

# BUSINESSSAFE

*BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.*

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## BusinessSafe Threat Topic: Human Trafficking

January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Human trafficking is defined under Florida law as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Overall, Florida ranks third nationally for the number of human trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. The two most prevalent types of trafficking are sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

Human trafficking can occur anywhere, and can impact anyone due to of the wide array of tactics used by traffickers to lure victims. The most prominent locations where sex trafficking occurs is in illicit massage/spa establishments, hotels or motels, in personal residences/brothels, through escort services, or via online advertisements. Victims of labor trafficking are most frequently reported in the agricultural sector, domestic work opportunities (nanny or a cleaning services), construction industry, and the hospitality sector.

**Nearly any online platform where two-way communication can occur has the potential to be used by traffickers to solicit victims.** This includes but is not limited to social media applications, gaming sites, video and photo sharing platforms, classified websites and talent websites both on the surface web and dark web. Given the amount of nefarious activity on these sites, Congress enacted legislation in 2018 that allows for civil or criminal prosecution of online marketplaces that knowingly participate in sex trafficking, and ultimately may end up in the website being shut down.

[St. Petersburg Police Arrest 7 People Accused of Sexually Exploiting Teen Boys](#)

[Kissimmee Man in Gainesville Faces Drugs, Human Trafficking Charges](#)

[U.S. Federal Authorities Seized Backpage.com in April 2018 with this New Federal Legislation](#)

**Labor trafficking is when individuals are forced to perform labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.** This is a large concern in Florida due to the extensive number of tourist attractions, sporting venues, hotels and motels, new construction projects, and large amounts of farming and agricultural lands to be maintained. Common labor trafficking tactics involve unlawfully garnishing the wages of workers, forcing them to live in unhealthy living conditions, and not allowing them proper equipment to remain safe on the job.

[Contractor Accused of Trafficking Unauthorized Workers Faces Trial](#)

[Local Nail Salon Owners Arrested and Charged with Forced Labor and Debt Bondage](#)



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[Restaurant Owner Indicted on Human Trafficking Charge](#)

**Traffickers tend to target the vulnerable, to include not but not limited to, those struggling with homelessness, poverty, drug or substance abuse, developmental disabilities, undocumented immigrants and migrant workers, and individuals that may run away from home.** They may use a variety of methods to control victims including making false promises, threats or intimidation, physical abuse, isolation or confinement, or support drug/substance abuse habits.

[Couple Sentenced for Keeping Disabled Woman in Shed, Selling Her for Sex](#)

[Restaurant Manager Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison for Enslaving and Torturing Employee with Disabilities](#)

[Alleged Human Trafficker Targeted Victims on Social Media.](#)

**Ways to Protect Against Human Trafficking:**

- Understand the indicators of human trafficking and recognize that the signs may vary depending on if the individual is a victim of sex or labor trafficking.  
[Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\) Blue Campaign Human Trafficking Indicators Reference Guide](#) – *Reference Guides Available in Multiple Languages* (PDF)
- The National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) has many human trafficking resources and products with information on combatting forced labor, labor trafficking in supply chains, human trafficking and the hospitality industry, and human trafficking assessments for airlines and airports.  
[NHTH Resources for Businesses](#)
- Report known or suspected trafficking to entities referenced below:
  - Local authorities (Police Department or Sheriff's Office)
  - National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888
  - Text HELP to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at BeFree or 233733
  - Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE or 1-888-962-2873
  - Dial 9-1-1 for emergency situations

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