



Presentation to
Joint Interim Committee to
Study Human Trafficking:
International Victims of Trafficking

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- In 1991, the Texas Legislature created the Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) to distribute federal funds available through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Refugee Act of 1980.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides funding to Texas for the Refugee Resettlement Program to OIRA, which operates within the Health and Human Services Commission.

- The Health and Human Services Commission's Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is the single point of contact for Refugee-funded services and benefits in Texas.
 - Certified international trafficking victims and international unaccompanied trafficked minors are eligible for these services to the same extent as refugees.
- OIRA administers federal funding that supports public/private partnerships located in nine primary resettlement areas:
 - Abilene, Amarillo, Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio

Refugee v. International Victim of Trafficking

- A refugee is a person living outside their country of origin who cannot return to their home due to fear of persecution based on their race, religion, or membership in a particular social/political group.
- An international victim of trafficking is someone who has been forced through abduction, the use of threat, deception, fraud, or sale for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labor.
 - Unlike Domestic Victims of Trafficking, these individuals are not US citizens and must seek legal remedy to remain in the United States when they are rescued.

- The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) directs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement to:
 - Identify and assist international trafficking victims.
 - Issue “certification” and “eligibility” letters for adult and child victims, respectively, that allow them to receive services and benefits.
- ORR funds the State Refugee Coordinator's office to provide federally-funded refugee programs.
 - 50 adult victims and 44 minor victims received services in Texas in 2013.

Refugee Benefits for Certified Victims

- ORR-certified international trafficking victims are potentially eligible for federally-funded benefits and services to the same extent as refugees, including:
 - Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, or Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Refugee Social Service Programs - Employment, Education, and Case Management
- Domestic victims of trafficking are not eligible for federally-funded refugee-related assistance programs.
 - As US citizens, domestic victims may be eligible for Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, and TANF programs if they meet program requirements.

Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URM)

- OIRA provides \$6 million to the Department of Family and Protective Services to fund two URM programs in Fort Worth and Houston.
- These programs:
 - Help refugee children from overseas, children granted asylum, trafficked minors, and unaccompanied alien children who are granted Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.
 - Establish legal responsibility and custody in accordance with applicable state laws.

- HB 1272 adds duties to the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force; including a requirement to develop:
 - Key indicators to help identify a victim of trafficking
 - Standardized training curriculum for HHSC and DFPS staff, and medical and school professionals
- The Office of the Attorney General (AG) is leading the development of the indicators and the training with input from various Task Force members, including HHSC.