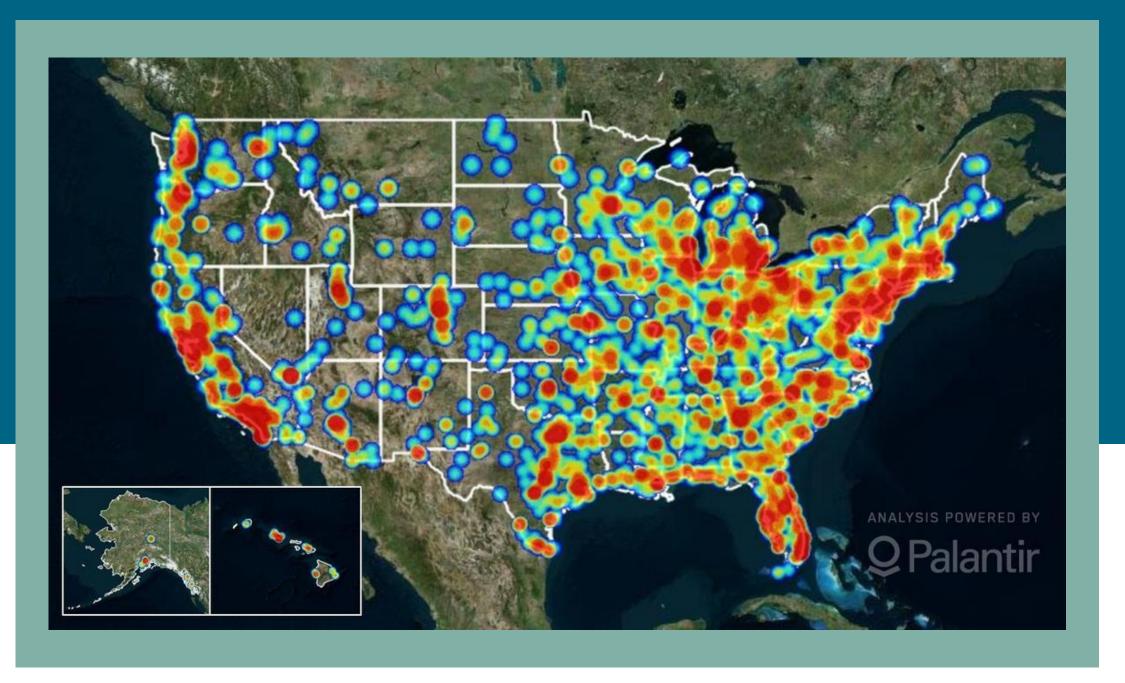# Human Trafficking Data Collection in Florida and the BRIGHT Project

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Shelly M. Wagers, Ph.D. - Associate Professor, Director of BRIGHT, Assistant Director of TIP Lab

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UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA

August 16, 2024

FLORIDA RANKS THIRD IN THE UNITED STATES...why?

ANALYSIS POWERED BY
Palantir

T-5. Providence, RI

182. Chattanooga, TN

T-5. Warwick, RI

4x Difference

Lust

Most Adult-Entertainment Establishments per Capita

T-1. Las Vegas, NV

T-1. Portland, OR

T-1. Atlanta, GA

T-1. Tampa, FL

5. Houston, TX

Fewest Adult-Entertainment Establishments per Capita
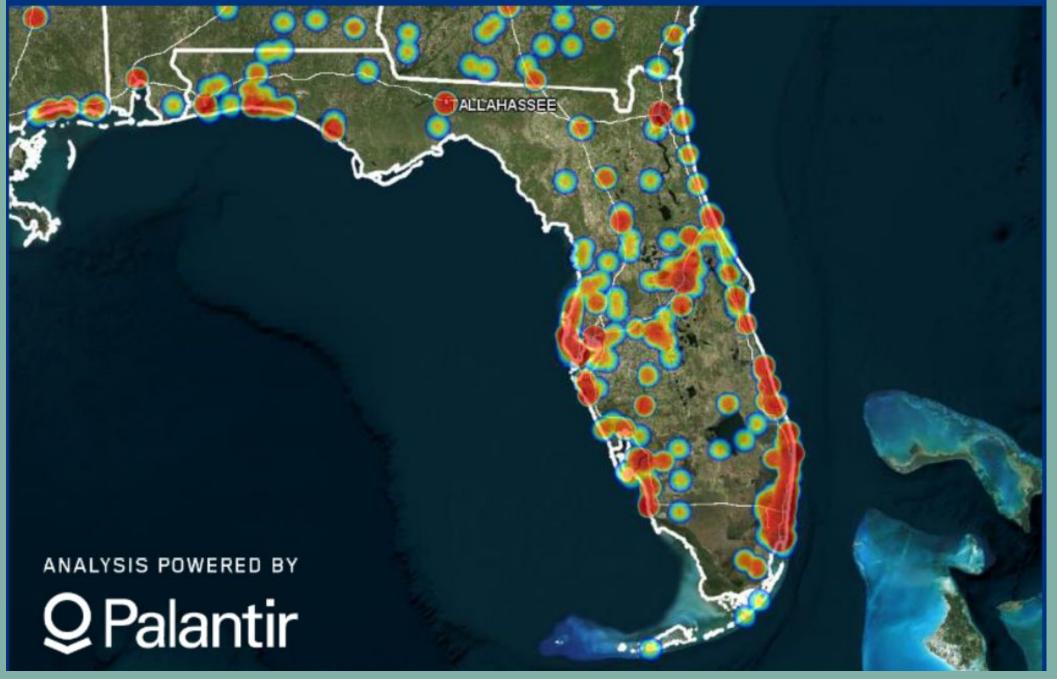
136. Chandler, AZ

137. Henderson, NV

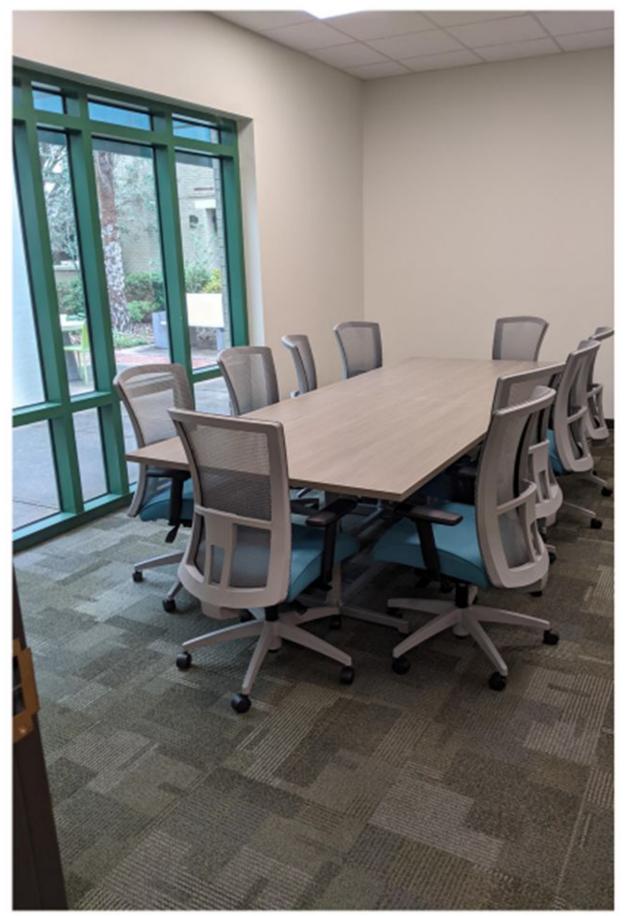138. Cincinnati, OH

139. Arlington, TX

140. Oakland, CA

Vanity

Most Tanning Salons per Capita

Fewest Tanning Salons per Capita

Locations of Trafficking*

ANALYSIS POWERED BY

Ⓞ Palantir

*some cases may involve multiple locations
Source: https://polarisproject.org/2019-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/

"Let's Stop Fighting Human Trafficking in the Dark"

- Research Progress and Challenges

- Hotline Data

- Various Sources of Partial Data

- Missing/Hidden Data

- [New research: 23% of national sample of at-risk U.S. women (ages 18-29) reported sex trafficking victimization – only 39% reported to law enforcement (Kulig, 2021).]
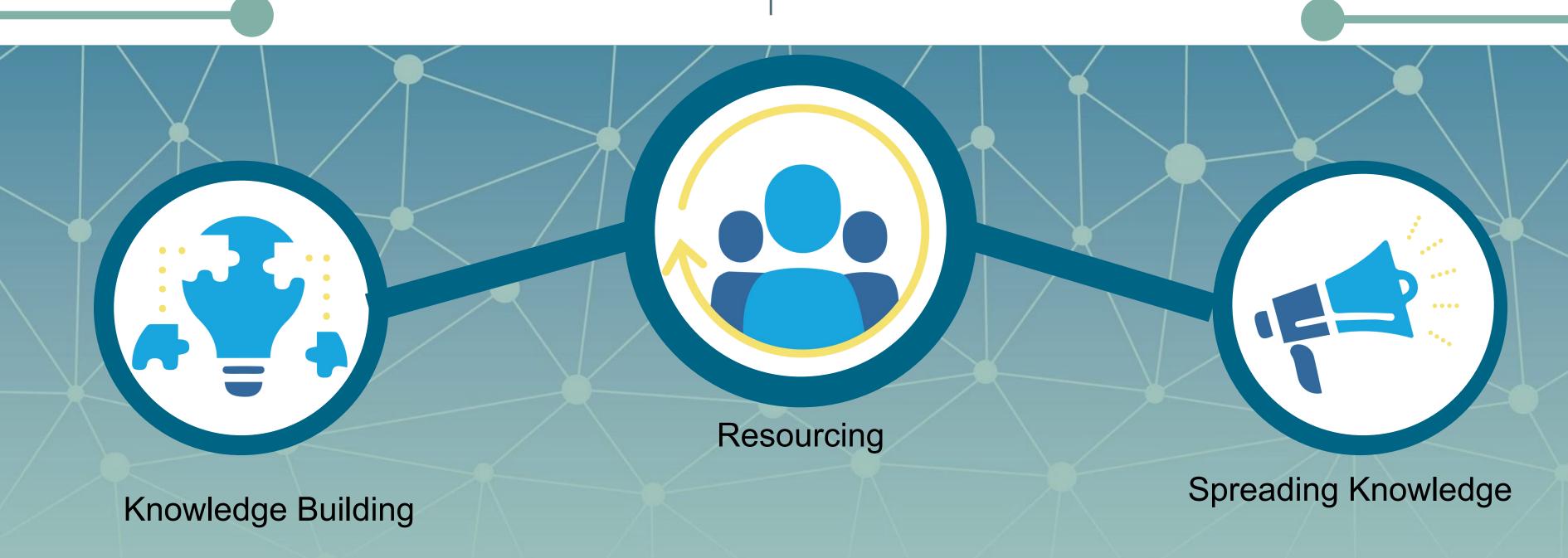
TIP

Trafficking in Persons - Risk to Resilience Lab

2-way mirror

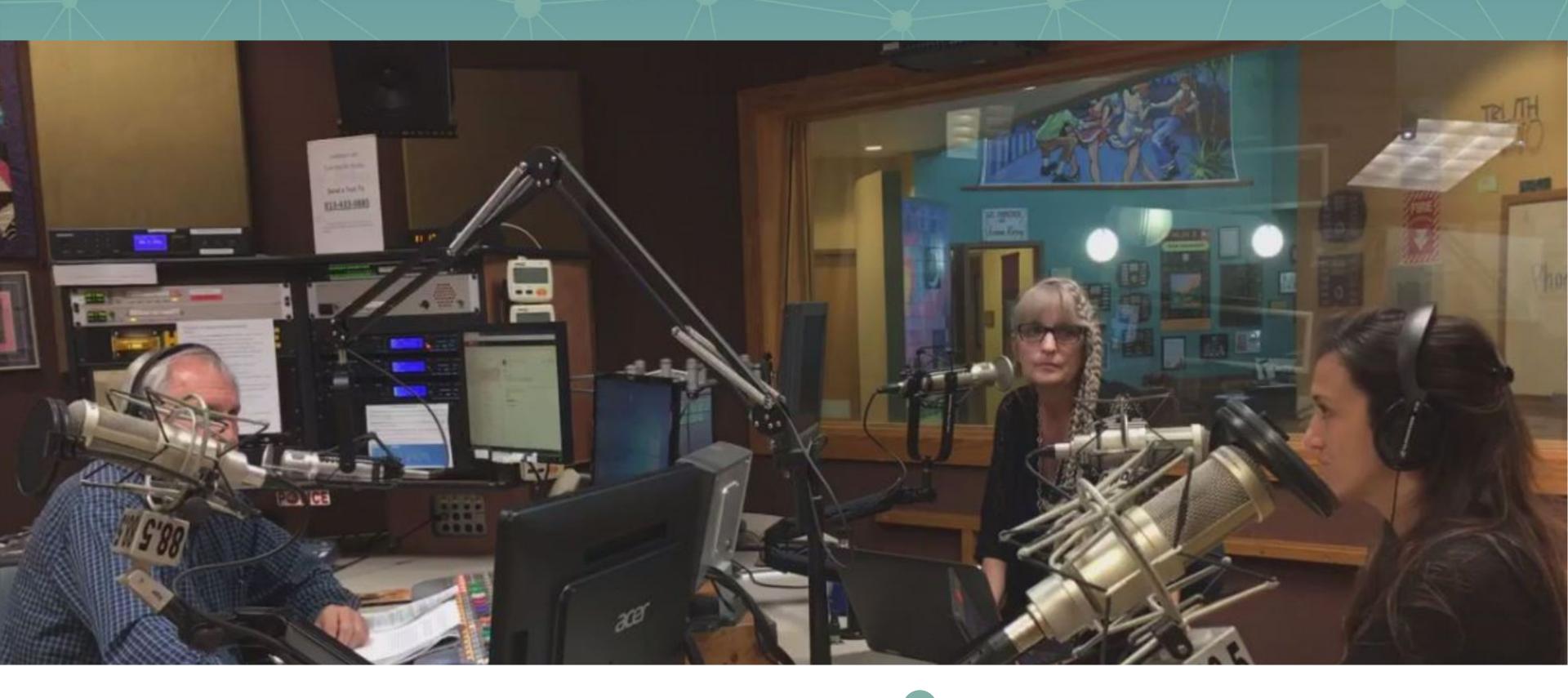From Blueprint to Reality

https://tiplab.cbcs.usf.edu/

Awareness & Education

More on the TIP Lab

15 Faculty & Faculty Affiliates

25 Graduate and Undergraduate Students

10 Active Research Projects

6 Disciplinary Perspectives
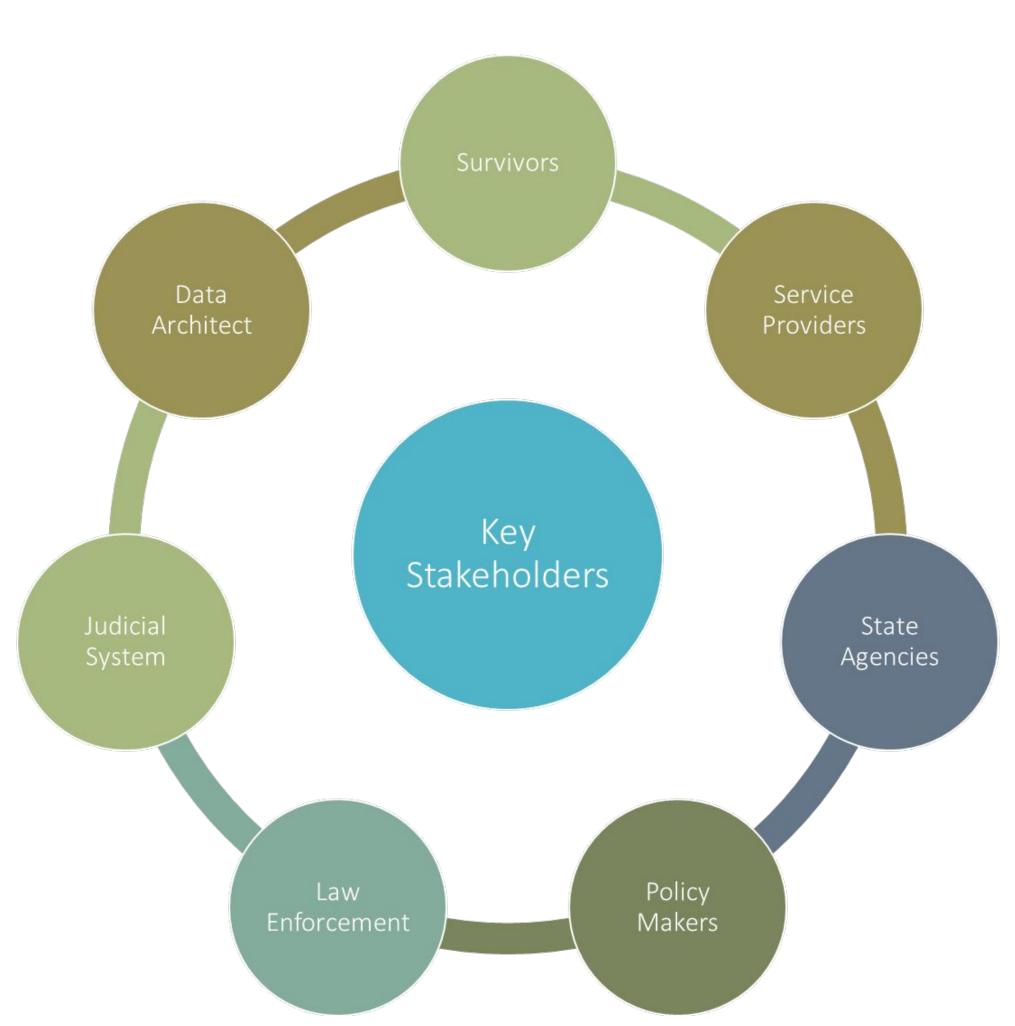
Background

INITIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Over the fall of 2020, conducted 100 interviews with various human trafficking actors
- Convienience sample
  - After initial interviews, snowball sample
- Representatives from different stakeholder "buckets"
- Semi-structured interviews
- Research team designed with a facilitator, note-taker, and observer
- Dual note-taking for accuracy of information

RESULTS OF INITIAL ASSESSMENT

- Results indicated:
  - Need for more funding
  - Need for better, more accurate data
  - Need to know what services are available versus gaps
  - Need for a more efficient way to be connected to resources in "real-time"
  - Issues with collaboration

Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment

- "There is not a lot of cohesiveness between agencies to serve the same victim"

- "Collaboration and education are key to ensuring best service delivery for our clients"

- "For the most part, data is not widely distributed or known...we need data that is more publicly available and easier to understand"

- "There is a lack of resources…it's more of a funding issue. The providers seem to be doing the best they can with what is available.

Key Findings

Good, Accurate Data

Access to Services

What is BRIGHT?

A vetted, online, secure resource referral network for those who provide services to victims of human trafficking.

Mission

BRIGHT seeks to disrupt human trafficking and elevate the standards of care for survivors through transparency, clear communication, collaboration, and the empowerment of survivors. Built from the voices of human trafficking survivors, service providers, and data-driven insights, BRIGHT provides a vetted, secure, referral network that promotes survivor-centered care, facilitates efficient service access, and informs comprehensive evidence-based anti-trafficking efforts.
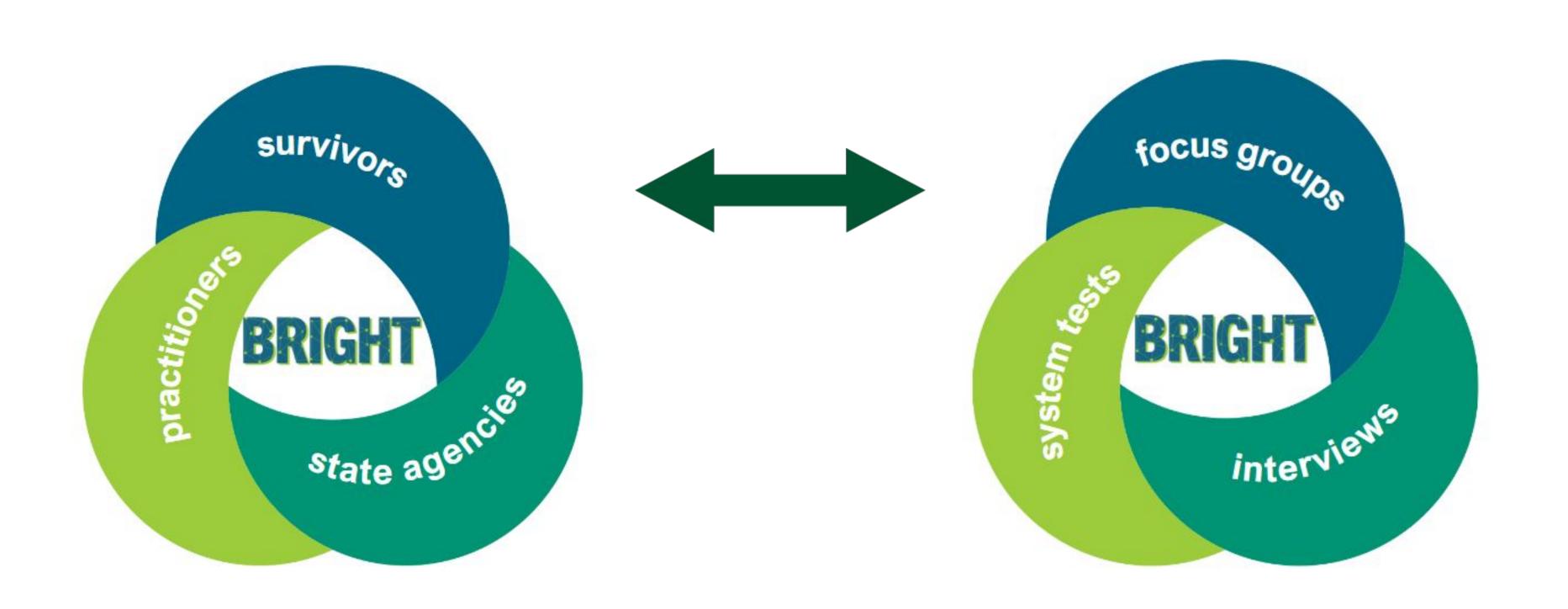
Vision

BRIGHT envisions a future where survivor voices, transparency, and data-driven insights, become the standard for all anti-trafficking, policies, programs, and service provision.

The development of a model that allows for better access to services for victims of human trafficking while collecting data to inform on gaps in service provision.
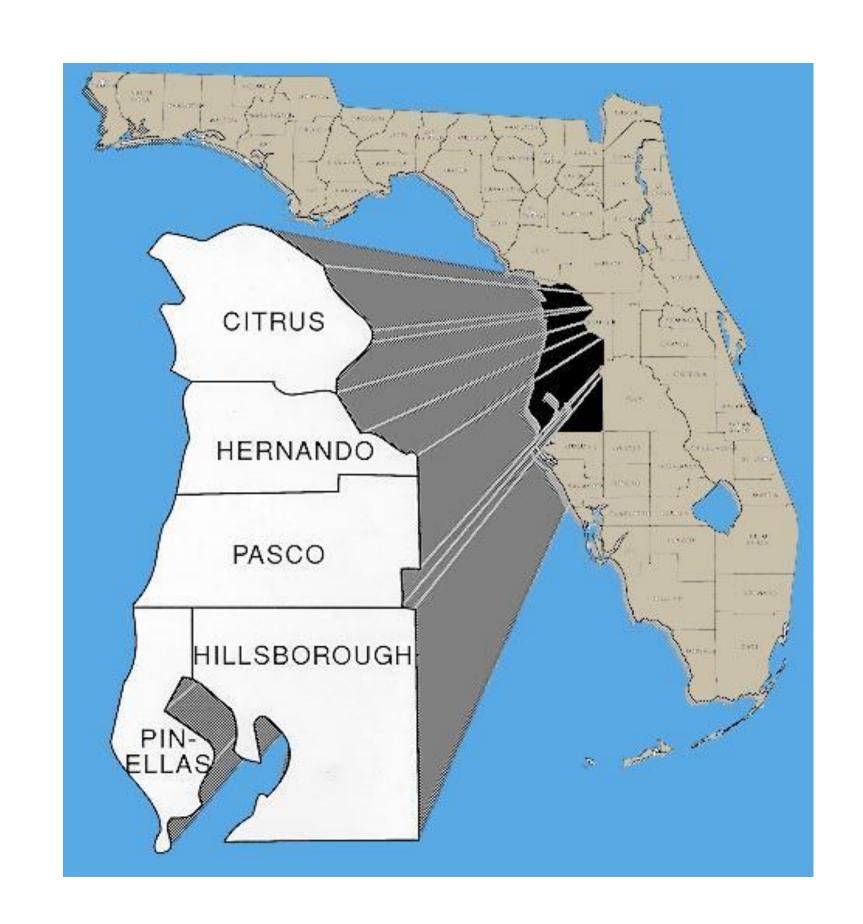
- Targeted Launch
  - Started in area with existing trust
  - Identification of available resources in area
- Synergy & Availability
  - SWOT analysis of organizations to determine:
    - Services available
    - Collaborative entities
    - Who can be served?
- Start small
  - Piloted for 9 months
  - Began with 5 initial organizations

Initial Pilot Analysis

S
- Implmentation of requested changes
- "Self-explanatory" and "easy to use"
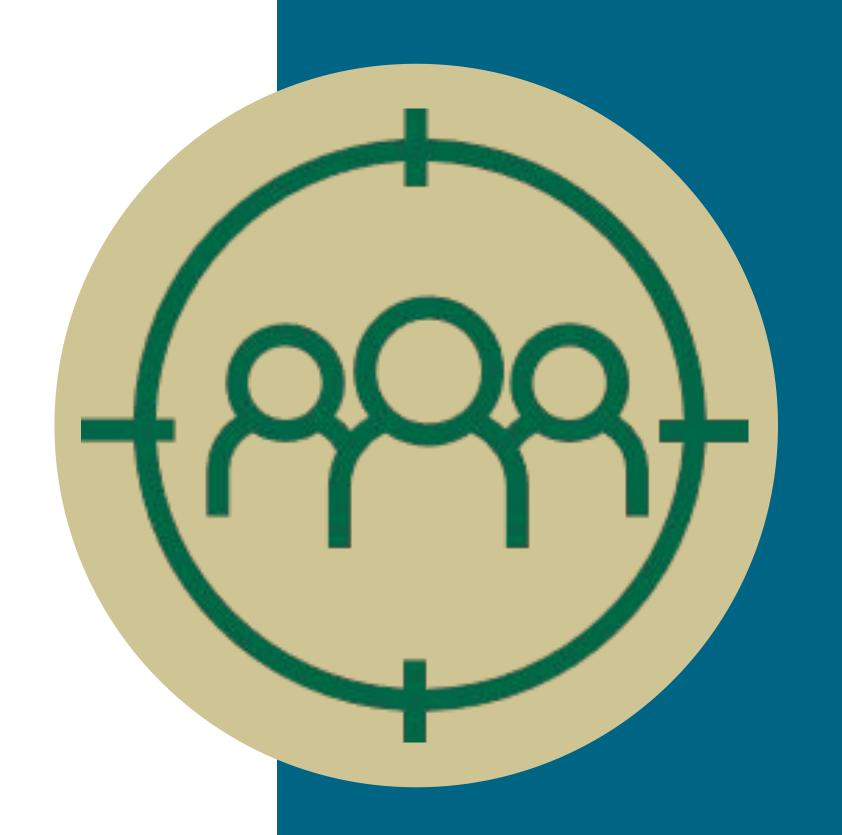- Filtering system to refine searches

W
- Universal referral form needed
- Usage of system
- Length of onboarding processes

T
- Organizational capacity
- Organization programming changes
- Identifying correct users of the system

O
- Creation of an app versus web-based
- More services needed and added
- Data to inform policy changes
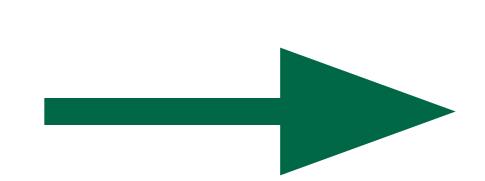
Follow Up Research

- To ensure that the research team did not misinterpret the results of the initial needs assessment
- To determine why organizations were not using the system
- To determine issues with the current system
- To determine further features needed in the system
- To examine barriers of use to the system

Methods & Design

Methodology

- Replication of Initial needs assessment with added questions
- Wanted to use different methodology to ensure findings were accurate
- Conducted six focus groups at one larger community meeting in October of 2023
  - Each focus group was facilitated by one trained member of the TIP Lab
- Focus groups were split based on their role (e.g., service provision, executive position)
  - Service providers came from multiple fields (e.g., housing, legal

Design

- Two part focus group over three hours
  - Part 1: General questions on service provision
    - Learn about the average client
    - learn about the referral process (i.e., how they find services for clients)
    - Ask about needs related to finding services
  - Part II: Perceptions of BRIGHT
    - likes & dislikes
    - benefits
    - potential issues
    - needs of system

Analysis

ASSESSING PROVIDER FEEDBACK

- All focus groups audio recorded and transcribed
- All facilitators met to debrief and discuss their focus groups to determine preliminary themes that emerged
- Four TIP Lab team members (three of whom did not participate in the focus groups to enhance objectivity and reduce bias) coded focus group transcripts
  - One team member coded all the transcripts; three team members coded a selection of the transcripts – this ensured that all transcripts had at least two coders
  - Team met several times to openly discuss the codes and themes that emerged from the focus groups in relation to the overall research questions and goals of the session

Current Referral Process

- How organizations currently find services for clients

Issues with Current Referral Process

- Things that make the current referral process difficult
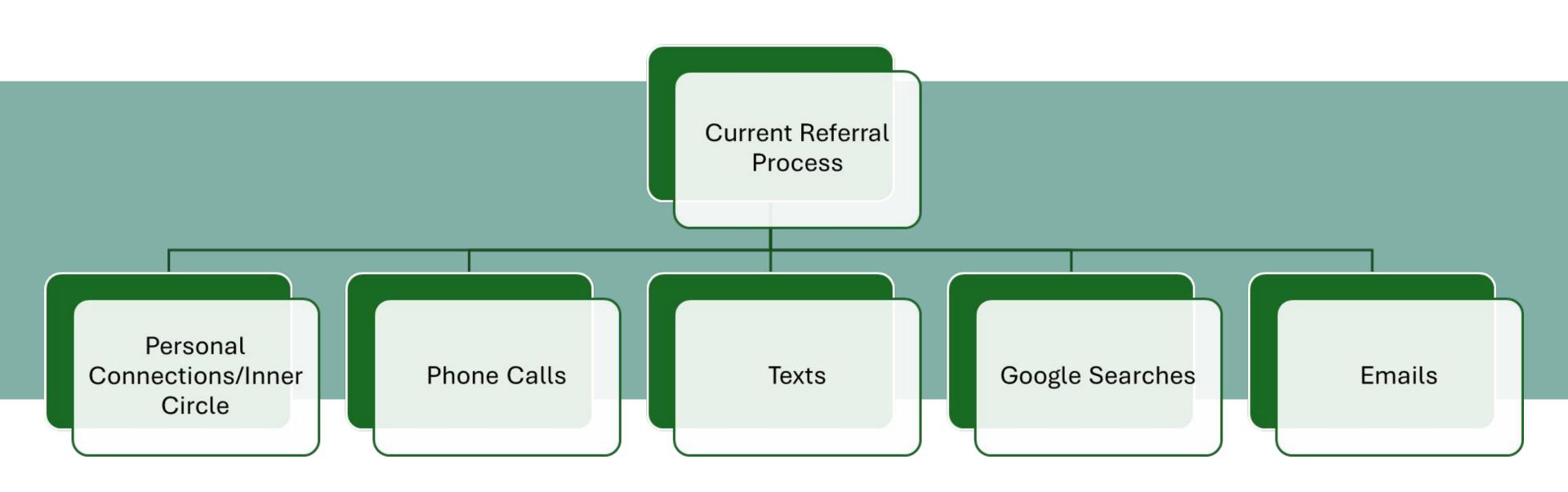
BRIGHT Organization Involvement

- Main things that need to be addressed for human trafficking stakeholders to use the system

Client Concerns

- Issues that direct service providers must be aware of to find appropriate service - important for a standardized intake form

Themes

General Findings

Current Referral Processes

"We call each other, that's what we do. We text, we call each other… We immediately start texting each other. I probably text every person in here."

(Direct Service Provider - ST)

"I generally send out two or three or sometimes four texts to people."

(Direct Service Provider - ST)

"We've just built that relationship."

(Direct Service Provider - ST)

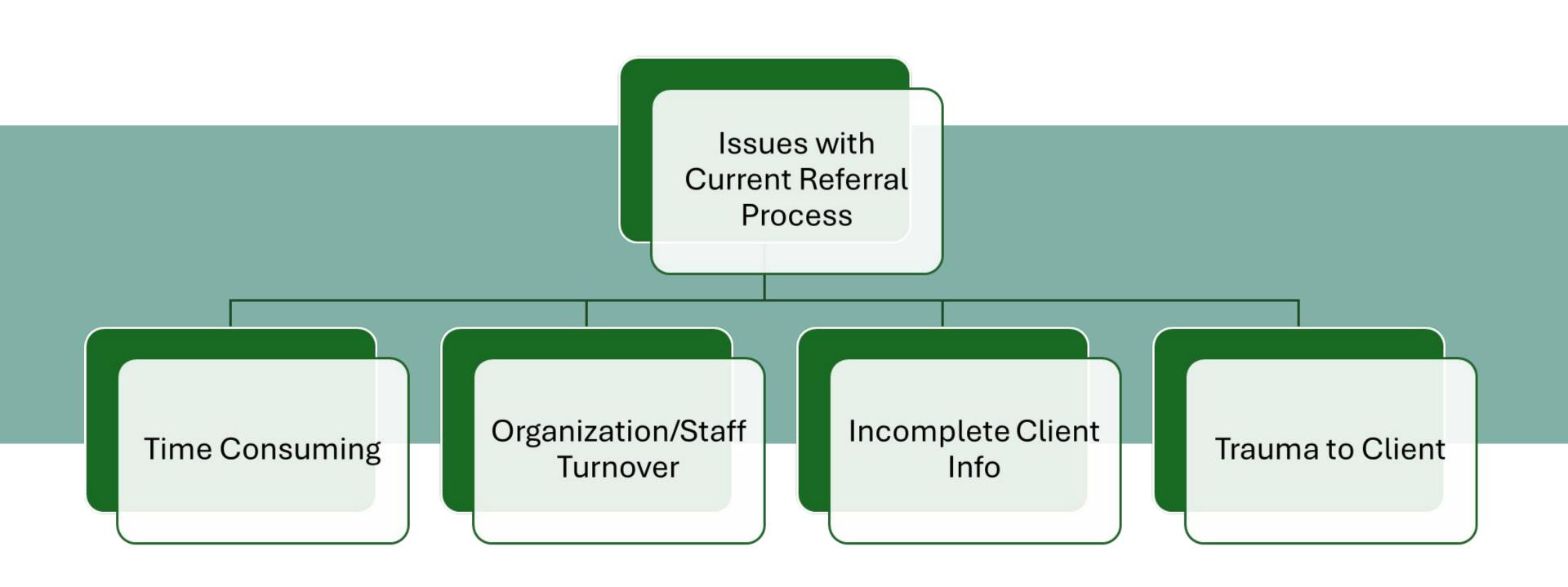"So much of what we do is relationship-driven."

(Executive Director of Organization)

"Sometimes…it's just people doing a Google search for legal services in the area to either direct referrals or just clients seeking out."

(Direct Service Provider – LT)

General Findings

Issues with Current Referral Process

- Time Consuming
- Organization/Staff Turnover
- Incomplete Client Info
- Trauma to Client

Issues with Current Referral Processes

"I remember when I first came in, you don't have those resources, you don't have someone's personal cell phone. It's a big problem." (Direct Service Provider – ST)
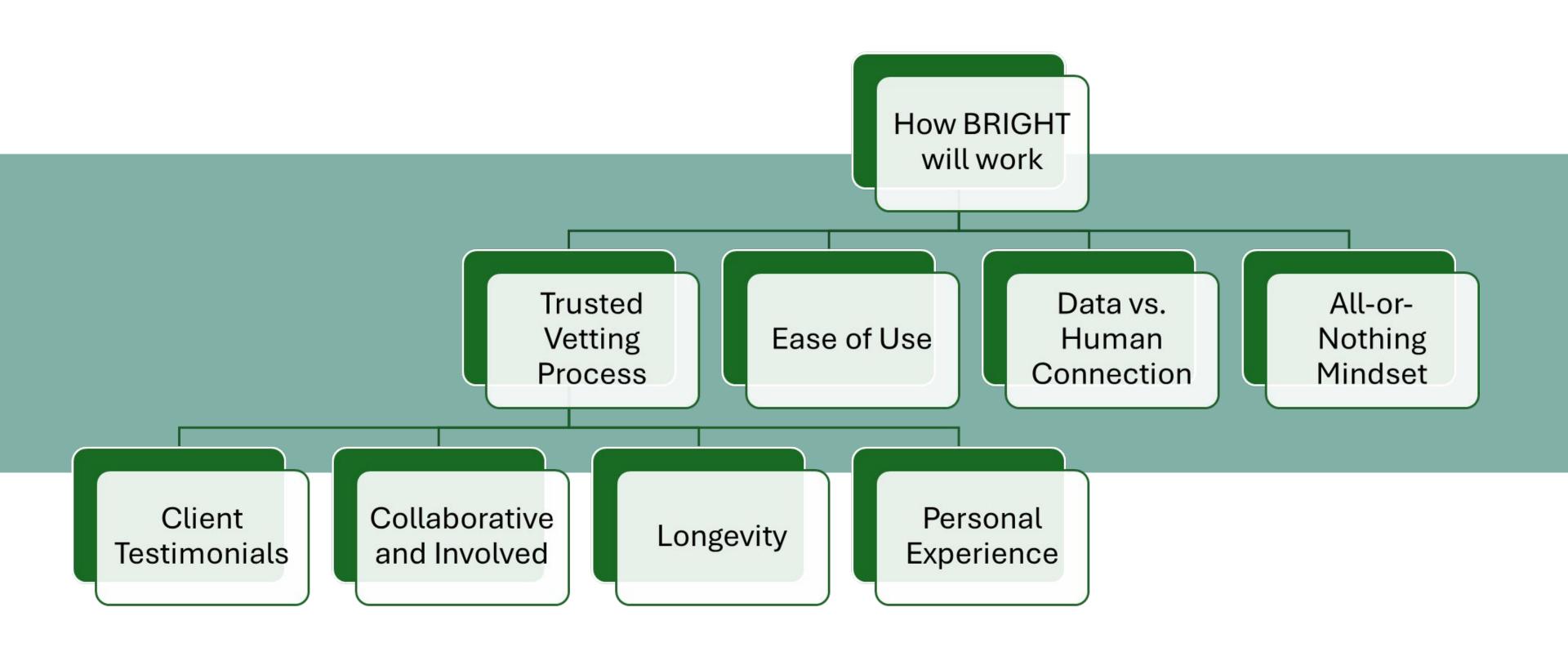
"You spend a lot of time calling around and it's a pain in the ***." (Direct Service Provider – ST)

"A lot of times we get referrals, and we get no information on this referral." (Direct Service Provider – ST)

"They call day after day after day." (Executive Director of Organization)

"What we're doing is asking these victims and survivors the same damn questions over and over and over and inadvertently retraumatizing them." (Direct Service Provider – ST)

General Findings

How to Get Organizations to Use BRIGHT

"When you create an automation, we look at two different things – what can be streamlined and doesn't affect the end client and then what needs to have that personal touch…And so, streamlining what [we] can and then making that time for that personal touch."
(Other Organization)

"It needs to be simple."
(Direct Service Provider)

"It has to be all or none. You can't have some people using it, some people not." (Direct Service Provider – ST)

"I mean is it easier to call someone and say, "do you have any beds", or is easier to use the system?" (Direct Service Provider – ST)

"If somebody's calling, they're going to get (*inaudible*) person checking the system and then they're not going to trust the system…they're just going to start calling because they feel like that's faster." (Direct Service Provider – ST)

Overall Theme

Direct service providers currently rely on personal connections, or their inner circle, to find services for clients. Changing this culture will be difficult, but not impossible. For BRIGHT to be successful, the system must be easy to use, have a trusted vetting process, all organizations must use it, and the organizations must still be able to maintain a human connection while using it.

BRIGHT

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Bridging Resource and Information Gaps in Human Trafficking

- Free for service providers
- Identification of resource/service gaps
- Reports for Funding and Policy
- Real time service referral connection
- Vetted network of care

Phase 0 - Online Application & Presence Review

Considerations:
- BRIGHT Application
- Website Review
- Social Media Review
- Charity Site Review
- Introductory Meeting

PEWTER

Send Referrals Only

Phase I - Background & Compliance Review

Considerations:
- Staff Member Background Search
- Board Member Background Search
- Organizational Document Review
- Meeting to Discuss Service Provision

BRONZE

Send & Receive Referrals

Phase II - Service Delivery Review

Considerations:
- Intake Form
- Hiring Policies,
- Program Manual Review
- Meeting on Service Provision - Deep Dive
- Preliminary Vetting Results

SILVER

Send & Receive Referrals

Phase III - Site Visit & Staff Manual Review

Considerations:
- Staff Manual
- Site Visit
- Check-in on BRIGHT usage

GOLD

Send & Receive Referrals

Phase IV - Financial Review & Supporting Documents

Considerations:
- I-990s
- Financial Policies
- Letter of Support
- MOU with Organization

PLATINUM

Send & Receive Referrals

Questions Answered
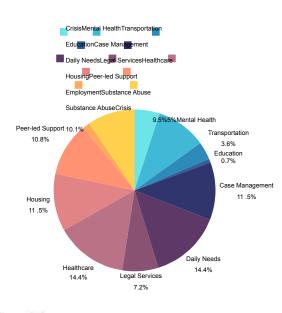
For organizations:

- How many clients am I serving?
- What services do I need more capacity for?
- What is my typical client?

BRIGHT
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275   250   15   Total Pending
                                10

Resource Categories

CrisisMental HealthTransportation
EducationCase Management
Daily NeedsLegal ServicesHealthcare
HousingPeer-led Support
EmploymentSubstance Abuse
Substance AbuseCrisis

Mental Health
Transportation 3.6%
Education 0.7%
Case Management 11.5%
Daily Needs 14.4%
Legal Services 7.2%
Healthcare 14.4%
Housing 11.5%
Peer-led Support 10.8%
10.1%
9.5% 5% 5%
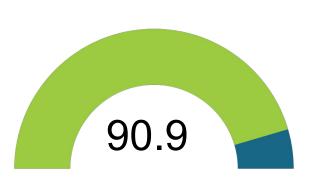
Acceptance Percentage

90.9

Hot Spot Map

Enlarge

Organizations

Name	Logo	Phone Number	Referrals Sent	Referrals Recieved	Referrals Accepted	Referrals Declined	Categories Served	
Gulf Coast Legal Services	GULFCOAST LEGAL SERVICES	7278210726	50	80	50	0		
Restored To Dream	RESTORED TO DREAM	7272138883	100	100	50	0	Crisis Case M...	...
United Way of Pasco...	United Way	7278453030	70	35	50	5	Case Management	...
Empowered To Change		7279147244	55	75	50	5	Substance Abuse	...

SHOWING ROWS 1 - 4   ← 1 / 1 →

GULFCOAST
LEGAL SERVICES

Convert To PDF

Gender

Men | Women Non-Binary
Transgender

Client Attributes

Series 1

Citizenship

US Citizen
Foreign National with Documentation
Foreign National without Documentation
Foreign National in Application
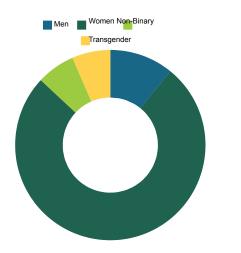
Total Referrals Sent	Total Accepted	Total Declined	Total Pending
31	46	0	1
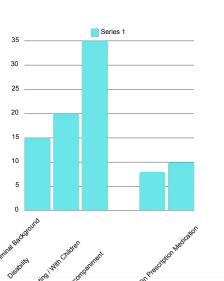
1
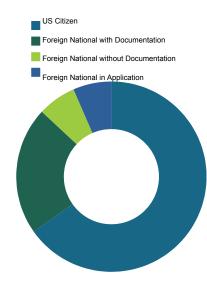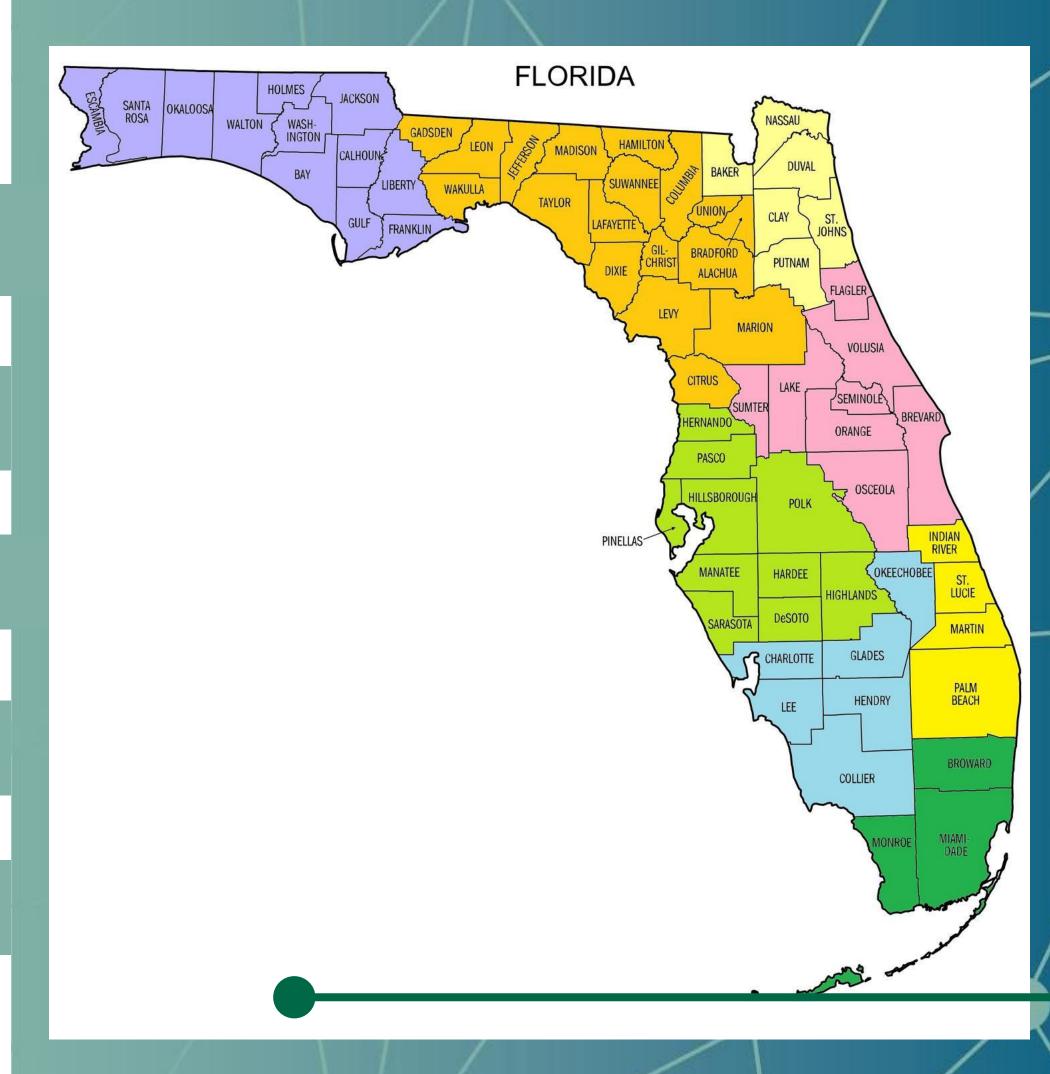
Service Type	Referrals Sent	Referrals Recieved	Referrals Accepted	Referrals Pending	Referrals Declined	Percent of Referrals	
Legal Counseling	10	25	25 300	0 100	0	42%	
Mediation	5	3	107	358	50 0 0	5%	...
Immigration Law	9	18	185	73	50 0 5	30%	...
Family Law	6	21			50 0 5	35%	...

View More

Data Driving Decisions

- (+) CONTINUOUS RESEARCH
- (+) IN-HOUSE TECHNOLOGY
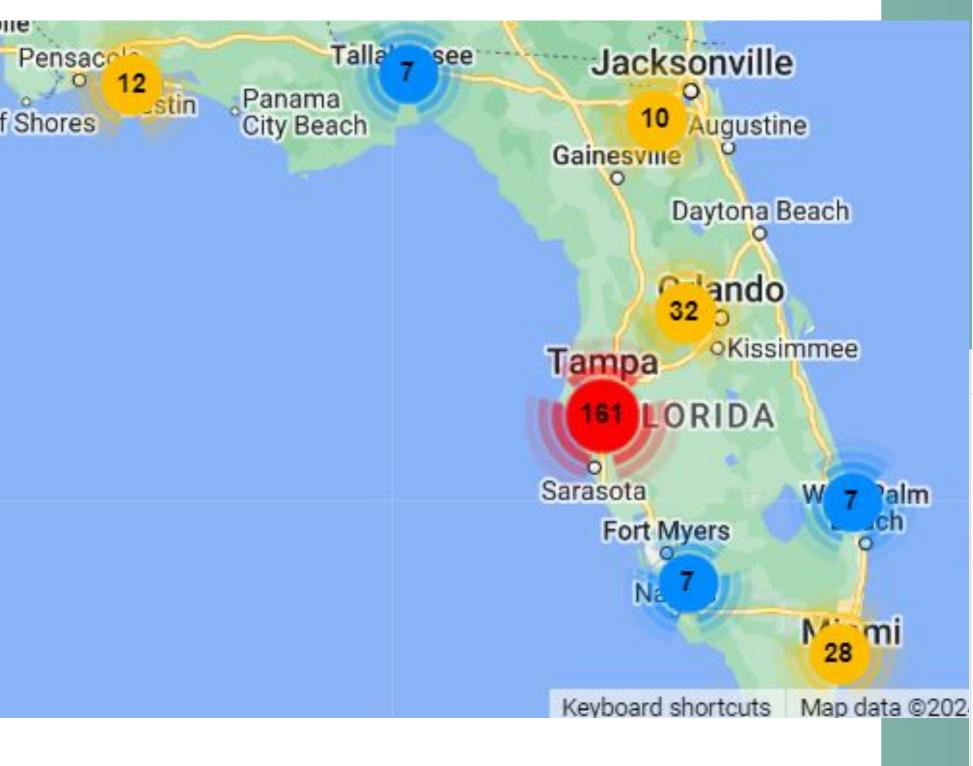- (+) STATEWIDE RESOURCES
- (+) SIMPLICITY
- (+) CAPACITY TRACKING

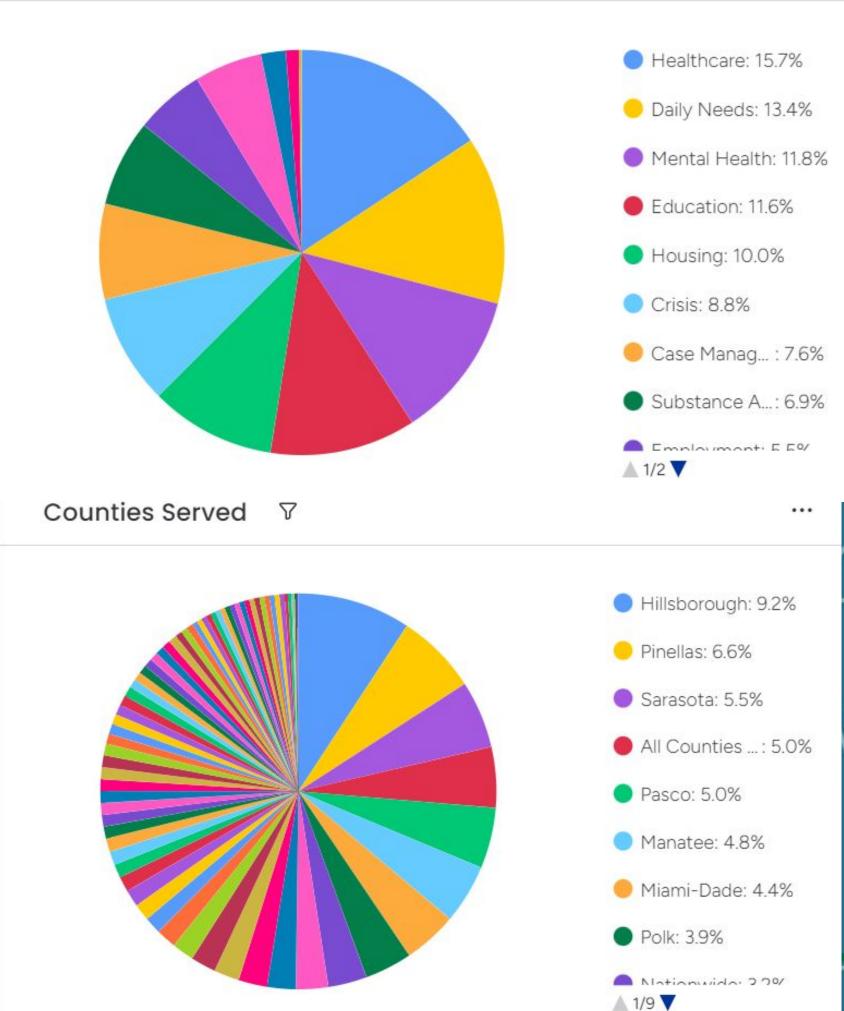# Questions Answered

- The data lends to a variety of questions answered, including:
  - Where are the gaps in services?
  - How many services are available in my region?
  - What types of services are available in my region?

Preliminary Results

Healthcare: 15.7%
Daily Needs: 13.4%
Mental Health: 11.8%
Education: 11.6%
Housing: 10.0%
Crisis: 8.8%
Case Manag... : 7.6%
Substance A... : 6.9%
Employment: 5.5%

1/2

Counties Served

Hillsborough: 9.2%
Pinellas: 6.6%
Sarasota: 5.5%
All Counties ... : 5.0%
Pasco: 5.0%
Manatee: 4.8%
Miami-Dade: 4.4%
Polk: 3.9%
Nationwide: 3.2%

1/9

Questions Answered

- The data will be able to answer the following questions...
  - How long does it take to get a victim connected to services?
  - What is the average quality of service in my region?
  - What services are most needed?
  - What types of individuals are most/least served?
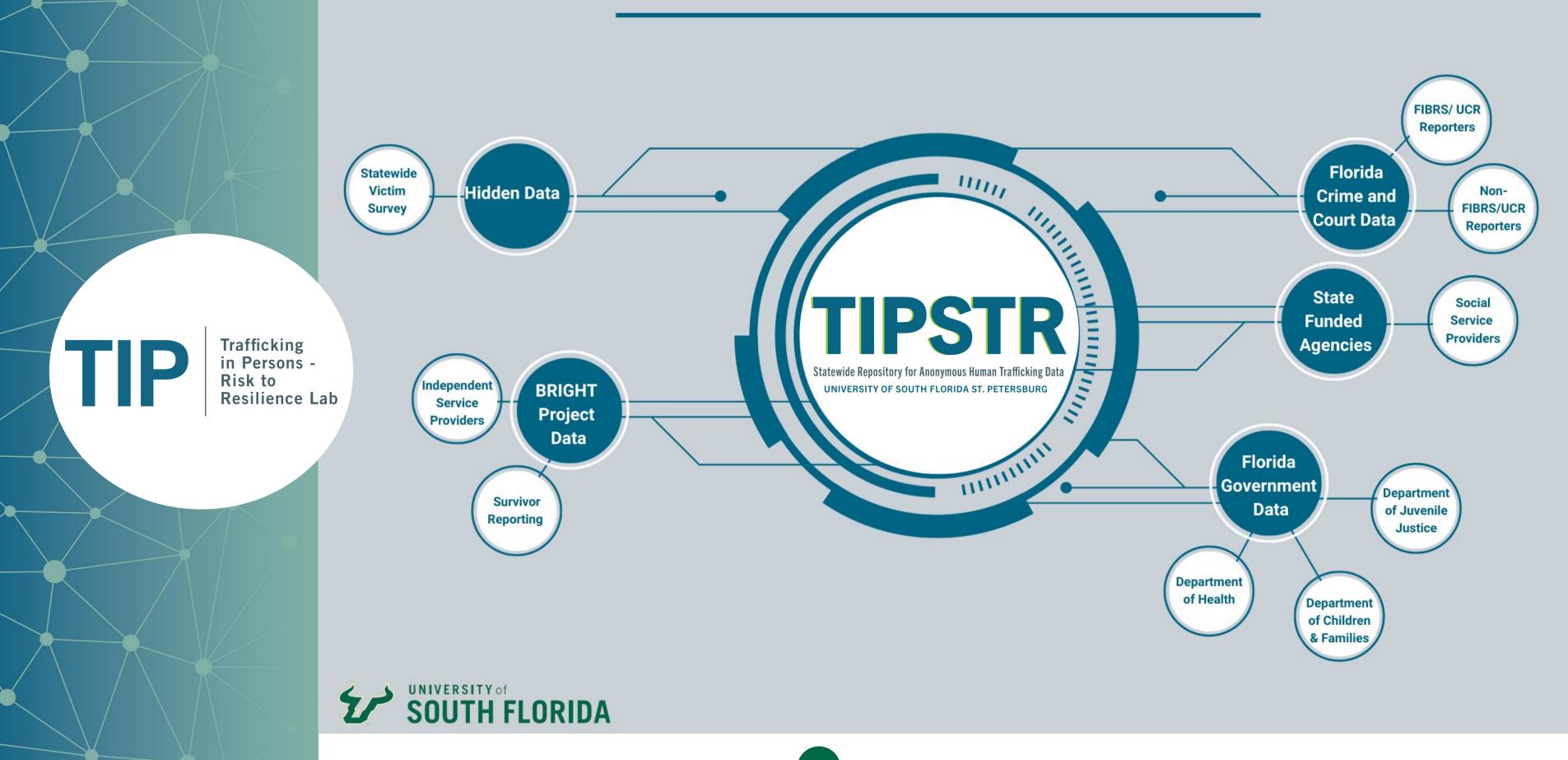 - What impedes an individual from receiving services?

Needs Assessment:
Lessons Learned & Structural Requirements

- Collection of Good, Accurate Data
  - Identification of current resources and gaps
  - Needs of a victim as recovered and how that shifts over time
  - How to create reports that stakeholders understand and can utilize?
- Cohesive definitions across stakeholders and platforms
  - De-duplicated information
- Ensuring Victim Safety
  - Level of client information collected
- Customizable technology
  - Adaptability in technology as providers needs change
  - Integration of system-level changes

Standardization of Data

- A standard definition of human trafficking across agencies
- Standardization of different methodologies, variables, and analytical tools to collect and analyze the data within and between agencies

Data Sharing

- Sharing of data between agencies to avoid duplication
- Ability to track cases in a single database from identification to conviction and/or victim compensation
- Improve data collection on re-trafficking of victims

Data Policy and Resources

- Policy implementation to increase reporting of cases
- Ensure sufficient time and staff to record data
- Allocation of resources to establish and maintain a standardized data collection system.

Protection of Trafficked Persons

- Protect confidentiality of presumed and formally identified trafficked persons
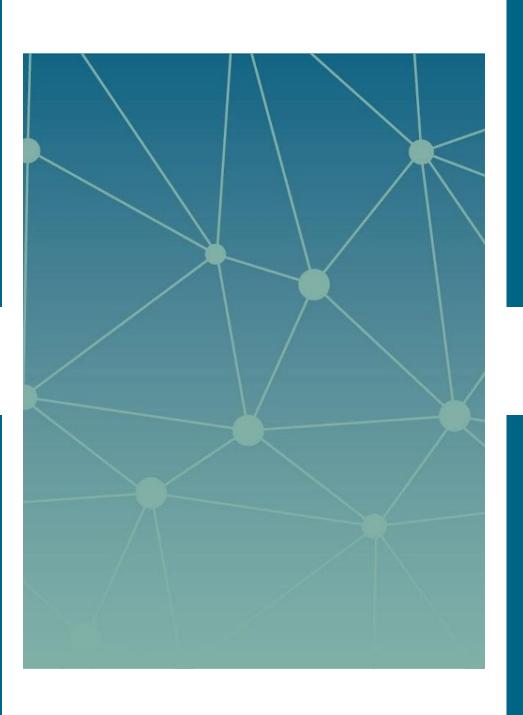
Essential Practices of Human Trafficking Data Collection

Purpose

Collect and Analyze Anonymous Data

This will help us understand the magnitude and trends in human trafficking throughout the State of Florida over time

Evaluating Effectivenes

This will help us determine the efficacy of various state-funded initatives to combat human trafficking and to use evidence-based decision making to help determine the State's investments in these

Informing Statewide

The Repository will help better inform efforts among law enforcement agencies, state agencies, and others to better apprehend and prosecute those who traffick and continue to victimize

Better Serve Survivors

The Repository will assist in determining which intervention strategies have been most efficient

What is being collected?

1. the alleged offense and description of offense

2. the demographics and case number of each suspect and victim

3. date, time location of the alleged offense.

4. type of trafficking victimization

5. any other related prosecution charges

6. victim services information (referrals)

7. disposition of the investigation/prosecution regardless of its manner of disposition

TIPSTR

Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data
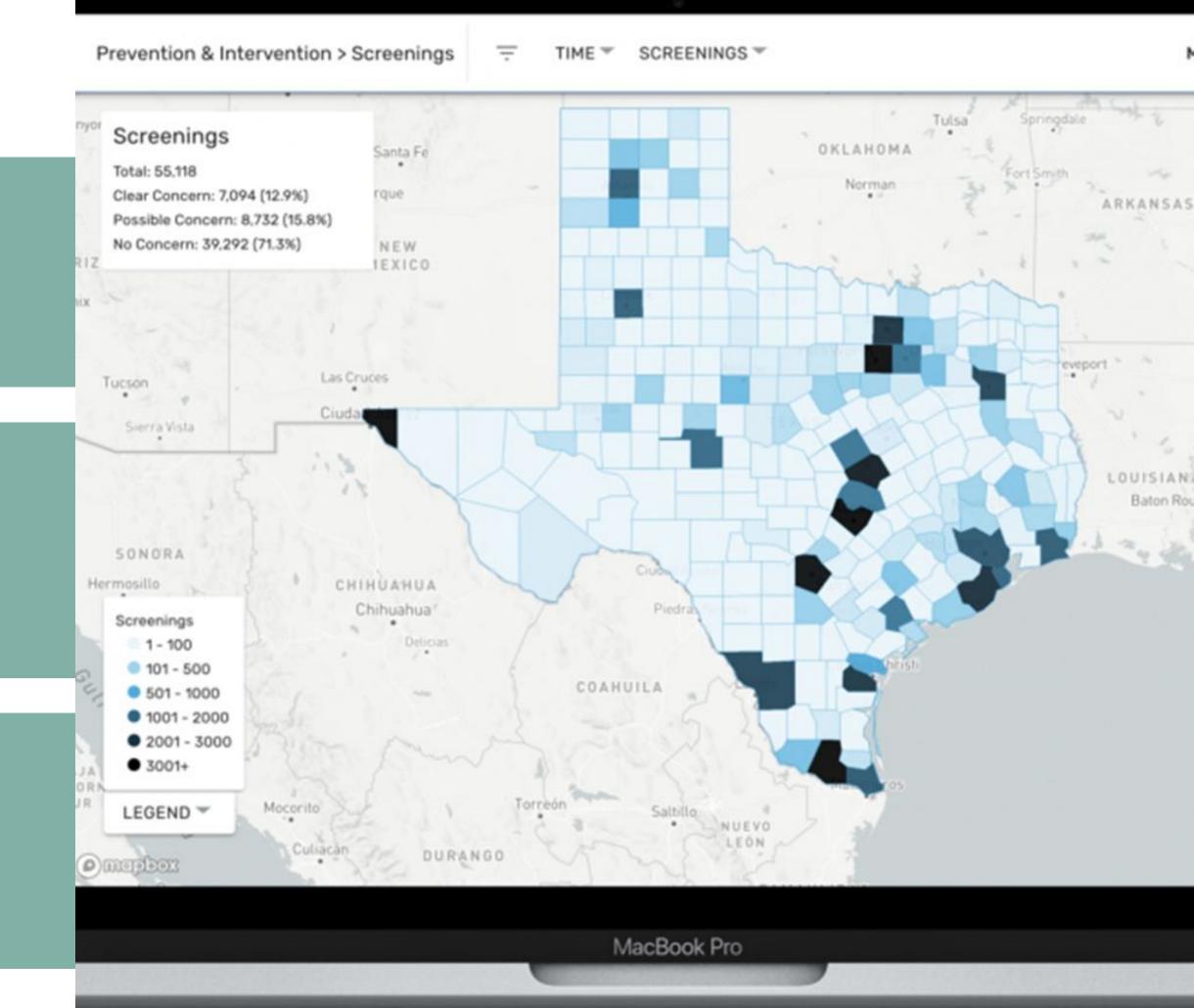
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Partners of TIPSTR

Data Visualization

DE-DUPLICATION OF INFORMATION

RISK AND RESILIENCE SCORES

UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE SCOPE IN FLORIDA

Thank you

Have more questions or want to stay in touch?

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Kailey Carter, kaileypate@usf.edu

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