



Civil Rights Department

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As Part of National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, Civil Rights Department Highlights New Resource to Support Survivors

Under California law, survivors of human trafficking may be able to obtain civil relief through direct legal action or by filing a complaint with the Civil Rights Department

SACRAMENTO – As part of National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, the California Civil Rights Department (CRD) today [released new guidance](#) on existing civil rights protections against human trafficking. Human trafficking refers to the exploitation for profit of another person by compelling them to perform labor or engage in commercial sex through force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking violates both civil and criminal laws. Under the California Trafficking Victims Protection Act, CRD is authorized to investigate and prosecute civil complaints of human trafficking.

“Not only is human trafficking a crime, but it is a violation of your civil rights,” said **CRD Director Kevin Kish**. “Whether it’s through legal action or services provided at the community level, California employs a wide range of tools to combat human trafficking and support survivors. I encourage anyone who has been impacted by human trafficking to read our new FAQ and learn how our department can help. Under California law, everyone is protected from human trafficking, regardless of their immigration status.”

California law provides for robust protections against human trafficking both in the civil and criminal contexts. Criminal cases — which may result in a prison sentence or other forms of punishment against someone engaged in trafficking — are typically investigated and prosecuted by local law enforcement. In the civil context, CRD may independently receive, investigate, mediate, and prosecute civil complaints, which can result in relief that is specifically targeted to supporting survivors. Under California law, survivors of human trafficking may be able to obtain civil relief — including monetary compensation — through direct legal action or by filing a complaint with CRD. Anyone in California is protected from human trafficking and may file a complaint, regardless of immigration status. Survivors of human trafficking may also be eligible for a U or T visa from the federal government, which permits crime victims to remain in or enter the United States to assist with the investigation or prosecution of a crime. CRD can assist in the certification of U or T visa requests for cases that fall under the department’s jurisdiction. In addition, undocumented human trafficking survivors may be eligible for deferred action from the federal government when they are also victims of employment or labor law violations.

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, there were more than 1,300 human trafficking cases reported to the hotline in California in 2021 — more than any other state in the nation.

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, there are numerous resources available to get support. In addition to filing a complaint with CRD, impacted individuals may want to consider reaching out to the following:

National Human Trafficking Hotline

- Online at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- Text 233-733 (Be Free)
- Call 1-888-373-7888

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking

- Online at <https://www.castla.org/>
- Call 1-888-539-2373

California Victim Compensation Board

- Online at <https://online.victims.ca.gov>
- Call 1-800-777-9229

General information about CRD's complaint process and how to file a complaint is available [here](#). Additional information regarding CRD's role in addressing human trafficking is available [here](#). The new FAQ announced today is available in English [here](#). It's also currently available in [Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Spanish](#), [Tagalog](#), and [Vietnamese](#).

For individuals who are in imminent danger or who want to report a crime to law enforcement, please call 911.

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The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. CRD's mission is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state-fund programs and activities, and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit civildrights.ca.gov.

