



Survivors of Trafficking Empowerment Program

Amy Hester, STEP Supervisor

Who is RST?

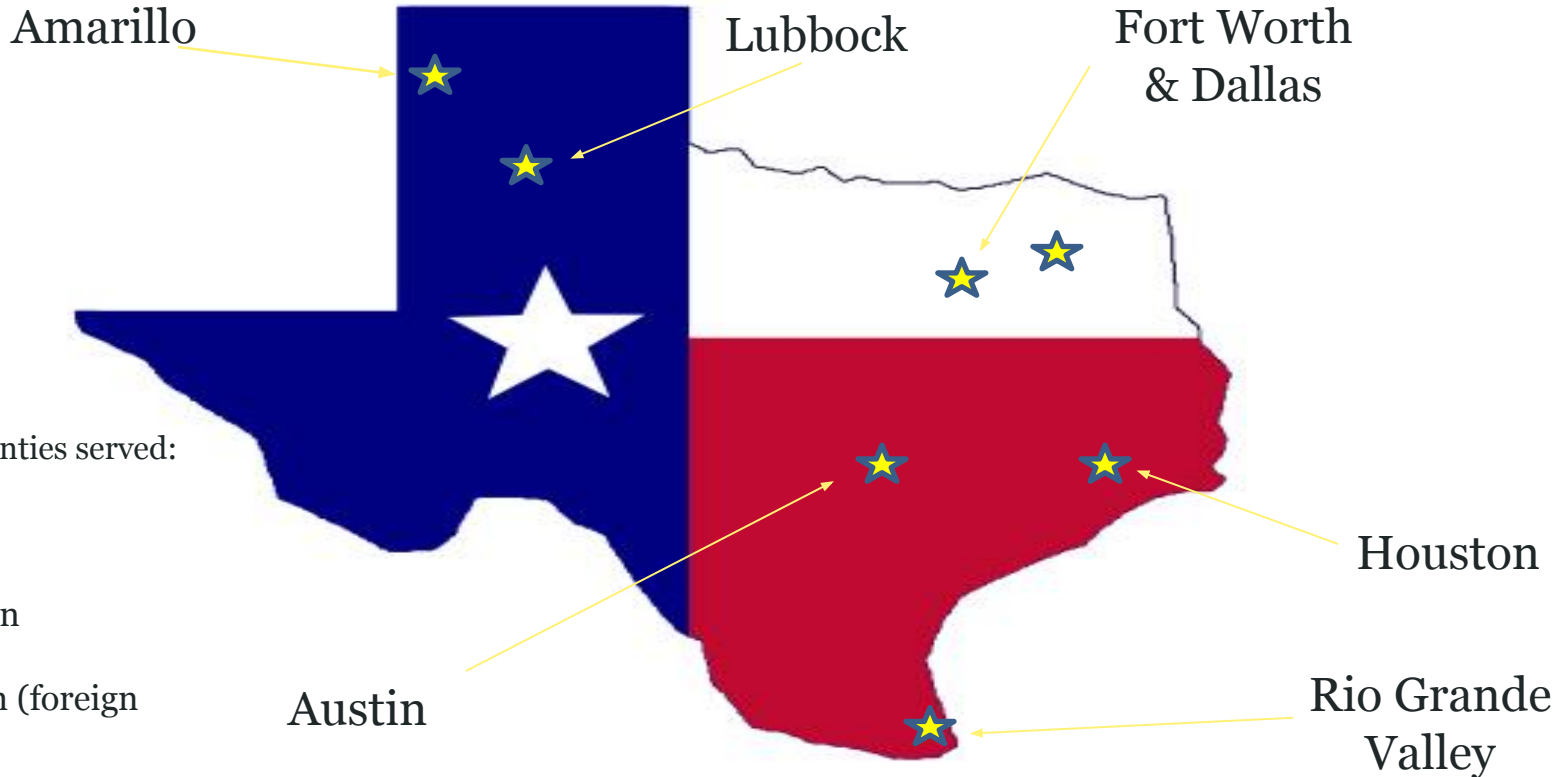
Founded in 1978, Refugee Services of Texas (RST) is a social-service agency dedicated to providing assistance to refugees, displaced populations, and survivors of human trafficking and violent crimes.



RST STEP

- Refugee Services of Texas (RST) Survivors of Trafficking Empowerment Program was established to assist survivors of trafficking, and other violent crimes throughout their transition to stable and independent lives.
- RST STEP prioritizes a **survivor-centered approach** that ensures safety, confidentiality, and the well-being of survivors and victims, while recognizing symptoms of trauma and coping mechanisms manifesting in the victim's life and interactions with service providers.
- RST has **30+ languages** represented by staff who provide sensitive, confidential and relevant languages as well as culturally competent case management services

STEP Statewide



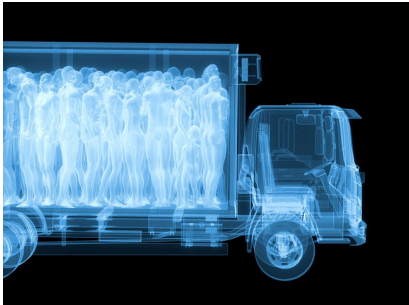


Case Study

Jane's Story

Foreign-Born Survivor of Labor and Sex Trafficking

Common Myths of Human Trafficking



What is Human Trafficking?

3 Elements

FRAUD =

DEBT BONDAGE, DECEITFUL LABOR RECRUITMENT



FORCE =

VIOLENCE / THREAT OF VIOLENCE



COERCION =

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION, THREAT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT /
IMMIGRATION, THREATS AGAINST FAMILY



The Numbers

Human Trafficking in Texas Today

APPROXIMATELY

79,000

MINORS AND YOUTH
ARE VICTIMS OF
SEX TRAFFICKING
IN TEXAS ★ ★

APPROXIMATELY

234,000

WORKERS ARE
VICTIMS OF
LABOR TRAFFICKING

THERE ARE CURRENTLY AN ESTIMATED

313,000

VICTIMS OF
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
IN TEXAS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TRAFFICKERS
EXPLOIT
APPROXIMATELY

\$600 MILLION

FROM VICTIMS OF LABOR TRAFFICKING
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ IN TEXAS

MINOR AND YOUTH
SEX TRAFFICKING COSTS
THE STATE OF
TEXAS
APPROXIMATELY

**\$6.6
BILLION**

Vulnerabilities and Risk Factors

Traffickers often exploit vulnerabilities as a recruitment tactic. Those at risk can have any of the following backgrounds/experiences:

- Food Insecurity
- Homelessness/Housing Insecurity
- Isolation
- Domestic/Family Violence
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Unemployment
- Poverty
- Victim Criminalization

Refugees/Immigrants can have additional risk factors:

- No documents
- Language barrier
- Lack of knowledge of rights (employment & immigration)
- Lack of understanding of culture or systems of new country
- Lack of community
- Few resources

Indications in Victims aka Red Flags

- Lack of knowledge of a given community/whereabouts
- Not in control (personal documents)
- Rarely or never alone
- Few to no personal possessions
- Does not speak
- Injuries (Multiple, old & new)
- Signs of Malnourishment
- Branding
- Calls boyfriend “Daddy”
- Minors with items such as two telephones or expensive purses
- No healthcare
- Claims of “just visiting” / in transit
- Inconsistent story
- Behavior changes when law enforcement mentioned
- Repeated, untreated STI’s
- Demeanor may be fearful, anxious, or submissive

- Victims are coming from a place of being controlled.
 - No freedoms, no independency, fear of defying their abuser.
- Victims often form “trauma bonds” with perpetrators.
 - This can be the biggest obstacle in their recovery and LE identification.
 - One of the primary reasons that victims don’t “walk away” or seek help on their own.
- Trauma can cause fragmented story lines of their victimization.

Barriers to Victim Self-Identification/Review

Threats of loved ones or co-workers

Distrust of Authority

Personal ID or documents
Withheld

Confinement

Language
barriers

Loyalty of
trafficker

Hopelessness

Debt bondage

Isolation

False promises

Fear of Arrest
or Deportation

Misinformation

Fear of
retaliation



Reporting Human Trafficking

I have seen red flags of human trafficking, but now what?

- Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) to make a report
 - Call: [1.888.373.7888](tel:18883737888) OR Text: “BeFree” [233733](tel:233733)
 - Anonymous reporting available
- Make a referral to any of our RST STEP locations
 - Email: HTreferrals@rstx.org and request a referral form
 - Complete form and return
 - Site specific case manager will contact you to discuss case
- Connect Survivor to Department of Labor
 - Information about Workers Rights
 - [Wage and Hour Division](#)
 - Filing for a Wage Claim

PROTECTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT VICTIMS

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Must be in the US on account of the trafficking
- ▶ Law enforcement certification is encouraged but not required



If approved, benefit provides:

1. Up to four years of temporary nonimmigrant status
2. Work authorization
3. Federal social services benefits
4. Ability to apply for permanent status

To apply:
USCS
Form I-914

T VISA

For victims of trafficking

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Perpetrator must be US citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident spouse or parent or US citizen adult son or daughter



If approved, benefit provides:

1. Protection from removal
2. Work authorization
3. Ability to apply for permanent status

To apply:
USCS
Form I-360

VAWA

For victims of Domestic Violence married to US citizens or permanent residents

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Qualifying crime must be in the US or have violated US law
- ▶ Must have law enforcement certification



If approved, benefit provides:

1. Up to four years of temporary nonimmigrant status
2. Work authorization
3. Ability to apply for permanent status

To apply:
USCS
Form I-918

U VISA

For victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Felonious Assault, Trafficking, Other Serious Crimes

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Must fear persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in particular social group



If approved, benefit provides:

1. Asylee status
2. Work authorization
3. Federal social services benefits
4. Ability to apply for permanent status

To apply:
USCS or
Immigration
Judge
Form I-589

ASYLUM

For victims of persecution

SIJS

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status for child victims

CONTINUED PRESENCE

For victims of trafficking

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Victims of a severe form of human trafficking and who may be potential witnesses, or filed a civil action
- ▶ Law enforcement support is required



If approved, benefit provides:

1. Protection from removal designation may be granted initially for a period of 2 years and renewed in increments of up to 2 years
2. Work authorization
3. Access to federal social services benefits

To apply:
ICE - Federal law enforcement must seek this protection for you

To apply:
USCS
Form I-360



If approved, benefit provides:

1. Protection from removal
2. Work authorization
3. Ability to apply for permanent status

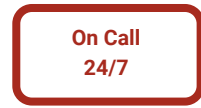
CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Must have juvenile court order
- ▶ For victims of abuse, abandonment, or neglect by one or both parents



STEP Services

We assist victims from the point of identification through the process of stabilizing and victim assistance services



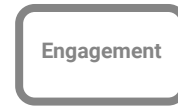
Point of Contact

When Victim is identified,
LE, Hotline or Community
Calls, LE Operations or
e-mail JPOs



Stabilize

Food, medical, clothes, relocation,
basic needs, house visit, CPS
report (if needed), court
accompaniment, visit in detention
center, shelter



Goal-Setting

School enrollment,
Therapy/Counseling,
Housing, Education, Legal,
Safety, Justice, Crime
Compensation



Survivor Lead

Continued support,
connection to community
members, employment, long
term housing, survivor
community



Case Study

Jane's Story

Foreign-Born LT & ST Survivor



Additional Resources

[Love146: End Child Trafficking and Exploitation](#) (prevention education, survivor care)

[Polaris Project](#) (Human Trafficking Response, Data, Research & Policy)

[Allies Against Slavery](#) (based in Austin - Community Awareness and Partnerships, Research, Data and Technology)

[National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) (Response and Resources/Trainings)

[Dept. of Justice Office for Victims of Crime \(OVC\)](#) - Faces of Human Trafficking (OVC is one of STEP's funders, lots of educational resources)



Questions?

Amy Hester

STEP Supervisor

512.981.6765 - ahester@rstx.org

rstx.org

National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888