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# FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY AND 1HTC F.I.G.H.T PROJECT REPORT



**FSU Center for the  
Advancement of Human  
Rights**  
426 West Jefferson Street  
Tallahassee, Florida  
32301-1602  
850-644-4550

<http://www.cahr.fsu.edu>



**1HTC, Inc. Tamarac**  
PO/CO 25731, 7875 NW  
57<sup>th</sup> Street Tamarac, FL  
33315-9998  
1-813-816-1HTC  
[info@1HTC.org](mailto:info@1HTC.org)  
[www.1HTC.org](http://www.1HTC.org)



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## Acknowledgements

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The Center staff Terry Coonan, Executive Director; Vania Llovera, Assistant Director; Sharifah Alrajhi and Rashad Aziz, Statisticians; and Daniela Donoso, Student Program Coordinator jointly worked on this project to produce a resource directory, develop a survey and a screening tool, as well as gather the information included in this report. The Center interns Haniyah Naeem, Mindy Clarke, Victoria Urdaneta, Mariapia Rueda, Rebecca Heidenberg, Marcos Cabello, Abrienne Brookins, Ana Seeger, Holly Kuyper, and Kristen Neville also assisted in the research and production of the report.

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## **Introduction**

Human trafficking has been a growing problem in the state of Florida. Service providers, law enforcement, and state agencies increasingly recognize that this crime occurs in every part of our state. While there is growing recognition of the pervasiveness of trafficking in Florida, it has been challenging to produce uniform assessment tools and reliable statistical information regarding the number of victims and survivors in Florida.

The Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights has done leading work nationwide combating human trafficking. In 2004, the Center produced one of the first victim-based research assessments of human trafficking in the United States, “Florida Responds to Human Trafficking.” Since that time, the Center has designed human trafficking curricula for federal and state agencies and service providers, and has delivered numerous trainings nationwide. In 2010, the Center produced a Florida Statewide Strategic Plan on Human Trafficking. The Strategic Plan drew upon the experiences of numerous law enforcement officials, service providers, and state agency workers. It provided both a survey of human trafficking trends in Florida as well as comprehensive recommendations on how Florida can better combat trafficking crimes and care for trafficking victims. The Center continues to provide ongoing pro bono legal representation and case management for immigrant survivors of forced labor and sex trafficking throughout Florida.

The Center has collaborated on this project with IHTC, an anti-trafficking organization in South Florida, to produce the F.I.G.H.T. Project Report. The goal of the project has been to collect law enforcement and service provider information, to identify trafficking trends, and to provide data regarding the prevalence of human trafficking in Florida’s southeastern-most counties of Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm Beach.

The F.I.G.H.T. project began in January 2016 by identifying and collecting contact information of key stakeholders who have been involved in the anti-trafficking movement in southeast Florida. The contact information and a description of the services that each organization offers

has been included in a directory that was produced as result of phase I of this project. An interview instrument was then developed to capture statistical information and to identify human trafficking trends in southeastern Florida from 2014 to 2016 as reported by the points of contact listed in the directory.

The victim information collected in this project has been kept completely confidential. Details regarding the identity of victims are not included in this report. The report instead comprises a summary of the challenges facing stakeholders in the field, highlights promising practices that are evolving, and lastly includes recommendations suggested by the stakeholders who participated in the research project.

This project surveyed law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and service providers so as to aggregate their knowledge of human trafficking as it occurs in their respective counties and to move beyond purely anecdotal estimates of victim types and numbers. For its victim assessment, the project relied on the design and use of an interview instrument that was distributed to stakeholders in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin counties. The interview instrument sought to collect important information on victim demographics without disclosing the victims' identities.

**Limitations of the Research**

Researchers solicited information from 175 federal, state, and local governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations that have been involved in anti-trafficking efforts in Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach Counties. From those 175 potential stakeholders, 76 completed the survey. Of the 99 that did not complete the survey, 51 stakeholders stated that they were unable to do so either because their focus was solely on human trafficking awareness initiatives or that their focus has never been on human trafficking even if they have provided services to human trafficking victims. An additional 48 stakeholders—primarily law enforcement—simply did not respond at all.

The original intent of the project was to collect reliable victim numbers as well as to identify

human trends in southeastern Florida. Researchers devised an initial survey which did not ask for exact victim identities but instead sought to prevent the duplicate counting of victims by requesting information such as victim dates of birth, initials, etc. Service providers in particular were not comfortable volunteering such information. In order to meet these concerns, a second version of the survey tool was developed that eliminated those questions. The final instrument documented only the gender, country of origin, and type of exploitation experienced by a trafficking survivor with whom a law enforcement agency or service provider had interacted. The resulting data on victim numbers therefore contains an unavoidable margin of error due to the possibility that the same victim might have been counted both by a law enforcement agency and a service provider.

In total, the 76 agencies/organizations that responded to the survey reported working with 1,816 trafficking victims between 2014 and 2016. Again, this number includes an overlap of trafficking survivors encountered by both service providers and law enforcement agencies. Another factor that hindered the ability of the researchers to arrive at more accurate victim numbers was the fact that there is no standard screening tool by which human trafficking data is currently collected or maintained by agencies or service providers in Florida.

An additional limitation encountered during the data collection phase was that several organizations could provide a total number of victims of human trafficking for whom they had provided services between 2014 and 2016, but did not record details on each case. As a result of this limitation, it was not possible to include these cases in the overall demographics record of this project. Still other organizations serve a broader clientele group than just trafficking survivors, and do not record statistics particular to those who have experienced trafficking. Consequently, they were not able to provide information on trafficking victims they had cared for even when their case workers confirmed anecdotally that they had served such victims.

It was also observed during the data collection that some organizations may be providing services for victims of human trafficking from other counties. Victims in these cases may have been exploited in one county but then moved to another county where they have received services. Given this mobility, precise victim numbers cannot be attributed to particular counties either.

Some of the organizations were not able to provide information on the years 2014-2016 because their data collection did not cover that entire time frame. For still other organizations, staff turnover and lack of institutional memory was an impediment to accurately counting trafficking cases or victim numbers. Part of this is attributable to the fact that human trafficking information collection in many agencies has not yet been standardized. This seemed to be especially true for law enforcement agencies.

Confidentiality constraints at times posed significant obstacles in securing accurate data from service providers regarding victim numbers. This was most discernible in the realm of health care providers. Given HIPAA confidentiality constraints, some health clinics and hospitals proved unable to provide information on victim demographics. Several declined to even take the survey because they would not be able to release any information on the cases they had encountered.

Federal agencies also faced their share of challenges in providing accurate victim numbers. Agencies such as the FBI only report numbers on a state-wide basis for purposes of national reporting on trafficking. They do not maintain regional data, and information from this agency was therefore not reflected in this project.

Perhaps the most significant obstacle encountered in the collection of information from stakeholders was that of time constraints. Both law enforcement and service providers report far more claims on their time than they can realistically meet. People in the field carry heavy investigative or service provision caseloads, and frequently they are also the ones charged by their agencies with capturing human trafficking information. Numerous stakeholders either did not respond at all or declined to participate in the research, citing lack of time to do so. This was especially the case with law enforcement—, only 12 state/local law enforcement agencies responded to survey requests, and only one federal law enforcement agency did so.

Rather than focusing on victim numbers, this report instead recounts the current characteristics of trafficking that agencies and organizations in southeastern Florida have noted. This includes the different forms of trafficking encountered in their local communities, the gender, nationalities, and age groups of trafficking survivors, as well as the involvement of each of the responding agencies

and organizations in introducing training, establishing protocols, and implementing policies on human trafficking.

## Challenges

Florida implemented its first laws against human trafficking in 2004. It has since comprehensively revised its statutes so as to more closely mirror federal law on trafficking and to make Florida anti-trafficking law more victim-centered. Nonetheless, stakeholders continue to encounter challenges on a daily basis in their efforts to better serve victims of human trafficking. Some of these challenges include the following:

### **Housing**

Finding proper housing for victims of human trafficking remains a significant challenge. There are service providers that provide housing to various populations such as teenage runaways, victims of domestic violence, and the homeless, which have expanded their services to include victims of human trafficking. However, human trafficking survivors often cannot meet the separate eligibility requirements of these service providers. Florida has enacted a very robust Safe Harbor law. However, resources and funding for safe harbor facilities are only slowly forthcoming. Concerns about housing articulated by various stakeholders interviewed in the project include the following:

- There are very few placements for adult victims of trafficking
- Victims with children have to be taken to domestic violence shelters which may not offer the specialized services needed by victims/survivors of human trafficking.
- Housing accommodations for male victims are scarce.
- Housing accommodations for pregnant and parenting teens are very limited.
- Housing accommodations for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) youth are needed.
- Victims who have substance abuse addictions are not accommodated at many of the current placements.
- Transitional housing is a major concern throughout all five counties surveyed.

- There is a lack of secure facilities for both short/long term placement.
- More housing options are needed for adult victims of labor trafficking.
- Service providers, especially in teenage runaway shelters, have encountered an acute problem with in-house recruiting by pimps.
- Specialized foster care services are not available in each of the counties surveyed in this project.

## Education/Employment

Every agency and service provider surveyed in the project highlighted the importance of education. Some emphasized the issue of youth education as a method of preventing trafficking; others stressed the importance of training community groups that may encounter trafficking victims. A number of service providers discussed the issues that victims/survivors of trafficking face when attempting to enroll in educational programs or when seeking job training. Educational advancement is often not feasible for trafficking victims because of their financial constraints. Despite the fact that there are GED (General Educational Development) and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programs that are readily available through the public education system and various churches, there are very few opportunities for many trafficking victims to pursue higher education. Particular issues that service providers mentioned that often prevent victims from advancing their education or furthering their career options included the following:

- Limited resources and funding to cover the high cost of tuition and books.
- Many of the victims have not mastered the basic skills necessary to seek employment.
- Many victims lack proper job training and are only eligible to be hired at entry level jobs in which they do not earn enough to support themselves or their families.
- Effective family programs are not in place but are crucial to the recovery and long-term care of the victims/survivors.
- Sex trafficking victims often have an arrest or conviction record for crimes committed in the course of their trafficking exploitation. They may not be eligible for employment as a result of required background checks by prospective employers.

The Florida educational community has made significant strides in its efforts to prevent human trafficking. The Florida Department of Education has developed materials and provides training to its school districts state-wide. The task forces and coalitions in all five counties surveyed in this project have also launched anti-trafficking awareness campaigns and initiatives. In Palm Beach County 15 non-profit organizations have joined to form an umbrella group called Partner Organizations Against Sex Trafficking (POAST). They have developed a curriculum on human trafficking that has been made available to the schools in Palm Beach County.

Notwithstanding these impressive efforts, professionals working in the anti-trafficking field believe that additional preventive efforts are needed. Measures that they propose include:

- More awareness-raising activities for communities. Many stakeholders noted the need for schools to incorporate human trafficking curriculum for students beginning at least at the middle school level. Many teens are trafficked but do not self-identify as victims either out of fear of their traffickers or because they do not trust the adults tasked with their care. Even more significantly many do not self-identify because they lack an understanding of what constitutes trafficking; they do not recognize that they are being victimized.
- Many stakeholders mentioned that increased awareness campaigns for local communities will almost certainly result in greater community participation in anti-trafficking efforts. Finding specialized services for victims remains an ongoing challenge for advocates. These services can range from victims needing tattoo removals to dental and medical services. Coalitions that have invested in community outreach have been able to establish relationships with professionals able to provide specialized services.
- The faith-based community has contributed significantly to anti-trafficking efforts by drawing upon the professional skills of their congregations. Victim Advocates for the Department of Homeland Security have been able to reach out to doctors, therapists, dentists and other professionals in the faith-based network who have been willing to provide their services to human trafficking victims, often on a pro-bono basis.
- Younger victims often need highly structured services in order to deal with the many issues they face as a result of their victimization. The G.R.A.C.E (Growth Renewed through Acceptance, Change and Empowerment) court in Miami has implemented a

“do not run order” which provides a measure of stability to minor victims and likewise assists the service providers that offer ongoing support to these minors.

- Service providers have recommended that law enforcement be present during trainings geared toward teens so that these teens become familiar with law enforcement officers who are involved in the anti-trafficking movement. This will help develop the needed relationship and trust with these officers.
- It is often a challenge to persuade schools to offer human trafficking awareness trainings. Many school districts are reluctant to offer programs on human trafficking because such trainings necessarily touch on subjects of sex and sexual exploitation. As a result there have been very few school trainings to date. Service providers suggest the need for legislative action to ensure that students statewide throughout Florida are trained on the dangers and indicators of potential human trafficking situations. [Note: SB 286 currently pending before the Florida Legislature in the 2017 Session seeks to include human trafficking awareness as part of the health education that all children will receive in Florida public schools].

### **Specialized staff/unit/resources/referrals**

There are very few agencies or service providers that have a dedicated human trafficking unit. Nonetheless many of the agencies/organizations recognize that it is crucial to have a point of contact for human trafficking. In practice, most human trafficking cases appear to be assigned by law enforcement agencies to existing units such as major crimes or special victims. Very few law enforcement agencies have developed specific protocols for human trafficking cases and many potential cases are treated under protocols for sexual assault or even domestic violence. Many service providers expressed concern that local law enforcement agencies continue to conduct prostitution stings that ensnare potential victims of trafficking.

Researchers in this project made numerous attempts to gather statistical information from law enforcement agencies but very few of the agencies responded to repeated queries. This low level of response might be attributable to the heavy workloads of Florida’s law enforcement agencies. It should also be noted however, that very few law enforcement agencies appear to be recording data regarding human trafficking cases or victims in their jurisdictions. This statistical gap poses a significant obstacle in assessing the magnitude of human trafficking in southeastern Florida

and elsewhere. Participants who responded to this survey made the following observations:

- It is imperative to have law enforcement personnel in human trafficking investigations who have been trained to recognize the indicators of human trafficking and who can work closely with service providers to guarantee the well-being of the victims.
- Local law enforcement agencies often lack the technological resources to secure the evidence contained in cell phones and other electronic devices of suspects in a timely manner. A great deal of the evidence in sex trafficking cases resides in the cellphones and electronic “footprints” left by pimps. Florida law enforcement labs are backlogged however, and it can take anywhere from 4-6 months to extract the information necessary for the successful investigation and prosecution of human trafficking cases.
- Institutional memory is an issue in many law enforcement agencies. There is frequent turnover in units involved in the investigation of human trafficking cases, attributable to promotions, retirement, and at times to officer burnout. Therefore, it is important for law enforcement agencies to maintain ongoing trainings on recognizing the indicators of human trafficking and on the importance of utilizing a victim centered-approach in the course of human trafficking investigations.
- A common screening tool could help many agencies and organizations to identify victims. It would also prove very useful in the provision of services and referrals as regards potential trafficking victims (some of whom might already be receiving services from another entity within a unit’s larger umbrella agency or organization).
- It is challenging for agencies that provide human trafficking referrals to obtain information on the ultimate results of their referrals. Many such referring agencies never receive confirmation that potential cases they have referred to law enforcement agencies have resulted in an investigation. The Department of Labor has referred cases to law enforcement and continues to be very active in training its investigators on the issue of human trafficking. However, DOL was not able to confirm any human trafficking cases since 2014 in the five counties that have been part of this project.
- Some law enforcement departments did not report any human trafficking cases. However, detectives in these same jurisdictions who have conducted human trafficking investigations elsewhere note that conditions in southeastern Florida are tremendously conducive to human trafficking. These detectives recommend more extensive law

enforcement trainings, and believe that cases are not being identified because law enforcement officials have not yet received such training.

- A number of stakeholders report the likelihood that strip clubs in their area may be involved in human trafficking. They note that many such clubs are run by foreign nationals and feature foreign national performers who speak very little English. This type of situation has led to the identification of trafficking victims in other states and resulted in the successful conviction of their traffickers.
- Service providers and law enforcement agencies alike raised concerns about organizations and agencies that do not adapt their services to the particular needs of human trafficking victims whom they serve. Organizations that have excellent track records for service provision emphasize that services for trafficking survivors need to be tailored to each victim. It is unrealistic to expect victims of trafficking to thrive under the case management of organizations that can only accommodate victims who are able to work around the organization's schedule and under very rigid guidelines. These limitations are creating a barrier for referrals to these organizations for services.

### **Trends**

- The focus for most law enforcement agencies is on cases involving sex trafficking of minors. Labor trafficking appears to be largely ignored. Sex trafficking of adults is not always immediately recognized, especially in the course of sting operations targeting prostitution. The manner in which prostitution raids are sometimes conducted may diminish the likelihood that sex trafficking victims will trust law enforcement, and as a result victims may not self-identify or cooperate.
- A number of runaway shelters note that they increasingly serve teens they call "travelers," especially at their drop-in centers. These "traveler" teens and young adults come to shelters in order to have basic needs met for several days and then move on to a new location. They often seek out odd jobs; some have found work in circuses or festivals and move from South Florida as far west as New Orleans. They are recognized as being vulnerable to trafficking.

- Service providers are reporting more instances of minors engaged in survival sex than had been observed in past years. Teens are coerced into sex acts in exchange for transportation, food, shelter, clothing, cell phones, and basic needs.
- Guardian Ad Litem programs noted that most of the human trafficking victims that they encounter have experienced victimization during the time in which they were in foster care. The lack of a common screening tool among service providers has made the process of victim identification difficult in many of these cases. Many potential victims are not identified unless and until they are arrested. The Human Trafficking alert created by ChildNet is only triggered when a case is verified by using the official DCF/DJJ screening tool.
- An expungement process is now available in Florida to victims of human trafficking who have incurred a criminal conviction related to their trafficking exploitation. The resources for pursuing this legal remedy are very limited however. Many young adults who have accrued a criminal record as a result of trafficking cannot afford the legal costs of pursuing this expungement process. Moreover, sex trafficking survivors have often incurred convictions for prostitution in numerous jurisdictions as a result of a pimp exploiting them throughout an entire circuit of states and cities. Florida's expungement process requires a separate process for each conviction. This can prove an insurmountable burden for victims with multiple convictions.
- Many cases are not being prosecuted as trafficking because the burden of proof for a human trafficking conviction under Florida law remains very high. In many instances, the victims have drug and alcohol addictions, and the level of trauma that many have experienced is too high to withstand cross-examination or the demands placed upon a victim witness in the course of a prosecution. As a result, prosecutors must often pursue lesser charges against traffickers or accept plea bargains involving less serious crimes.
- Traffickers are now using gift cards or bitcoins instead of credit cards to pay for expenses associated with trafficking conspiracies.
- Most of the cases coming through Miami-Dade's G.R.A.C.E. court involve minors who rarely have structure or accountability in their home lives. Such minors typically have spent time in the foster care system.

- Service providers have encountered more male sex trafficking victims in recent years, a trend credited to increased awareness campaigns conducted in the southeastern region of the state.
- Service providers who come in contact with child victims of trafficking who are pregnant learn from the victims that after becoming pregnant they are often no longer deemed useful to their traffickers. The attention of these victims then becomes focused on the needs and well-being of their unborn child. This situation in many instances has created a strong enough incentive for victims to break away from the cycle of trafficking when afforded proper services by local providers.

### **Promising Practices**

- The State Attorney’s Office in Miami has created a “Stand-Alone Unit” for human trafficking cases. This facilitates much more effective follow-up and service provision for victims. Advocates and prosecutors associated with this unit note that most victims are deeply connected to their trafficker. The Stand-Alone Unit responds to this situation by enabling a victim advocate/coordinator to be available to the victims 24/7. In addition, this office has developed its own screening tool which has been in use since 2011. The State Attorney’s Office has earned nationwide recognition for its “Miami Model” of prosecuting successful cases while providing sustained victim assistance.
- The CHANCE Program in Miami has done critical work ensuring that runaway children receive services from the same therapist when they return after a period of absence. Many trafficked teens have chronic runaway records and as a result must build rapport with a different therapist every time they return after a period on the streets. The CHANCE Program allows such children to build a relationship with one therapist to whom they are re-assigned after a runaway episode. Therapists in this program also have the freedom to meet with the children at various locations in the community, such as the beach or in yoga classes. This has greatly facilitated a steady flow of services to this group of at-risk minors.

- The G.R.A.C.E. court in Miami operates under the Juvenile Dependency Division of the Miami-Dade Courts and was established specifically to meet the needs of children who have been exploited in sex or labor trafficking. This specialized docket allows the provision of services to children and their families under Florida human trafficking law. It has been very helpful for maintaining a connection to potential or verified victims of trafficking. The Court is set up to coordinate the services provided by multiple agencies and organizations. Before a child comes before the court, the Care Program conducts an assessment and refers a child to the court if there is any indication of possible trafficking.
- The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office is organizing a task force that will focus on human trafficking investigations, provision of services to victims of trafficking, and recording demographics on these cases. They have received a grant to create a dedicated unit that will address human trafficking cases.
- The Coalition of the Palm Beaches will focus on a series of labor trafficking trainings in the summer of 2017.
- The Juvenile Delinquency Division in Broward County Courts has a Girls Court docket dedicated to child trafficking cases. This specialized docket serves an estimated 50 -70 girls who present with trafficking risk factors. The girls undergo an assessment for wrap-around services, and then report back to court every two weeks. This routine allows the victims to develop trust and an ongoing relationship with service providers who work closely with the court system.

### **Recommendations from Professionals in the Field**

- Law enforcement agencies have requested that the Attorney General's Office look into the issue of not having enough laboratories to process the digital evidence in human trafficking investigations (information contained on cellphones, computer, tablets, etc.) that is vital for securing convictions in human trafficking prosecutions.
- Both service providers and law enforcement agencies underscored the importance of preventive measures. The state needs to prioritize training in schools and communities.

Increased efforts in this area will make it more difficult for traffickers to recruit and exploit children. Organizations and agencies emphasize that prevention is always less costly than restorative measures.

- There is a high demand for legal services; service providers recommend that Florida state government allocate resources to grant programs that can provide legal services needed by trafficking survivors. There is a particular need for funding legal representation to victims seeking to expunge convictions incurred as a result of trafficking exploitation.
- Florida needs to continue addressing the acute needs that victims of trafficking have for both short-term and transitional housing.
- Funding for direct victim services is crucial to meet the needs of the victims. There is a great need for flexible funding—each victim has different needs. The funding issued to assist victims should be flexible enough that if a victim needs a bus pass, deposit/rent for an apartment, deposit for utilities, etc. they are able to use it without many barriers. Services should follow the victim, not the other way around.
- Law enforcement training in recognizing the signs of trafficking should be mandatory and victim-centered. While this is currently a required component in the training of new Florida law enforcement recruits, it should also be required for veteran officers as part of their ongoing training regime.
- The state needs to focus on all forms of trafficking. Given the industries that make up the economy of Florida, labor trafficking should be a priority for many agencies. Very little attention has been given to all the sectors of Florida’s economy in which labor trafficking may occur.
- Employees at the Social Security Administration and representatives at ACCESS Florida need to be trained to recognize letters of eligibility and letters of certification. In many cases it is necessary for case managers to spend up to six hours at these offices educating the representatives that clients are eligible to receive benefits.
- Foreign victims of human trafficking are only eligible to receive assistance for eight months. A lack of knowledge on the part of staff at these offices can make it very challenging for victims of trafficking to receive benefits in a timely manner.

- Numerous stakeholders interviewed for the project recommended that prosecutors and public defenders receive trainings on trauma and trauma informed care of trafficking survivors. Even given the limitations imposed by an adversarial court system, both prosecutors and defense attorneys need to work together to better assist potential victims of trafficking.
- Currently the Department of Juvenile Justice does not record the country of birth of victims; it would be helpful to record this information for possible referrals for immigration relief and other services for which foreign-born victims of trafficking might be eligible.
- Local and state law enforcement agencies must better document the trafficking cases they are asked to investigate. This will be crucial for arriving at a more accurate understanding of how many trafficking victims there are in Florida and where trafficking is occurring throughout our state. The creation and dissemination of a common human trafficking screening tool for Florida law enforcement agencies constitutes a vital first step towards making this happen.

## Aggregate Response Statistics

The survey for this project collected information about the respondents' agencies, characteristics of trafficking they have observed, and non-identifying information on victims of human trafficking encountered from 2014 to 2016. 76 surveyed individuals responded, representing different agencies and organizations from the five chosen counties. The types of agencies and organizations that responded to the survey and the number of case entries they reported are noted in Table 1. Across all responses, 1,816 cases of human trafficking were described.

Aggregate characteristics of responding agencies are presented in Table 2. Roughly half of the surveyed Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, State agencies, and Service Providers had an established tool to screen for human trafficking, and most of these organizations had some type of training to recognize trafficking.

73% of Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, and State agencies report encountering sex trafficking, compared to 10% reporting labor trafficking. Service providers show 93% encountering sex trafficking and 30% encountering labor trafficking.

Agency Type	n	Case Entries Submitted
Federal Law Enforcement	1	54
Local Law Enforcement	12	113
County Courts	1	91
Service Provider and Community Group	54	762
State Agency	6	682
State Prosecutor's Office	2	115

**Table 1. Agency Types and Total Reported Trafficking Instances**

Both groups report 70% or higher incidence of trafficking of minors, and roughly half reported trafficking of foreign nationals. Over one-quarter of Law Enforcement, Prosecutor, and State agencies reported not having any record of human trafficking cases. However, several of these agencies reported that this may be due to a lack dedicated recordkeeping for human trafficking cases as well as to high turnover of employees who have been trained in human trafficking.

Agency Type	% Reporting Established Tool for Human Trafficking Screening	% Reporting Agency Training to Recognize Human Trafficking	% Reporting Sex Trafficking	% Reporting Labor Trafficking	% Reporting Trafficking of Minors	% Reporting Trafficking of Foreign Nationals	% Not Encountered Human Trafficking
Law Enforcement, Prosecutor, State Agency	53.3%	83.3%	73.3%	10.0%	70.0%	46.7%	26.7%
Service Provider or Community Group	54.7%	96.3%	89.1%	29.1%	76.4%	49.1%	7.27%

**Table 2. Agency Characteristics and Trafficking Observed**

60 respondents listed the types of organizations that reported human trafficking case information to their offices. The most frequent group of organizations were official entities including DJJ, Law Enforcement, prosecutor and state attorney general offices, and referrals from the DCF hotline. Table 3 shows these frequencies.

Survey responders were given the option to submit basic information on human trafficking cases they have encountered, summarized in Table 4. Of the 1,654 cases of sex or labor trafficking where a gender was provided, 89% (1,465) involved women exploited in sex trafficking. Of the 1,276 cases with a reported age, 68% (869) were in the 12-17 range and 95% (1,213) were in the 12-31 range. 1,042 reported cases involved a US-born victim, and 304 involved a foreign-born victim.

Stakeholders	n
DCF/DJJ/LE/State	24
Domestic/Sexual violence shelters	17
Faith-based Groups	10
Family/Friends	10
School Officials	9
Hotels/Motels	7
Store/Business owners	6
Other Civilian	5
Self-report	2
Compliance code inspectors	1
Taxi Drivers	1
None Reported	5

**Table 3. Number of respondents receiving trafficking information from various stakeholders**

Most demographic groupings showed 75%+ being involved in sex trafficking. Forced labor was reported in 9.8% of all cases, with higher numbers for males, older populations, and individuals not born in the United States. A high proportion of forced labor appears for cases where gender was not reported: a potential anomaly. A small proportion of cases report both sex trafficking and forced labor.

When age, gender, and US domestic status were indicated, the largest group of victim cases reported involved 551 12-17 year old female US-born commercial sex trafficking victims. The next largest group is 197 female 18-30 year old US-born commercial sex trafficking victims, followed by 100 male 12-17 year old US-born males involved in commercial sex trafficking, and 75 18-30 year old US-born males involved in commercial sex trafficking. While data and sampling concerns prevent us from making definitive statistical claims, the prevalence of US-born female minors being sex trafficked agrees with prior reports suggesting that this is the population at greatest risk in Florida.

**Sex trafficking:** Causing a child under the age of 18 to participate in a commercial sex act, or using coercion for the commercial sexual exploitation of an adult

**Forced labor:** The use of coercion to obtain labor or services of another

		All	Reported Commercial Sex Trafficking		Reported Forced Labor		Reported Both	
		n	n	%	n	%	n	%
All		1,795	1,643	91.5%	175	9.8%	23	1.3%
Gender	Female	1,532	1,465	95.6%	78	5.1%	11	0.7%
	Male	114	94	82.5%	21	18.4%	1	0.9%
	Transgender	8	8	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Not Reported	141	76	53.9%	76	53.9%	11	7.8%
Age	Under 12	23	20	87.0%	3	13.0%	0	0.0%
	12-17	869	822	94.6%	49	5.6%	2	0.2%
	18-31	344	287	83.4%	67	19.5%	10	2.9%
	31+	40	33	82.5%	9	22.5%	2	5.0%
	Not Reported	519	481	92.7%	47	9.1%	9	1.7%
US-Born	Yes	1,042	989	94.9%	58	5.6%	5	0.5%
	No	304	233	76.6%	88	29.0%	17	5.6%
	Not Reported	449	421	93.8%	29	6.5%	1	0.2%

Table 4. Demographics of human trafficking cases reporting sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and both  
 Note that a case involving both sex trafficking and forced labor is counted in all columns

**Respondent Contact with Trafficking Victims**

Responding agencies varied in their mission and relationship to human trafficking.

**State Agencies, Law Enforcement, and Prosecutor's Offices** have broad roles relating to crime and victim services. Human trafficking is only one issue that DCF, DJJ, the Department of Health, and other agencies encounter.

The largest number of cases between 2014 and 2016 was reported by DCF. DJJ and other legal entities that focus on juveniles, a State Attorney's office, and a federal law enforcement agency (ICE/HIS) also reported a high number of cases. While the reported cases for DCF and DJJ vary by county, they are consistent with other reported data that show high figures. Law enforcement reported that they forward cases involving victimization of children to DCF; service providers reported that they often receive child trafficking referrals from DCF.

**Local law enforcement**, however, reported the lowest numbers for observed trafficking cases. Of the 12 responding local law enforcement agencies, a single agency having a team for juveniles reported 99 cases. The remaining 11 offices reported a total of only 14 cases, with 8 offices reporting none. Most offices stated that they had not encountered a case of human trafficking between 2014 and 2016, and some were unable to recall a case in the previous decade or more. However, these departments also cited a need for professional training or the need for a screening tool as their greatest challenge in addressing human trafficking. The paucity of local law enforcement data encountered on this project is consistent with previous reports of the acute needs on the part of local law enforcement agencies for training on human trafficking crimes.

**Service Providers and Community Groups** can be specifically oriented to human trafficking advocacy. Of the service providers and community groups that responded, 2 offered general victim services; 3 focused on services to minority populations, LGBTQ individuals, refugees, and the disabled; 13 focused on services for at-risk children or victims of domestic or sexual abuse; 15 offered shelters for women or children; 11 were medical facilities; 7 were law firms or private investigation firms; one had a primary goal of raising awareness.

Several of these organizations included human trafficking in their primary missions. Naturally, these observed larger numbers of trafficking cases. This is analogous to the differences in reporting

trafficking cases between state and law enforcement agencies focused on children versus general law enforcement offices: their numbers reflect a combination of the prevalence of trafficking *and* the overall mission of the organization.

Organizations can also differ in their likelihood of being the *first point of contact* with a victim of trafficking. A trafficking prosecution, for instance, is likely the product of a first contact by police rather than the attorney’s office. Likewise, many service organizations report that they mostly receive referrals from DCF, DJJ, and law enforcement. A few organizations surveyed specifically exist to connect victims with services: service coalitions and advocacy groups.

Healthcare providers, who were categorized as service groups, often are the first organization to encounter trafficking victims. While some victims are referred from law enforcement or state agencies, others are only revealed to be trafficking victims during an intake procedure by a health care provider. Many such victims decline to participate in a law enforcement investigation. The majority of healthcare agencies surveyed focus on behavioral health needs of patients following trauma; several describe this as a common characteristic of trafficking victims. Shelters report significant difficulties in victim care: minor female victims will often run away, even recruiting other minor females from within the shelter before leaving.

While DCF has a specific human trafficking screening tool that other agencies commonly use, most law enforcement agencies report not having a screening tool. Service providers have mixed results, but those who respond as having a screening tool are usually referring to their internal intake process. For instance, an initial intake by a law office or an initial psychological examination by a trauma expert may reveal a history of trafficking. However these tools are designed for the office’s mission, and as a responding law enforcement agency noted, behavioral specialists in sexual trauma may not be equipped to handle the specifics of human trafficking trauma without additional training.

Surveyed Agencies' Greatest Challenges	n
Training	16
Collaboration	15
Shelter/Housing	11
Identifying Victims/Screening	9

The final items asked in the survey sought information from agencies regarding the greatest challenges they face in serving human trafficking victims, other than funding. Results are shown in Table 5. Several items are expected and essentially funding-related: staffing, and provision of basic goods and services. Several specific support services were listed as lacking, particularly relating to successful transitions into society: long-term housing, education, and rehabilitation. Victim participation was also raised as an issue; e.g., victim hesitation to participate with law enforcement or cases of minor victims running away.

Victim Participation	5
Need More/Any Dedicated Human Trafficking Staff	5
Employment/Education	4
Programs for Children/Teenagers/Women	3
Drug/Alcohol Support	3
Basic Goods/Services	2
Legislation	1
Community Awareness, Engagement	1

**Table 5. Greatest challenges other than funding**

Among the top challenges noted by agencies were Training, Collaboration, and Identifying Victims/Screening. These challenges suggest potential opportunities for a third-party organization to assist agencies which handle human trafficking cases but lack the resources to conduct their own training and outreach.

Common themes observed from the surveyed populations were:

1. Some organizations explicitly stated they do not record human trafficking data, that no one in the organization has been tasked with recording data that might otherwise be available, or that they simply did not have time to respond to research requests. Some estimates provided to the researchers were based on personal recall; still others were described as simply guesses. High rates of employee turnover or lack of a specialized human trafficking training for employees worsens the problem. This suggests that there is an immense opportunity for improvement in data collection, retention, and management.
2. The lack of continuity of services caused by lack of collaboration is another potential consequence of inadequate data. Several shelters describe the difficulties of dealing with a young and traumatized victim, while behavioral health center describe the difficulty of finding patients shelter.

3. Current methods of identifying trafficking victims appear to be based largely on the varied missions of organizations or agencies, and not necessarily in line with a global approach to human trafficking. Lack of training and an absence of a screening tool were frequently noted as obstacles. Trainings and screening tools can be designed to adequately identify trafficking, and can furthermore be adapted to the various agency missions such as law enforcement or psychological evaluations.

## **Policy Considerations**

Notwithstanding the inability of researchers on this project to ascertain truly reliable victim numbers, a number of observations regarding the research findings are still germane for policymaking. That over 1500 victims of human trafficking in the five southeastern counties of Florida were referenced between 2014 and 2016 is significant. Human trafficking is an issue that Florida must continue to address.

As previous anecdotal reports suggested, the largest number of trafficking victims in this southeastern Florida are domestic minor sex trafficking victims—U.S. citizen teenage girls between 12 and 17. When human trafficking was first recognized in Florida some 15 years ago, the presumption was that most victims were foreign nationals. Researchers on this project found there were over three times as many U.S. citizen trafficking victims as foreign national victims reported in southeastern Florida, and that the large majority of these were U.S. citizen minors. This represents an important paradigm shift from that embraced by the U.S. anti-trafficking community over a decade ago.

The high incidence of U.S. citizen minor sex trafficking cases reported may however be at least partially attributable to the burden of proof imposed by law upon state and federal prosecutors. To obtain a conviction in sex trafficking cases involving adult victims, prosecutors must demonstrate that an adult's consent to participate in an act of prostitution was negated through the exercise of force, fraud, or psychological coercion. In sex trafficking cases involving minors, there is no requirement that prosecutors prove the existence of force, fraud, or coercion. Under both Florida and federal law, minors are deemed incapable of consenting to commercial sex. Any case that involves a minor found engaged in commercial sex therefore can be prosecuted as sex trafficking. Given this lower burden of proof imposed upon law enforcement and prosecutors in cases involving minors, there is perhaps a greater likelihood that such cases will be pursued—and that minor victims will be identified.

Researchers found it significant that a great many local law enforcement agencies interviewed on this project reported no incidence of human trafficking in their jurisdictions. It is precisely local law

enforcement agencies that are best positioned to identify human trafficking, in that community policing capabilities give them greatest access to criminal activities occurring within their jurisdictions. The research finding that local law enforcement agencies demonstrated the lowest likelihood of identifying trafficking cases and victims strongly suggests the need for greater training at this level.

Part of any training for law enforcement should certainly focus not simply on the investigation of sex trafficking but of labor trafficking as well. It is revealing that service providers interviewed in this research were far more likely to identify labor trafficking cases and labor trafficking victims than were their law enforcement counterparts.

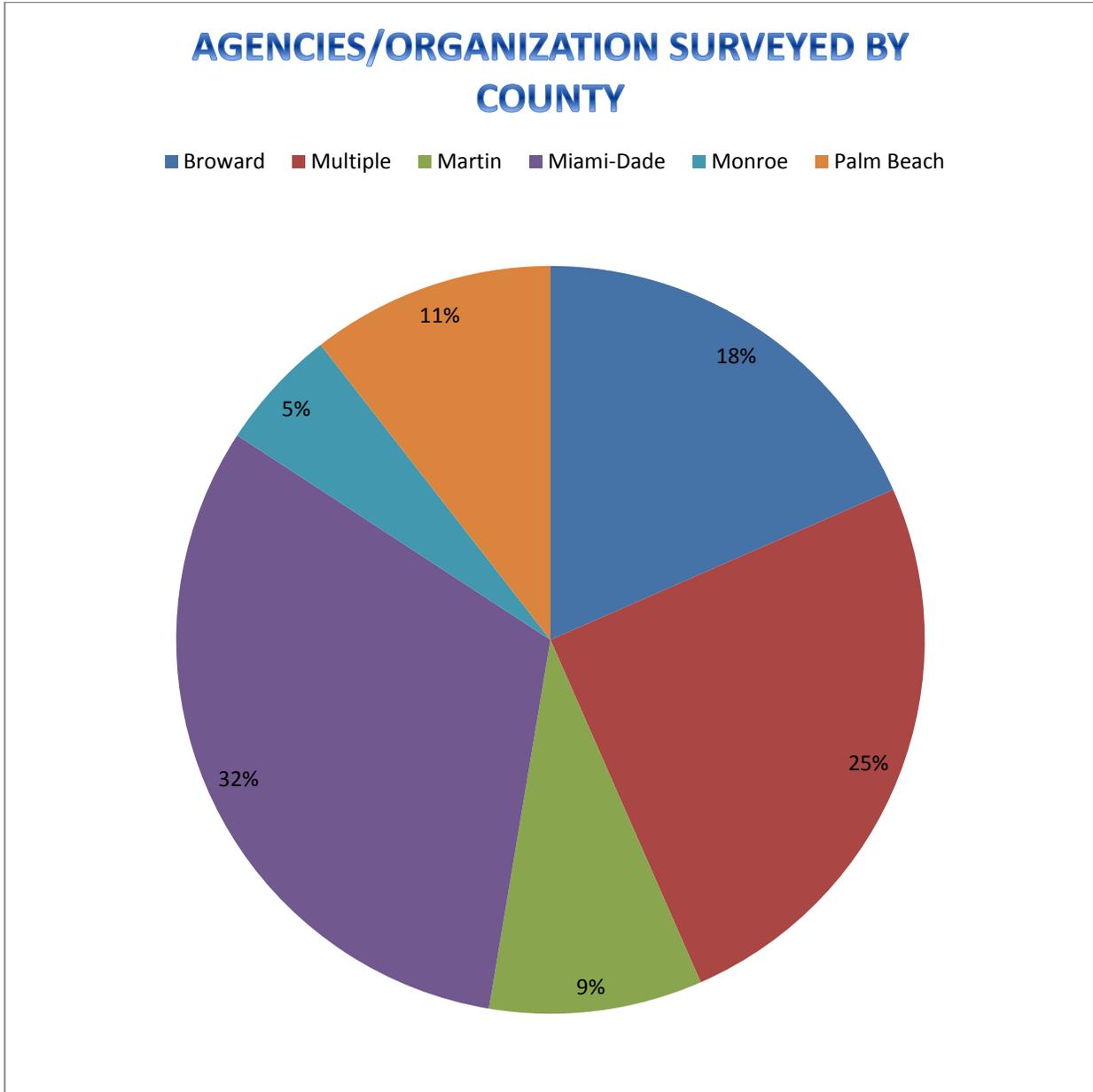
The research finding that only half of the agencies and organizations interviewed had a screening tool for identifying human trafficking is also notable. Such a tool is urgently needed not simply to identify more trafficking cases and victims but also to rectify the lack of institutional memory that often occurs in organizations. The researchers on this project conclude that a standard screening tool should be promoted among Florida organizations and agencies, and that a standardized system for recording human trafficking cases should be legislatively established.

Finally, there should also be mandated and standardized reporting of human trafficking established for Florida and federal agencies—especially law enforcement agencies. Accurate research results regarding the incidence of human trafficking in Florida communities will not be obtained until such reporting is mandated. This research project in many ways exemplifies the significant constraints that limit the collection of reliable data on human trafficking when such reporting is entirely volitional. Researchers were unable to obtain data from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida, from the FBI Office in Miami, or from the Miami-Dade Police Department. All three agencies have established track records for investigating or prosecuting human trafficking cases, but their numbers were not reflected in the data collected as part of this project.



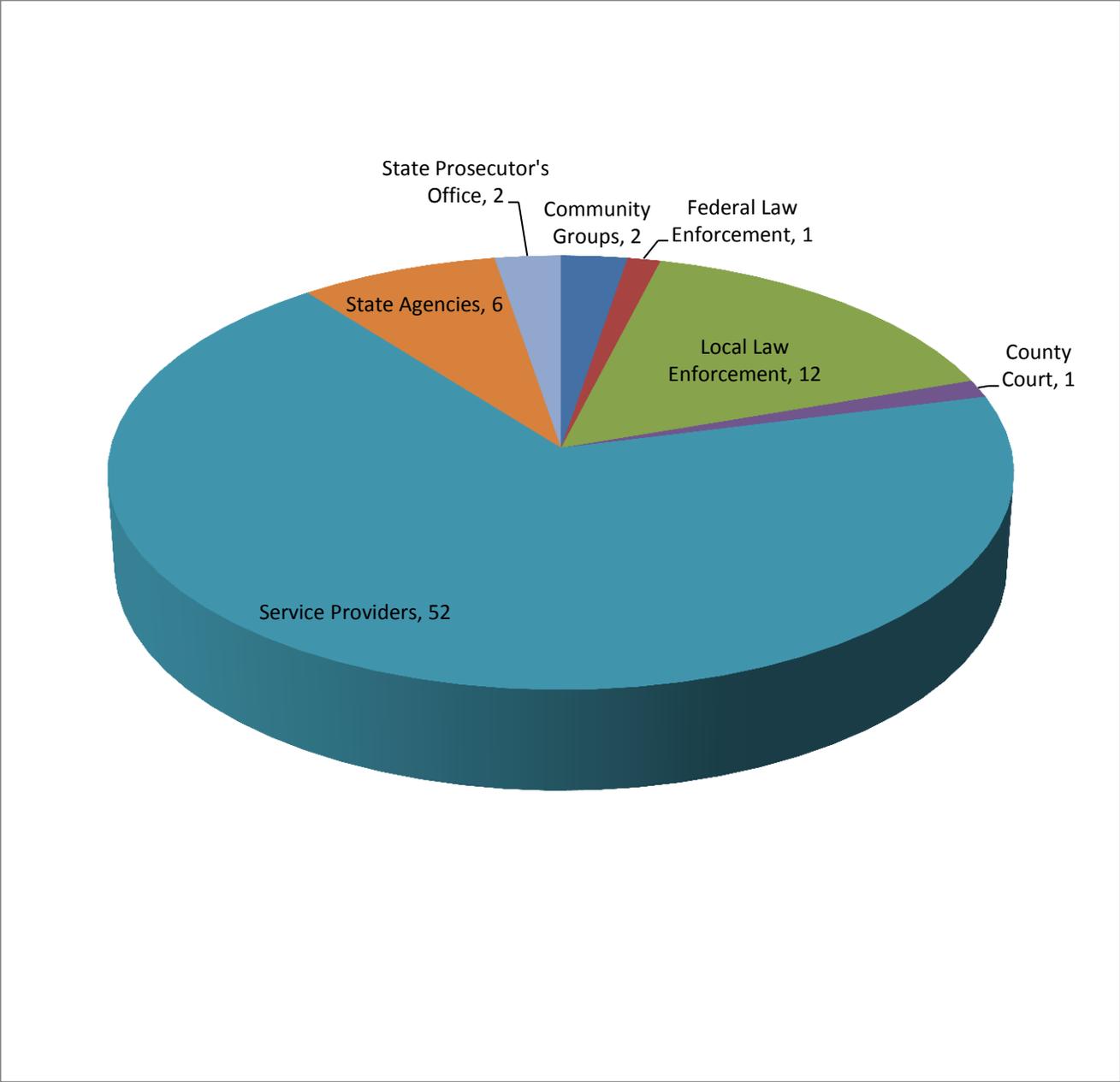
**Appendix A - General Information on the agencies/organizations interviewed**

The following data sets include information gathered from law enforcement agencies, state agencies, county courts and service providers in Broward, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe and Palm Beach Counties.



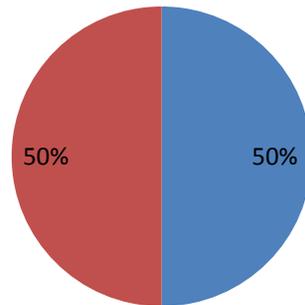
*Note: Multiple indicates that the agencies/service providers served more than one county*

# AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS THAT RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY



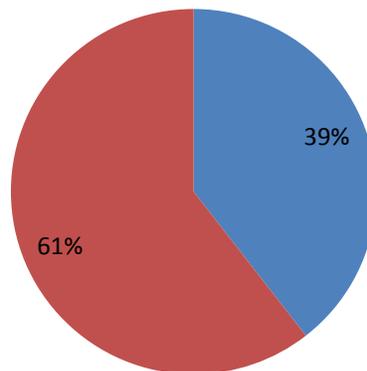
## AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS WITH A SCREENING TOOL

■ Yes ■ No



## DEDICATED UNIT OR POINT OF CONTACT

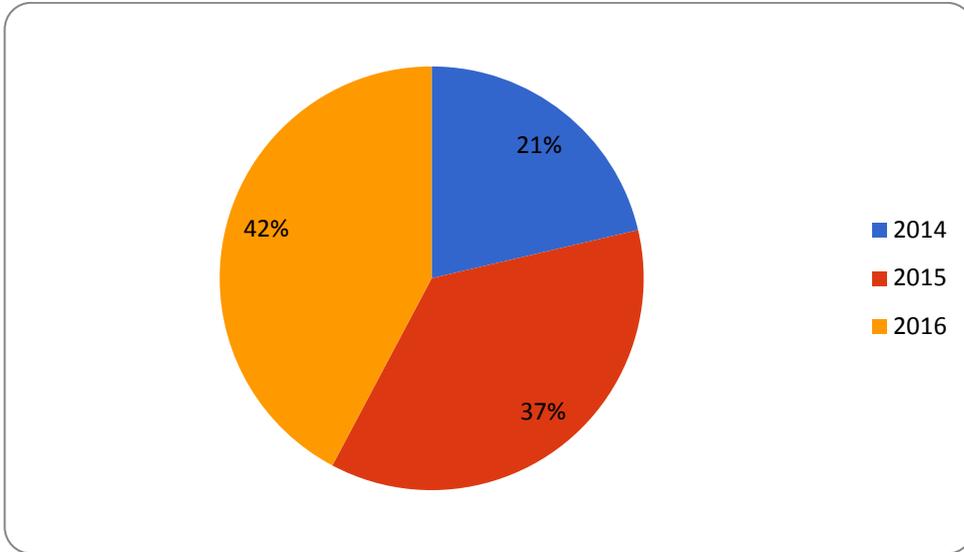
■ Yes ■ No



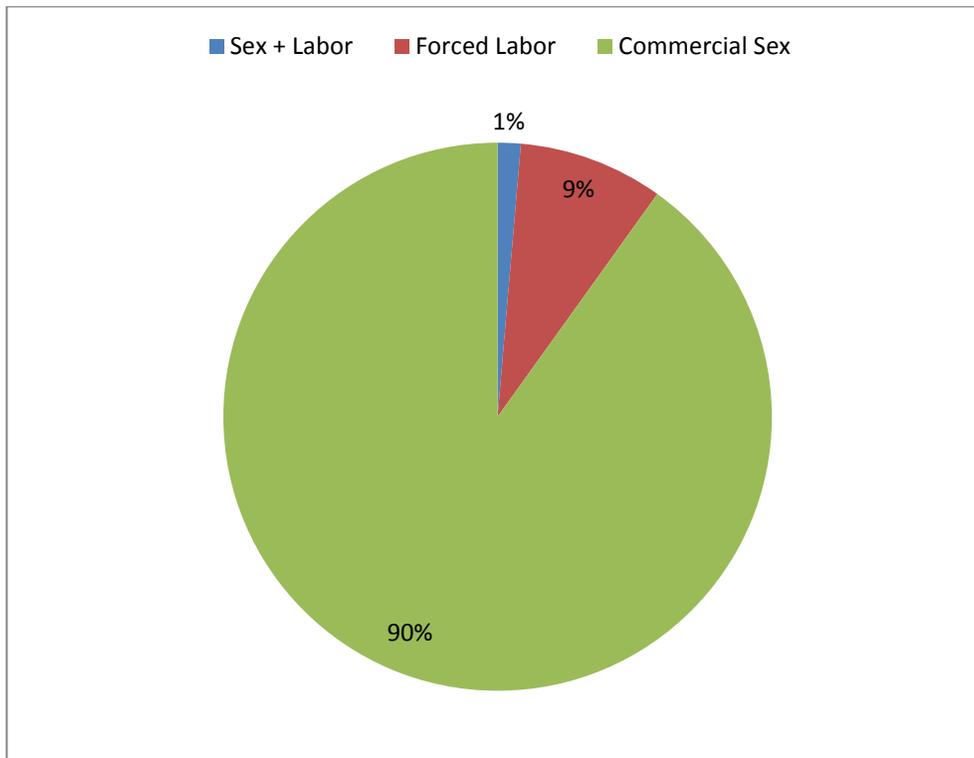
*Note: This graph reflects whether the agencies/organizations have a dedicated Unit and or a point of contact to respond to human trafficking cases.*

from 2014-2016

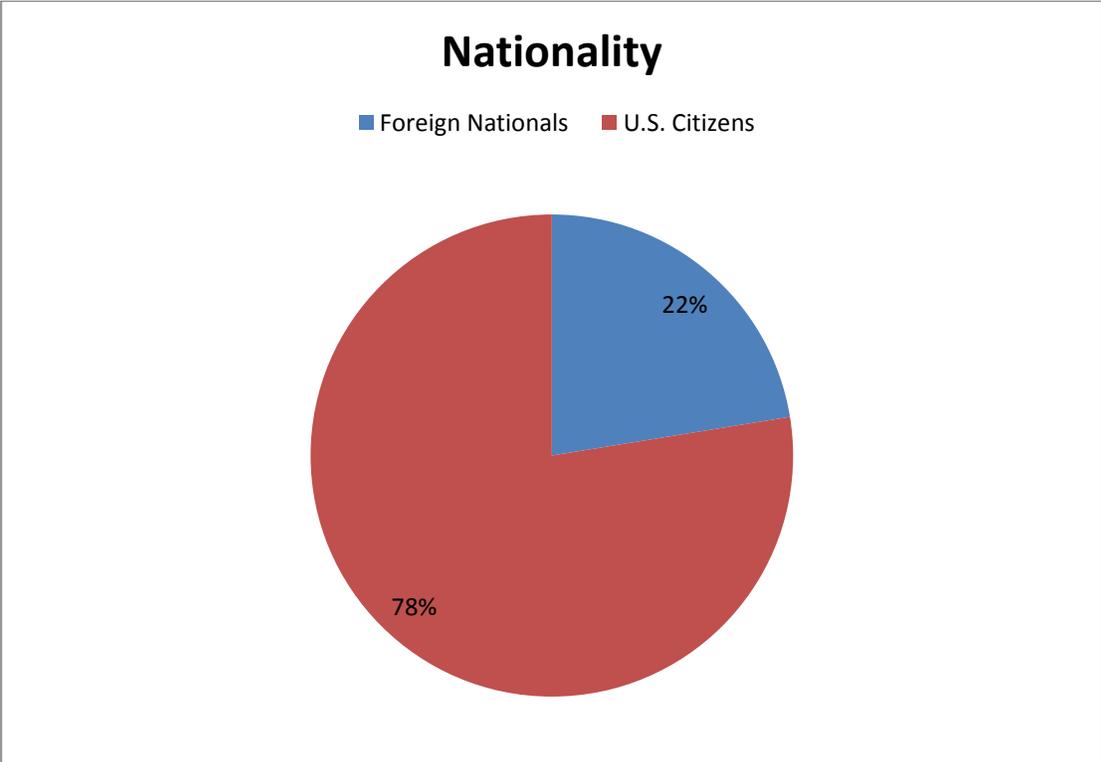
### TRAFFICKING BY YEAR



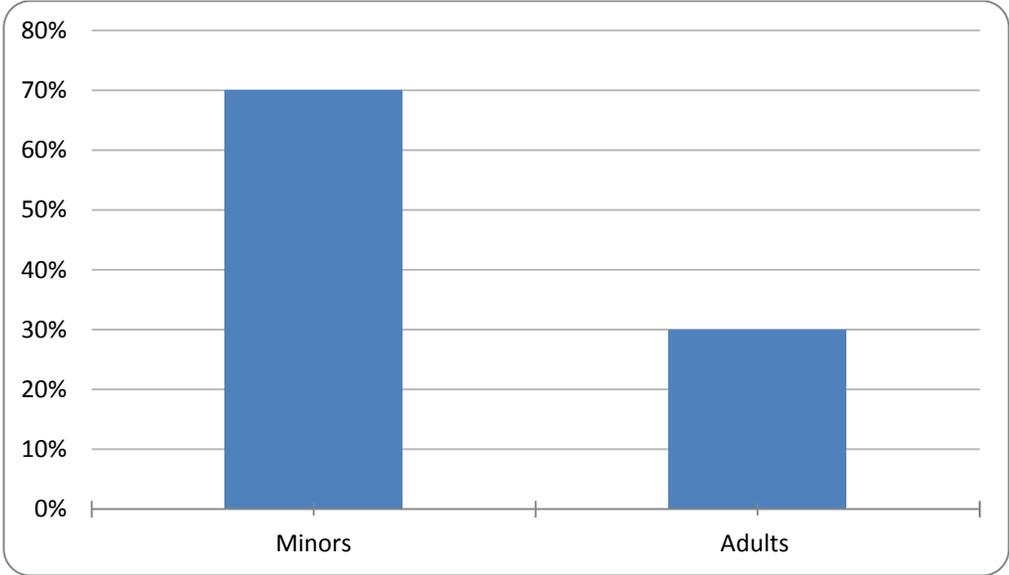
### TYPES OF TRAFFICKING



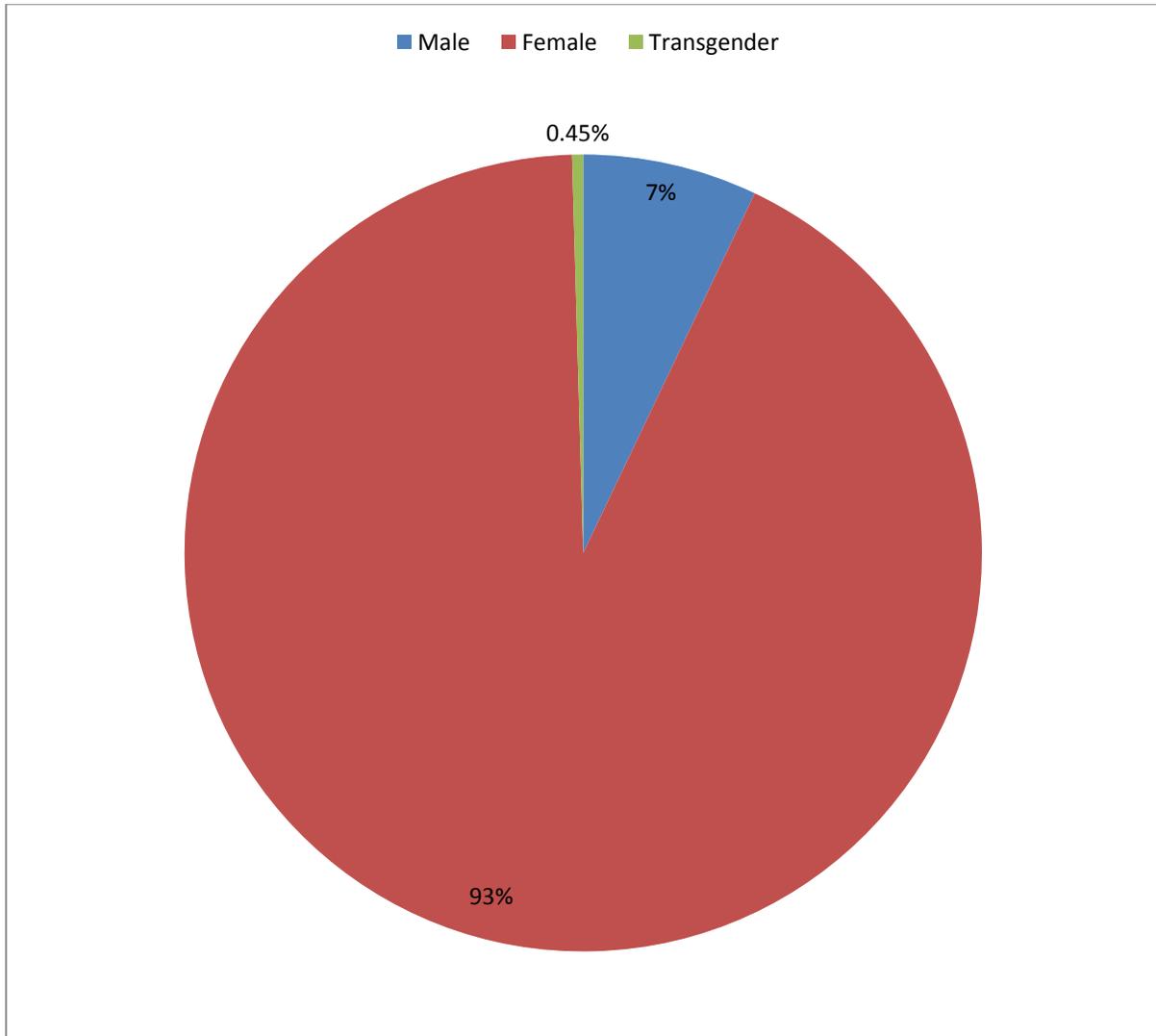
# U.S. CITIZENS VS. NON-CITIZENS



# MINORS VS. ADULTS



## GENDER IDENTITY



## **NATIONALITIES OF FOREIGN VICTIMS REPORTED BY AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS**

Australia
Bangladesh
Brazil
Canada
Caribbean
Central America
China
Cuba
Czech Republic
Dominican Republic
El Salvador
France
Guatemala
Haiti
Honduras
Hungary
India
Italy
Jamaica
Lebanon
Mexico
Pakistan
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Puerto Rico
Russia
Serbia
Ukraine
Venezuela
Yemen

## Appendix C – Screening Tool Linked to the Three Elements of Trafficking

Human trafficking is a crime that affects every community around the world, and has been underreported for many years. In many instances it is hidden among other underlying crimes and more often than not, it goes unidentified. It has been challenging for many stakeholders to identify victims of human trafficking, even when they have interacted with victims previously. Ongoing trainings are especially needed by organizations and agencies where staff turnover can greatly hinder institutional memory. One way to counter the organizational tendency to lose institutional memory is to maintain a screening tool that can be utilized when interacting with potential human trafficking victims. Appropriate screening questions can ensure that trafficking victims are accurately identified, and are provided the services they most need. In the case of law enforcement agencies, an appropriate screening tool can ensure that trafficking crimes are correctly identified and investigated.

It is our recommendation that a screening tool with key questions be utilized so as to reduce the possibility of re-traumatizing potential victims of trafficking. A number of screening tools currently in use are long and very time consuming to administer. The tool used in this project built upon a model introduced by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking because it is very concise and is based on the three elements of trafficking established under the U.N. Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. However, it is very important that agencies/organizations customize their own screening tools around the confidentiality requirements by which they are bound. Some of the information that might emerge through an intake interview might not be appropriate for an agency to maintain or collect due to client privilege. In such instances it might be necessary to refer potential victims to a legal service provider that might be better able to address those issues.

*Some important factors to keep in mind before administering a screening tool:*

- Explain to the potential victim the need for the screening, how long it will potentially take, how the information will be used, and that the interview can be stopped at any point
- Safety is key not only for the potential victim but also for persons assisting them
- Secure a safe/comfortable place that is non-threatening to the potential victim (making sure that a suspected trafficker is not present or close by)
- Rapport should be established with the potential victim before posing any questions that might reference a traumatic experience the victim has undergone
- Basic needs on the part of the victim should be met before a screening session (food, clothing, rest, medical attention, etc.)
- Be sensitive to cultural and gender concerns. Use an approachable tone of voice as well as body language; be empathetic
- Dress appropriately; learn as much as you can beforehand who you will be interviewing and where. Law enforcement interviews may prove more productive when not done with a gun or badge visible
- If interpreters are needed, make sure that they are reliable, trustworthy and that they will be able to fully comprehend the language of the potential victims. Insist that the interpreter relate the exact statements of the person being interviewed without editorializing or injecting information. In addition, make sure that you have confidentiality agreements already in place so that interpreters fully understand victim privacy rights and concerns.

**Sex trafficking is:**

- (1) Causing a child under the age of 18 to participate in a commercial sex act; or
- (2) Using coercion for the commercial sexual exploitation of an adult

**Forced labor** is the use of coercion to obtain the labor or services of another

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Country of origin:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ACT**

**Recruiting**

- Did someone offer you a different job than the one you are doing right now?
- Have you been required to perform activities that are different from what you were told you would be doing?
- Did you sign a contract with different terms than the ones you are being asked to do now?

**Harboring**

- Are you able to contact your family and friends?
- Does another person decide where you live or work?
- Do you live in the same place where you work?
- Does anyone control your movement?

**Transporting**

- Who arranged for your trip to the U.S.?
- Does someone take you from home to where you work?

**Obtaining/Providing**

- Has anyone advertised your services or forced you to advertise yourself?

**MEANS**

**Force**

- Do you have access to your identification documents or passport? If not, who has them?
- Has someone physically hurt you? If yes, who and why?
- Are there any locks where you work or live so that you cannot leave?
- Have you ever been deprived of food, water, sleep, or medical help?

**Fraud**

- Has your employer or someone else lied to you about the type of work, salary, or hours?
- Has your employer ever promised you immigration status?
- Does someone else make decisions on how to spend your money?

**Coercion**

- Has someone threatened you or your family?
- Have you ever been forced to work while sick? Told you that you must make a specific amount of money for them?
- Have you been threatened with deportation if you ever leave your job?
- Has someone intimidated you or humiliated you in any way? How?

**ENDS**

**Debt Bondage**

- Have you been forced to work to pay off a debt? If yes, is your debt connected to your employer?

**Involuntary Servitude**

- Have you been forced to give someone else the money you have worked for?
- Have you worked for someone or done any activities for which you thought you would be paid but were not?
- Did you ever feel like you couldn't stop working because someone was going to hurt you or your family?

**Sex Trafficking**

- Have you been forced to have sex for money, food, shelter, or other needs?
- Has anyone forced you to touch someone or have physical/sexual contact with another person?