

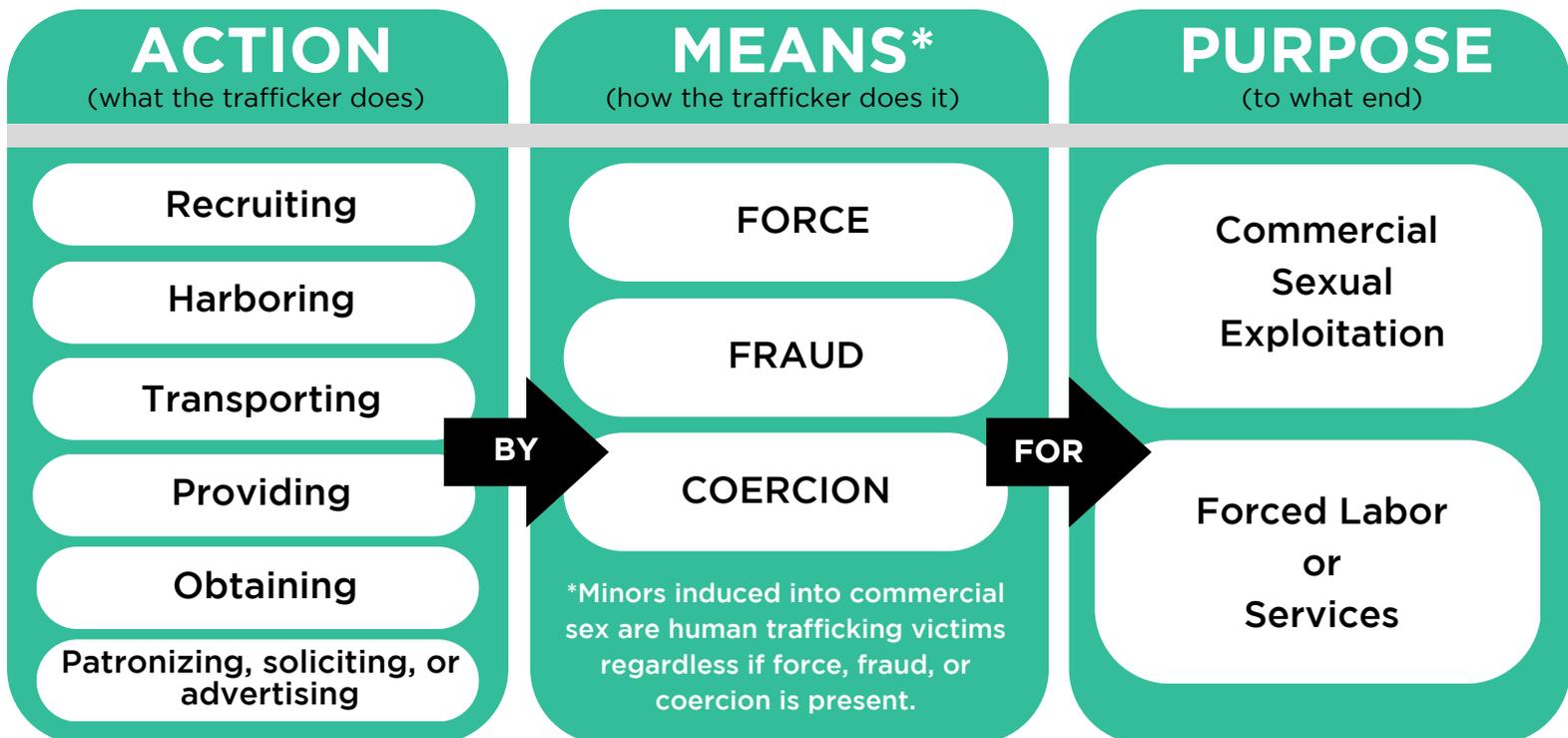
WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Trafficking Affects Michiganders Every Year

DEFINITION

"Human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, is a crime that involves compelling or coercing a person to provide labor or services, or to engage in commercial sex acts. The coercion can be subtle or overt, physical or psychological. Exploitation of a minor for commercial sex is human trafficking, regardless of whether any form of force, fraud, or coercion was used."

-US Dept. of Justice



WHO ARE THE MOST VULNERABLE?

While it is true that victims of human trafficking can be anyone, human traffickers often prey upon members of marginalized communities and other vulnerable individuals especially people of color and those with limited resources. A person is at risk of being trafficked if they:

- Are a runaway, involved in the juvenile justice, or foster care system
- Have a caregiver or family member who has a substance use disorder
- Are facing poverty or economic need
- Have an unstable living situation
- Have a history of domestic violence
- Are part of the LGBTQ+ community
- Have a history of sexual abuse
- Have a history of physical or emotional abuse; neglect
- Have mental health issues or a disability
- Are addicted to drugs or alcohol
- Recently Migrated, are Undocumented, or are here on a Work Visa
- Are a youth lacking social support/family dysfunction/low self-esteem

How are victims lured?

Love Safety Jobs
Money Education
Shelter Belonging
Fame Drugs

RECRUITMENT

Internet

Neighborhoods

Dating Apps

Social Media

Families

Shelters

“the internet was reported as the top recruitment location for all forms of trafficking”, Facebook and Instagram were main platforms.

MYTHS vs. REALTIES

MYTH: Only females are victims of sex trafficking.

REALITY:

While it is estimated that about 4 out of 5 victims of commercial sexual exploitation are women and girls, trafficking happens to ALL genders. Lower numbers for boys and men may be due to under reporting.

MYTH: Traffickers target victims they don't know.

REALITY:

Victims are more often trafficked by people they know, who may be a romantic partner, a spouse, or family member.

MYTH: Trafficking always involves kidnapping or physical force.

REALITY:

Most traffickers actually use various means such as tricking, defrauding, manipulating, or threatening victims into providing commercial sex acts or forced labor.

MYTH: Only undocumented foreign nationals get trafficked in the U.S.

REALITY:

Persons are trafficked regardless of their citizenship status and trafficking does not require the crossing of a border. This includes both survivors of sex and labor trafficking.

STATISTICS

- In 2024 alone Sex and Labor Trafficking cases were reported all over Michigan including rural towns like Greenville and Dundee, suburbs like Waterford, Southgate and Wyoming, the Upper Peninsula, and big cities like Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Detroit.
- 506 Michigan victims of trafficking were identified in 2023 through the National Trafficking Hotline
- Though statistics are important, numbers are LOW compared to actual trafficking happening due to lack of victim self-reporting and the fear victims experience at what a trafficker would do to them or a loved one if they report.*

STATE REPORT CARDS



Polaris

“62% of survivors reported being cited, detained, or arrested by law enforcement. Most of those survivors arrested (81%) were arrested, detained, or cited during their trafficking situation. Of those arrested, 71% had criminal records that resulted from the original citation, detention, or arrest.”



Shared Hope

“Gaps remain related to non-criminalization for prostitution offenses... buyer accountability under the trafficking law and trafficker accountability under state CSEC laws.”