Many misconceptions exist about human trafficking. There are plenty of myths about the crime – what it is, who can experience trafficking, what happens in a trafficking situation. Part of our mission is to help spread understanding of the bigger picture and why these myths exist. Let’s learn the truth to dispel the fallacies and become better informed so that we are able to really serve people in the best possible way!

**MYTH 1: Under the federal definition, trafficked persons can only be foreign nationals or only immigrants from other countries.**

The landmark Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) laid the groundwork for the federal response to human trafficking. In the years since, Congress has built on this foundation, honing and expanding the U.S. strategy to combat sex trafficking and labor trafficking through a holistic, multi-agency approach.

When the TVPA was enacted and first started searching for grant opportunities, the initial focus of that legislation was for nationals and people being brought into America, or in any country associated with, or a protectorate of the US. In fact, when they got their federal funding to the task force initially, it was this type of trafficking they were supposed to focus on. However, things have changed, and they’ve evolved over time. And now domestic minor sex trafficking and our domestic children being victimized, as well as adults, is being looked at.

While the focus is still on sex trafficking, mostly because it is more publicized, sometimes the reality is that it deals with labor as well. So, perhaps the initial myth started with the fact that the funding was focused on foreign national trafficking and people being brought into our country, taken into other countries against their will, or at least being misled and brought there through force, fraud, or coercion. However, that has since evolved, and we recognize now that our domestic minors and adults can be trafficked within their respective countries, whether it’s the United States or any other country.