Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

https://www.vera.org/publications/out-of-the-shadows-identification-of-victims-of-human-trafficking

Policy Isssue Resources

Publication

The landmark Trafficking Victims Protection Act made trafficking in persons a federal crime in 2000, but the greatest obstacle to rescuing victims of human trafficking is identifying them. To make this task easierand subsequently, get people the services and support they need while also generating evidence against their traffickersVera created and validated a screening tool to be used by victim service providers and law enforcement when faced with someone who may be a victim of sex or labor trafficking. The tool, a 30-topic questionnaire that was tested by service providers across the U.S., is the result of a two-year study funded by the National Institute of Justice. It is available at no cost and no permission is required.

This tool gives legal, health care and social service providers, law enforcement, and other professionals the ability to bring trafficking victims out of the shadows and improve their legal and social outcomes.

Vera has been working since 2006 to research and develop reliable and effective practices for identifying trafficking victims; this is the first trafficking victim identification tool to be statistically validated in the United States.

While every state has enacted anti-trafficking legislation, only a small fraction of trafficking victims have been identified because victims are commonly hidden and living in fear.

The screening tool may be used in either its full form or in a briefer 16-question version. The two versions, available in both English and Spanish, may also be used in succession at separate times, such as initial intake (short version) and deeper investigation once the victim is more comfortable

NEWS

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