



COALITION TO
ABOLISH SLAVERY
& TRAFFICKING



Freedom Network USA



KEY FINDINGS

2017 SOCIAL SERVICE, ADVOCATE AND LEGAL SERVICE SURVEY REGARDING IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In 2017, the Administration reshaped immigration policy with the passage of executive orders that require unprecedented levels of enforcement activity. Because human traffickers routinely use threats of law enforcement and deportation to control and trap victims, the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST), Freedom Network USA, and Polaris set out to better understand the potential impact of these policies on immigrant survivors of human trafficking (“survivors”). The groups sent surveys to legal and social services providers across the United States asking for overall impressions of what they had seen among their clients. The survey results show that many in the anti-human trafficking field believe that the new immigration enforcement policies and practices are increasing their clients’ vulnerability to human trafficking.

The information presented here comes from 147 responses from social service providers, advocates, and attorneys who provide direct social and legal services to survivors in 39 states, the District of Columbia and, U.S. territories.¹ The organizations represented by these responses include emergency shelters, task forces, and legal service providers among others.

The results of this informal survey strongly suggest the need for a more rigorous analysis to further understand how changes in immigration enforcement policies are or may be affecting victims and survivors of human trafficking.

NEARLY 70% OF SERVICE PROVIDERS BELIEVE THAT SURVIVORS WILL REMAIN WITH THEIR TRAFFICKERS LONGER GIVEN THE RECENT POLITICAL SHIFT.

¹ Arizona, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, American Samoa.

“

They always have, but especially now, even considering applying for a T-Visa is risky and many consider repatriation at higher rates.

”

Holistic Service Provider in NY

82%

Of service providers affirm that some survivors are sharing with their agency that they have concerns about contacting the police

54%

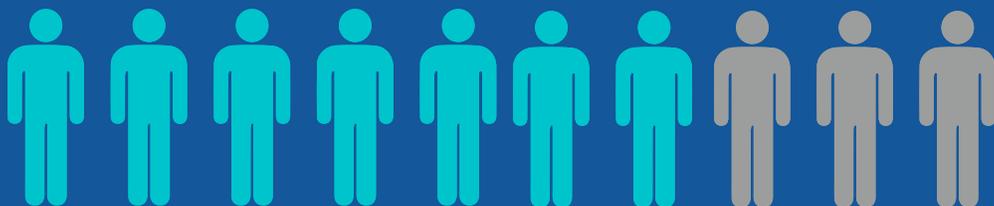
Of service providers agree that some survivors are sharing heightened concerns about their trafficker's threat of deportation or controlling immigration status

“

They are concerned that they will not be believed and then detained by ICE officers. They are concerned that cooperation with the police may result in other witnesses/victims being arrested and deported.

”

Social Service Provider in SC



7 OUT OF 10 SERVICE PROVIDERS BELIEVE SURVIVORS HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT GOING TO COURT FOR A MATTER RELATED TO THE ABUSER/OFFENDER

“In a labor trafficking/domestic violence case, the victim decided to drop civil claims on family court and in respect to unpaid wages because of trafficker’s continued public disparagement of her as an illegal immigrant and repeated attempts to have her deported by contacting ICE.”

- Social Service Provider in SC

“We are working on a few labor trafficking cases in which the trafficker represented themselves as attorneys or DHS officials in order to gain information about the victims and then threatened them with deportation if they did not work, etc.”

- Holistic Service Provider in SC

SERVICE PROVIDERS REPORT THAT THESE CONCERNS MAY ALSO HAVE AN IMPACT ON SOME SURVIVORS’ WILLINGNESS TO ASSERT THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS IN CIVIL, CRIMINAL AND IMMIGRATION COURT.

“The immigration threats from the current administration further empower traffickers to use immigration status as a threat to keep a victim under control.”

- Victim Service Provider in CA

“People have expressed fear about reporting all types of abuse, rape, and trafficking. They have also expressed fear of reporting to police, but to pretty much any agency, fearing deportation, detention, or other sanctions.”

- Holistic Service Provider in MN

“Trafficking survivors have had experiences and/or heard of ICE showing up at court houses.”

- Legal Service Provider in CA