

COMBATting HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A UNITED WAY STRATEGY GUIDE

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In Collaboration with
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Human trafficking is compelling someone through force, fraud or coercion to work or engage in commercial sex acts against their will. It happens all around the world—including in all 50 states and territories of the U.S.

**Every United Way can be part of the solution
to end human trafficking.**



LETTER FROM THE CEO



Human trafficking is one of the most compelling and egregious human rights issues today. No country or community is immune from its reach. Human trafficking is the act of compelling someone to work or engage in commercial sex, for little or no pay, through force, fraud, or coercion. Individuals who are trafficked are deprived of their freedom and are often compelled to engage in work that is sexual, laborious, dangerous, and violent. Human trafficking prevails in communities large and small, and affluent and impoverished. We may encounter individuals who are being trafficked in our daily activities without knowing the reality of their circumstances.

Institutional and structural injustices like economic and gender inequality, discrimination, and racism are just a few of the underlying factors that enable human trafficking to perpetuate. More insidiously, individuals often experience human trafficking due to violations of trust. Irrespective of the cause, human trafficking is buttressed by national and international phenomena such as migration,

war and conflict, economic embargoes, hunger and disease, and the environment. In many cases, these factors serve as reasons why exploitation persists: precarious socioeconomic circumstances in an individual's hometown or nation often means insufficient family, community, social, and economic resources to escape trafficking.

Human trafficking is an issue that touches all our lives, whether we recognize it or not. The people who construct our buildings and roads, ring up our groceries at the store, do our hair and nails, and farm the foods we eat may experience human trafficking.

At United Way, we possess the unique ability to mitigate the challenges impacting our communities, including human trafficking. Our mission is to mobilize the caring power of communities to advance the common good. We envision equitable, inclusive, and resilient communities that prioritize the needs of all its inhabitants. This includes protecting and reincorporating survivors of human trafficking into full societal participation, free from further harm and threat.

We possess the unique ability to mitigate the challenges impacting our communities.

In all that we do, United Way works to promote equity in our communities. We recognize that dismantling the barriers that perpetuate injustices and insidious systems like human trafficking cannot be eradicated until equity as a value is infused in all aspects of a community.

We strive to create a world where communities deliver equitable solutions to achieve lasting change, giving everyone the chance to thrive. We are especially attuned to improving outcomes in education, economic mobility, and health because we recognize the impact these areas have on the continuity of human trafficking. United Way facilitates critical work and possesses deep institutional knowledge and networks in these areas. In partnership with survivors of human trafficking, United Ways are poised to build and create solutions that combat this gross human rights violation across communities.

This Strategy Guide serves as a catalyst to empower United Ways across the United States to combat human trafficking. **United Ways can – and do – use the power of local networks to serve as conveners, funding sources, and advocates deeply committed to eradicating human trafficking.** Our ecosystem possesses the tools needed to engage key partners in accelerating this work, including those with lived experience as survivors.

We know that a better world is possible. If we are to achieve that better world, **we must commit ourselves to eradicating human trafficking and all systems that infringe of the rights of our fellow humans.**

– Angela F. Williams
President and CEO
United Way Worldwide

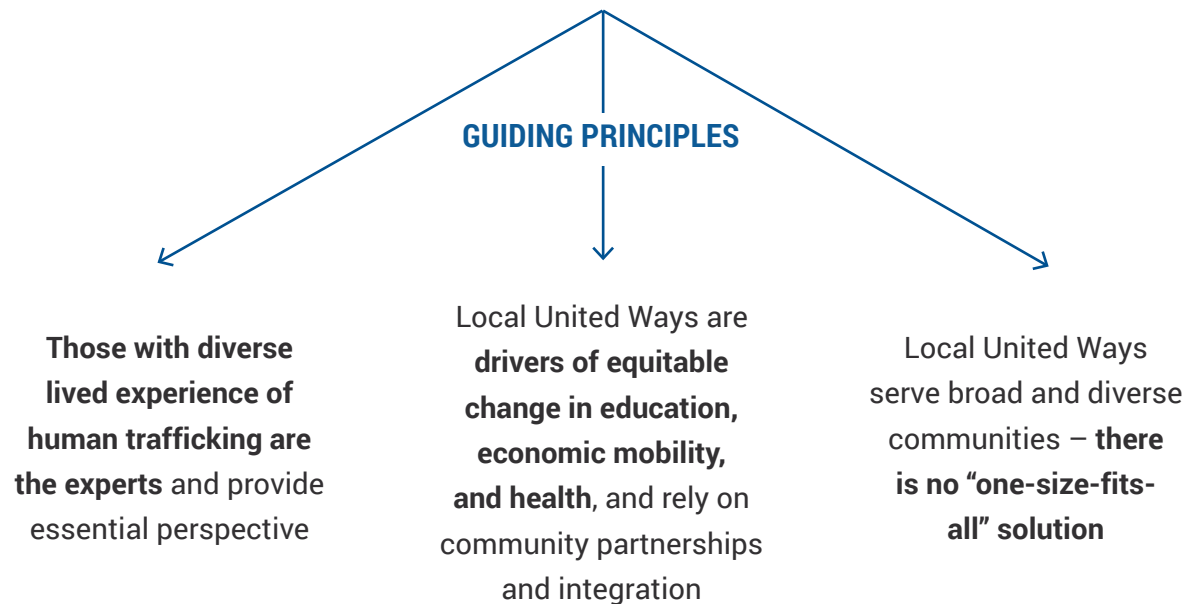
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, United Way established a pilot program with United Ways in four U.S. cities to support efforts to combat human trafficking through a community-centered approach. As more local United Ways embrace such efforts around the U.S., it is important to understand local community needs, considerations, and strategies for success.

PURPOSE

This strategy guide serves as a resource for local United Ways within the United States to better understand the landscape of combatting trafficking, how efforts align with the United Way mission, and ways that local United Ways can build a tailored approach to combat trafficking within their communities.



OBJECTIVES

THE STRATEGY GUIDE...

1

Serves as an **easy-to-understand resource and guide for United Ways**, and other organizations, to use when planning for and executing initiatives to combat trafficking

2

Provides an **actionable path to success**, with incremental steps and tools that U.S.-based United Ways can take to integrate equitable efforts to combat trafficking into current priorities

3

Establishes a **commitment to initiatives to combat trafficking, and support for those with lived experience** of human trafficking through the lenses of education, economic mobility, and health

UNITED WAY MISSION OVERVIEW

United Way envisions a world where communities implement equitable solutions to achieve lasting change, giving everyone the chance to thrive — especially in education, economic mobility, and health.

UNITED WAY OVERVIEW

United Way was established in 1887 in Denver, Colorado, and today partners with over 45,000 corporate partners and 29,000 community partners. Through the impact areas of education, economic mobility, and health, United Way builds stronger, more resilient communities where everyone can thrive. Localizing strategic community engagement is critical to the success of United Way's mission. The network of partners varies by community, which allows each local United Way to focus on what is most needed, and to work locally with global scale.

United Way has established goals for each of the three impact agendas to be achieved by 2028:

- **5 million people** will get better jobs
- **95% of students** will graduate high school ready for college and careers
- **90% of people** will be healthier

These goals are ambitious, but with global reach and locally-focused programs and partners, United Way will continue to address big challenges to improve the lives of millions of people.

▶ **1,100**
Local United Ways
around the World

▶ **1.5 million**
Global Volunteers

▶ **100%**
Of U.S. states have at least
one Local United Way

▶ **\$41.5B**
Grants, scholarships, and
awards funded by United Way
Worldwide in 2021

We bring anti-trafficking efforts to scale by energizing, coordinating, and mobilizing the United Way Network. We are innovating where needed, uplifting good work already being done, elevating survivor leadership, and utilizing the United Way Network to catalyze the anti-trafficking movement.

IMPACT AGENDAS

United Way centers work around three impact areas, working toward equity for all.

People who experience human trafficking face barriers in all of these areas, and

United Ways have a unique ability to bridge these gaps through our expertise in Education, Economic Mobility, and Health.



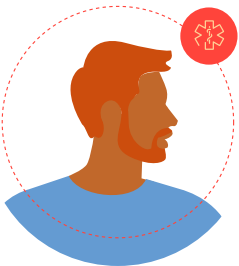
Education*

Efforts to ensure that children have the support they need to promote early development, transition to kindergarten, and success in primary/elementary schools (e.g., family engagement, access to quality preschool programs, literacy support). And includes efforts to support in-school youth (elementary through postsecondary) to help them gain the knowledge, skills, and credentials essential for success in the workplace (e.g., mentoring, tutoring, skills development).



Economic Mobility

Efforts to ensure that individuals gain good jobs and effectively manage their resources. Includes helping individuals and families attain financial stability by lowering costs and accessing benefits (e.g., tax credits), and attaining family-sustaining jobs that offer opportunities for advancement.



Health

Ensuring that individuals and families have access to healthcare, services and supports to lead healthy lives. Also includes efforts to create healthy systems and living environments (e.g., healthy food access, prenatal care) and to address the social determinants of health.

**Childhood and Youth Success*

United Way's mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world to advance the common good. To achieve this mission, United Way works with communities to tackle tough challenges and private, public, and nonprofit partners to boost education, economic mobility, and health resources.

ACKNOWLEDGING WORD CHOICE

Due to the sensitive nature of human trafficking, the language we use matters. We've made some choices in this document that reflect our desire to be inclusive and respect how individuals wish to be identified (e.g. individual with lived experience, survivor, etc.). Commonly used terms are defined throughout this document for reference.

The following terms and definitions are commonly used when discussing combatting human trafficking. Additional terms can be found in the [appendix](#).

COMMUNITY IMPACT

United Ways work to create positive community change by convening community leaders to identify priority issues, building awareness, working across sectors (corporate, nonprofit, public) to align and coordinate efforts, engaging community residents to be part of solutions, and advocating for policy change.

EQUITY

The intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes. [Learn more.](#)

FORCED LABOR

Encompasses the range of activities involved when a person uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the labor or services of another person. [Learn more.](#)

Also referred to as: Labor trafficking, debt bondage, domestic servitude

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The act of compelling someone to work, or engage in commercial sex, for little or no pay, through force, fraud, or coercion for personal or commercial exploitation.

[Learn more.](#)

*Also referred to as: trafficking in persons, forced labor, modern slavery**

**This term is not used by United Way in the United States due to its association with our country's history of enslaving persons as chattel. While experiences of slavery and trafficking may correlate in similar structural and systemic concepts, they are not the same and have different historical contexts.*

INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Individuals may prefer to be referred to as “survivor leaders,” “survivor advocates,” or “subject matter experts with lived experience of human trafficking.” Some may have other titles or prefer not to identify based on this experience at all. In recognizing individuals’ full life experiences, skill sets, and professional goals, it is important to always ask how someone wants to be identified. Policymakers and community members should not assume that someone who identifies as a “survivor leader,” “survivor advocate,” or “expert with lived experience of human trafficking” should be referred to as such in a professional setting or that identification as a survivor leader makes it acceptable to inquire about someone’s personal experience with [human trafficking](#).

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Populations who require services that are tailored and promote equity for marginalized and/or underserved human trafficking populations, including, but not limited to, youth, indigenous populations, black and brown communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, boys and men, and people with special needs.

SEX TRAFFICKING

Encompasses the range of activities involved when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel another person to engage in a commercial sex act or causes a child (under age 18) to engage in a [commercial sex act](#).

HUMAN SMUGGLING

Human smuggling is the business of transporting people illegally across an international border, in this case into the United States. Smuggling does not always involve coercion. The people the smugglers bring from one place to another place generally have chosen to make the trip themselves for any number of reasons. Some are fleeing violence or poverty. Most, in fact, are paying someone to help them make the journey.

SURVIVOR-INFORMED APPROACH

A program, policy, intervention, or product that is designed, implemented, and evaluated with intentional leadership, expertise, and input from a diverse community of survivors to ensure that it accurately represents their needs, interests, and [perceptions](#).

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

KNOW THE STORIES



José came to the U.S. hoping he could help his family avoid further violence after his brother's murder. For an average of 12 hours a day he works in the orchard during harvest season. He lives in a crowded trailer on the site, which is guarded at night so he can't leave. His employer says José owes a large debt for his rent and water. José isn't paid and is told his earnings are paying off this debt. He would like to seek medical help for an injury, but his employer threatened to hurt his family back home if he does.*



Kayla was 17 years old when she met Tim online and they began to hang out. She had felt isolated from her family after she was sexually abused by a family friend when she was 11. Tim said he loved her. He asked her to have sex with a friend of his. He said he would only continue loving her if she did this. The friend was a customer. Tim required Kayla to engage in sexual acts for money repeatedly over the next three years. She was arrested twice for things Tim told her to do. When she tried to leave Tim, he threatened and abused her.*

**These stories are fictional but based on true stories.*

RISK FACTORS

Systemic injustices and inequities lead some people to face more risk of human trafficking than others. Marginalized and under resourced communities are disproportionately affected. Common vulnerabilities and risk factors include:

Marginalization of Community (BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, etc.)	Poverty, economic hardship, financial instability, unemployment	Migration, displacement, relocation (voluntary or as a refugee/asylee)
Homelessness, housing insecurity	Abuse and/or violence (sexual abuse/ assault, child abuse/neglect, domestic violence, etc.)	Foster care, Child Welfare System, Juvenile Justice System
Health concerns (mental and/or physical health)	Disabilities (intellectual, developmental, physical, etc.)	Addiction or substance abuse

**This list, which is based on reports to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, is not exhaustive.*

COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING OVERVIEW

Combatting human trafficking requires an integrated and comprehensive community approach tailored to local needs and informed by those with lived experience.

Given the complexity of human trafficking and its intersections with equity and education, economic mobility, and health, United Ways are uniquely prepared to be conveners, supporters, service providers, and advocates in communities across the country.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING OVERVIEW

Human trafficking is the act of compelling someone to engage in work or commercial sex for little or no pay, through force, fraud, or coercion for personal or commercial exploitation.

Legally in the United States, it is defined as “The exploitation of adults through force, fraud, or coercion, and children for such purposes as forced labor or commercial sex.”

BY THE STATISTICS

- ▶ **50M**
People who are currently experiencing human trafficking [around the world](#)
- ▶ **\$150B**
[Profits made each year](#) by traffickers around the world
- ▶ **219,380**
Total contacts made to the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline in FY21
- ▶ **83**
% of individuals with lived experience in the U.S. faced poverty prior to their [trafficking](#)
- ▶ **55.7**
[% of all labor trafficking survivors](#) in the U.S. are Hispanic
- ▶ **40.4**
[% of all sex trafficking survivors](#) in the U.S. are Black⁹

The spread of misinformation and myths about this issue has had damaging effects on the anti-human trafficking movement in the past. When we (intentionally or unintentionally) perpetuate false narratives about trafficking, we fail to center the actual people affected by the issue.

MYTH

FACT

It is limited to developing countries

It happens around the world, including in every US State and territory

It is defined by movement

It does not require crossing borders or even leaving one's home

It usually involves abduction from public places

It is more often a complex crime of coercion and manipulation to create and maintain exploitative relationships

It is restricted to minors

Adults make up the majority of the world's victims

It mostly happens to women and girls

It happens to people of all genders

It is only sex trafficking

Forced labor occurs far more frequently

Traffickers are strangers

Traffickers are often people the victims know and trust

Victims will always try to escape if they have the chance

Traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion to control their victim

Labor trafficking only happens to immigrants

It affects people around the world regardless of migration or citizenship status

Labor trafficking and sex trafficking are always separate issues

While distinct from one another, multiple forms of trafficking can intersect, and victims may experience more than one

GETTING STARTED: ACCELERATORS

Actively and effectively engaging in combatting human trafficking requires a general understanding of the issue, how it is identified, and how it can be prevented. Accelerators are included below to help with getting started.

UNITED WAY LIVE LEARNING SESSIONS



Understanding Human Trafficking: The Intersections And Complexities

Part of the Live Learning Session series, created in partnership with UPS and Rising Worldwide

ESSENTIAL EDUCATION

Prior to engaging in work to combat trafficking, United Ways should first educate themselves on human trafficking as an issue, in all its forms. Taking the time to prepare demonstrates our deep commitment to this serious and salient issue. To help get your United Way started, we have included some general information and helpful resources. We also offer more topical and specific resources related to United Way's approach to prevention of, and intervention in, human trafficking in education, economic mobility, and health. We recommend beginning by taking the following steps.

Step 1: Learn about the issue — [Check UWO](#) for training and educational opportunities; Review the resources shared within this guide

Step 2: Complete the "Factors & Considerations" questionnaire

Step 3: Reach out to anti-trafficking subject matter experts at United Way Worldwide for support beyond the strategy guide

In partnership with a team of lived experience experts, United Way Worldwide has created Live Learning Sessions to help United Ways across the country learn more. Each session, led by a team of survivor experts, provides an overview of the issue of human trafficking, as well as information on how we can strategically and collectively combat trafficking in our communities.

To date, the Live Learning Sessions have educated and provided resources to over 1,800 community leaders, and 100% of local United Way partners reported an interest in continuing to work to combat trafficking after the event.



We recommend these resources as a starting place to better understand the scope of human trafficking and what's being done to combat it in the United States.

GENERAL RESOURCES



[Human Trafficking Does Not Happen in a Vacuum](#)

United Way blog on intersections of trafficking and persistent injustices



[20 Ways You Can Help Fight Human Trafficking](#)

Resource by the Department of State on joining the fight against human trafficking



[Know Your Rights](#)

An information pamphlet describing rights while working in the United States



[HHS ACF Fact Sheet: Human Trafficking](#)

Definitions, trafficking vs. smuggling, and how victims are trafficked



[On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes](#)

Explains how human traffickers exploit legitimate systems within multiple business sectors for their own profits



[Labor Trafficking Here and Beyond PSA](#)

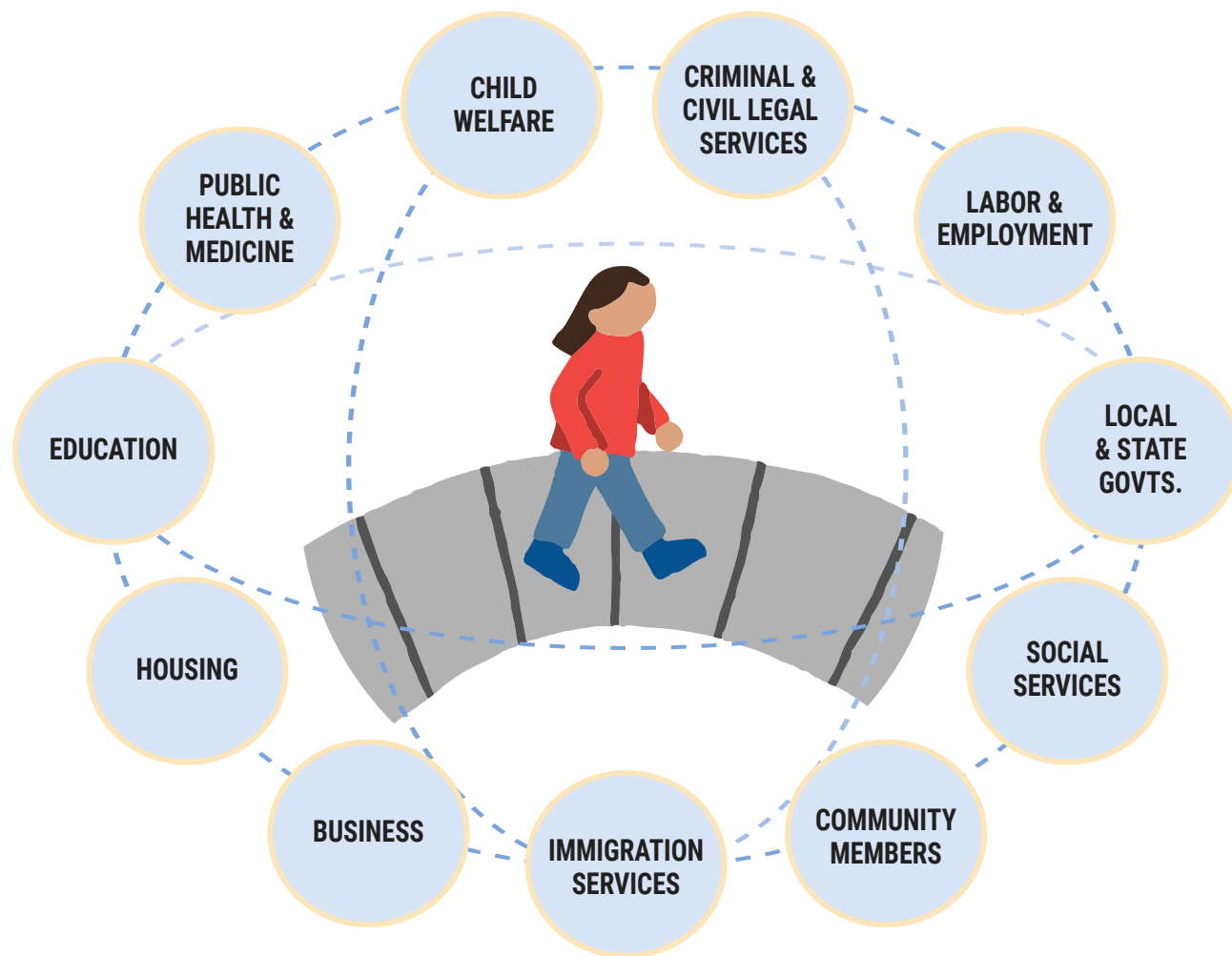
Explains labor trafficking and rights regardless of immigration status

**Note: These resources are not exhaustive.*

COMBATTING TRAFFICKING COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM

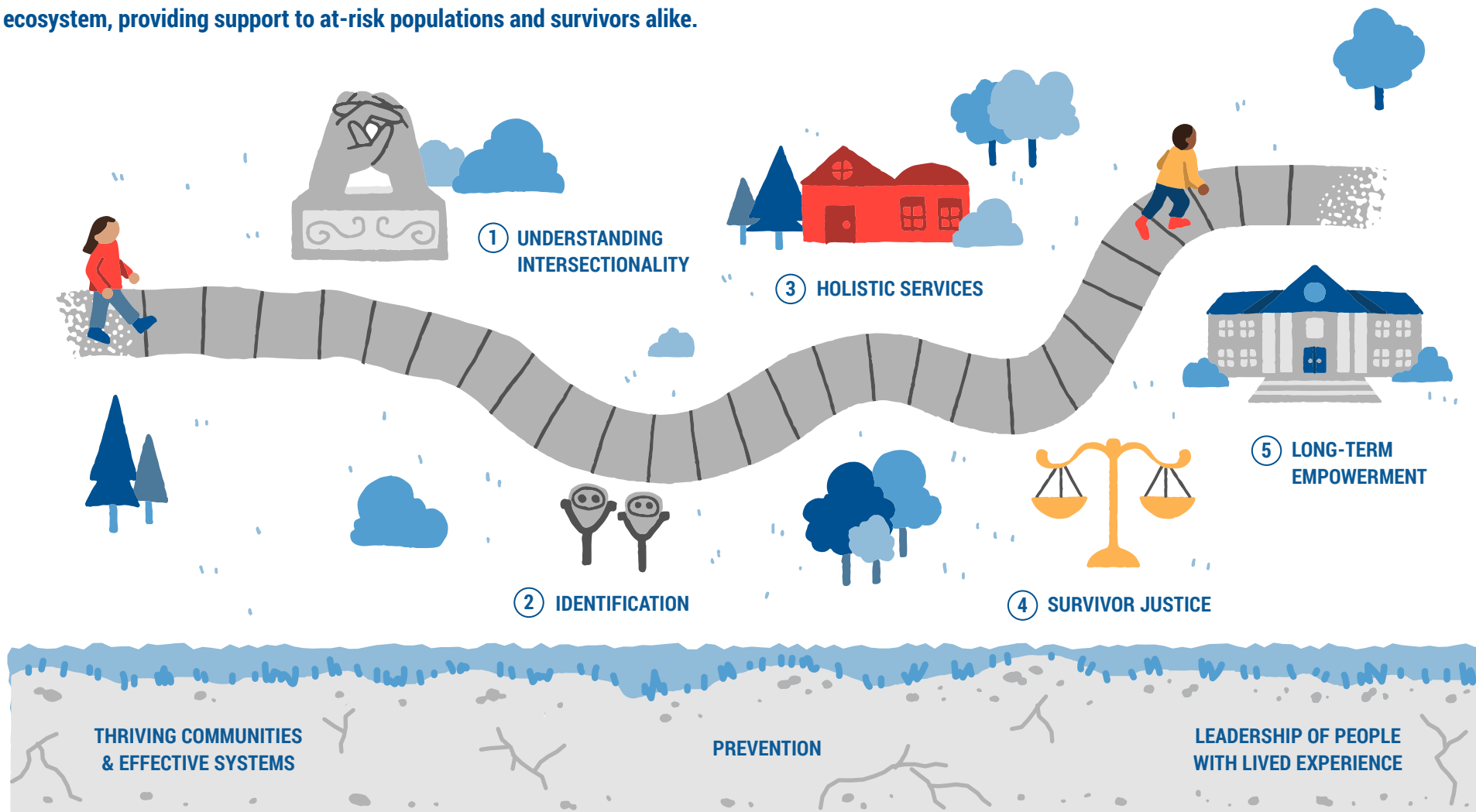
Throughout the experience of exploitation and the process of exiting their trafficking situation, survivors come in contact with a myriad of systems and institutions that can impact their recovery and future. United Ways' connection to these community stakeholders through existing programs that support community health, education, and economic mobility can play a key role in supporting people with lived experience at all stages of their lives.

Various community leaders, especially those with lived experience, play critical roles across education, economic mobility, and health to support prevention and intervention of human trafficking.



SUPPORTING THE SURVIVOR'S JOURNEY

Combatting human trafficking spans every part of a community, including the areas highlighted below. Making impact within education, economic mobility, and health requires a comprehensive and collective approach. **United Ways are well poised to engage in all stages of the anti-trafficking ecosystem, providing support to at-risk populations and survivors alike.**



SUPPORTING THE SURVIVOR'S JOURNEY TERMS



1. UNDERSTANDING INTERSECTIONALITY

Engaging underserved communities by understanding vulnerabilities and intersectionality.

2. IDENTIFICATION

Proactive outreach to at-risk or victimized individuals to facilitate identification and service provision.

3. HOLISTIC SERVICES

Providing individuals with support including aftercare, access to housing, health care, legal support, childcare, and other services.

4. SURVIVOR JUSTICE

Assisting people with lived experience of human trafficking to achieve their definition of personal justice, including but not limited to engagement with the criminal and civil legal system. Other examples might include restorative justice, community healing and education, engagement in prevention work, and more.

5. LONG-TERM EMPOWERMENT

Assisting people with lived experience of human trafficking to reduce likelihood of revictimization including access to education, job opportunities and leadership development.

All of these stops on the Survivor's Journey are supported and made possible by **thriving communities, effective systems, prevention efforts, and the leadership of people with lived experience of human trafficking.**

PARTNERING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Centering the work to combat human trafficking around the perspectives of individuals with diverse lived experiences of human trafficking is a key success factor to understanding the most important areas of focus for strengthening initiatives, priorities, and partnerships in this work.

ON THE NECESSITY OF ENGAGEMENT

Engaging individuals with lived experience of human trafficking is a **critical element of preventing and combatting trafficking**. Individuals with diverse lived experiences bring firsthand perspective and feedback on the needs, challenges, and solutions to support others in trafficking situations and prevent future trafficking. Prioritizing partnerships with people with lived experience is needed to strengthen these areas:

- Gaining a better understanding of needs and experiences of those with lived experience
- Understanding the level and types of care needed to avoid harm and re-traumatization
- Modifying and improving current services and programs based on efficacy feedback and data

Without embracing the perspective of individuals with diverse lived experience, **organizations and communities cannot effectively gauge the benefit and impact** of services and programs supporting the fight. As a result, organizations that do not effectively build partnerships with people with lived experiences are ultimately “left behind” and cannot evolve their programming to meet the needs of the populations they serve.

In addition to the need to work with, and for, those with diverse lived experience of human trafficking, engagement also **dismantles systemic and historic power dynamics** in our communities. When we address power imbalances through inclusion and engagement, we help **prevent re-victimization** of those with lived experience.

“It is imperative that our movement integrate survivors as equal members of our community. We are here to build with you. When we knock on your doors, please invite us in.”

— MINH DANG, MSW, PHD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
SURVIVOR ALLIANCE

PARTNERING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Every person's experiences and healing journeys are unique. Engage with individuals with lived experience if or when they feel ready as consultants, co-creators, and leaders.

Below are a few ways United Way can engage with individuals with lived experience:

- Support and partner with **survivor-led organizations**
- Understand perspectives of individuals with lived experience through **focus groups, surveys, and public data**
- Identify individuals with lived experience to serve as **expert consultants**
- Find ways to **support the professional development** of people with lived experience
- **Hire** individuals with lived experience of human trafficking

When engaging with those with diverse lived experience of human trafficking, move past the story of a person's trauma. Use their areas of unique expertise to help community leaders find ways to be more inclusive and break down barriers and power dynamics. As United Ways, we need to meet the individual where they are, understand the expertise they bring, and leverage that expertise to cultivate a more culturally responsive and effective approach.

ON COMPENSATION

Individuals with lived experience should always be compensated for their time and expertise. Additional guidance is included in the resource below.

EQUITABLE COMPENSATION



[Fundamentals for Compensation & Expenses](#)

Overview on practices for compensating lived experience consultants, published by Survivor Alliance

At United Way, we believe it is our responsibility as community conveners and leaders to prepare and build inclusive spaces to team with individuals with diverse lived experience in the fight to combat human trafficking.

PARTNERING WITH INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

United Ways can, and in some cases already do, engage in work to combat human trafficking in partnership with and alongside those with diverse lived experiences of human trafficking.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

As part of efforts to combat trafficking, United Ways have begun engaging and working with those with lived experience. Some have even been able to hire or otherwise engage and compensate individuals with lived experience to inform their work. While many with lived experience have trafficking related expertise to share, those with lived experience also contribute their perspective to combatting human trafficking to United Way's vast suite of programming efforts.

If your United Way is finding it difficult to identify consultants and leaders with lived experience who currently work in or have interest in the field of combatting trafficking, you are not alone. This journey is critical but challenging and takes concerted effort to avoid tokenization or re-traumatization of community members.

The following are some leading practices from Rising Worldwide Experts, other lived experience experts and consultants, and fellow United Ways working in the space:

- Coordinate with local organizations working in the trafficking space to **understand the landscape of leadership** of those with lived experience
- Ensure **spaces are accessible and mindful of triggers** for those who may have trauma around confinement or other triggers (e.g., a small conference room)
- Work with those with diverse lived experience to **meet them where they are in their healing journey** and at the comfort level for sharing their story
- **Focus on an individual's area of expertise** and identifying ways to make an impact rather than focusing on their trauma or story

- Conduct intentional outreach and work to **elevate the voices and work of those with lived experience**

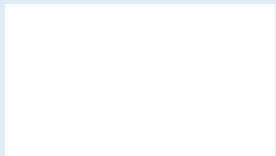
The criticality of having those with diverse lived experience informing our work, their support to clients and input to policies and organizational structure cannot be overstated. Though this continuous learning process is challenging, elevating the voices of individuals with lived experience of human trafficking in identifying issues and building solutions is invaluable to **making true impact and igniting community change**.





RESOURCES: Included below is a non-exhaustive list of resources and guidance for engaging individuals with lived experience of human trafficking.

RESOURCES FOR ENGAGING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Meaningful Engagement of People with Lived Experience

Framework for increasing diverse lived experience leadership across the spectrum of engagement



Survivor Engagement Resources

Compiled by Survivor Alliance, a collection of resources and guidance across various areas in the trafficking space



Rethinking Survivor Leadership

Training from the National Survivor Network on examining norms and biased assumptions about engaging survivor leaders



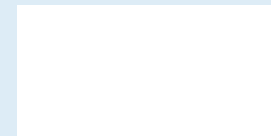
How Systems Fail Human Trafficking Survivors

Conveys survivors' experiences and perceptions of institutions, structures, and organizations



We Name it So We Can Repair It

Outlines kinds of harm survivors experience within the anti-trafficking sector, explains approaches for repair



Human Trafficking Survivor Leadership in the United States

Provides an overview of the current state of survivor leadership and its impact on the movement to combat human trafficking

UNITED WAY'S APPROACH

APPROACH TO COMBATTING TRAFFICKING AT UNITED WAY

Education, economic mobility, and health affect, and are affected by, human trafficking. The pillars are instrumental to the fight, and serve as prevention points and intervention tools in combatting human trafficking.

UNITED WAY IMPACT AGENDAS

United Ways work to create positive community change by improving access to education, economic mobility, and health for every person in every community. Through United Way, communities tackle tough challenges and work with private, public, and nonprofit partners in these impact areas. Improving accessibility and availability of each is critical in the fight to combat human trafficking.

The work of United Way illustrates our global Network's unique ability to strengthen community resilience to both human trafficking and disasters. Through efforts that support the health, education, and economic mobility of all community members, local United Ways address the root causes of injustice and reduce vulnerabilities.

Education

Millions of children and youth lack the support they need to strengthen their literacy, stay on track in school, graduate high school and find a career. **Lack of access to quality education exacerbates vulnerabilities and puts children and adults alike at risk of human trafficking.** Learn more at [Education as a Tool to Combat Human Trafficking](#)

Health

A public health approach to anti-human trafficking prevention and intervention activities can help communities address the root causes of this systemic issue and better support the long-term healing and success of survivors. Learn more at [Human Trafficking is a Public Health Issue](#)

Economic Mobility

Human trafficking stems from and contributes to economic instability for individuals and communities. Traffickers often seek out economically vulnerable individuals, such as those who are living in poverty, unemployed, or experiencing homelessness. Learn more at [Combatting Human Trafficking Through Financial Stability](#)

Disaster Relief

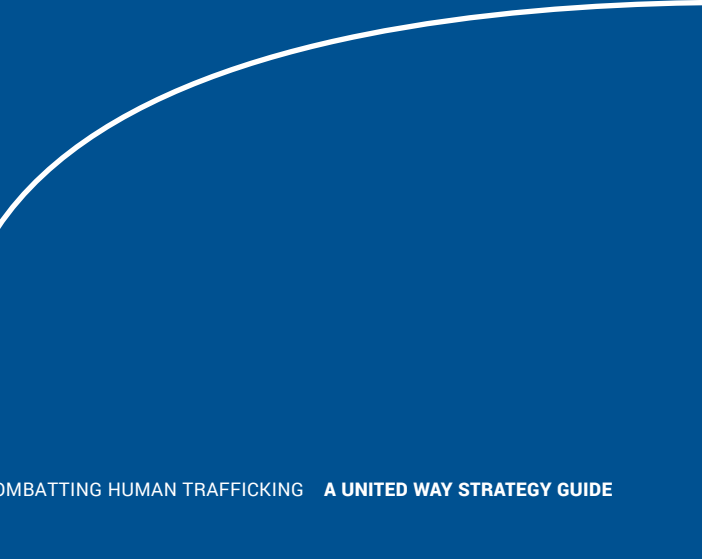
Individuals experiencing displacement because of conflict or natural disaster are likely to lose assets, livelihood, and the ability to plan their future. **Displaced populations and their future host communities alike are made increasingly vulnerable to human trafficking in the wake of disasters and conflicts.** Learn more at [Anti-Human Trafficking & Disaster Resilience](#)

While this strategy guide aims to provide frameworks and context to support United Ways in embracing efforts to combat human trafficking, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to this work. Every community and local United Way is unique, and evaluating factors and considerations can help determine where to start.



FACTORS & CONSIDERATIONS

Local leaders and community members are best positioned to understand community needs and opportunities related to combatting human trafficking. It is at the intersection of those needs and opportunities that real and lasting change is made. A few factors for consideration when determining how to combat trafficking in your community are included here, though this is not an exhaustive list.



GETTING STARTED: FACTORS & CONSIDERATIONS

1 COMMUNITY SOCIOECONOMICS & DEMOGRAPHICS

Community makeup and populations served

- ☐ What factors impact vulnerabilities to trafficking in the community, including income, education, safety, employment, and social programs?
- ☐ Are any demographics within our community known to be underserved, under resourced, or marginalized? What support mechanisms or systems exist among these communities?

2 EXISTING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships that can help accelerate impact

- ☐ Do we have established relationships within the ecosystem of community components to combat trafficking?
- ☐ To what extent are there local leaders with lived experience of human trafficking with whom we can partner?
- ☐ To what extent have we engaged and partnered with local leaders with lived experience of human trafficking?

3 COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Local understanding of human trafficking

- ☐ To what extent do community members and leaders understand what human trafficking is and how to combat it?

4

SCOPE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Understanding community needs and prevalence of trafficking in the community

- ☐ What is the prevalence of human trafficking in the community? In which sectors? Who is most impacted and where? What forms does trafficking take?
- ☐ What data sources do we have to understand the potential and prevalence of trafficking in the community? What information gaps are there?

GETTING STARTED: FACTORS & CONSIDERATIONS

5 STAFF EXPERTISE & BANDWIDTH

Number of staff and time a United Way can reasonably dedicate to combatting trafficking

- ☐ How well does our staff understand the issue of human trafficking? Is there interest among staff to learn more and engage in this work?
- ☐ What is the availability of staff and resources to support initiatives to combat trafficking, either in addition to current work or as newly-defined roles?
- ☐ Can we bring in new resources to support this work? What resources will be needed to engage those with lived experience of human trafficking?

6 LEADERSHIP MOMENTUM

Drive and momentum behind combatting trafficking locally

- ☐ Will our United Way leaders and board members support efforts and build momentum to combat trafficking in your community?
- ☐ Are our leaders willing to expend their name or brand recognition?

7 BUDGET & FUNDING RESOURCES

Availability of funding to make an impact to combat trafficking

- ☐ Do we have direct monetary support and grant funding available for use in partnerships supporting combatting trafficking and programming for the community?
- ☐ To what extent are there opportunities to secure funding for such work?

8 ALIGNMENT

How this work aligns and fits with other existing programs

- ☐ Can this work be effectively integrated into any of our other programs?
- ☐ Can existing efforts be leveraged to work on this issue and/or serve people with lived experience?
- ☐ Are there existing community efforts that we can tap into to support this work? Do any of our current partners work on this issue already?

** See information on local United Ways already involved in combatting trafficking in the Appendix on Slide 59*

UNITED WAY EQUITY FRAMEWORK

United Way's impact agendas – education, economic mobility, and health – are underpinned and driven by the collective goal to create more equitable communities. **While equity must be front and center in all we do, it is especially applicable in human trafficking because underserved communities are more vulnerable to exploitation.**

EQUITY FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

[The Equity Framework](#) assists local United Ways in identifying, developing, and implementing strategies to foster equitable outcomes within communities. It comprises six equity levers, each designed to address both the process and results of tackling community-driven issues, with a specific emphasis on human trafficking in this context.

Systemic injustices—including racism, homophobia, sexism, and economic inequality—make certain individuals more susceptible to human trafficking.

By employing the Equity Framework's six levers, we not only recognize the role of equity in fighting trafficking but also aim to disrupt the ongoing systemic vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit.

Each equity lever is modular, allowing for flexibility in their application. While these levers are interrelated, they are distinct enough to address specific priorities and interests based on local community needs.

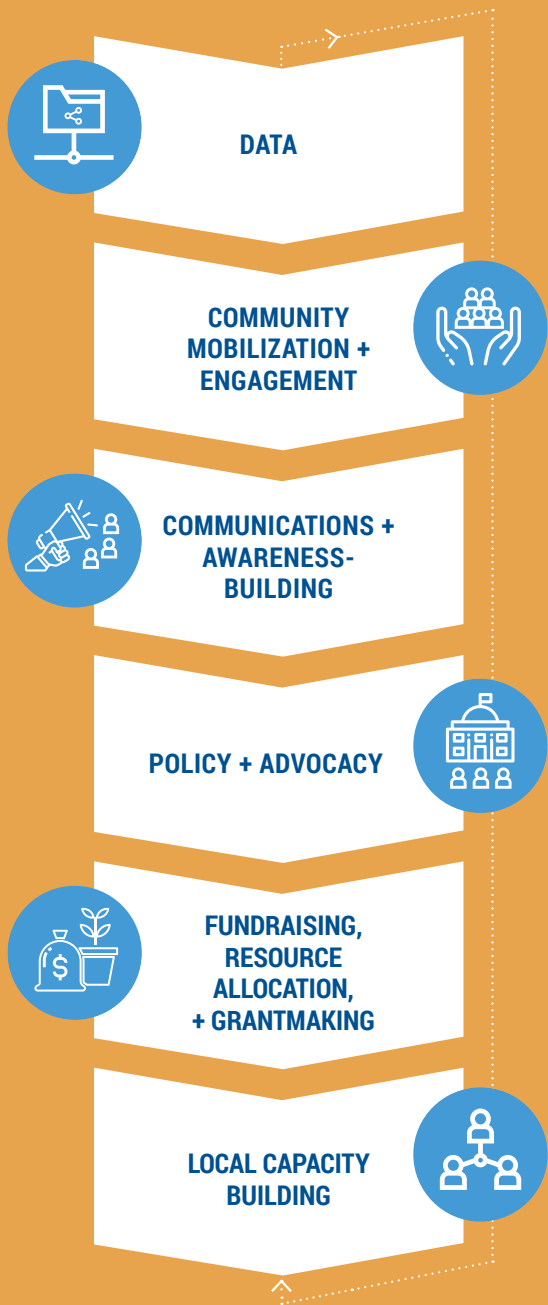


STRENGTHENING OUR EQUITY MUSCLE TO ACCELERATE IMPACT
THE UNITED WAY EQUITY FRAMEWORK



[How We Define Equity](#)

Equity is the intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes.



Throughout the rest of this Strategy Guide you will find information detailing the ways in which United Ways can utilize the Equity Framework to engage in anti-trafficking efforts.

The six equity levers are as follows:

DATA

Advancing equity by effectively collecting, analyzing, and sharing data. This includes using data to better understand community demographics, needs, disparities, donor characteristics, and its role in creating narratives that mobilize communities towards action.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION + ENGAGEMENT

Prioritizing equity to strengthen community engagement and mobilization strategies.

COMMUNICATIONS + AWARENESS-BUILDING

Leveraging effective communications and messaging to help diverse community residents, partners, funders, and other key constituents develop a deeper understanding of equity issues.

POLICY + ADVOCACY

Advancing equity through concerted policy and advocacy efforts, especially at the local and state levels.

FUNDRAISING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, + GRANTMAKING

Advancing equity through fundraising, grantmaking, and resource allocation.

LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Creating a shared point of view regarding prioritizing equity in our work and working with partners to grow capacity and skills to advance equity.



The data equity lever uses community-level data to understand the contexts of human trafficking, including who is most impacted. This can include building data-sharing partnerships with local institutions.

COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH...

A data-driven approach to combatting human trafficking at the community level creates opportunities to provide the support and services most needed by community members. Data that informs efforts to combat trafficking may include more than just specific information about trafficking in the community. It may also contain information about the factors impacting underserved populations creating vulnerabilities for exploitation.



Tips on data collection in support of combatting human trafficking, as heard from lived experience experts and those working to combat trafficking:

- Use anonymous mechanisms with data security standards for gathering data and feedback (and communicate this clearly with participants) to protect the identities and security of those with lived experience of human trafficking.
- Avoid data collection mechanisms that require a “log-in” (e.g., social media collection) and employ an easily accessible survey as some participants may not be comfortable with “logging in” to provide information.
- Employ local, state, and national hotline data sources to understand needs within the community around trafficking and prevention.
- When engaging those with lived experience for more than a feedback survey, provide compensation for their efforts and expertise.
- Remember that data can be either qualitative or quantitative, and can, therefore, be collected through an array of methods.
- Utilize disaggregated data to highlight disparate impacts of issues on specific populations.



DATA DRIVEN CYCLE

When using a data-driven approach at the community level, building feedback loops can help ensure that the data collection and dissemination is working in an effective manner. Those with lived experience should be engaged throughout the process, in planning, collection, analysis, sharing out results, and integrating feedback and lessons learned.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM EXAMPLES

Below are some example data approaches, contextualized within the community ecosystem.

Local/State Government

Collect data on awareness and willingness of community leaders in government to engage in efforts to combat human trafficking and understand where awareness raising is needed.

Labor and Employment

Collect and analyze data on employment statistics and trends in the community to inform other programming around job training and reskilling for those with lived experience.

RESOURCES



Worksheets: Take Action & Track Progress

Checklists and worksheets to get started on tracking and using data (created by United Way Worldwide)



Opportunity Index

Interactive website with scores for states and counties on opportunity, economy, education, community, and health



To help United Ways get started on combatting trafficking using the data lever, below are examples within education, economic mobility, and health, and the community ecosystem.

EXAMPLE APPROACHES

These example approaches are non-exhaustive and meant to spark ideas and conversations about how United Ways can expand on existing programming in education, economic mobility, and/or health to combat trafficking.

Education	Conducting data analysis to understand community needs within human trafficking including education around mental health, trauma informed care, training for frontline staff	Partnering with a local school or childcare programs to understand data and needs of underserved communities and those with lived experience through quantitative data collection methods (e.g. surveys and statistical analyses) or qualitative data collection methods (e.g. convenings and focus groups)
Health	Conducting data analysis to understand community needs within human trafficking including mental health accessibility, trauma informed care, and reproductive healthcare	Partnering with a local medical school or hospital to understand data and needs of underserved communities and those with lived experience through quantitative (e.g. surveys and statistical analyses) or qualitative (e.g. convenings and focus groups) data collection methods
Economic Mobility	Conduct disaggregated data collection and analysis surrounding economic mobility, housing, and employment needs, gaps, and other areas to inform impact priorities within the community	Analyzing data on barriers to economic mobility due to criminal records, fines, or penalties for acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking to inform policy changes



IN PRACTICE



Metro United Way



LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Noting a lack of centralized information for anti-trafficking efforts in Louisville, Kentucky, Metro United Way convened a steering committee of community organizations and experts with lived experience to develop and conduct an in-depth data driven landscape analysis of trafficking prevalence, current interventions, and gaps in services for the region.

Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods, Metro United Way conducted legislative research, literature reviews, key informant interviews, and partnered with over 200 individuals and 40 organizations to produce and disseminate the **2021 Report: Human Trafficking in Louisville, Kentucky.** Data collection and analysis enables Metro United Way and its partners to galvanize community engagement and create collective strategies for counter human trafficking.



This lever focuses on how United Ways can convene and build spaces to work together to combat trafficking, empower residents to shape solutions, and deepen community understanding of human trafficking.

COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH...

Working in prevention of, and intervention in, trafficking **requires community engagement** with underserved, at risk community members, particularly those with diverse lived experience of human trafficking.



Tips to engage and mobilize the community in support of combatting human trafficking:

- Use “local champions” to help drive successful engagement (e.g., local government representation, Mayor, Hospital Chief of Staff, etc.).
- Meet with leaders in the community serving both underserved and marginalized populations, as well as those working with individuals with diverse lived experience (including local lived experience experts).
- Identify ways to remove specific barriers to engagement by providing childcare, food, transportation, translators, etc.
- Follow up every meeting in the human trafficking space with “**Who else should I talk to?**” and “**Who is missing from the conversation?**” to expand networks and capture additional voices.
- Recognize long term leadership in your community and amplify existing efforts.
- Engage local partners (hotels, schools, hospitals, etc.) and bring them along the journey of recognizing and combatting human trafficking.



FIND PARTNERS IN COMBATTING TRAFFICKING

There are many organizations on the national, state, and local level working to combat trafficking. A few places to start when looking for partners in community mobilization and engagement are:

- National Survivor Network's [list of 29 survivor-led organizations](#)
- End Slavery Now's [directory of organizations](#) across the world working to combat trafficking
- Polaris' [Global Modern Slavery Directory](#)
- U.S. Department of Justice's [list of over 400 groups](#) around the country
- Freedom Network's [list of current members](#)

ENGAGING COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM EXAMPLES

Below are some example data approaches, contextualized within the community ecosystem.

Business

Create a local coalition of businesses that meet regularly to discuss how to combat trafficking in their industries, including hospitality, entertainment, construction, forestry and logging, etc.

Child Welfare

Engage with those in and around spaces that support children (schools, day care, doctors, nutrition programs, home visits) and mobilize staff to identify potential trafficking victims.

RESOURCES



Determine Your Path Forward: Suggested Strategies

Includes ways to engage and mobilize the community (to build on existing efforts, check out [Accelerated Strategies](#))

“Having [a local United Way] to be a cheerleader in your corner and [to] help introduce you to people in the space, that would be a beautiful gift.”

– UNITED WAY
COMMUNITY PARTNER



To help United Ways get started on combatting trafficking using the community mobilization + engagement lever, below are examples within education, economic mobility, and health, and the community ecosystem.

EXAMPLE APPROACHES

These example approaches are non-exhaustive and meant to spark ideas and conversations about how United Ways can expand on existing programming in education, economic mobility, and/or health to combat trafficking.

Education	- Establishing regular community outreach, education, and volunteer opportunities to support combatting human trafficking, especially in underserved communities - Improving education and awareness of healthcare organizations, social services, law enforcement, and businesses to inspire mobilization and cooperation	Providing educational materials to members of the legal system (district attorneys, judges, public defenders, juvenile justice, foster care, FBI, DHS, CPS, etc.) to bridge gaps in understanding around trafficking
Health	Conducting community planning about handoffs among providers of healthcare services to ensure “soft transitions” and to avoid gaps in care (i.e., case management system)	Improving access to trauma-informed education for those in the healthcare field to inform engagement with individuals with diverse lived experience to provide appropriate care
Economic Mobility	Supporting local businesses (e.g., hotels, nail salons, restaurants, farms) to improve work environments and increase access to job opportunities for survivors and vulnerable populations	Supporting individuals working with housing-insecure populations to understand the intersectionality of homelessness with human trafficking, as well as how to combat it



IN PRACTICE



United Way of Southern
Cameron County



BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS

United Way of Southern Cameron County identified a need for more frequent connections and engagement points in the community and **developed a network to establish a regular meeting cadence** with an array of partners. These included refugees services, a local hospital system, the District Attorney's office, and many other stakeholders. As a result, organizations and individuals understand the issue and the community is **more engaged, mobilized, and prepared to work together to combat trafficking.**



Creating compelling and consistent materials on trafficking and dispersing in the community is key to driving awareness and building a community-wide movement rooted in equity and informed by those with lived experience.

COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH...

Awareness-building around human trafficking in local communities is informed by current levels of understanding and engagement in the community. Developing and providing educational materials that are accessible for target audiences is complex and may require creating different materials in multiple languages or lenses for comprehension. When educating those in your community on human trafficking, tearing down misconceptions is critical to changing a community's momentum around the issue.



Tips to engage and mobilize the community in support of combatting human trafficking:

- What is the awareness level of human trafficking and of the rights and services available in the community?
- Does the community recognize inequity in local contexts, including how it impacts underserved populations?
- How can we engage organizations, including survivor-led organizations, that are already creating and disseminating compelling and consistent materials on trafficking in the community?
- How comfortable is the community with engaging in discussions around human trafficking, equity, and root causes of the issues?
- Who in the community interacts with those with diverse lived experience and are therefore high priority groups to engage?

ENGAGING COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM EXAMPLES

Below are some example communications + awareness-building approaches, contextualized within the community ecosystem.

Public Health & Medical

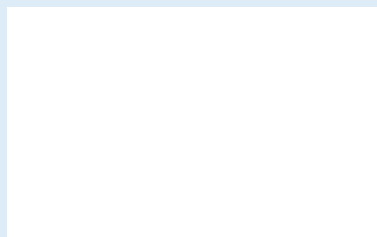
- Partner with a hospital to distribute information to visitors and patients.
- Train healthcare workers to identify trafficking with patients.

Education

- Train teachers and counselors to recognize trafficking in schools.
- Work with local schools to spread awareness with students.



RESOURCES



[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Toolkit](#)

Resources on crafting messaging and narratives for community awareness-raising



[Busting Human Trafficking Myths](#)

United Way blog on common myths and their corresponding truths



[Ethical Storytelling Guidelines](#)

United Way resource on storytelling involving those with lived experience in an ethical manner free from re-exploitation



To help United Ways get started on combatting trafficking using the communications + awareness-building lever, below are examples within education, economic mobility, and health, and the community ecosystem.

EXAMPLE APPROACHES

These example approaches are non-exhaustive and meant to spark ideas and conversations about how United Ways can expand on existing programming in education, economic mobility, and/or health to combat trafficking.



Education

- Building awareness of individuals with diverse lived experience as a part of underserved populations needing services
- Increasing areas of outreach and/or sharing accessible materials on the rights of someone with lived experience of human trafficking and ways to remove oneself from a trafficking situation
- Conducting outreach to those working in education, foster care, LGBTQ+ and youth organizations, etc., to share ways to identify and support someone in a trafficking situation
- Providing those with lived experience information on educational opportunities, including GED/high school completion, credentialing, and post-secondary education

Health

- Providing materials (e.g., pamphlets, guides, phone numbers/websites, etc.) about human trafficking to hospitals and healthcare organizations to make available to patients
- Raising awareness for vulnerable populations and those with diverse lived experience on healthcare options, how the healthcare system works, health insurance, etc.

Economic Mobility

- Conducting outreach to those in fields where migrants and youth populations work to explain what trafficking is and the rights of those with diverse lived experience
- Providing trainings in underserved communities and for employers and those with diverse lived experience on workplace norms, interview trainings, inclusive environments, etc.
- Providing trainings in underserved communities and for those with diverse lived experience on financial management, financial literacy, taxes, bank accounts, public benefits, etc.

IN PRACTICE



United Way of Southern Nevada



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

United Way of Southern Nevada (UWSN) is preparing for large sporting events in 2023 and 2024 (Formula 1, Super Bowl) and is meeting with community members in preparation for the increased attention and resources that these events will bring to the city. Through its convening power and relationships in the community, UWSN is leveraging these events to increase community awareness of human trafficking.

Policy and advocacy at the community and state level is critical to combatting human trafficking and prevention and intervention efforts, especially in education, economic mobility, and health.



COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH...

Policy/advocacy and funding are often the **base for implementing systemic solutions and programmatic efforts** focused on combatting trafficking and are also critical to prevention efforts in communities. In many cases, local community and government **policies dictate the limits of work to combat trafficking**, including funding, types of services provided, access to mental, physical, and reproductive healthcare, ability to engage communities, structure of the justice system, and more.



To understand more about your local policy landscape and where advocacy can make an impact, use these initial guiding questions:

- What is my Polaris State Report Card on criminal relief laws for those who have experienced human trafficking?
- Who is engaged in human trafficking policy work in my community?
- Does the city or county fund any efforts related to prevention or response?
- What do “agency” policies around human trafficking look like in specific systems?
- What laws, regulations, and/or local ordinances exist that impact human trafficking?
- What are the regulations, policies, and/or loopholes that allow trafficking to remain profitable?
- Are there currently any efforts to provide people with awareness of their rights?

(source: United Way Louisville and United Way Worldwide)

ENGAGING COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM EXAMPLES

Below are some example communications + awareness-building approaches, contextualized within the community ecosystem.

Criminal Justice & Legal

Work with the local courts system to improve policies to protect those with lived experience of human trafficking from additional harm and exploitation.

Social Services

Convene a coalition of social services organizations around affordable and quality mental healthcare services for those with diverse lived experience.

POLICY EXAMPLES & IMPACT

Investing in policy change, though a long process, can make a true impact in prevention efforts and how a person with lived experience of human trafficking can gain access to a variety of critical services. Policies shown below are example policies that, in some states, are already in motion:

POLICY

Ability to clear criminal record, fines, or penalties for acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to trafficking

Funding for affordable childcare, early childhood education programs, and home visit programs

Providing information on victims and worker's rights to those unable to articulate their trafficking experience

IMPACT

Eligibility for employment, financial credit, social services, education, and other resources to prevent re-exploitation

Improved access to childcare, address educational inequities, and broken-down generational cycles that create conditions for exploitation

Relationship-building that prioritizes trust and increases willingness to accept the services or support offered

RESOURCES



United Way Policy Agenda for the 118th Congress

Themes and framing within this agenda can be useful to approach local community policies and advocacy efforts



ATEST

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) is a U.S.-based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world

To help United Ways get started on combatting trafficking using the policy and advocacy lever, below are examples within education, economic mobility, and health, and the community ecosystem.

EXAMPLE APPROACHES

These example approaches are non-exhaustive and meant to spark ideas and conversations about how United Ways can expand on existing programming in education, economic mobility, and/or health to combat trafficking.



Education	- Increasing policy movement around early childhood education opportunities and programming funding - Influencing funding for training in relevant fields (e.g., law enforcement, first responders) on trauma-informed care, identification of potential victims, and avoiding re-exploitation	Advocating for additional support and resources for those with diverse lived experience to continue education, including high school, post-secondary education, and certifications	Providing information on victims and worker's rights to those at-risk of human trafficking to promote awareness and trust-building
Health	Advocating for healthcare needs and equity that can be met under national, state, and local laws and policies	Influencing policies that respect gender and cultural identities across all areas of healthcare, including specific and unique needs	Advocating for policies for basic and equitable standards of care within health systems regardless of location, size, or population
Economic Mobility	Establishing safe and efficient immigration and employment authorization processes to prevent vulnerable populations, including migrant children, from experiencing trafficking	Influencing policies that require traffickers to provide backpay or other remediations that an individual with diverse lived experience wants as justice, and advocating for fair wage laws	Ensuring policies such as vacatur laws are in place to protect those with diverse lived experience from missing out on financial opportunities due to a criminal record resulting from a trafficking situation

IN PRACTICE



United Way of Southern Nevada



LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

United Way of Southern Nevada (UWSN) established a **Policy Council** that comprises over **30 organizations, agencies, and survivors** (academic, corporate, legal, etc.) to meet and discuss policies related to combatting human trafficking. Due to policy changes during the legislative session as well as momentum and interest growing in the area, trafficking efforts are becoming more tangible and relevant. Now, in addition to the Policy Council, UWSN is focused on direct grant programs to survivor-led organizations and raising awareness in the community.

5 EQUITY LEVER: FUNDRAISING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, + GRANTMAKING

Local United Ways can provide financial backing and resources to support existing organizations working to combat human trafficking, including grant funding and direct cash assistance programs for those with diverse lived experience.

COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH...

Determining **how much** and **to whom** sub-grants and direct cash assistance should be awarded is challenging, but a strong understanding of the community is the first step. When local United Ways are supporting efforts to combat trafficking for the first time, **a humble recognition of the efforts of others** in the community is key to developing these relationships and a deeper understanding of the community's needs. Direct cash assistance can support individuals with lived experience in their healing journey and building stability, fundraising support can enable local organizations to be successful, and sub-grants can demonstrate the trust and support local United Ways have in their community partners.



To better understand the local landscape of funding for work to combat human trafficking, identify the answers to the following initial guiding questions before distributing funding:

- Is funding currently being allocated to efforts to combat trafficking? If so, how is funding currently being allocated at the local United Way for trafficking prevention and intervention, as well as other programs?
- What funding is available locally to support efforts and services to combat human trafficking?
- How do national, state, and local systems provide announcements or communications on resources developed?
- What gaps is United Way best suited to fill at the local level?

5 EQUITY LEVER: FUNDRAISING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, + GRANTMAKING

GRANT REPORTING & IMPACT STORIES

Establishing reporting and metrics early in the process is critical when setting up grants and other methods of backing community partners. This step helps identify how your United Way's money is being used and informs future investments, grant giving, and program improvements. Additionally, grant reporting and impact stories from partners can be used to enhance and bolster activities in other levers.



Communications + Awareness-building

Raising awareness in the community through examples of how the funding supported those with lived experience.

Policy + Advocacy

Sharing out important data analysis on community and individual level needs collected through community partners and grant reports can help impact momentum around addressing trafficking through policy change.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM EXAMPLES

Below are some example fundraising, resource allocation, + grantmaking approaches, contextualized within the community ecosystem.

Public Health & Medical

Provide grants to a local maternal health advocacy group to create a toolkit for local health organizations on trauma-informed care for those with diverse lived experience.

Housing

Partner with local housing organizations and provide grant money to help provide housing to meet current gaps (e.g., LGBTQIA+ safe housing).

RESOURCES



Worksheets: Take Action & Track Progress

Includes sample activities for fundraising, resource allocation, + grantmaking across impact areas

5 EQUITY LEVER: FUNDRAISING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION, + GRANTMAKING

To help United Ways get started on combatting trafficking using the fundraising, resource allocation, + grantmaking lever, below are examples within education, economic mobility, and health, and the community ecosystem.

EXAMPLE APPROACHES

These example approaches are non-exhaustive and meant to spark ideas and conversations about how United Ways can expand on existing programming in education, economic mobility, and/or health to combat trafficking.

Education	– Providing technology resources to support underserved populations and those with diverse lived experience in obtaining an education (e.g., phone, laptop, Wi-Fi, transportation, etc.)	– Increasing accessibility for funding to receive and education at any age (e.g., books, connectivity, childcare)
Health	– Supporting provision of resources for physical health and safety of those with diverse lived experience (e.g., witness protection or prosecution of traffickers as appropriate and desired)	– Providing grants and funding to support local programs providing healthcare services to individuals with diverse lived experience and underserved populations
Economic Mobility	– Identifying job training, apprenticeships, and paid internships in specific fields, and providing funding, resources, and/or delivery to support these programs – Administer direct cash assistance programs to support those with lived experience in meeting basic needs	– Providing funding for those with diverse lived experience needing pro-bono legal support for various challenges including IRS/tax support, immigration process, work authorizations, credit repair, etc.



IN PRACTICE



United Way of
Greater Atlanta



ATLANTA, GEORGIA

United Way of Greater Atlanta provided almost **\$400,000 in subgrant funding** to community partners during the pilot program. These funds went to local organizations, including several organizations providing **transitional and permanent housing** to those with lived experience of human trafficking. Betty (name changed) was in transitional housing but thanks to a **direct cash transfer program** run by a local nonprofit, has been saving money each month to use to move into permanent housing.

United Ways can play a unique role in building the capacity of community partners to engage in work to combat human trafficking and drive community-level outcomes through leading coalitions and collective impact efforts.

COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH...

United Way's name and brand is well known in communities across the country. Existing relationships with community partners can drive local capacity building for preventing and combatting human trafficking. Determining which partners to engage in this work depends on the community needs and services available and should be informed by those with diverse lived experience and their knowledge of gaps in community response and services available.



Example methods of increasing local capacity:

- Investing in local nonprofit operational capacity through staff development and training, including in the IT and financial operations spaces.
- Sharing institutional knowledge and area-specific knowledge around fundraising and mobilization best practices.
- Supporting and partnering with lived experience experts and leaders in the community, and elevating and addressing the issues raised.
- Convening partners around a specific issue within combatting trafficking (e.g., affordable housing, childcare, etc.) with a neutral stance and a collective goal to combat trafficking.
- Leading or enabling coalitions to raise awareness around a specific issue impacting underserved populations and/or those with lived experience.

RESOURCES



Worksheets: Take Action & Track Progress

Adaptable activities rooted in equity to support local capacity building around combatting trafficking



CAPACITY BUILDING TO FILL SERVICE GAPS

Lived experience experts engaged in developing this strategy guide identified gaps in safe and accessible programming for LGBTQ+ communities as well as programs for men. Many men do not qualify for programs set up for women and children and many programs do not have capacity to prioritize needs of LGBTQ+ individuals or men. The following resources can help United Ways understand needs of various communities:



LGBTQ+ Youth and Human Trafficking

Intersection of LGBTQ+ equality and fighting human trafficking



How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking

Ways to engage and build rapport with male clients to address needs

ENGAGING COMMUNITY ECOSYSTEM EXAMPLES

Below are some example fundraising, resource allocation, + grantmaking approaches, contextualized within the community ecosystem.

Community Members

Engage those with diverse lived experience to identify gaps in local capacity and ability to provide comprehensive and quality to support to those exiting a trafficking situation.

Child Welfare

Work to build a network and increase capacity of nutrition programs for children locally, through schools, government support, and food pantries.

To help United Ways get started on combatting trafficking using the local capacity building lever, below are example approaches within education, economic mobility, and health, and the community ecosystem.

EXAMPLE APPROACHES

These example approaches are non-exhaustive and meant to spark ideas and conversations about how United Ways can expand on existing programming in education, economic mobility, and/or health to combat trafficking.

Education

- Building capacity to meet immediate needs when exiting a trafficking situation including schools that accept fluid addresses and childcare to support adults continuing education
- Building capacity to meet medium-term needs when exiting a trafficking situation including continuing education programs for adults, ESL, affordable childcare, and pre-K programs
- Building capacity to meet long-term needs when exiting a trafficking situation including financial support for continuing education, training programs, and leadership opportunities

Health

- Building capacity to meet immediate needs when exiting a trafficking situation including physical and mental healthcare, food and clothing needs, and translation support during care
- Building capacity to meet medium-term needs when exiting a trafficking situation including access to insurance, substance abuse treatment programs, and support groups
- Building capacity to meet long-term needs when exiting a trafficking situation including affordable physical and mental care, trauma informed care, and supportive communities, including support for families of those exiting

Economic Mobility

- Building capacity to meet immediate needs when exiting a trafficking situation including emergency housing (safe for LGBTQ+, women, men, youth) and immediate cash assistance
- Building capacity to meet medium-term needs when exiting a trafficking situation including safe shelters/transitional housing, legal support and help obtaining employment
- Building capacity to meet long-term needs when exiting a trafficking situation including affordable and safe housing, relocation support, credit build and repair, and career advancement opportunities



IN PRACTICE



PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA

United Way of Pasco County has provided service in economic mobility through securing housing ranging from emergency situations to preparing and supporting individuals with lived experience in obtaining long term affordable housing. They have built relationships with other housing and shelter service providers in the area and increased the capacity of this network that is activated when an individual is identified as needing support after a trafficking situation.

NEXT STEPS

As your United Way embraces the opportunity to combat human trafficking, United Way Worldwide is available and ready to support you in this effort.

As a local United Way, you have the unique opportunity to make an impact in your community to combat trafficking within United Way's impact agendas – education, economic mobility, and health – and by applying the six equity levers – data, community mobilization + engagement, communications + awareness-building, policy + advocacy, fundraising, resource allocation, + grantmaking, and local capacity building.

We hope that you will use the information contained in this guide to spark conversations with your local United Way and local community partners to understand the landscape of human trafficking in your community and how to get started in working to combat trafficking.

If you are interested in learning more or connecting with someone at United Way Worldwide to discuss combatting human trafficking, please reach out. We encourage you to join us in the fight to end human trafficking for all.

“Due to the intersecting nature of the work, local United Ways are already equipped to [combat human trafficking]. The priorities of health, education, [and economic mobility] are the same challenges faced by survivors of human trafficking.”

– LOCAL UNITED WAY STAFF MEMBER

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Survivor Alliance

Rising Worldwide

McCain Institute

Wellspring Living

ImpactNV

*And many other anonymous lived experience experts,
partner organizations, and supportive colleagues who
preferred not to be credited by name.*

BEYOND A “ONE SIZE FITS ALL” APPROACH

United Way’s pilot programs to combat human trafficking comprised four cities that have each done vastly different work. Additionally, United Way of Pasco County has been working to combat trafficking outside of the pilot program. The statistics below inform the spectrum of United Ways working on this issue.



United Way Of Greater Atlanta

2018 Staff Size: 193

2021 Contributions: \$137,243,580

2021 General Population Size: 5,136,560

Atlanta Demographics*: 48.2% Black, Median Gross Rent \$1,342, 18.5% Persons in poverty

Combatting Trafficking Alignment: Education, Health

Levers Exemplified: Local Capacity Building, Funding, Resource Allocation, + Grantmaking, Community Mobilization + Engagement



Metro United Way (Louisville)

2018 Staff Size: 65

2021 Contributions: \$25,538,510

2021 General Population Size: 1,219,540

Louisville Jefferson County Demographics*:
23.8% Black, 15.2% Persons in poverty

Combatting Trafficking Alignment: Health
(Basic Needs)

Levers Exemplified: Data, Local Capacity Building



United Way Of Pasco County

2018 Staff Size: Not Reported

2021 Contributions: \$1,817,108

2021 General Population Size: 575,435

Pasco County Demographics*: 18.1% Hispanic or Latino, 11.6% Persons in poverty

Program Alignment: Economic Mobility, Health

Levers Exemplified: Community Mobilization + Engagement, Communications + Awareness-Building



United Way of Southern Cameron County

2018 Staff Size: 8

2021 Contributions: \$924,131

2021 General Population Size: 289,644

Southern Cameron County Demographics*:
90% Hispanic or Latino, 24.6% Persons in poverty

Combatting Trafficking Alignment:
Education, Health

Levers Exemplified: Community Mobilization + Engagement, Communications + Awareness-Building



United Way Of Southern Nevada

2018 Staff Size: 29

2021 Contributions: \$10,064,310

2021 General Population Size: 2,672,859

Las Vegas Demographics*: 34.1% Hispanic or Latino, 11.5% Black, 14.9% Persons in poverty

Combatting Trafficking Alignment: Education, Economic Mobility, Health (Policy)

Levers Exemplified: Policy + Advocacy, Local Capacity Building, Communications + Awareness-Building

**Census Bureau population information is not comprehensive and chosen to demonstrate diversity of populations served by United Way.*

TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Due to the sensitive and critical nature of human trafficking, the language we use matters. The following terms and definitions are commonly used when discussing combatting human trafficking.

ACCESSIBILITY

Refers to a site, facility, work environment, service, or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, and/or use safely and with dignity by a [person with a disability](#).

COERCION

Threats of harm to or physical restraint against any person including psychological manipulation, intimidation, document confiscation, and shame and fear-inducing threats to share information or pictures with others or [report to authorities](#).

COMMUNITY-CENTERED APPROACH

Approaches designed based on a specific community's needs, vulnerabilities, and solutions to identify, address, and prevent human trafficking.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Identifying and prioritizing United Way resources to respond to the needs that matter most to the local community, accomplished through advocating for

community change, convening community leaders around community issues, and educating businesses, community leaders, and the public about how to best support efforts for positive community change.

CULTURALLY COMPETENT APPROACH

Cultural and linguistic competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations. 'Culture' refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. 'Competence' implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities. [Learn more](#).

DIVERSITY

Everyone is unique, and groups of individuals reflect multiple dimensions of difference including race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and cognitive styles.

EQUITY

The intentional inclusion of everyone in society. Equity is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes. [Learn more.](#)

FORCE

Physical restraint, physical harm, sexual assault, and abuse. Monitoring and confinement is often used to control victims, especially during early stages of victimization to break down the victim's resistance. [Learn more.](#)

FORCED LABOR

Encompasses the range of activities involved when a person uses force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the labor or services of another person. [Learn more.](#)

Also referred to as: Labor Trafficking

"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 U.S.C. § 7102(11)(B))

FRAUD

False promises regarding employment, wages, working conditions, love, marriage, or better life. Over time, there may be unexpected changes in work conditions, compensation or debt agreements, or nature of relationship. [Learn more.](#)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The act of compelling someone to work, or engage in commercial sex, for little or no pay, through force, fraud, or coercion for personal or commercial exploitation. [Learn more.](#)

Also referred to as: Trafficking in Persons, Forced Labor, Modern Slavery (This term is not used by United Way in the United States due to its association with our country's history of enslaving persons as chattel. While experiences of slavery and trafficking may correlate in similar structural and systemic concepts, they are not the same and have different historical contexts)

"The exploitation of adults through force, fraud, or coercion, and children for such purposes as forced labor or commercial sex" [Learn more.](#)

INCLUSION

A value and practice of ensuring that people feel they belong, and their input is valued by the whole (group, organization, society, or system), particularly regarding decisions that affect their lives. [Learn more.](#)

INDIVIDUALS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Individuals may prefer to be referred to as "survivor leaders," "survivor advocates," or "subject matter experts with lived experience of human trafficking." Some may have other titles or prefer not to identify based on this experience at all. In recognizing individuals' full life experiences, skill sets, and professional goals, it is important to always ask someone how they want to be identified. Policymakers and community members should not assume that someone who identifies as a "survivor leader," "survivor advocate," or "expert with lived experience of human trafficking" should be referred to as such in a professional setting or that identification as a survivor leader makes it acceptable to inquire about someone's personal experience with human trafficking. [Learn more.](#)

INTERSECTIONALITY

An analysis of the connections between systems of oppression (e.g., racism and classism, racism and sexism) and how individuals experience those intersecting or compounding systems of oppression or privilege. [Learn more.](#)

LIVED EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

Engagement of people with lived experience in policy, research, and programming to end human trafficking can take many forms, from not involved at all to entirely led by impacted people and communities. We can think of this as a spectrum of different ways to engage people with lived experience. [Learn more.](#)

MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

A term used to describe a group of people who are treated as insignificant or peripheral in comparison to others. Trafficking disproportionately affects people of color and members of groups who suffer systemic discrimination and marginalization because of their race, ethnicity, tribe, caste, sex, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. [Learn more.](#)

RACE

A socially constructed way of grouping people based on skin color and other apparent physical differences, which has no genetic or scientific basis. The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination. [Learn more.](#)

SELF-DETERMINATION

Empowering individuals with lived experience to define safety and leadership for themselves and have support in achieving their goals. [Learn more.](#)

SEX TRAFFICKING

Encompasses the range of activities involved when a trafficker uses force, fraud, or coercion to compel another person to engage in a commercial sex act or causes a child (under age 18) to engage in a commercial sex act. [Learn more.](#)

“The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act 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” (22 U.S.C. § 7102(11)(A))

SMUGGLING

Human smuggling is the business of transporting people illegally across an international border, in this case into the United States. Smuggling does not always involve coercion. The people the smugglers bring from one place to another place generally have chosen to make the trip themselves for any number of reasons. Some are fleeing violence or poverty. Most, and are in fact, paying someone to help them make the journey. [Learn more.](#)

SURVIVOR

A term of self identification for a person who has experienced historical, collective, or cultural trauma. While some individuals who have experienced trafficking choose to embrace the title “survivor,” others do not. Terminology regarding human trafficking varies based on a country’s respective laws and language(s). The word “survivor” is not generally defined by law, nor is it universally used or accepted in the context of human trafficking. [Learn more.](#)

SURVIVOR-INFORMED APPROACH

A program, policy, intervention, or product that is designed, implemented, and evaluated with intentional leadership, expertise, and input from a diverse community of survivors to ensure that it accurately represents their needs, interests, and perceptions. [Learn more.](#)

SURVIVOR JUSTICE

From a restorative perspective, justice for survivors means working to help make them whole, moving them past trafficking victimhood to personal autonomy and empowerment. [Learn more.](#)

“THE LIFE”

A term commonly used by individuals with lived experience of human trafficking to refer to the experiences of an individual during a trafficking situation. This phrase is most frequently associated with sex trafficking.

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

A trauma-informed approach recognizes signs of trauma in individuals and the professionals who help them and responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings and by seeking to actively resist re-traumatization. This approach includes an understanding of the vulnerabilities and experiences of trauma survivors, including the prevalence and physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma. A trauma-informed approach places priority on restoring the survivor’s feelings of safety, choice, and control. Programs, services, agencies, and communities can be trauma-informed. [Learn more.](#)

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

A term used to describe groups that have limited or no access to resources, leading to marginalization or disenfranchisement. Trafficking disproportionately affects people of color and members of groups who suffer systemic discrimination and marginalization because of their race, ethnicity, tribe, caste, sex, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. [Learn more.](#)



For a collection of the resources noted
in this document, go to:

unitedway.org/endtrafficking/resources

UNITED WAY WORLDWIDE

Address: 701 North Fairfax Street,
Alexandria, Virginia 22314 U.S.A.

www.unitedway.org/endtrafficking

Deloitte.

