



Supporting Anti-Trafficking Efforts in Maine:

Volunteer opportunities for organizations & groups who want to join anti-trafficking efforts in their communities

Human trafficking is a complex issue that requires a community-wide response. If you are a community-based group interested in being a part of these efforts, here are some recommendations for how to contribute in a meaningful way to work that is currently happening here in Maine.



Educate Yourself

Before hosting an awareness night or starting a fundraiser, do some homework on the issue to learn what is happening in Maine and the basic dynamics of human trafficking. Resources for that include:

- [Human Trafficking in Maine: Identification and Response Training](#): Maine's local multidisciplinary anti-trafficking teams offer a statewide victim-centered and empowerment-based training, and include interactive, skills-building sessions informed by Maine-based expertise and resources. You can request a training for your agency or group through this site.
- [Sex Trafficking in Maine Video Series](#) and the first [Maine Human Trafficking Needs Assessment](#) (both found at mainesten.org)
- Labor Trafficking in the United States: Visit the Polaris website for additional resources.
- Reach out to your local anti-trafficking team to find out the needs are specific to your community and what next-steps they would recommend. Email info@mecasa.org for contact information.



Volunteering Intervention

Since there are very few trafficking-specific organizations in Maine and many confidentiality and safety concerns, the opportunities to work directly with survivors are few. That said, every domestic violence

resource center and sexual assault support center in Maine works with survivors of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation and many immigrant serving organization works with individuals vulnerable to labor exploitation and/or trafficking. They may be seeking volunteers for their hotlines, but also might have internships or placements for college students. While this may not be exclusively anti-trafficking work, the issues and root causes intersect.

Prevention

Many factors lead can increase an individual's vulnerability to trafficking, such as child sexual abuse, family trauma, poverty, political or social unrest and lack of economic opportunities and lack of a support system. Agencies and programs that work to alleviate these vulnerabilities, like mentoring and supporting at-risk youth, are preventative in nature. Volunteering as a mentor or at drop-in centers with homeless and street involved youth or with New Mainer communities are trafficking prevention efforts.

Administrative

The Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Network and many other local providers in our network can often use administrative support to keep contact lists updated, edit the website, keep track of volunteer requests and layout e-newsletters.

Reach out to info@mecasa.org to be connected with any of these organizations in your area.



Fundraising

Survivors of human trafficking and commercial sex exploitation experience an almost total loss of financial, educational, physical, and emotional autonomy. Individuals engaged in trafficking are treated as a commodity or property, and are often reliant on their trafficker, an employer, or an intimate partner to meet their basic needs. They may have limited or no access to the money that they earn; as a result, their ability to forge an independent, safe, and self-reliant life is severely undermined. Maine currently has limited specialized resources to meet these needs.

Monetary donations

Currently there are two statewide funds available to all service providers and law enforcement working with victims of human trafficking. One is the [Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Network Victim Support Fund](#). This fund can be used by any victim of human trafficking and/or exploitation for the purposes of safety and/or stability. For more information on the Victim Support Fund and how to make donations contact info@mecasa.org.

If you choose to host an event to raise money reach out to your local providers for input on how they would like to be involved with the event. Consult the [Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Media Guide](#) when creating your event invitations and outreach materials.

Donations of goods

Below is a list of needs identified by local service providers working with victims of human trafficking. A donations drive would be a great way to meets the needs of some victims.

- Phone cards (Straight Talk, TracFone)
- Grocery gift cards (Hannaford, Shaw's)

- Walmart gift cards
- Bus pass cards (10 ride cards since they can be used month to month)
- First Aid supplies (Band-Aids, antibiotic ointment, sunscreen, chapstick, gloves, etc.)
- Toiletries (nail clippers, tweezers, toothbrushes, shampoo, soap, razors, etc.)
- Underwear and bras
- Personal hygiene products (tampons, pads, wipes, etc.)
- Makeup
- Bags (backpack, large tote, etc. For women who are in shelter, this is huge for helping them stay organized/keep their things safe.)
- Winter Accessories (hats, scarves, gloves)
- Organizational tools (monthly planners, calendars, notebooks, etc.)

Local agencies doing anti-trafficking work would welcome monetary and donations of goods directly. Contact the chair of the anti-trafficking multidisciplinary team in your area to be connected to local providers. You can find their information on mainesten.org or reach out directly at info@mecasa.org.



Raising Awareness

Human trafficking is an easily sensationalized topic and its connection to basic vulnerabilities like poverty, lack of economic opportunity, unstable housing, non-permanent immigration status, previous trauma or child sexual abuse and other forms of oppression (like sexism, gender identity and racism) can be overlooked. Below are some recommended formats to raise awareness in your community, and to start conversations about what human trafficking looks like here in Maine and what we all can do to address it.

Awareness Events

We recommend consulting with local providers and survivors when planning an awareness program. They may offer training that you could incorporate into your event, but also offer feedback on what sort of awareness efforts would be supportive of current work happening in Maine.

Screening of a film followed by a panel discussion is one way to have a conversation about human trafficking in Maine. We recommend films that discuss how human trafficking looks in the United States and then extending the conversation to what it may look like in Maine, what resources are available to victims and how we can all be part of the solution.

- [Very Young Girls](#) (free online)—sex trafficking and exploitation.
The film takes you into the work of a former sexually exploited youth-turned-activist named Rachel Lloyd, who started the New York City organization GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services) to help victimized young women escape their pimps and find another way of life. You meet teen aged girls at different stages of this transition.
- [Food Chains](#)—labor trafficking and exploitation.
There is more interest in food these days than ever, yet there is very little interest in the hands that pick it. Farmworkers, the foundation of our fresh food industry, are routinely abused and robbed of wages. In extreme cases they can be beaten, sexually harassed or even enslaved – all within the borders of the United States.

Possible panel participants: Members of the local anti-trafficking multidisciplinary team (service providers,

law enforcement and medical providers), people involved in faith-based anti-trafficking efforts, professors who specialize in human trafficking or an intersecting topics like sociology or women and gender studies, advocates within immigrant and refugee communities, survivors*.

Possible panel questions (you could use this after a movie screening or as a stand-alone panel):

1. What is your role in responding to human trafficking in Maine?
2. What do you want the community to know about human trafficking in Maine?
3. What vulnerabilities did traffickers and/or employers exploit in order to trap people in an exploitive situation?
4. What tactics did traffickers and/or employers use to keep people in their exploitive situations?
5. What resources do people need during or after trafficking and exploitation?
6. What role can community members play in supporting victim/survivors and anti-trafficking efforts?

*Survivors play a key role in elevating understanding and awareness of human trafficking, improving service delivery, and informing policy. If survivors are part of your awareness events, they should be playing the role of expert in the response to trafficking and not just there to tell their story of exploitation. As such, offer to pay for their time and transportation costs.

Visit mainesten.org or email info@mecasa.org for contact information for local providers.

Outreach materials

Identifying victims of human trafficking victims and letting them know there are services and support available is a large part of awareness building. The Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Network and the Blue Campaign have outreach materials that you could distribute throughout your community. In collaboration with your local service providers place posters or palm cards in locations like family planning and medical clinics, churches, community centers, WIC/GA offices, laundromats, local coffee shops and cafes and nail salons. Contact info@mecasa.org or the [Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign](#).

