



Human Trafficking
Policy & Research
Analyses Project

Administration for Children and Families' Office on Trafficking in Persons

Learning Agenda

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Administration for Children and Families' Office on Trafficking in Persons: Learning Agenda

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About This Document

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Learning Agenda at a Glance



Learning Question 1

What is the role of technology in the prevention of and response to human trafficking?

- How can OTIP use technology to improve its response to human trafficking? For example, how can technology address emerging issues with the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) (e.g., wait times, dropped calls)?
- What are the respective roles of OTIP and enforcement bodies—such as the U.S. Department of Justice or Department of Homeland Security—on the issue of technology and human trafficking?
- How is technology being used to perpetrate human trafficking? How can OTIP use technology to disseminate prevention messaging?

Potential Learning Activities

- Impact assessments of existing anti-trafficking public health campaigns to measure the impact of various forms of messaging to target demographics
- Operations research to better understand technology gaps in OTIP's current practice
- Literature review of how the effectiveness of prevention education has been measured for other targeted behavioral changes
- Literature review of intervention strategies to prevent deception and victimization from use of dating applications, including information about targeted populations
- Attendance at a future convening providing opportunities to address this topic, including the MIT Lincoln Lab's Counter-Human Trafficking Technology Workshop or the BSR Tech Against Trafficking Summit¹
- Engagement with the Tech Coalition²
- Industry roundtables and listening sessions, including actions through the White House Task Force on Online Abuse and Harassment
- Analysis of OTIP's technology gaps
- Evaluation of the NHTH (ongoing)²
- Market research, including a survey of existing human trafficking public awareness and outreach materials developed by government and nongovernment organizations (ongoing, as part of the Look Beneath the Surface campaign refresh)



Learning Question 2

How can OTIP contribute to or act upon emerging issues in the anti-trafficking field?

- To what extent is the landscape shifting with regard to populations particularly vulnerable to human trafficking (e.g., migrant populations)? What needs to be learned about these populations to better address their needs?
- What is the relationship between human trafficking and climate change? How might worsening climate change affect the human trafficking landscape in the United States? What are the respective roles of OTIP and other agencies with a more global focus—such as the Department of State or the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—to identify and address these issues?

Potential Learning Activities

- State policy and legislation scan to understand legal responses to evolving understanding of human trafficking exploitation
- Literature review on laws that allow courts to vacate, or legally remove, convictions for some offenses that victims of trafficking have been forced to commit and other responses to forced criminality in sex trafficking cases, including an analysis of how these strategies can be applied to other forms of forced labor and criminalization
- Focus groups with human trafficking legal scholars about the challenges of evolving legal definitions of human trafficking and strategies to overcome them
- Listening session with service providers to better understand the expanding landscape of vulnerability, including risk factors
- Working meeting with staff at the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to better understand whether and how the Social Vulnerability Index can be leveraged to inform the human trafficking response in vulnerable communities after natural disasters, public health emergencies, or other disruptive social events
- Landscape study to assess how anti-trafficking and natural disaster or humanitarian response professionals currently coordinate and collaborate. Identify existing policies, protocols, or procedures for such coordination, including topics related to climate refugees, displacement, and trafficking.³

Learning Agenda at a Glance



Learning Question 3

How can OTIP increase the Office's dissemination reach, particularly to communities vulnerable to human trafficking?

- What are OTIP's current dissemination practices? Whom are these materials intended to reach, and how do those communities access information? Are there gaps between current practices and how affected communities seek information, and if so, how can OTIP widen its dissemination reach?
- What are effective strategies for OTIP to encourage those in the health care sector to examine and evaluate their own supply chain and procurement practices for indicators of labor trafficking?
- What is OTIP's role in increasing the public's attention to, and understanding of, issues of culpability in labor trafficking exploitation in the United States, particularly as such exploitation relates to consumer demand?
- What is OTIP's role in influencing and talking with different sectors and other agencies about labor trafficking, and how is this role distinct from that of the Department of Justice?
- How can OTIP better understand and communicate the impact of its grant programs and initiatives? How can OTIP use evaluation findings to inform the design of (and supports needed for) new grant programs? How can OTIP be more effective in disseminating evaluation findings to the field?

Potential Learning Activities

- Survey or host a focus group of OTIP grant recipients about ideal dissemination practices after evaluation participation and sources they currently use to access information and news.
- Review existing OTIP dissemination products and evaluate whether the purpose and intentions are clear. Consider explicitly stating document goals and exploring accessibility of information.⁴
- Connect with human trafficking and supply chain researchers to understand the methods of their work and whether their findings apply to the health care sector. Consider supporting a similar study specific to the health care industry.
- Review other federal agencies' dissemination methods.
- Solicit feedback at key points during the planning for OTIP website updates.
- Conduct market research, including a survey of existing human trafficking public awareness and outreach materials developed by government and nongovernment organizations (ongoing, as part of the Look Beneath the Surface campaign refresh).
- Collaborate with relevant Senior Policy Operating Groups to create deliverables about human trafficking prevention within specific sectors (ongoing).

Learning Agenda at a Glance



Learning Question 4

How can OTIP improve its support of services for people who have experienced human trafficking?

- What are the mechanisms for learning the actual needs of people who have experienced human trafficking, the resources necessary to provide them, and the most effective strategies to ensure they receive them? How can feedback from clients of grant-funded programs be meaningful for OTIP, and how can OTIP create a mechanism to obtain feedback directly from clients in OTIP-funded programs?
- How can the process of applying for and navigating government-funded aid be streamlined so that (a) government agencies are not duplicating resource provision and (b) people who have experienced human trafficking can manage the application process easily?
- How can OTIP help support better policies for future instances of major social disruptions, such as widespread public health crises or natural disasters? What lessons can be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic regarding (a) the needs that people who experienced human trafficking presented at service provider agencies and (b) the ways that agencies pivoted to meet increased or different needs among clients? How can OTIP support more effective policies for providing flexible support to people who have experienced human trafficking during times of crisis?
- On behalf of people who have experienced human trafficking, how can OTIP support reintegration services that are survivor informed and designed with the needs of groups especially vulnerable to human trafficking in mind?

Potential Learning Activities

- Review the literature to see how other fields have accomplished improving data-matching algorithms, establishing more robust referral mechanisms, streamlining business processes, and notifying program participants of their potential eligibility. These activities are opportunities to strengthen applying for and navigating government-funded programming.⁵
- Explore tailored interventions and comprehensive models of care implemented within the pre-existing health care, social service, and community structures.⁶
- Conduct an environmental scan of programs providing flexible funding; study funding sources, limitations, and lessons learned.⁴
- Explore how to limit or eliminate contextual inquiry on applications for individuals who have experienced human trafficking.
- Conduct an environmental scan of resource availability by state, including qualification standards; consider an app or website with an easy-to-navigate dashboard to share this information.
- Conduct an environmental scan of community-based organizations (including outside of trafficking), web-based programs, or other resources that assist with applying for aid; highlight what works.⁴
- Review policies about flex funding models; consider application to the human trafficking field.
- Seek feedback from survivor-led and culturally specific organizations about barriers to accessing federal funding.
- Explore the impact of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders on interpersonal violence and the implications for emergency response efforts (ongoing).

Learning Agenda at a Glance



Learning Question 5

To what extent can lessons learned or best practices related to economic opportunity and mobility be used or adapted for use in the anti-trafficking field?

- How can OTIP better understand self-sufficiency, particularly as people who have experienced human trafficking transition from environments with heavy support to greater independence? What are their financial and other needs during this transition and beyond?
- What are the mechanisms for OTIP to provide financial support for clients of OTIP-funded programs once they transition from those programs? How can OTIP determine the longevity of these needs and corresponding supports?

Potential Learning Activities

- Scan practices for compensating individuals who have experienced human trafficking among various government agencies; consider creating a minimum standards recommendation document.⁴
- Consider how Administration for Children and Families (ACF) programs focused on economic opportunity and mobility are relevant to or can be applied to the anti-trafficking field.
- Review the literature about evidence-based two-generation or whole-family policies and practices and how they can be applied to the anti-trafficking field.
- Conduct a focus group with, or a survey of, people who have experienced human trafficking to identify long-term needs.
- Conduct an environmental scan of programs providing economic empowerment and other relevant programming (ongoing activity by OTIP).⁴



Learning Question 6

How can OTIP continue to authentically and meaningfully engage people who have experienced human trafficking?

- What are the most important places for OTIP to incorporate the input of people who have experienced human trafficking (e.g., in drafting funding opportunities, grant application review)? What barriers to engagement have been identified to date? How can these barriers be addressed?
- What are the best practices in encouraging the representation of people with varied human trafficking experiences in activities related to planning, programming, and policy? How can individuals contribute to planning, programming, and policy without being labeled, or asked to self-identify, as survivors?
- What are the best mechanisms for OTIP to provide compensation for the expertise of people who have experienced human trafficking? Are there any policy flexibilities that could better enable compensation?

Potential Learning Activities

- Explore the perspectives of people who have experienced human trafficking; ask about their interactions with anti-human trafficking programming and their recommendations to strengthen services.⁷
- Scan compensation policies from organizations engaging with people who have experienced human trafficking.
- Conduct focus groups or listening sessions with people who have experienced human trafficking to discuss the range of consulting and employment compensation they have been offered and to understand a range of compensation that feels adequate and accounts for the nature of this work.
- Conduct focus groups or listening sessions with service providers to better understand the barriers to full- or part-time employment of people who have experienced human trafficking.

Learning Agenda at a Glance



Learning Question 7

Are there ways in which increased collaboration would improve OTIP's capacity as a leader in the anti-trafficking field?

- How can OTIP measure the impact of partnerships and collaboration as they pertain to the recently established U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Task Force on Human Trafficking Prevention?
- Among both other HHS subagencies and offices and other government departmental offices, what types of data are already being collected that could inform OTIP's work? What is the availability of these data? What types of data sharing agreements could facilitate access to this information?
- How can OTIP provide education about trafficking relevant to other ACF suboffices targeting particular industries or populations with susceptibility to trafficking (e.g., the home health care industry through Health Resources & Services Administration, the childcare industry through the Office of Child Care)?
- How can OTIP identify areas in which to learn from the international community? What are feasible and actionable strategies to better engage with the international community?
- How can OTIP collaborate with the private sector to advance anti-human trafficking initiatives?

Potential Learning Activities

- Scan of current government agency work, including agencies outside of HHS, to identify overlapping work, areas for collaboration, and gaps
- Scan of dissemination products from other ACF offices, with consideration of target audiences, to identify outlets for content-specific messaging
- Brief surveys or less formal check-in discussions with the HHS Task Force on Human Trafficking Prevention about specific task force collaboration challenges and successes
- Market research, including a survey of existing human trafficking public awareness and outreach materials developed by government and nongovernment organizations (ongoing, as part of the Look Beneath the Surface campaign refresh)



Learning Question 8

How can OTIP's grant administration processes be adjusted to improve efficacy and equity?

- What training or ongoing technical assistance can be provided to project officers overseeing grant programs? In what ways could training or technical assistance improve grant administration and, in turn, better support programs and initiatives?
- In what ways could OTIP resources and supports (e.g., National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center) build the capacity of organizations (especially those without prior OTIP funding) to submit an application to an OTIP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)?
- What is the extent of existing resources or models (across other HHS subagencies) of best practices in writing NOFOs that are inclusive of smaller organizations or those serving a diverse range of individuals across diverse settings?

Potential Learning Activities

- Explore existing mentor models aimed at assisting first-time grant applicants with the application process.
- To better understand the barriers to application, conduct focus groups with leaders from organizations—including those that are survivor led—that have not applied for OTIP funding.
- Create a best practices guide for managing grants specific to vulnerable or minority populations or both.

Learning Agenda at a Glance



Learning Question

9

What role should OTIP have within the broader anti-trafficking field?

- How can OTIP support and influence identified areas of current importance to the anti-human trafficking field, including topics such as housing and housing placements for youth who have experienced human trafficking, economic mobility, forced criminality, identifying and serving populations especially vulnerable to human trafficking (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning [LGBTQ+] individuals; Native communities; youth in the child welfare system); elevating the issue of the exploitation of men and boys; inaccurate and complicated data; prevalence; demand reduction; and labor trafficking in supply chains?
- How can OTIP continue to encourage a public health approach to human trafficking in the United States? How can this framework coexist with a criminal justice approach, especially with regard to prevention, public awareness, and response?
- What is OTIP's role, if any, in responding to various ideological factions within the anti-trafficking field (e.g., the debate around legalization or decriminalization)? Within what boundaries should OTIP (or any other government agency or office) navigate tensions in the field?

Potential Learning Activities

- Hold a working session with law enforcement professionals with significant experience with case response to both sex trafficking and labor trafficking to learn about institutional and cultural challenges they face in implementing principles of a public health approach in their day-to-day practice.
- Compare the objectives of law enforcement professionals tasked with addressing human trafficking with those of public health professionals.
- Conduct a scoping review of literature on the public health approach to preventing sex trafficking perpetration (ongoing).
- Explore how a public health approach can inform criminal justice practices through funding specific research projects (ongoing).
- Seek advice from staff from other HHS subagencies and offices about how they navigate difficult or turbulent issues resulting in ideological factions in their fields of work.

Overview and Strategy

As part of the Human Trafficking Policy and Research Analyses Project (HTPRAP), RTI International has developed this learning agenda focused on priority areas identified by the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF's) Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) and Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE). This learning agenda aims to support OTIP's major functions: prevention, protection, and research and policy.

According to ACF, the goal for developing a learning agenda (here, specific to OTIP) is to create a shared vision for ongoing learning that provides a framework for better understanding:

1. **What OTIP has learned** about effective practices and processes from its work to date
2. **Where we still have questions** and what we still need to learn to improve OTIP's work
3. **The pathways or processes for furthering learning** to meet OTIP's mission
4. **How new learning can be used** to do OTIP's work more effectively and efficiently^a

To accomplish this, RTI, in close partnership with OTIP and OPRE, followed a multistep, iterative process, described below, to identify a set of learning questions central to the current work and priorities of OTIP. For each of the identified questions, this document outlines potential actionable strategies, including potential learning activities and experts to engage.

Learning Agenda Formulation Strategy

HHS Website and Document Scan

To prepare for interviews with OTIP leadership and staff, RTI conducted a scan of publicly available documents and other materials from OTIP and other relevant U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) offices from 2010 through September 2021, as well as additional documents solicited from OTIP that were not available to the public but offered insight into the current and near-future topic areas of interest to OTIP.

Interviews With OTIP Leadership and Staff

During October and November 2021, RTI spoke with 17 members of OTIP staff. Discussion topics included

questions about what staff have learned about effective practices, what important questions remain and how the answers would help improve OTIP's work, what pathways exist for furthering learning to meet OTIP's mission, and how new learning can be used to do OTIP's work more effectively.

Drafted, Refined, and Prioritized Learning Questions

In coordination with OTIP and OPRE, RTI built on the learning activities to date to develop draft learning questions in December 2021. During working meetings in February 2022, the questions were further refined and prioritized.

^aDeveloping a Learning Agenda for the Office on Trafficking in Persons slide deck, shared with RTI on March 5, 2021

Literature Review

In February 2022, RTI began a literature review to assess existing knowledge about the key topics identified by OTIP as central to the learning questions.

Listening Sessions

To solicit additional feedback on the learning questions, in July 2022, RTI held listening sessions with people who have experienced human trafficking, as well as the service providers who work with this population. These listening sessions served to gather external feedback on selected relevant learning agenda questions and sub-questions. Because of time limitations, some questions were prioritized for discussion.

Interviews With Subject Matter Experts

To gather additional external feedback, in July and August 2022, RTI held additional conversations with academic and other professionals with subject matter expertise specific to learning questions that we did not discuss in the listening sessions.

Revised Learning Questions and Action Plan

Finally, we incorporated the feedback received from the listening sessions and expert interviews, as well as the most relevant information we identified from our literature review, to inform this learning agenda and action plan.



Foundational Principles

This learning agenda represents the current and near-future priorities of OTIP leadership and staff. OTIP staff believe the following two principles to be of paramount importance:

1. All learning activities should incorporate the consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Inherent in every instance of human trafficking is an imbalance of power between people. It is critical that the anti-trafficking field considers, in every possible way, the ways that diversity, equity, and inclusion are relevant to or may affect the work that is being done. Therefore, this learning agenda does not include specific sub-questions about the relevance of diversity, equity, and inclusion for each overarching learning question; rather, OTIP staff believe that consideration of these principles should underlie all learning questions and activities.

2. All learning activities conducted should follow a data-driven, evidence-informed approach.

Similarly, while not explicitly stated for every listed learning activity, OTIP staff believe that all learning activities should be conducted according to the most reasonable level of scientific rigor and that research, policy decisions, and disseminated works should be data driven and evidence informed.

Learning Agenda and Action Plan

This learning agenda presents each learning question with supplemental information about the state of relevant evidence for the topic, identified knowledge gaps, proposed learning activities to deepen OTIP's understanding of the learning questions, and suggested professionals and subject matter experts who would be important to consult in addressing these learning questions.



Relevant Evidence. What big-picture knowledge do we already have about this topic?



Knowledge Gaps. Where are there identified gaps in our knowledge about this question?



Potential Learning Activities. What are some ways we might learn more to address this question?



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage. Who could be consulted as we learn more and address this question?



Learning Question 1

What is the role of technology in the prevention of and response to human trafficking?

- How can OTIP use technology to improve its response to human trafficking? For example, how can technology address emerging issues with the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) (e.g., wait times, dropped calls)?
- What are the respective roles of OTIP and enforcement bodies—such as the U.S. Department of Justice or Department of Homeland Security—on the issue of technology and human trafficking?
- How is technology being used to perpetrate human trafficking? How can OTIP use technology to disseminate prevention messaging?



Relevant Evidence

- Complex data mining activities are regularly used for commercial digital marketing purposes to create targeted, personalized messaging, content, and advertisements. This same process has been applied for public health campaigns.^{3, 8}
- Geographic information systems and other surveillance technologies have been used to help identify areas with high-risk populations and allow for concentrated prevention outreach. However, surveillance technologies can also infringe on a person's privacy.^{9, 10}
- Few outcome evaluations have been conducted to assess the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns.
- Evidence is accumulating that users of dating applications are at risk of deception and sexual violence.^{11, 12} This evidence is not specific to human trafficking.
- Technology tools (computer learning, big data, data mining) can be used for learning about communities, including social vulnerabilities. The application of that learning (e.g., with local service providers) may or may not require a technology solution.³
- The use of online platforms and limited in-person contact due to COVID-19 highlighted a digital divide likely caused by age and socioeconomic status.¹³



Knowledge Gaps

- How can human trafficking prevention messaging be digitally targeted and disseminated in ways that are both effective and aligned with the ethics and mission of OTIP?
- What is the known impact of digital marketing strategies on public health outcomes, and how has this impact been measured? What factors of digital campaigns, targeted advertisements, or both are associated with changing behaviors?
- How should digital marketing strategies be differentiated to address the risk of both sex and labor trafficking across different subpopulations?
- What victimization prevention methods are used for violence prevention more generally on dating applications and social media? How well do these apply to human trafficking prevention?
- How prepared is the anti-trafficking field to understand technology utilization and how it can be applied to preventing and responding to human trafficking?

- What are the goals of the NHTH, and how well is the hotline meeting those goals? Which of these issues can be addressed with technology (e.g., wait times may be a staffing issue, not a technology issue)? In what ways might technology contribute to the operational challenges of the hotline?



Potential Learning Activities

- Impact assessments of existing anti-trafficking public health campaigns to measure the impact of various forms of messaging to target demographics
- Operations research to better understand technology gaps in OTIP's current practice
- Literature review of how the effectiveness of prevention education has been measured for other targeted behavioral changes
- Literature review of intervention strategies to prevent deception and victimization from use of dating applications, including information about targeted populations
- Attendance at a future convening providing opportunities to address this topic, including the MIT Lincoln Lab's Counter-Human Trafficking Technology Workshop or the BSR Tech Against Trafficking Summit^{14, 15}
- Engagement with the Tech Coalition¹
- Industry roundtables and listening sessions, including actions through the White House Task Force on Online Abuse and Harassment
- Analysis of OTIP's technology gaps
- Evaluation of the NHTH (ongoing)²
- Market research, including a survey of existing human trafficking public awareness and outreach materials developed by government and nongovernment organizations (ongoing, as part of the Look Beneath the Surface campaign refresh)



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- People who have experienced technology-facilitated trafficking
- Experts applying technology to combatting human trafficking
- Operations research analysts
- Digital marketing experts
- Researchers



How can OTIP contribute to or act upon emerging issues in the anti-trafficking field?

- To what extent is the landscape shifting with regard to populations particularly vulnerable to human trafficking (e.g., migrant populations)? What needs to be learned about these populations to better address their needs?
- What is the relationship between human trafficking and climate change? How might worsening climate change affect the human trafficking landscape in the United States? What are the respective roles of OTIP and other agencies with a more global focus—such as the Department of State or the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—to identify and address these issues?



Relevant Evidence

- Recent events, including humanitarian crises, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate-related disasters, and rapid economic inflation, have demonstrated the need for inclusive understanding of groups vulnerable to human trafficking and even means of human trafficking perpetration (for example, forced criminality).^{2, 16-19}
- State and federal laws relevant to human trafficking continue to be updated as our social understanding of the problem evolves, but legal, institutional, and attitudinal challenges can constrain or delay the effectiveness of such legislation.²⁰
- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created the Social Vulnerability Index, which taps databases to help emergency response planners and public health officials identify and map communities that are most likely to need support before, during, and after a hazardous event.²¹



Knowledge Gaps

- As new groups become vulnerable to trafficking, how do we expand the way anti-trafficking professionals think about trafficking? Similarly, as new forms of trafficking emerge, such as forced criminality, how do we expand the way the field understands how trafficking can happen? What is the role of OTIP in facilitating an evolving understanding of an evolving problem?
- Can the Social Vulnerability Index be leveraged to inform the human trafficking response after a natural disaster or other hazardous event?
- How should local, state, and federal agencies collaborate and coordinate to respond to human trafficking in the wake of natural disasters? Who needs to be involved? What types of training and cross-training are needed? Does the nature of the collaboration or coordination need to be tailored to specific types of disasters (e.g., hurricanes, wildfires)?³



Potential Learning Activities

- State policy and legislation scan to understand legal responses to evolving understanding of human trafficking exploitation
- Literature review on laws that allow courts to vacate, or legally remove, convictions for some offenses that victims of trafficking have been forced to commit and other responses to forced criminality in sex trafficking cases, including an analysis of how these strategies can be applied to other forms of forced labor and criminalization
- Focus groups with human trafficking legal scholars about the challenges of evolving legal definitions of human trafficking and strategies to overcome them
- Listening session with service providers to better understand the expanding landscape of vulnerability, including risk factors
- Working meeting with CDC ATSDR staff to better understand whether and how the Social Vulnerability Index can be leveraged to inform the human trafficking response in vulnerable communities after natural disasters, public health emergencies, or other disruptive social events
- Landscape study to assess how anti-trafficking and natural disaster or humanitarian response professionals currently coordinate and collaborate. Identify existing policies, protocols, or procedures for such coordination, including topics related to climate refugees, displacement, and trafficking.³



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- Human trafficking legal scholars
- Researchers who specialize in the intersection of climate change and human trafficking
- CDC and ATSDR staff
- People who have experienced human trafficking
- Community leaders who work with any marginalized groups (not only people who have experienced human trafficking)⁴



Learning Question **3**

How can OTIP increase the Office's dissemination reach, particularly to communities vulnerable to human trafficking?

- What are OTIP's current dissemination practices? Whom are these materials intended to reach, and how do those communities access information? Are there gaps between current practices and how affected communities seek information, and if so, how can OTIP widen its dissemination reach?
- What are effective strategies for OTIP to encourage those in the health care sector to examine and evaluate their own supply chain and procurement practices for indicators of labor trafficking?
- What is OTIP's role in increasing the public's attention to, and understanding of, issues of culpability in labor trafficking exploitation in the United States, particularly as such exploitation relates to consumer demand?
- What is OTIP's role in influencing and talking with different sectors and other agencies about labor trafficking, and how is this role distinct from that of the Department of Justice?
- How can OTIP better understand and communicate the impact of its grant programs and initiatives? How can OTIP use evaluation findings to inform the design of (and supports needed for) new grant programs? How can OTIP be more effective in disseminating evaluation findings to the field?



Relevant Evidence

- Converting scientific knowledge into practitioner-friendly products to be used for implementation is a beneficial way to disseminate findings.²²
- People with lived trafficking experience may struggle to seek information at all, either because they don't believe they are victims or because they have no means of seeking information.⁴
- Many local groups are already conducting outreach and awareness activities, but those activities may still be inaccessible (because of language, location, or unclear definitions or descriptions).⁴
- People who have experienced human trafficking, and service providers serving them, need web-based resources that are easy to navigate, filter, and search. Some find the OTIP website difficult to navigate and do not rely on it as a primary resource.⁴
- Study findings or other information disseminated at the national level may not be broadly applicable to all U.S. regions and populations.⁴
- The National Science Foundation is funding research focused on human trafficking supply chains and potential opportunities for disrupting systems that facilitate human trafficking.²³



Potential Learning Activities

- Survey or host a focus group of OTIP grant recipients about ideal dissemination practices after evaluation participation and sources they currently use to access information and news.
- Review existing OTIP dissemination products and evaluate whether the purpose and intentions are clear. Consider explicitly stating document goals and exploring accessibility of information.⁴
- Connect with human trafficking and supply chain researchers to understand the methods of their work and whether their findings apply to the health care sector. Consider supporting a similar study specific to the health care industry.
- Review other federal agencies' dissemination methods.
- Solicit feedback at key points during the planning for OTIP website updates.
- Conduct market research, including a survey of existing human trafficking public awareness and outreach materials developed by government and nongovernment organizations (ongoing, as part of the Look Beneath the Surface campaign refresh).
- Collaborate with relevant Senior Policy Operating Groups to create deliverables about human trafficking prevention within specific sectors (ongoing).



Knowledge Gaps

- Current processes of information dissemination have a significant gap in translating research into practice using internet-based technologies that are intended to be interactive and consumer centered.²⁴ What are best practices for differentiating materials based on the groups they are intended to reach?
- How might the current supply chain disruption research be generalized or applied to the health care sector?



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- People who have experienced human trafficking
- Service providers
- Supply chain disruption researchers
- OTIP grant recipients
- Relevant Senior Policy Operating Groups



How can OTIP improve its support of services for people who have experienced human trafficking?

- What are the mechanisms for learning the actual needs of people who have experienced human trafficking, the resources necessary to provide them, and the most effective strategies to ensure they receive them? How can feedback from clients of grant-funded programs be meaningful for OTIP, and how can OTIP create a mechanism to obtain feedback directly from clients in OTIP-funded programs?
- How can the process of applying for and navigating government-funded aid be streamlined so that (a) government agencies are not duplicating resource provision and (b) people who have experienced human trafficking can manage the application process easily?
- How can OTIP help support better policies for future instances of major social disruptions, such as widespread public health crises or natural disasters? What lessons can be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic regarding (a) the needs that people who experienced human trafficking presented at service provider agencies and (b) the ways that agencies pivoted to meet increased or different needs among clients? How can OTIP support more effective policies for providing flexible support to people who have experienced human trafficking during times of crisis?
- On behalf of people who have experienced human trafficking, how can OTIP support reintegration services that are survivor informed and designed with the needs of groups especially vulnerable to human trafficking in mind?



Relevant Evidence

- An optimal model for supporting people who have experienced human trafficking requires the collaboration of people who have experienced trafficking with experts in disciplines such as medicine, public health, law, and human rights advocacy.²⁵
- Incorporating the perspectives of people who have experienced human trafficking is imperative in crafting comprehensive strategies to address the complex needs of this population.²⁶
- People who have experienced human trafficking described the process of seeking help as feeling as though agencies were “evaluating crisis to see if it is ‘crisis enough’ to see if they qualify for help.” This process was described as “not helpful” and “invasive.”⁴
- The nature of the decentralized, fragmented application processes for benefits (and the need to prove qualification or status as having experienced human trafficking) is not trauma informed. The intake into various assistance programs is often duplicative.⁴
- Government-provided aid has stipulations and limitations that can be confusing to recipients or difficult for them to meet. Although there is some focus on helping people access aid after they have experienced human trafficking, what happens to recipients when aid ends is not considered, nor is whether pursuing some types of government assistance (e.g., student loans or grants for education) may disqualify them from other forms.⁴
- Service providers noted that many organizations that work with people who have experienced human trafficking do not have the capacity or resources to apply for grant funding. The organizations that do receive funding struggle with the increased administrative burden.⁴
- The domestic violence community is increasingly embracing a “flex funding” model, which offers flexible financial assistance to meet the tangible and urgent needs of people who have experienced human trafficking.^{4, 27}
- Crisis services should not be viewed as stand-alone resources operating independently of the local community mental health and hospital systems, but rather as an integrated part of a coordinated continuum of care.
- Collaboration among agencies during COVID-19 helped support internal implementation of policies and procedures, as well as the use of new technology. Additionally, flexibility with reporting requirements during times of crisis helped agencies cope with the many difficulties that came with COVID-19.¹³
- The use of online platforms and limited in-person contact due to COVID-19 highlighted a digital divide likely caused by age and socioeconomic status.¹³



Knowledge Gaps

- Evidence to inform the identification, referral, and care of people who have experienced human trafficking is extremely limited.²⁸
- How can funding sources be implemented for sustained care, rather than only immediate care after someone exits a trafficking situation?
- What would make the process of applying for one or more types of aid simpler for people who have experienced human trafficking, without requiring information they may not have (e.g., addresses for the past several years) or requiring them to “prove” their human trafficking exploitation experience in such a way that they “qualify”?⁴
- How can funded service programming be flexible and centered around the individual goals of participants, rather than one size fits all?⁴

- How can client feedback be collected through grant recipients without putting more pressure or expectations on grant recipients?⁴
- What are the actual barriers to applying for government-funded aid (e.g., not having answers to required questions, not having access to technology to apply or follow up)?⁴
- Do people who have experienced human trafficking know about available aid? Are they comfortable requesting government resources?⁴
- How prevalent is the need for credit repair among people who have experienced human trafficking? How does that impact the need for aid, the ability to qualify for aid, and sustained self-sufficiency?⁴
- How can the flex funding model, which is being used in correlating fields, be applied to service provision and support for people who have experienced human trafficking?⁴



Potential Learning Activities

- Review the literature to see how other fields have accomplished improving data-matching algorithms, establishing more robust referral mechanisms, streamlining business processes, and notifying program participants of their potential eligibility. These activities are opportunities to strengthen applying for and navigating government-funded programming.⁵
- Explore tailored interventions and comprehensive models of care implemented within the pre-existing health care, social service, and community structures.⁶
- Conduct an environmental scan of programs providing flexible funding; study funding sources, limitations, and lessons learned.⁴
- Explore how to limit or eliminate contextual inquiry on applications for individuals who have experienced human trafficking.
- Conduct an environmental scan of resource availability by state, including qualification standards; consider an app or website with an easy-to-navigate dashboard to share this information.
- Conduct an environmental scan of community-based organizations (including outside of trafficking), web-based programs, or other resources that assist with applying for aid; highlight what works.⁴
- Review policies about flex funding models; consider application to the human trafficking field.
- Seek feedback from survivor-led and culturally specific organizations about barriers to accessing federal funding.
- Explore the impact of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders on interpersonal violence and the implications for emergency response efforts (ongoing).



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- Grant recipients who have successfully responded to OTIP Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs)
- Service provider representatives who have not responded to an OTIP NOFO but would qualify
- Other federal funders of assistance programs, particularly victim assistance programs (e.g., Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime; Department of Labor)
- Community-based programs, including those that work with other groups that might need similar assistance (e.g., refugee resettlement and migrant assistance, community reentry, domestic violence, neighborhood resilience)
- Human Trafficking Leadership Academy
- U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking
- National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC)
- Culturally specific community organizations
- People who have experienced human trafficking



To what extent can lessons learned or best practices related to economic opportunity and mobility be used or adapted for use in the anti-trafficking field?

- How can OTIP better understand self-sufficiency, particularly as people who have experienced human trafficking transition from environments with heavy support to greater independence? What are their financial and other needs during this transition and beyond?
- What are the mechanisms for OTIP to provide financial support for clients of OTIP-funded programs once they transition from those programs? How can OTIP determine the longevity of these needs and corresponding supports?



Relevant Evidence

- Programs, not individuals, need to change to create spaces that are responsive to the impacts of trauma.²⁹
- An evaluation of the social service needs of people who have experienced human trafficking and their children identified long-term needs in safety, medical health, emotional and psychological health, financial stability, and social and familial equilibrium.³⁰
- There are few standards and a wide range of program models for economic empowerment programming for people who have experienced human trafficking. Emergent work focuses on establishing guiding principles to inform economic empowerment programming for people who have experienced human trafficking.^{31;32}



Knowledge Gaps

- To what extent can lessons learned or best practices related to economic opportunity and mobility (e.g., cash transfers, employment support, entrepreneurship training) be used or adapted for use in the anti-trafficking field?
- To what extent have best practices related to economic opportunity and mobility been employed in adjacent fields, such as sexual violence prevention or with individuals who have experienced traumatic life events?
- To what extent can these practices related to economic opportunity be applied to populations vulnerable to human trafficking?
- What are the long-term economic needs of people who have experienced human trafficking?
- What is the range of payment and compensation for consulting services by people who have experienced human trafficking?⁴
- How can we measure the level of support that a person who has experienced human trafficking needs to increase their independence and autonomy?



Potential Learning Activities

- Scan practices for compensating individuals who have experienced human trafficking among various government agencies; consider creating a minimum standards recommendation document.⁴
- Consider how ACF programs focused on economic opportunity and mobility are relevant to or can be applied to the anti-trafficking field.
- Review the literature about evidence-based two-generation or whole-family policies and practices and how they can be applied to the anti-trafficking field.
- Conduct a focus group with, or a survey of, people who have experienced human trafficking to identify long-term needs.
- Conduct an environmental scan of programs providing economic empowerment and other relevant programming (ongoing activity by OTIP).⁴



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- Training and technical assistance providers (e.g., Futures Without Violence, NHTTAC)
- Experts in economic opportunity
- Human Trafficking Leadership Academy
- U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking
- Survivor-led or survivor-centered organizations
- Government and nongovernment agencies and organizations that work with people who have experienced human trafficking⁴



How can OTIP continue to authentically and meaningfully engage people who have experienced human trafficking?

- What are the most important places for OTIP to incorporate the input of people who have experienced human trafficking (e.g., in drafting funding opportunities, grant application review)? What barriers to engagement have been identified to date? How can these barriers be addressed?
- What are the best practices in encouraging the representation of people with varied human trafficking experiences in activities related to planning, programming, and policy? How can individuals contribute to planning, programming, and policy without being labeled, or asked to self-identify, as survivors?
- What are the best mechanisms for OTIP to provide compensation for the expertise of people who have experienced human trafficking? Are there any policy flexibilities that could better enable compensation?



Relevant Evidence

- Prioritizing the expertise of people who have experienced human trafficking is critical to adjusting structures of power in anti-trafficking organizations and informing more effective policies and interventions.^{33; 34}
- The compensation provided to people who have experienced human trafficking and who offer their expertise is highly variable.⁴ There is no shared understanding or observance of what the market rate for consultation services or employment is or should be.
- Compensation rates should account for the emotionally taxing nature of the work. The input of people who have experienced human trafficking is being sought because of their personal experience, even if they are not directly discussing it.⁴
- Creating space for people who have experienced human trafficking to have an equal opportunity to contribute to the work at hand ensures that they are able to provide direct input and are not simply asked to share their stories.
- A qualitative, exploratory study noted the following recommendations for supporting people who have experienced human trafficking: services should be sensitive to their histories of violence and mistrust of others, providers should anticipate barriers to employment (e.g., safety, unemployment, legal issues), and providers should adopt a nonjudgmental stance to avoid stigmatizing and shaming the consultant or employee.³⁵
- Creating an advisory board of people who have experienced human trafficking can prevent tokenization, provide peer-to-peer mentorship and support, and help establish a truly survivor-centered organization.
- Creating a clear policy for paid participation that details all stages and necessary documentation, and sharing it with both participants and other organizations, was noted as a best practice by the Scottish Human Rights Commission.³⁶



Knowledge Gaps

- Scan of current government agency work, including agencies outside of HHS, to identify overlapping work, areas for collaboration, and gaps
- Scan of dissemination products from other ACF offices, with consideration of target audiences, to identify outlets for content-specific messaging
- Brief surveys or less formal check-in discussions with the HHS Task Force on Human Trafficking Prevention about specific task force collaboration challenges and successes
- Market research, including a survey of existing human trafficking public awareness and outreach materials developed by government and nongovernment organizations (ongoing, as part of the Look Beneath the Surface campaign refresh)



Potential Learning Activities

- Explore the perspectives of people who have experienced human trafficking; ask about their interactions with anti-human trafficking programming and their recommendations to strengthen services.⁷
- Scan compensation policies from organizations engaging with people who have experienced human trafficking.
- Conduct focus groups or listening sessions with people who have experienced human trafficking to discuss the range of consulting and employment compensation they have been offered and to understand a range of compensation that feels adequate and accounts for the nature of this work.
- Conduct focus groups or listening sessions with service providers to better understand the barriers to full- or part-time employment of people who have experienced human trafficking.



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- People who have experienced human trafficking
- Survivor-led organizations
- Human Trafficking Leadership Academy
- U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking



Are there ways in which increased collaboration would improve OTIP's capacity as a leader in the anti-trafficking field?

- How can OTIP measure the impact of partnerships and collaboration as they pertain to the recently established U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Task Force on Human Trafficking Prevention?
- Among both other HHS subagencies and offices and other government departmental offices, what types of data are already being collected that could inform OTIP's work? What is the availability of these data? What types of data sharing agreements could facilitate access to this information?
- How can OTIP provide education about trafficking relevant to other ACF suboffices targeting particular industries or populations with susceptibility to trafficking (e.g., the home health care industry through Health Resources & Services Administration, the childcare industry through the Office of Child Care)?
- How can OTIP identify areas in which to learn from the international community? What are feasible and actionable strategies to better engage with the international community?
- How can OTIP collaborate with the private sector to advance anti-human trafficking initiatives?



Relevant Evidence

- Educational interventions for at-risk populations—specifically, collaboration with local stakeholders and risk factor mitigation—facilitate “best practice strategies to combat human trafficking.”³⁷
- Private-sector companies have access to a wide variety of technological tools that can be used to support governments' anti-trafficking efforts.³ Using this technology, private companies can identify and address cases of trafficking and exploitation in their supply chains. Public-private partnerships can facilitate investigations “to trace the financial gains or organized criminal activities such as those involving trafficking in persons.”³⁸



Knowledge Gaps

- What mechanisms will enable more robust and purposeful data collection, better evidence, more analysis, and wider sharing between partners?³⁹
- How do other government offices and agencies perceive the role of OTIP in the anti-trafficking space in relation to their own?
- Does the private sector understand OTIP's mission and purpose well enough to communicate how collaboration could improve services to the anti-trafficking community?
- Do individual government agencies and offices know the nature and scope of relevant data that other agencies and offices have? What is the best way to share this information at a high level in order to initiate thinking about the utility and feasibility of information sharing?



Potential Learning Activities

- Scan of current government agency work, including agencies outside of HHS, to identify overlapping work, areas for collaboration, and gaps
- Scan of dissemination products from other ACF offices, with consideration of target audiences, to identify outlets for content-specific messaging
- Brief surveys or less formal check-in discussions with the HHS Task Force on Human Trafficking Prevention about specific task force collaboration challenges and successes
- Market research, including a survey of existing human trafficking public awareness and outreach materials developed by government and nongovernment organizations (ongoing, as part of the Look Beneath the Surface campaign refresh)



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- Other government offices and agencies engaged in anti-trafficking work
- HHS media and communications specialists
- Members of the HHS Task Force on Human Trafficking Prevention



How can OTIP's grant administration processes be adjusted to improve efficacy and equity?

- What training or ongoing technical assistance can be provided to project officers overseeing grant programs? In what ways could training or technical assistance improve grant administration and, in turn, better support programs and initiatives?
- In what ways could OTIP resources and supports (e.g., NHTTAC) build the capacity of organizations (especially those without prior OTIP funding) to submit an application to an OTIP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)?
- What is the extent of existing resources or models (across other HHS subagencies) of best practices in writing NOFOs that are inclusive of smaller organizations or those serving a diverse range of individuals across diverse settings?



Relevant Evidence

- OTIP staff identified a need for grant administration training, specifically about managing grant amendments and conducting site visits.
- Some agencies providing grant funding have established a mentor model in which seasoned service providers help smaller or new service provider agencies to navigate the grant application process.
- For some agency representatives, the bureaucracy and administrative requirements for even responding to an OTIP NOFO are prohibitive, and they would not even consider applying.⁴



Knowledge Gaps

- Organizations that lack adequate technology resources struggle to compete with more technologically sophisticated organizations.⁴⁰ How can this issue be addressed?
- What are the specific pain points in applying for federal grants? What specific aspects of the process deter organizations from applying (e.g., initial business registration, data collection to inform program justification, proposal writing, partnership formation)?
- What are the best practices to engage smaller organizations?
- With what specific grant administration tasks would project officers overseeing grant programs like support? Could any tasks, such as administrative tasks, be managed by a third-party staff person who would standardize grant management and administration practice and ease the burden for project officers?



Potential Learning Activities

- Explore existing mentor models aimed at assisting first-time grant applicants with the application process.
- To better understand the barriers to application, conduct focus groups with leaders from organizations—including those that are survivor led—that have not applied for OTIP funding.
- Create a best practices guide for managing grants specific to vulnerable or minority populations or both.



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- OTIP project officers overseeing grant programs
- Human Trafficking Leadership Academy
- U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking
- Trafficking training and technical assistance providers (e.g., NHTTAC, Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center)
- Survivor-led and survivor-centered community organizations
- Culturally specific organizations



Learning Question 9

What role should OTIP have within the broader anti-trafficking field?

- How can OTIP support and influence identified areas of current importance to the anti-human trafficking field, including topics such as housing and housing placements for youth who have experienced human trafficking, economic mobility, forced criminality, identifying and serving populations especially vulnerable to human trafficking (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning [LGBTQ+] individuals; Native communities; youth in the child welfare system); elevating the issue of the exploitation of men and boys; inaccurate and complicated data; prevalence; demand reduction; and labor trafficking in supply chains?
- How can OTIP continue to encourage a public health approach to human trafficking in the United States? How can this framework coexist with a criminal justice approach, especially with regard to prevention, public awareness, and response?
- What is OTIP's role, if any, in responding to various ideological factions within the anti-trafficking field (e.g., the debate around legalization or decriminalization)? Within what boundaries should OTIP (or any other government agency or office) navigate tensions in the field?



Relevant Evidence

- OTIP is a source of information for individuals representing a number of systems critical to the response to human trafficking, including child-serving agencies, those in the medical community, and those in public health.
- Public and even relevant professional perspectives on what human trafficking “looks like” continue to be narrow in scope and misaligned with much of the reality of human trafficking.
- An effective partnership between the public health and criminal justice system includes “providing support for all victims of trafficking without the condition of involvement in the criminal-justice system.”⁴¹



Knowledge Gaps

- Research on how a public health and criminal justice framework can coexist in the anti-trafficking field.
- What would it take for the field to recognize labor trafficking of minors as a form of child abuse? Are our child welfare systems prepared to provide a functional and meaningful response to this form of victimization?³
- How can OTIP broaden the scope of the public's understanding of what human trafficking exploitation can look like for adults?
- How open is the criminal justice field to the principles of a public health approach to human trafficking?
- Some law enforcement professionals have significant experience working on human trafficking cases. Is there a difference in the understanding and adoption of a public health approach to addressing human trafficking between them and their agency leaders?
- How do other government agencies and offices navigate ideological disagreements relevant to their work (e.g., vaccine safety, gun rights), and are there any lessons that can be applied to navigating such issues in the anti-trafficking field?



Potential Learning Activities

- Hold a working session with law enforcement professionals with significant case response experience with both sex trafficking and labor trafficking to learn about institutional and cultural challenges they face in implementing principles of a public health approach in their day-to-day practice.
- Compare the objectives of law enforcement professionals tasked with addressing human trafficking with those of public health professionals.
- Conduct a scoping review of literature on the public health approach to preventing sex trafficking perpetration (ongoing).
- Explore how a public health approach can inform criminal justice practices through funding specific research projects (ongoing).
- Seek advice from staff from other HHS subagencies and offices about how they navigate difficult or turbulent issues resulting in ideological factions in their fields of work.



Potential Professionals and Experts to Engage

- Law enforcement professionals with significant case response experience with both sex trafficking and labor trafficking
- Leadership and staff from other HHS subagencies and offices

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