

U.S. Department of Transportation

USDOT Advisory Committee On Human Trafficking

PUBLIC MEETING

November 4, 2026

9:00am – 4:00pm EST



WELCOME



WELCOME

DANIEL J. EDWARDS
Assistant Secretary for Aviation
and International Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation



Welcome

Chair: Christopher Bidwell
Senior Vice President of Security
Airports Council International – North America



Welcome

Vice Chair: Megan Lundstrom
Chief Executive Officer
Polaris



INTRODUCTIONS



COMMITTEE OVERVIEW



Committee Overview

Maha Alkhateeb
Senior Counter-Trafficking Advisor
Office of International Transportation and Trade
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation



11.04.26

ACHT Committee Overview & Statutory Requirements

Maha Alkhateeb, ACHT Designated Federal Officer,
Senior Counter-Trafficking Advisor, OST Office of Intl. Transportation & Trade, USDOT

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

AUTHORITIES

- Public Law 115-99, January 3, 2018
  - Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act, Section 5
- Public Law 117-58, November 15, 2021
  - Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Section 23020
- Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. Chapter 10
- Committee Charter
  - Effective September 4, 2026
  - Subject to renewal every two years

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Section 5(a) through (c) of the 2018 Act: Establishment and Membership

- The Secretary shall establish an advisory committee on human trafficking
- Not more than 15 external stakeholder members whose diverse experience and background provide balanced points of view
- Representatives from trafficking advocacy organizations, law enforcement, and the trucking, bus, rail, aviation, maritime, and port sectors, including industry and labor
- Members appointed for the life of the Committee; vacancies filled in the manner of the original appointment
- Members serve without compensation
- Establishment and appointment of all members within 9 months of enactment

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Section 5(d) of the 2018 Act: The Original Duties

- Recommendations to the Secretary on actions the Department can take, including successful strategies for identifying and reporting instances of human trafficking, and administrative or legislative changes necessary to use Department programs, properties, and resources- Recommended best practices for States and State and local transportation stakeholders
- The Secretary shall ensure that State Governors and State departments of transportation are notified of the best practices

Report Elements

- Best Practices
  - based on multidisciplinary research and promising, evidence-based models and programs
  - user-friendly,
  - incorporate the most up-to-date technology,
- Include sample training materials, strategies to identify victims, and sample protocols addressing data collection and sharing across systems
- Types and scope of trafficking and victim interaction with multiple systems
- Pathways for State agencies to educate stakeholders and assist victims

Section 5(e) and (f) of the 2018 Act: Report and Definitions

- Within 2 years of enactment, the Secretary shall submit a report on the Committee's actions to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and make it publicly available in print and online

- "Human trafficking" is defined by reference to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and encompasses both sex trafficking and severe forms of trafficking in persons (22 U.S.C. 7102)

- The 2018 Committee terminated on October 3, 2020 upon expiration of its charter; re-chartered on July 29, 2022 per 2021 Act

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Section 23020 of the 2021 Act: The Triennial Report

- Not later than 3 years after enactment, and every 3 years thereafter, the Secretary, acting through the Committee, shall coordinate with the Attorney General to prepare and submit to Congress a report

- The report shall
  - relate to human trafficking violations involving commercial motor vehicles
  - include recommendations for countering human trafficking
  - include an assessment of previous best practices by transportation stakeholders

- Set out as a note to 49 U.S.C. 31102 (135 Stat. 777)

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Timeline and the 2027 Reporting Cycle

- November 15, 2021, enactment of the 2021 Act
- November 15, 2024, first triennial report due; submitted September 6, 2024, under the title "Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking in the Transportation Sector"
- November 15, 2027, second triennial report due under the plain terms of the statute
- Public meetings noticed for this term, November 4, 2026; December 10, 2026; January 28, 2027
- Subcommittees have no authority to make decisions or recommendations; all advice is deliberated by the full Committee

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Timeline and the 2027 Reporting Cycle

- November 15, 2021, enactment of the 2021 Act
- November 15, 2024, first triennial report due
  - "Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking in the Transportation Sector" submitted to Secretary on September 6, 2024, under the title November 15, 2027
- November 15, 2027, second triennial report due
  - Public Meetings:
    - 2026: November 4, December 10
    - 2027: January 28, May 20, June 15, July 8
- Subcommittees report findings to full Committee for deliberation and recommendations

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

What the Statutes Require of This Committee

- One report, prepared through the Committee, coordinated with the Attorney General, and submitted by the Secretary to Congress not later than November 15, 2027

- Three required elements:
  - violations involving commercial motor vehicles,
  - recommendations for countering human trafficking, and
  - an assessment of previous best practices by transportation stakeholders

- Best practices to meet the standard in Section 5(d)(2) of the 2018 Act:
  - research-based, evidence-based, technology-current, and user-friendly

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING



USDOT's Counter-Trafficking Initiative & Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Efforts



USDOT's Counter-Trafficking Initiative

Maha Alkhateeb
Senior Counter-Trafficking Advisor
Office of International Transportation and Trade
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation



11.04.26

From Policy to Action: USDOT's Counter-Trafficking Action Framework

Maha Alkhateeb, Senior Counter-Trafficking Advisor
Office of International Transportation & Trade
Office of the Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

USDOT Legislative Authorities

Authorities	P.L.	Title	Year
USG + DOT Coordination	115-99	Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act	2018
Policies *(Conduct + Procurement)*	117-58	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	2021
	117-348	Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act	2022
Grants *(CMVs + Airports)*	115-99	Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act	2018
	117-58	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	2021
	118-63	FAA Reauthorization Act	2024
Regulation *(CMVs)*	115-106	No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act	2018
Training	117-348	Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act	2022
Awareness & Outreach	115-99	Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act	2018
	117-301	Human Trafficking Prevention Act	2022
Data Tracking *(Air Carriers)*	115-425	Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act	2019
Advisory Committee	115-99	Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act	2018
	117-58	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	2021

USDOT Support for Sectoral Mandates

Authorities	P.L.	Title	Year
Awareness & Outreach	117-301	Human Trafficking Prevention Act	2022
Training *(Air Carriers)*	114-190	FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act	2016
	115-254	FAA Reauthorization Act	2018
Data Collection *(Air Carriers)*	115-425	Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act	2019
CDL Ban *(CMVs)*	115-106	No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act	2018

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

USDOT Counter-Trafficking Initiative

Functions

- Strategic Leadership
- Partnerships, Training & Awareness
- International Cooperation
- Participates in the President's Interagency Task Force and its Senior Policy Operating Group

Guiding Principles

- Person-centered
- Trauma-informed
- Culturally responsive
- Data-driven

Action Framework

- Leadership, Coordination & Funding
- Policy Development & Compliance
- Reporting & Response Systems
- Partnerships & Collaboration
- Workforce Training & Education
- Public Awareness & Outreach
- Research, Data & Evaluation
- Victim & Survivor Support

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Leadership, Coordination & Funding

Leadership & Coordination

- Department-wide OST coordination
  - Internal Counter-Trafficking Steering Committee
  - Operating Administration lead for their modes
- Participation in the President's Interagency Task Force and the Senior Policy Operating Group

Funding

- FMCSA Grants
  - $12 million+ for State counter-trafficking efforts via:
    - Commercial Driver's License Program Implementation
    - High Priority,
    - Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program
- FTA Grants
  - $5.4 million to 24 organizations for transit public safety, including human trafficking prevention
  - Urbanized area formula funds
- Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Impact Award
  - Conferred annually since 2020
  - 2026 prizes of up to $100k, $50k, and $25k

Policy Development & Compliance: Putting Safeguards into Practice

- Commercial Driver Disqualification
  - FMCSA's 2019 rule implementing lifetime disqualification, with CDL Program Implementation grants supporting state conformity
- Aviation Training & Reporting
  - FAA guidance: DOT/DHS BLI training
  - Annual reports to DOT and partner agencies from U.S.-flag carriers under federal contracts
- Grant & Contract Terms
  - Government-wide prohibitions on trafficking by DOT grant recipients and contractors



U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Policy Development & Compliance: Forced Labor & Responsible Sourcing

- Scope
  - Risks in transportation workforces, contracted services, recruitment & purchased goods across aviation, maritime, pipelines, private vehicles, rail, transit, and trucking
- Sector Training on the New Tools
  - For transportation entities, government contractors, and procurement professionals
- Roadmap guidance on supply chain due diligence:
  - a contractual ban on forced labor
  - mapping and screening of supply chains
  - direct hire where possible, and careful vetting of labor agents
  - a way for workers to raise concerns



U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Reporting & Response Systems

TLAHT Reporting Pathway

- Campaign materials direct reports to the National Human Trafficking Hotline
- By call, text, or chat,
- With QR codes linking to mode-specific indicators & reporting methods
- TLAHT training covers how to report a tip

DOT/DHS Blue Lightning Initiative Pathway (Aviation)

- In-flight
  - Crews report through airline procedures & FAA's Domestic Events Network
- On the ground
  - DHS HSI Tip Line
  - National Human Trafficking Hotline included for referrals

RESOURCES

- **Indicators:** General and mode-specific, covering individuals at risk + suspected traffickers
- **Reporting Guidance:** Safety first, reporting sequence, information to include & internal tip tracking with standardized fields
- **Response & Referral Standards:** Trauma-informed response and survivor-centered referral to local service providers

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Partnerships & Collaboration

Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking

- 600+ multimodal signatories
- Industry/labor
- Every mode & state
- Call to Action
  - Train Employees
  - Raise Public Awareness
  - Track Data

DOT/DHS Blue Lightning Initiative

- 150+ partners
- Domestic and foreign aviation sector entities
- 25-minute training
- 400,000+ aviation personnel trained

International Engagement

- Resolutions at ICAO's 40th, 41st, and 42nd Assemblies
- APEC transport ministers' commitments (2013, 2017, 2023)
- G7 (2023) and ITF (2018) ministerial declarations
- Guidance Documents
  - ICAO Document 10171
  - APEC strategy

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Workforce Training & Education

DOT Workforce

- All employees complete training on recognizing and reporting human trafficking every two years.
- Initial and recurrent training has been provided since 2012.
- CTI & OA webinars to train sector personnel

Resources

- TLAHT Combating Human Trafficking in the Transportation Sector Awareness Training
  - 2.0 in development
- DOT/DHS Blue Lightning Initiative Training
- Roadmap Training Framework

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Public Awareness & Outreach

Multimodal

- Cards
  - Pocket & Visor
- Graphics
  - Digital display, social media graphic, logos
- Indicator Poster
  - 3x5 to 40x60
- Public Service Announcement
- Fact Sheets
  - Take Action, Guidelines, TLAHT, USDOT Efforts
- Bilingual (English & Spanish)

Modal

- Modes: Aviation, bus, maritime, pipelines, rail, rest area, rideshare/taxi/private car service, transit, trucking, Native
- Cards
  - Pocket & Visor
- Graphics
  - Digital displays, social media graphics, logos
- Posters
  - 3x5 to 40x60
- Toolkits



U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Research, Data & Evaluation

- **Transportation Data Fields**
  - Location, mode and facility type, and reporter role
  - Incorporated by the National Human Trafficking Hotline
  - Voluntary intake process
- **Research Sponsorship + Co-Sponsorship**
  - **FAA:** Airport program development & Mitigation technologies
  - **FHWA:** State DOT contributions & Toolkit
  - **OST:** Responsible sourcing & national survey
  - **OST-Research:** Transit riders & CA trafficking

RESOURCES

- Sample Transportation-Related Data Collection Fields
- Roadmap measurement framework
  - After-action reviews, assessments before and after training, false-positive tracking, and short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes
- Forthcoming
  - TLAHT & BLI Annual Surveys
  - Program Evaluation Tool

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Victim & Survivor Support

Survivor Expertise

- Training and campaign materials developed with survivors
- ACHT may include members appointed for their survivor experience

Roadmap Support Standards

- **Frontline Response:** Person-centered multilingual materials, protocols that avoid secondary victimization, discreet call boxes & restroom displays
- **Longer-Term Support:** Workforce development, paid internships, employment, mentorship & retention support
- **Travel Assistance:** Donated travel vouchers & airline miles, received and booked by Hotline staff for survivor travel



U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Status of ACHT's 42 Recommendations for USDOT

LEGEND

21 Completed / Ongoing | 12 In Process | 6 To Be Implemented | 3 Pending Appropriations

Leadership & Funding (7)



Training & Awareness (14)



Policies & Reporting (6)



Research, Data, and Information-Sharing (8)



Partnerships (6)



Victim and Survivor Support (1)



U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

VISIT
transportation.gov/stop-human-trafficking

CONTACT
trafficking@dot.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation

PUT THE BRAKES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Efforts

Cicely Waters
Director of the Office of Communications
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation







Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Human Trafficking Prevention Efforts Overview

November 4, 2026

250

U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration



Mission

Reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities involving large trucks and buses

Vision

FMCSA advances commercial motor vehicle safety nationwide through clear and transparent communication, impactful outreach, practical education and guidance, and disciplined enforcement – working together to reduce crashes, uphold accountability, and save lives.

Commercial Motor Vehicle Industry Role's

The Environment

WHERE

Truck stops, rest areas, travel centers, and bus terminals are among the settings where trafficking indicators may be visible.

Frontline Partners

WHO

Drivers, bus operators, inspectors, dispatchers and the public may observe unusual or concerning behavior.

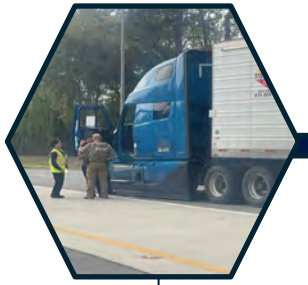
The Action

HOW

Recognizing indicators and reporting concerns allows trained authorities and support providers to respond.

Truck drivers and bus operators can be the Nation's eyes and ears on the road.

FMCSA’s Sustained Efforts



Targeted Regulations & Grant Funding



National Education Campaigns & Reporting



National Training Center Curriculum



Partnerships



Strengthened State Coordination & Data Analysis

Equip people to recognize, report, and respond through appropriate channels.

Targeted Regulations



Code of Federal Regulations
49 CFR Part 383.51(b)

No Human Trafficking on Our Roads Act (July 2019)

- FMCSA permanently bans any CMV driver convicted of using a CMV to conduct human trafficking from holding a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) for life.
- Rule added human trafficking to FMCSA's official list of major disqualifying offenses.

Targeted Voluntary Effort



https://www.transportation.gov/stop-human-trafficking/roadmap

USDOT Roadmap for Countering Human Trafficking in Transportation

- Encourages bus companies to donate transportation vouchers, credits or free tickets to help victims and survivors of human trafficking reach safety and access essential services.
- Bus companies can partner with victim-service organizations to provide complementary transportation for affected individuals.

Targeted Grant Funding

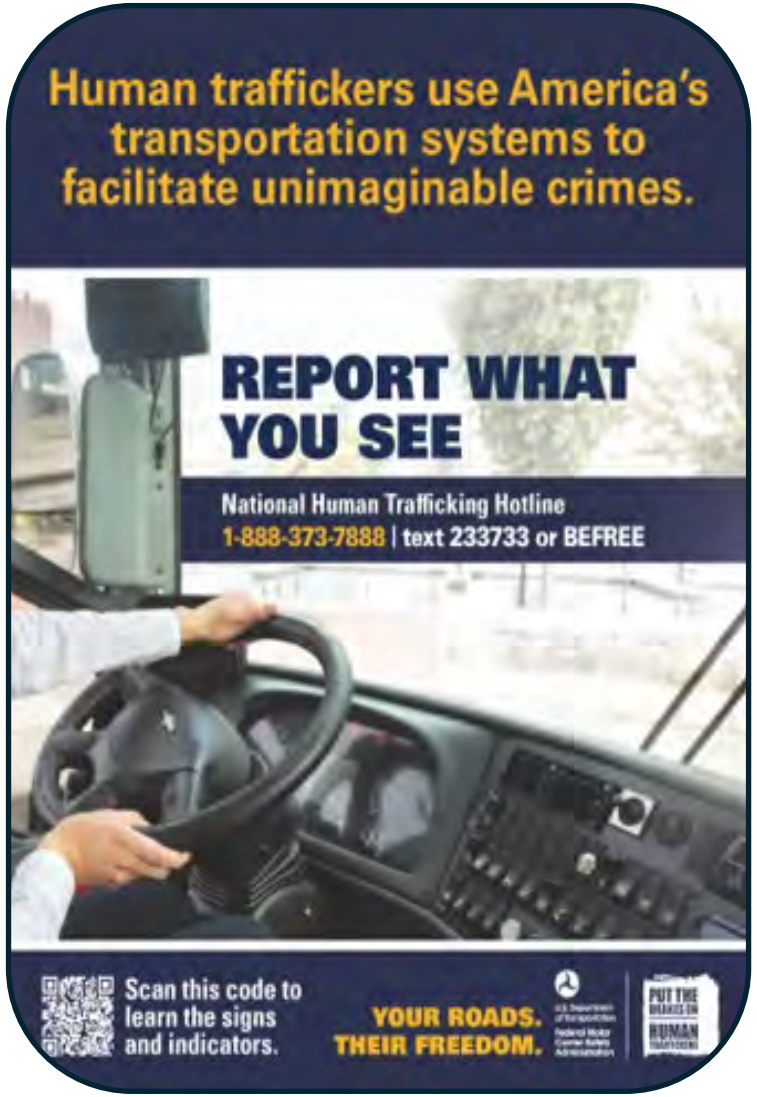


https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/grants

(*FY2026 grant awards not yet announced)

- **$411,150** to the state of Iowa for commercial motor vehicle – focused covert operations, victim resources, training and outreach.
- **$1,648,278** to the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance for national safety, education, and enforcement campaigns that include human trafficking prevention.
- **$35,054** to the state of Arizona to partner with TAT to implement efforts aimed to identify, deter, and eliminate human trafficking.

National Education Campaigns and Resources



Your Roads, Their Freedom

- Developed/updated more than 25 tools and resources to highlight best practices for effective public awareness and outreach materials (wallet cards, videos, posters +).
- Conducted two paid media efforts that resulted in more than 922 million impressions and almost 86,000 clicks to agency's updated website.
- Provided insight and recommendations for the next iteration of the USDOT Human Trafficking Prevention training video – will raise awareness of human. trafficking, including indicators and reporting methods; video will be made available to USDOT employees, across the transportation sector and the traveling public.

https://www.dot.gov/stophumantrafficking

National Training Center Curriculum



Commercial Motor Vehicle Criminal Interdiction for Academy

- FMCSA Safety Investigators
- Federal, State, Local Law Enforcement and Enforcement Personnel
- Human Trafficking Prevention
- Interviewing
- Rapid Assessment
- Report and Refer

Specialized training; not open to the public

Reporting



FMCSA Complaint Center

- Centralized federal clearinghouse used to report, track, and investigate violations of federal commercial trucking and bus regulations.
- Not a real-time emergency dispatch.
- Used by members of the CMV industry and the general public.

https://www.complaint.fmcsa.dot.gov

Partnerships



https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/ourroads/our-roads-our-safety-partners

We can’t do it alone

- Our Roads Our Safety – flagship, national public education and outreach campaign.
- Work with transportation organizations, safety advocates and other stakeholders to amplify FMCSA safety messages.
- Partnered with TAT, Virginia State Police and bus/truck industry to create education campaign video.

Strengthened State Coordination

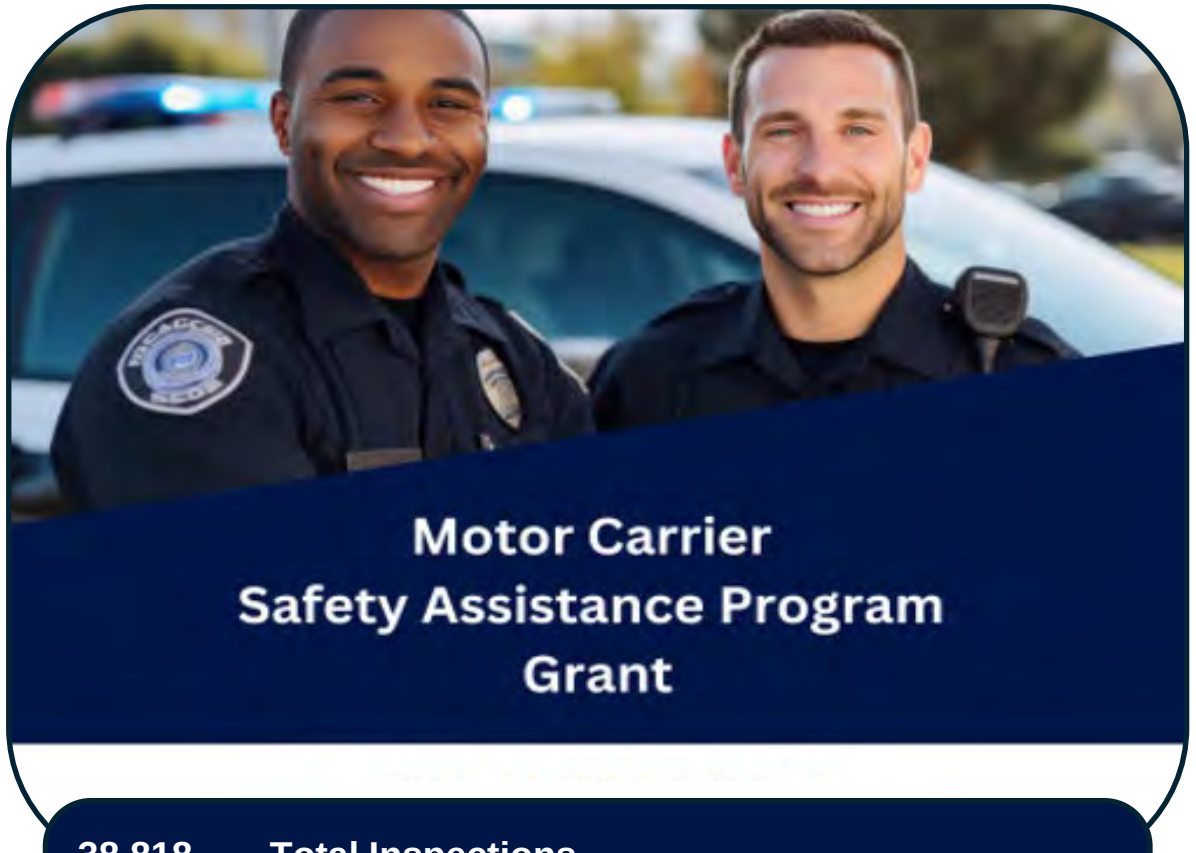


Joint enforcement operations include human-trafficking elements

State Partners as Force Multipliers

- Strengthened human trafficking prevention-related expectations in FY2026 MCSAP grant policy.
- Coordinate with other law enforcement agencies and stakeholders.
- Incorporate trafficking prevention into eligible MCSAP activities.
- Identify planned anti-trafficking activities in their programs and provide updates in quarterly reports.
- Ensure enforcement personnel can recognize signs of criminal activity beyond traditional vehicle safety violations.

Strengthened State Coordination



38,818 **Total Inspections**
1035 **CMVs carrying passengers**
1671 **Authorized passengers**
42 **Unauthorized passengers**
(2026 Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance Human Trafficking Awareness Data)

Data Collection and Analysis

- Inspectors examine vehicle, driver, and occupants
- Inspectors look for indicators of trafficking
- Relevant observations are documented
- Suspected trafficking is referred to appropriate authorities
- Drivers receive prevention information

FMCSA Resources and Contact

https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov

https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/grants

https://www.dot.gov/stophumantrafficking

https://www.complaint.fmcsa.dot.gov

https://www.transportation.gov/stop-human-trafficking/roadmap

https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/ourroads/our-roads-our-safety-partners

Cicely L. Waters
Director, Office of Communications
cicely.waters@dot.gov



BREAK



PROSECUTION, PROTECTION & PREVENTION



Prosecution, Protection & Prevention Panel

Moderator: Julie Abraham
Director, Office of International Transportation & Trade
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation

Meet the Panelists: DOJ





Hilary Axam
Senior Counsel for Combating Human Trafficking
Criminal Division
Human Rights & Special Prosecutions Section

Ayn Ducao
Senior Counsel
Criminal Division
Human Rights & Special Prosecutions Section

Tara Ratz
Project Safe Childhood and Human Trafficking Coordinator
Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys

Department of Justice

Human Trafficking Prosecutions

Hilary Axam
Senior Counsel for Combating Human Trafficking
Criminal Division, Human Rights & Special Prosecutions Section
United States Department of Justice

Ayn B. Ducao
Senior Counsel
Criminal Division, Human Rights & Special Prosecutions Section
United States Department of Justice

Tara S. Ratz
Project Safe Childhood and Human Trafficking Coordinator
Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys
United States Department of Justice

DOJ Priority

“Ending human trafficking and the exploitation of children has been and remains one of the highest priorities of the Department of Justice.”

- **June 17, 2026 Attorney General call to enhance DOJ national strategies to combat human trafficking & child exploitation**

- **DOJ Child Exploitation & Human Trafficking Coordinator appointed to spearhead updating of statutorily-required DOJ-wide national strategies**

Whole-of-Department Approach

Victim-centered, trauma-informed, & multi-disciplinary:

- **P**revention of trafficking & exploitation risks
- **P**rotection, stabilization, & support of victims/survivors
- **P**rosecution, investigation, & interdiction
- **P**artnerships to enhance anti-trafficking response

- Coordinated & cross-cutting:
  - Specialized strategies targeting trafficking-specific detection & enforcement challenges
  - Coordinated responses to combined & crossover threats

Anti-Trafficking Partners & Roles

- **DOJ-Wide National Coordinator for Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking**

- **Prosecutions**
  - **Specialized Human Trafficking & Child Exploitation Prosecutors**
  - **EOUSA Human Trafficking & Project Safe Childhood Coordinator**
  - **USAO Human Trafficking & Project Safe Childhood Coordinators**

- **Investigations**
  - **FBI Human Trafficking Unit**

- **Victim Assistance**
  - **Human Trafficking & Child Exploitation Prosecution Programs**
  - **FBI Victim Services Division**
  - **EOUSA & USAOs**
  - **Office for Victims of Crime**

- **Task Forces**
  - **Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces**
  - **Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) HT Task Forces**
  - **FBI Child Exploitation & Human Trafficking Task Forces**
  - **USAO-led, HSI-led, Regional, & Statewide ATTFs**
  - **In coordination with HSTFs on HSTF-designated cases**

What is Human Trafficking?

- Compelling or coercing labor, services or commercial sex; or commercial sex of a minor
- Subtle or overt; physical or psychological
- *Need not include smuggling or movement across borders or state lines*







Two Major Categories

- **Forced Labor § 1589**

- **Sex Trafficking § 1591**

Sex Trafficking: 18 U.S.C. § 1591

Whoever knowingly (1) in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, obtains, advertises, maintains, patronizes, or solicits by any means a person; or (2) benefits, financially or by receiving anything of value, form participating in a venture which has engaged in an acted described in paragraph (1), knowing, or, except where the act constituting the violation of paragraph (1) is advertising, in reckless disregard of the fact that means of force, threats of force, fraud, coercion, or any combination of such means will be used to cause the person to engage in commercial sex, or that the person has not attained the age of 18 years and will be caused to engage in a commercial sex act, shall be punished as provided in subsection (b).

Forced Labor: 18 U.S.C. § 1589

Whoever knowingly provides or obtains the labor or services of a person by any one of, or by any combination of, the following means: (1) by means of force, threats of force, physical restraint, or threats of physical restraint to that person or another person; (2) by means of serious harm or threats of serious harm to that person or another person; (3) by means of the abuse or threatened abuse of law or legal process; or (4) by means of a scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause the person to believe that, if that person did not perform such labor or person, that person or another person would suffer serious harm or physical restraint, shall be punished as provided under subsection (d).

Human Trafficking and the Transportation Sector

The transportation industry is uniquely positioned to help **Recognize** and **Report** human trafficking.

- The crime of human trafficking does not require transportation, however ***traffickers often use transportation systems*** to operate their illicit enterprise.



Human Trafficking and the Transportation Industry

Human traffickers use the transportation industry to ***exploit*** victims.



- Personal, business, and rental vehicles
- Taxis and ridesharing services
- Buses, trains, and airplanes
- Trucking, shipping, freight
- Truck stops, rest areas, welcome centers

Human Trafficking and the Transportation Industry

Sample Prosecutions

- **Use of bus lines or bus stops**
  - *United States v. McGee*:
    - Sex trafficking defendant who met minor victim through Instagram.
    - After months of speaking with her, defendant bought the victim a bus ticket for her to travel to meet him in person.
    - Defendant drove the victim to outdoor areas in known for commercial sex work and instructed her to solicit sex buyers in passing cars.
  - *United States v. Barnhill*:
    - Defendant, a former officer with the Metropolitan Police Department, recruited minor victims at bus stops by asking the victims if they wanted to model for him.

Human Trafficking and the Transportation Industry

Sample Prosecutions (continued)

- **Use of planes**
  - *United States v. Brown*:
    - Defendant met victim on social media and told her that he had a modeling agency and that he wanted to work with her.
    - Defendant said he would pay for her plane ticket to fly to Boston and provide everything for her once she arrived.
    - After she arrived, Brown took photos of her, purportedly for modeling, but instead he posted them on websites advertising commercial sex.

  - *United States v. Hernandez*:
    - Defendant operated a highly profitable prostitution enterprise known as “International Playmates” from a hotel in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
    - Defendant and others recruited many of the women who worked for him from other countries, including Spain, Colombia, Venezuela and other Central and Latin American countries.
    - Defendant and his associates reserved and paid for plane tickets for foreign nationals to enter the United States.

Human Trafficking and the Transportation Industry

Sample Prosecutions (continued)

- **Commercial vehicle drivers**
  - *United States v. King*:
    - Defendant, an over-the-road truck driver paid the 14-year-old minor victim to have sex in the back of his semi-truck.
    - Over a three-year period, Defendant paid the Minor Victim hundreds of dollars in cash for sex on approximately 10 occasions and produced two videos of his sexual exploitation of the minor victim.

  - *United States v. Wardlow*:
    - Defendant, a commercial truck driver, paid the minor victim for sex on multiple occasions, both in his truck and in hotels.
    - Defendant took her out of town in his truck on several occasions. The minor victim testified at trial that the Defendant threatened her with violence should she ever contact law enforcement.

Human Trafficking and the Transportation Industry

Survivors use the transportation industry to ***escape***.

Survivors used buses and ridesharing services during escapes.

Bus, shipping, freight, and
parcel delivery sectors have been used
in victim identification.



Trainings and Initiatives

- In January 2026, in recognition of National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, DOJ and DHS surged resources to fight and raise awareness about human trafficking, including partnering with AMTRAK and Federal Air Marshals to increase law enforcement resources and distribute posters with QR codes for reporting human trafficking in all station bathrooms and trains.

- DOJ provides training to Federal, State, local and Tribal law enforcement partners including those who work in transportation hubs:
  - Example: DOJ has provided training on the intersection of human trafficking and narcotics interdiction at the past three annual International Narcotics Interdiction Association Annual Conferences. The conference is aimed at law enforcement involved in narcotics interdiction, including law enforcement who work at transportation hubs such as airports and bus terminals or work highway patrol.

- DOJ's OVC funds training and technical assistance to Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) Task Forces to Combat Human Trafficking to increase their skills and abilities to become sustainable, high functioning task forces. This support includes both in-person and virtual training and peer-to-peer mentoring on law enforcement and prosecution case and strategic approaches rooted in victim-centered and trauma- and survivor-informed practices to increase identification of victims of all ages and all forms human trafficking.

Coordination with USAOs

- Coordination with DOT on the CDL-related Advisory to AUSAs
- Ensuring AUSAs are aware of the CDL lifetime disqualification rule
- Training for investigators and AUSAs on transportation-related evidence to build strong cases

Meet the Panelists: DHS



Michael Cestare

Acting Division Chief for Programs

Center for Countering Human Trafficking

DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking Overview

Background: Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)

WHO WE ARE

HSI is the principal investigative arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, responsible for investigating transnational crime and threats, specifically those criminal organizations that exploit the global infrastructure through which international trade, travel, and finance move.

OUR HUMAN TRAFFICKING MISSION

- Proactively identify, disrupt and dismantle human trafficking organizations and minimize the risks they pose to national security and public safety.
- Employ a victim-centered approach, placing equal value on identifying, recovering and stabilizing victims while investigating and helping prosecute traffickers.



Background: Center for Countering Human Trafficking

The Center for Countering Human Trafficking (CCHT) advances counter human trafficking law enforcement operations, protect victims, and enhances prevention efforts by aligning the Department of Homeland Security's capabilities and expertise. By law, the CCHT advances every aspect of DHS's counter-trafficking work across four functional areas.

Identification and Screening	**Enforcement and Investigations**
Victim Protection and Assistance	**Training, Outreach, and Engagement**

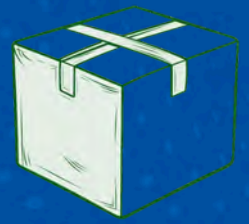
Background: Center for Countering Human Trafficking



Proactively identify, disrupt and dismantle complex domestic and **cross-border human trafficking organizations** and minimize the risk they pose to national security and public safety.



Employ a **victim-centered approach** to enforcement, whereby equal value is placed on the identification and stabilization of victims and on the deterrence, investigation, and prosecution of traffickers.



Prevent the importation into the United States of **goods produced by forced labor** and facilitate the prosecution of those criminally benefitting from such forced labor.

CCHT Integrates Efforts to Counter Human Trafficking



- Homeland Security Investigations
- Enforcement and Removal Operations
- U.S. Secret Service
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Transportation Security Administration
- Science & Technology
- Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans
- Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
- Office of Intelligence and Analysis
- Management Directorate
- Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
- Office of Inspector General
- Office of Partnership and Engagement

CCHT Leverages Interagency Partnerships



CCHT Assists Field Offices with Human Trafficking Cases

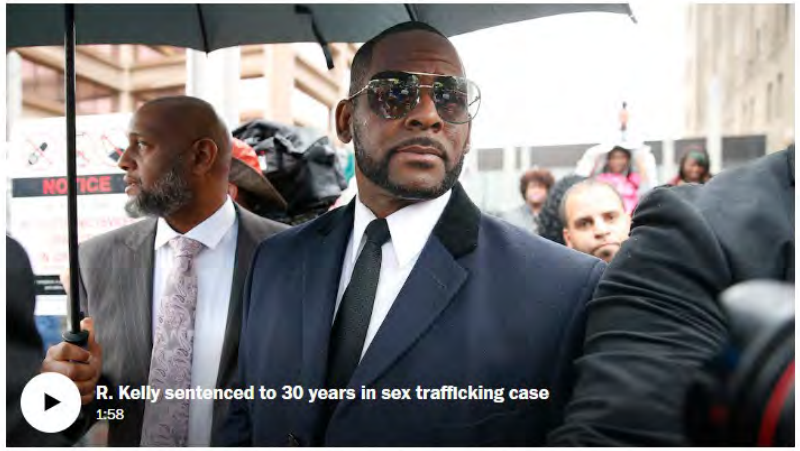
Pop Culture

R. Kelly sentenced to 30 years for sex trafficking and racketeering

Former R&B star faced up to life in prison after a Brooklyn jury found him guilty last year

Updated June 29, 2022

6 min 878



R. Kelly was sentenced to 30 years in prison on June 29 for racketeering and sex trafficking. (Video: Reuters)

Feds bust 'modern-day slavery' ring amid new immigration enforcement effort

At least 100 immigrant workers were freed from conditions in which at least two died, another was repeatedly raped, and others were kidnapped and threatened with death.



CCHT Promotes Best Practices on Working with Victims

- Improving screening and identification by DHS Components
- Advancing the Continued Presence program
- Engaging survivors
- Training Components on best practices
- Coordinating with HSI's Victim Assistance Program

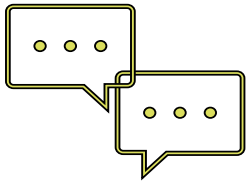


How Should Transportation Workers Report Human Trafficking?

Call 911 or local law enforcement
if you or someone else is in immediate danger.



Follow your organization's reporting protocols.



Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline
1-888-373-7888
Text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733).



Call the HSI Tip Line
1-866-347-2434

Do **not** at any time attempt to confront a suspected traffickers directly or alert them to your suspicions.

What happens when a Tip is submitted to HSI?

1. Employee follows internal reporting protocol and submits tip to Homeland Security Investigations Tipline by providing
   - Who: Names, descriptions (height, weight, age, distinguishing marks), or contact details.
   - What: Include details like vehicle descriptions (make, model, license plate) or business names.
   - When: The exact or approximate dates and times you witnessed the activity.
   - Where: Specific locations, addresses or ports of entry where the activity is taking place.
   - Why it is suspicious: Specific facts or behaviors that make you believe a violation or crime is occurring
2. HSI Tip Line collects information, documents the tip, and forwards the report to closest regional field office.
3. Based on submitted information federal, state, and/or local law enforcement respond. HSI **will not** provide status updates or follow-up communication. Do not submit multiple tips.



FY 2025 STATS AT A GLANCE:

The CCHT supports the work of these DHS offices and Components.

ICE HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS

779 human trafficking victims assisted

392 Continued Presence approvals

- ♂ **291** male
- ♀ **234** female
- **103** sex trafficking
- **404** forced labor

145 ICE HSI cases supported by CCHT

107 CCHT training and outreach events with **13,369** participants

RELATED TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

- **1,985** CASES INITIATED
- **2,670** ARRESTS
- **860** INDICTMENTS
- **646** CONVICTIONS

BLUE CAMPAIGN

139 Blue Campaign trainings conducted with **22,813** participants

36 New Blue Campaign partnerships

400,000 personnel trained on human trafficking through the Blue Lightning Initiative

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

107 shipments with a value of **$18,945,553** stopped under a Withhold Release Order

U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

T Nonimmigrant Status granted to **1,398** victims and **1,547** family members of victims

U Nonimmigrant Status granted to **10,000** victims and **6,956** family members of victims

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTERS

3,698 law enforcement officers received human trafficking awareness training

Additional Information

Training and Outreach Request

Information on Center for Countering Human Trafficking

Meet the Panelists: HHS & NHTH



Katherine Chon
Director
Office on Trafficking in Persons
Administration for Children and Families



Tiffany Taylor
Executive Director for Call Center Operations
Compass Connections



Department of Transportation Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking

Katherine Chon, Director, Office on Trafficking in Persons

November 4, 2026

The Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) uses a public health approach to:

1. Strengthen prevention efforts
2. Expand access to quality services
3. Build evidence-based programming



HHS – DOT Collaboration

- Joint transportation-sector outreach webinar in 2024
- Collaboration on awareness materials and communications practices
- Sharing outreach best practices through the SPOG Public Awareness & Outreach Committee
- Discussions regarding the National Human Trafficking Hotline transition



Statutory Requirements

- "Make reasonable efforts to distribute information to enable all relevant Federal Government agencies to publicize the National Human Trafficking [Hotline] on their websites, in all headquarters offices, and in all field offices throughout the United States" (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(6)).
- DOT in consultation with HHS "shall seek to coordinate with the owners and operators of aircraft, airports, over-the-road buses, bus stations, passenger trains, and passenger railroad stations to place the contact information of the national human trafficking hotline in the restrooms of each such aircraft, airport, over-the-road bus, bus station, passenger train, and passenger railroad station operating within the U.S." (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1(B)(ii).
- DHS in consultation with HHS "shall place the contact information of the national human trafficking hotline at each port of entry" (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1(B)(iii).

Meeting People Where They Are

Messages that reflect their experiences and connect them with support.







ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office on Trafficking in Persons

Intentional Placement

Gas Station TV

Locations:

- Albuquerque-Santa Fe, NM
- Las Vegas, NV
- Los Angeles, CA
- Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN

Languages:

English and Spanish

Timeline: November 2024 – January 2025

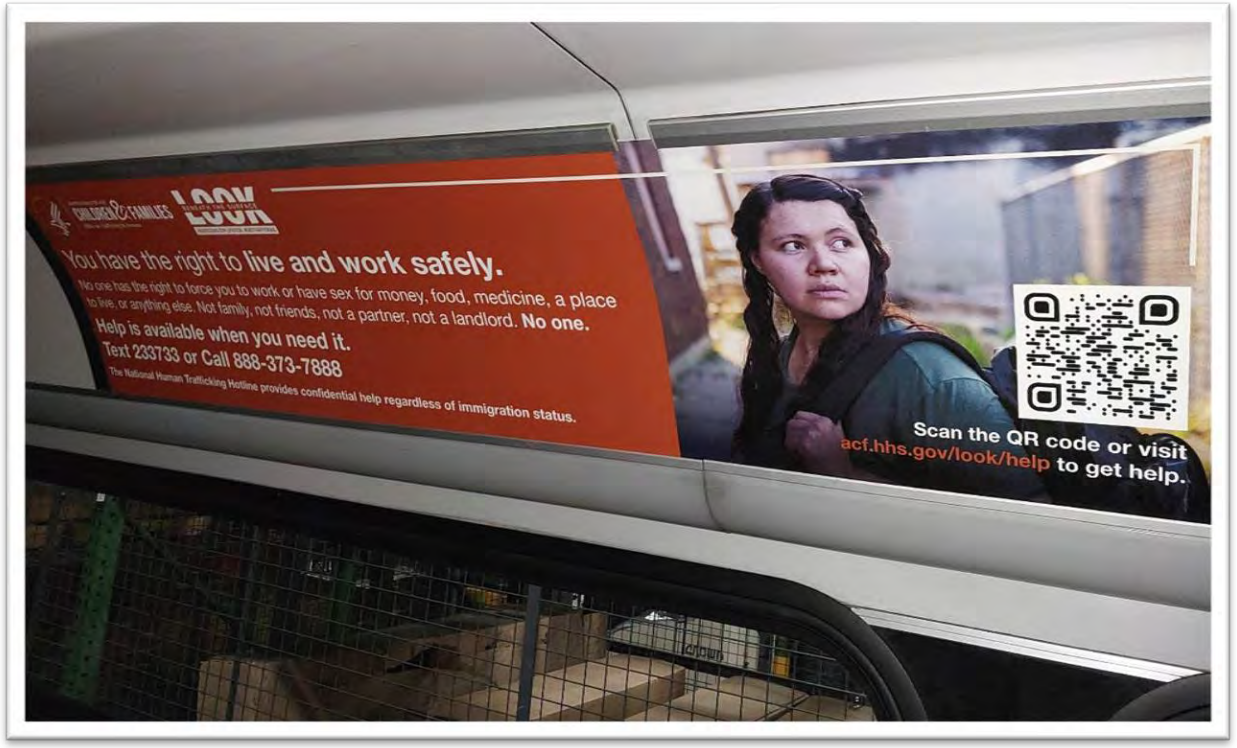


ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office on Trafficking in Persons

Reaching People During Everyday Travel

Interior Bus Ads

- **Languages:** English and Spanish
- **Timeline:** March and April 2024
- **Locations**
  - Anchorage, AK
  - Los Angeles, CA
  - Miami, FL
  - Minneapolis, MN
  - Las Vegas, NV
  - New York, NY
  - Oklahoma City, OK
  - Laredo, TX



ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office on Trafficking in Persons

Reaching People During Everyday Travel

Subway Liveboard Ads

Locations:

New York City (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

Languages:

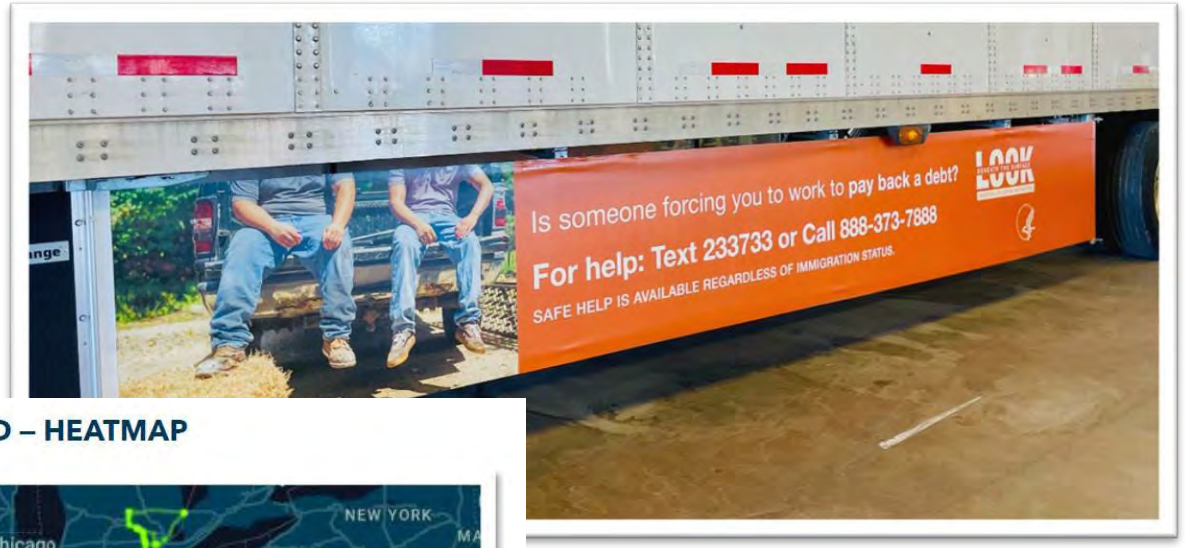
English and Spanish

Timeline: March – May 2024



ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office on Trafficking in Persons

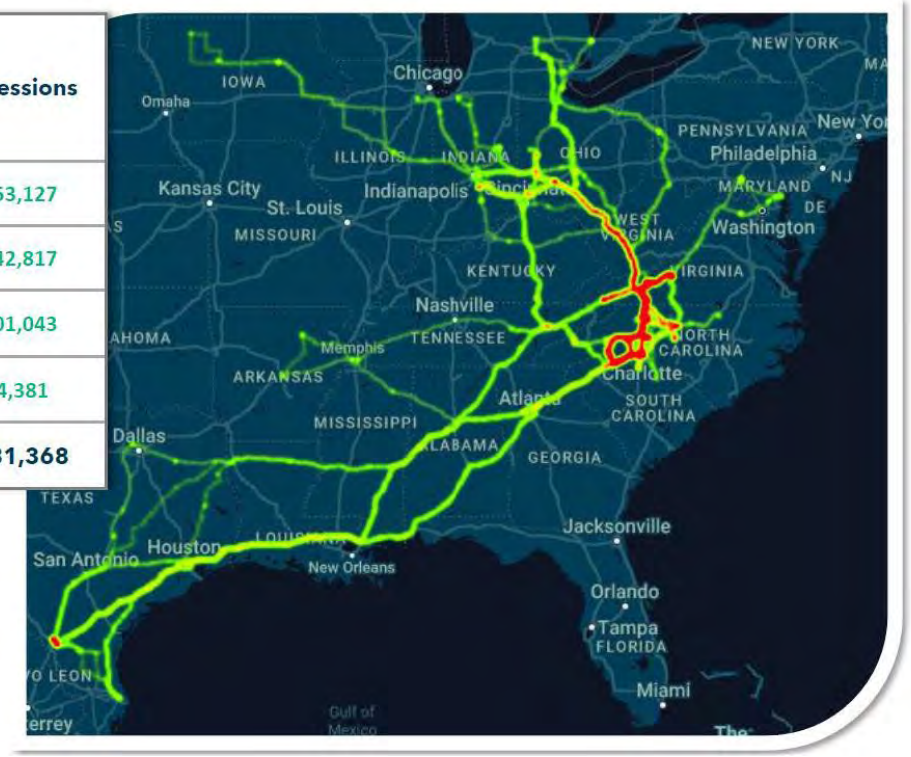
Rural Communities



CAMPAIGN TOTAL TO DATE

Month	Distance (Miles)	Fuel Saved (Gallons)	C02 Offset (Tons)	Impressions
March	12,407	99	21	1,253,127
April	26,167	209	45	2,642,817
May	26,743	214	46	2,701,043
June	6,281	50	11	634,381
TOTAL	**71,598**	**572**	**123**	**7,231,368**

ROUTES TRAVELED – HEATMAP



Languages:

- English
- Spanish
- Haitian Creole

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office on Trafficking in Persons



Transportation Connects Survivors with Services and Opportunity

OTIP's victim service grants support reasonable transportation assistance based on survivor-identified needs.

Immediate access: Safe housing, essential appointments, and services.

Ongoing support: Transportation to work, school, and health care during program enrollment.

Community connections: Case management and referrals to eligible benefits and local resources.

Assistance may include: Bus passes, subway or train fares, taxi or rideshare trips, and accessible transportation.

Costs must be necessary, reasonable, documented, and consistent with applicable award terms.



Where Continued Collaboration Can Help

Audience-focused outreach

- Connect transportation expertise with survivor-informed messaging.
- Refine placement and evaluate audience relevance.

Local transportation partnerships

- Connect transportation providers with service organizations.
- Address recurring barriers identified by survivors.

Shared learning

- Identify remaining gaps.
- Share findings that can inform future efforts.

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Human Trafficking Awareness and Action in Transportation

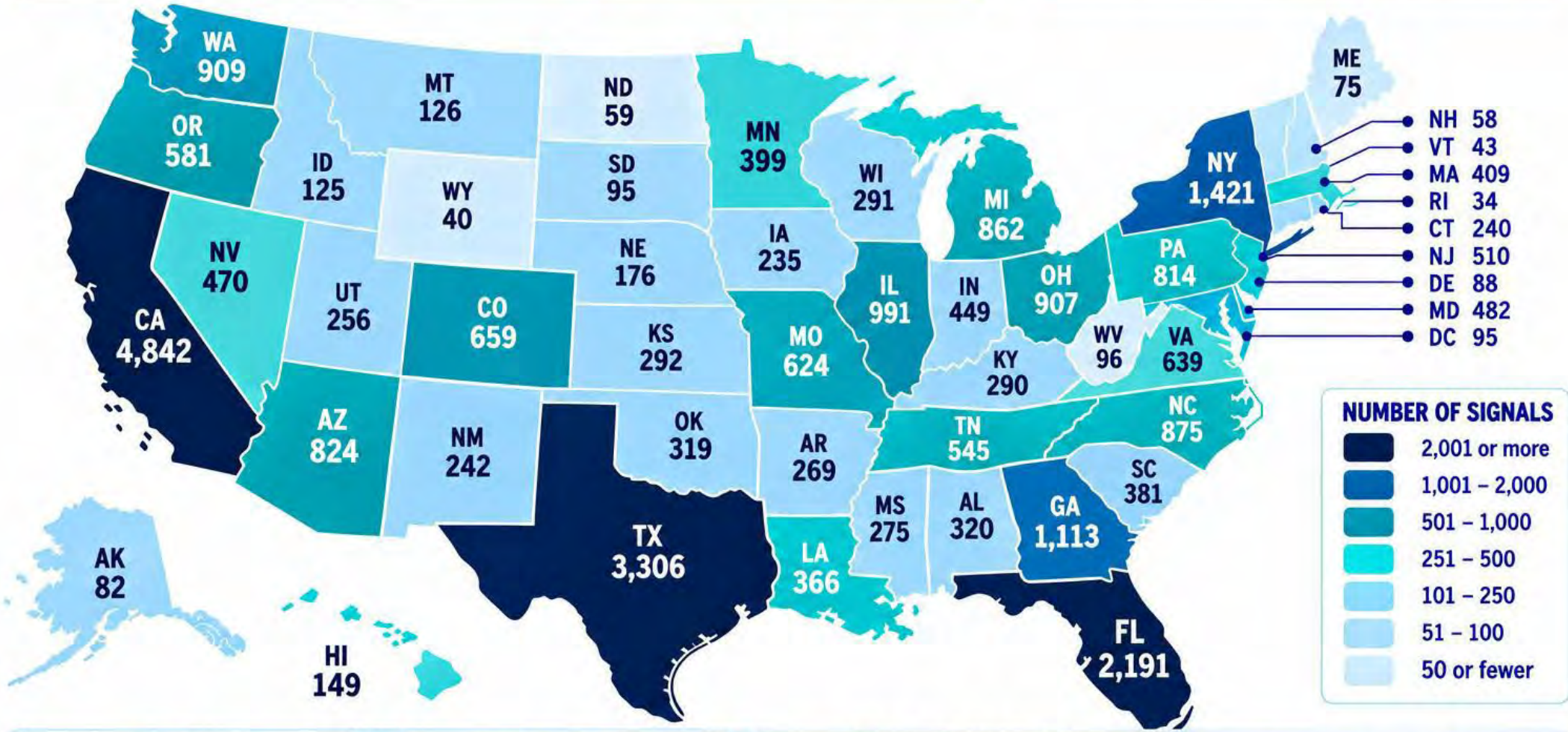
Partnering for Safer Communities and Stronger Connections



SIGNALS RELATED TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

BY STATE | November 6, 2025 – October 27, 2026

TOTAL SIGNALS RELATED TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING: 50,147



UNKNOWN LOCATION: 19,488

INTERNATIONAL LOCATION: 691

U.S. TERRITORIES

Puerto Rico 19 | U.S. Virgin Islands 6
Guam 2 | American Samoa 1
Northern Mariana Islands 1

ALL OTHER SIGNALS: 42,958

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Reporting Period: November 6, 2025 – October 27, 2026

Signals from the Transportation Industry

Transportation industry professionals contact the Hotline to report potential trafficking, suspicious, and other high risk situations.



14%

Airline/Airport Personnel

62

TOTAL CONTACTS



6%

Bus Industry Employee

27

TOTAL CONTACTS



9%

Commercial Transportation Employee

39

TOTAL CONTACTS



26%

Taxi / Rideshare Driver or Employee

111

TOTAL CONTACTS



40%

Truck Industry Employee

171

TOTAL CONTACTS



4%

Truck Stop Employee

18

TOTAL CONTACTS

428 | **TRANSPORTATION RELATED SIGNALER TYPES**

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Transportation Data Collection Workflow

How Transportation Information is Gathered During a Hotline Contact



1. Contact Received

A trained, live Advocate answers the call, chat, text, email, or web contact.



2. Assess & Gather Information

Advocate provides support, assesses for potential trafficking, and gathers key details from the individual.



3. Ask Transportation Questions (When Relevant)

When information suggests a connection to transportation, the Advocate asks voluntary questions to capture:



Venue/Industry

The industry or setting associated with potential trafficking (e.g., hospitality, agriculture, or other industries).



Site of Transportation

Transportation-related locations (e.g., airports, truck stops, rest areas, and other transit settings).



Mode of Transportation

Transportation methods identified (e.g., personal vehicles, commercial transportation, rideshare services, or air travel).



4. Document & Use

Information is recorded in the Hotline's system to support reporting, referrals, and trend analysis, as appropriate.



Key Takeaway: *Transportation questions are integrated into the existing intake process, asked when relevant, and are voluntary for the individual to answer.*

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Key Indicators and Trends

Transportation Fields Added in March 2026

New, voluntary intake fields capture transportation-related details shared during a Hotline contact, including the venue/industry, site of transportation, and mode of transportation.

POTENTIAL VICTIM INDICATORS BY STATE



VENUE/INDUSTRY

TOTAL 815

Hotel & Hospitality	207
Illicit Activities	182
Agriculture & Animal Husbandry	166
Escort Service	131
Personal Servitude	129

SITES OF TRANSPORTATION

TOTAL 205

Unknown Cars	52
Personal Cars	50
Airports (General & Commercial)	83
Rest Stops – Truck Stops	20

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

TOTAL 206

Personal Vehicles	74
Unknown Vehicles	62
Airports (General & Commercial)	54
Rideshare Vehicles	16

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Support and Resources When It's Needed Most

The National Human Trafficking Hotline provides 24/7, confidential support and can connect individuals to critical resources.



24/7 ACCESS

Connect with trained Advocates by phone, text, chat, web form, or email.



TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

Flight vouchers through Southwest Airlines to help individuals get to a safe location and reunite with their families.



CONNECTION TO CRITICAL SERVICES

Referrals to trusted service providers for safe housing, healthcare, legal support, mental health services, and other essential resources.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Southwest Airlines

Emergency Transportation Assistance

Through our partnership with Southwest Airlines, we can provide flight vouchers for individuals in crisis, helping them leave dangerous trafficking situations, reach safety, and reunite with their families and support systems.



STRANDED AND NEEDED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

A crisis contact reached out while stranded in a city away from home and needing urgent assistance to leave a trafficking situation. A flight voucher helped them get to a safe location.

SEEKING SAFETY FROM ABUSE

A crisis contact reported being abused and forced into trafficking and needed urgent assistance to leave their current situation. A flight voucher helped them return home to be with their family.

ESCAPED A PROLONGED TRAFFICKING SITUATION

A crisis contact reached out after escaping a trafficking situation and being prevented from returning home for several months. A flight voucher helped them get back to their home state and reconnect with support.

LEFT BEHIND AND AT RISK

A crisis contact reported being left behind after traveling to help a family member and then taken to a location where others were being exploited. After escaping and reaching out for help, a flight voucher allowed them to return to their family and a safe environment.

NEEDED URGENT TRANSPORTATION

A crisis contact with high indicators of trafficking reached out for help to leave a dangerous situation after their trafficker was going to be released from jail. A flight voucher provided urgent assistance to get to safety and reunite with their young child.

SAFE TRAVEL. BRIGHTER TOMORROWS.

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

World Cup Public Awareness Collaboration

The National Human Trafficking Hotline collaborated with Union Pacific, Clear Channel, and A21 on a digital billboard campaign during the World Cup to increase public awareness of human trafficking and provide actionable information to help individuals recognize and report.

25
MARKET CITIES

Digital billboards placed in 25 market cities across the United States.

415 MILLION
IMPRESSIONS

Reaching millions with critical messaging across the country.

$2.9 MILLION
MEDIA VALUE

Generating significant earned media value for greater impact.



Union Pacific® | Clear Channel® | A21®

For general inquiries or point of contact updates:
NHTH@compass.team

Tiffany Taylor, Executive Director Call Center Operations:
tm7216@compass.team

Drew Carter, Executive Vice President:
andrew.carter@compass.team

Call: 1-888-373-7888
Text: INFO or HELP to BeFree (233733)
Chat: humantraffickinghotline.org

Thank you

The National Human Trafficking Hotline is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through a financial assistance award totaling $7 million annually. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, ACF/HHS or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website: https://bit.ly/PolicyACF

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Operated by Compass



LUNCH BREAK



U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking



U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking

Sameer Jain
Member

UNITED STATES
ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Council Presentation to the U.S. Department of Transportation: Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking

Sameer Jain, Member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking

November 4, 2026

UNITED STATES
ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Survivor expertise informs federal action

The Council brings lived experience into federal anti-trafficking policy, programs, and implementation.

1

Mandate

Established under the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act to advise and make recommendations to federal agencies.

2

Perspective

Comprised of survivor leaders whose personal and professional experiences inform policy and programs at the federal level.

3

Contribution

Issues annual recommendations, engages PITF agencies, and promotes survivor-informed, trauma-informed federal action.



Intersection of transportation and the survivor experience

Transportation can increase risk or expand options

The same infrastructure may be used to recruit, move, monitor, or isolate a person, or to connect a person to safety and support.



Facilitation

Travel and transportation services can enable recruitment, movement, or exploitation across and within communities.

Control

Restricting mobility, transportation access, communication, or the ability to attend appointments can be a form of coercive control.

Access

Reliable, affordable transportation can increase access to medical care, services, employment, family, and other supports.

Opportunity

Well-designed protocols can offer safer ways to seek help, report concern, or connect with a trusted resource.

Transportation appears throughout the trafficking experience

Survivors reported using transportation during recruitment, exploitation, and exit or escape.

81% used transportation during recruitment

76% used transportation during exploitation

52% said transportation facilitated exit or escape

107 survivors surveyed

Transportation can facilitate trafficking, but it can also support a pathway to safety.

Source: 2021 National Outreach Survey on Transportation, as reported by U.S. DOT.

A system of touchpoints, not a single line of defense

Workers across modes and places may encounter different pieces of a situation. Their role should be supported by clear, safe, trauma-informed protocols.

Modes

- Airlines and airports
- Bus and motorcoach
- Passenger rail and transit
- Rideshare and taxi
- Commercial trucking

Places

- Gas stations
- Truck stops
- Highway welcome centers
- Rest areas
- Stations, terminals, and hubs

Functions

- Recognize concerning context
- Respond without escalating danger
- Use mode-specific reporting channels
- Connect to trained resources
- Document and refer appropriately

Give personnel specific actions that match their role, authority, location, and access to support.



Relevant past Council recommendations

2017–2022

Build awareness materials with survivors, diversity, and the full experience in view

Early recommendations focused on the quality of public awareness and training, then broadened the lens to mobility and access.

2017

Improve DOT materials

Reflect diverse survivor and trafficker backgrounds; cover all forms of trafficking; increase attention to labor trafficking; include survivor voices; share resources across PITF agencies.

2020

Continue survivor-informed outreach

Recognized DOT's transportation-stakeholder materials and reinforced diversity, survivor collaboration, cultural appropriateness, and trauma-informed campaigns.

2022

Recognize mobility restriction as force

Included restricting mobility and transportation access, travel, communication, medical care, and appointments among ways traffickers may exercise force or control.

Throughline: materials should reflect the diversity and complexity of trafficking, while transportation policy should recognize access and mobility as core survivor needs.

2024–2026

Move from awareness toward accessible help and operational readiness

Recent recommendations pair infrastructure and communications with transport-specific planning, training, and response capacity.

2024

Discreet emergency access

Pilot discreet, accessible, untraceable emergency phones in selected airports, bus stations, transportation hubs, and networks for people in distress who may not have phone access.

Design implication

A protective option must be findable, accessible, discreet, and safe to use under conditions of monitoring or control.

2026 (forthcoming)

Major-event readiness

Establish a DHS–DOT readiness plan; use targeted, just-in-time training; update awareness and reporting protocols; promote TLAHT resources across transportation modes; increase trained TSA availability at high-traffic hubs.

Design implication

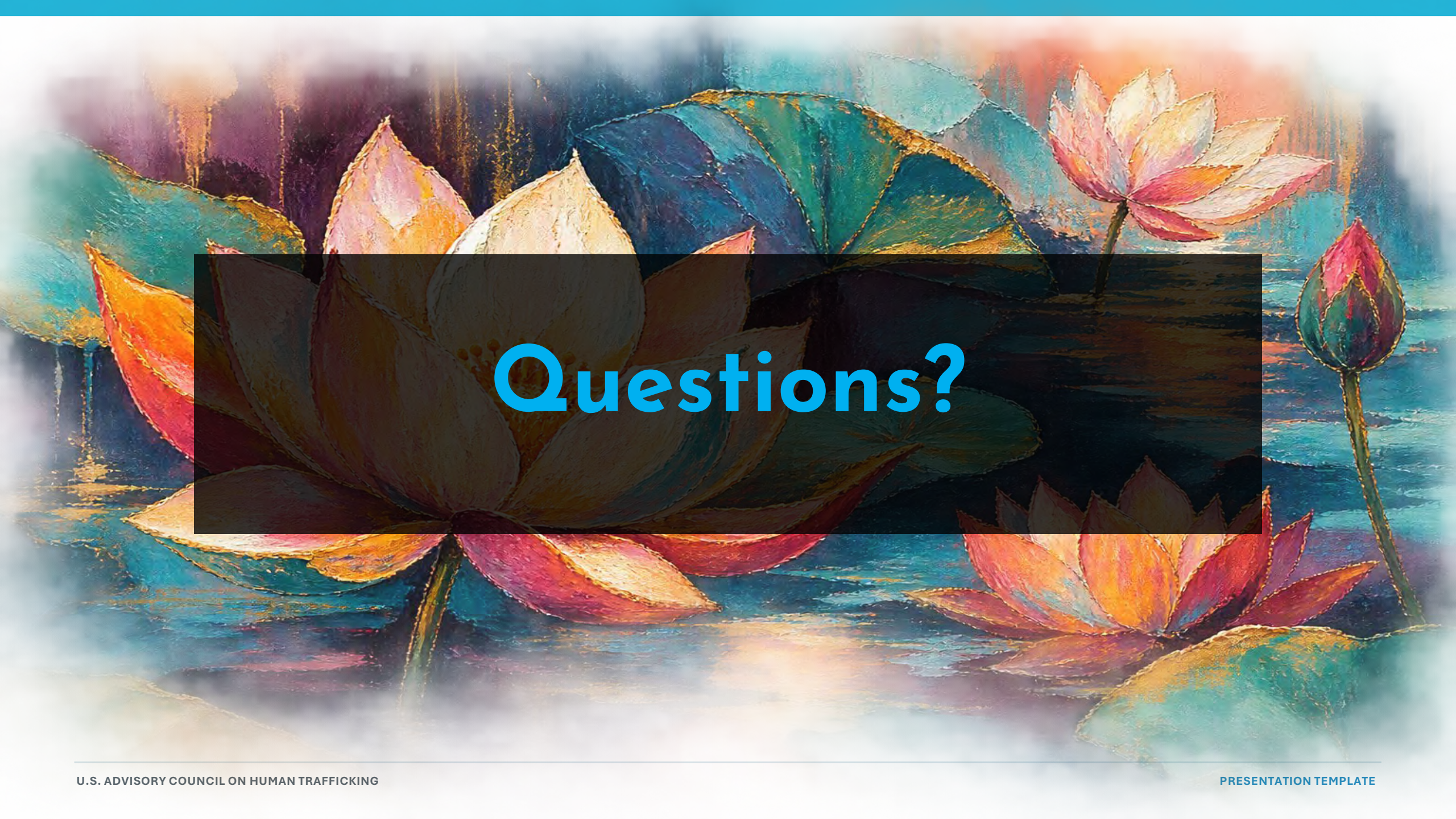
Preparedness should connect training, reporting, referral, staffing, and partner coordination before demand intensifies.

UNITED STATES ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

What the recommendations ask of transportation systems

Council recommendations point toward a coordinated, survivor-informed transportation ecosystem.

01	**Start with survivor expertise**	Engage survivors early in design, testing, dissemination, and evaluation.
02	**Protect access and autonomy**	Treat transportation access as part of safety, service delivery, recovery, and stability.
03	**Equip the workforce for safe action**	Use role- and mode-specific guidance with clear reporting, referral, and escalation options.
04	**Design for use under conditions of control**	Provide discreet, accessible options that account for monitoring and barriers to help.
05	**Connect prevention and response**	Align awareness, infrastructure, training, reporting, referral, services, and coordination.


Questions?

UNITED STATES
ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

THANK YOU

Sameer Jain, Council Member,
sameerjain.usa@gmail.com



Research Panel: Evidence, Practice & Knowledge Gaps



Evidence, Practice, & Knowledge Gaps Panel: Meet the Moderator

Jodi Godfrey
Senior Research Associate
Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida

Meet the Panelists



Megan Lundstrom
Chief Executive Officer
Polaris



Trayce Hockstad
Law & Policy Analyst
Transportation Policy Research Center
University of Alabama



Kezban Yagci Sokat
Associate Professor of Business Analytics and Research Associate
San Jose State University

RESEARCH PANEL

EVIDENCE, PRACTICE & KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Megan Lundstrom, CEO



RESEARCH PANEL

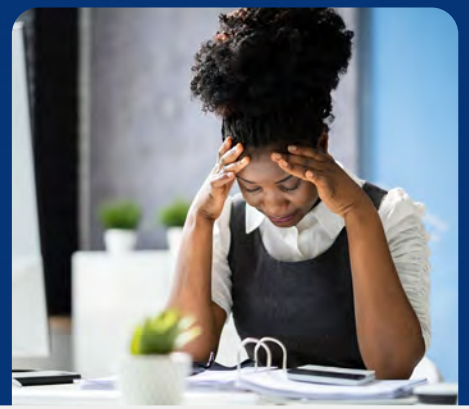
UNDERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Vulnerability



Recruitment



Control

Preexisting vulnerability → exploitation of dependency → barriers to leaving and revictimization

Source: Polaris Project, 2026

RESEARCH PANEL

THE EXPLOITATION CONTINUUM







BEFORE:
Prevention

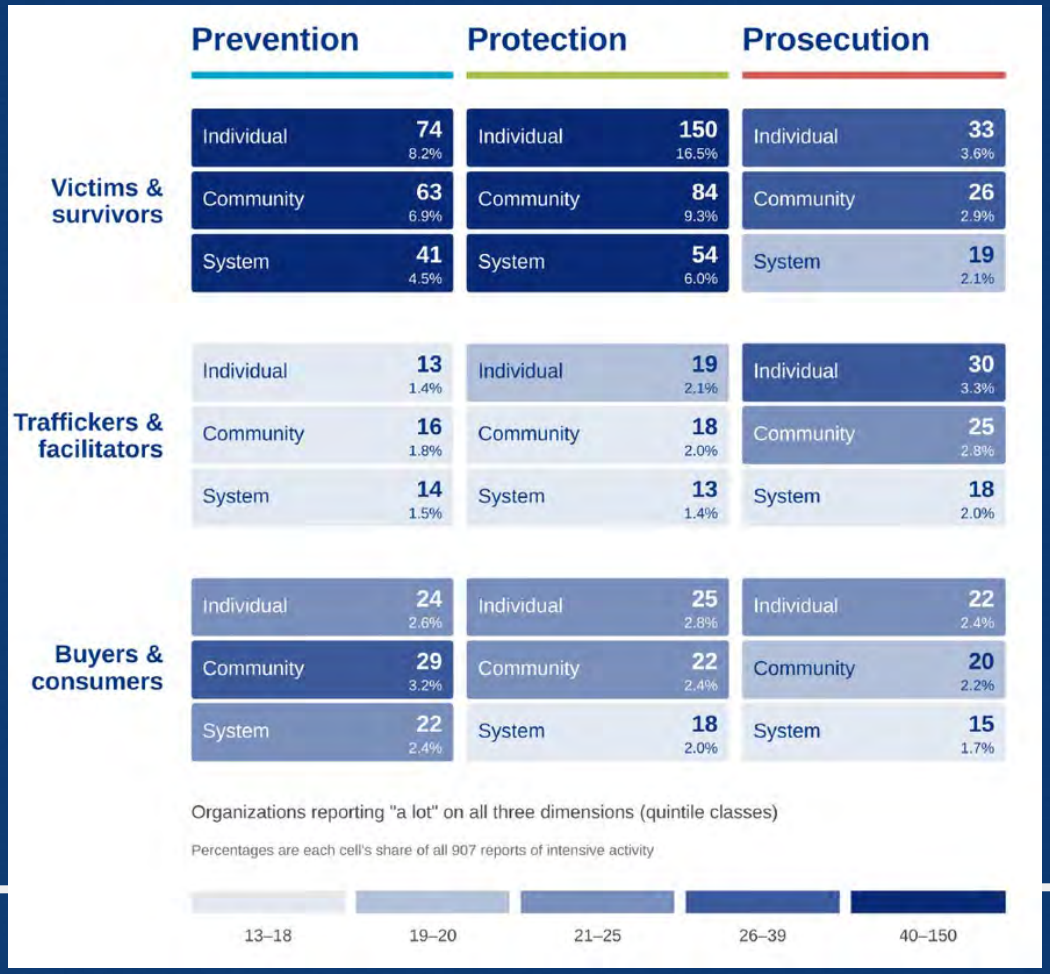
DURING:
Protection

AFTER:
Prosperity

Source: Polaris Project, 2026

RESEARCH PANEL

PREVENTION



Source: Polaris Project, 2026

RESEARCH PANEL

PROTECTION



A Pathway to Safety and Recovery

245

Rideshare vouchers, 2020-2024

487

Flights, 2023-2025

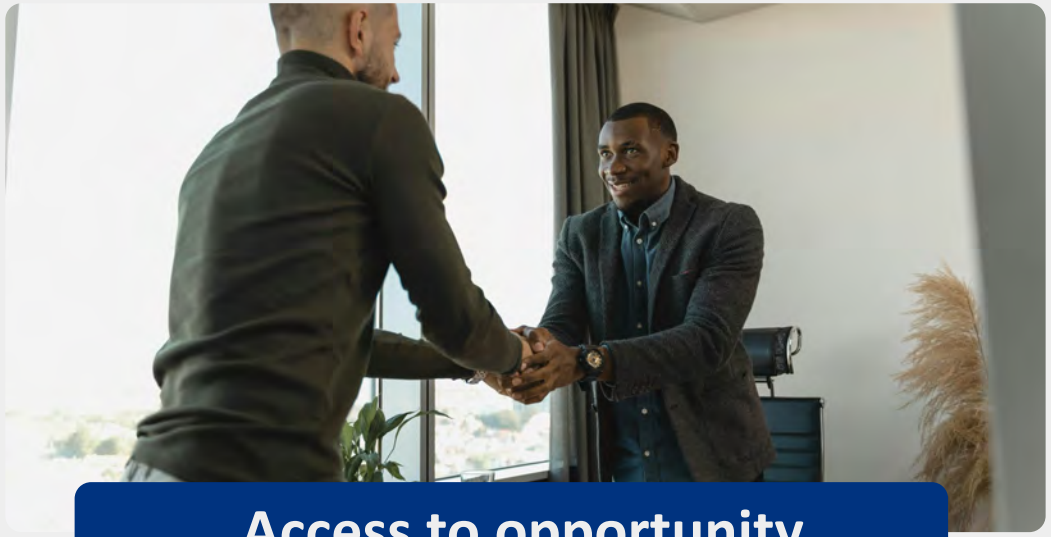
65%

Rideshare requests fulfilled

Source: Polaris Project, 2026

RESEARCH PANEL

PROSPERITY



Access to opportunity



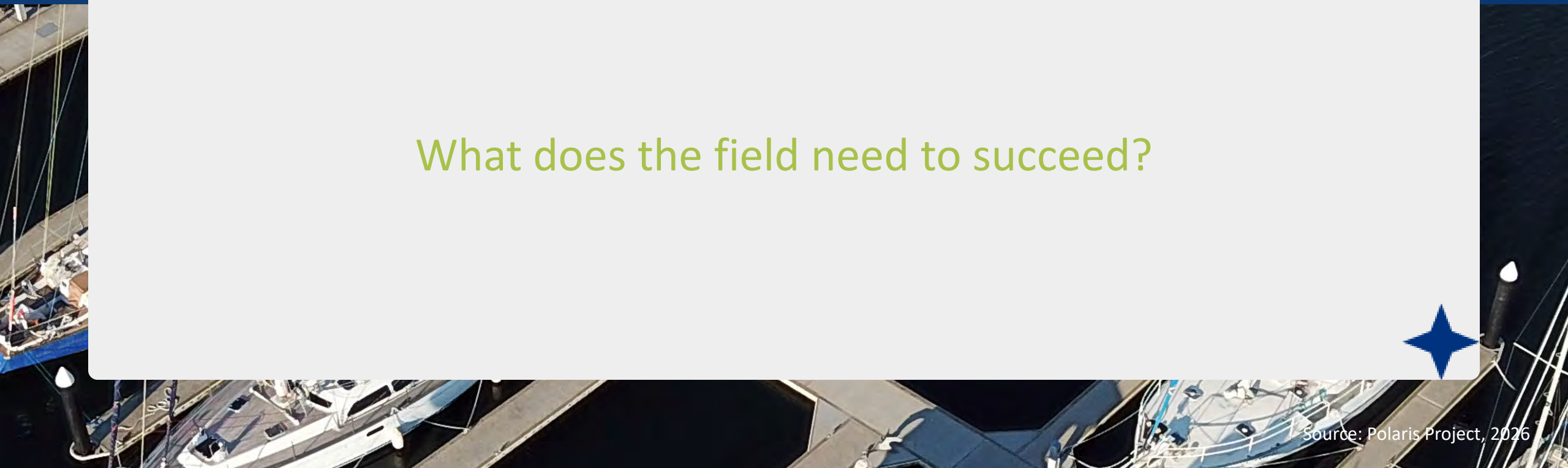
Meaure what matters

Source: Polaris Project, 2026

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

What do survivors need to thrive?

What does the field need to succeed?

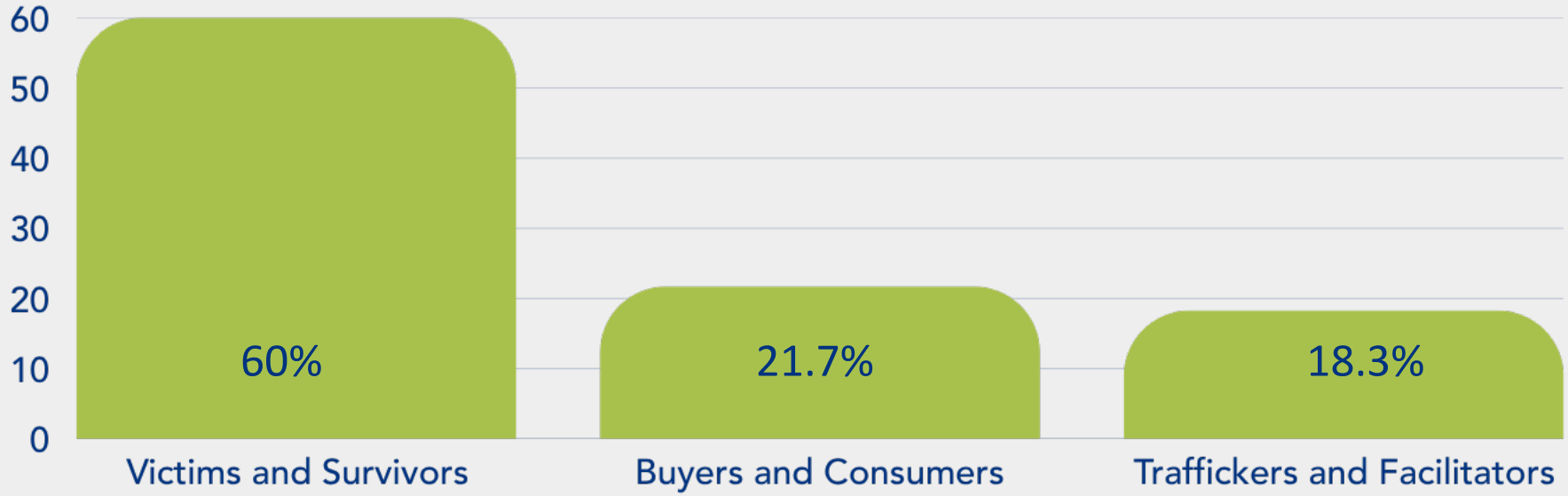


Source: Polaris Project, 2026

RESEARCH PANEL

INTERVENTIONS

Distribution of reported intensive intervention activity



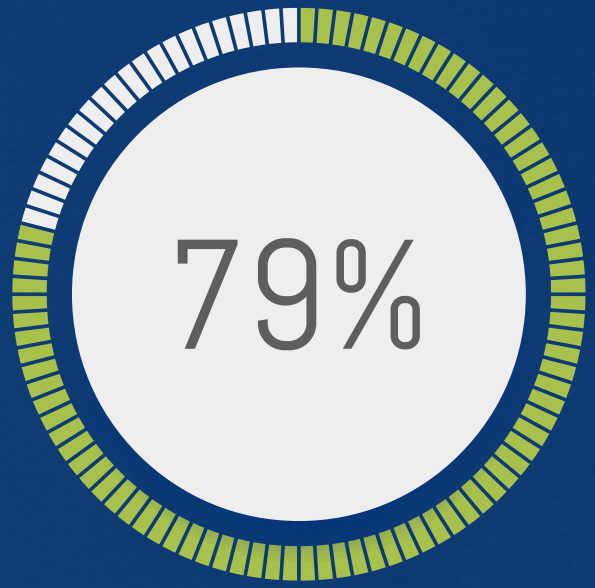
Disrupting human trafficking requires interventions directed at traffickers, facilitators, consumers, and the systems that enable exploitation.

Source: Polaris Project, 2026

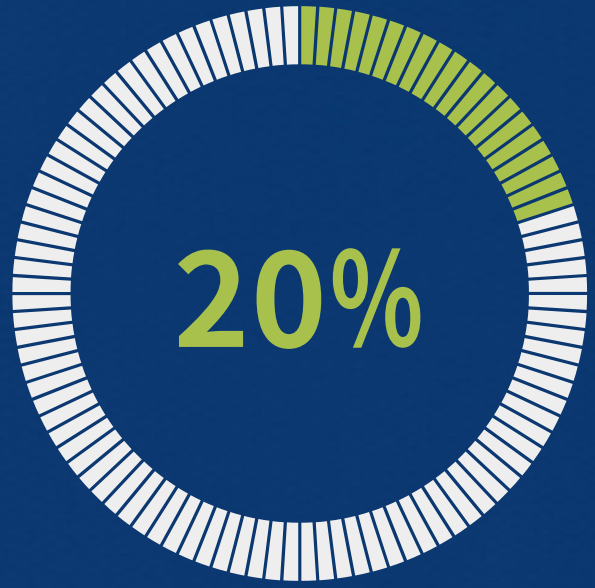
RESEARCH PANEL

COORDINATED ACTION

The field has relationships, but lacks infrastructure.
Institutions need governance, shared data, and decision-making mechanisms.



Report regular cross-system convenings



Agree clear coordination mechanisms exist

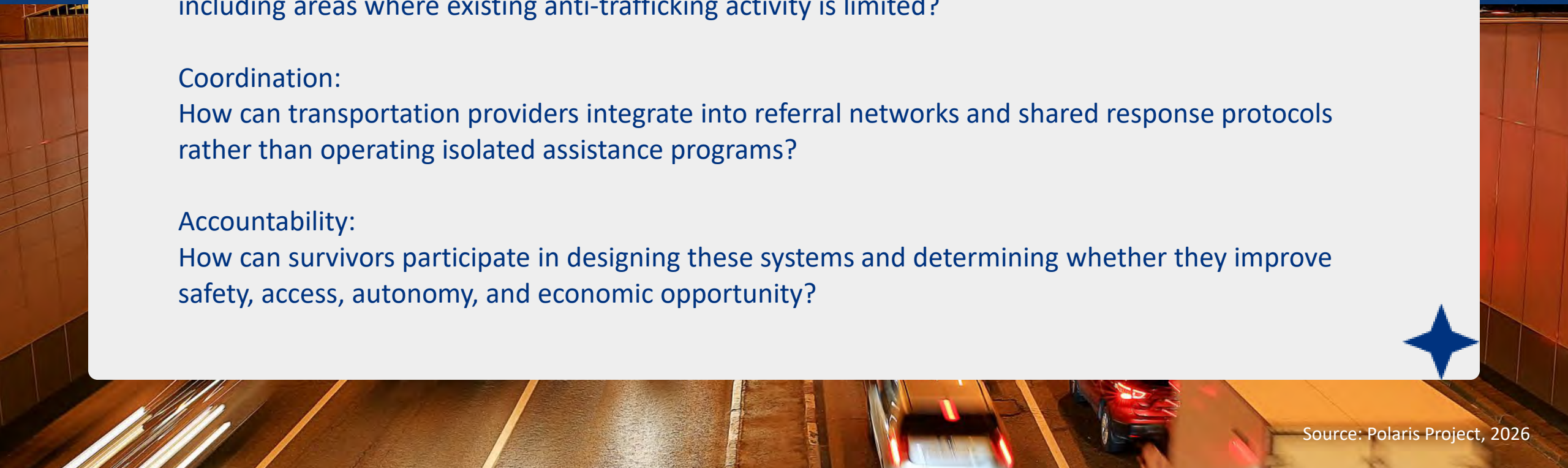
Source: Polaris Project, 2026

SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP

Coverage:
Where can transportation institutions intervene across Prevention, Protection, and Prosperity, including areas where existing anti-trafficking activity is limited?

Coordination:
How can transportation providers integrate into referral networks and shared response protocols rather than operating isolated assistance programs?

Accountability:
How can survivors participate in designing these systems and determining whether they improve safety, access, autonomy, and economic opportunity?



Source: Polaris Project, 2026

RESEARCH PANEL



CONTACT US

www.polarisproject.org



Trafficking Laws & Transportation:

Insights from the Legal Landscape

Trayce Hockstad, J.D., M.A.
Associate Director of Policy Research
Alabama Transportation Institute

State Law Overview

All states now have at least some legislation addressing and prohibiting human trafficking.

Business Entity Liability: Approximately 45 states have enacted some form of statutory business entity liability to address entities that knowingly commercially profit from trafficking activity.

(e.g. Rhode Island General Laws § 11-67.1-8)

Training: At least 43 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws to require certain public agencies and/or private businesses to train their staff to appropriately recognize, report or respond to human trafficking crimes and victims. Common professions required to receive trafficking training include police and first responders, judicial officials, school employees, medical professionals and social services workers. In addition, at least six states have expanded those training requirements to the private sector.

(e.g. West Virginia Code § 30-29-3 [authorized]; New Jersey Revised Statute § 2C:13-12 [mandatory])

Hotline Posting: 36 states requiring the posting of the National Human Trafficking Hotline number at transportation-related locations.

(Arkansas Code Annotated § 12-19-102)

Regulatory Schematic

Statutes: Enforceable through government action or private litigation where authorized. Penalties may include criminal sanctions, civil fines, and other statutory remedies.

Regulations: Enforceable by agencies and, where authorized, courts. Consequences may include administrative fines, license revocation, or other sanctions permitted by law.

Contracts: Enforceable through contractual remedies, including damages, termination, or other agreed-upon consequences.

Organizational policies: Primarily enforceable internally through disciplinary procedures, employment decisions, or organizational oversight. In some circumstances, policies may create enforceable contractual obligations.

Voluntary commitments: Primarily enforced through reputational pressure, industry accountability, or loss of voluntary certification. Legal consequences may arise if commitments become contractual promises or materially misleading representations.

Industry Efforts

Would you like to receive human trafficking training in the following areas? Select all that apply.

	Aviation	Roadway	Railway	Maritime	Transit	Law Enforcement	Service Provider	Academia	Other Support Industry
How to identify human trafficking victims	84%	85%	88%	94%	83%	88%	53%	89%	97%
Human trafficking indicators	80%	81%	90%	76%	75%	90%	47%	74%	94%
Human trafficking laws	55%	48%	82%	71%	54%	77%	71%	54%	50%
Indigenous and tribal issues in human trafficking	44%	40%	58%	41%	38%	52%	100%	37%	63%
Learn about labor trafficking	60%	61%	76%	76%	64%	72%	53%	51%	63%
Learn about sex trafficking	60%	61%	77%	71%	63%	73%	47%	54%	63%
Living and working conditions considered abusive	50%	54%	55%	59%	61%	52%	59%	54%	47%
Misconceptions of human trafficking	58%	63%	71%	65%	67%	66%	59%	51%	78%
Protocols on reporting alleged human trafficking	71%	69%	77%	88%	67%	73%	65%	71%	91%
Total Respondents	1650	825	185*	17	248	313	17	35	32

QID_162 by Group Total Respondents: 3137*

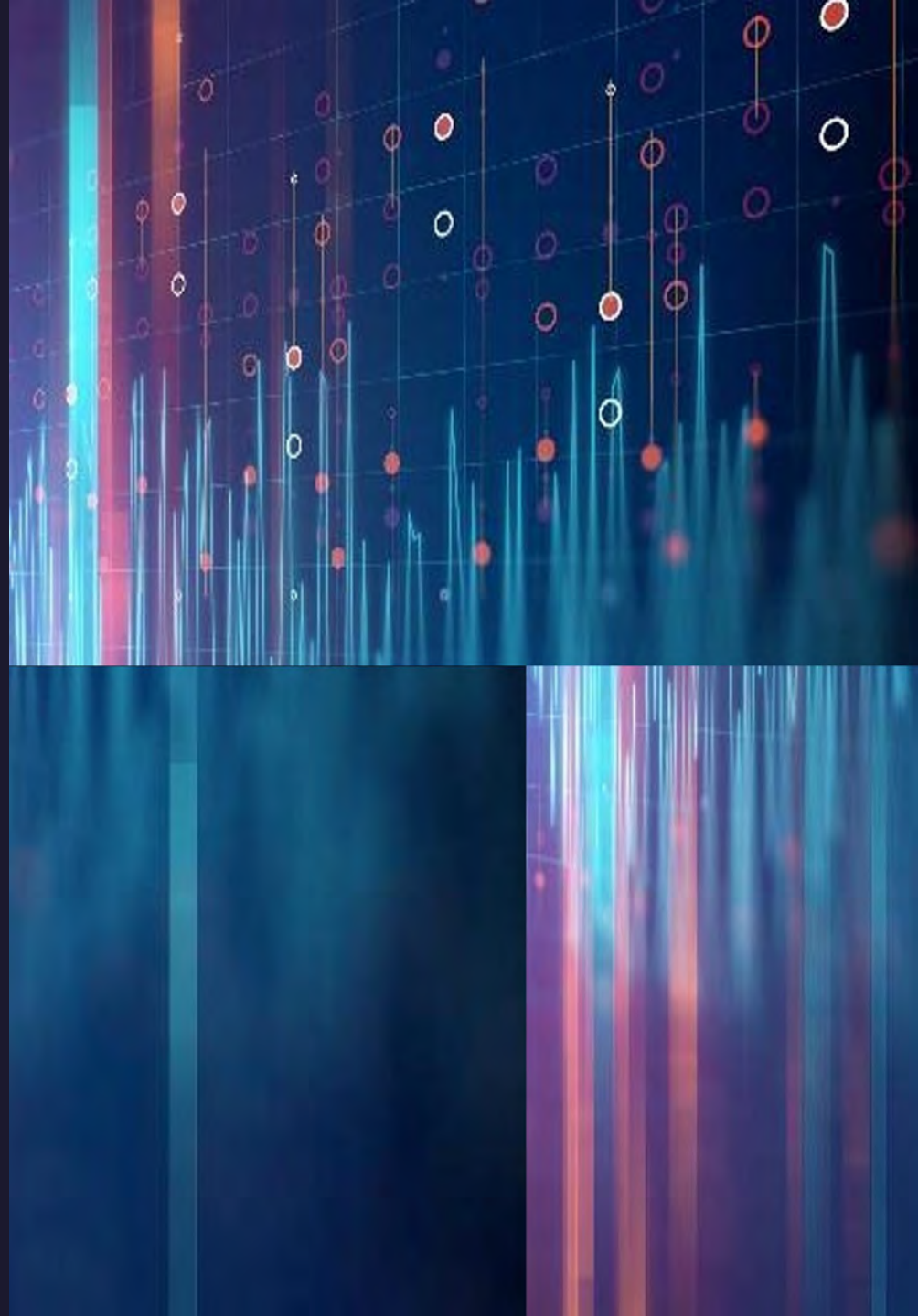
Note: Statistics include responses from respondents in multi modes and may not represent any larger population segment. *The total number of respondents equals 3137; however, 185 Amtrak PD respondents are listed under Railway and in Law Enforcement.
Source: United Against Slavery 2021 National Outreach Survey for Transportation (NOST)

Reporting and Accountability

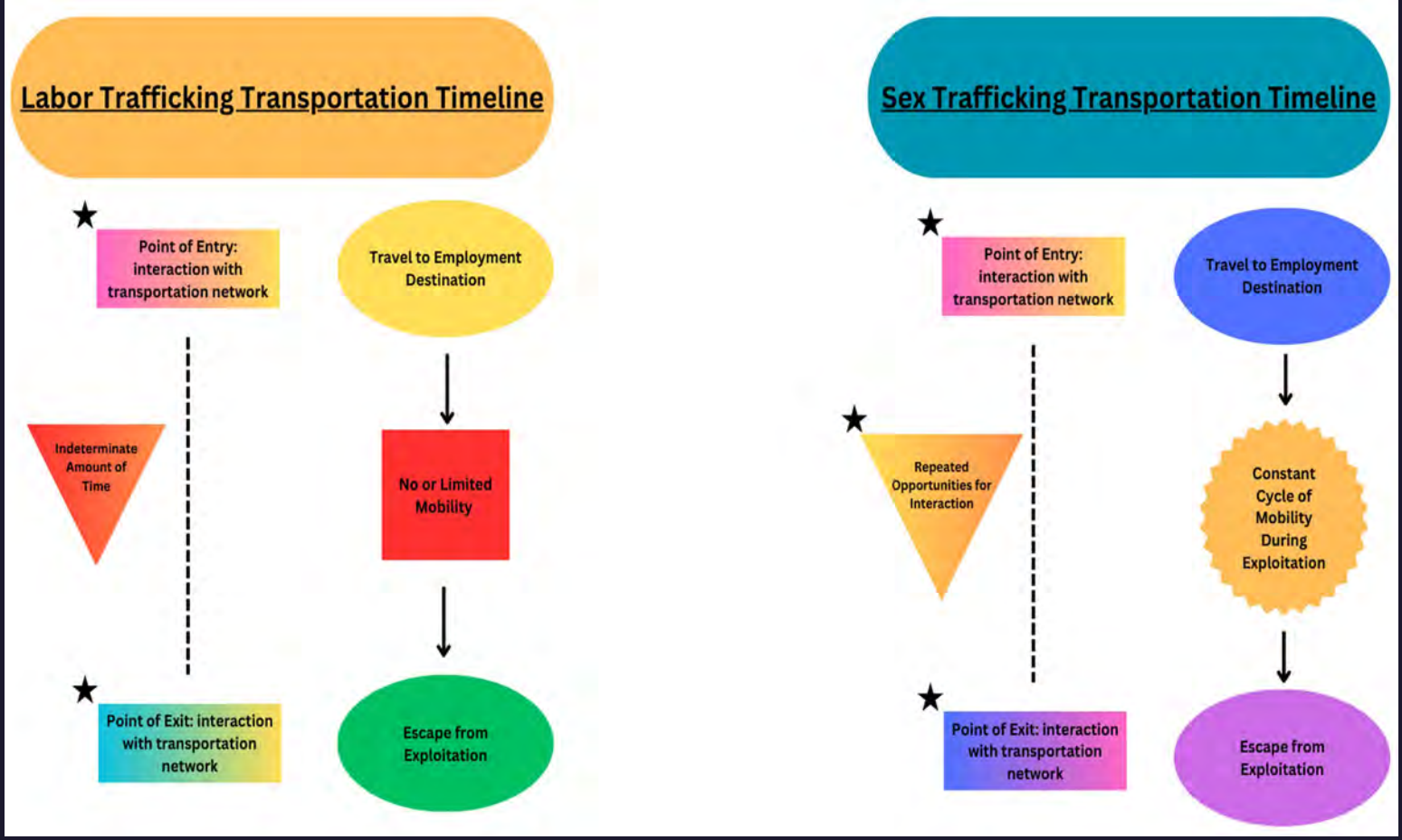
Several states expressly protect individuals who report suspected human trafficking in good faith, even if an investigation ultimately determines that trafficking did not occur. These protections generally take the form of civil immunity, criminal immunity, or protection against employer retaliation.

The important legal distinction is between a good-faith report that turns out to be incorrect and a report made knowingly falsely, maliciously, or with reckless disregard for the truth.

Minnesota	Minn. Stat. § 157.177, subd. 4	Hotel and motel operators and employees acting in good faith are immune from civil liability for reporting suspected sex trafficking.
Iowa	Iowa Code § 80.45A(6)	Lodging employees acting in good faith are immune from civil liability for reporting suspected human trafficking to law enforcement.
Kentucky	Ky. Rev. Stat. § 336.075(2)	Provides civil and criminal immunity for good-faith reports made with reasonable cause under the statute's labor-cabinet reporting provisions.



The Role of Transportation in Labor Trafficking Cases



1

Breaking a Cycle

Sahebdin v. Khelawan, trafficker was stopped by TSA for traveling with victim's passport. He was coerced into exculpating her. Years passed before he had another chance to escape forced servitude.





2

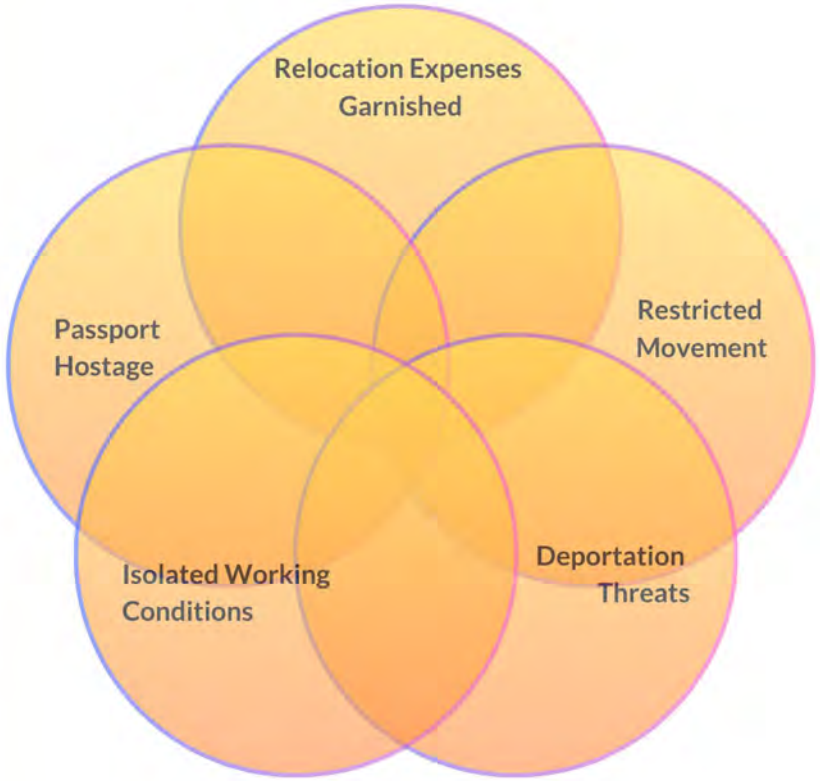
Risking Mobility

Barrett v. State, runaway child picked up by bartender leaving shift. She refused to return home and was turned over to detectives.

Identifying the Issue

MOBILITY TRENDS IN TRAFFICKING CASES

Indications of illegal activity



3

Understanding the Way Out

Hernandez v. Attisha, after years of captivity a victim finally escaped and sued her employer for unpaid wages. The court held no statute of limitations applied to her claims given her total isolation during exploitation.





4

Disrupting the Process

Reyes-Trujillo, a bus crash proved fatal for 6 H-2A visa workers . The USDOT fined the defendants $22,000 in connection with the crash, and evidence of the defendants' activities captured through this interaction appeared later in a case brought by trafficking victims against the same defendants.

5

Changing the Story

Mazengo v. Mzengi, one of the defendant's customers sent a taxi to the defendants' home so that Ms. Mazengo could escape. a federal court awarded a victim $1,059,348.79 in damages.



Closing Policy Gaps

Training

Mandate Human Trafficking Training for Professionals

Tailor Training to Fit the Target Industry

Ensure a Plan for Funding

Conduct Evaluations of Training

Include Training Targeting Labor Trafficking

Funding

Long-term, sustainable financial support

Educate agencies/partners about federal funding opportunities for startup/project costs

Victim Assistance (TSRA)

Capitalize on Opportunities for Disruption

Information Dissemination

Support through the Legal Process

Thank you

Trayce Hockstad

tahockstad@ua.edu



SJSU | LUCAS COLLEGE AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MTI MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

Transportation and Human Trafficking: Recent Data and Research

Kezban Yagci Sokat, PhD

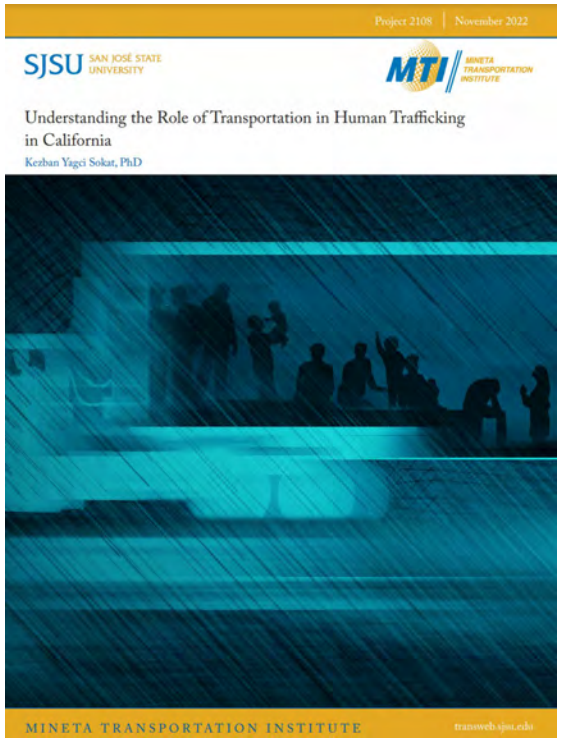
Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking Public Hearing

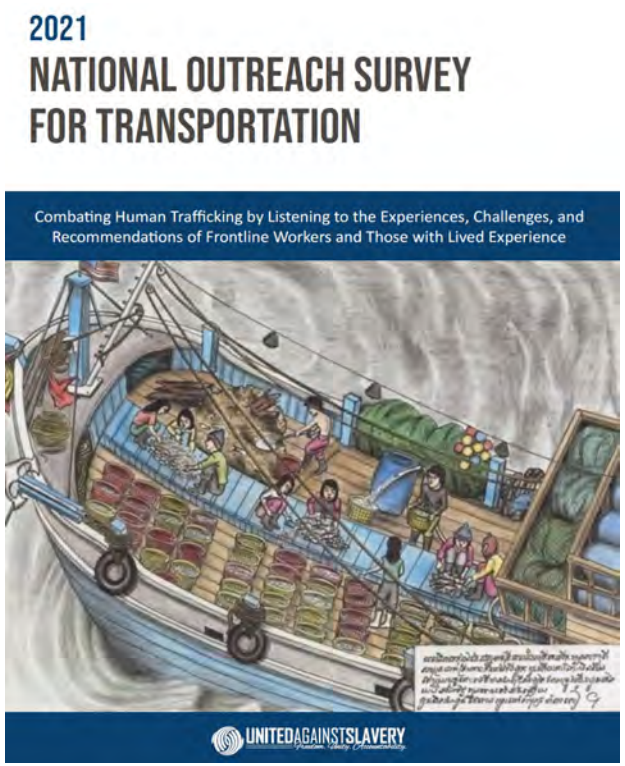
Research Panel: Evidence, Practice, and Knowledge Gaps

November 4, 2026

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

Thank You!







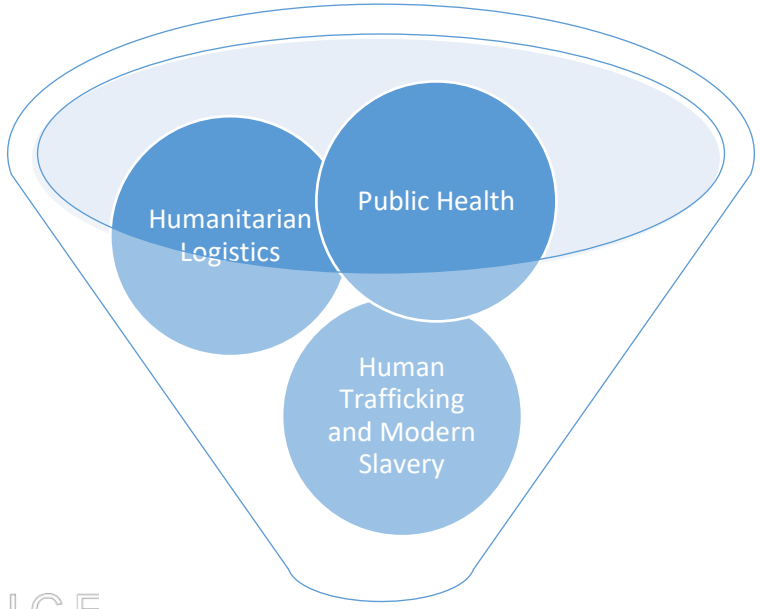


SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Thanks to U.S. Department of Transportation for various funding and support. USDOT Combating Human Trafficking in Transportation Impact Award, #27231 & United States Department of Transportation (Agency ID/Contract number 69A3551747127. California State University Transportation Consortium, 22-1100-6761 (SB1 Year 7-9), San Jóse State University Research Foundation for RSCA Grant support.

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

Who Am I?



Managerial Insights

Policy intervention

Decision Support Tools

Copyrights reserved by
Kezban Yagci Sokat

Role of Transportation in Human Trafficking

Some of the roles listed include

- transporting victims,
- recruiting victims,
- allowing victims exit through either serving as safe place or identifying victims,
- isolating and controlling victims,
- preventing human trafficking,
- supporting victim/survivor healing through access to services and collecting information.

"transportation personnel are eyes and ears of the community"

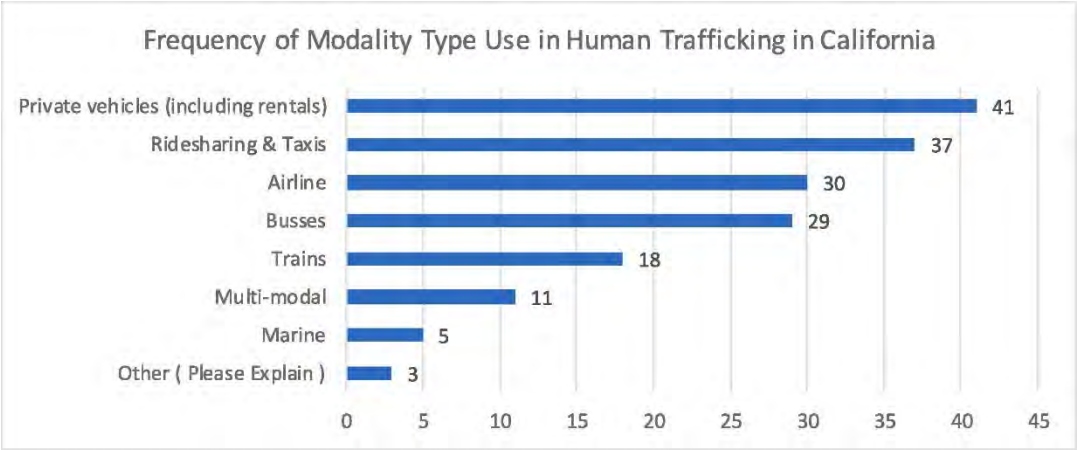
They have the potential to recognize and stop or prevent human trafficking. Checkpoints, rest stops, routine traffic stops. As a survivor, I had contact with law enforcement, Department of Agriculture, DOT, and highway patrol and none of them recognized me as being in a trafficking situation. Those were 5 opportunities for rescue. (Survey Respondent 18)

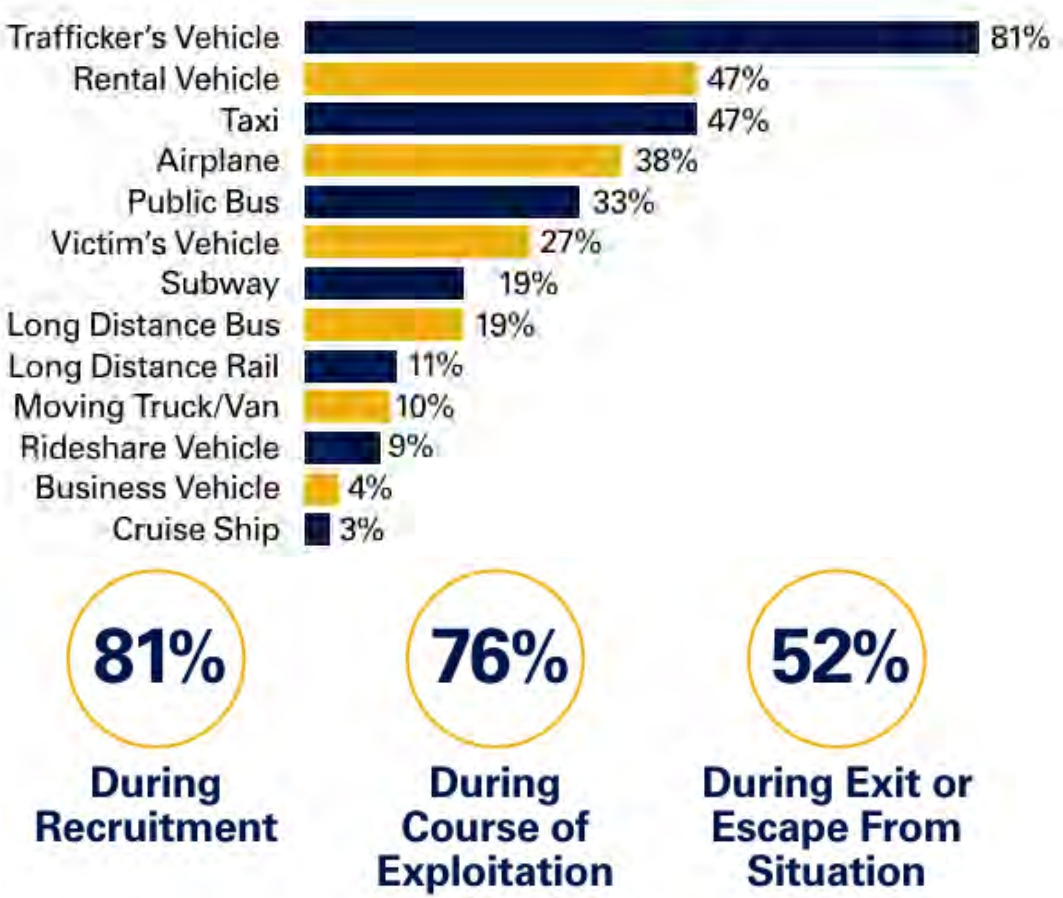
Yagci Sokat, K. (2022) Understanding the Role of Transportation in Human Trafficking in California" *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 15, 100673*

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

Transportation Use





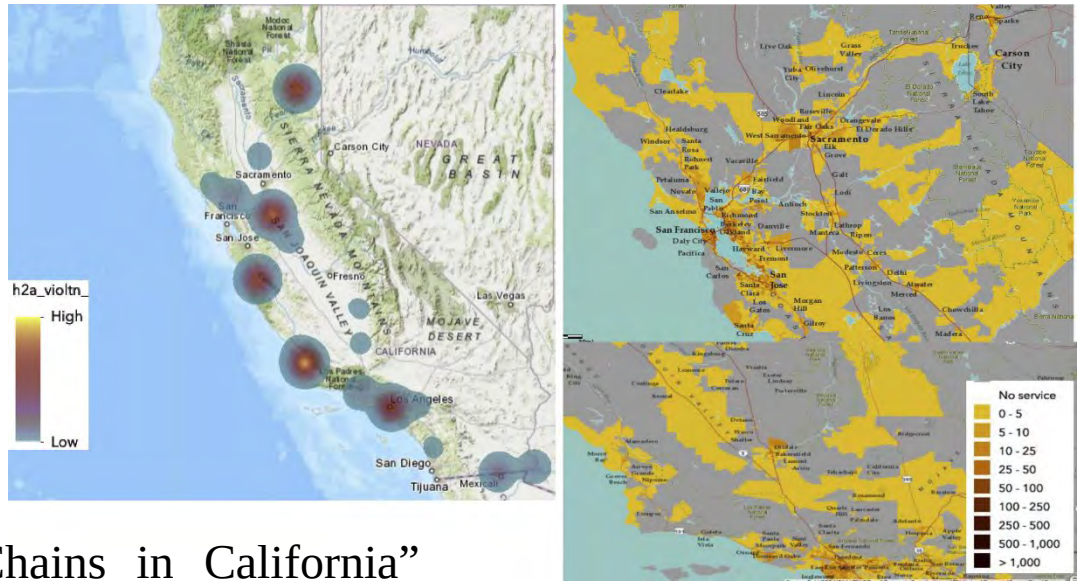


TAT 2018, UN Migration, NOST, 2021, Yagci Sokat (2022)

Copyrights reserved by
Kezban Yagci Sokat

Addressing Forced Labor in Supply Chains in California

- Analysis of forced labor in supply chains in California
- Examining the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act
- Transportation accessibility and safety analysis (wage and hourly violations)



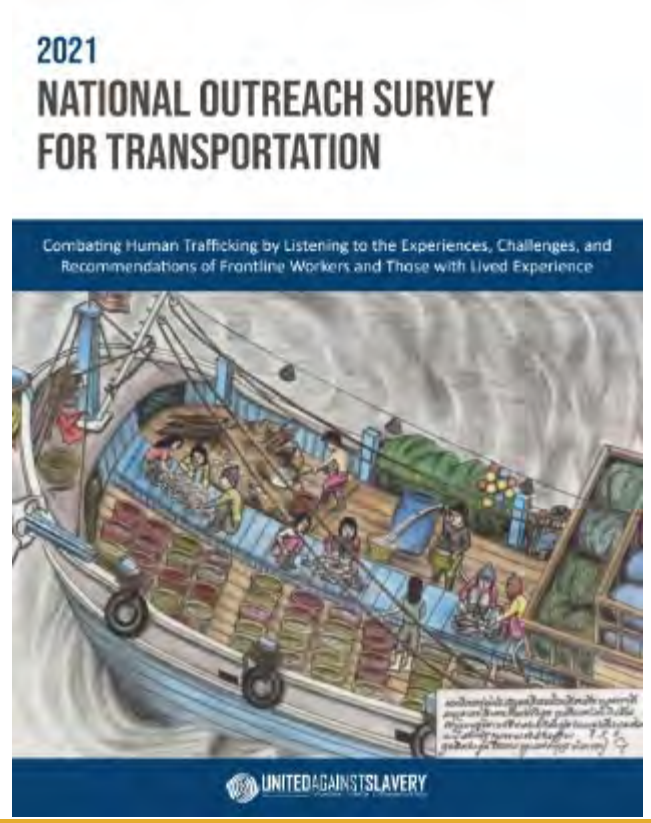
Yagci Sokat, K. (2022) "Addressing Forced Labor in Supply Chains in California" *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 16C, 100735*

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

National Outreach Survey for Transportation (NOST)

- **Key findings include:**
- Nearly one-third of 2,792 respondents reported mandatory human trafficking training at their place of employment, while 23% were unsure.
- **85%** of 3,870 respondents have **never** reported signs of human trafficking. This includes 62% of 341 law enforcement, 87% of 2,002 aviation workers, 92% of 266 transit workers, 97% of 935 roadway workers, and 47% of the remaining 326 respondents.
- **60%** of 923 transportation workers stated that their agency has an established protocol for reporting suspected human trafficking.
- Among 3,551 respondents, **48%** indicated they had concerns about misidentifying signs of human trafficking.
- During their exploitation, **65%** of 158 survivors never saw a hotline number posted. In particular, 32% of 95 trafficking survivors never saw human trafficking awareness information in a restroom, and 23% said they rarely saw such information as they moved from location to location.
- 60% of 44 victim service providers say obtaining transportation services for their clients is difficult

NOST, 2021



Combating Human Trafficking at Major Events through Transportation

- How do major events impact human trafficking risks in transportation systems, and what strategies can be implemented to effectively combat human trafficking during such events?
  - Multi-method: Focus group & case analysis
  - “Be ready for organized chaos”

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

SOUTH BAY
Coalition to End Human Trafficking
Spreading the seeds of hope

Yagci Sokat, K. Mandhanya, R. Cheung, C., Greer, B. Combating human trafficking at major events through transportation. (Accepted)

CSUTC

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

Transit Monitoring

Transit monitoring strategy to identify and intercept potential HT victims while they are in transit

Aim: How can LJI expand transit monitoring?

Contribution:

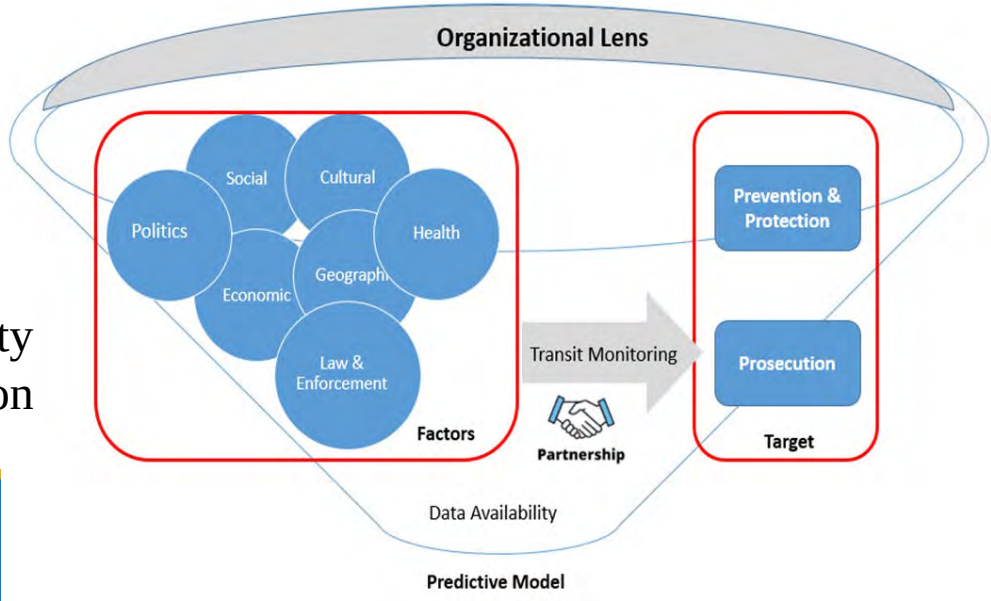
-Incorporate Palermo Protocols: prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnership

-Data-driven capacity expansion strategies for transit monitoring with multi-target metric

-Impact of anti-trafficking operations (prevention and prosecution)

-Cost of Intervention



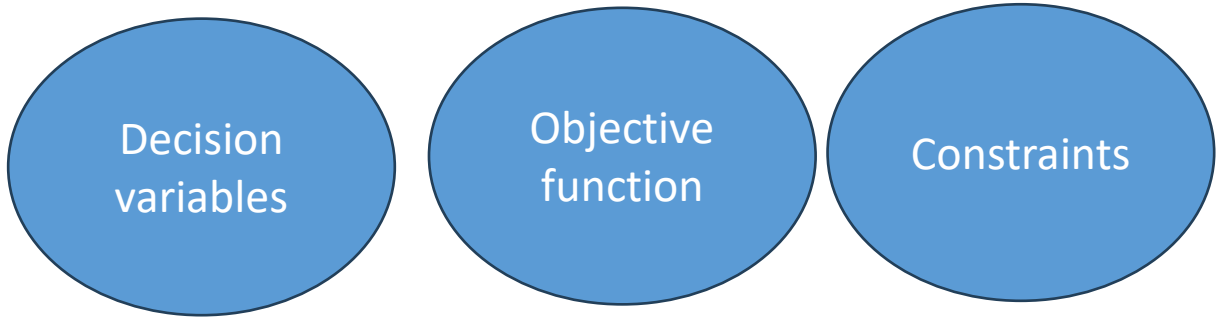


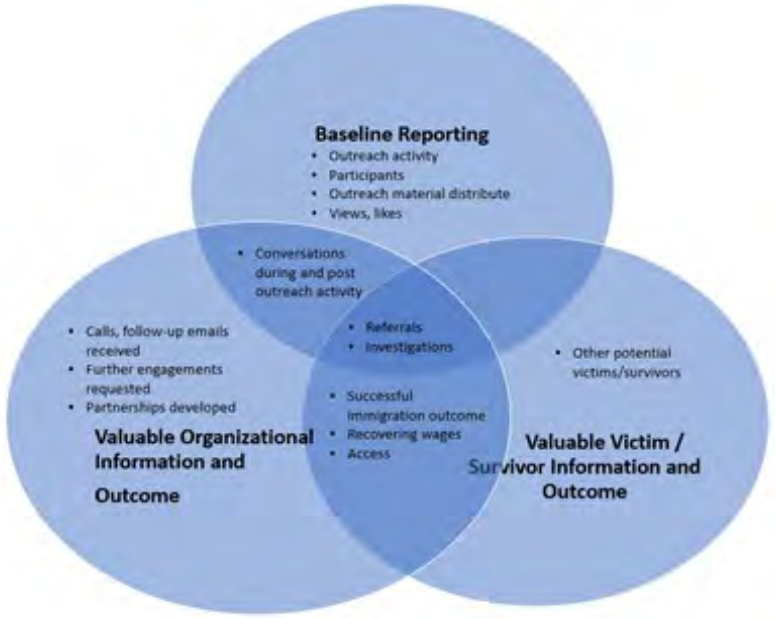
Yagci Sokat, K., Chi, M*., Hudlow, J. (2024) "Transit Monitoring Capacity Expansion: Analytics for Combatting Human Trafficking" Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 24, 101032

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

Evaluation

- Definition of Success for Outreach
- How to Measure the Success
- Factors Impacting the Success





Yagci Sokat, K. Garrido, M.K. “Strategies for Successful Outreach”

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

Gaps and Opportunities

Evidence gap	What is missing	Committee elements
Comparable measurement	Shared definitions, standardized fields, clear denominators, and documentation of missing data	Policies & Reporting; Research, Data & Information-Sharing
Implementation evidence	Whether funding, training, protocols, and partnerships reach intended users and operate as designed	Leadership & Funding; Partnerships; Training & Awareness
Survivor-centered outcomes	Longitudinal evidence on safety, service access, well-being, and whether interventions reduce harm	Victim & Survivor Support; Research, Data & Information-Sharing

Copyrights reserved by
Kezban Yagci Sokat

References

- Yagci Sokat, K. (2022) “Addressing Forced Labor in Supply Chains in California” *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 16C, 100735* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2022.100673
- Yagci Sokat, K. (2022) “Understanding the Role of Transportation in Human Trafficking in California” *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 15, 100673* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2022.100673
- Hockstad, T., & Yagci Sokat, K. (2025). A Legal Analysis of Labor Trafficking Cases with a Transportation Lens. Transportation Research Record, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/03611981251362159
- Yagci Sokat, K., Besiou, M. “Anti-trafficking and Humanitarian Operations: Transferring Learnings for a Better World” Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management, DOI:10.1108/JHLSCM-08-2023-0066
- Auguste, M., Yagci Sokat, K., Wigle, C., Baglin, C. “Reporting on Human Trafficking Crimes: A National Transportation Survey” *Journal of Transportation Security, 17, 7 (2024).* https://doi.org/10.1007/s12198-024-00277-5
- Yagci Sokat, K., Chi, M*., Hudlow, J. “Transit Monitoring Capacity Expansion: Analytics for Combatting Human Trafficking” *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives,* 24, 101032 10.1016/j.trip.2024.101032
- Yagci Sokat, K., Auguste, M., Wigle, C., Baglin, C. (2024) “Forced Labor and Transportation: Multi- disciplinary Perspectives” *Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives,* 23C, 100999 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trip.2023.100999
- Yagci Sokat, K. Combating Human Trafficking at Major Events Through Transportation https://transweb.sjsu.edu/csutc/research/utc/Combating-Human-Trafficking-Major-Events-through-Transportation

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

References

- Wigle, C., & Baglin, C. (Eds.). (2023). *National Outreach Survey for Transportation (NOST) 2021: Combating Human Trafficking by Listening to the Experiences, Challenges, and Recommendations of Frontline Workers and Those with Lived Experience*. United Against Slavery. https://www.wtsinternational.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/NOST%202021%20Human%20Trafficking%20Final%20Report.pdf
- USDOT Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking (2024 and 2019) Combating Human Trafficking in the Transportation Industry

https://www.transportation.gov/stop-human-trafficking/dot-advisory-committee-human-trafficking-2024-report

https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/mission/administrations/office-policy/343931/acht-final-report-section-508-compliant.pdf

- Polaris (2018) On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY https://polarisproject.org/on-ramps-intersections-and-exit-routes/

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat

Questions

SJSU | LUCAS COLLEGE AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MTI MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

THANK YOU!

For inquires, please feel free to contact at

kezban.yagcisokat@sjsu.edu

Copyrights reserved by Kezban Yagci Sokat



BREAK



Discussion:
Best Practices & Potential Gaps



Next Steps & Closing