



Freedom Network USA

2018 MEMBER REPORT

Every Survivor Counts.

It is more than a hashtag or slogan, it is a core value for Freedom Network USA. This report represents our dedication to literally count every survivor supported by our network. We celebrate the victories, and mourn the hardships, of every one. Our members have provided each individual in this report with client-centered, trauma-informed services to address their specific experience, needs, and dreams.

As a network, we take a step back every two years and look across these many diverse experiences. We look for trends, common challenges, and emerging issues. By aggregating these experiences, we hope to provide a more comprehensive picture of human trafficking in the United States. We look for information about who the traffickers are, the types of trafficking that are occurring, who is being exploited, and what service needs persist for survivors.

We use this data to drive our focus and realign our priorities. Based on our last report, we have expanded our membership to better reflect the field, including a specific emphasis on incorporating Survivor Leaders as Individual Members. We have advocated for expanded federal programs to address labor trafficking, and against criminalization strategies that harm survivors of labor and sex trafficking. We have developed a new Training and Technical Assistance Project to improve access to housing for survivors.

We hope that you will find this report helpful in both inspiring and supporting your work.

Please note that all names, images, and identifying information in this report have been changed to protect the privacy of the survivors.



Jean Bruggeman
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

Freedom Network USA is the largest alliance of experienced advocates advancing a human rights-based approach to human trafficking in the United States. Together with our members, we advocate for comprehensive federal policy and provide training and technical assistance to the field. Our expertise is derived from our members, each of which has experience working directly with survivors. We work to incorporate those insights and strengths into a collective voice for a positive and permanent impact in the lives of all survivors of human trafficking.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

Freedom Network USA members are headquartered in 19 states and 32 cities, including Washington, D.C., with 44 member organizations and 13 individuals across the United States. Members include individual experts, independent non-governmental organizations, and survivors. Organizational members vary in size, budget, and overall mission. Our members represent legal, social service, and academic sectors, who we support through training, technical assistance, and capacity building in order to build an effective and inclusive anti-trafficking movement.

ABOUT THE REPORT

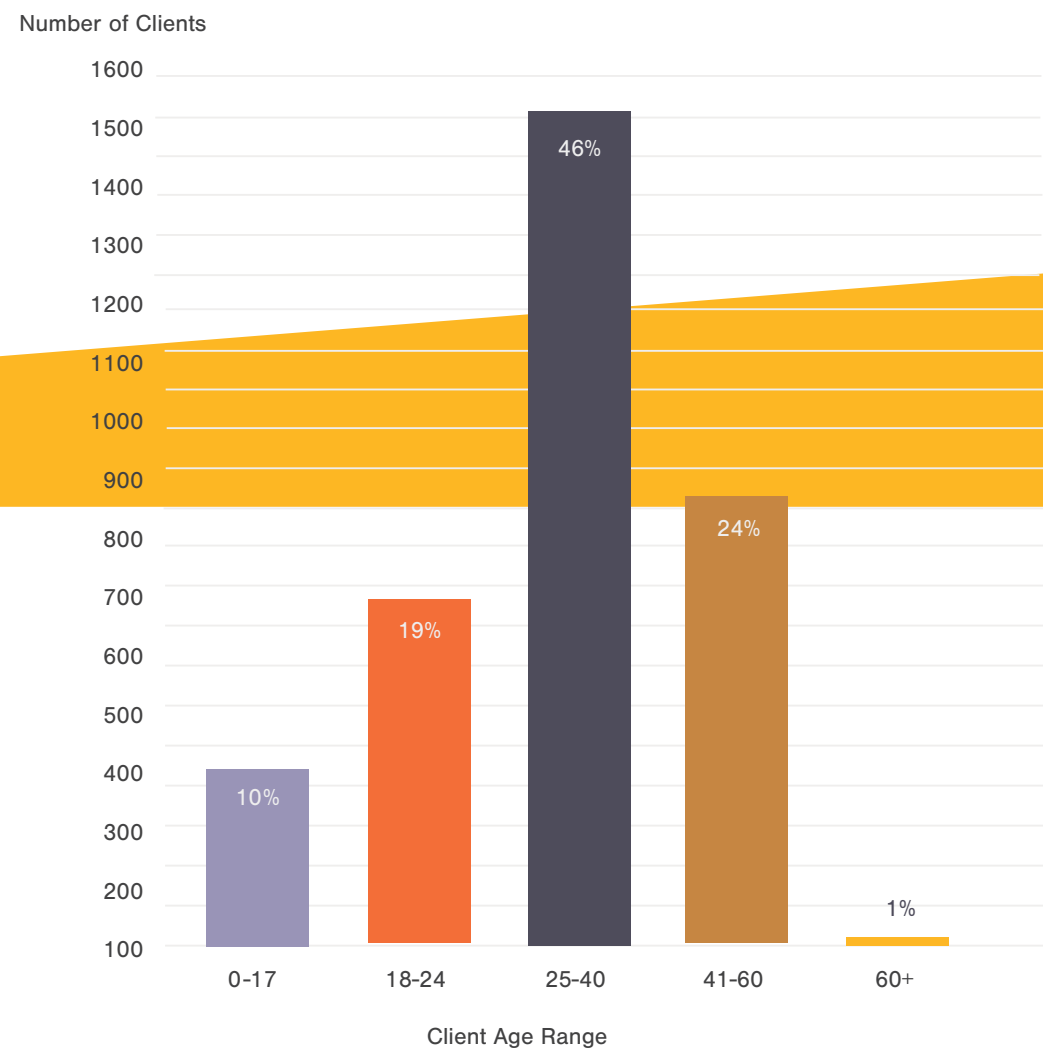
This report represents the services provided by Freedom Network USA's members from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016. The information was self-reported by members through a simple survey instrument. Not all members responded to the survey, nor were all members able to provide all of the requested information about every client they served. No personally identifying information was gathered in the course of developing this report, therefore it is impossible to determine whether these numbers include clients served by more than one agency. Some data may have been estimated based on the best available information. However, in spite of these limitations, we believe that this report contributes to the national understanding of the diversity of trafficking and the needs of survivors in the United States. We hope that it helps to develop and support the human trafficking research agenda to inform more effective services for trafficking survivors. For comparison purposes, our previous report covered the period between January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2014. Freedom Network USA welcomes new members each year, therefore the number of members has increased compared to the previous report, and has increased again since the end of this reporting period.

EVERY SURVIVOR COUNTS

TOTAL CLIENTS

3,919 TOTAL CLIENTS

Freedom Network USA members are serving almost 2,000 human trafficking clients annually. This is a 33% increase from the last reporting period (2013-2014) when 2,332 clients were served. FNUSA experienced significant growth, with 19 more individual and organizational members in 2017 compared to 2015.



The majority of clients served by Freedom Network USA members continue to be 18-40 years old. The number of minors served by members decreased from 17% to 10%, while the percentage of older clients went largely unchanged.

SUCCESSES

Thriving Survivors

Thanks to the unwavering dedication of organizations and advocates like our members, every day survivors are reaching new heights and accomplishing ambitious goals. Survivors are attending college, being promoted at work, starting families, visiting family members in their country of origin, seeking justice against their trafficker, and becoming a public face in the anti-trafficking movement. Every survivor is different and defines success in their own way. Programs using a human-rights based approach and practicing trauma-informed care understand how to respond to each client's unique needs. Advocates don't rescue these clients; they rescue themselves.

Member Spotlight

URBAN JUSTICE CENTER, SEX WORKERS PROJECT

A case manager at SWP began working with "Anna" in 2014, while she was still living with her perpetrator. Over time, she was able to move to a safe house and then, with the support of SWP, she obtained independent housing and changed her name. She was granted a T Visa, thanks to the support of a legal partner who specializes in immigration. After completing adult literacy classes and receiving her GED, she was accepted into a community college program. With safe housing and legal immigration status, "Anna" was recently accepted to the University of San Francisco to pursue her bachelor's degree. We wish "Anna" continued success!

TRENDS

Increased Immigration Enforcement Hurts Trafficking Survivors

In 2017, Freedom Network USA joined the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) and Polaris, to survey service providers on the impact of increased, indiscriminate immigration enforcement on the communities they serve. We found that immigrants are increasingly afraid to come forward to report crimes committed against them. 82% of providers reported their foreign-born clients had new or increased concerns about contacting police. Additionally, 7 out of 10 providers reported their clients had concerns about attending court for a matter related to victimization. Trafficking investigations and prosecutions depend on evidence and information provided by survivors. When survivors do not feel safe to cooperate with law enforcement and engage in the criminal justice system, traffickers will continue to exploit and abuse with impunity. Survivors will not be able to access the services and support they need, including medical and mental health care, access to safe housing and education, and legal services including immigration relief.

Member Spotlight

LEGAL AID AT WORK: JUSTICE FOR FISHERMEN

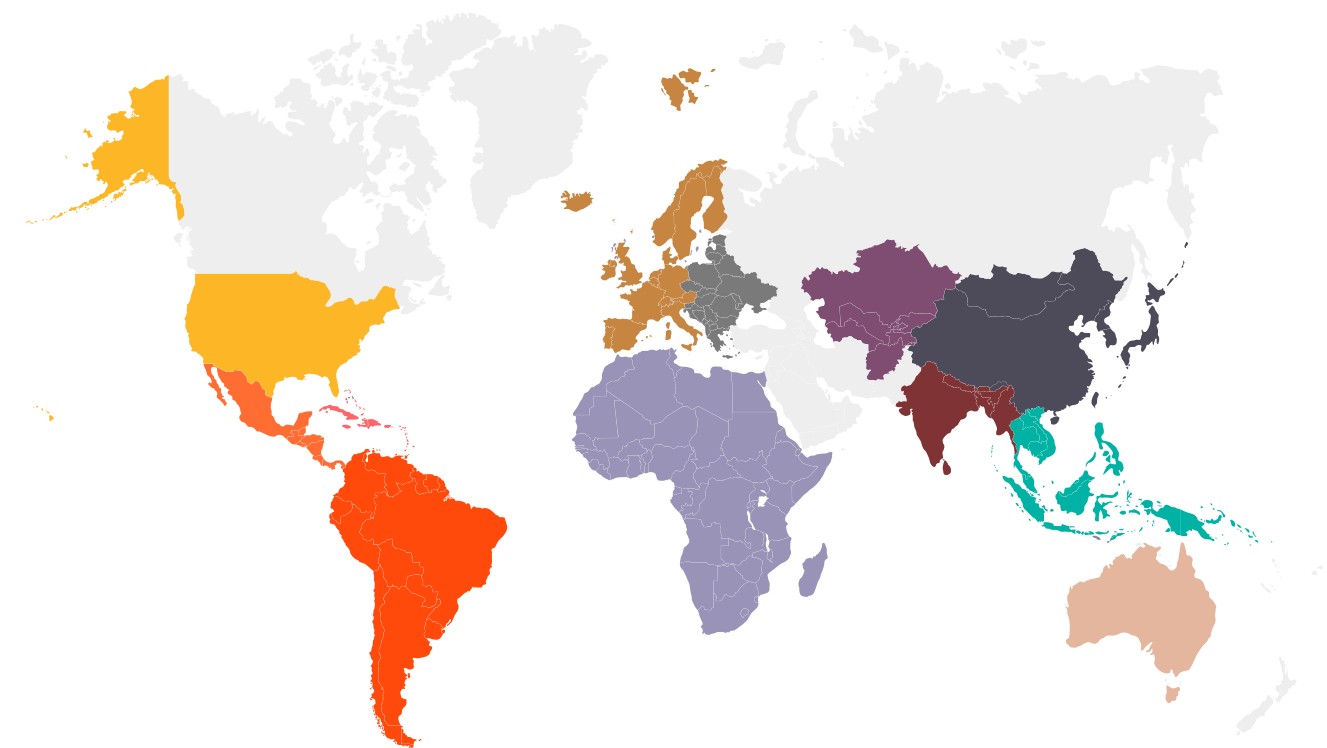
In 2016, the commercial fishing industry drew international attention after major media outlets reported widespread trafficking and exploitation in the supply chain. Scrutiny mounted as calls for transparency and new regulations rose, specifically in southeast Asian waters. However, these practices were also taking place in US waters. Foreign-born workers, employed on US-based fishing vessels, are also being exploited and abused. Freedom Network USA member, Legal Aid at Work, sued an American fishing boat captain on behalf of two Indonesian fishermen who escaped from a boat docked in San Francisco. The men were promised well-paying jobs on US vessels, but instead they were paid much less, forced to work 20-hour days, denied medical care, and threatened with violence. Their passports were confiscated and they were told that they could not leave the ship until they paid the owner thousands of dollars.

Survivors have several courses of action they can take through a civil claim, from filing a claim for unpaid wages through the Department of Labor, to suing their perpetrator in court for damages. Once the men escaped and received services, Legal Aid at Work attorneys reviewed all the civil options available to them and they decided to sue the fishing boat captain in a San Francisco federal court in 2016. A settlement was reached in the case in January of 2018, which included a financial settlement for the exploited workers, as well as provisions to prevent future abuse including that the captain must provide “know your rights” education materials to current and future workers.

ORIGIN

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Freedom Network USA members serve clients from all over the world. Continuing the trend from previous reports, the number of clients who are US citizens jumped 10 percent from 22% (2013-2014) to 32%. The other notable change was a rise in survivors from Eastern Asian countries such as China, South Korea, and China (from 5% to 18%).



United States – 32%

Central America/Mexico – 24%

South America – 3%

Caribbean – 4%

Western Europe – 1%

Eastern Europe – 1%

Africa – 3%

Other – 1%

East Asia – 18%

Southeast Asia – 9%

South Asia – 3%

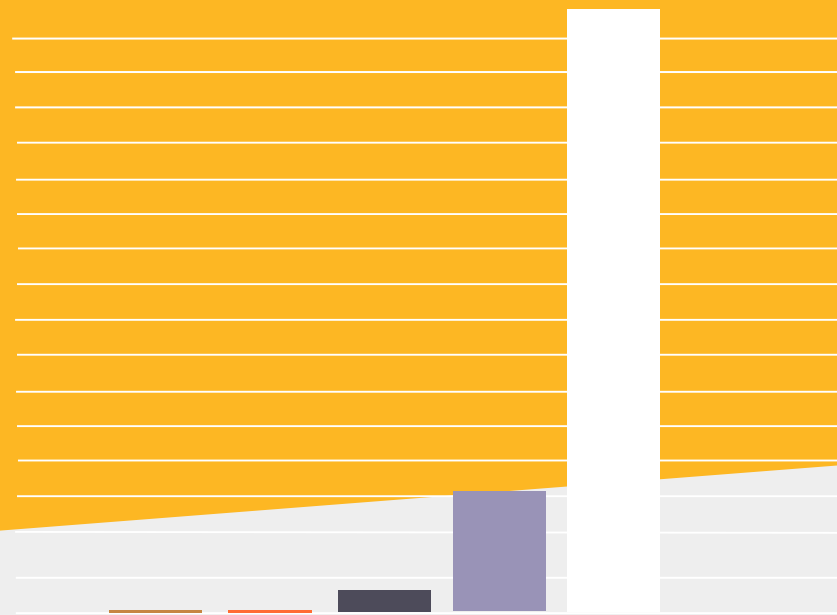
Central Asia – 1%

GENDER

CLIENT GENDER

The percentage of female clients served by members increased again, rising 6% from the previous reporting period (2013-2014). The most notable change in the breakdown of client gender is the increase in individuals who identify as transgender, specifically those identifying as transgender female.

Gender	Number of Clients
Female	3011
Male	601
Trans Female	107
Trans Male	2
Other/Unknown	4
Total	3725



TRENDS

Opioids and Human Trafficking

Recently, the field has turned its attention to the intersection of human trafficking and opioids. Members report seeing higher incidents of addiction among their clients, specifically to heroin, and particularly with sex trafficking survivors.

Traffickers manipulate addiction to control their victims. Some exploit individuals who are already addicted, others work to create addictions. They may offer the drugs as an escape, a way for survivors to emotionally and physically deal with their experience of abuse. Multiple, well-documented cases describe traffickers using the effects of withdrawal to coerce their victims to engage in sex work. They wait until the effects begin to kick in and then offer them a fix only if they agree to work on the street. In an effort to end the pain, the survivor agrees and is stuck in a perpetual cycle that only further benefits the perpetrator.

Additionally, labor trafficking in the form of forced drug cultivation, production, transportation, and sales continues to be a less recognized form of exploitation. As an informal economy, traffickers can easily isolate victims, which makes identification very difficult.

Extensive research has yet to be done on these intersections. Freedom Network USA members, on the front lines of this crisis, are working to share their expertise with other advocates across the country to improve services and support for survivors.

CHALLENGES

Housing Access for Survivors: Freedom Network Training Institute Housing Training and Technical Assistance Project

Survivors have identified safe housing as the most critical need after escape. However, service providers report a lack of affordable housing options that meet the unique needs of their clients. While some qualify for traditional housing programs, others struggle with limited rental histories, poor credit, and limited to no documented employment history. Mainstream housing programs often lack expertise in addressing trauma, domestic violence shelters are generally not designed to support men, and housing-first programs may not be well designed for minors.

Over the next three years, FNUSA will work with experts including a Survivor Advisory Panel, housing experts, and FNUSA member organizations to share best practices that address the specific housing needs of survivors. Members have implemented a variety of housing program structures in different regions nationwide. Leveraging that expertise, the FNTI Housing Training and Technical Assistance Project will support the development of specialized housing programs, as well as effective collaborations with existing providers.

“ Safe housing options allow individuals to concentrate on their psychological needs, including any effects of complex trauma that they experience. When a survivor’s basic needs (including safe and affordable housing) are not met they must concentrate on basic survival. This creates an environment that makes them more vulnerable to new exploitative situations. ”

- International Institute of St. Louis, Missouri

“ Clients who have experienced human trafficking (especially labor) often have a more difficult time finding housing since they may not fit the domestic violence criteria of DV specific shelters (not in immediate danger, not living with their trafficker, etc). ”

- WomanKind, New York

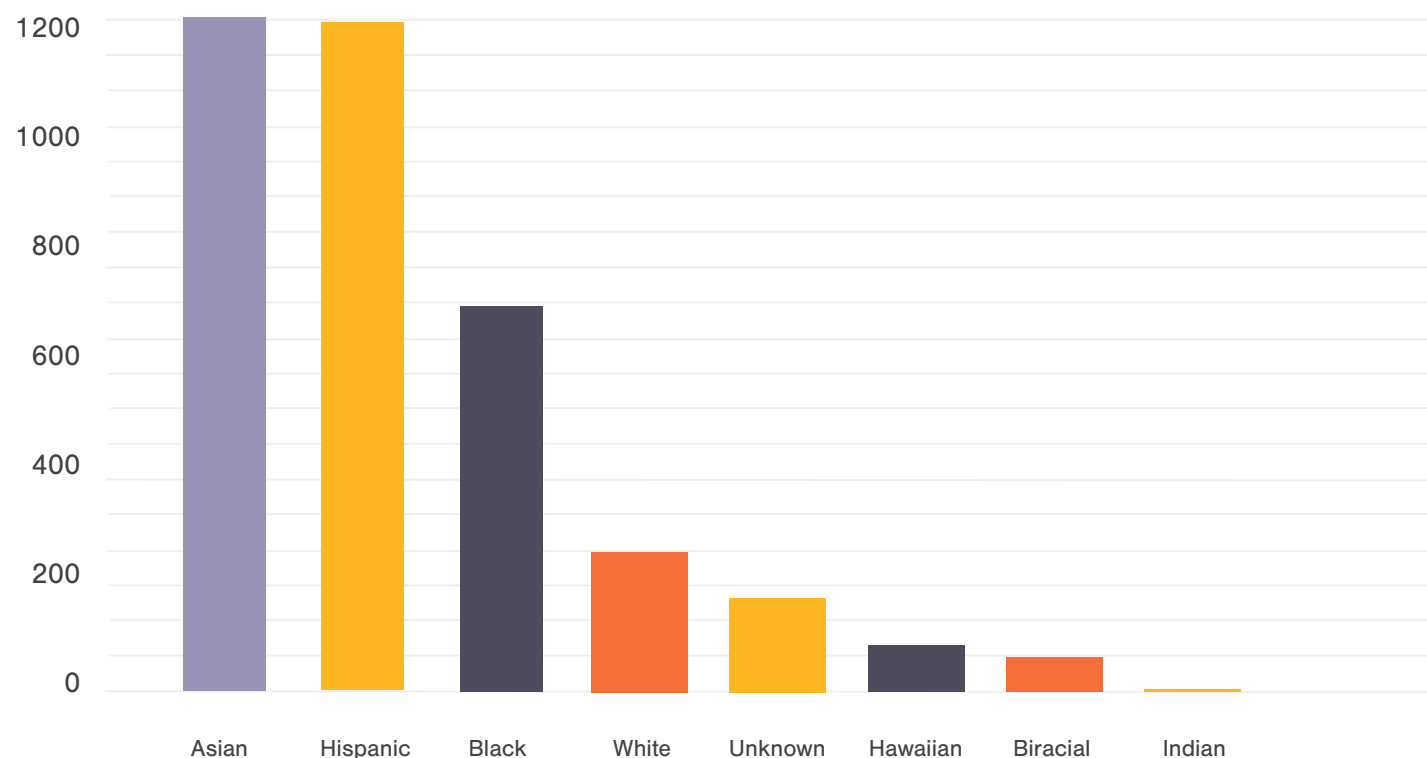
“ Finding safe, stable, affordable housing for foreign-national survivors is extremely difficult when they have very little income due to awaiting their immigration status and/or low wage employment. This compounded with discrimination by landlords against individuals who are immigrants, have no credit or poor credit, and those who have section 8 vouchers makes it extremely difficult. ”

- Heartland Human Care Services, Illinois

ETHNICITY

RACE AND ETHNICITY

People of color represent 84% of clients served by members. This statistic illustrates the importance of the human rights-based approach to human trafficking. Racial discrimination creates economic and social disadvantages, including higher rates of poverty, limited access to education, and health disparities. These impact an individual's ability to meet both their own, and their family's, basic needs – creating further vulnerabilities to exploitation and abuse. Prevention efforts that address the root causes of this vulnerability, such as discrimination and poverty, are the only effective approaches to ending human trafficking.



Member Spotlight

NEW YORK'S LEGAL AID SOCIETY

During the reporting period, the Legal Aid Society vacated over 800 criminal convictions imposed on clients. Prostitution-related offenses were most common, but drug possession, weapon possession, and petit larceny convictions were removed as well. For their clients who were newly arrested during the reporting period, LAS was able to obtain dismissals for 84% of their clients, and for an additional 10% of clients, we were able to avoid criminal convictions – substantially reducing the criminalization of trafficked individuals and others engaged in sex work.

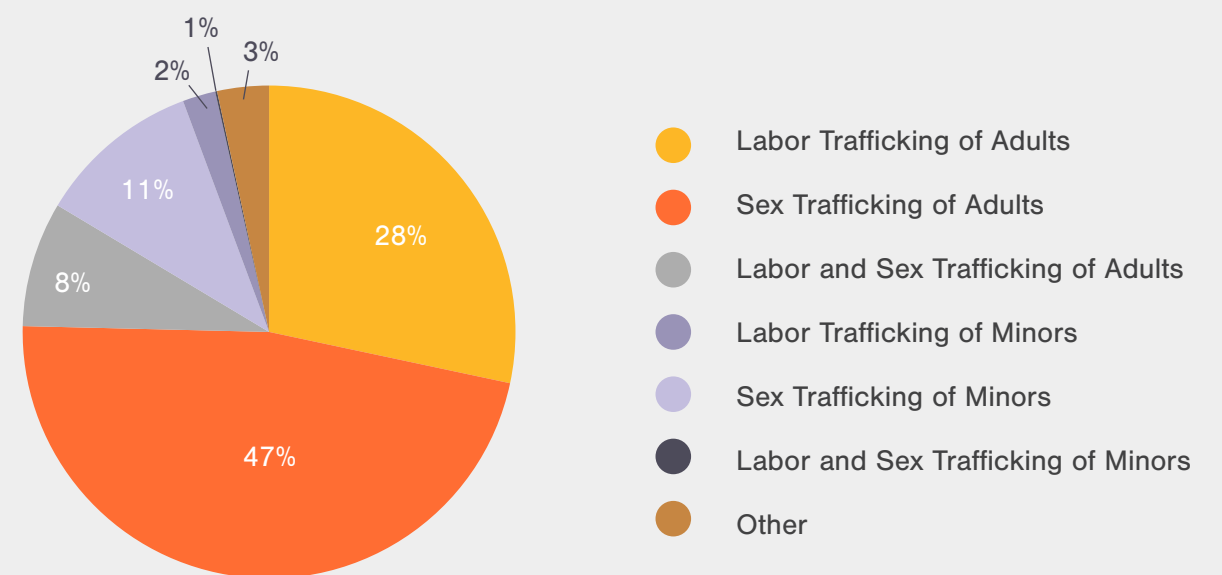
SUCCESSES

Vacatur

Across the country, state lawmakers are enacting policies that allow survivors to clear their record of crimes they committed as a result of their trafficking situation. A criminal record can make it difficult to find a job, secure housing, and fund college or other educational programs. These barriers create financial and emotional hardships that make it difficult for a survivor to recover from their trauma. Freedom Network USA members have filed motions to vacate or expunge these convictions, pushed for these laws in their own states, provided technical assistance to colleagues, and created pro bono partnerships to represent survivors. With the help of an attorney, countless individuals have been able to tear down this barrier and begin rebuilding their lives.

LABOR SECTORS

Freedom Network USA continues to serve survivors exploited in diverse labor sectors. Continuing the upward trend from our last two reports, the number of clients who were trafficked in the sex trade increased from 42% to 58%. The number of survivors victimized in both sex and labor increased from 6% to 9%.



SERVICES

SERVICES

CASE MANAGEMENT

LEGAL SERVICES

COUNSELING

HOUSING/SHELTER

MEDICAL

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

EDUCATION

EXPERT TESTIMONY

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ADVOCACY

REFERRALS (LEGAL, SOCIAL SERVICES, MEDICAL, ETC.)

“The collective experience of our Members - providing services to survivors nationwide - provides a realistic picture of human trafficking in the US. This deep and comprehensive knowledge explains the real impact of the legislation, policies, and programs created by often removed government agencies. Sharing these stories, one survivor at a time, can change the futures of thousands of survivors.”

- Jean Bruggeman
Executive Director

MEMBERS

Asian Americans Advancing Justice · California · advancingjustice-la.org
Advocating Opportunity · Ohio · advocatingopportunity.com
American Gateway · Texas · americangateways.org
Americans for Immigrant Justice · Florida · aijustice.org
Annie Fukushima, PhD · Utah · Individual Member
API Chaya · Washington · apiwfsc.org
Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach · California · apilegaloutreach.org
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund · New York · aaldef.org
Ayuda · Washington DC · ayuda.com
CAST · California · castla.org
Cindy Liou · California · Individual Member
City Bar Justice Center · New York · citybarjusticecenter.org
Coalition of Immokalee Workers · Florida · ciw-online.org
Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants · Connecticut · cirict.org
Elisabet Medina · California · Individual Member
Evelyn Chumbow · Washington DC · Individual Member
Fainess Lipenga · Washington DC · Individual Member
Florence Burke · New York · Individual Member
Give Way to Freedom · Vermont · givewaytofreedom.org
Hanni Stoklosa · Massachusetts · Individual Member
Heartland Human Cares Services · Illinois · heartlandalliance.org
Human Trafficking Legal Center · Washington DC · htlegalcenter.org
International Institute of Minnesota · Minnesota · iiminn.org
International Institute of Buffalo · New York · iibuffalo.org
International Institute of St. Louis · Missouri · iistl.org
International Organization for Adolescents · New York · iofa.org
International Rescue Committee (IRC) Miami · Florida · rescue.org
International Rescue Committee (IRC) · California · rescue.org
Janie Chuang · Washington DC · Individual Member

Kate Mogulescu · New York · Individual Member
Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center · California · law.scu.edu/kgaclc
Kristin Heffernan · New York · Individual Member
Legal Aid Foundation · Illinois · lafchicago.org
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles · California · lafla.org
Legal Aid Society · New York · legal-aid.org
Legal Aid at Work · California · legalaidthatwork.org
Lifeboat Project · Florida · thelifeboatproject.org
Mosaic Family Services · Texas · mosaicfamily.org
My Sisters' Place · New York · mspny.org
Nat Paul · New York · Individual Member
National Immigrant Justice Center · Illinois · heartlandalliance.org
Opening Doors · California · openingdoorsinc.org
Pat Medige · Colorado · Individual Member
Preble Street · Maine · preblestreet.org
Russell Wilson · California · Individual Member
Safe Horizon · New York · safehorizon.org
Sex Workers Project at the Urban Justice Center · New York · sexworkersproject.org
Southern Poverty Law Center · Georgia & Louisiana · splcenter.org
Susan French · Washington DC · Individual Member
Susie Baldwin · California · Individual Member
Tapestri · Georgia · tapestri.org
UMD Safe Center · Maryland · umdsafecenter.org
Vida Legal Assistance · Florida · vidalaw.org
Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (IRC) · Washington · warn-trafficking.org
WomanKind · New York · iamwomankind.org
Worker Justice Center of New York · New York · wjcny.org
YWCA Kalamazoo · Michigan · ywcakalamazoo.org



Freedom Network USA