



## **FACT SHEET: Human Trafficking and Business**

### **THE CRIME and ITS VICTIMS:**

- According to a 2007 study, at least 300-500 children are being trafficked for commercial sex in Seattle/King County. The study, conducted by Dr. Debra Boyer, identified 238 prostituted youth.<sup>i</sup>
- Since October 2008, King County courts have charged and prosecuted 67 offenders for sex trafficking-related crimes. The majority of these crimes took place in hotels and motels. Seventy-two percent of the victims named in the cases were children.<sup>ii</sup> The majority of the crimes took place in area motels. Some of them took place in high-end hotels.
- 14,500-17,000 persons are trafficked into the U.S. each year.<sup>iii</sup>
- The number of victims served in the U.S. more than doubled to 1,472 in 2010.<sup>iv</sup> This dramatic rise is due in part to efforts that enable citizens to report suspected trafficking appropriately.

### **TRAFFICKING and BUSINESS:**

- Women have been trafficked from Thailand, South Korea, and China into U.S. Asian Massage Parlors, or AMPs. Since January 2009, 65 AMPs have offered sexual services in Washington state. In November 2010, a study found 19 active AMPs with evidence of sexual services being offered in the cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond.<sup>v</sup> These facilities pose legal risks to commercial property owners and managers who may be held legally liable if they have knowledge of prostitution or trafficking occurring in their facilities.
- It is in the legal and financial interests of businesses that employ immigrants to take steps to prevent exposure to labor trafficking. In Washington state, 91% percent of the foreign national trafficking victims identified are victims of labor trafficking.<sup>vi</sup>
- Labor trafficking and related crimes pose financial, legal and reputational risks to local companies. For example, retailers in Tacoma and Lakewood received negative press when a King 5 News investigation claimed that they were purchasing supplies from a sweatshop in Burien, WA.<sup>vii</sup> Valley Fruit Orchards and Green Acre Farms in Eastern

Washington are named in a suit by the federal government for employing trafficked laborers from Thailand. These farms were pulled into this suit due to the actions of a business partner: the California-based recruiting company Global Horizons.<sup>viii</sup>

- Shopping malls used to be places where parents were comfortable letting their teenage daughters spend time. Now that traffickers are using shopping malls to recruit victims,<sup>ix</sup> it is in the financial interest of commercial real estate owners and managers to keep malls safe and prevent this crime within their properties.
- Victims of trafficking have been found working in U.S. businesses including restaurants, landscaping companies, nail and hair salons, farms, cleaning companies, construction, and massage.

## **BEST SOLUTIONS:**

- The **Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking** (BEST) Alliance is a group of Washington business leaders that are committed to preventing sex and labor trafficking in our local communities and abroad.
- The **Washington BEST Principles** are the first set of anti-trafficking best practices for small to medium size companies. The BEST Principles will be launched on March 27<sup>th</sup>.
- The BEST Principles resulted from the leadership of local businesses and the partnership with End Human Trafficking Now, the international organization that manages the Athens Ethical Principles for multinational corporations.
- More than 12,000 companies have pledged to abide by the Athens Ethical Principles. The 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report, produced by the U.S. Department of State, promoted the Athens Ethical Principles as a best practice for multinational corporations that want to take part in the solution.

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<sup>i</sup> Boyer, Debra. "Who Pays the Price?" A Study Commissioned by the City of Seattle Human Services Department, 2007. [http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/domesticviolence/Report\\_YouthInProstitution.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/domesticviolence/Report_YouthInProstitution.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> "Selected King County Superior Court Cases Involving Sexual Exploitation of Adults and Minors 2008-2010 and through June 2011." A 2012 Report Issued by the Office of City Councilman Tim Burgess. [www.timburgess.com](http://www.timburgess.com)

<sup>iii</sup> Estimated number in Department of Justice, *Attorney General's Annual Report to Congress on U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons: Fiscal Year 2005*, June 2006.

<sup>iv</sup> 2011 Trafficking in Persons Report, "the exact number is unknown because some victims were assisted with funding from both agencies but an unduplicated count is not available." <http://malta.usembassy.gov/tr-usa2011.html>

<sup>v</sup> Smith, S. Mar. "Human Trafficking in Illicit Massage Facilities," A Report Published through Washington Engage in December 2011, <http://waengage.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Massage-White-Paper.FinalR11.pdf>.

<sup>vi</sup> Marie Hoffmann, Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network, 2012.

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.king5.com/news/investigators/KING-5-traces-surburban-sweatshop-goods-to-reputable-businesses-109029759.html>

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/release/4-20-11b.cfm?renderforprint=1>

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.king5.com/news/investigators/KING-5-traces-surburban-sweatshop-goods-to-reputable-businesses-109029759.html>; and <http://www.kentreporter.com/news/134943468.html>