

# Freedom Network USA 2020 Member Report

An analysis of Freedom Network USA  
services provided from January 1, 2017 to  
December 31, 2018.



Freedom Network USA

# Who We Are

Freedom Network USA (FNUSA) is the nation's largest coalition working to ensure that trafficked persons have access to justice, safety, and opportunity. Together with our members, we advocate for comprehensive federal policy and provide training and technical assistance to the field. Our expertise is derived from members, each of whom 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 working in 23 states and 50 cities, including Washington, DC, with 48 member organizations and 20 individual experts across the United States. Members include survivors, legal and social service providers, researchers, advocacy organizations, and expert consultants. Organizational members vary in size, budget, populations served, and services provided. We support our members 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, 2017 to December 31, 2018. 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 all of the clients they served. Freedom Network USA welcomes new members each year, therefore the number of members has increased compared to the previous report. 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. 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.

# Letter from the Executive Director



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JEAN BRUGGEMAN

Data can be many things. Social media is full of numbers and claims about human trafficking in the US that is disconnected and misleading.

What the anti-trafficking field needs is useful data that helps us to respond to the needs of survivors with policies, programs, and strategies that actually reduce trafficking, increase accountability, and improve the lives of survivors. At FNUSA we strive to use the data we gather to focus and improve our work and impact.

This report presents the data we have gathered from our members representing the work they are doing, the survivors they are working with, the challenges they are facing, and the innovative solutions they are developing. FNUSA exists to gather this vast wisdom from the best anti-trafficking programs across the country in order to identify the trends, emerging issues, and best practices. We then share this information broadly to support the development of a stronger and more effective anti-trafficking field.

The quantitative data shows that our field is growing stronger, more inclusive, and is having a greater impact; the qualitative data tells a story of resilience, creativity, and determination. Faced with barriers, old and new, FNUSA members are developing new strategies and partnerships to ensure that survivors are provided with the respect, protection, and support that they need and deserve.

We hope that you also find this report helpful in inspiring and supporting your work in these challenging times.

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

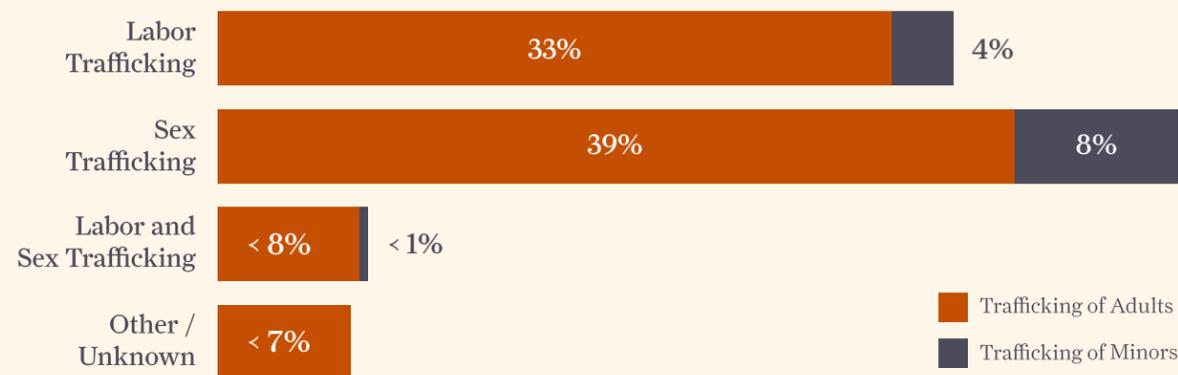
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Bruggeman". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

# Who We Serve

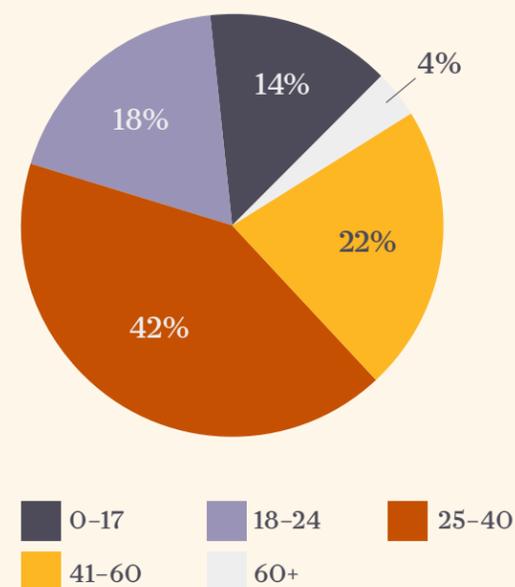
3,747 Total Clients

Freedom Network USA members are working with almost 2,000 human trafficking survivors annually. These include labor and sex trafficking survivors of all ages, races, and genders from around the world.

## Type of Trafficking



## Ages



FNUSA members work with survivors of both labor (42%) and sex trafficking (56%). Some member organizations specialize in only labor or sex trafficking, while others support survivors of both. Similarly, members may specialize in working with only minors or adults. Almost half of the clients served by Freedom Network USA members are between 25–40 years old.

# Uncovering Labor Trafficking

Despite the high prevalence of labor trafficking survivors served by our members, labor trafficking remains largely misunderstood and under-investigated by law enforcement, prosecutors, some service providers, and most government agencies. Federal human trafficking prosecutions are overwhelmingly sex trafficking cases – in 2018, only 17 of 230 nation-wide prosecutions were labor trafficking cases.<sup>1</sup> This results in barriers or delayed services and support for labor trafficking survivors. They might not be identified by law enforcement or direct service agencies who are not trained to screen for both labor and sex trafficking, and few will achieve justice from civil or criminal courts for the crimes committed against them.

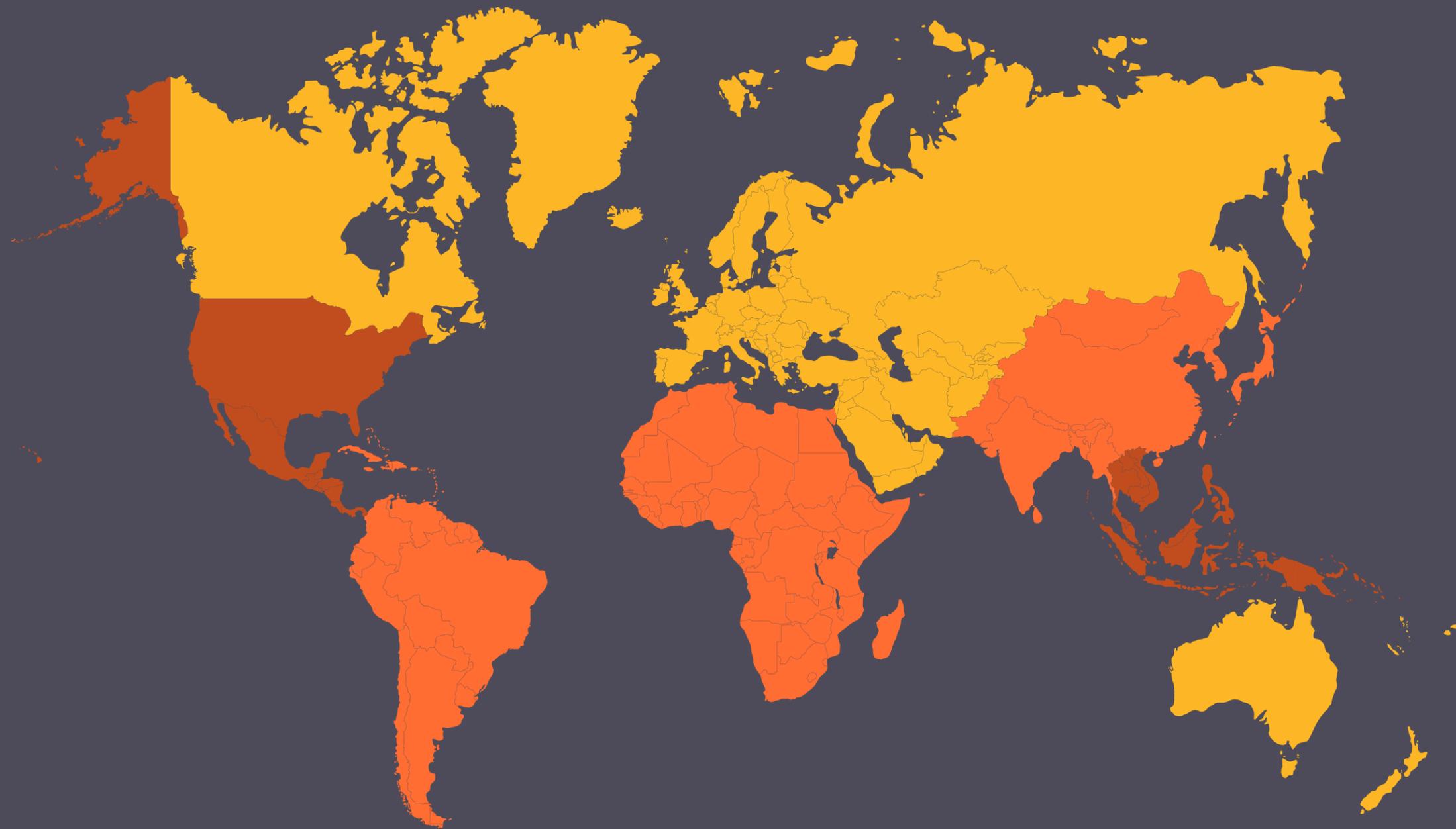
Freedom Network USA members have developed specialized services and support programs that address the needs of labor trafficking survivors, including the needs of men and boys. Labor trafficking survivors are primarily immigrants, and our members have developed extensive language access programs and immigration expertise to support survivors. Labor trafficking cases range from individual domestic servitude cases to large-scale agricultural or garment factory cases with hundreds of victims. FNUSA members have developed expertise in the unique challenges presented by large-scale cases, and have developed survivor support programs to address the loneliness and isolation experienced by others.

FNUSA continues to advocate for increased awareness and focus on labor trafficking. In federal legislation, we push for all legislation to include both labor and sex trafficking in programs that provide training, funding, and reporting, and have been invited to testify before state and federal legislative bodies regarding labor trafficking. Our annual human trafficking conference is also designed to ensure an equal emphasis on labor and sex trafficking education.

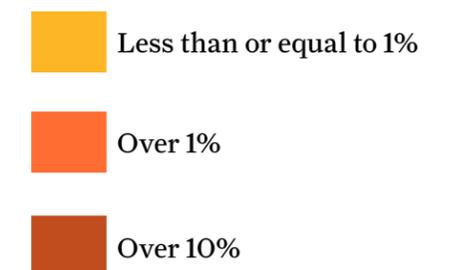
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf> p. 485

# Countries of Origin

Freedom Network USA members serve clients from all over the world. The top country of origin served by members is the United States. However, members report that the majority of survivors they work with are immigrants (60%).



- US** – 38%
- Central Asia & Middle East** – 1%  
(e.g. Kazakhstan, Turkey, Afghanistan)
- East Asia** – 3%  
(e.g. China, South Korea, Mongolia)
- South Asia** – 2%  
(e.g. Pakistan, India, Nepal)
- Southeast Asia** – 11%  
(e.g. Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia)
- Africa** – 5%
- Central America/Mexico** – 32%
- South America** – 3%
- Caribbean** – 2%
- Western Europe** – 1%  
(e.g. France, Finland, Italy)
- Eastern Europe** – 1%  
(e.g. Poland, Romania, Russia)
- Australia** – <1%
- Other** – 1%



# Barriers to Immigration Relief for Survivors

During this reporting period, the US government released a wide-range of immigration policies and procedures that harm human trafficking survivors. These changes have effectively eliminated access to immigration relief, including Continued Presence, and the T and U visas specifically created by Congress for victims of crime. For example, the new “Notice to Appear” policy specifically states that applicants for humanitarian relief – including survivors of human trafficking – will be sent for deportation if their applications are not approved. At the same time, the immigration service is denying applications in record numbers based on distorted interpretations of the law. In 2019, 42% of the decisions were denials, double the historical average of 20% (FY2008 to FY2018). Continued Presence is designed to provide a temporary status and right to work for survivors while their visa is processed, but federal law enforcement agencies continually refuse to support these applications. At the same time, processing times for the T visa have increased from a historical average of 3-6 months to over 2 years. 2,358 applications were pending at the end of FY 2019, the highest number in recorded history.<sup>1</sup> With all of these threats, members report that some survivors choose not to seek protection at all, and some return to their trafficker instead.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Victims/I914t\\_visastatistics\\_fy2019\\_qtr4.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Victims/I914t_visastatistics_fy2019_qtr4.pdf)

## Member Quote:

“”

The lack of ability to get Continued Presence for clients, combined with long adjudication times, means that clients are not eligible for work authorization for an extended period of time while pursuing their T visa. This means that clients remain vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, and they are unable to rebuild and move forward in their lives.

These policies have not only impacted access to immigration relief but also whether trafficking survivors are willing to report these crimes to law enforcement. Members report some clients are too scared to speak with law enforcement. This has resulted in fewer investigations and prosecutions of human trafficking, leaving traffickers to operate with impunity.

## Member Quote:

“”

We get a lot of calls about potential victims from grassroots community organizations. The clients that they refer later decide to not come forward and talk to us because they are scared. These are all foreign-born individuals.

FNUSA members are the nation's leading experts on immigration relief for human trafficking survivors. We have used this expertise to raise these issues with policy makers through written comments, meetings with government officials and congress, and through the press. In partnership with allies in the immigrant rights field, FNUSA will continue to call for a just and compassionate immigration system to ensure protection and safety for all.

# Housing Access for Survivors

The lack of safe and affordable housing across the US is a significant challenge for the anti-trafficking field. It both puts people at risk of trafficking when they are desperate to avoid homelessness, and also acts as a barrier for survivors seeking safety. Housing resources designed for trafficking survivors are limited and primarily serve female sex trafficking survivors. This leaves men, boys, or those who identify as transgender without services. Access to long-term housing is critical for all survivors of human trafficking as they seek supportive services, justice, and reclaim their lives.

## Member Quotes:

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We continue to struggle to find stable housing and employment for clients who have successfully separated from their trafficker.

“”

The common challenge between them (youth and adults) is housing. With youth, there is a lack of availability regarding safe options for those outside of the foster system. With adults, transitional housing options exist but often do not embrace harm reduction as a part of their services.

## Member Quote:

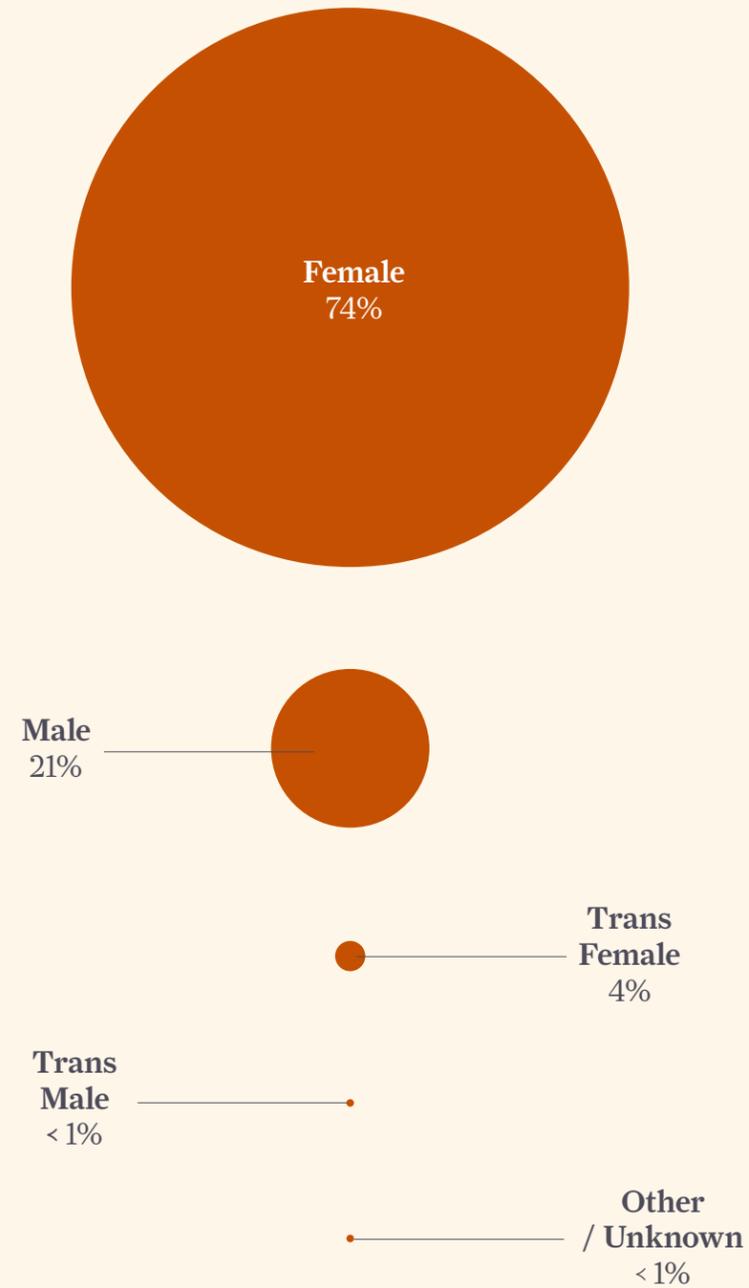
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One of our largest challenges is housing, especially for male survivors.

Freedom Network USA members are creating innovative solutions and partnerships in their local communities to increase access to housing for survivors. Housing services and support provided by members range from emergency housing to long-term housing and are grounded in the Housing First philosophy. Housing services are available without prerequisites, knowing that a survivor can be best positioned to obtain services when they have a safe place to stay.

Freedom Network Training Institute's (FNTI) Housing Training and Technical Assistance Project builds upon the expertise of FNUSA members. The project provides advocates dynamic and up-to-date training and resources on housing options for survivors of human trafficking. The training, tools, and resources offer information and guidance for advocates in accessing appropriate emergency, transitional, and long-term housing options for survivors. All materials are available for no cost through the [FNTI Resource Library](#).

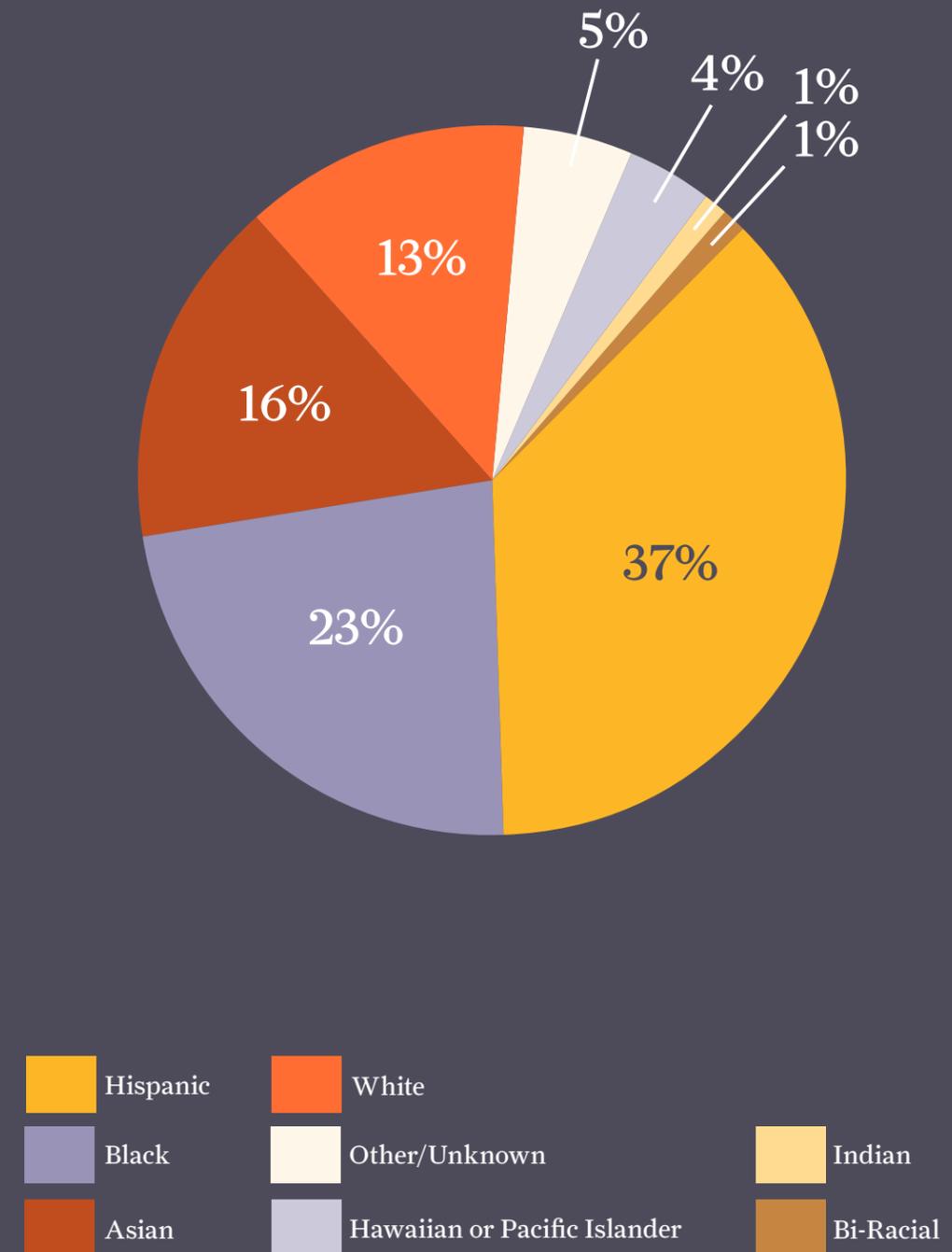
## Genders



Freedom Network USA members provide services to human trafficking survivors across the gender spectrum. While many see human trafficking as a women's issue, and our members primarily serve female identified survivors, FNUSA advocates for policies and services inclusive of all genders who experience human trafficking.

## Race/Ethnicity

People of color represent 87% of clients served by FNUSA members, which include both US citizens and foreign nationals.



# Criminalization of Survivors

Human trafficking survivors report a range of negative interactions with the criminal legal system. Law enforcement in many jurisdictions use raids to attempt to identify victims and gather evidence of sex trafficking. Survivors involved in these raids are traumatized and are often arrested, although they may be offered services in lieu of jail time. These traumatic experiences may prevent them from cooperating with law enforcement to prosecute the trafficker. The criminal records impact their access to education, housing, employment, and put them at increased risk of ongoing exploitation and abuse for many years to come.

## Member Quotes:

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It can be challenging to engage with survivors from police raids. Survivors who access services through other referral sources are more likely to engage in long-term services and case management.

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Criminalization, in general, has not been positive for clients we've served. The trauma of arrest — which often includes feelings of humiliation, shame, and deep harm to self-determination — adds to any prior trauma and can further clients' fears about police and/or government interactions.

FNUSA members train their community and law enforcement partners in trauma-informed care, which supports better collaboration and reduces the number of victims arrested. This may include advocating to be informed prior to a raid taking place, or being onsite to ensure potential survivors are linked to services instead of being arrested. Many members work to reduce the criminalization of trafficking survivors.

Attorneys who practice criminal defense advocate for these individuals in court, while other members file motions to clear the records for survivors. For survivors with criminal records, relief is available in over 30 states. These jurisdictions allow survivors to remove or seal their records of arrests and convictions for crimes they were forced to commit as part of their trafficking experience. FNUSA members reported assisting over 150 survivors in these criminal record relief cases.

In 2019, Freedom Network USA became the home of the Survivor Reentry Project, which advocates for comprehensive criminal record relief laws, educates criminal justice professionals, and supports survivors with access to a trained attorney to file these applications across the country.

# Call for Long-Term Services

Federal funding for anti-trafficking efforts increased overall during this reporting period. However, members report challenges in their ability to meet the long-term needs of clients. Funding restrictions that limit the length of time a survivor can receive services, or which cap the amount of financial support they can receive, limit their recovery. Additionally, strict reporting requirements can hinder creativity to support long-term goals, leaving survivors unable to attain successful outcomes.

## Member Quote:



Helping a client at the point when they're disclosing trafficking for the first time in their lives is paramount, but the ongoing and deeper work — the less visibly urgent and less quantifiable work — is what ensures that a client is not re-trafficked, can manage moments of being re-triggered, and leads an emotionally, physically and financially healthier and safer life.

Despite these barriers, members find creative ways to provide survivors with the supportive services they need. Thanks to the advocacy of Freedom Network USA Member, Heartland Human Care Services, survivors pursuing a T or U visa or asylum can now access state-funded Medicaid, food stamps, and cash assistance in Illinois. The International Rescue Committee in Seattle developed a partnership with a local hospital where all participants receive medical care at no cost to their client or the program. These policies and partnerships help survivors meet their basic needs with few resources so they can focus on their longer-term healing and success.

FNUSA advocates with federal agencies, policy makers and Congress to not only increase the funding available for services, but to ensure that the grant programs are responsive to the real needs of survivors. FNUSA continues to oppose time limits and funding caps for individual survivor services, and to advocate for strict privacy protections to ensure that the medical and mental health records of survivors are kept confidential. We also advocate for increased support for training and technical assistance for service providers, developed by advocates with experience supporting trafficking survivors, to support the development and adoption of best practices.

## Services

Freedom Network USA members provide the following services. The most commonly provided services are case management, legal services, community education, criminal justice advocacy, technical assistance, and referrals. This list is not comprehensive of all the services available through our member organizations.

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.)

# 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  
apichaya.org

## **Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach**

California  
apilegaloutreach.org

## **Ayuda**

Washington DC  
ayuda.com

## **Caleb Stewart**

Colorado  
Individual Member

## **Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking**

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

## **Deborah Pembroke**

California  
Individual Member

## **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

## **Gulfcoast Legal Services**

Florida  
gulfcoastlegal.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**

Washington, California, Arizona, &  
Florida  
rescue.org

## **Janie Chuang**

Washington DC  
Individual Member

## **Jessica Emerson**

Maryland  
Individual Member

## **Julissa Ponce**

Illinois  
Individual Member

## **Justice At Last**

California  
justiceatlast.org

# Members

## **Kate Mogulescu**

New York  
Individual Member

## **Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center**

California  
law.scu.edu/kgaclc

## **Kristin Heffernan**

New York  
Individual Member

## **Legal Action of Wisconsin**

Wisconsin  
legalaction.org

## **Legal Aid Chicago**

Illinois  
legalaidchicago.org

## **Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles**

California  
lafla.org

## **Legal Aid Society of Metropolitan Family Services**

Illinois  
metrofamily.org/legal-aid-society

## **Legal Aid Society**

New York  
legal-aid.org

## **Legal Aid at Work**

California  
legalaidatwork.org

## **Lifeboat Project**

Florida  
thelifeboatproject.org

## **Mosaic Family Services**

Texas  
mosaicservices.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

## **Rachel Ostergaard**

Hawaii  
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

## **Verity**

California  
ourverity.org

## **Vida Legal Assistance**

Florida  
vidalaw.org

## **Volunteer Lawyers for Justice**

New Jersey  
vljnj.org

## **WomanKind**

New York  
iamwomankind.org

## **Worker Justice Center of New York**

New York  
wjcny.org

## **YWCA Kalamazoo**

Michigan  
ywcakalamazoo.org



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