goal of building and maintaining trust



## Peer Support

Individuals with shared experiences are integrated into the organization and viewed as integral to service delivery



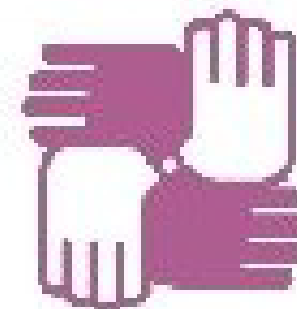
## Collaboration

Power differences — between staff and clients and among staff — are leveled to support shared decision-making



## Empowerment

Patient and staff strengths are recognized, built on, and validated — this includes a belief in resilience and the ability to heal from trauma



## Humility & Responsiveness

Biases and stereotypes and historical trauma are recognized and addressed



**Contact us!**

**T’Nika Wilmore: [T’Nika.Wilmore@delaware.gov](mailto:T’Nika.Wilmore@delaware.gov)**