



# Freedom Network USA

## FNUSA Feedback on the Department of State “Know Your Rights” Materials

June 26, 2023

OMB Control No: 1405-0193

Submitted via [virtual survey](#)

Freedom Network USA submitted the following feedback on the Know Your Rights Pamphlet and Video provided by the US Department of State to foreign national workers seeking employment- and education-based temporary visas.

### **5 & 6. Do you speak a language that the pamphlet is not currently available that you would recommend making available?**

Yes, the pamphlet should be available in Tigrinya and Oromo. The video should also be available in Haitian Creole.

### **7. Do you have any recommendations to improve the contents of the pamphlet and/or video?**

Overall, the text in the pamphlet can be rewritten in plain language. Many foreign-born survivors have little formal education and would be better able to utilize this pamphlet if the language was simpler.

The list of websites on page 13 is helpful, but these links should be provided throughout the document in the sections where they are most relevant so workers know immediately where to look based on their concerns.

- Page1:
  - You Have the Right to: this section should be rewritten in a way that is easier to understand. A format like “You have the right to be paid the amount promised. Your employer does not have the right not to pay you” would provide more context and information in a simplified way. The right to safe housing should be included. The final point should remove the word “abusive.” Some workers know they are not being treated well but do not believe it fits the definition of abuse. They should know they still have the right to leave.
  - Whenever the National Human Trafficking Hotline is mentioned, a note should be added that reminds workers they will not face immigration consequences due to calling. This will help workers feel safer utilizing this service.
- Page 2:
  - #1: This section should include details about the right to be paid through legal means and not under the table, not to be indebted to your employer, and only to pay fees agreed to upfront.

- Page 3:
  - #3: This section should also include verbal harassment and be clear that no employee of the company can harass or exploit you, not just employers.
  - #4: This section should also include the right to access the phone, email, and physical mail. Restrictions from accessing modes of communication are common issues for immigrant workers facing exploitation.
- Page 5:
  - #5: This section is the only one to mention the rights listed apply regardless of immigration status. This point should be made at the beginning of the entire section on page 2 because it applies to all of the six rights listed and is vital for workers to understand.
  - #6: As noted above, this section header should remove the word “abusive” so workers know they can leave any employment situation. Workers’ perceptions of what abuse entails can vary widely, and they may not believe what they have experienced is abuse.
- Page 7:
  - H-2B Visas: It should be clear in the final bullet point that your employer cannot make you indebted or force you to pay off a debt.
- Page 11:
  - Debt: This section should be simplified. Words like “imposing” or “proportion” may be unfamiliar to workers without much formal education.
  - Rules and Controls: The phrase “rules and controls” may be confusing to workers and should be simplified. For example, your employer taking away your passport may cause confusion because it is not presented as a rule by the employer.
- Page 12:
  - Deception and Lies: The final bullet point should say “employer or other employees” instead of “trafficker” to match the phrasing of the rest of this document. A worker may not identify their employer as a trafficker.
  - Will You Be Deported if You Report the Abuse?: This question is not answered in the following text, so it does not make sense as the title. The text should either directly answer that question, or the title should be changed to something more appropriate to the text. Something like “Can your employer have you deported if you report abuse?” may be more appropriate because it is a common fear of workers and is directly answered by the text.
  - What services are available?: This section should also explain who to contact to obtain services, like the hotline phone number and a sentence explaining how to search for local service providers.

**8. How can the Department update the design and visuals in the pamphlet and/or video to make them more helpful?**

- Pamphlet
  - The large sections of text are difficult to read through and can be broken up visually by bolding keywords and phrases throughout. This will also help workers

- know which pieces of information are the most important.
- For long lists, like the one under the first bullet point under Right #2 on page 3, breaking the lists up into bullet points would make them easier to read. The list on page 4, for example, is much easier to read in bullet point format and can be used as a model for other sections with large amounts of text.
  - There should be a call out somewhere in the pamphlet that tells workers where they can access the pamphlet information and find the hotline phone number at a later date.
- Video
    - The National Human Trafficking Hotline phone and text numbers should be on the screen throughout the entire video so they are easy to access in an emergency and workers are more likely to remember it is available at a later date.

**10. Beyond existing physical and online versions, how else can the Department provide the pamphlet to applicants of relevant visa categories?**

The pamphlet is quite lengthy and difficult to transport, especially to another country and in a workplace where items are confiscated illegally. In addition to the full pamphlet, a pocket or business card-sized version should be provided with the National Human Trafficking Hotline phone and text numbers, a brief list of rights, a QR code to the full report, and a list of phrases to use to describe their situation to the hotline or law enforcement. This format can provide workers with the tools to reach out for help and is easier to hold onto when other belongings have been confiscated.

**12. Please share any thoughts on this potential method of distribution, including your thoughts on what the webpage that the QR code directs users to should look like.**

Applicants should be provided with access to both the physical copy and the QR code. The physical copy should have the QR code printed on it so the worker can access it again later. A pocket-sized version with the most relevant emergency information should be included, with the QR code on it as well. A physical copy can be easily lost, and the link to the virtual version may not be easily accessible at a later date, so having as many touchpoints as possible is essential.

The QR code should link to a simple page that allows users to choose the language they need upfront, so the page automatically is translated, and the appropriate pamphlet and video are available immediately. The hotline phone and text number should be highly visible. Additional information, like phrases to use if reporting to law enforcement and rights when talking to law enforcement, would help empower workers to report safely or ask for help.