

Truckers Against Trafficking:

Using network leadership to mobilize the trucking community as the eyes and ears of the nation's highways to end sex trafficking

Domestic Sex Trafficking

Around the world, there are an estimated 40.3 million slaves.

Human trafficking has been reported in all 50 states, and the number of victims in the United States is estimated in the hundreds of thousands.

Victims are lured, kidnapped, or otherwise coerced into forced labor or commercial sex. Traffickers recruit out of schools, online, in shopping malls, as well as the streets and other locations. A large percentage of the people trafficked are women and children. Many of them are used in the sex industry. In fact, what we might have once observed and called "prostitution," could in fact be *forced* commercial sexual activity. The victims are trafficked at a variety of venues such as on the street, in private homes, and in legitimate business such as restaurants, truck stops, and motels. Human trafficking intersects with several industries, including hospitality, tourism, oil and gas, entertainment, and transportation, amongst others.

➔ *The Need: Victims need to be identified, rescued, and supported in becoming thriving survivors.*

The Big Idea

When the founders of Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) first learned about human trafficking in 2007 and that federal investigations were underway at truck stops to identify traffickers, they had a revolutionary idea.

➔ *The Big Idea: What if truckers were educated and equipped to spot and report potential signs of human trafficking to the National Hotline?*

"There are over three million truck drivers across the United States, driving day and night to move the commercial goods that help sustain our nation's economy," said Kendis Paris, executive director of TAT. "Who better to spot potential signs of trafficking on the roads and at public rest stops, travel plazas, restaurants, and hotels?"

Founded initially in 2009 as a ministry initiative, Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) became a 501c3 in 2011. TAT's mission is to educate, equip, empower, and mobilize members of the trucking and travel plaza industry to combat domestic sex trafficking. Yet, TAT is more than an organization. Through the power of network leadership, TAT is a vibrant community across trucking and law enforcement of "truckers against trafficking" who are innovating, advocating, and partnering to end domestic sex trafficking.



The Problem & Solution

The idea may be simple, but it is revolutionary. Traditionally, our society has been conditioned to see the problem as "prostitution." Too often the response has been to ignore it. But, as TAT encourages, it is critical

to consider, “What’s her story?” It is quite possible that a person engaged in commercial sexual activity has not chosen to be there but has been forced or coerced.

So, instead of seeing “prostitution” as the problem, TAT has redefined the problem and solution:

- ➔ *The Problem: Central to TAT’s approach is the belief that “traffickers,” or those who force or coerce victims into sexual activities, are the problem.*
- ➔ *The Solution: And, as or more importantly, truckers, as the eyes and ears of the nation’s highways, are critical to the solution.*

Theory of Change

Truckers Against Trafficking is raising up a mobile army of transportation professionals to assist law enforcement in the recognition and reporting of human trafficking, in order to aid in the recovery of victims and the arrest of their perpetrators. Thus, central to its theory of change is the belief that equipping members of the trucking industry to spot and report potential signs of sex trafficking can lead to the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of traffickers and freedom for victims.

- ➔ *The Theory of Change: Educate and equip trucking community → truckers and travel plaza employees report potential cases → law enforcement investigates, arrests, and prosecutes → survivors are empowered*



Strategies for Engaging & Scaling

However, with over three million truck drivers across America, spreading ideas and new practices to scale the industry is no small task. To do this, TAT offers a number of ways for organizations across the entire industry to engage—e.g., trucking companies train their drivers, state trucking associations advocate amongst their member companies, and law enforcement partner with travel plazas and trucking companies to form local coalitions. In so doing, they are engaging organizations and individuals across the trucking community and law enforcement as a network of “truckers against trafficking”.

Critical to their uptake is helping people understand the reality of the issue, providing simple things they can do, and communicating positively about the potential and real impact the trucking industry is having in ending slavery.



Engaging and Partnering across Trucking and Law Enforcement

- ➔ *The Approach to Scaling: Identify a variety of ways for trucking industry and law enforcement to both reach and influence truckers and incorporate anti-trafficking policies and practices into their own work.*

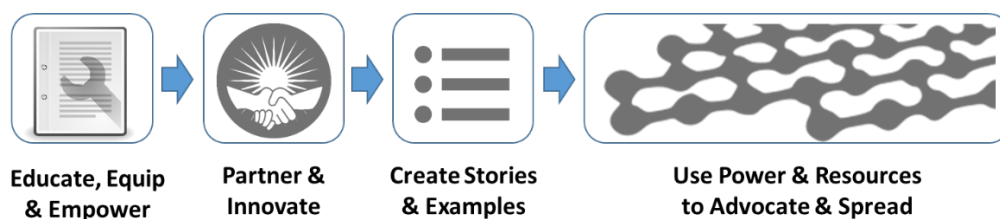
Network Leadership

Network leadership is core to TAT's approach. TAT is not about scaling its organization, but rather equipping and mobilizing partners to use their expertise, resources, and power to fuel the movement.

"We come alongside members of the trucking and law enforcement communities to provide resources that equip and empower them. More importantly, as they learn about the issue of trafficking, we learn from and partner with them in discovering new ways of engaging the trucking community and supporting truckers in the effort to end trafficking," said Paris. "They are the experts in their sector and have the power to identify the resources at their disposal, create new ways of engaging in anti-trafficking, and influence their peers."

This powerful approach equips partners who develop ideas and approaches in their organizations, regions, or spheres of influence. If it is successful and there is potential for broader application, TAT partners with them to write about their work. And as applicable, together they advocate across the industry to spread the innovative approaches.

➔ *Network Leadership Approach: TAT educates, equips and empowers trucking and law enforcement individuals and organizations → they partner to innovate and test new approaches → TAT documents the success stories and examples others can follow → they leverage each other's power and resources to advocate and spread across the trucking community*



Programs

So, what does this look like in practice? TAT has several programs through which trucking and law enforcement members can partner:

- [The Freedom Drivers Project](#) is a first-of-its-kind, mobile exhibit serving as a remarkable tool to educate members of the trucking industry, law enforcement, and general public about domestic sex trafficking and how the trucking industry is combating it. From the compelling exterior imagery on this 48-foot trailer to the interior's video monitors and actual trafficking artifacts from women and children who had been enslaved by traffickers, this trailer serves as a powerful education tool.
- The [Industry Training Program](#) is TAT's core program that drives the biggest impact by training hundreds of thousands of industry members about the realities of domestic sex trafficking and how the trucking industry can combat it. TAT training has resulted in a significant increase of reports of possible trafficking to the national hotline from truck drivers, which has resulted in victim recoveries and the arrest of criminals.
- The [Shipping Partners Program](#) engages major purchasers of shipping to encourage their carriers to implement TAT materials as a regular part of training and orientation. Building on the corporate social responsibility movement, and leveraging purchasing power, TAT is utilizing pre-existing relationships between shippers and their carriers to train even more drivers.
- [Coalition Builds](#) bring law enforcement agencies at all levels of government together with the general managers of truck stops, representatives of trucking companies and state trucking

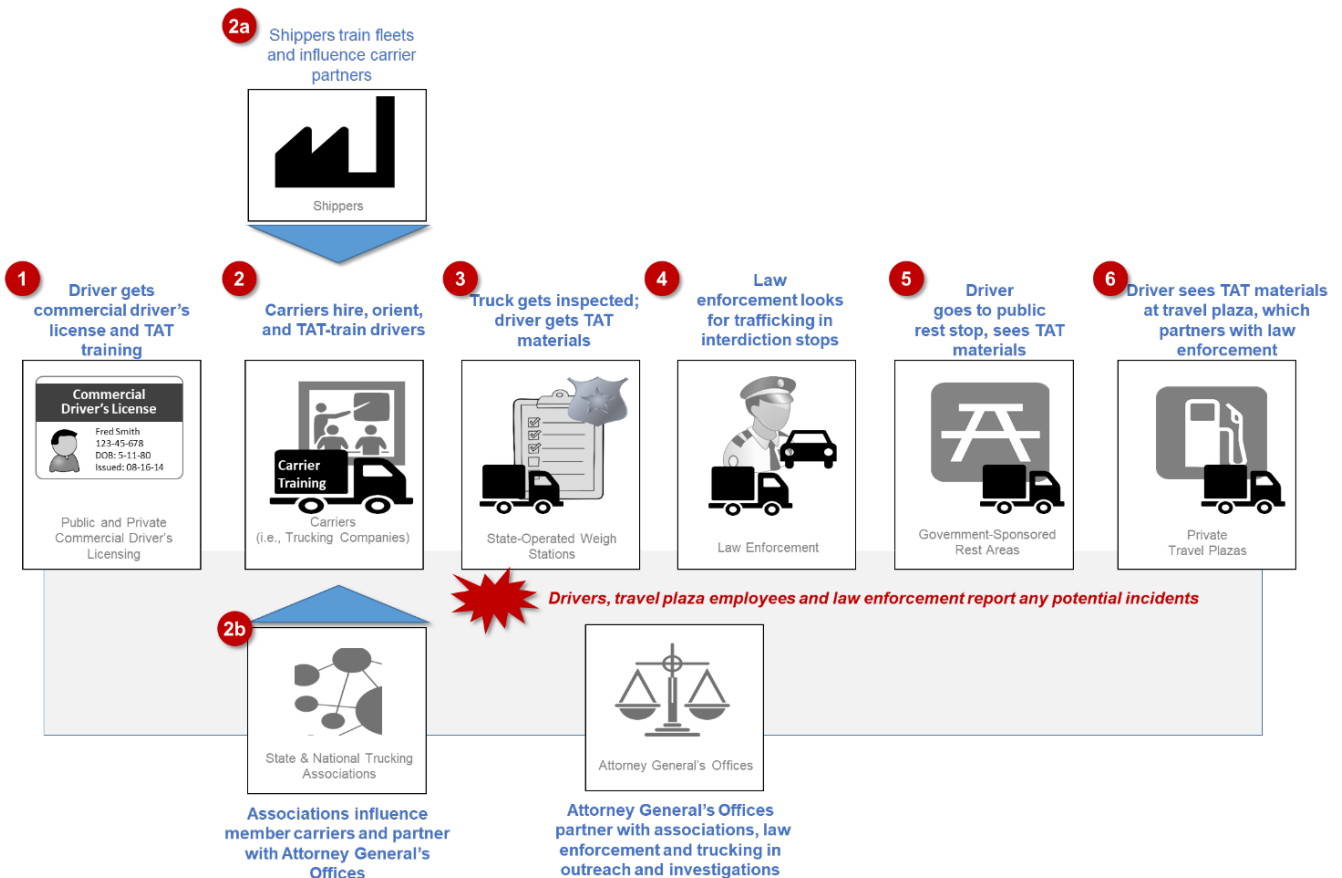
associations to provide extensive training resulting in a significant increase in anti-trafficking activity in a local area.

- **State-Based Initiatives** build on the groundbreaking work done by the Iowa Motor Vehicle Enforcement (Iowa MVE) agency with TAT materials, by activating the appropriate government agencies in outreach work to the trucking industry. The Iowa MVE Model organizes the state patrol and other law enforcement entities to utilize entry points into the trucking industry to spread the TAT anti-trafficking message.
- The **TAT Dealership Partner Program** provides a specific pathway for manufacturers from all corners of the industry to not only support TAT financially, but also raise awareness about the realities of domestic sex trafficking and TAT's innovative work by becoming a distribution point for materials.

In addition, TAT is in initial stages of working to assist survivors in getting their drivers licenses. TAT is currently surveying survivors to learn more about their needs and the potential support desired, and efforts are also underway to work in collaboration with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and Departments of Motor Vehicles across the nation.

Systems Change

TAT's programs are working to cover the many touchpoints that members of the trucking community and law enforcement may have with trafficking. Collectively they are enabling the discovery and disruption of human trafficking networks by incorporating relevant policies, practices, and trainings into their respective work.



Through these programs and practices, TAT and its partners are facilitating systems change. For example, they are creating:

- ➔ **Values, Meanings, & Training:** awareness of human trafficking, empathy for victims, training around anti-trafficking actions, and efforts to stop the objectification of women and children
- ➔ **Power, Resources, & Influence:** shifts of power from traffickers to the trucking and law enforcement community who are leveraging organizational and individual resources and relationships in anti-trafficking efforts
- ➔ **Policies, Processes, & Social Practices:** adoption of new policies, processes, and social practices across the trucking and law enforcement communities to close loopholes to traffickers



Impact

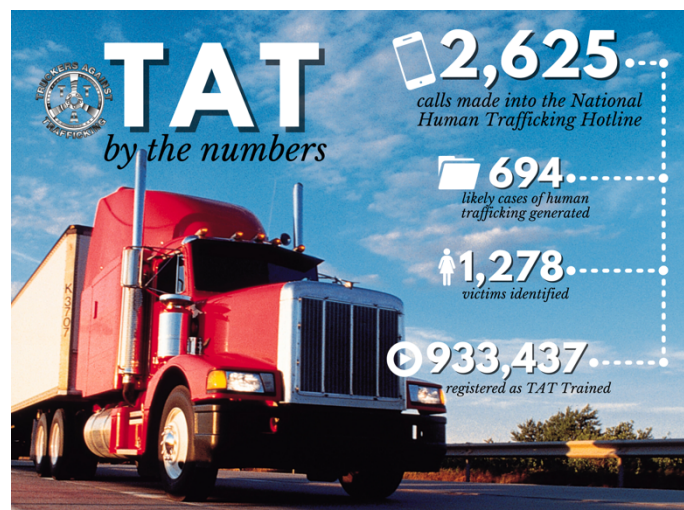
TAT's impact in mobilizing the trucking community to stop trafficking can be seen in the number of calls placed to the National Hotline, and as or more importantly, the number of likely cases of human trafficking identified.

It is also evidenced in stories such as that of Conway Truckload driver Kevin Kimmel. In January 2015, Kimmel caught a glimpse of a distraught-looking young girl in the darkened window of an RV which had pulled into the truck stop where Kimmel had stopped to sleep. He decided things did not look right and called the police. When police responded, they found an Iowa couple in the RV, along with a 20-year-old malnourished and frightened young woman, who said the couple had kidnapped her two weeks earlier in Iowa and forced her into prostitution. The couple was arrested and charged with sex trafficking. TAT named Kimmel the 2015 Harriet Tubman Award winner for his actions which saved a woman from torture and modern-day slavery. As Paris said, "Kevin Kimmel recognized, 'You know what, there's something not right.' And he had the courage to make a call and get involved. And now, he's helped unlock her pathway back to freedom."

And in 2016, TAT presented its Harriet Tubman Award to two TA/Petro employees in Jessup, Maryland, whose observations, quick thinking, and follow-up call to police last year helped law enforcement in Howard County arrest three traffickers and recover six of the 12 women they were forcibly prostituting.

TAT's impact has been fueled and made possible by an entire fleet of partners. Since its inception, TAT has successfully:

Distributed Training & Information



- Over 3 million Wallet Cards
- Over 200,000 training DVDs
- Over 2 million window decals
- Over 500,000 posters and brochures

Partnered to Advocate & Adopt New Practices

- Partnered with hundreds of trucking companies, public and private trucking schools, major truck stops, all state trucking associations, and every major national trucking association
- Registered over 933,000 as TAT trained
- 48 states have adopted the Iowa MVE Model in part or whole
- 12 states now require TAT training within their CDL schools

Expanded to other Regions & Sectors

- Launched TAT Canada in 2019
- Expanding into the energy industry in 2020
- Expanded into the bus industry via Busing on the Lookout

And these successes are being noticed. In addition to being recognized by Congress twice, TAT was awarded the Suzanne McDaniel Memorial Award for Public Awareness in April 2015 as part of the annual Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus Awards at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C. Bill Brady, an over-the-road truck driver for Lodestar, and driver of the Freedom Drivers Project, accepted the award on behalf of TAT. In 2019, after being nominated by the USDOT, Paris received the Presidential Award for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons. And while TAT is focused on domestic sex trafficking, its approach is being replicated internationally.

"As a driver and advocate for truckers, it has always been important to stand for justice, respect, and fair treatment. No other organization has inspired us and so many others to recognize and do more for the exploited and suffering of our society. As TAT's passion, dedication and commitment protect the weakest and most vulnerable in life from the atrocities and abuse of slavery, they have been able to do something that few can fathom... rally and unite the entire trucking industry together!" -- said Allen S.

A Model Ready for Further Replication

In addition to its growth across the trucking industry, the movement is also growing across the bus industry via Busing on the Lookout (BOTL). TAT has successfully partnered with national, regional, and state motorcoach, pupil transportation, and public transit associations to get training materials out to bus operators throughout the country. Less than two years after its launch, over 75,000 members of the bus industry are registered as TAT/BOTL trained. BOTL partners include 70 private bus companies, including Greyhound and Coach USA/Megabus, the two largest motorcoach operators in North America. Transit agencies in 25 states are BOTL training, with First Transit, the largest transit contractor in North America, training all of its drivers in 39 states. BOTL is working with pupil transportation partners in 29 states, with AL, IA, KS, IL, TN and MI incorporating BOTL into curriculum that will reach all school bus drivers statewide. In 2019, TAT honored a bus driver and safety director from Lakefront Lines in OH with the Harriet Tubman Award for their role in the recovery of a victim and arrest of a trafficker.

While TAT has already expanded its model cross-modally, and now into the energy sector, it could equally be transferred to other industries to catalyze partnerships and new social practices that will end trafficking. As TAT has learned in its work with agencies often overlooked in developing strategies to combat human trafficking (such as Departments of Motor Vehicles and Revenue), central to this will be uncovering individuals, organizations, and methods to engage the industry while providing resources and a network to inspire and propel their efforts. In fact, in 2018, TAT was selected to serve on the USDOT's Advisory

Committee on Human Trafficking and assisted in creating a report containing best practices in combating trafficking for all modes of transportation and state agencies. This report was distributed to all state DOTs and governor's offices in hopes that targeted systems change will occur within their agencies and organizations through mass implementation.