



Freedom Network USA

Raising a Chorus for Change

2019 Impact Report

Freedom Network USA is a national alliance of experienced advocates working with survivors of all forms of human trafficking to ensure that trafficked persons have access to justice, safety, and opportunity.



Photo credit: Tyler Mahal

A Letter from Jean

I am truly thankful for the ongoing support from our partners, funders, and members in 2019. Together, we faced a tough year that made it harder for human trafficking survivors to find safety, access justice, and chart a new path of freedom. By joining all of our individual voices – in support of refugees, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ communities, laborers, sex workers, runaway and homeless youth, and others – we have elevated a chorus calling for change. We will continue this fight for as long as it takes. We will not be defeated. And we are ever grateful for your partnership as we march.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Bruggeman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jean Bruggeman

Executive Director

ABOUT FREEDOM NETWORK USA


Freedom Network USA (FNUSA) is the nation's largest coalition of individuals and organizations working to address human trafficking in the US. Together with our members, including survivors, social workers, attorneys, researchers, and advocates, we advocate for comprehensive federal policy and provide training and technical assistance to the field.

Our expertise is derived from our experience working directly with survivors. We work to incorporate these insights and strengths into a collective voice for a positive and permanent impact in the lives of all survivors of human trafficking.

WE INVITE YOU TO STAY ENGAGED AND CONNECTED

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at freedomnetworkusa.org

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Advocating for All Survivors



Photo credit: Tyler Mahal

2019 required FNUSA to fight against harmful policies that put more people at risk of trafficking, making it harder for survivors to stay safe and access justice, through the use of media, sign-on letters, amicus briefs, blog posts, social media posts, and newsletters. FNUSA spoke out against anti-immigrant policies including border closings, family separation, “zero tolerance,” limitations on immigration court proceedings, and limiting asylum, as well as USCIS’ NTA policy, fee waiver changes, and public charge changes. We also criticized SESTA-FOSTA for endangering sex workers across America, including those exploited by traffickers.

► **Protecting Funding for Safe Housing**

FNUSA raised the alarm in September 2019 when the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) suddenly cancelled the HUD Specialized Housing and Services for Victims of Human Trafficking grant program. Several Congressional inquiries were sent to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and HUD about the cancellation. Although no clear explanation was ever given, DOJ did issue a

new housing grant program in 2020. This funding was a critical step in improving access to safe and affordable housing for human trafficking survivors.

“Across the board, the nation’s anti-trafficking advocates and service providers fighting to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers, and seek justice for survivors, reject the Trump administration’s cynical manipulation of human trafficking as a political pawn to justify his cruel attacks on immigrants and trafficking survivors.” - Jean Bruggeman, [The Hill](#)

► **Pushing Back Against Criminalization of Survivors**

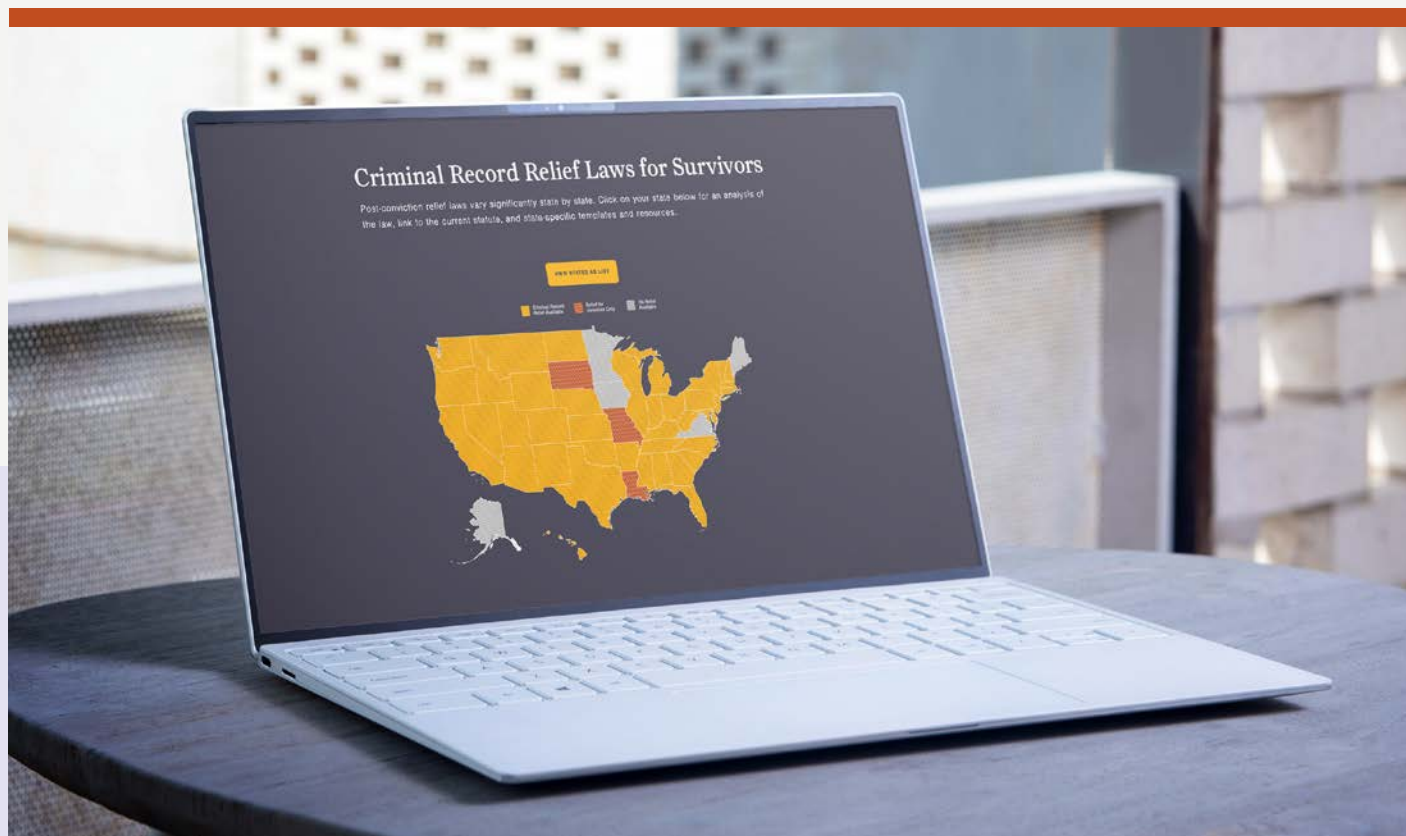
Many survivors have been arrested, often more than once, and their arrest records can greatly impact their stability, eligibility for services, programs, licenses, and jobs as well as impede their personal empowerment and well-being. Most states have laws that allow survivors to seal, vacate, or expunge records of crimes they were forced to commit as a

result of their trafficking situation. FNUSA continued to lead a broad-based effort to convince the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to retract its bar on the use of TVPA funds for post-conviction relief matters. FNUSA was the first organization to speak out against this terrible policy when it first appeared in OVC's FY18 grant solicitations by coordinating letters from survivors, providers, law enforcement and prosecutors, and pro bono attorneys. We raised the issue with Congressional leaders and will continue this work into 2020.

► **The New Home of the Survivor Reentry Project**

In the fall of 2019, the Survivor Reentry Project (SRP) moved from the ABA Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence to Freedom Network USA!

Member Kate Mogulescu founded this national training and technical assistance project in 2016 to advocate for comprehensive state criminal record relief laws, and to provide direct training to professionals and assistance to survivors to navigate and implement criminal record relief laws.



Training and Technical Assistance for Better Services

FNUSA continued to build on its reputation and impact as the best source for high-quality training and technical assistance on human trafficking in the US. It is critical to ensure that service providers, policy makers, and the public have a reliable source for accurate information and training materials based on the human rights-based approach. In 2019, the Freedom Network Training Institute (FNTI) trained almost 4,200 participants and provided technical assistance to 27 organizations through one conference, 11 webinars, and 11 in-person events.

In addition, FNTI released the white paper, *Standards of Care for the US Anti-Trafficking Field*, which surveyed organizational and regional models from all over the world and provided recommendations for the curation of standards in the future. FNUSA is working to develop a set of standards for its members in 2020 that can be scaled and set the future standard.

► Spotlight on Housing

Access to safe and affordable housing is critical for survivors of human trafficking. However, the housing landscape is truly complex and can be difficult to navigate. The Freedom Network Training Institute (FNTI) Housing Training and Technical Assistance Project provides training and resources on housing options for survivors of human trafficking, including guidance for advocates in accessing appropriate emergency, transitional, or long-term housing.

In 2019, the project released eight fact sheets and hosted several webinars for advocates across the country. Additionally, the housing team hosted two in-person housing summits which brought together stakeholders in New Orleans and South Dakota in order to achieve better housing outcomes for survivors in those communities.



► **Grounding and Growing: Tools for a Powerful Anti-Trafficking Movement**

FNUSA hosted its 18th Annual Conference, Grounding and Growing: Tools for a Powerful Anti-Trafficking Movement on March 19-20 in 2019. 650 participants from across the country gathered for the professional skill-building event in Alexandria, VA.

FNUSA held a preconference training, which provided 100 participants a comprehensive introduction to the human rights-based approach, and added a new Law Enforcement Only Preconference to introduce the multidisciplinary human rights-based approach.



Photo credit: Tyler Mahal

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“Great community-building and opportunity to connect with other orgs/professionals. Good topics and content experts as speakers.”

“It is an unparalleled experience every year in terms of meeting with and learning from colleagues. It absolutely reenergizes me to get back to work.”

— CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Capacity Building for a Stronger Movement



Photo credit: Tyler Mahal

FNUSA is dedicated to supporting human trafficking professionals and organizations whose work is grounded in human rights. We create space for learning and collaboration which leads to more effective anti-trafficking strategies. Our members have countless opportunities to connect and learn through national and regional member calls, working groups, and our listserv.

FNUSA is also committed to building the capacity of survivor advocates in the field. In January, we published the white paper, *Human Trafficking Survivor Leadership in the United States*, which highlighted existing programs and made recommendations for future funding and programming in this area based on interviews with leading survivor leadership efforts across the country. These conversations opened the door for new collaboration and stronger relationships with survivor leaders.



Photo credit: Tyler Mahal

► **Turning Stories into Action**

FNUSA’s Survivor Leadership Project hosted a storytelling training on public narrative in November 2019. The anti-trafficking movement continues to lack the voices of those most impacted, and effective and ethical storytelling can be an empowering leadership tool for survivors. Individual survivors and staff came together for a six-week training from a public narrative expert. Participants learned how to use their narratives to connect with stakeholders, elicit action, and how to coach others on how to use this skill.

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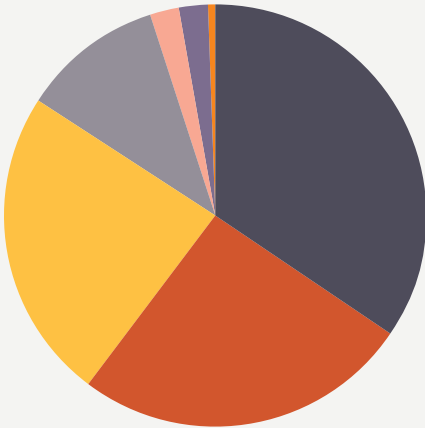
“Thank you to all of the folks who facilitated and involved. I learned a lot of extremely applicable things that will help the direction of my work stay equitable and ethical.”

– Survivor Participant

► **Focus on Capacity for Impact**

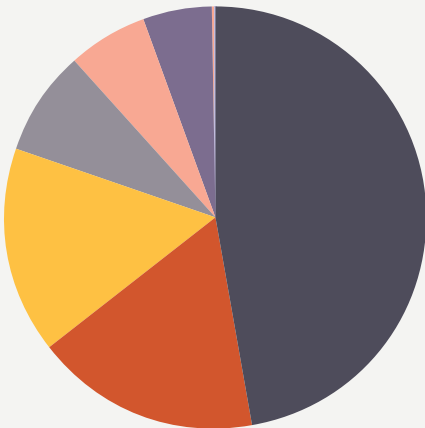
In March 2019, FNUSA concluded a broad strategic assessment of its network. The process created space for reflection and planning on how to have the greatest impact. The result was a more fluid structure that allowed FNUSA to be responsive to trends on the ground while also being mindful of the capacity and interest of members. We defined new roles and responsibilities and introduced a new communication platform to enhance engagement.

Financial Report



Total Income \$815,563

- Government grants \$282,849
- Contributions and grants \$210,950
- Conference \$194,812
- Investment of Previous Income \$87,514
- Program income \$19,000
- Membership dues \$16,300
- Other income \$4,138



Total Expense \$815,563

- Personnel and employee benefits \$385,592
- Conference \$141,024
- Contract services \$128,367
- Office expenses \$67,093
- Rent \$48,956
- Travel \$42,636
- Payroll fees \$1,091
- Registration fees \$804

Our Team

Staff

- Jean Bruggeman**
Executive Director
- Amanda Norwood**
Operations Assistant
- Karen Romero**
Freedom Network Training Institute Director
- Avantika Shenoy**
Freedom Network Training Institute Coordinator
- Melinda Smith**
Director of Partnerships

Board

- Kathleen Morris**
Chair
- Tammi Hogan**
Secretary
- Jacqueline Murray**
Treasurer
- Wendy Rhein**
Director
- Maria Odom**
Director



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