



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office on Trafficking in Persons | 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20201
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/endtrafficking

Dear Grantees,

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) is monitoring the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation, and is aware of the impact it may have on your program operations and the populations you serve. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to plague our Nation and the world, OTIP remains steadfast in our determination to support your efforts to combat human trafficking and help survivors attain independence and stability. The health and well-being of individuals who have experienced human trafficking, and that of service providers working during this time, is of utmost importance to us.

I am writing to keep you informed about the work that we are doing to help ensure every program has access to information and resources during this critical time, including pandemic-specific policies and flexibilities through our programs and training and technical assistance. We have heard from survivors, advocates, program administrators, and national stakeholders. They have shared their challenges, despair, and successes in the midst of this unprecedented time.

We recognize the impact of COVID-19 on survivors, advocates, frontline responders, and grantees and the communities they serve. Many are experiencing financial difficulties, health crises, and uncertainty about the future. We have been working to identify ways that we can best assist you, your staff, and your clients as you work to serve survivors and help others avoid becoming victims of sex and labor trafficking by those who might take advantage of current circumstances.

OTIP has taken the following actions to support your steadfast efforts to maintain your program operations and the vital services they deliver:

- The **National Human Trafficking Hotline** successfully transitioned to full remote operations with no disruption in services and onboarded 15 new staff. The Hotline has found creative solutions for individuals in lockdown areas through partnerships with the business community. For example, the Hotline facilitated the transport of an individual from California to Texas to secure shelter. In another case, the Hotline worked with private partners to secure a hotel stay for an individual requiring two-week quarantine before they could be admitted to a shelter.
- The **National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center** shifted training and technical assistance response to remote sessions and minimized disruptions to financial support of survivor consultants employed during the public health crisis.
- OTIP has had **contact with government and non-government organizations** in more than 20 states to understand the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery and on the market dynamics of human trafficking. These consultations have informed [our list of website](#)

[resources](#). We will soon release new information briefs offering tips to address remote case management and locate shelter and housing needs tailored to survivors.

- OTIP, in partnership with the DOJ Office for Victims of Crime, launched a **4-part [webinar series on child trafficking](#)** during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April that included discussions about the impact of COVID-19 on this vulnerable population.
- OTIP has **spoken with grantees to assess their unmet needs**. OTIP is determining how best to address these needs, and we will notify grantees of available funding flexibilities.
- OTIP has reviewed the **flexibilities authorized by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and 2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards** to relieve short-term administrative, financial management, and audit requirements for grant recipients whose operations have been adversely affected by COVID-19. We have determined that direct service costs related to emergency services, including rental and/or utility assistance, child care, gift cards to cover basic necessities (e.g., food and clothing) may be covered, unless otherwise specified by your grant.

Grant-related flexibilities are time limited and are only applicable for awards that support services necessary to carry out additional expenses required to fulfill grant activities due to COVID-19 during the period specified in the HHS [Public Health Emergency Declaration](#). OTIP has prepared a list of frequently asked questions and answers to clarify how OMB guidance applies to OTIP-funded programs and to identify promising practices that grantees across ACF programs have shared with us. If you have questions about the flexibilities and their applicability to your grant, please contact your OTIP Project Officer or your Grants Management Specialist.

Our partners at HHS continue to work closely with state, local, tribal, territorial, and public health professionals across the nation and world to respond to COVID-19. The HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is updating guidance about how to protect you and those you serve from COVID-19. We urge you to stay informed by visiting the [CDC website](#), and to share this information with your staff, service providers, and community partners. Also, we encourage you to visit the [OTIP website](#) to find information and resources related to COVID-19 and its effect on stakeholders, caregivers, and survivors of human trafficking.

As always, we value our partnership with you.

With appreciation,



Katherine Chon, Director
Office on Trafficking in Persons