

# National Safe Haven Alliance



**Infant Abandonment Prevention**  
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# Introduction

Every year infants are illegally abandoned in the U.S. In 2021, 31 babies were placed in dumpsters, found in backpacks, or discarded in other dangerous locations. 22 of these infants were found deceased.

73 babies were saved by Safe Haven laws in 2021.

The National Safe Haven Alliance is a 501-3c non-profit organization committed to providing safe alternatives for women and parents to prevent harm or even death of babies.



# 2022 Abandonments

- 12/31/21: Alaska- Mother leaves newborn in a box with a note on a street corner, baby survived.
- 1/7/22: New Mexico- Mother is seen on video tossing a bag into a dumpster, baby later found in that bag by people searching dumpster for goods, baby survived.
- 1/15/22: Illinois- Baby found deceased in a duffel bag out front of a fire station in freezing temperatures.
- 2/13/22: Nebraska- Baby found on a blanket on side of a road after mother gave birth and abandoned the infant, mother found nearby, baby survived.



# Safe Haven Law

- The law provides safe options for a parent that may be unable or unwilling to care for their infant. The Safe Haven Laws allow a parent to anonymously relinquish an unharmed baby to a Safe Haven Provider and the parent will not be prosecuted.
- The law gives a desperate parent a safe alternative and saves the life of a vulnerable infant.
- Each state has a different Safe Haven Law, the first law passed in 1999 in TX and was subsequently passed in each state and Guam.
- Hospitals are an approved location in every state.



# Safe Haven Providers

**On-duty hospital staff members are considered a Safe Haven Provider in every state.**

- Safe Haven Providers differ by state and may include on-duty:
  - Firefighters/EMS Personnel
  - Law Enforcement Officers
  - Free standing Emergency Department staff
  - Church Staff/Volunteers
  - Participating Adoption Agency Staff
  - County Health Department Staff
  - Infant Safety Device at designated locations

**\*Know your state designated Safe Haven providers & locations**



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# Statistics

Safe Haven statistics unofficially recorded since 1999.

- Safe Haven relinquishments: **4,524** babies
- Illegal infant abandonments: **1,610** babies
  - Babies found alive: 608
  - Babies found deceased: 915



**Who organizes, provides  
training, and implements  
Safe Haven laws?**



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# About NSHA

**Mission**: The National Safe Haven Alliance (NSHA) equips Safe Haven Providers and parents facing unplanned pregnancies with safe alternatives that prevent infant abandonment while providing holistic care for both parents and babies.

**Vision**: The National Safe Haven Alliance ensures every parent who is experiencing an unplanned pregnancy is given the resources and opportunity to create a safe post-birth plan for their baby.

24/7 Crisis Hotline: **1-888-510-BABY (2229)**



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# Crisis Hotline

- 24/7 staffed hotline
  - Staffed by EMS, nurse, case management, social work staff
- Provide immediate and emergency referrals
- Facilitation of safe relinquishment process
- Connection to community resources for parents and providers
- Direct support for a parent in need
- Comprehensive training and direction for Safe Haven providers



# Communication Model

- What prevents you from feeling you can parent this child?
- Identify the crisis the parent is experiencing:
  - Abuse, assault, trafficking, homelessness, substance abuse, pregnancy denial syndrome, post-partem depression, mental health issues
- Provide direct assistance addressing immediate needs:
  - Anti-trafficking agencies, shelters, detox, OB physician, DOH
- Utilize resources to assist in developing a safe plan for child and parent
- Provide options for placement for child outside of age limit



# Options for the Mother/Parent

1. **Parenting:** Discuss what would cause parent to feel they are unable to parent this child, provide necessary resources to parent child. Temporary placement option available.
2. **Adoption:** Utilize adoption experts and resources if a mother is willing to consider this option.
3. **Safe Haven:** This is a life saving, last resort. Provide information regarding the state law, Safe Haven providers and locations, and confidentiality.



# 2021 LA Safe Haven Case

- Mother admitted to emergency department for injuries related to an assault by partner, found to be 34 weeks pregnant
- After assessment, delivery induced for safety of baby and mother
- Mother verbalized that she had been trafficked from her home state and has traveled through many states with partner
- Relinquishes infant using the Safe Haven law
- NSHA hotline staff and social worker provided direction, referrals to trafficking support agency
- Infant safely relinquished, mother safely transported back home with follow up resources in place



# Identified Needs Concerning Infant Abandonment Prevention

- National awareness/education campaign
  - Public awareness
  - Providing signs and Safe Haven provider training
- National Hotline contract and utilization
- National registry of state reporting for:
  - Safe Haven relinquishments
  - Illegal infant abandonment
- Funding for National Safe Haven Alliance contract or HHS Program Manager position
  - Develop training and education
  - Hotline oversight



# National Safe Haven Alliance

## 1-888-510-2229

[www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org](http://www.nationalsafehavenalliance.org)



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