

SC Statewide Workgroup for Direct Service Provision to Victims of Human Trafficking

Purpose:

Human Trafficking is a complex issue in South Carolina and across the country. Efforts are underway more than ever before to curtail and prevent victimization. Service provision involving advocates, criminal justice professionals, and social service agencies are making concerted efforts to recognize, respond to, and prevent trafficking in our state. The purpose of the Direct Services Workgroup of the Human Trafficking Task Force is:

- To inform and influence best practices in policy and provision of direct services to victims of human trafficking;
- To assess and identify the demand, the needs, and the existing gaps in services to victims of human trafficking and to make recommendations about how to meet the unmet demands for service;
- To support the process of meeting statutory federal and state obligations related to service provision to victims of labor and sex trafficking;
- To build upon existing state and national efforts to create frameworks that minimize damage to victims and support holistic multidisciplinary responses;
- To serve as a clearinghouse for state-wide information and resources so as to facilitate coordination and collaboration between service providers across the state;
- To provide updates and recommendations to the Attorney General's Office and the SC Human Trafficking Task Force.

Principles:

The Direct Service Providers Workgroup is a statewide alliance of multidisciplinary professionals with expertise in working with victims of trafficking. The Workgroup supports the following philosophy:

- Human trafficking violates a person's human rights.
- There are many conditions that foster human trafficking, including poverty, forced migration, racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, and classism.
- The intersections of oppression (gender, immigration status, disability, history of abuse, economic status, ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc.) increase vulnerability to trafficking and present barriers to accessing services.
- Individuals and organizations alone cannot end the conditions that promote human trafficking, and a broad community response is necessary to make social and institutional change.

Note: The terms victim and survivor are used to denote a person who has been exploited through human trafficking. However, it is important to note the implications of labeling and the need to approach each case on its own merit. Where applicable, the term "survivor" is employed for its recognition of the person's agency and self-efficacy. The term "victim" is employed in legal or statistical situations, or when implying potential, ongoing, or hypothetical experiences of trafficking.

The Workgroup believes that service provision must:

- Be trauma-informed, evidence-informed, and based on the empowerment model of service provision and recovery. An empowerment model of service provision is strengths-based, comprehensive, and respects individual autonomy and self-determination.
- Be victim-centered. Services should promote formal and informal collaboration with multidisciplinary organizations that are informed by organizational policies and protocols where the victim is at the center and their wishes, safety and well-being take priority.
- Be focused on the dignity of individuals. Victims must be believed, protected from the accused, and their privacy must be respected throughout the process.
- Be offender-accountable. Services should help promote the protections in the SC Victim Bill of Rights, which requires victims be given accurate and timely information about their cases, equal protection under the law, and be provided with information about how to exercise their rights.
- Be culturally relevant. Services should take into account the victim's cultural and linguistic needs.

Credit: These principles and best-practice guidelines have been adapted from the *Wisconsin Human Trafficking Protocol and Resource Manual*, the *North Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force Manual*, and from resources from the Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Network.

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