

Freedom Network USA 2022 Member Report

An analysis of Freedom Network USA
member services provided from
January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020.



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, provide training and technical assistance to the field, and work to build the capacity of our members and allies. Our expertise is derived from 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 working in 27 states and 60 cities, including Washington, DC, with 53 member organizations and 26 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, 2019 to December 31, 2020. 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. 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. Freedom Network USA welcomes new members each year; therefore, the number of members has increased compared to the previous report.

Letter from the Executive Director



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JEAN BRUGGEMAN

I am especially proud of this, the fourth FNUSA Member Report. Contained in this report are critical points of data and trends that tell the story of human trafficking in the US. It is a story of abuse and exploitation, but also a story of resilience and strength.

Each number in these pages represents an incredible life story; the story of a mother, a father, a child, or a sibling. A person who has triumphed over the isolation and abuse of human

trafficking, but also over the forces that enable trafficking in the first place. Trafficking survivors have triumphed over the racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia that motivate US policies that deny protections to workers in agriculture and domestic work, that refuse to provide paid sick leave and a living wage, that allow discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, that criminalize the sex trades, and that demonize immigrants. In the face of policies designed to embolden the powerful and excuse their abuses, these survivors bravely came forward to speak their truth and regain their freedom. These stories of success and triumph are the motivation that fuels our work.

FNUSA is also extremely proud of our members. Through lockdowns and PPE shortages, they have continued to reach out, welcome, educate, and support. They have found new ways to meet with clients, provide services, ensure safety, and fight for justice. They have stood up, spoken out, and refused to back down even when times were tough and protections for survivors became elusive. They have survived wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, and this pandemic with determination. They have refused to accept restrictions on services and support for survivors, fighting against rule changes that rolled back 15 years of progress. And we won't stop until our work is done and the balance of power is forever shifted in the favor of workers, children, immigrants, LGBTQIA and Two Spirit communities.

We welcome you to join us.

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

Total Survivors

3,451 Total Clients

Freedom Network USA members are working with approximately 1,750 human trafficking survivors annually.

Responding to Crisis

The emergence of COVID-19 completely reshaped how we respond to human trafficking in the US. Like many around the world, survivors suffered physical, emotional, and economic hardship over the past two years. Many lost their jobs, got sick or lost loved ones, and were left without childcare as schools shut their doors in March 2020. However, this population was particularly vulnerable to the worst outcomes of the crisis.

Human trafficking survivors are victims of an economic crime where their trauma is inextricably linked to work. Even survivors who had found some financial stability, faced renewed economic hardship as they were laid off from their already precarious employment off the books, in the gig economy, or in low-wage industries. These workers were also more likely to get sick and less likely to have medical insurance. Some immigrants and those in the sex trades were left out of federal economic stimulus payments, leaving them with no resources. Undocumented survivors were particularly hard hit as the waiting period for a T Visa approval dragged on for up to two years during this reporting period. The T Visa is a special type of immigration relief for trafficking survivors. Those waiting were not able to work and were not eligible for pandemic relief.

These communities are less likely to have access to affordable health care, including mental health treatments to address their trauma and substance abuse treatments to manage their addiction. Even when they found a way to meet those needs, many did not have the technology and high-speed internet to access remote services. Additionally, the pandemic disproportionately impacted communities of color, leaving many survivors of color with medical bills, caregiving responsibilities, and ongoing health problems.

Despite these challenges, FNUSA members were able to serve clients throughout the pandemic. Some moved to remote models and funded access to technology for their clients. Others continued to offer in-person services by implementing new operating procedures or shifting to mobile community models. Members continued to identify survivors through creative outreach initiatives to reach into communities put at risk. Providers also had to adapt to the needs of the community as they shifted in real time. In the beginning, survivors struggled with emergency housing, food security, and transportation. As time wore on, long-term housing and challenges with accessing pandemic relief, including unemployment benefits, arose.

Not only did the pandemic negatively impact survivors who had already escaped their trafficking experience, but it also created optimal conditions for traffickers. COVID-19 created a climate of social isolation and financial instability. These are the circumstances that allow traffickers to thrive. Workers have less power to advocate for safe conditions and decent pay, are less likely to report abuse or exploitation, and have a harder time finding help if they need it.

Most of our members noted that fewer survivors came forward for services and support during this period than before. They also noted that immigrant survivors were less willing to report their abuse and exploitation to law enforcement agencies or to engage with court systems due to their fear of racial violence and deportation. Some reported survivors who chose to remain in their trafficking situation due to the restrictions on immigration relief that were imposed by the Trump administration.

Member Quote:

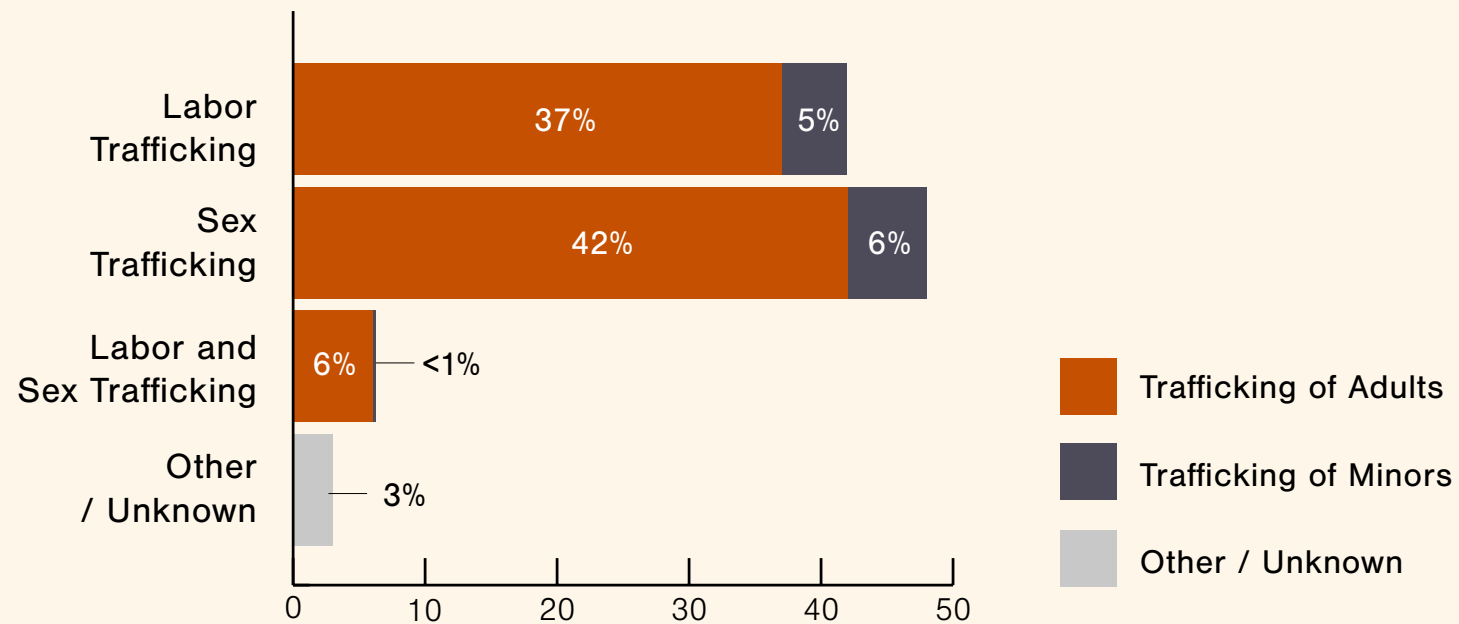


Many of our undocumented clients, especially those who worked in service industries, lost their jobs during the pandemic, or their hours were reduced for many months. Without work authorization, they weren't able to apply for or obtain alternative jobs, so they struggled financially, which placed greater demand and stress on social services.

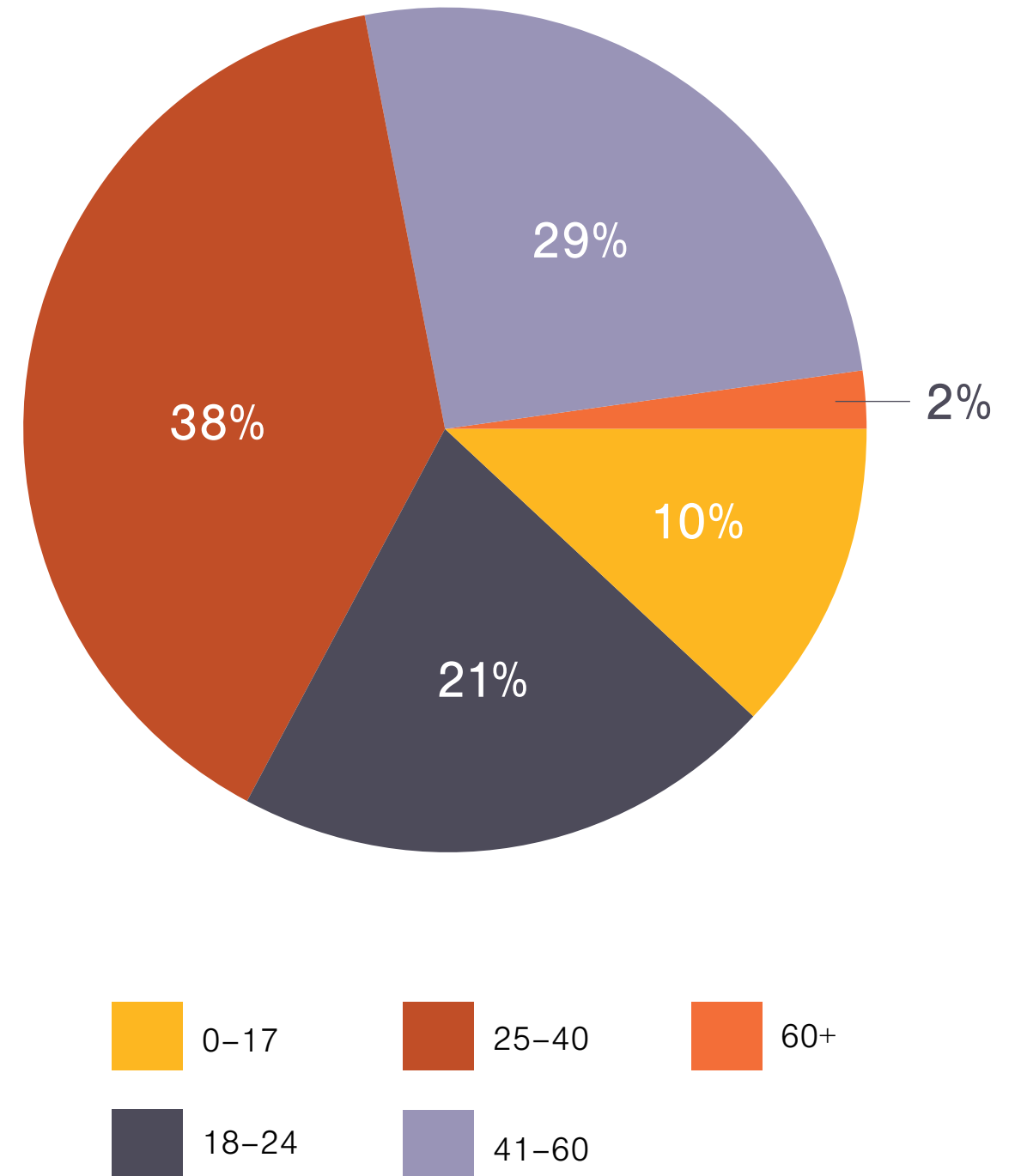
— Attorney in Chicago

Type of Trafficking

The dominant narrative about human trafficking does not reflect the experience of many survivors. Of the clients served during the reporting period, 37% experienced labor trafficking and 67% were over the age of 25.



Age of Those Trafficked



Survivor Relief Fund

When the pandemic struck, there was an obvious need for immediate financial support for survivors. Many communities were not eligible for federal pandemic relief programs due to their immigration status or criminal records that resulted from their trafficking situation. Human trafficking survivors can be left without status while they await a decision on their T Visa, which can take up to two years. Providers reported that without access to these benefits, their undocumented clients had no options when lockdowns were initiated.

Sex workers were also not eligible for unemployment programs because their industry is not recognized by the government. From our work with all those in the sex trades, we know that some sex trafficking survivors return to sex work because factors such as criminal records and lack of access to job training prevent them from finding sustainable employment elsewhere. These populations had to rely on non traditional means, such as mutual aid networks, to meet their basic needs.

Overall, our members reported that former clients returned in large numbers because they were experiencing financial hardship. More than ever, survivors faced an increased risk of homelessness and hunger.

FNUSA started the Human Trafficking Survivor Relief Fund to respond to this need. The Survivor Relief Fund was able to provide immediate support to those who worked hard toward survival and safety, but were derailed by the health crisis. Through our membership, we paid out over \$55,000 in cash to survivors across the US. These payments could be used in whatever way each survivor needed, including rent, medical expenses, and food.

Member Quotes:

“”

These funds came at a critical time for my immigrant survivor clients who are currently battling COVID while trying to support their children.

— Attorney in Florida

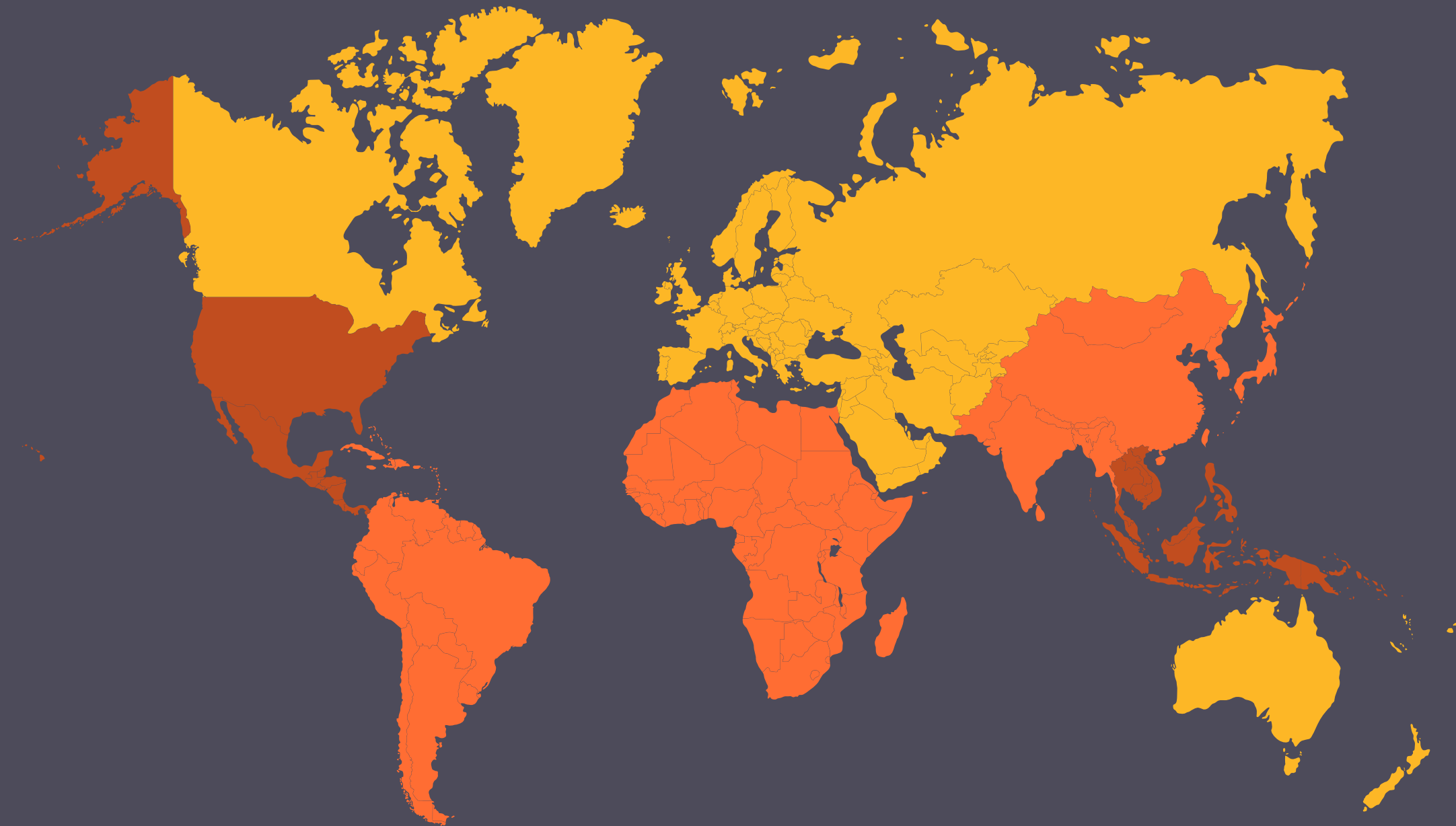
“”

Thank you for giving me this fund, you are the only person that contacted me to offer me help during this pandemic, other people or organizations contact me just to ask permission if they can use my story for fundraising purposes. I used the fund to fix my car that was vandalized while it was parked on the street.

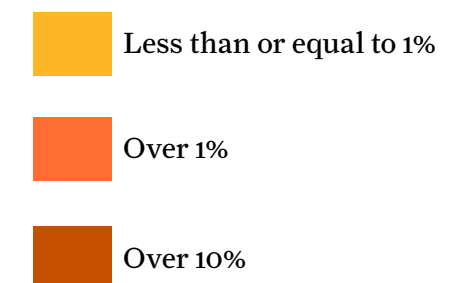
— Fund Recipient

Country of Origin

Immigrants accounted for 55% of the total number of clients served by members during the reporting period. However, the largest percentage from any single country came from the US.

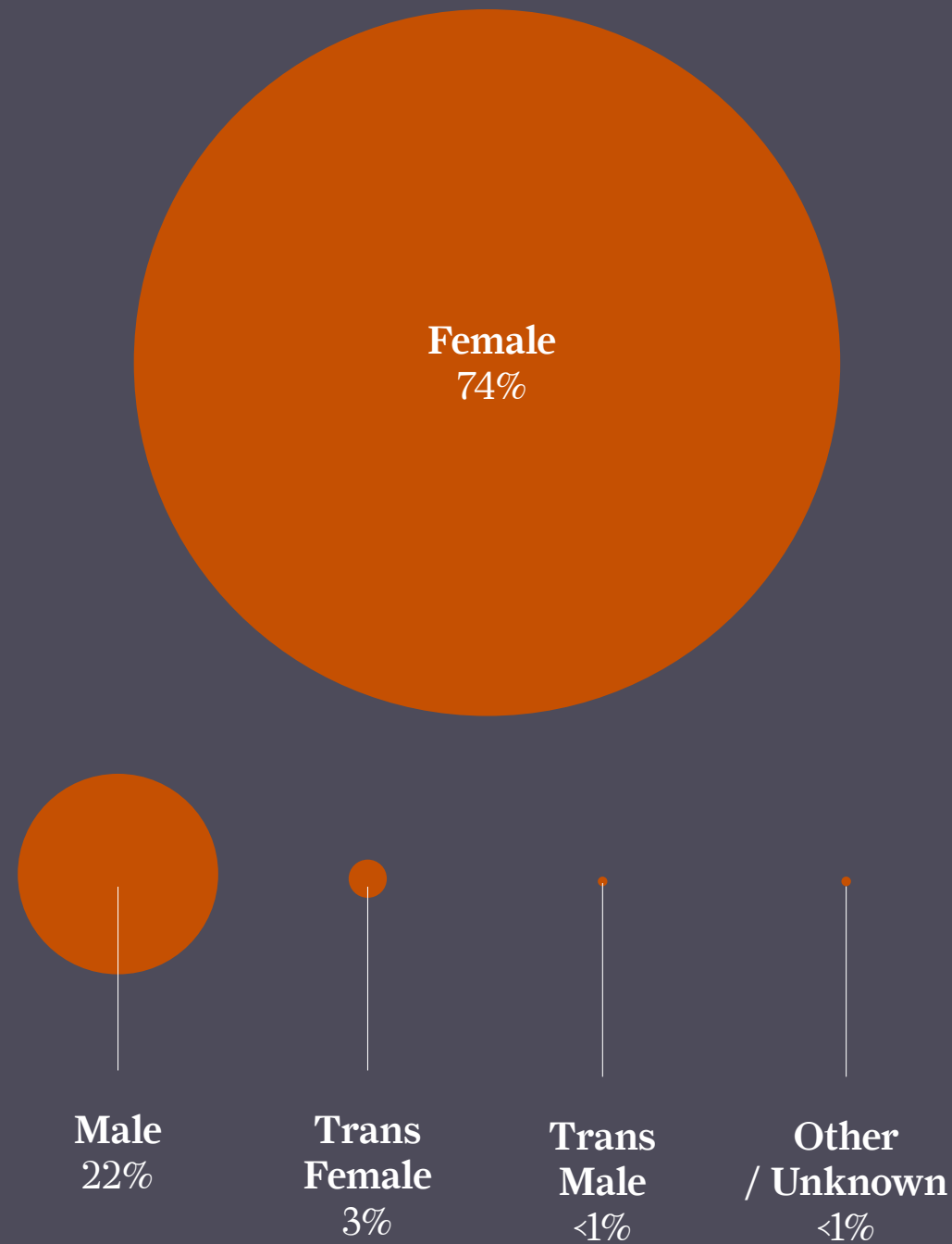


- US** – 38%
- Central Asia & Middle East** – 1%
(e.g., Kazakhstan, Turkey, Afghanistan)
- East Asia** – 3%
(e.g., China, South Korea, Mongolia)
- South Asia** – 2%
(e.g., Pakistan, India, Nepal)
- Southeast Asia** – 11%
(e.g., Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia)
- Africa** – 5%
- Central America/Mexico** – 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%



Genders

Women were overwhelmingly the largest percentage of survivors served by members during the reporting period. However, with 26% of survivors identifying as other genders, we must be sure that policies and services are tailored to their needs as well.



Substance Use

Members reported a trend of increased substance use by the survivors they served during the reporting period. National data shows an overall increase in drug use and overdoses during the pandemic, particularly involving opioids. Many survivors struggle with addiction. Substance use may have contributed to their vulnerability to human trafficking. Traffickers can use their dependency to trap survivors in cycles of abuse by offering drugs in exchange for their labor. Survivors have also reported using drugs as a way to get through the physical and emotional trauma of trafficking.

In all of these cases, survivors need access to trauma-informed behavioral health services after their victimization. The increased need for substance use services made it more difficult for providers to refer survivors to quality programs.

Substance use can also impact what services a survivor can access after their escape. Members report that addiction is a significant housing barrier for many of their clients. Many shelters will not provide services to survivors who use substances. This restriction makes it very difficult to secure safe housing, which is already extremely limited. Additionally, many shelter providers may not have adequate or appropriate training to work effectively with these populations. Our members are committed to maintaining a person-centered and voluntary services housing model.

Member Quotes:

“““
The use of opioids continues to be a major trend among clients we serve. Over the past two years, well more than half of clients served by our program report a history of or current opioid use disorder (OUD). OUD may be directly related to a client’s history of trafficking (e.g., their trafficker used substances to recruit and/or control), or substances are used to manage mental health and trauma history.

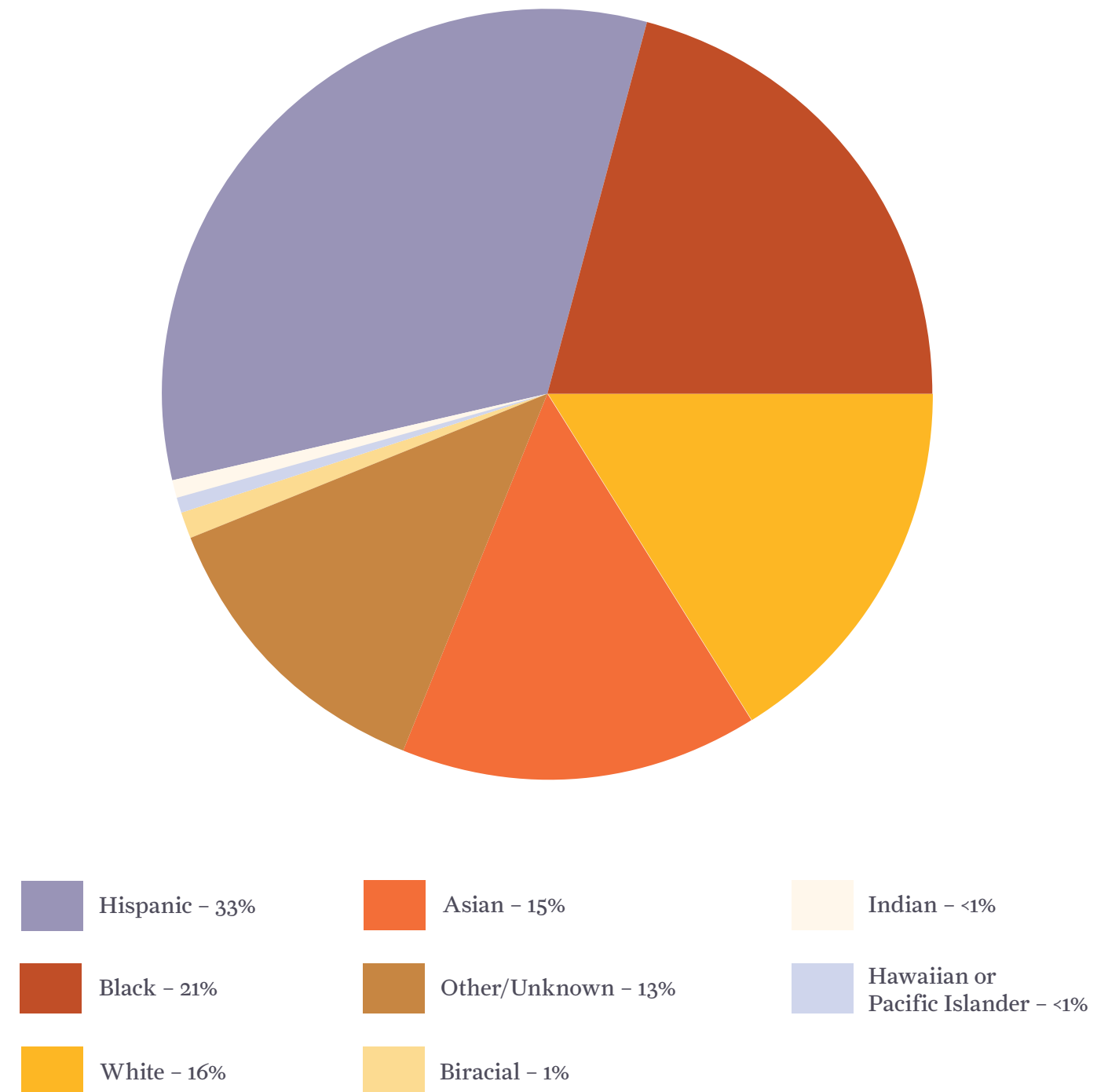
— Social Worker in Maine

“““
Building partnerships with substance abuse treatment facilities and securing placement for patients has been a major barrier during the service provision process. There are few facilities in the area that provide state-funded or free treatment, and many patients have cycled through these facilities or been exited and are not allowed back. The alternative for many patients is to enter a shelter or other temporary housing situation. Unfortunately, patients are quickly exited or leave of their own volition due to substance use and/or associated mental health conditions.

— Mental Health Social Worker in Texas

Race/Ethnicity

Only 16% of survivors identified as white during the reporting period. Members are overwhelmingly serving BIPOC communities which highlights the clear intersection of racial justice and human trafficking.



Racial Equity

2020 was Black Lives Matter's biggest year since its formation in 2014. Activists demanded structural change to address police brutality and the media took note. As racial equity issues rose to the forefront after the murder of George Floyd in June 2020, the anti-trafficking field was forced to reconcile its roots in systemic oppression. It is not accidental that the industries in which trafficking is most pervasive today are those that are rooted in slavery and racist immigration policies. The US economy was built on the use of enslaved workers, primarily Africans, for agricultural and domestic work.

When legal protections were enacted for workers in the US (including wage and hour protections, safety standards, and expanded protections for minors), the excluded industries were agriculture, domestic work, and the sex trades. The first US immigration law, the Page Act of 1875, barred entry for Chinese women based on the racist and sexist belief that they were only coming to the US for the purpose of sex work. The Mann Act of 1910 was famously used to prosecute Black men who engaged in interracial relationships.

FNUSA's members came together in 2019 to form a working group to explore how trafficking disproportionately affects people of color. This work shifted to examine our own racial equity practices and how we contribute and uphold racism and white supremacy within our own work. Today, we are exploring the impact that individual, cultural, and institutional racism has on communities and individuals and how this heightens vulnerability to exploitation.

FNUSA members and staff began working with a racial equity consultant who strengthened and expanded our capacity for this work. As we further engage in anti-racist work, there needs to be intentional space created for BIPOC survivors and advocates in the trafficking field. FNUSA and our members are committed to becoming an anti-racist community and working toward a more racially equitable future for trafficking survivors and marginalized communities everywhere.

Services

Our members provide a wide range of services to human trafficking survivors. While this list is not exhaustive, many members provide one, more, or almost all of these 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 Housing Crisis Continues

Many survivors experienced housing instability during the reporting period. While survivors have long identified housing as one of their most critical needs, this was exacerbated by the pandemic. Many traditional housing programs stopped taking new clients or enacted strict protocols which left many out in the cold. Some survivors lost their job, got sick, were left without childcare, and were at risk of losing their homes. The CARES Act and other social safety programs kept many survivors afloat, but these programs were not accessible to many trafficking survivors. As the pandemic continues, many still find it difficult to find safe and stable housing as housing prices rise and eviction moratoriums expire.

These challenges forced FNUSA members to develop innovative ways to house survivors during this reporting period. They developed new relationships with hotels, worked with city governments to use publicly owned buildings, and identified new resources to provide rental assistance to keep survivors in their homes.

FNUSA also answered the call through our Housing Training and Technical Assistance Project. We provided resources and training for advocates focused on accessing appropriate emergency, transitional, or long-term housing options for survivors. Our team worked with members, survivors, advocates, and service providers to ensure their resource needs were met. This included developing training materials focused on the changes in the eviction moratorium: Housing Survivors of Trafficking During COVID-19 and Housing Options for Survivors of Human Trafficking.

In partnership with our members, the Housing project hosted a series of peer support calls to discuss current challenges and strategies. This series included information about housing undocumented survivors of trafficking, housing youth survivors, and how to use hotels to house survivors. Panelists for the peer support calls represented direct service providers that shared creative solutions to housing survivors during the pandemic. Safe and stable housing is essential for survivors as they reclaim their lives.

Member Quotes:

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Housing for foreign nationals continues to be the biggest challenge for the populations we serve.

— Social Worker in Georgia

“”

In 2019, 60% of survivors who called our hotline reported being homeless compared to 82% in 2020.

— Social Worker in California

Members

Advocating Opportunity

Ohio
advocatingopportunity.com

American Gateways

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, Silver Spring
ayuda.com

Baylor College of Medicine

Texas
bcm.edu

Caleb Stewart

Colorado
Individual Member

Carson Osberg

Colorado
Individual Member

CAST

California
castla.org

Chris Ash

North Carolina
Individual Member

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

Dan Werner

Georgia
Individual Member

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 Care Services

Illinois
heartlandalliance.org/heartland-human-care-services/

Hopeworks

Maryland
hopeworksofhc.org

Human Trafficking Legal Center

Washington DC
htlegalcenter.org

Ingrid Guerrero Rodriguez

Texas
Individual Member

International Institute of Buffalo

New York
iibuffalo.org

International Institute of Minnesota

Minnesota
iimn.org

International Institute of St. Louis

Missouri
iistl.org

International Organization for Adolescents

New York
iofa.org

International Rescue Committee

Washington, California, Arizona, New York & 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

Justice Matters

North Carolina
justicematters.org

Kate Mogulescu

New York
Individual Member

Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center

California
law.scu.edu/kgaclc

Members

Kristin Heffernan

New York
Individual Member

Laura Murphy

Louisiana
Individual Member

Leanne McCallum

Louisiana
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
legalaidnyc.org

Lifeboat Project

Florida
thelifeboatproject.org

Mosaic Family Services

Texas
mosaicservices.org

My Sisters' Place

New York
mspny.org

National Immigrant Justice Center

Illinois
immigrantjustice.org

Opening Doors

California
openingdoorsinc.org

Pat Medige

Colorado
Individual Member

Preble Street

Maine
preblestreet.org

Rachel Ostergaard

Hawaii
Individual Member

Rafael Bautista

California
Individual Member

Ruby's Place

California
rubysplace.org

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
umsafecenter.org

Verity

California
www.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

Yuriria Guerrero Rodriguez

Texas
Individual Member

YWCA Kalamazoo

Michigan
ywcakalamazoo.org



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