

# 2022

## Impact Report

---



Freedom  
Network USA



# Refreshed Commitment

Freedom Network USA (FNUSA) concluded a strategic alignment process in 2022. The anti-trafficking movement continues to evolve as the needs of survivors shift. Staff and members took a step back to reevaluate their work and center the values that are most critical now, including equity and transparency. FNUSA is adopting an anti-racism and anti-oppression frame throughout our work. Staff and members have personally committed to this work and are learning from one another in FNUSA spaces and listening to experts. The new vision, mission, and values serve as a commitment to center equity well into the future.

## Vision

Freedom Network USA envisions a transformed human trafficking movement in the United States where survivors have the tools and resources needed to be leaders in an equitable movement; prevention and intervention efforts work to dismantle the racist and oppressive systems that make people vulnerable to abuse and exploitation; human trafficking is accurately understood, and all human trafficking survivors have access to voluntary, trauma-informed, person-centered services.

## Mission

Freedom Network USA mobilizes its collective strength to build a transformative approach to human trafficking that is grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppression.

## Values

Transparency

Equity

Inward and Outward Accountability

Respect

Ethical and Evolving Expertise

Share Power and Build Community



# Advocacy

FNUSA's advocacy work was wide-sweeping in 2022. FNUSA staff and members restored services to hundreds of survivors who relied on the Trafficking Victim Assistance Program (TVAP), a program of the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP). The TVAP grant funds case management, housing, medical and mental health care, and legal services for survivors. At the end of the FY22 grant cycle, providers received 30 days' notice that the payments would stop, with no information about next steps. Hundreds of survivors were suddenly left scrambling for support. Our members were among the providers that were cut off with little warning and no alternative. FNUSA immediately took up the fight and convened listening sessions with our members to understand exactly what was happening and what they were being told. We then insisted on a meeting with the staff at OTIP to demand changes to the grant program and hold the grantee accountable for the impact of the transition. They immediately changed course, restoring access to funding within a week for all survivors. We will continue to monitor the administration of all federal funding to ensure that survivors are centered in all programming decisions

As part of the 2022 Trafficking Victims Protection Act reauthorization, FNUSA proposed some critical changes. Unfortunately, only parts of two bills out of four passed. The good news is that two of our key priorities made it through. First, confidentiality protections for survivors who receive federally funded services. For too long, some careless agencies have divulged personal information about the survivors they support, and the survivors have had little to no recourse. Now, agencies are required to protect the confidentiality of the survivors they are serving. Second, eliminating bankruptcy protection for traffickers. Our members reported several trafficking survivors won criminal restitution or a civil judgment, only to have the trafficker declare bankruptcy forcing the survivor to spend several years fighting to get paid. The TVPA now explicitly states that civil damages and restitution cannot be discharged in bankruptcy. We will continue to advocate with members of Congress to ensure new legislation is introduced to fill in the gaps left behind by the failure to pass over half of the package.



# Overcoming Obstacles

---

Our Survivor Reentry Project provides criminal record relief to survivors of human trafficking all across the US in partnership with 6 national pro bono law firms. The project also offers national training and technical assistance on vacatur, expungement, sealing and other criminal record remedies for trafficking survivors, public defenders, legal service lawyers, pro bono attorneys, victims' advocates, law students, judges, and prosecutors.



130

## **REQUESTS RECEIVED FROM PROVIDERS AND SURVIVORS**

FNUSA receives referrals via its website and directly through partners. FNUSA staff outreach and training efforts increase access to criminal record relief. FNUSA received over 4x the number of referrals from 2021.



69

## **CONNECTED TO PRO BONO ATTORNEYS**

FNUSA partners with pro bono attorneys to take on cases across the US. FNUSA provides our partners with training on criminal record relief and trauma-informed lawyering to ensure survivors have access to appropriate services.



33

## **RECORDS CLEARED FOR 11 SURVIVORS**

The process of clearing criminal records for human trafficking survivors is complex and time-consuming, it can take years for the legal system to vacate these unjust criminal convictions. Many more cases are pending.

# Training

FNUSA continues to be a leading voice on housing access for human trafficking survivors in the US. FNUSA's FNTI Housing Project reviewed the policies and procedures of all of OVC's Human Trafficking Housing Program grantees to ensure they implement trauma-informed, voluntary services. FNUSA's team provided feedback to over 80 human trafficking programs. These reviews have removed barriers including drug testing, curfews, room inspections, and impeded access to necessary medication. Additionally, the housing team hosted over 1,000 participants for virtual trainings and nine in-person training events in 2022.

FNUSA hosted the 2022 conference in a hybrid format, both virtually and in person. The event drew over 700 professionals for four days of learning about trends, challenges, and innovations to address human trafficking in the US. Further training included 20 different webinars from the Freedom Network Training Institute, including "Finding Joy in the Work" a two-day webinar for BIPOC advocates in the anti-trafficking field.

**Over 4,500 anti-trafficking professionals trained**





# Working Collectively

FNUSA hosted short and long-term working groups and meetings to foster collaboration and share knowledge between members and allies. Members learn from one another through our Mentorship Series on topics including: navigating difficult partnerships, a deep dive on Chrystul Kizer's case, program evaluation, and pitching and placing op-eds. They supported and responded to each other's challenges in regional convenings and in real-time via our online listserv.



Additionally, FNUSA convened several working groups to improve human trafficking policies, practices, and prevention. Members developed and informed recommendations for federal government agencies and Congress, including the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. FNUSA continued work with its Sex Worker Rights Working Group and established a new Youth Issues Working Group to explore the unique challenges that youth survivors and their providers face. Specifically, the group is focused on the challenges of the child welfare system to learn more about how and if child welfare reform could be a meaningful step toward prevention.



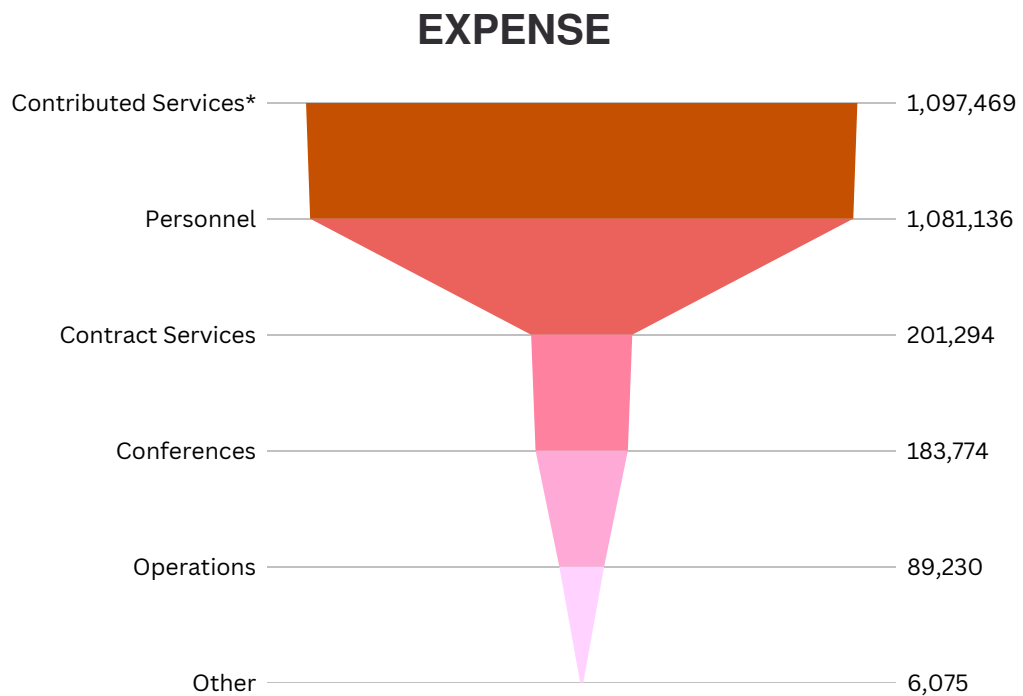
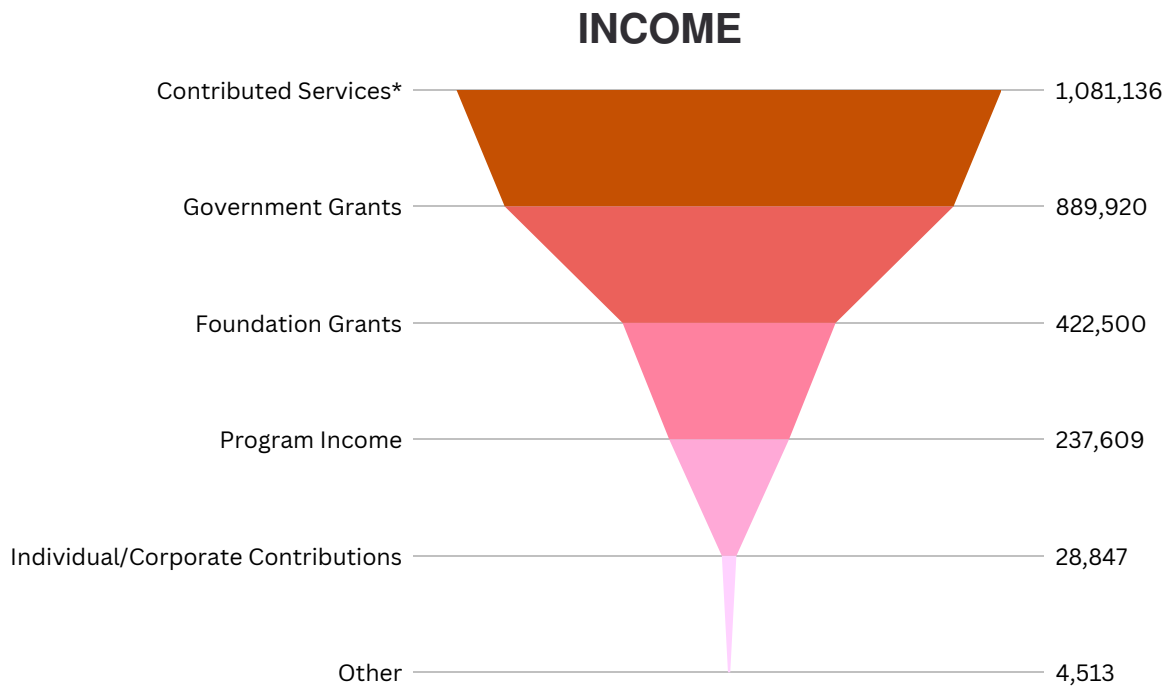
# Shifting Minds

FNUSA concluded its initial phase of research on the current human trafficking narrative. Most information and stories shared about human trafficking are deeply flawed, which has negative repercussions for advocates and survivors. Staff and allies worked alongside narrative contractor, Wonder: Strategies for Good, to understand the existing dominant narratives in the anti-trafficking space and develop a strategy to alter how audience members understand these concepts in the future.



The final report included a sample narrative and strategy recommendations to apply it in different contexts. These recommendations were informed by a media audit, discussions with experts, individual interviews with audiences, and message testing results. Staff and members will use this report to inform policy, strategy, messaging, and education moving forward. Anti-trafficking policies, practices, and prevention are more effective when audiences have a better understanding of the issue.

# Financials



\*Pro bono law firms donated over \$1,080,000 worth of legal services to the Survivor Reentry Project





# Contact Us



+202-768-7338



[info@freedomnetworkusa.org](mailto:info@freedomnetworkusa.org)



[www.freedomnetworkusa.org](http://www.freedomnetworkusa.org)

Freedom Network USA is the largest coalition working on human trafficking in the United States. Our network includes survivors, legal and social service providers, researchers, and expert consultants. We mobilize this collective strength to build a transformative approach to human trafficking that is grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppression. This approach informs our advocacy, training and technical assistance, and capacity-building efforts with members and allies.