

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Human Trafficking Awareness Month

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is joining with the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force and partner organizations around the state to recognize January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

“Ohio has made great strides in the ongoing fight against both labor and sex trafficking; however, there is so much more we can do,” said ODJFS Director Cynthia C. Dungey. “ODJFS encourages all Ohioans to be aware of the signs that someone may be a victim of human trafficking. If they see anything suspicious, they should contact local law enforcement or call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888.”

Sometimes called modern-day slavery, human trafficking is a crime in which individuals are forced to engage in labor and/or sex trafficking. Signs of human trafficking include the following:

- The appearance of physical or sexual abuse or malnourishment
- Young women who are with older males, especially at hotels or truck stops, and who appear to be fearful or overly submissive
- Individuals who are fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, nervous or paranoid
- Sleeping bags or cots at a business where workers appear to be given a ride to and from work together at one time
- Scripted or rehearsed answers to casual questions

Ohioans of all ages and demographics can become victims of human trafficking, but children and teenagers are especially vulnerable. It’s estimated that more than 1,000 Ohio children a year become victims of sex trafficking, and at least 3,000 more are at risk.

In 2013, ODJFS entered into a partnership with the Ohio Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers (ONCAC) to help minors who are victims of human trafficking. ODJFS is providing ONCAC with \$523,200 to train advocacy centers to provide direct services to minor victims, provide community workshops on human trafficking, and link each center with the regional Ohio Network of Anti-Human Trafficking Coalitions. When appropriate, the centers also assist with human trafficking investigations.

More information about human trafficking is available at <http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov/>.

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