

# SPECIAL EDITION

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

## Homelessness and Trafficking

Research from numerous studies has found trafficking rates among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness range from 19% to 40%.

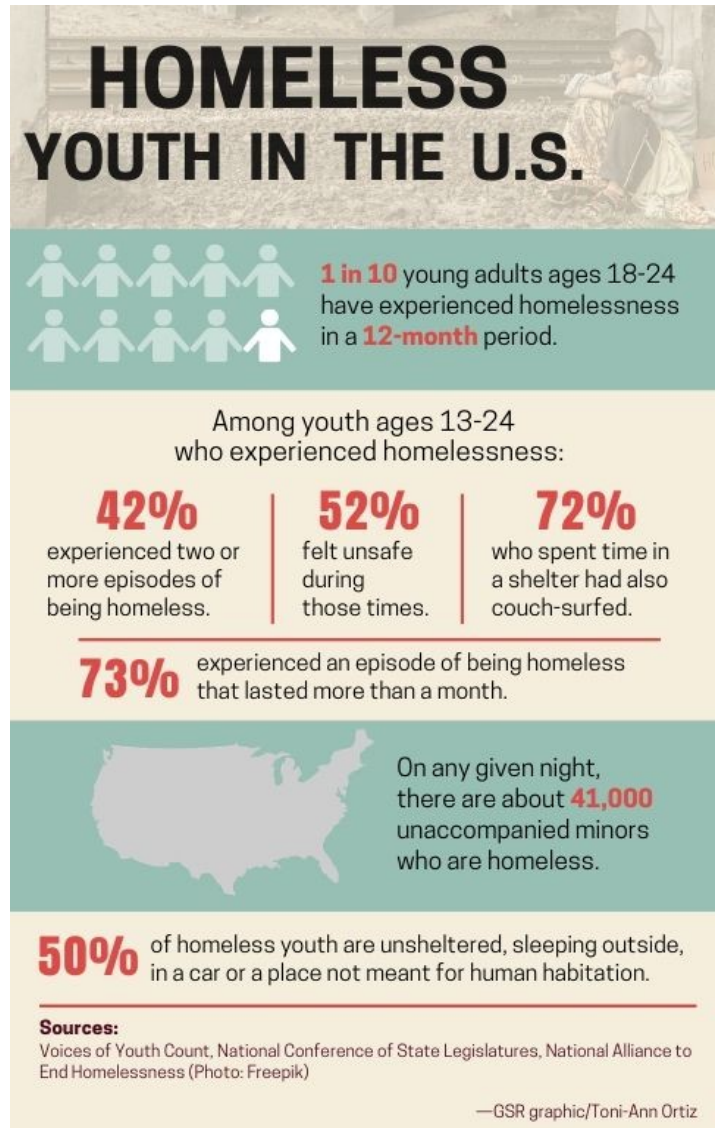
Why are homeless youth more at risk for trafficking:

- Engaging in survival sex to meet basic needs, including clothing, food, and shelter.
- Homelessness and trafficking begin early, often well before age 18.
- Girls and young women are more likely to experience trafficking, but boys and young men also experience high levels of trafficking.
- When sex trafficking victims were asked what could have helped prevent their being trafficked, the most common response was having supportive parents or family members.
- Youth experiencing homelessness who have also been victims of sex trafficking are more likely to have mental health and substance use issues, to have experienced physical and emotional abuse by parents or guardians, and to have a history of sexual abuse

## Potential Solution

Safe and stable housing is a critical resource for survivors of human trafficking as they exit their trafficking situation and continue their journey toward healing. Anti-trafficking service providers often rely on emergency housing resources such as homeless or domestic violence shelters to meet the

immediate needs of survivors. Providers in the housing and homelessness field are likely already serving survivors of trafficking without knowing it. Not all survivors will disclose their trafficking experience and some may not be aware that their exploitation is considered trafficking. Housing programs have the opportunity to ensure that their services are trauma-informed and person-centered.



# 🎀 Online Dangers 🎀

We as a society have become more and more dependent on online services. Whether it be social media, shopping or simply googling a question. However, there is a dark side to the online world that often times goes unrecognized even though it is happening on nearly every major social media website.



Technology and the internet provide the tools that traffickers can use. Online resources such as open and classified advertisement sites, adult websites, social media platforms, chat rooms, extending into the dark-web enable traffickers to interact with an increasing number of potential victims. Data shows that in the United States approximately 40% of sex trafficking victims are recruited online, making the Internet the most common place where victim recruitment takes place.

## Recruiting Online

Online may begin with commenting on potential victims' photos and sending direct messages, carefully building the rapport and intimacy needed to entice victims into a false sense of trust. Traffickers may target those who post about feel like they are alone and not loved. After gaining a sense of trust with their victim, the next phase is often "boyfriending" manipulations such as feigned romantic interests, extreme flattery, promises of gifts or other financial assistance, assurance that they, and they alone can care for the potential victim, or even perceived salvation from domestic violence or child sexual abuse.

Traffickers may also contact the potential victim directly, claiming to be a recruiter for a modeling agency or the owner of another kind of legitimate business seeking staff. Often these interactions also include some elements of building trust and a relationship online before the actual job offer is made.

## Have You Seen These?

7 APPS THAT COULD HURT YOUR TEEN



**BurnBook:** anonymous app for posting text, photos and audio rumor messages about others.



**Secret:** allows anonymous message sharing. When a student sees a secret on the app, they don't know who posted it, only that know one of their 3-100 connections sent it.



**"Calculator" / Private Photo:** hides photos and videos behind an innocent looking calculator app.



**Slingshot:** a comparison app, marketed to boys, that allows users to vote or create polls, including polls that are not appropriate for teens.



**Whisper:** anonymous social network that allows people to "express themselves" to strangers. Whisper also reveals a user's location.



**Gather:** event planning app to share events. The app uses a method of spamming that creates false credibility since users think their friends are suggesting they use the app



**MyLOL:** designed for students 13-19 years old. Built-in features of MyLOL encourage users to send private messages to random strangers.

# Wisconsin Legislation

## Safe Harbor Bill

Under current Wisconsin law, police can prosecute those under 18 for prostitution, even when the minor is a victim of sex trafficking. Wisconsin state law contradicts the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which “treats coerced children as victims, even if they have engaged in criminal prostitution activity”. Essentially under the federal law there is no such thing as a child prostitute.



“Child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation are kids, not criminals.  
Safe Harbor laws protect them.”

Carolina De Los Rios  
— Director of Client Services  
Polaris Project

The Safe Harbor bill would put this state in line with the federal law as it would end the prosecution of minors as prostitutes and provide them with specialized support services. 34 states have enacted Safe Harbor laws as of 2019. States that have passed the Safe Harbor bill have shown increased care to victims of trafficking as well as conviction of traffickers. Our neighbor state, Minnesota passed the Safe Harbor bill in 2011 and saw the convictions of traffickers quadruple in 2012.

Besides assisting victims of trafficking and the conviction of their traffickers, the Safe Harbor bill also provides an opportunity for law enforcement, school officials and others to be trained and educated on the warning signs of human trafficking as well as how to help. The cost of the Safe Harbor bill is next to nothing as many of the services are already established in the state to help victims of trafficking.

How can you help?

You can email and/or call your state representative and/or senator and express your opinion about the Safe Harbor Bill.

## Surcharge Bill

Under current Wisconsin Law, the court must impose certain surcharges on a defendant who has been found guilty of a criminal offense, which are in addition to any applicable fines, costs, and fees. The surcharge amounts collected reimburse counties for services provided to victims and witnesses of crimes.

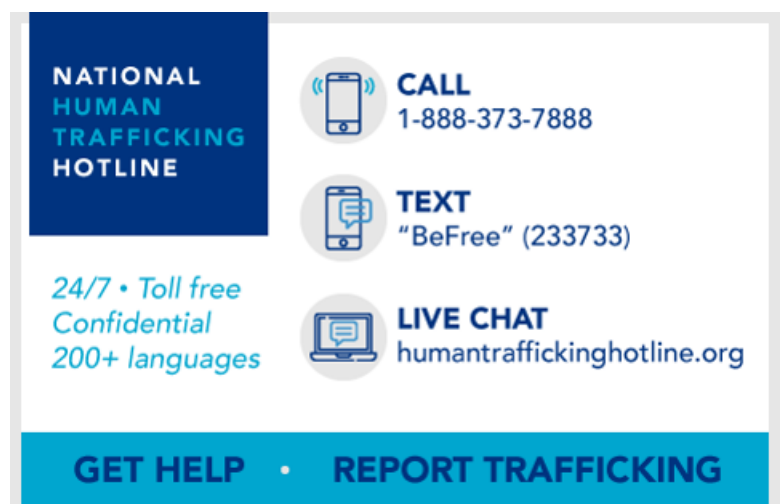
Wisconsin Senate Bill 26 (Assembly Bill 139) creates a \$5,000 surcharge to be imposed on a person who is convicted of soliciting prostitutes, indulging or keeping a place of prostitution. The \$5,000 surcharge would be used for treatment and services for sex-trafficking victims and for criminal investigations and investigation related to online trafficking.

## Truckers Against Trafficking

In November of 2019, Governor Tony Evers signed Assembly Bill 22 into law. This bipartisan bill requires educational training on the recognition and prevention of human trafficking for commercial truck drivers. Truck drivers travel often times to every part of this state and at times across state lines. They encounter several different truck stops that have been known to be hot spots for trafficking victims to be in. This law ensures that truckers remain vigilant and have the knowledge and training to recognize human trafficking victims and how to report it. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has partnered with the national non-profit, Truckers Against Trafficking to provide this training to current and future truckers in Wisconsin.

## What Communities/Individuals can do:

- Learn the indicators of human trafficking (<https://www.state.gov/identify-and-assist-a-trafficking-victim/>)
- Volunteer and support anti-trafficking efforts in your community
- Meet with and/or write to your local, state, and/or federal elected officials to let them know you care about combating human trafficking and ask what they are doing to address it
- Be well-informed. Set up a web alert to receive current human trafficking news
- Host an awareness-raising event to watch and discuss films about human trafficking
- Organize a fundraiser and donate the proceeds to a local human trafficking organization
- Encourage your local schools or school district to include human trafficking in their curricula and to develop protocols for identifying and reporting a suspected case of human trafficking or responding to a potential victim.
- Use your social media platforms to raise awareness about human trafficking
- Become a mentor to a young person or someone in need. Traffickers often target people who are going through a difficult time or who lack strong support systems. As a mentor, you can be involved in new and positive experiences in that person's life during a formative time
- Parents and Caregivers: Learn how human traffickers often target and recruit youth and who to turn to for help in potentially dangerous situations. Host community conversations with parent teacher associations, law enforcement, schools, and community members regarding safeguarding children in your community
- Youth: Learn how to recognize traffickers' recruitment tactics, how to safely navigate out of a suspicious or uncomfortable situations, and how to reach out for help at any time.
- Faith-Based Communities: Host awareness events and community forums with anti-trafficking leaders or collectively support a local victim service provider.
- Businesses: Provide jobs, internships, skills training, and other opportunities to trafficking survivors. Take steps to investigate and prevent trafficking in your supply chains by consulting the Responsible Sourcing Tool and Comply Chain to develop effective management systems to detect, prevent, and combat human trafficking.
- College Students: Take action on your campus. Join or establish a university club to raise awareness about human trafficking and initiate action throughout your local community. Consider doing one of your research papers on a topic concerning human trafficking. Request that human trafficking be included in university curricula.
- Health Care Providers: Learn how to identify the indicators of human trafficking and assist victims. With assistance from local anti-trafficking organizations, extend low-cost or free services to human trafficking victims. Resources from the Department of Health and Human Services can be found on their website.
- Journalists: The media plays an enormous role in shaping perceptions and guiding the public conversation about human trafficking. Seek out some media best practices on how to effectively and responsibly report stories on human trafficking.
- Attorneys: Offer human trafficking victims legal services, including support for those seeking benefits or special immigration status. Resources are available for attorneys representing victims of human trafficking



**NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE**

24/7 • Toll free  
Confidential  
200+ languages

**CALL**  
1-888-373-7888

**TEXT**  
"BeFree" (233733)

**LIVE CHAT**  
[humantraffickinghotline.org](https://humantraffickinghotline.org)

**GET HELP • REPORT TRAFFICKING**

Belleville is a small community southwest of Madison in Dane and Green Counties. Belleville is a special place to visit because of its natural beauty, recreational activities and friendly people and atmosphere. Belleville is a great community for families seeking a solid educational system along with the natural amenities of the community.

The Belleville Area Cares Coalition came into existence following a town hall meeting in April of 2014.



**We are comprised of local representatives from schools, businesses, churches, village administration as well as parents, and youth—all working together to promote healthy lifestyles**

**More information can be found at : <https://www.bellevillewicare.org/>**

**BACC meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 4:45 pm in the Belleville Village Hall.**

#### **BACC Mission Statement**

***“The mission of Belleville's Area Cares Coalition is to promote a healthy community for youth and young adults, free of alcohol and other drug abuse.”***

*The Belleville Area Cares Coalition works to develop, implement and support environmental strategies to reduce substance abuse.*

*We believe by working together, we can nurture social and environmental changes to make the Belleville area a safer and healthier place, brightening the future of our children, youth and families.*

#### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

The BAAC asks you to give the gift of time. Make a difference in the lives of our youth and our community by

1. Working with us in providing support for planning, project management and awareness campaigns
2. Helping with coalition events, conferences, workshops, and fairs held throughout the year.
3. Being a voice for change in our community, it is time to come together and be that force for change in the Belleville area.