



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING & TEMPORARY GUESTWORKER VISAS



Data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline reveal trends in labor trafficking among temporary guestworker visa holders. A study of hotline data from 2015-2017 identified nearly 800 victims who held temporary visas during their exploitation. Further study of the U.S. temporary guest worker program reveals patterns of abuse that can lead to labor trafficking.

This resource is designed as an introduction to the different temporary visas, the trends in exploitation among visa holders, and the potential signs of a human trafficking victim. While many temporary visa holders are never exploited, the risk of labor trafficking and exploitation demands our attention.

The following chart describes the visas that Polaris identified nationally as potentially at-risk for exploitation, after having worked with nearly 800 trafficking victims holding such visas at the time of their exploitation.

| Visa        | Description  | Number of Visas Issued FY 2020 | Top Countries of Origin                        |
|-------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>A-3</b>  | Personal employees, attendants, or domestic workers for diplomats and government officials | <b>857</b>                     | Philippines, India, Egypt                      |
| <b>B-1</b>  | Business visitors  | <b>37,841</b>                  | Philippines, Mexico, Brazil                    |
| <b>F-1</b>  | Students, including colleges and universities  | <b>364,204</b>                 | China, India, South Korea                      |
| <b>G-5</b>  | International organization/NATO officials and employees                                    | <b>404</b>                     | Philippines, Peru, Colombia                    |
| <b>H-1B</b> | Workers in specialty occupations requiring at a higher education degree                    | <b>188,123</b>                 | India, China, Mexico                           |
| <b>H-2A</b> | Temporary/seasonal agricultural workers  | <b>204,801</b>                 | Mexico, Jamaica, Guatemala                     |
| <b>H-2B</b> | Temporary/seasonal non-agricultural workers  | <b>97,623</b>                  | Mexico, Jamaica, South Africa                  |
| <b>J-1</b>  | Participants in work, cultural, and study-based exchange programs                          | <b>353,279</b>                 | China, Great Britain/Northern Ireland, Germany |



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Temporary guestworker visa holders face many vulnerabilities, including language barriers, economic need, and immigration status. Traffickers often exploit such vulnerabilities, knowing that workers' limited legal protections and frequent migration may allow their abuse to go undetected. Furthermore, for the majority of guestworkers whose visas are tied to their employer, fleeing abuse could mean deportation.

Labor trafficking victims holding temporary guestworker visas come from a variety of different industries. These include, but are not limited to, agriculture, domestic work, landscaping, hospitality, and restaurant/food service. Victims often face wage theft, threats of deportation, excessive working hours, and isolation. See below for information on identifying and reporting labor trafficking in these instances.

## IDENTIFYING LABOR TRAFFICKING

*It is important to note that victims of labor trafficking often display many of these signs and there is **not one sign** in particular that flags someone as a trafficking victim.*


### An individual who:

- Works in dangerous conditions, without proper gear, training, adequate breaks, etc.
- Lacks freedom of movement or is heavily monitored
- Lives in dangerous, overcrowded or inhumane conditions provided by an employer
- Lives and works in isolated conditions; lacks interaction with others or support systems
- Is unpaid or paid very little for his/her work
- Has been threatened by their boss with deportation or other harm
- Has a large amount of debt that he/she is unable to pay off
- Lacks control over money, identification, or phone

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

 Do **not** intervene

 In case of emergency, **call 911**

 To report a tip or seek help, **call** the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or **text** "BEFREE" to 233733



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