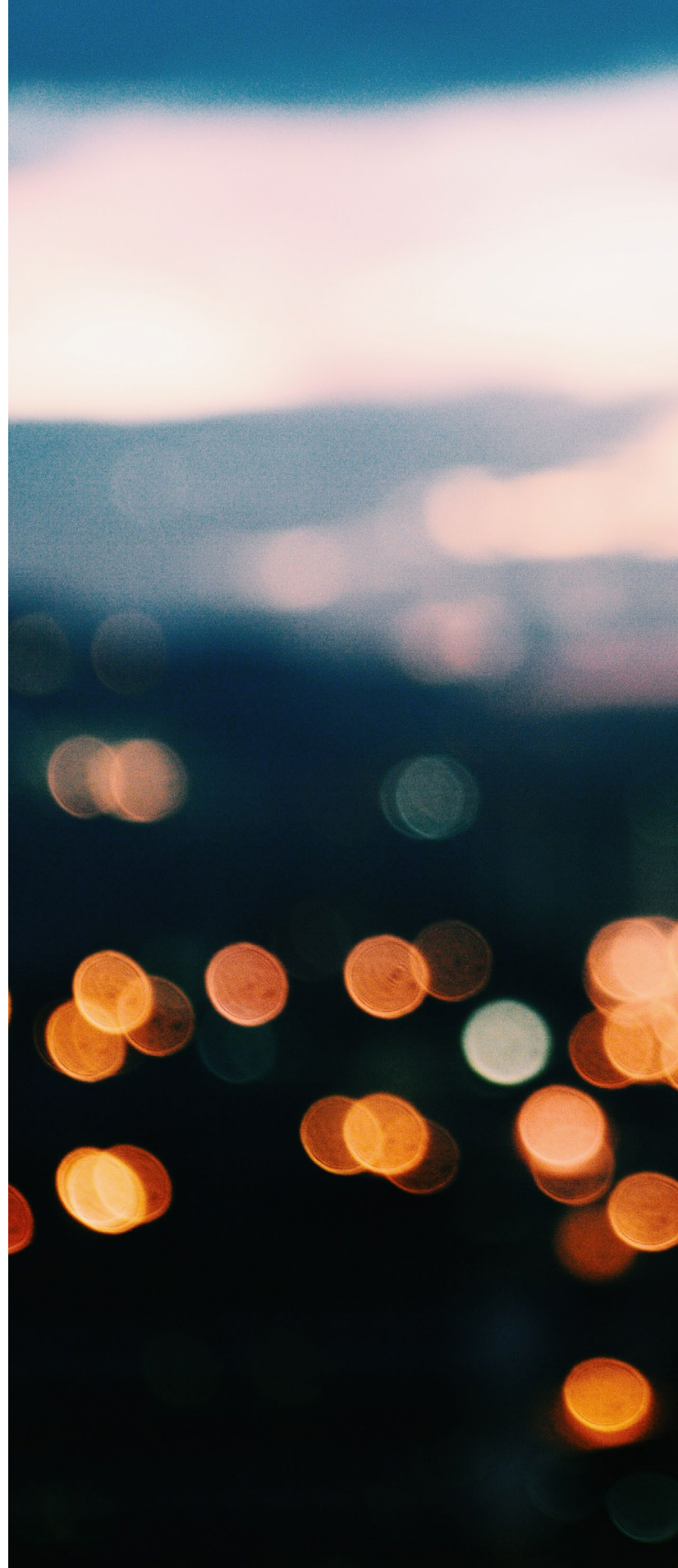




**NORTH CAROLINA
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
COMMISSION**



STANDARDS OF SERVICE

The North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission provides these Standards for the purpose of defining the values and expectations that should guide professional conduct and service provision for any organization in our state that works with victims / survivors of human trafficking.

North Carolina General Statute § 14-43.11 defines human trafficking as follows: “A person commits the offense of human trafficking when that person (i) knowingly or in reckless disregard of the consequences of the action recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, or obtains by any means another person with the intent that the other person be held in involuntary servitude or sexual servitude or (ii) willfully or in reckless disregard of the consequences of the action causes a minor to be held in involuntary servitude or sexual servitude.”

The philosophy underlying the guidance in this document is “first, do no harm.” For the purpose of this document, “human trafficking” refers to all forms of labor and sex trafficking, adult or child trafficking, and trafficking of foreign-born or domestic-born victims. The crime of human trafficking is complex, taking on many different forms, happening in very different environments, and involving a broad range of people as victims, traffickers, or everyday citizens engaged in their communities. The needs of survivors of human trafficking are complex as well, in terms of both immediate intervention and long-term recovery.

Just as every survivor presents a unique set of circumstances for response, every community has its own set of assets and challenges that should be considered when designing services or interventions.

The Standards of Service are organized into two sections: “Foundational Standards” apply to any organization providing any type of service or direct outreach to victims / survivors of human trafficking. “Service Area Standards” are intended to provide additional guidance related to specific types of programs. The emphasis is on the unique vulnerabilities, needs, and interests of victims / survivors of human trafficking as it relates to that service.

FOR ALL STANDARDS:

- **“Does Not Meet Standard”** describes practices that are inadequate, thereby presenting risks to the people who might seek or receive services.
- **“Meets Standards”** is recognized as the minimum standard of operation ensuring the delivery of safe, effective, victim-centered services.
- **“Exceeds Standards”** offers useful practices, in addition to those expressed by “Meets Standards,” that enhance or expand the quality and delivery of services.

THE STANDARDS OF SERVICE ARE INTENDED TO BE USED FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

- To help service providers design and strengthen their programs.
- To provide the public reassurance of programmatic quality.
- To provide objective criteria for the Human Trafficking Commission, and others, in vetting service providers for referrals, funding decisions, or other processes in which the quality of services should be considered.

The Standards of Service uses the term “victim / survivor” to refer to someone who has been trafficked in sex and / or labor settings. Historically, the term “victim” is commonly used in the context of criminal justice. Throughout this document, the term “victim” may be used in this context, or to refer to someone who is still in the trafficking situation. The term “survivor” may be used to refer to people who have exited the trafficking situation. However, we recognize that people who are living in trafficking situations are in fact survivors, as they are surviving each day through their strength and determination. Additionally, each survivor’s journey is individualized and unlikely to fit into these simple categories. The best way to determine how to refer to a person impacted by human trafficking is to ask their preference.



INDEX

Section I: Foundational Standards

External Authority	
1	Codes of Conduct / Ethics
2	Governmental Expectations
3	Staffing
Organizational Operations	
4	Policies and Procedures
5	Culturally Humble, Trauma-Informed Services
6	Input from People with Lived Experience of Trafficking
7	Faith-Based Expression and Practices
8	Organizational Assessment
Confidentiality, Privacy, Security	
9	Privacy
10	Media and Publicity
11	Confidentiality
12	Informed Consent
13	Health and Safety
14	Professional Boundaries
15	Data Security
Staff, Volunteers, and Interns	
16	Background Checks
17	Exceptions
18	Training
19	Job Descriptions
20	Supervision
21	Self-Care and Secondary Trauma
22	Professional Development
Interactions with Service Recipients	
23	Referrals
24	Data Collection
25	Communication
26	Multi-Disciplinary Approach



INDEX

Section II: Service Area Standards

Service Area 1: 24-Hour Hotline	
27	Response to Inquiries
28	Operations Protocol
29	Timely Response
30	Mandatory Reporting
31	Supervision and Support
32	Hotline Coverage
Service Area 2: Crisis Response	
33	Immediate Assistance
34	Safety Assessment
35	Providing Resources and / or Referrals
36	Exit from Trafficking Situation
37	Temporary Shelter
38	Basic Needs
39	Comprehensive Services
40	Minors
Service Area 3: Case Management	
41	Survivor-Centered Approach
42	Needs Assessment
43	Individualized Service Plan
44	Advocacy
Service Area 4: Survivor Peer Support	
45	Selection
46	Training and Support
Service Area 5: Shelter and Housing	
47	Case Management
48	Emergency Shelter Staffing
49	Safe Facilities
50	Transparent Guidelines
51	Intake Paperwork
52	Financial Benefit
53	Transportation Services
54	Housing Minors



SECTION I: FOUNDATIONAL STANDARDS

Foundational Standards apply to any type of public or private organization that provides services to victims / survivors of human trafficking. Organizations that meet these expectations are considered to be exercising due diligence to ensure their services are (1) informed about the unique dynamics associated with human trafficking, (2) operated according to the professional standards of their fields and organizational structures, and (3) structured to “do no harm” to the people associated with it.

EXTERNAL AUTHORITY	
Standard 1: Codes of Conduct / Ethics	
The organization adheres to appropriate code(s) of conduct / ethics as evidenced in organizational records.	
Exceeds Standard	The organizational code of conduct policy / ethics has been approved by the board of directors and is part of the onboarding process for new employees, board members, and volunteers.
Meets Standard	The organization can document its adherence to the codes of conduct / ethics related to its field of service and the professional identities of staff. The organization has and can provide a code of conduct policy / ethics.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is not connected with or oriented to professional or organizational codes of conduct / ethics. The organization cannot demonstrate through documentation of adherence to professional or organizational codes of conduct / ethics.
Standard 2: Governmental Expectations	
The organization is expected to adhere to local, state, and federal government expectations as set forth in ordinances, codes, and laws.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization posts the codes, laws, and policies protecting victim-survivor rights. Material is posted in a common space to which victim-survivors have access.
Meets Standard	The organization complies with applicable federal, state, and local ordinances, codes, and laws. If shortcomings are identified, the organization implements a correction plan.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is unaware of or does not consistently adhere to ordinances, codes, and laws that affect their operations. Inspections or reviews by external authorities document shortcomings.



<p>Standard 3: Staffing</p> <p>The organization must demonstrate how its staffing structure adheres to state or federal professional expectations and standards of care that relate to its field of service delivery.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization can demonstrate how it exceeds state or federal expectations for staff or how it is proactive in designing and sustaining its staffing plan.
Meets Standard	The organization complies with state or federal expectations for staffing ratios and for staff professional degrees, licenses, and credentials. If shortcomings are identified by authorities, the organization implements a correction plan.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is unaware of, does not consistently adhere to, cannot provide documentation of, or disregards professional standards or staffing expectations that relate to its field of service delivery.
<p>ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS</p>	
<p>Standard 4: Policies and Procedures</p> <p>The organization maintains policies and procedures that relate to all aspects of service delivery, administration, and personnel management.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization engages in periodic and proactive updates to its policies and procedures and documents how it reviews and shares those updates with service recipients, staff, volunteers, interns, and any relevant community stakeholders. The organization creates a review team or process that contains multiple perspectives from across programs, roles, and functions to consider and recommend updates.
Meets Standard	The organization’s policies are easily accessible and share all relevant information related to its purpose, programs, administrative oversight, and personnel management. The organization applies those policies and procedures consistently.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is inconsistent in creating, updating, and / or training on its policies and procedures.



<p>Standard 5: Culturally Humble, Trauma-Informed Services The organization operates using culturally humble, trauma-informed protocols.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization contributes to promising practices in the field by sharing its resources and learning with other organizations. The organization is consistent in using the preferred vocabulary or terms that relate to the gender identity, race, heritage, and / or culture of the victim / survivor.
Meets Standard	The organization can provide evidence of culturally humble, trauma-informed materials, training opportunities, and protocols for service delivery. The organization attempts to consistently respect vocabulary or terms that relate to the gender identity, race, heritage, and culture of the victim / survivor.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization has inconsistent or no evidence of culturally humble, trauma-informed outreach materials, training opportunities, or protocols for service delivery. The organization does not respect or is inconsistent in respecting vocabulary or terms that relate to the gender identity, race, heritage, or culture of the victim / survivor.
<p>Standard 6: Input from People with Lived Experience of Trafficking The organization seeks, considers, and implements, where appropriate, survivor input in decision-making, program design, service delivery, and program evaluation.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization has formal roles and processes defined for seeking, considering, and implementing survivor input and can document the outcomes generated from the input.
Meets Standard	The organization documents its processes for seeking, considering, and implementing survivor input.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization rarely or never takes survivor input into account and does not have a process for doing so.



<p>Standard 7: Faith-Based Expression and Practices The organization shall not require victim / survivors to participate in or attend religious services or other forms of faith-based expression.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization empowers victims / survivors to define, change, and control their preferences for any form or degree of religious service or expression and makes a reasonable effort to support their choices.
Meets Standard	If the organization accepts or solicits funds that prohibit religious requirements for program participants, then it enables victims / survivors to choose whether to participate in or opt out of all religious services or expressions. Or, the organization operates solely off unrestricted funds and if requiring religious participation from victim-survivors, the organization’s website, program flyers, intake forms, interviews, and client manuals reflect detailed expectations for the program; they are proactive in communicating the religious requirements widely.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not fully explain its religious expectations to potential service recipients and partner agencies. The organization receives or solicits funds that do not allow religious requirements, but then either passively or actively expects victims / survivors to participate in religious services or expressions. The organization discontinues program services to victims / survivors who choose not to participate in religious services or expressions.
<p>Standard 8: Organizational Assessment The organization periodically assesses the success of its programs, administration, and board oversight, then implements changes to strengthen operational functions as needed.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization regularly conducts formal evaluation processes of its programs, services, and administrative practices. The review process incorporates opportunities to provide input across all levels of the organization and is managed by an inclusive team.
Meets Standard	The organization regularly takes time to reflect on and improve its programs, services, and administrative practices. Multiple people in various roles participate in the review process.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization never or rarely initiates assessment, evaluation, or improvement processes. Participation in the review process is limited to a few people.



CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVACY, SECURITY

Standard 9: Privacy

The organization protects the privacy, stories, and communication with or about victims / survivors.

Exceeds Standard	The organization employs a policy that prohibits sharing personal stories, images, or other information until the victims / survivors have been out of the program at least one year and have signed current consent forms.
Meets Standard	The organization can demonstrate the practice of policies related to privacy. The policies and practice are consistent with professional codes of conduct / ethics. Information about or photos of victims / survivors are not shared through social media without careful consideration and written informed consent, voluntarily signed by the service recipient. The organization does not lessen or withhold services or benefits if service recipients refuse to provide consent.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not have policies protecting client privacy. Violations of policies and practices occur. Photos and information about victims / survivors are shared without written consent through social media by staff, volunteers, or interns. Visitors to the organization or facilities might gain information about service recipients and visitors are not required to sign confidentiality forms. The organization does not provide notification of visits or seek consent from victims / survivors when entering their personal living space.

Standard 10: Media and Publicity The organization practices and encourages responsible media coverage and publicity on human trafficking.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization includes information about responsible reporting in replies to media inquiries, provides media with original or credited photos or illustrations that do not stereotype or misrepresent the issue of trafficking, educates reporters about responsible reporting and tips for interviewing survivors, and acts proactively to prepare media response when major events happen. The organization provides access to media training for those who participate in interviews or presentations.
Meets Standard	The organization’s website includes basic, factual information about trafficking, as well as links to related resources, for the purpose of informing responsible reporting. victims / survivors are not included or depicted in media contacts without informed consent and support. The organization has protocols for responding to media inquiries.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization shares inaccurate, stereotypical, or sensationalized information or images with the media; does not refer the media to anti-trafficking organizations that are better able to respond; and / or involves victims / survivors without consent, preparation, or support. The organization exerts influence to encourage victims / survivors to share their stories, be present for events, or represent the interests of the organization to the public or supporters. The organization does not have protocols to provide support for victims / survivors who do share their stories.
Standard 11: Confidentiality Staff, volunteers, interns, and board members sign confidentiality statements and protect the confidentiality of victims / survivors.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization renews these statements annually.
Meets Standard	<p>The organization maintains signed confidentiality statements on file for 100% of staff, volunteers, interns, and board members. All expectations about sharing information as required by mandatory reporting laws or with professional peers or family members of service recipients are clearly defined, explained, and followed.</p> <p>The organization has a policy that prohibits staff, volunteers, or interns from sharing information or taking photos involving victim / survivors or service delivery without proper consent.</p>
Does Not Meet Standard	Signed confidentiality statements are on file for less than 100% of staff, volunteers, interns, or board members that have access to victim / survivors or such information. Photos or information about clients or their situations is sometimes shared without their consent, online, in-person, or in writing. Mandatory reporting laws are not consistently explained.



<p>Standard 12: Informed Consent</p> <p>The organization obtains the written informed consent of victims / survivors prior to sharing information with external parties. In the case of minors, the organization adheres to expectations of information sharing as defined by judicial orders or legally defined authorities.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization periodically audits case files to ensure informed consent is correctly being documented and obtained.
Meets Standard	<p>Staff, volunteers, or interns obtain informed consent from victims / survivors prior to sharing identifying information about them with anyone outside the organization. For in-person contacts, the informed consent must be written and signed. For online or phone contacts, the informed consent may be obtained verbally and documented.</p> <p>The consent form and protocols clarify any limitations placed on providing or exchanging information with external parties, either during emergencies or in on-going communication and interactions. In the case of minors, the organization gains parental / legal guardian consent as required by law.</p>
Does Not Meet Standard	Staff, volunteers, or interns share identifying information inadvertently or deliberately about victims / survivors without their informed consent.
<p>Standard 13: Health and Safety</p> <p>The organization prioritizes the health, well-being, physical and personal safety of victims / survivors, staff, volunteers, and interns.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization periodically reviews safety measures and risks to further enhance overall health and safety.
Meets Standard	The organization discusses and builds reasonable safety measures into all intake, referral, planning, and intervention processes with victim / survivors, through delivery of programs and services or in interactions with community members. Safety planning is included in all protocols, including those related to staff interaction with victims / survivors.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not proactively address safety risks for victims / survivors, staff, volunteers, or interns and / or update safety plans when circumstances change.



Standard 14: Professional Boundaries The organization upholds appropriate professional boundaries in relationships and interactions.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization provides training that includes examples of potential pitfalls and consequences that may arise when appropriate professional boundaries are not maintained.
Meets Standard	The organization has policies that describe expectations related to uphold professional and sustainable boundaries of service. Staff, volunteers, and interns do not engage in personal relationships with service recipients and avoid the risk of exploiting professional trust or impairing the service provider’s objectivity and judgement.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not have policies describing appropriate professional boundaries. Violations of professional boundaries defined by professional codes of conduct / ethics occur.
Standard 15: Data Security The organization protects and securely stores confidential information and communication related to service recipients and personnel in both physical and online settings.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization documents and demonstrates risk management and security measures that protect physical and online records, communications, and meetings.
Meets Standard	The organization takes reasonable measures to protect the security of physical and online records, communications, and meetings.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not consistently and securely store physical or online records, communications, and meetings.



STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, AND INTERNS

Standard 16: Background Checks

The organization protects the safety of both service recipients and personnel by conducting criminal background checks by a Consumer Reporting Agency and by checking the National and North Carolina sex offender registries. All staff, volunteers, and interns who work with or near vulnerable populations or who will have access to confidential information about them, will be subject to a criminal background check. The organization checks the driving license report of any personnel who might transport service recipients, staff, volunteers, or interns.

Exceeds Standard	Criminal background, sex offender, and driver’s license checks are repeated every three years.
Meets Standard	Criminal background, sex offender registry, and driver’s license checks are conducted and filed for staff, volunteers, and interns, prior to beginning their service. No prior criminal activity or driving offenses relevant to current responsibilities in the organization are found. If criminal activity or driving offenses are found, any exceptions made are documented and comply with Standard 17 on Exceptions.
Does Not Meet Standard	Background checks are inconsistently completed of staff, volunteers, and interns. Background checks are conducted via internet search or other limited means rather than through a Consumer Reporting Agency.

Standard 17: Exceptions

Exceptions made with all background checks are supported by an analysis of the severity of the offense, additional subsequent acts, time-frame of the crime, compliance with sanctions, evidence of rehabilitation, relevance of the crime to current responsibilities and client population, and potential benefits by their participation in the organization.

Exceeds Standard	Those who might have direct access to victims / survivors or their information are held to a higher standard than those who support the program or organization in an off-site role.
Meets Standard	The organization has a policy and protocols in place for respectfully disclosing prior criminal convictions of staff, volunteers, or interns when doing so would inform the choice of potential service recipients or community members to engage with the program. The organization documents and applies the same rationale or policy for making an exception in the selection of staff, volunteers, and interns with prior criminal convictions. The organization has a written policy that applies to these decisions.



Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is inconsistent in applying and documenting the rationale for making an exception in the selection of staff, volunteers, and interns with prior criminal convictions. Conflicts of interest do not exist among those involved in approving the exception.
<p>Standard 18: Training</p> <p>Training for staff, volunteers, or interns who have direct client contact is continuously conducted, planned, and documented. Basic “human trafficking 101” training that addresses both sex and labor trafficking will be provided within 30 days for those new to the work. Additional training topics should be defined by best practices in the field, be planned and relevant to the position of the staff, volunteer, or intern.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	All staff, volunteers, and interns complete basic training within 30 days. The organization delivers or provides access to ongoing training on topics applicable to the roles of all staff, volunteers, and interns. Staff repeat or update their training every three years. The organization documents the content of and participation in training.
Meets Standard	All staff, volunteers, and interns who have direct client contact complete basic training within 30 days. The content and format of basic training is informed by current practices in the field and in alignment with the content of these Standards of Service. The organization documents the content of and participation in training.
Does Not Meet Standard	Training is either not provided or is inconsistently provided. Content and / or participation in training is not documented.
<p>Standard 19: Job Descriptions</p> <p>Staff, volunteers, and interns sign a formalized agreement, such as a job description or MOU, with the organization outlining the scope of their work, the training they are expected to undertake, the professional and ethical standards they are expected to uphold, and the support they will receive from the organization in fulfilling these expectations.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization documents how it assesses the responsibilities and potential risks of any position, as well as the support required to enable the success of staff, volunteers, and interns in conducting their work. Formalized work agreements are regularly updated to reflect changes to roles, the work environment, or promising practices in the field of service.



Meets Standard	The organization maintains signed agreements for staff, volunteers, and interns. Both the organization and the staff, volunteers, and interns uphold the expectations contained within the agreement. A written policy justifies any exceptions made to this practice when staff, volunteer, or intern opportunities are low risk, short-term, off-site, and / or have no contact with vulnerable populations.
Does Not Meet Standard	Signed job descriptions or MOUs are on file for less than 100% of staff, volunteers, or interns without a justifiable exception that adheres to written policy.
<p>Standard 20: Supervision Staff, volunteers, and interns who work directly with victims / survivors are supervised by qualified staff.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	All supervisory staff of direct service providers have degrees or certifications that enable them to support the professional work of others and uphold ethical / professional codes. All supervisory staff have options for and access to the support they need.
Meets Standard	Supervision is designed to provide consistent and appropriate guidance for the work assigned and enables continuous improvements for both personnel and the organization.
Does Not Meet Standard	Supervision is unplanned or risks violations of ethical / professional codes.
<p>Standard 21: Self-Care and Secondary Trauma The organization recognizes the importance of self-care and incorporates practices to avoid or minimize the impact of burnout and secondary trauma.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization’s policies and procedures build in paid, scheduled time for self-care on a regular basis and / or the organization provides paid counseling for staff on a regular basis.
Meets Standard	The organization can provide documentation that demonstrates regular discussion or resource sharing that encourages opportunities to engage in self-care practices at home and at work.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization has no discussion or documentation encouraging engagement in self-care practices at home and at work. The organization may actively discourage or stigmatize self-care.



Standard 22: Professional Development
 The organization provides staff opportunities for continued professional development.

Exceeds Standard	The organization budgets for, sets goals for, and schedules professional development for staff.
Meets Standard	The organization provides in-house training opportunities and / or supports staff in obtaining professional development on a regular basis.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not support staff in obtaining professional development.

INTERACTIONS WITH SERVICE RECIPIENTS

Standard 23: Referrals
 The organization makes and documents referrals for victims / survivors.

Exceeds Standard	The organization assesses the needs of victims / survivors and makes appropriate referrals for any service it cannot provide, then follows up to track the progress of the victim / survivor and engages in problem-solving as needed.
Meets Standard	The organization assesses the needs of victims / survivors and makes appropriate referrals for any service it cannot provide.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is unaware of available services, does not make appropriate referrals, or does not assess the needs of service recipients either at the initial or follow-up contacts.

Standard 24: Data Collection
 The organization documents all contacts with victims / survivors and keeps accurate data on services provided.

Exceeds Standard	The organization has a system for documenting client contacts, can provide summary reports of its activities, and uses that data to inform program planning.
Meets Standard	The organization has a system for documenting client contacts and can provide summary reports of its activities.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not document all client contacts and cannot provide summary reports of its activities.



<p>Standard 25: Communication</p> <p>The organization provides or coordinates verbal and written communication in the preferred language and format of the victim / survivor.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization prioritizes hiring qualified staff to enhance their ability to serve diverse populations within their communities.
Meets Standard	The organization has strategies in place for communicating in the languages that victims / survivors most frequently prefer and for communicating with those who are limited in sight or hearing. The organization communicates at the reading level and with the vocabulary that is appropriate for the person or audience receiving the information.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization denies service to or does not attempt to accommodate the communication needs of the victim / survivor. The responsibility of enabling successful communication falls primarily to the victim / survivor.
<p>Standard 26: Multi-Disciplinary Approach</p> <p>The organization works cooperatively with professional peers across disciplines to maximize the resources, skills, and authority available to serve victims / survivors.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization is a member of a local multi-disciplinary team that focuses on serving victims / survivors. Mutual understanding of roles, service expectations, and confidentiality are specified within a formal written agreement.
Meets Standard	The organization builds relationships with professional peers and uses a multi-disciplinary approach to providing services or problem-solving. The organization is aware of the range of complementary or supportive services offered by local, regional, or state professional peers and readily makes referrals when necessary.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is not fully aware of available complementary or supportive services, does not make an adequate effort to productively engage with professional peers, or disregards standards related to upholding confidentiality, obtaining written consent, or honoring the preferences of the service recipients.

SECTION II: SERVICE AREA STANDARDS

In addition to the 26 foundational standards that apply to all service providers, there are also standards that apply to the following specific areas of service delivery:

1. 24-Hour Hotline
2. Crisis Response
3. Case Management
4. Survivor Peer Support
5. Shelter and Housing

The intent of these standards is not to duplicate the body of knowledge, codes of ethics, or professional standards that apply to any of these service areas. Instead, the purpose is to define basic expectations and highlight practices that will enable the organization to better protect and serve victims / survivors of human trafficking.

Service Area 1: 24-Hour Hotline

Definition: Operation of a 24-hour service staffed by live trained responders who are available to link people with crisis / support services or information related to human trafficking.

Goal: To ensure that anyone seeking support or information can readily access it.

Standard 27: Response to Inquiries The organization provides support and assistance in accessing human trafficking related services or information.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization follows written protocols that describe how they respond to requests that are received outside of normal business hours for information, transport, or other services.
Meets Standard	The organization is able to provide or link the caller with support and assistance in accessing human trafficking related service/information, as evidenced by documentation.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is inconsistent in providing or documenting service provision related to human trafficking.
Standard 28: Operations Protocol The organization follows a written protocol for hotline operation.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization has a comprehensive manual that includes topics such as assessment of immediate danger, expectations on returning missed calls, putting calls on hold, etc.
Meets Standard	The organization can demonstrate that a protocol is used consistently and provide documentation on how staff, volunteers, and interns are trained on the protocol.
Does Not Meet Standard	No evidence that a protocol is in use. Service provision is inconsistent.



<p>Standard 29: Timely Response The organization offers prompt response to hotline inquiries.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization ensures and documents that all hotline contacts and inquiries receive an immediate response, no matter how they are received.
Meets Standard	The organization ensures all hotline contacts and inquiries are answered within 20 minutes, as evidenced by training protocols and documentation of response time.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is inconsistent about responding to hotline contacts and inquiries in a timely manner or does not follow up on all contacts.
<p>Standard 30: Mandatory Reporting Any reports of suspected trafficking, abuse, or neglect of a minor or vulnerable adult will be reported to law enforcement, Adult Protective Services, and / or Child Welfare within timeframes defined by law.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	Organization has a protocol for informing clients about mandatory reporting laws.
Meets Standard	The organization has written protocols that explain when and how mandated reports are to happen and be documented. The organization provides training on those protocols to staff, volunteers, and interns. The organization can produce documentation of mandated reports made.
Does Not Meet Standard	The mandated reporting does not happen, is not documented, or exceeds the response time required by law.
<p>Standard 31: Supervision and Support The organization holds regular meetings for hotline personnel to debrief calls, identify patterns within inquiries, and receive supervision and support.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization offers regular meetings to debrief and support staff, volunteers, and interns who serve on the hotline, as part of its service delivery, as evidenced by documentation. Immediate support and debriefing are offered as needed after unusually stressful or complex contacts.
Meets Standard	The organization can provide documentation that they support hotline personnel through efficient communication and meetings.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization cannot demonstrate how they offer regular support for hotline staff.



Standard 32: Hotline Coverage	
The organization’s hotline schedule indicates 24 / 7 coverage by trained staff, volunteers, or interns.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization schedules back-up support to assist the on-call person.
Meets Standard	The organization’s staffing schedule reflects consistent 24 / 7 coverage.
Does Not Meet Standard	There is no schedule for 24 / 7 coverage. Gaps in coverage are revealed by lack of response.

Service Area 2: Crisis Response

Definition: A service in which the organization responds 24 / 7 to direct requests for assistance related to potential human trafficking situations, based on a safety assessment.

Goal: To assist victims / survivors in determining their immediate needs, conducting safety planning, informing them of their resources, and making referrals. When requested by the victims / survivors, the organization assists them in leaving the trafficking situation and getting to safety.

Standard 33: Immediate Assistance	
The organization assists victims / survivors in evaluating and responding to their immediate needs.	
Exceeds Standard	After assessing for staff safety and feasibility, the organization’s written protocol recommends in-person response to the crisis situation.
Meets Standard	The organization’s protocols document 24 / 7 ability to provide for or make referrals for medical or other immediate needs during initial emergency response.
Does Not Meet Standard	No evidence that this service is provided.
Standard 34: Safety Assessment	
The organization assesses current or emerging safety concerns to other clients, staff, volunteers, or interns as part of intake referral and placement processes, then provides appropriate response in a timely manner.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization has a written protocol for reaching a supervisor when staff need additional support in the decision-making process.
Meets Standard	The organization has a protocol for immediate safety assessment. Staff, volunteers, and interns with direct contact are trained in implementation of the safety assessment and appropriate response.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization has no protocol for immediate safety assessment, or the protocol is not consistently applied. Staff, volunteers, and interns are not trained in the protocol.



Standard 35: Providing Resources and / or Referrals Provide information verbally or in writing about available resources / services.	
Exceeds Standard	When making a referral, the organization assists the victim / survivor in accessing the resource or service and follows-up to ensure that the contact happened.
Meets Standard	The organizational procedures require the documentation of resources and referrals given, as well as the method for sharing other resources / services. When there is no risk of harm to the victim / survivor, the organization shares written resources for victim / survivors to access themselves, if desired.
Does Not Meet Standard	No evidence that this service is provided.
Standard 36: Exit from Trafficking Situation The organization is prepared and available to coordinate or support a person’s exit from a trafficking situation, with the understanding a survivor may choose not to leave the situation. The safety of the service provider and the victim / survivor are equally considered and protected.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization has and adheres to signed agreements with members of the multi-disciplinary team that are potentially involved with the exit process.
Meets Standard	The organization assists with the exit in a trauma-informed manner, only engaging law enforcement by survivor request or mandatory reporting, as evidenced by policies and protocols.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization provides no evidence that exits are supported or coordinated in a trauma-informed manner. Or the organization’s policy is to refuse all requests for exit that do not involve law enforcement.
Standard 37: Temporary Shelter The organization coordinates supportive, appropriate, temporary shelter for participants who leave their trafficking situation, including dependent children of the participant, and arranges transportation as needed.	
Exceeds Standard	Placements have been previously vetted by program staff and determined to be safe, trauma-informed, and victim-centered.
Meets Standard	Organization coordinates supportive, appropriate, temporary shelter for participants who choose to exit, and the shelter plan accounts for care of dependent children, as evidenced by written documentation. Organization prioritizes safety in all processes, policies, and physical sites.
Does Not Meet Standard	No evidence that this service is provided or coordinated. Uses temporary or short-term housing within staff, private homes, or volunteer homes.



Standard 38: Basic Needs	
Ensure that participant’s basic needs are met.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization conducts a needs assessment and has written agreements with service providers to meet immediate, basic needs.
Meets Standard	The organization’s conducts a needs assessment to determine basic, immediate needs and then provides for those. (Food, shelter, clothing, medical, alcohol/ drug detoxification, hygiene, etc.)
Does Not Meet Standard	No evidence that this service is provided, the organization cannot provide all basic needs, or the organization cannot provide such needs in a timely fashion.
Standard 39: Comprehensive Services	
Once immediate needs are met, the organization links victims / survivors with ongoing comprehensive services if they desire those services.	
Exceeds Standard	If needed, the organization facilitates and accompanies the victim / survivor to the new service provider before closing the case and follows up to ensure the transition has been successful.
Meets Standard	The organization has protocols, documentation, and a referral network related to successfully transferring victims / survivors to ongoing comprehensive services or provides these services internally.
Does Not Meet Standard	There is no evidence the organization provides this service.
Standard 40: Minors	
Organizations that do not provide services to minors provide referral for age-appropriate services when needed.	
Exceeds Standard	Placements have been previously vetted by program staff and determined to be licensed, safe, trauma-informed, and victim-centered.
Meets Standard	Organization has a process for referral of children and youth as evidenced by program procedures, documentation, and referrals and in accordance with North Carolina mandatory reporting laws.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not have a referral process, or process is not in accordance with North Carolina mandatory reporting laws.



Service Area 3: Case Management

Definition: Case management refers to a survivor-centered, goal-oriented process for assessing the need of an individual for services and making plans to obtain those services. Case management can be comprehensive or service-specific, and either short- or long-term.

Goal: To ensure victims / survivors receive needed services and adequate support to move towards identified goals.

<p>Standard 41: Survivor-Centered Approach</p> <p>The organization provides case management in a nonjudgmental manner that holds the needs and interests of victims / survivors at the center. The wishes, safety, and wholistic well-being of victims / survivors take priority. The process acknowledges the unique needs of every survivor and ensures that services are tailored to meet those needs.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	N / A
Meets Standard	Activities and services within the case management process are survivor-centered, which means the rights, needs, and wishes of the victim / survivor are included and prioritized.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not apply case management using a survivor-centered approach.
<p>Standard 42: Needs Assessment</p> <p>A needs assessment is conducted to inform the planning and delivery of services.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization updates / reviews the need assessment tool / template annually to evaluate if additional resources can be added.
Meets Standard	The organization completes a needs assessment for each participant that engages in the case management process. Assessment uses a standard agency tool or template that is appropriate for whether organization is providing short- or long-term case management.
Does Not Meet Standard	No needs assessment is completed and/or on file.
<p>Standard 43: Individualized Service Plan</p> <p>The organization develops an individual service plan (ISP) to provide a framework within the case management process when planning, implementing, and evaluating the services essential to meet the participant’s needs and goals.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization and / or case managers regularly evaluate their own effectiveness in working with victims / survivors to successfully complete ISPs.



Meets Standard	The organization, along with the victims / survivors, complete an individualized service plan when case management contact will exceed the stabilization phase. Participant needs, strengths, and goals are outlined in the plan. ISP uses a standard tool or template that is appropriate for whether organization is providing short- or long-term case management and the tool includes target dates for goals and for program completion. Both parties sign the service plan, and it is reviewed regularly in case management meetings.
Does Not Meet Standard	No Individual Service Plan is completed and / or on file. The ISP is not reviewed or used as a tool for communication and progress.
<p>Standard 44: Advocacy</p> <p>When requested by individual victims / survivors, the organization advocates for their interests by helping them navigate service systems.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization can describe its policies and practices related to advocacy for victims / survivors when interacting with other professionals, such as through law enforcement, the judicial system, medical services, etc.
Meets Standard	The organization provides advocacy services in close consultation with the victim / survivor.
Does Not Meet Standard	Organization does not provide advocacy services or does so without close consultation with the victim / survivor.

Service Area 4: Survivor Peer Support

Definition: A survivor peer support and mentoring program provides personal support, mentoring, advocacy, and education to other victims / survivors.

Goal: A survivor peer support and mentoring program provides personal support, mentoring, advocacy, and education to other victims / survivors.

<p>Standard 45: Selection</p> <p>The organization screens potential peer support mentors for readiness to serve in the role and to prevent unintentional harm to self or others.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization can demonstrate and share its plan for addressing challenges presented by peer support mentoring programs.
Meets Standard	The organization can document its process of screening potential peer support mentors and how they determine appropriateness of fit prior to matching them with a victim / survivor.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not have a consistent process to adequately screen peer support mentors for readiness to serve in this role. The organization does not intervene if a survivor / mentor fails to demonstrate readiness to serve in this role.



Standard 46: Training and Support

The organization supports the success of potential peer support mentors by requiring training and providing the support they need for the role.

Exceeds Standard	The organization ensures that those who provide peer support are certified to do so, such as through a Certified Peer Support Program, or something similar, and maintains documentation of the certification.
Meets Standard	The organization makes referrals to appropriate peer support training programs or provides thorough volunteer training for the role and maintains documentation of the completed training.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization engages peer support mentors who cannot demonstrate that adequate training has been completed or certification obtained.

Service Area 5: Shelter and Housing

Definition: While the forms of shelter and housing vary according to the needs of victims / survivors and characteristics of the organization, the goal is to provide safe and appropriate places to live. The following categories demonstrate how programs might be structured differently:

Emergency Shelter means a facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for safety and initial stabilization. Such placements are low barrier for entry and do not require occupants to sign leases.

Other Emergency Options provide stabilization in a setting such as a hotel, gymnasium, or other temporary setting. These placements are utilized when safe emergency shelter facilities are not available. They are also low barrier for entry.

Transitional and Residential Housing refers to the facilities and / or programs that provide housing for survivors after emergency stabilization has occurred. This type of housing offers auxiliary programming to aid survivors such as life skills, support for substance use, therapy, groups, employment, or job training / placement, etc. In some settings, schooling or other educational options may also be included.

Permanent Housing Programs offer private housing for survivors ready to move into independent living. This would include programs where the apartment / house is in the organization’s name and the survivor becomes a sublease or where the original lease is in the survivor’s name. The organization may also provide after-care or rental assistance for a period in this category.

Goal: To provide safe places for victims / survivors to live, where the organization balances support, safety, and autonomy.

Standard 47: Case Management	
Any organization providing shelter or housing also provides case management services that are designed to address the unique needs, characteristics, and level of functioning of each victim/survivor.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization has an option for after-care when victims/survivors move out of the shelter or housing program.
Meets Standard	The organization has protocols for meeting with each victim/survivor served to assess their unique needs, engage in joint problem-solving, formulate a service/ goal plan for supportive action, monitor progress, and adjust plans as needed.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization provides no case management services or is inconsistent in providing case management services to all victims/survivors served.



<p>Standard 48: Emergency Shelter Staffing The organization staffs its emergency shelter, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week when it is occupied.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization has trained staff and / or volunteers on-site, regardless of whether or not the shelter is occupied.
Meets Standard	The organization has trained staff and/or volunteers on-site at all times when the shelter is occupied.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization does not document its staffing plan and / or does not have trained staff and / or volunteers on site when the shelter is occupied.
<p>Standard 49: Safe Facilities The organization ensures that the physical setting of any owned or leased facilities are safe from general hazards.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization is proactive in its risk management practices identifying and correcting potential hazards. These responsibilities are assigned to particular staff.
Meets Standard	Facilities are safe from general health and safety hazards; for example, appliances, equipment, and furnishings are in good working condition. The organization has protocols for identifying and repairing potential hazards in a timely manner.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization has no protocol and does not assign job responsibilities that address the physical safety of their facilities. There is visible evidence of problems such as malfunctioning plumbing, mold, faulty electrical wiring, hazardous equipment, missing smoke detectors, etc.
<p>Standard 50: Transparent Guidelines The organization is transparent about all expectations related to program entry, participation, dismissal, and program completion. Information about the expectations is easily accessible to service recipients and referral partners.</p>	
Exceeds Standard	The organization allows potential participants to visit the facility prior to committing to the program.
Meets Standard	The organization shares all programmatic expectations with victims / survivors to enable their free and informed choice about participating in and leaving the service. Expectations are communicated with sufficient notice using the language and format that the victim/survivor can understand.
Does Not Meet Standard	The organization is unreliable, inconsistent, or unpredictable in expressing or enforcing programmatic standards. Program components and / or guidelines are communicated without sufficient notice.



Standard 51: Intake Paperwork	
Exceeds Standard	Organization reviews and revises intake paperwork annually.
Meets Standard	Organization uses standard forms for every intake. Intake paperwork is completed and filed in a timely manner to ensure proper communication with victims/survivors about expectations and functioning of the facility.
Does Not Meet Standard	Organization has no standard and/or required intake paperwork. Intake paperwork is not consistently used or used in a reasonable timeframe, or, intake paperwork does not parallel the level of the housing service being offered.
Standard 52: Financial Benefit	
The organization operates according to a financial model which does not require or rely on victims / survivors fee for services, in-kind contributions, or uncompensated labor.	
Exceeds Standard	The organization can demonstrate through financial records that victims / survivors being served in the organization do not in any way contribute to the financial benefit of the organization.
Meets Standard	Participants in housing programs choose when / if they take part in activities that contribute to agency profit, and they receive fair compensation for their labor. Participation is not required to continue program services or maintain housing. Organizations providing shelter services do so free of charge.
Does Not Meet Standard	Victim / survivors are charged fees, or are required or pressured to make products, or perform other labor for the financial benefit of the organization. Participation is required to continue to receive housing services. When compensation is given, it is insufficient.
Standard 53: Transportation Services	
The facility shall have reasonable access to transportation services.	
Exceeds Standard	Organization has transportation options, such as being near public transportation, to allow for increasing participant independence.
Meets Standard	Organization offers safe and reliable transportation provisions. Facility has transportation available that allows participants to make appointments and meet commitments or has active agreements with another qualified direct service provider to transport any victim-survivor safely and effectively.
Does Not Meet Standard	Participants are unable to meet appointments or move ahead in their service plan due to lack of transportation or limitations with transportation.



Standard 54: Housing Minors

Any organization that houses minors without a parent or legal guardian is licensed with the State of North Carolina to do so and complies with all licensing and accreditation processes that relate to that population. Any organization that is not licensed to serve minors has protocols in place to safely transfer the minor to appropriate service providers or authorities as soon as it becomes available.

Exceeds Standard	Organization has a written MOU with the local child welfare office or policy developed in conjunction with the local child welfare office that accommodates for situations when a minor presents for shelter.
Meets Standard	Organization has a copy on file of state licensing to house minors. If a minor presents at a facility that is not licensed to house them, the organization will make and document every attempt to work with local authorities to seek placement in a timely manner.
Does Not Meet Standard	Organization does not have documentation of licensing; Organization provides housing to minors without making or documenting attempts to engage local authorities within a reasonable time frame; and/or turns away minors that have presented at their facility without proper transfers in place to ensure safety.

The standards included in this publication have been developed by the Human Trafficking Commission and community partners to equip victim service providers to best assist clients with diverse backgrounds, needs, and lived experiences. We envision these standards as a checklist for victim service providers to evaluate their own organizations, with additional resources from the national anti-trafficking community. Our goal is to maximize survivor support and empowerment and to minimize safety risks and re-traumatization.

Agencies can find additional information and tools that accompany the Standards of Service on the North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission’s website at [HTC.NCCOURTS.GOV](https://htc.nccourts.gov), under “resource library.”

Additional training on these standards can be requested through the website and agencies will find several examples of helpful items such as:

- Standards of Service Agency Self-Assessment Tool
- Agency User Guide for Documentation of the Standards
- Publications related to providing trauma-informed services, incorporation of survivor voices, etc.
- North Carolina Resource Directory
- Additional Resources, Toolkits, and Podcasts on serving victims/survivors

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