

UNDERSTANDING THE DEFINITION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING:  
THE ACTION-MEANS-PURPOSE MODEL

**TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT (2000)**

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 is the first comprehensive federal law to address human trafficking. The TVPA addressed existing gaps in the legal framework by creating new criminal offenses and establishing victim protections. The law created a three-pronged approach of prevention, protection, and prosecution. For more information about the TVPA and subsequent reauthorizations, please visit <http://www.polarisproject.org/resources/state-and-federal-laws>.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts or labor or services against his or her will. It is not necessary to demonstrate the use of force, fraud and coercion when a minor is induced into commercial sex. Victims of human trafficking may be men, women, children, foreign nationals, and U.S. citizens. It is a form of modern-day slavery and is present in the United States.

Common terms that are often associated with or interchanged with human trafficking include: trafficking in persons, labor trafficking, sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, modern-day slavery, contemporary slavery, and forced labor.

**THE A-M-P MODEL**

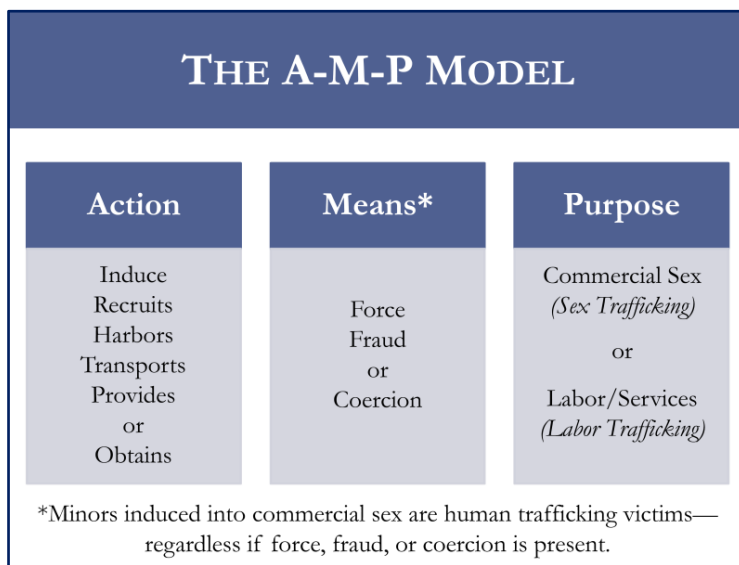
The Action-Means-Purpose (AMP) Model is a device used to illustrate and articulate the federal definition of a “victim of severe forms of trafficking in persons,” contained in [22 USC §7102\(8\)](#). For the corresponding criminal offenses, see [18 USC Chapter 77](#).

Human trafficking occurs when a perpetrator, often referred to as a trafficker, takes any one of the enumerated **Actions**, and then employs the **Means** of force, fraud or coercion for the **Purpose** of compelling the victim to provide commercial sex acts or labor or services.

At a minimum, one element from each column must be present to establish a potential situation of human trafficking. The presence of force, fraud or coercion indicates that the victim has not consented of his or her own free will.

Remember that under federal law, any minor under the age of 18 years induced into commercial sex is considered to be a victim of sex trafficking—regardless of any indicators of force, fraud, or coercion.

Action + Means + Purpose = Human Trafficking



For additional resources on human trafficking, please visit:  
<http://www.polarisproject.org/resources/resources-by-topic/human-trafficking>.