

# Labor Trafficking Fact Sheet



Labor Trafficking is the crime of using **force, fraud or coercion** to induce another individual to work or provide a service. Coercion can be subtle and insidious or may be more obvious and cause physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Labor trafficking is a global, national, and local problem, including in Vermont. Victims of labor trafficking are diverse in their background, including their culture, gender, sexual orientation, race, and age. Labor trafficking is a violation of basic human rights.

| <b>Labor Violations and Labor Trafficking</b> | <b>% LT Victims Reporting</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Less pay than promised                        | 83                            |
| Withheld pay                                  | 81                            |
| Under minimum wage                            | 80                            |
| Denial of pay                                 | 80                            |
| Illegal deductions                            | 62                            |
| No written earnings statement                 | 62                            |
| Safe water, toilet                            | 30                            |
| Hazardous work environment                    | 16                            |
| No meal breaks                                | 42                            |
| Movement to work controlled                   | 80                            |
| Victim lived where worked                     | 56                            |
| Depriving / disorienting                      | 84                            |
| Threats or use of violence                    | 82                            |
| Demoralizing                                  | 82                            |
| Diminishing resistance                        | 70                            |
| Intimidation and control                      | 80                            |
| Deception of consequences                     | 71                            |
| Use / threatened use of the law               | 71                            |

Percentage of U.S. labor trafficking victims reporting the conditions of their situation, and where each condition falls along the spectrum of labor exploitation (Owens et al. 2014. *Understanding the Organization, Operation, and Victimization Process of Labor Trafficking in the United States*. Urban Institute and Northeastern University, 287 pp).

## Labor Exploitation



## Labor Trafficking

### Forms of exploitative practices linked to labor trafficking

#### **Bonded labor, or debt bondage:**

Labor is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan or service in which its terms and conditions have not been defined, or in which the value of the victim's services as reasonably assessed is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt.

#### **Forced labor:**

Victims are forced to work against their will under the threat of violence or some other form of punishment. Their freedom is restricted, and control is exerted over them.

#### **Child labor:**

A form of work that is likely hazardous to the health and/or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development of children and/or can interfere with their education.

## Facts About Labor Trafficking in the U.S.

Fact #1: Children and adults affected by forced labor often don't view themselves as victims of crime, and are unaware of laws that can protect them.

Fact #2: People who enter the country legally on worker visas for legal occupations such as domestic, factory, construction or agricultural work, may later become victims of labor trafficking.

Fact #3: People are trafficked every day without ever having crossed an international border.

Fact #4: Labor trafficking victims can be working alongside those who are not victims at the same job, or work under the table for little or no pay.

Fact #5: Labor traffickers can be family members, a stranger, or a friend.

Fact #6: People who come to the U.S. on worker visas, as visitors, or for cultural purposes can be trafficked by their sponsor or employer.

Fact #7: Victims may be trapped by force, fraud, or coercion, such as violence, threats of deportation, or threats toward family members.

Fact #8: Keeping victims isolated – sometimes physically, sometimes emotionally – is a key method of control in most labor trafficking situations

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## Common indicators of labor trafficking or exploitation

- Individual feels pressured by their employer to stay in a job or situation they want to leave
- Individual owes money to an employer or recruiter and/or not being paid what they were promised or are owed
- Individual does not have control of their passport or other identity documents
- Individual is living and working in isolated conditions, largely cut off from interaction with others or support systems
- Individual appears to be monitored by another person when talking or interacting with others
- Individual is being threatened by their boss with deportation or other harm. May work in dangerous conditions, without proper safety gear, training, adequate breaks and other protections
- Individual is living in dangerous, overcrowded or inhumane conditions provided by an employer

- Adapted from Polaris: <https://polarisproject.org/labor-trafficking>

For more information or to report suspected trafficking contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline: **1-888-373-7888** OR Text: **BeFree**

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