



Human Trafficking in **AMERICA'S SCHOOLS**



- Human Trafficking Webinar Series –

Understanding Child Labor Exploitation in the U.S. and How Schools Can Help Address It

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Transcript

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Hello, everyone, and good afternoon. Welcome to today's webinar, Understanding Child Labor Trafficking in the United States and How Schools Can Help Address it. This is the latest webinar in the series of webinars sponsored by the US Department of Education since January of 2020 to focus on the critical role that schools play in addressing human trafficking and child exploitation. We are so pleased to have you with us today.

My name is Cindy Carraway Wilson, and I'm training specialist for the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments or NCSSLE. NCSSLE is funded by the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the US Department of Education.

To learn a little bit more about NCSSLE, we want to invite you to visit our website. Our website has resources and other items for you to download and use that could help you to make improvements and changes to school climate, to foster school safety, and to maintain a supportive, engaging, and healthy environment for students to learn and fully develop. On the left side of the screen, you see some of our more commonly referred to references and materials that you can download, and on the right-hand side is a picture of our homepage, again showing some of the resources that you might access. Please also do follow us on social media as we do share resources and events that are coming out of the field via our social media. Please also note that materials that you see today, including the slides, the referenced resources, and the archived version of this recording will be made available on that event webpage within this website, and in fact, some of those items, including the slides and bios are already there.

You may also access previously recorded human trafficking webinars at this very webpage on the site.

To give you a little bit more information on the topic of human trafficking, I want to remind everybody that the US Department of Education and NCSSE have produced a wide variety of resources to address human trafficking in our schools. The webinar series of which this is one example has a variety of archived webinars that you can go back and review, and the link for the webinar series is now being posted in chat. We also produced several guides to build your knowledge and address skills to address and prevent human trafficking. These are pictures at the top left of the slide and include human trafficking in America's schools, what schools can do to prevent and respond and help students to recover from human trafficking, addressing the growing problem, domestic sex trafficking in minors through the PBIS, and finally how schools can combat human trafficking in partnership with people with lived experience.

Pictured on the bottom left of this slide are the images of our human trafficking in America schools staff development series, which compliment the human trafficking guide. These are brief online videos which provide information and discussion questions which might be used by individual teams or staff members. All of these items are available on the human trafficking webpage with the link now being shared in the chat box.

You may also access resources rooted in the latest research and best practices, as well as the wisdom of people with lived experience and human trafficking prevention advocates and specialists on a dedicated human trafficking webpage at the US Department of Education's website. Now, I'd like to briefly review the flow of the webinar today, webinar today. This slide shows that we will be going into introductions and context-setting presentations. We'll move through our panel discussion, which is going to be very dynamic and amazing, and then toward the end, we are going to go ahead into 15 minutes of live Q&A. So please remember to use the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen in your Zoom control panel to post your questions and comments.

Now it's my great pleasure to introduce our welcome speaker from the Department of Education, Mr. Bryan Williams, the director of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the US Department of Education. Bryan.

Bryan Williams:

Thanks, Cindy, and welcome everyone. On behalf of the US Department of Education, thank you so much for taking the time to join today's webinar. I'm very excited to announce our newly expanded human trafficking and child exploitation webinar series, which has broadened its focus to address child exploitation in the US. As many of you may know, child exploitation is defined as the act of using a minor child for profit, labor, sexual gratification, or some other personal financial advantage. The experience is harmful to the young person emotionally, physically, and socially. In similar ways that human trafficking is harmful, school personnel have the unique ability to engage in prevention activities and to identify students who may be experiencing child exploitation or human trafficking. They don't need to be responsible for classifying the situation as trafficking or exploitation, but they do need to be able to provide prevention activities to protect students and identify when something is happening and know what to do to intervene.

We know that some young people want to work, some need to work and others are forced to work. Young people participate in the workforce on this continuum and it can sometimes be challenging to identify when a student is being exploited. In this webinar, you will learn what child exploitation is so you can identify jobs and job roles that are inappropriate for young people and provide students with an understanding of workers' rights to prevent exploitation.

Our speakers today will also provide examples of current child exploitation cases and describe the process for making a report. Then our panelists will provide additional strategies schools can use to partner with the Department of Labor and others to support students and address child labor and exploitation.

We hope that you will find this content helpful in your continued efforts to build safe and supportive learning environments for all students, including those who have been impacted by human trafficking or child exploitation. Thanks again for joining us today, and we appreciate all of the important work that you all are doing to improve safety and wellbeing of all students.

Now, I'm going to turn it back over to Cindy who will launch the webinar.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you so much for those welcoming words, Mr. Williams. We greatly appreciate your ongoing support on these efforts. Now it's my pleasure to show you the speakers who will be coming up to set our context, and I'd like to encourage you to go to visit the event webpage when you have a moment later today to read more about them in the speaker biographical pages.

The first speaker today that I'd like to introduce is Ms. Jessica Looman, who's the administrator at the wage in our division at the US Department of Labor. Jessica.

Jessica Looman: Thank you so much Cindy, and thank you to Bryan and thanks to everyone for having us here today, and it's my pleasure to join you all to discuss this really important topic, and really want to thank you all of you who are attending this webinar today for choosing to spend your time to learn about this really important issue. I want to thank the Department of Education and the folks at the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments or NCSSLE, as Cindy shared with us earlier for your leadership and your partnership as together we are working on education and prevention of child labor exploitation.

I want to give a special thanks to Deputy Assistant Secretary Ruth Ryder for her partnership. Ruth has been an ongoing partner in the work that we're doing all across this administration to really address this important issue. And again, thank you so much to Cindy and to all of our panelists who will be joining us later in this presentation.

For those of you who are maybe not as familiar, the Wage and our division at the US Department of Labor, we're responsible for enforcing some of the

nation's most foundational federal worker protection laws, including the federal minimum wage, overtime pay laws, Family Medical and Leave Act, and the child labor requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and our mission is to promote and achieve compliance with labor standards to protect and enhance the welfare of the nation's workforce.

And every day we wake up and we help 165 million workers and 11 million workplaces across our country. Protecting children against illegal child labor is one of our top priorities. Many people believe exploitive child labor may be a thing of a past, a hundred-year-old problem, but we know unfortunately that it is still very much a problem today.

Positive and safe first work experiences can allow young people to develop skills and earn money and learn what it means to be part of the labor force, and these jobs should be good jobs that can help get young workers on the path to good careers, but a job shouldn't jeopardize a child's wellbeing or their educational opportunities.

In February of this year, the Wage and Hour Division announced one of the largest child labor cases in the Department of Labor's history where we issued a penalty of \$1.5 million against Packers Sanitation Services, Inc. for employing more than 100 children as young as 13 at facilities across eight states to work the night shift to clean meat processing plants. The number of children illegally employed in the hazardous nature of their work was unparalleled in recent memory and several Wage and Hour child labor cases this past year found severe violations and resulted in tragedy. These investigations demonstrate the ongoing threat that illegal child labor poses to our kids. In a Wisconsin sawmill, that illegally employed nine children to operate hazardous machinery, tragically one child had a fatal work-related injury this summer. And in another meat packing facility, a food processing manufacturer, the employer paid more than \$140,000 in penalties because we found 19s employed illegally to operate dangerous equipment.

These are just some examples of the cases that we are seeing on a day-to-day basis in the Wage and Hour Division, and overall, we concluded about 955 investigations involving child labor violations just in the last year. Our enforcement actions impacted nearly 5,800 children who were employed in violation of the law. This is an 88% increase since 2019, and we currently have more than 800 active child labor investigations in the Wage and Hour Division. And while we don't investigate labor trafficking, we are uniquely positioned to detect potential human trafficking indicators and make sure all of our investigators are trained to make referrals to law enforcement agencies when indicators of human trafficking are found. We know that everyone involved in a young worker's life can play a role in keeping children out of harm's way in the workplace and understanding that they understand their rights. That's why today is such an important opportunity and why our partnership with the Department of Education and with educational stakeholders like you is so impactful.

We know that partnership is essential to our success and the Department of Labor is leading the administration's interagency task force to combat child labor exploitation, to promote collaboration and information sharing and advance the health, education, and wellbeing of all children across the United States. We are so grateful for the work with the Department of Education and the Health and Human Services and to connect with educators and service providers across the country to share information and resources.

So we know that thousands of you are thinking about millions of children every single day, and we hope that when you identify, when you are concerned about, when you see something that concerns you around child labor, and particularly after the conversation that we have today, we hope that you will reach out to us. We invite you to come to speak, to raise any concerns. We have 54 district offices all across the country. We have one 1-800 number that we really encourage you to participate in. You can find all of the resources be shared as part of this webinar.

More than 50% of our Wage and Hour investigators are multilingual, and we do not ask immigration status case for any case, and we protect all workers equally under the law. We are a resource and we are here for you in the Wage and Hour Division. So without further delay, want to hand you over to this amazing panel, but I just again want to thank you to the Department of Education and NCSSLE for the invitation to join you here today. And thank you again all for your time to really join us and address this important issue.

Together we can promote the safety, welfare and education of children nationwide. Thank you so much. And Cindy, back over to you.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Jessica, thank you so much for that and for all the amazing work the Department of Labor is doing to protect our kids because we know our students are going into the workforce for many different reasons, and they deserve to have the same protection as any other employee out there, so we greatly appreciate that work.

Now it's my pleasure to introduce our next speaker, Ms. Norma Flores Lopez is going to be speaking in a moment. She is the chair of the Child Labor Coalition and Domestic Issues Committee, and is a person with Lived Experience who's going to talk to us about child labor exploitation.

Ms. Flores Lopez.

Norma Flores Lopez: Hi everyone. Thank you. As mentioned, my name is Norma Flores Lopez and I grew up in the US-Mexico border in a place called the Rio Grande Valley in south Texas. That is somewhere that that is home to the majority of migrant farm workers that travel across this country. I believe the census showed something like 48 states out of the 50 that they travel and migrate to be able to follow the harvest. That is something that my grandparents did. That is something that my parents did, and that was the legacy that they passed on to me and my sisters.

Although both of my parents were US born, my mother was pulled out of school in the third grade and my father out of the sixth grade, and not because they didn't enjoy going to school and learning, they were both avid readers and loved to be able to learn, but unfortunately, both of them lived in desperate poverty and their families counted on them to be able to bring home money to be able to put food on the table because as it was true then and is true now, the great irony in this country is that the majority of the people who harvest the fruits and vegetables that we eat oftentimes can't even afford those same very fruits and vegetables.

As I mentioned, we would migrate from South Texas, we would pack up our belongings to the back of a pickup truck. We would all crowd in there, and then we'd start our two-day trek across the United States to be able to go up to states like Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Illinois, Colorado to be able to harvest the fruits and vegetables. I myself was able to do everything from picking apples to the de-tassling corn to harvesting asparagus and even onion fields in South Texas.

And I was able to do that because the US child labor laws permitted me to be able to start working at the age of 12. However, because of the way the system is set up for the piece rate, my family was actually able to take us at a lot younger ages. My first memories of working out in the fields had to have been around the age of nine when I started to work under my dad's name, where all of us sort of put in as many apples as we could into the boxes. Why is it that my parents took us out there?

A, as I mentioned, the desperate poverty that we continue to live in because farm workers don't get paid a whole lot. B, was because they had nowhere to leave me. As we moved through rural communities, and especially during the summer, there was nowhere that would be able to accommodate their hours or even to be able to afford to pay for the childcare fees. And lastly, because my parents, that's what they were taught and that's what they were told was the right way to teach us how to be able to get work experience and to learn the value of the dollar. And so they didn't know that it was a dangerous place for us, and they thought, this is where my kid is safer. I'd rather have her here with me than to have her by herself in a farm worker camp where we were sharing housing with other people.

And then once I turned 12 years old, I was able to start working legally, which meant I could start working full-time. And full-time to me was 10, 12 hour days, eight days ... seven days a week, rather sometimes three, four weeks without any days off during the peak harvest. And as a kid, I was expected to keep up with the adults when I was out there working in the fields. It was something that I had to really push my body to be able to work really hard and with very little safety training, with very few parameter safeguards in place. And so while this might be something that might be beneficial to somebody who's learning how to be able to one day run their own farm, for somebody like me, I never had that opportunity and I was very clear about that, we're out there to work, to be able to earn money, to put food on our table and without any hope of one day

being able to have all of this hard work that I was putting in to turn into an opportunity for me in the future.

And so when we look at the word exploitation, what it means is to be able to gain a benefit from treating somebody unfairly. And that was absolutely the case with young children that are out there working in agriculture, having worked those long, hard backbreaking days of harvesting fruits and vegetables around having machinery, being exposed to extreme weather conditions and dealing with the billions of pounds of chemicals and pesticides that are used in agriculture, it really took an impact on my education.

Because I knew the desperate poverty that my family lived in, I needed to work. And so schooling became second place for me. I was pulled out of school two to three times each year, always feeling like I was behind, knowing that the teachers had to set aside assignments differently for me as I was navigating through the different school systems and always feeling like I could never catch up.

And so it was no wonder that children who work in agriculture are dropping out at four times the national rate, and many of them are having health impacts from the exposure to the pesticides, from using sharp tools, from working around heavy machinery, sometimes even causing their deaths as agriculture continues to be one of the most dangerous industries for children and the deadliest. And so you see that it has these terrible impacts on children. It's very easy to exploit them, especially young girls that are out there when we don't know about our rights, when there's the language barriers, where we are decentralized locations, we're out there in the field in rural locations.

And to be honest, during my entire time from when I was 12 years old until I was 18 years old that I worked in the field, not once did I ever see an inspector or somebody that could be able to come in and check in and make sure that things were all right. I was always left to the whims of the crew leader, the farmer, the contractor, whoever it is that was in charge of us, and hoping that we would get somebody that would be fair and that would pay us.

And so I thank you guys for listening to my story and to know that while my story happened 10 years ago, that is what continues to happen to kids today across the country, and hopefully, we can, with your help, be able to change that for future generations.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Norma, thank you so much for your willingness to talk to us about your experiences and to share how it had such a deep impact on your life in so many different ways, including in your schooling and your overall health. We appreciate you sharing your expertise with us, and we will hear from Norma again in our panel. And thank you so much for those reactions that we see coming up as well.

It's now my great pleasure to introduce Ms. Bridget Dutton, who is the program specialist from the Wage and Hour Division of the US Department of Labor.

Bridget.

Bridget Dutton:

Thank you, Cindy. And I want to reiterate to our administrators, thank you to all of you for having the Wage and Hour Division here today to discuss this extremely important topic. The Department of Labor is dedicated to helping young workers find those positive and early employment experiences, but the work must be safe. The child labor provisions of the FLSA were enacted to ensure that when young people work the work does not jeopardize their health or wellbeing. Today's presentation will provide an overview of these child labor topics, child labor protections by age hours, 14 and 15-year-olds can work jobs 14 and 15-year-olds can work, dangerous jobs prohibited for all children under the age of 18, child labor protections on farms, and we'll discuss some of the additional resources that we provide to workers, youth, advocates, and families alike.

So generally, the minimum age for employment is 14, although there are some exceptions and exemptions for children under the age of 14 that allow them to babysit on a casual basis, deliver newspapers, and work as actors and performers, for example. However, the Fair Labor Standards Act or the FLSA, as we refer to it groups into two categories for employment purposes, 14 and 15-year-olds in one group and 16 and 17-year-olds in the second group. Simply stated, employees aged 14 and 15 years of age may only work outside of school hours and only for certain time periods, which we will discuss a little bit further.

They may only work in specific non-manufacturing, non-mining, and non-dangerous jobs. Any job not specifically permitted is prohibited. However, employees that are aged 16 and 17 years of age may perform.

Employees that are aged 16 and 17 years of age may perform any job that is not considered dangerous and with no limit to the number of hours that they work. The child labor regulations do not apply to any employee that is 18 years of age or older. Last, there is a parental exemption for a person who's the sole owner of a business. A child who works for a company that is entirely owned by their parent may work longer hours, and also, they have fewer job restrictions.

Anything not permitted is prohibited. Please remember that. Work that a 14 and 15-year-old generally cannot do includes manufacturing, mining or processing, baking or cooking, serving as a public messenger, construction work, including roofing, use or cleaning of power driven equipment, loading and unloading equipment, working in freezers or coolers, participating in door-to-door sales. All of these jobs are considered dangerous for children under the age of 18 years old.

The number of hours that a 14 and 15-year-old may work depends on whether school is in session or not. For example, when school is in session, 14 and 15-year olds may not work more than 18 hours. However, when school is not in session, 14 and 15-year olds may work up to 40 hours in each work week. Additionally, 14 and 15-year olds may only work between the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, except from June 1st through Labor Day when the evening hour is extended to 9:00 PM. Our standards violations are very common when

discovering child labor violations for 14 and 15-year olds. Let me point out that many states have different standards and employers should check with both state and federal agencies to ensure compliance. Where state and federal laws are different, the most protective law applies.

Although we have been making the distinction between children who are 14 and 15 and those that are 16 and 17, dangerous jobs applies to all children under the age of 18. The Secretary of Labor has determined these jobs to be too dangerous for children under the age of 18 to work. Children under the age of 18 may not perform any of these jobs at any time, not even once. There are 17 hazardous orders, or HOs as we commonly refer to them, for work that is not performed on farms. On the next few slides, we'll discuss a few of the 17 HOs that are off limits for children under the age of 18. However, our website hosts additional compliance assistance materials, including Fact Sheet 43, which provides more detailed information for the work children can and cannot do, and also Fact Sheet 40, which provides more detailed information for the work children can and cannot do on farms.

Children generally cannot work in factories, warehouses, or other places where explosives are produced or stored. Children generally cannot work where exposed to radioactive materials. Federal law generally bans minors from working in mining operations, including coal mining. Federal law generally bans miners from working in forest firefighting or prevention and from working in logging and in saw mills. This dangerous job involves meat and poultry packing or processing. Children generally cannot work in slaughterhouses or meat packing facilities. They cannot operate clean, set up or repair mechanical meat slicers, meat processors, or other types of machines, even if used for things other than meat.

Children cannot use clean or repair power driven bakery machines, including vertical dough and batter mixers, dough rollers, rounders, dividers and sheeters and cookie or cracker machines. 16 and 17-year olds can use certain lightweight small portable countertop mixers and certain pizza dough rollers under certain conditions. Federal law generally bans children from using, repairing or cleaning chainsaws, sanders, or other power driven woodworking machines regardless of the material being cut. Federal law generally bans children from using metal working machines, including metal forming, punching and shearing machines.

Federal law generally bans minors from using, riding on or repairing forklifts, cranes, and any other type of power driven hoisting or lifting machines. Federal law bans the operation of and working as a helper on the name types of power driven equipment no matter what kind of items are being cut by the equipment. Equipment includes power driven circular saws, band saws, guillotine shears, chainsaws, wood chippers, and abrasive cutting discs.

Federal law bans driving motor vehicles on public roads and working as outside helpers on motor vehicles. Children generally cannot drive a car, truck or other vehicle for work or ride on the outside of the vehicle. However, there are special circumstances for 17 year olds only. They can drive cars or small trucks during daylight hours for limited times and under strictly limited circumstances, and we

ask that you please reference Fact Sheet 34 to learn more as it pertains to driving.

Children generally cannot use, load, unload, clean or repair these machines, compactors and bailers. In some circumstances, 16 and 17-year olds can load but not unload certain machines used only for paper. Please reference Fact Sheet 57 to learn more about compactors and bailers. Federal law bans most jobs in wrecking, demolition and shipwrecking operations, but does not apply to remodeling or repair work, which is not extensive. Federal law also bans most jobs in roofing operations, including work performed on the ground and removal of the old roof and all work on or about a roof.

Special exemptions do apply here to student learners and apprentices who are at least 16 years of age and enrolled in approved programs. Federal law bans most jobs, entrenching and excavation work, including working in a trench more than four feet deep. Special exemptions apply here as well to student learners and apprentices who are at least 16 years of age and enrolled in approved programs. Federal law also bans most jobs in the manufacturer of brick, tile and similar products.

Let's discuss our child labor protection specific to agriculture. There are major differences between what children can do on farms versus all farms. Although they both have age limitations, hours regulations, and hazardous orders or dangerous jobs, the rules are applied differently.

Once a child reaches the age of 16, the child labor rules no longer apply to farm work and they can do any job on a farm at any time. Children who are 14 and 15 working on farms are restricted to working outside of school hours, but for an unlimited number of hours. However, they are banned from working in dangerous jobs or hazardous orders as we referenced earlier. 12 and 13-year olds may also work on farm jobs outside of school hours and are banned from working in dangerous jobs.

However, they must either work on farms where their parents or guardians work or have written consent to work from a parent. Children under 12 years old may work outside school hours in non-dangerous jobs with parental consent, but only on small farms where none of the employees are subject to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act or FLSA. The parental exemption allows kids to work in any job on farms owned or operated by their parents or persons standing in place of their parent.

This slide shares what children under the age of 16 can do on farms. They can operate garden type tractors, work with dairy cattle on a range and use ladders. They can harvest and drive vehicles on the farm, but they cannot drive on a public road. Children are not allowed to perform specific dangerous jobs on farms, which include operating a tractor of over 20 horsepower or connecting or disconnecting an implement of any of its parts to or from such a tractor, operating or working with a corn picker, a cotton picker, a grain combine, hay mower, a hay baler, potato digger, a pea viner, a feed grinder, a forage blower,

or unloading a mechanism of non-gravity type self unloading wagon or trailer, a power post hole digger, power post driver, those are all prohibited.

Children cannot work in felling, buckling, skidding, loading or unloading timber. Federal law prohibits children from doing this work, particularly unloading timber with a diameter of more than six inches. Children cannot work from a ladder or scaffold at a height of over 20 feet or handle or use toxic chemicals. Children working on a farm that are under 16 are also banned from working inside a fruit forage or grain storage designed to retain an oxygen deficient or toxic atmosphere. They cannot work in an upright silo within two weeks after silage has been added, and they also cannot work in a manure pit or a horizontal silo while operating a tractor for packing purposes, as these jobs have been determined to be dangerous on farms.

So now that you're more familiar with the laws we enforce, particularly that of child labor protections, let's discuss how we do enforcement, outreach, compliance assistance, and the declaration of regulations that promote compliant behaviors in order to impact compliance levels. If a worker or their advocate has reviewed our information and believes their workplace rights have been violated, they have a right to file a complaint with us. One of the goals of our outreach programs is to ensure that workers know how to reach us, how to file a complaint and understand that we pursue complaints regardless of the workers' immigration status. Workers can contact us at our phone number or visit our webpage. If they contact us by phone, they will be directed to the nearest wage in hour office for assistance. There are wage in hour offices throughout the country, 54 as our administrator mentioned, with trained professionals designed to help you daily. Complaints are confidential. We do not share complainants names with employers or even confirm that a complaint was filed.

So you may be asking yourself, "Who may file a child labor complaint?" Well, the worker or the child themselves with the help of their parent or guardian, school officials, other school officials or employers, advocacy groups or other agency that are involved and have found that the child may be employed in violation of our law. Information that's useful in filing a complaint with our division includes their name, the address and phone number, how the person can be contacted, what are good times to return a call, the name of the company where they work or worked, the location of the company.

Now, this sometimes can be different from where they actually work. Phone number of the company, manager or owner's name, who should we speak to when we arrive at the establishment? The type of work completed, how and when they were paid? Was it by cash or check, every Friday? And any additional information that they can provide such as copies of the pay stubs, personal records of hours worked, or other information on the employee's pay practices are extremely helpful. These pieces of information are not required, but they help us to develop stronger cases.

The Wage and Hour division recently encountered some of the most significant child labor cases in our history. As our administrator mentioned, we've seen

alarming trends in child labor violations over the past five years. We've seen a significant increase in the number of minors employed in violation of child labor laws since 2018, and we've noted a large increase in minors employed in hazardous occupations and found nearly 700 minors employed in hazardous jobs. Over the past year, we've investigated some of the most egregious violations we've seen in years.

As our administrator alluded to in her opening comments, one of those largest cases was of PSSI, where we found children in slaughterhouses and on the kill floor exposed to caustic chemicals as they clean dangerous equipment like bone saws and meat grinders. Children as young as 13 years old put to work in appalling conditions on overnight shifts and 13 meat processing facilities in eight states. Investigators learned that at least three minors suffered injuries while working for PSSI.

The division began our PSSI investigations of August of 2022, and in November of 2022, the Solicitor's office filed a complaint in the US District Court of Nebraska based on evidence that the company had employed at least 31 children from 13 to 17 years of age in hazardous occupations to clean dangerous power equipment during overnight shifts. The US District Court issued a temporary restraining order on November 10th of 2022, forbidding the company and its employees from committing child labor violations.

In December of 2022, we were able to... The US District Court entered a consent order and judgment in which the employer agreed to comply with the Fair Labor Standard Act child labor provisions in all of its operations nationwide, and to take significant steps to ensure future compliance with the law, including employing an outside compliance specialist. In February 2023, PSSI paid \$1.5 million in civil money penalties for its employment of at least 102 minors and hazardous occupations at its facilities.

This slide summarizes some of the main activities and contributions that the Wage and Hour division makes in support of the prevention and elimination of human trafficking. We actively engage and collaborate with federal and state law enforcement partners by participating in over 80 human trafficking task forces across the country. We are uniquely positioned by often being the first government agency in a business to detect and refer possible human trafficking indicators identified during the normal course of an investigation.

When such indicators are detected, we will follow established protocols to make referrals to our law enforcement partners. When requested through proper channels by another federal agency, typically an assistant United States attorney or criminal law enforcement agency, we will provide advice or participate in the computation of restitution for victims or penalties against the traffickers.

We have talked about achieving compliance efforts under our enforcement activity. Now we will discuss how memorandums of understanding or MOUs and partnerships also help us to achieve compliance. We build and maintain strong relationships with select non-profit organizations to foster communication and better serve our nation's workers and businesses. Wage

and Hour has MOUs states, agencies and organizations across the country concerning the various laws that we enforce. These partnerships provide for data sharing, referrals, coordinated enforcement, joint outreach and compliance assistance. They maximize our impact and the corresponding benefits for businesses and workers.

We have long maintained that enforcement alone will never be sufficient to achieve the division's mission. Education and outreach to workers and employers has been and will continue to be when the division's key strategies for protecting the workforce and promoting compliance. The vast majority of employers want to comply with our laws if they understand them. Our compliance assistance and outreach work ensures that employers and employees have all the tools they need to clearly understand their responsibilities to comply with the law and their rights as workers within this country.

The division offers numerous resources to assist youth with knowing their rights and the knowledge of the work they can and cannot perform. The Youth Rules Initiative promotes positive and safe work experiences for teens by providing information about protections for young workers, for youth, parents, employers and educators. Through the Youth Rules Initiative, the US Department of Labor and its partners promote positive and safe work experiences that help prepare young workers in the workforce. From the Youth Rules website, you can quickly access information about federal and state labor laws that apply to young workers. The website also educates teens on the rules and provides information as well for parents, educators, and employers.

As part of the Youth Rules Initiative, the department and its partners develop and distribute informational materials, provide training on federal and state rules governing young workers, increase awareness through public service announcements and develop other tools designed to increase compliance with federal and state laws. Employers are responsible for the safety and well-being of their teen workers under federal law. As we previously discussed, some jobs are prohibited for all workers under the age of 18. The division has developed a Dangerous Jobs webpage where you can hover over the images to learn more about those jobs where youth are not permitted to work. You'll also find easy access to either of these sites by utilizing the QR codes on the screen.

Collaboration between government and schools to address child labor is crucial as it helps raise awareness, implement policies, and educate youth, parents and communities about the dangers and consequences of child labor. By working together, we can create effective strategies to prevent child labor, ensure youth rights in the workplace, and enforce laws that protect them from exploitation. This slide shares just some of the examples of the work being done within Wage and Hour with partners in Education at the local level.

A newer relationship to highlight our Atlanta District office has established a relationship with work-based learning Director for the Central Education Center for Coweta County Schools. The CEC is a unique experience, a joint venture among business and industry, and the county school system and West Georgia

Technical College is also involved. Our Atlanta office has provided child labor guidance to the work-based learning program. The schools have posted our child labor posters within the district, and because of this relationship, they will provide child labor information during two upcoming sessions and establish a booth at the annual State of Georgia Conference this month. So we're super excited to learn and for you to hear more about this partnership in the upcoming panel.

I certainly want to thank you all for your time and attention today, and I'll turn it now back over to Cindy as she introduces today's panel.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Bridget, thank you so much for all of that information. You provided such clarity to be able to understand when a job that a student is in might be something that we should be questioning. I greatly appreciate that and for the work that you and your department are doing to protect our students.

Now it's my pleasure to bring our panel forward so that we can take some of the information that Bridget gave us and hear about how it's working on the ground. I'd like to welcome back to the floor, Ms. Norma Flores Lopez, who we met earlier, Mr. Mark Whitlock, the Chief Executive Officer of Central Educational Center in Georgia, and Ms. Ashley Allen Feliciano, the Assistant District Director of the Southeast Regional Initiative and the team lead for the Child Labor within the U.S. Department of Labor. Welcome, all of you. We appreciate you being here today. You also will be meeting later Ms. Sirena Bazile-Cox, who's the Senior Advisor of Office Policy for the U.S. Department of Labor, who's going to come in when we go into our live questions and answers. Now, I'd like to go ahead and begin our conversation with you, Mark. Can you tell us a bit about your partnership with the Department of Labor? How did you get in touch with the Wage and Hour Division, and how have you worked together?

Mark Whitlock: We began the most recent iteration of that partnership back in 2016 when employers in the manufacturing sector asked about apprenticeship. We contacted the Safety, Health, Environmental Services Group at Georgia Tech, which has an OSHA consultation program.

They put us in touch with Wage and Hour, and we began to talk with Wage and Hour about apprenticeship guidelines, understanding of labor laws. And we did things as granular as submit workplace sketches, equipment lists so that USDOL colleagues could guide us and we could help employers to feel comfortable with the opportunity for apprenticeships for high school-aged students.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That sounds like a wonderful partnership, and all the little steps that you provided to get in there can be helpful for others listening. The idea of talking to the folks that you're going to be working with, and I particularly am interested in those sketches that you put in so that you can have conversation about the workplace. Thank you for sharing those steps.

Mark Whitlock: Absolutely.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Now, I'd like to have Ashley come in and tell us a little bit about what made that collaboration successful.

Ashley Allen Feliciano: Yes. Well, to be honest, a large part of what made that collaboration successful is the commitment on the part of Coweta County to ensuring that kids are safe in the workplace and the kids under their supervision have the information that they need as well as the employers to keep those kids safe in the workplace.

Beyond coordinating with us and reaching out to us for clarification and for information, they also took it upon themselves to share the information they received with other folks that they work with, who they know are working with minors who may be in the workplace as well, and also introducing us and bringing more people into the fold so that they can communicate with us and get information from us as well.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's wonderful. So it sounds like the collaboration expanded over time.

Ashley Allen Feliciano: Yes.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent.

Ashley Allen Feliciano: And it's still growing.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thanks. Mark, would you like to add to that?

Mark Whitlock: Yeah, Ashley's exactly right. It's still growing. It's going to grow more. The collaboration allowed us to help employers establish parameters. Ashley will know that, most recently, we've begun adding lots of nonprofit partners to our work-based learning employer sites.

That gave us yet another opportunity to go back to Wage and Hour to get help with guidelines that we could share with students and parents as we have done before. But that also helped us to identify how to recruit partners into the work-based learning opportunity for students. So the partnership is growing. It's going to grow more. We appreciate that.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. So your recruitment strategies are always expanding and including a variety of different sectors and not just the sectors that you began with. That's wonderful. All right. Now we know that there is... there's a lot of work going on in the county school system in which you work, Mark. Can you tell us a little bit about the work that you did with the county school system on this partnership and maybe a little bit about effective ways that you've worked with the government partners to get the buy-in from the school and district?

Mark Whitlock: Sure. Cindy, I would tell you that the biggest word is intentionality. We worked with the school district to bring business, to bring layers of education, and to bring local government to the table to create what the State of Georgia calls a College and Career Academy, where students under the age of 18 can focus on gaining highly technical skills that are needed by employers today.

It was that intentionality that led us to build our stakeholder team to include groups like Georgia Tech, their Occupational Safety and Health Group, and to include Wage and Hour. We began as we developed that team to understand that the layers of stakeholders have to continue to grow, but intentionality was what led us to that.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And that's excellent. And with the intentionality can oftentimes come hand in hand with purpose, which is something that you can help students to develop a sense of purpose and to highlight their intent for a career pathway. Excellent.

Mark Whitlock: It's wonderful to see those students get interested in an occupation, learn about it, and begin to practice what they learn in the classroom.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. Now we know that there's essential information for faculty and staff to have to make sure that we're helping students to stay safe, especially given what we heard about the cases that the Department of Labor has been dealing with of late. And there's also information that we need to make sure our students have. What's the most effective way to reach young people directly to make sure they understand their rights? Norma, I'd like to start with you on this one.

Norma Flores Lopez: Absolutely. For many of these youth that are working, school is their safe place where they get to be children, where they get to learn, where they get to explore the things that they love. And so I think in recognizing that that's their safe place is making sure that all the kids are able to have an overabundance of information about how to stay safe and making sure they know where to access this information.

So while that might not be provided necessarily by every employer, whether it's because they don't know that that information needs to be handed out or maybe it's not in a culturally appropriate way for them, that's where the schools can be able to step in and ensure, given that so many of the kids do go to school.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent, thank you. And Mark, what would you like to add to that prompt?

Mark Whitlock: We build safety training into classes for students. Host companies emphasize safety training. They provide great supervision, and we look for companies that wish to mentor, where that mentoring approach is something that's very important to us. We have orientation and parent meetings with every work-based learning student. And for nonprofit placements in particular, parents sign a document outlining the parameters of the internship so that... We've got students, parents, teachers, everybody is on page.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: So you have sort of this career wraparound for the students in all three places where they're living and learning.

Mark Whitlock: That's correct.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: The home, the school, and the job. Wonderful. Thank you. And Ashley, would you like to add to that prompt?

Ashley Allen Feliciano: Sure. Really, to sort of follow up on some of what Norma said, I think something that's really critical for the department in terms of making sure kids have the information that they need is to, similar to a lot of communities that we work with, meet them where they are. Whether that be at school, whether that be on virtual platforms, we need to come meet you where you are and try to give you the information that you need.

That also includes things like trying to be responsive linguistically, making sure that our materials are available in different languages. It means using different platforms, like I mentioned, whether that be social media, whether that be written publications, whether that be in-person presentations and things of that nature. We just try to make sure that we are making it as easy as possible for kids to have the information that they need to know their rights and be safe in the workplace.

And we don't necessarily even limit that information only to what's applicable to the kids because we know and we've seen that kids will share that information with their parents. They'll go home and say, "Hey, mom I learned today that you should be getting overtime if you're working over 40 hours." So it really is just a matter of getting the information out there and trying to also make it as accessible as possible.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's wonderful that it can be intergenerational and it's going to the parents, and I imagine it probably also would go to younger siblings and being able for that student to be able to be supportive in both generational directions. Excellent.

All right. Thank you. Now we know that many people... that there are people who want to work, young people who need to work, and some young people who are forced to work. We heard that from Bryan, and we know that that is a continuum that we see as young people enter the workforce. And Norma, I think that we heard from you that you really needed to work. You really were working to support your family and didn't really... your family didn't really think about it, right, at the time because it was such a need. Can you start us off by asking what you would say to a young person who says they need to work?

Norma Flores Lopez: The need is absolutely understandable, especially when we're talking about meeting some of the most basic needs like putting food on the table. My question to them would be, "How can we find a way to ensure that the work does not disrupt or interrupt your education?" Education is absolutely the most important job of a child is to make sure that they are getting their studies.

And because for those that have been living in poverty, it's going to be one of the most successful ways to be able to end that generational cycle. And so, for me, what I would ask that child is, "Is that job going to keep you safe? Make sure that you're not being employed in places that are harmful to you. And

then, as I mentioned, how can we make sure that we put a plan that will continue to support your education and prioritize that so that you can be able to successfully complete your education and have other opportunities as you grow up."

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: So you're putting the guide rails up a little bit. So it's, "You need to work, we hear that. We want you to be able to work, and this is how you can be protective and planful and purposeful in your work." Excellent, thank you. And Mark, what would you say to a young person who says, "It doesn't matter what the work's like I need to work?"

Mark Whitlock: Yeah, we would talk with them, Cindy, about the fact that, "Every job's going to teach you something, but you need to align yourself as best you can with what's best for your future. There are opportunities that you'll have in high school that can set you up for greater outcomes later on. We need to help you explore what those can best be for you.

We want you to think of work as an extension to the classroom. We want you to explore what you're passionate about. We want you to develop work-related skills. We want to teach you about work ethic and soft skills, and we want you to practice those in the workplace. Those kinds of habits, those kinds of focus and thoughtfulness, are going to set you up for greater outcomes later on."

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Right. So you're tying that, that work experience in with the classroom. And we know that, for many students, that can actually make the classroom material more meaningful and oftentimes increase their engagement in the classroom as well.

Mark Whitlock: And improve their grades in the classroom.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes. Yes, absolutely. Excellent. Thank you. And Ashley, what would you like to add to that? What would you say to a young person who says they need to work?

Ashley Allen Feliciano: Yes. I would say, honestly, I think Norma and I must have been sharing notes. I would say that firstly, we understand and we realize that for... not every kid doesn't have the option of whether or not they're going to contribute financially to their family. For a lot of kids, it is something that has to happen as soon as they're able to do that. And we understand that. "But the other side of that is that as valuable as the opportunity is to get exposure and experience in the workplace, the most important thing is that you're safe when you're there.

That you're able to return home to your families in the same condition that you went to work that day. And also that it's not preventing you from having access to education." Because, as Norma mentioned and as Mark mentioned, that is a critical opportunity and something that kids need access to in their life. And then thirdly, we would say, "We understand how important it's that you can contribute to your family when your family needs that support. But as I mentioned, the most important thing is that you're safe because if your family

had to choose between that check and you coming home safe, they're always going to choose you. They're always going to choose having you come home safe. So that is the top priority."

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Those are powerful messages that you can't sacrifice yourself to a job, to a career even. And I think those are good messages to carry on into adulthood for all of us really. Thank you. This next question is going to come back to you, Norma.

What were... There are lots of things that you spoke about in your introduction at the very beginning and about your experience. This question is about what kind of information do you wish you had known as a young person or an adolescent. And or what would've been the most impactful way for a teacher or another trusted adult to support you in your experience?

Norma Flores Lopez: The easy answer would be resources. I think that as somebody that was living in pretty desperate poverty, didn't have access to information because we had to move around in the community, we often didn't know who to turn to for support, resources would've been very helpful. It was a college counselor. It was a teacher who would point me to somebody that would be able to provide me with shoes or somebody that would provide me with a winter coat, or even organizations that could help me provide for books that were required reading during the summer. Or once I wanted to take the dual credit courses, the college books that my parents couldn't afford, I was able to take advantage of resources that were available through the school system.

My parents were not knowledgeable, they didn't speak English and were not knowledgeable of the American school system. Didn't know how to navigate that. And teachers, counselors, school officials are aware of so many different resources around the community that can be able to provide that support and fill in those gaps to ensure that young students are able to participate and be able to even have those sort of things that they didn't think were possible, that were outside of their reach with those sort of opportunities, scholarships, different resources around the community. And so, for me, I had folks that stepped in and helped me out in those very real ways. Even if it was just nowadays you could do an Amazon wishlist, right, to be able to help out a family in need. And I think those would be things that would be very much appreciated by the community.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. I'm going to go off script here a little bit, and you can opt out of this question. But my follow-up question to you, Norma, is, how did you know that an adult was available to provide resources or support? What signals did they send you?

Norma Flores Lopez: I understand from teachers and administrators how oftentimes they can be so overwhelmed and how they have so many students and so many different lesson plans, and they are so overstretched. Especially during the pandemic, I think all of us realized how teachers are. The counselors are the care providers, everything in between, right, and fill in so many shoes. But what mattered to me was to feel seen and to be valued as a student and not to be felt as a burden.

Those teachers that rolled their eyes and sighed under the breath because now they had to prepare a separate lesson plan because I came in late, I felt that and the guilt that I carried with me.

And instead, I had a teacher that looked at me and said, "Hey, you are a talented writer. You are fantastic. Let's really cultivate these skills in you." And saw me as somebody that was worthwhile and had great things that I can be able to provide. After that third-grade teacher, I was a top student every single year. I just really blossomed. And so it was a teacher that stepped out and went above and beyond and saw me for what I could do and not what I can't do that was able to help out. And those were the ones that were typically the ones that would be open to say, "Do you need something else? Is there some other way that I could be able to provide you with support?"

And once that trust was felt, once I felt seen, it was easier to go to them and say, "Well, actually, my family could really use a winter coat right about now. Or I could really use a pair of shoes, or my family's really struggling to put food on the table," and maybe that's something that they could help me out with. But it was the teachers that were willing to open themselves up and to be able to see me that I had value and want to cultivate that in me that really helped me be here today and to be the first person in both sides of my family that even earn a master's degree. And so, hopefully, it's something that I can now pass on to other kids and show them that they matter too when they too can be able to do more.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Awesome. And that's amazing to be a first-generation person in a family to earn a higher degree. I'm also in that role, and so I can understand how important that is for a young person, right, to be able to have that. Thank you so much for your willingness to respond to that off-script question. All right.

We're going to move to our next prompt. There are many ways that educators and school staff can promote education prevention of unlawful child labor. What should people do if they're concerned that one of their students may already be employed in a dangerous job or in a job with long or overnight hours? Ashley, this question goes to you.

Ashley Allen Feliciano: Okay. Well, first, what I would say is please, please give us a call. Even if you're not ready to file a complaint, even if you're not at that stage, you just want to get information, please give us a call and just find out whether what's happening is something that's okay or is not okay. We can, at the very least, give you that basic information. Additionally, contacting us, even if you file a complaint or you're just getting information, can be confidential. Even if we were to do an investigation of a business, we do not disclose the reason for that investigation.

We do not disclose... If someone made a complaint, we would not disclose who may have filed a complaint or not. Another important thing to mention is our services are the same whether a person is documented or undocumented. That is not something that impacts the work that we do in terms of the assistance we provide. Any person who is working in this country, whether they have

documentation or not, is entitled to the same rights and protections and assistance from our agency as any other person in this country. Additionally, we have a very diverse staff, so we have many languages available on staff that we can assist people with, and those that we don't have, we do offer telephone-based translation services that has, I think, around 120 languages available.

So please reach out to us. We will speak to you in your language to the best of our ability. And if we can't do it, we'll find someone that can because at the end of the day for us, and I think for everybody, every minute or every day that a child is working in a dangerous situation is another day that that child is at risk where they could be hurt or worse and no one wants that. So we always say, "Please reach out to us. We are happy to help, especially when it involves keeping a child safe."

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's amazing that you have so many languages. It's so important because some words just don't translate the same way. When a person is speaking about their experience, they really need to be heard, which helps them, as Norma said, to feel like they're seen when they can be understood by another individual. So thank you so much for that. I also appreciate, and I hope that the audience really took note of the fact that immigration statuses irrelevant here, that everybody has a right to be safe and healthy in their workplace, and that the Department of Labor isn't going to be checking status and addressing that.

They're going to be addressing the workplace circumstances. So that's wonderful to know. We have one more prompt I think we have time for prior to going to our live Q&A. The last prompt I'd like all three of you to respond to is recommendations for next steps that somebody in a school or a whole district might take. How would they get started in addressing child labor exploitation in their school or district? And Norma, I'm going to pass it to you first.

Norma Flores Lopez: Absolutely. I think it's getting to know the students and understanding where they're coming from. Oftentimes, it's really difficult when you have a classroom full of 30 students and you have multiple classrooms, you have a whole school that you're responsible for, kids like myself are the ones that easily get lost in the shuffle. And we feel that because maybe a program might be beneficial or a job opportunity might be beneficial for certain kids, there's others that are doing it, that are working because they desperately have a need to meet, and that puts them in grave danger.

And so I think it's really important to be able to understand that. There's a lot of materials to learn about children that are working in agriculture, both legally and illegally, that are working in those sort of jobs. And there's other organizations that are dedicated to these sort of muted narratives. And so I encourage folks to be able to take the time to learn more about it and to also understand that you guys are a very important touch point and a safe place for these children and that you guys could be a conduit to be able to share information to make sure that these kids are safe and are able to-

Information to make sure that these kids are safe and are able to prioritize their education and can even provide resources to them, little bright moments of

happiness. I encourage you guys to get to know the students, especially those that are quieter in the back that might be a little bit more troubled, those are usually the ones that could use that act of kindness more so.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. We do, frequently in these webinars, come back to that idea that the relationship, the knowing, the seeing of a student, of all students in the school really is the keystone of being able to provide good support to students no matter what's going on in their lives, for sure. That's wonderful. Now I'd like to go ahead and shift over to Mark. Go ahead. How would you encourage schools to get started?

Mark Whitlock: Sure. I would encourage again that we use that word intentionality. Make sure that in your entire K-12 system, there are opportunities for parents and students to learn about great jobs in your community. Make sure that employers are at the table, helping your teachers to incorporate that understanding into their lessons. Make sure that parents understand what are the needs of the local economy and what jobs might be available so that assessment can be done by those parents and students all the way through the K-12 experience. Then, I recommend that employers and schools working with those employers get in touch with their state's OSHA consultation program to become familiar with safety and health regulation, safety and health opportunities that ensure the best environments for students. Those are some steps that I would encourage folks to take in education.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. Some of those are small steps and some of those are somewhat bigger steps, and that's really what we need based on where our schools are in development. Thank you. Ashley, what would you recommend for next steps for schools?

Ashley Allen Feliciano: Yes. Well, I would say, first, do your best to be informed. Go to our website. You can look at my background behind me, it says youthrules.gov. That's one of our websites where we house a lot of our child labor information. As Bridget mentioned earlier, there's information directed to minors themselves, to parents, to employers, to other parties that may be interacting with kids who are in the workforce. Get that information on how to do child labor the right way in the safe way if you are going to have minors in employment. That's number one.

Number two, I would also want to put in a plug for our CORPS, and that stands for Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialists. Those are our best point people that we have. Mark is familiar, he's worked extensively with our CORPS, Carla here in the Atlanta district office, but every district office across the country has someone in this position who is our main point of contact for the community, for all of our stakeholders, for any needs that you may have, whether that be requesting outreach, getting publications, getting other questions answered, or getting connected to someone who can help you with something that may not be in our wheelhouse. I guess the best first steps I would say are to read up and reach out.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: That's a great way of summarizing it. It should be a bumper sticker, the read up and reach out. Really, to make sure that that information is available. I could see that background of yours being a poster on a wall in a school or even in the coffee shop or wherever young people might be working in your community, know your rights. That's wonderful.

I'm going to pause for a moment on our conversation and I'm going to do a formal closing of the webinar delivery section. We're not leaving yet though, we're not leaving until 4:30. We're going to be going into our live Q&A in just a moment, so please use that Q&A button to answer your questions or make comments about what you've heard so far. Right now what I'd like to do is I'd like to first thank our panelists and our speakers for all this great information that you provided and to remind the audience that these slides are available, so don't feel like if you miss something... You can download the slides, you can also listen to the recording again, so you have access to all of this information. We appreciate your attention, your questions, and of course those icons that are still going up the right side of my screen.

We also want to make sure that you're aware of some additional webinars that are coming up in our Lessons From the Field and our human trafficking child exploitation webinar series. In December, we have two Lessons From the Field webinars coming up that are part of our free-to-learn miniseries, which is focusing in on providing a variety of evidence-based approaches to prevent, address, and reduce the effects of bullying, violence, and hate, while also supporting school safety, school-based mental health, and positive school climates. December 6th is going to focus on getting students and families into the school's doors and into the classrooms, and we'll highlight strategies to enhance belonging.

December 13th, we'll be focusing on engaging students in academics and in school culture and extracurricular activities. It's all about engagement there. There'll be additional webinars in this series throughout the new year. I encourage you, even if you've never gone to a Lessons From the Field before and you've always come to this series, there's going to be a lot of great information that's going to be relevant to young people who might be experiencing trafficking or exploitation. Our next human trafficking child exploitation webinar is currently scheduled for January 31st, and we'll be focusing in on what it looks like when you report a suspicion of child trafficking, either sexual or labor trafficking, and what can be done to maintain a healthy relationship with that student and provide supports through that process. We really hope to see you at some of those upcoming events. I'd like to go ahead and also remind everybody that all of the materials that you heard about today, all the references that went out via chat, and the recording will be on that event webpage, the website address is here.

You can look at other recordings from the webinar series by going to that series page. Of course, the human trafficking webpage @theed.gov has a lot of information about human trafficking. Then finally, before we move into our live Q&A, I'd like to encourage everybody to take a few minutes to provide us feedback on the feedback form. We really do use that information you give us

and it guides our material. We had so many questions about exploitation or what do you do if it doesn't quite fit trafficking, here we are with talking about exploitation. We use your information to guide our content development. Please take a few minutes to click that link and provide that feedback. We will bring the link back in after our live Q&A as well, so don't worry if you don't catch it right yet.

Now I'd like to go ahead and move us back to our live Q&A and I'm going to invite all of our speakers to come back in, so Bridget and all of our panelists. I'm also going to invite in Sirena Bazile-Cox, who you have not yet met, and Michael Kravitz who are going to also be helping to field some of the questions in the Q&A. Welcome back, everybody. I'm going to go through, we've got a lot of questions. Please, those of you in the audience, continue to hit that Q&A button, you can add more questions as we move along. The first question that I have that I'd like to put out is going to go to Norma and Michael, please provide any kind of best practices in terms of building trust with the community before you're providing these interventions. It's really about building that buy-in. What would you suggest? Norma?

Norma Flores Lopez: I think trust is incredibly important, especially for folks in our community. I think it's really important to be honest with folks about what you can do, honest with information that you actually have versus things that you may not actually know and say, "I can get back to you." It's really important that you do get back to folks about making sure that information is provided. I think showing folks that you really are there for them, that you're there to provide them with the most honest and forthcoming information, and to show them that you are providing a reliable source of information is incredibly important for trust. That's really important for the communication and to ensure that they get the information they need.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. That follow-up is essential for sure, even if you don't know what the answer is right now. Thank you. Michael, what would you add to that question?

Michael Kravitz: Great. Actually, a lot of this Ashley has covered, I think she did a fantastic job kind of talking about how our outreach staff at the Department of Labor, our corps develop these relationships with all of you, with the community, and that helps build the trust. That's the honesty. We much rather have that conversation and avoid having to do investigations and really get the word out. We recognize that a lot of these kids may not be aware of the laws, but hopefully their parents or guardians or custodians and educators can all kind of help them along so that even if we're not able to touch, we're able to reach the community who can then touch. I think Jessica kind of started off these remarks about how we have to partner at the Department of Labor with all of you and others to really address what is a growing problem.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. That's such a key piece to emphasize. Really with everything that we talk about, it really is about the collaboration because no one entity, in this case the schools, can do it by themselves. We all need to work together to be able to keep our young people safe and help them to learn and develop. Thank you for that. Okay. Sirena, here's a question for you. Can you go over a situation where

a parent owns a business and has their 12, 13, or 14 year year old working at that business? How many hours is the child permitted to work, for example?

Sirena Bazile-Cox: Thank you for the question. If that parent is the sole owner of that business, oftentimes a person might think that if the parent is a partner in the partnership or if the parent is one of the officers of a corporation that this same exemption implies and it does not. If in fact that parent is the sole owner of the business or if they're a partner in a partnership that consists of only their parents, then there is a parental exemption that does apply, in which those 14 and 15 year olds are under the age of 16, they do not have to be in compliance with our standards as they are listed, so they may work however many number of hours that their parent requires.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Okay. I'm going to go over to Michael again for a moment. Michael, there's a question here that is asking about the DOL's confidentiality policy for people making the reports. Is that confidentiality guaranteed or required in the same way as it is for people who are talking about the domestic or sexual environments working in those kinds of agencies?

Michael Kravitz: I can't speak for the other agencies, but I can tell you a little bit about our confidentiality policy because it really is so important to us. We really need that trust and we really do uphold that confidentiality. People can call us with information and tips. We'll take an anonymous complaint related to child labor. We really just need that information and we'll work with them and certainly do not disclose that information to the employer. If for whatever reason it ever went to court, this is something that we would discuss with the confidential complainant and see if they're wanting to do that. We do everything we can to protect that confidentiality. If there's at all a concern, we will not move forward. We very much just want that information and we'll keep that complainant informed and not disclose that. We recognize for this process to work, we have to maintain that confidentiality and we do that throughout the investigation.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Okay. Excellent. Thank you. We have another one coming over to you, Sirena, here. Often we receive phone calls, so this person has received phone calls from people who are concerned about children selling candy late at night alone or going door to door, is this considered a violation? We see them all over the place, kids doing this, is it considered a violation?

Sirena Bazile-Cox: Youth peddling is how we refer to that in our regulations. Youth peddling is prohibited for 14 and 15 year olds. It's different from if they're out there and they are selling candies for school, things of that nature, but if they are actually out there working for an employer to sell candy, that sounds like we have two separate issues here. Number one, it will be youth peddling. Then number two, if they're 14 and 15 year olds, they have to be in compliance with the hour standards, and so if they're working beyond 7:00 PM provided it is prior to June 1st and after Labor Day, that would be a violation as well. Definitely youth peddling is prohibited, also you want to look at the hours that they are working.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Right, so you want to look at are you selling this to support your school, are you within the legal timeframe? Because I know that in one of our previous

webinars that was used as an example of labor trafficking where there were traffickers who were forcing young people to do things door to door and sell things to folks as part of a criminal enterprise. It was also around the forced criminality webinar for those who might be interested. We have another question here. I'm going to actually shift up a little bit because we have a lot of people here in our audience who are actually coming from the school-based health clinics. We've got a lot of nurses here, so I'm just going to put this up real quick for a question to see if anybody wants to respond to this one. There's a question that just came in about the types of questions that you might ask when you're seeing a student for a physical or other health visit. Is there anything that might put up a red flag for potential labor exploitation that anybody would like to try to respond to here?

Michael Kravitz:

I'm happy to chime in a little bit and maybe help clarify, maybe a little what we have witnessed in some of the cases that we have undertaken. First of all, we work with the Department of Health and Human Services, so this is part of the partnership I was talking about. They would definitely be the experts in terms of the specific warning signs to look for. As a matter of fact, we've done some cross-training with them to help our staff better understand some of this to be seen. But one thing that we have noticed, particularly with some of the serious labor exploitation, is that the schools are able to identify if a kid is particularly tired, if they have chemical burns on their hands, maybe from using some hazardous chemicals that they have been working, if they're doing some... Some of the serious abuses we've uncovered have been in manufacturing and some of the cleaning materials that they're doing some of these night shifts, Jessica mentioned one of those cases, so seeing some of those burns on their hands.

If they're calling in sick or late on a repeated basis, those are the kinds of things that I think would be those red flags that they may be working at nights in dangerous conditions. Yeah, all of that is really useful information for our investigative purposes.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes. Thank you for being willing to jump in on that. I appreciate that. Norma, did you want to add?

Norma Flores Lopez:

I just wanted to say that for educators in the classroom, it's absolutely right what Michael was saying. If you see a student that has fallen asleep, that can't stay awake, that's typically a sign that they have been working long hours overnight, or long absences as well. Or even for students that typically, let's say for myself, that would each year go to a school in Indiana from August to October. If this particular year I didn't come in, it might not be that I'm not in the area, but rather I'm just opting not to be able to go to school and it's important to be able to have somebody go by. Many school districts are able to have migrant education programs that will have counselors and recruiters that are able to do site visits to camps, migrant camps, labor camps, and to keep a lookout to see if there's children out there, and having the parents understand that it's important for those children to be enrolled in school. But there's little signs in the classroom as falling asleep, chemical burns, but then also long absences or not returning back the following year.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. Those are key pieces, the absences, but also the lack of returning and wondering where that student went and being able to follow up to try to figure out what's going on there. Absolutely. All right, thank you. Michael, I'm going to come back to you again. We have one minute. Other than finding companies, what role does the Department of Labor have in helping kids help themselves? What is the relationship between the Department of Labor and child protection?

Michael Kravitz: Thank you. Yeah, so we definitely see this as a collaboration. We do have a piece to educate, not just enforce. Our mission is very much we want people to know the rules. There's a lot of safe and healthy working environments that is good for children, so we don't want to exclude... Kids very much can work and should work in the right environments, but it has to be safe. They should not be on a kill floor of a meat packing plant, but there are definitely opportunities for kids to have safe working environments, and we want to encourage that and explain those vast differences to avoid the really serious, unfortunate problems we've been uncovering.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Absolutely. Thank you so much for that. We have a lot of other questions here. Thank you for sending them in, everybody. We will send your questions out to all of these speakers and to the department to guide future content. Please feel free to reach out to us if you need further assistance or want further information. You will also be able to have the email addresses and all those resources that everybody spoke about, as well as Mark Whitlock has a ton of resources to offer if you're interested in doing a program somewhat similar to what he's done, and his email address is in the resources and in his bio. Thank you all for being here today. We greatly appreciate your attendance. We hope that you have a wonderful rest of the day.