

## CERTIFICATION FOR ADULT VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, FY 2001 – 2017

### DATA FACT SHEET

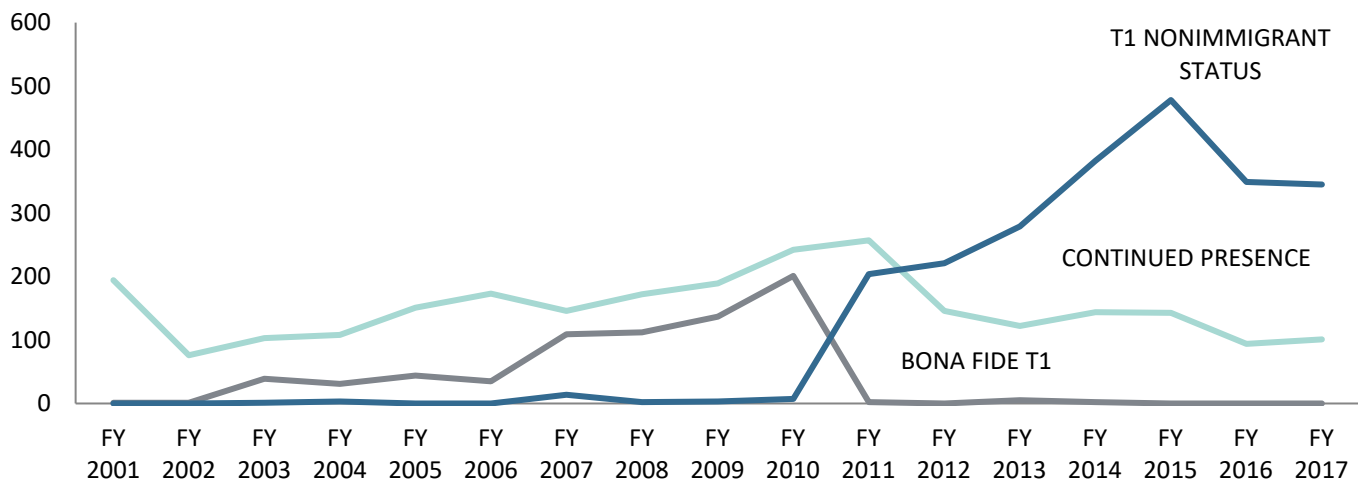
A foreign national adult victim of human trafficking is eligible for federal and state benefits and services to the same extent as a refugee upon issuance of a letter of certification by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS issues a Certification Letter after notification from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) granting a person Continued Presence, or a T visa, or that a bona fide T visa application has not been denied<sup>1</sup> (22 U.S.C. § 7105).

#### Basis of HHS Certification

HHS began issuing Certification Letters in the federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2001. Over 17 years, the number of foreign national adults who experienced human trafficking and received HHS Certification Letters has increased by 129%, from 195 individuals receiving HHS Certification Letters in the base year of the program to 446 individuals in FY 2017<sup>2</sup>.

Figure 1 shows a decrease in the number of letters issued on the basis of a bona fide T visa application after FY 2010 and Continued Presence after FY 2011. The number of certification recipients who have Continued Presence has decreased by 61% over the past six years from FY 2011 – 2017. At the same time, the number of certification recipients with T nonimmigrant visas has on average increased 63% annually since FY 2010.

**Figure 1: Total Number of HHS Certification Recipients by Basis of Certification, FY 2001 - 2017**



<sup>1</sup> U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents who are victims of a severe form of human trafficking do not need to obtain certification from HHS in order to access specialized services for victims of trafficking or any other federal benefits and protections to which they are entitled.

<sup>2</sup> Accessible charts for each graph can be found in the appendix on page 4.

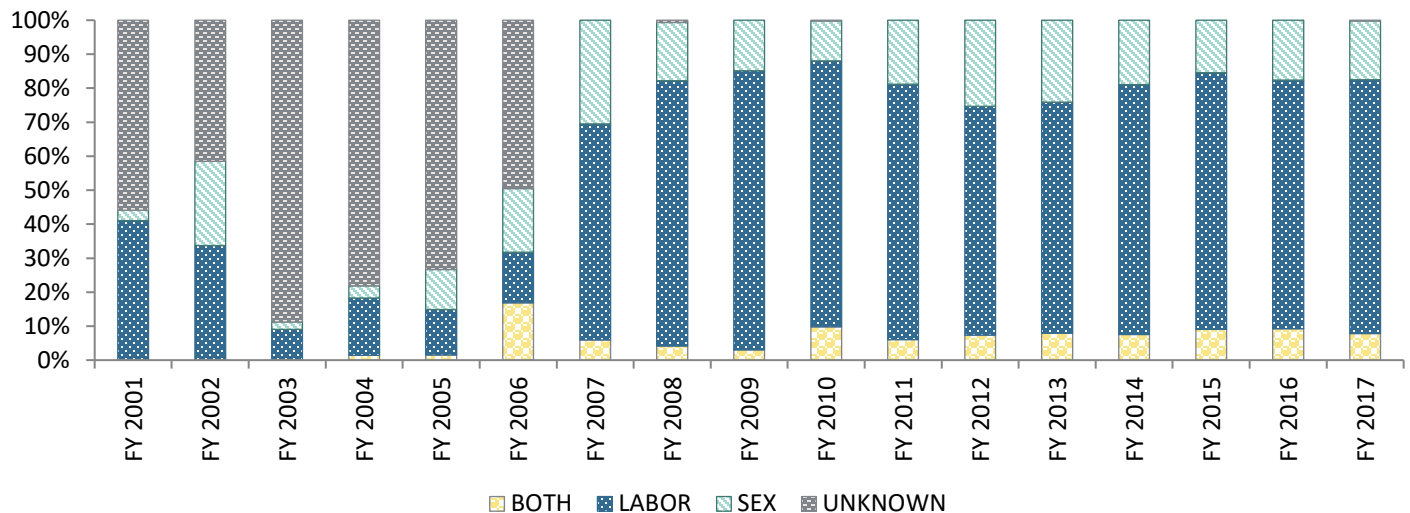
## HHS Certification Recipients

HHS has issued Certification Letters to survivors of human trafficking in 49 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands. The top 15 states of HHS Certification recipients make up 81% of the letters issued from FY 2001 – 2017 (California, New York, Texas, Florida, District of Columbia, Louisiana, Hawaii, Virginia, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Jersey, Utah, Washington, and Oregon). The states of recipients do not necessarily indicate the location where human trafficking victimization occurred or the location where survivors access federal and state benefits. HHS sends Certification Letters to the states requested by victims.

The identified victims of trafficking with Certification Letters are from 137 countries. The top 15 countries of origin of recipients of Certification Letters make up 82 percent of the letters issued from FY 2001 – 2017 (in descending order: Philippines, Mexico, Thailand, India, Honduras, Vietnam, El Salvador, Guatemala, China, Peru, South Korea, Indonesia, Ethiopia, North Korea, and the Dominican Republic). The U.S. Department of State recognizes each of these nations as source countries from which individuals are targeted for human trafficking victimization. Victims from these countries are lured into trafficking situations through labor recruitment fraud, internationally brokered marriages, criminal organizations, or during migration when victims are seeking better life prospects or fleeing government oppression or poverty or devastation from natural disasters<sup>3</sup>.

From FY 2001 – 2017, 65% of individuals receiving Certification Letters experienced labor trafficking, 17% experienced sex trafficking, and 7% experienced both labor and sex trafficking. The type of victimization was unknown in 11% of cases, mostly during FY 2001 to FY 2006, as depicted in Figure 2. The higher number of labor trafficking cases could be due to a number of factors, including federal investigations of labor trafficking typically having a higher number of victims identified per case than sex trafficking cases.

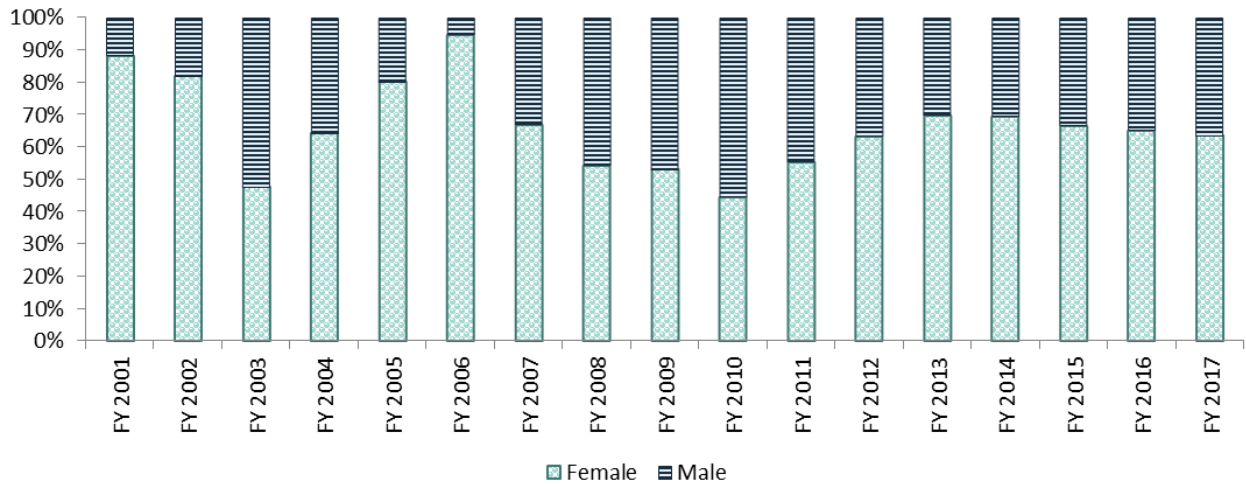
**Figure 2: Type of Trafficking Experienced HHS Certification Letter Recipients, FY 2001 - 2017**



Of the recipients who received Certification Letters from FY 2001 – 2017, 64% were female and 36% were male. More letters were issued to female victims of trafficking than male victims each fiscal year, except for fiscal years 2003 and 2010 (see Figure 3).

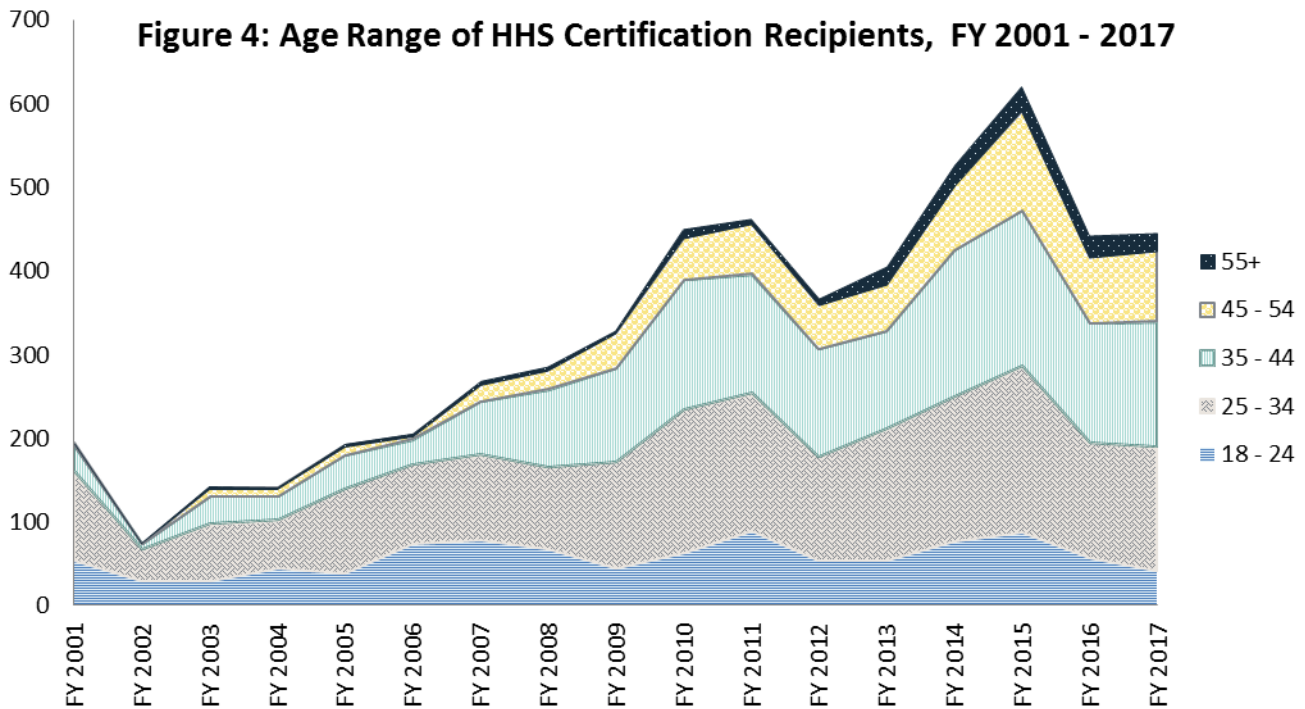
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of States. (2017). *Trafficking in Person's Report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/index.htm>.

**Figure 3: Gender of HHS Certification Letter Recipients, FY 2001 - 2017**



The average age of victims receiving Certification Letters has increased by eight years since FY 2001 (from 29 years old to 37 years old). Since FY 2007, victims aged 35 – 44 years old and 45 – 54 years old have represented an increasing proportion of victims receiving Certification Letters (see Figure 4). The age of victimization is often younger than the age at which an individual receives a certification letter due to the time it takes to identify victims, for victims to come forward, and for DHS to issue the initial basis for HHS Certification.

**Figure 4: Age Range of HHS Certification Recipients, FY 2001 - 2017**



**Conclusion**

The increase in Certification Letter recipients mirrors the growth of HHS anti-trafficking programs to identify victims of human trafficking and assist them in obtaining certification. For example, the number of foreign national victims identified by the Rescue and Restore Regional Grant Program increased by 45% since the grant program began in FY 2008, the number of potential cases of foreign trafficking victims identified by the National Human Trafficking Hotline increased by 86% since FY 2012, and the number of foreign national individuals assisted through the Trafficking Victim Assistance Program increased by more than 100% since the grant program began in FY 2012. Each of these grant programs provide information about and offers assistance to foreign national victims seeking HHS Certification.

## Appendix: HHS Certification Data Table, FY 2001 – FY 2017

Fiscal Year	Total Recipients	Basis of Certification			Type of Trafficking				Gender		Age Range (Years) <sup>4</sup>				
		Bona Fide T Visa Application	Continued Presence	T Visa	Sex & Labor	Labor	Sex	Unknown	Female	Male	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
FY 2001	195	1	194	0	0	80	6	109	172	23	55	106	30	3	1
FY 2002	77	1	76	0	0	26	19	32	63	14	31	37	6	2	1
FY 2003	143	39	103	1	0	13	3	127	68	75	30	68	32	11	2
FY 2004	142	31	108	3	2	24	5	111	91	51	46	56	28	10	2
FY 2005	195	44	151	0	3	26	23	143	156	39	39	101	39	12	4
FY 2006	208	35	173	0	35	31	39	103	197	11	75	94	29	6	3
FY 2007	269	109	146	14	16	171	82	0	180	89	79	102	62	22	4
FY 2008	286	112	172	2	12	223	49	2	155	131	68	98	92	24	4
FY 2009	329	137	189	3	10	270	49	0	174	155	46	126	111	43	3
FY 2010	450	201	242	7	44	352	53	1	200	250	64	171	154	50	11
FY 2011	463	2	257	204	28	348	87	0	256	207	90	164	142	60	7
FY 2012	367	0	146	221	27	247	93	0	232	135	54	124	128	54	7
FY 2013	406	5	122	279	32	276	98	0	283	123	55	156	117	56	22
FY 2014	528	2	144	382	40	388	100	0	366	162	78	172	174	78	25
FY 2015	621	0	143	478	56	469	96	0	413	208	88	198	186	119	30
FY 2016	443	0	94	349	41	324	78	0	288	155	57	138	142	80	26
FY 2017	446	0	101	345	35	333	77	1	283	163	42	148	149	85	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,568</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>2,561</b>	<b>2,288</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>3,601</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>1,991</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>2,059</b>	<b>1,621</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>174</b>

Note: HHS submits data on the number of Certification Letters issued to the U.S. Department of Justice for the annual Attorney General’s report to Congress on federal anti-trafficking activities. The numbers reflected in the above HHS Certification Data Table are the most current numbers from HHS.

<sup>4</sup> In two instances, minors (defined as individuals below the age of 18) were issued HHS Certification Letters. These cases were excluded from the 18 – 24 year old age range and were not placed in a separate category due to the small number of anomalies and privacy concerns.