TIPSTR

Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG

Annual
Report

2024

Prepared By :

**The University of South Florida
Trafficking in Persons (TIP)
Risk to Resilience Research Lab**

TIP | Trafficking
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Report Contributors

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- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Family Life Center
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
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- Project HELP
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- Refuge House
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- Women's Center of Brevard
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Foreword

A Letter from the Director

Invisible No More: Data Illuminates Human Trafficking

"Human trafficking is considered a hidden crime and its victims are often invisible. Traffickers work hard to prevent victims from reporting their victimization to the police and many victims appear to the untrained observer to be willing participants in the crime being committed against them. Given these circumstances, the key objective of this report is to, as much as possible, make the hidden and invisible visible to those who have the will and responsibility to take action toward disrupting human trafficking in our communities, counties, and state.

I've spent my research career pursuing human trafficking data. For absent data, there may appear to be no problem, no victims, and without data, there is no foundation for evidence-based decisions and policy. For a myriad of reasons, access to human trafficking data is often withheld from researchers and policymakers – the very professionals who are tasked with understanding complex crimes, developing solutions, and responding to societal problems such as human trafficking. Data is required for identifying critical issues, understanding the potential impacts of different policies, and assessing the effectiveness of interventions. Florida's Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data (TIPSTR) is a uniquely designed solution to this human trafficking data problem. By aggregating and analyzing previously collected and anonymous administrative data, many of the concerns around protecting of human trafficking victim data are mitigated (IOM & UNODC, 2023).

Without question, disrupting human trafficking is among the most pressing challenges currently facing Florida's law enforcement agencies, policymakers, victim service providers, child welfare workers, and our concerned public.

Despite the passage of the groundbreaking Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) over 25 years ago, many questions remain regarding progress and best practices within the 5-P focal areas of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Policy, and Partnership.

This report highlights these five key areas of focus in combating human trafficking. The TVPA (2000) emphasized the first three aims of prevention, protection, and prosecution. Since then, two more critical components in the fight against human trafficking have been added – policy and partnership. These sectors align together to reduce the risk of trafficking, support survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable. Providing knowledge regarding the status of these five focus areas in the State of Florida is the purpose of this annual report."

- Joan A. Reid, Ph.D., LMHC | TIP Lab Director

A Frontline Perspective: Why Data Matters

"Human trafficking is a pervasive issue that presents differently in every community, necessitating tailored, local-level solutions. To effectively combat this crime, it's essential to implement an evidence-based, data-driven approach. Aggregated datasets can provide critical insights, such as identifying trafficking hotspots, understanding the demographics of at-risk individuals, and profiling perpetrators. Such data enhances law enforcement's investigative capabilities and can help guide targeted prevention strategies implemented by local commissions and coalitions. Informed, proactive measures geared toward protecting vulnerable populations, educating the public, and advocating for victims and survivors are crucial to mitigating the impact of trafficking in local communities. Such datasets as those provided by TIPSTR will also be invaluable to direct service providers/NGOs, as they offer concrete evidence that trafficking affects the populations they serve in the communities they serve, thereby justifying the allocation of funding for essential services and resources."

- **Liana Dean | Chair, Pasco County Commission on Human Trafficking**

"Collecting and merging all human trafficking data in a centralized repository is paramount to allow for more accurate quantification and understanding of the scope of the issue. It also aids in identifying patterns and trends in trafficking activities, which is crucial for formulating effective prevention and intervention strategies. In addition, centralized data facilitates collaboration and information sharing among various stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and policymakers that enhance coordination to maximize the impact of efforts aimed at combating trafficking. Lastly, robust and comprehensive data supports advocacy and awareness campaigns, driving policy changes and encouraging public support to eradicate human trafficking. "

- **Dotti Groover Skipper | Founder, Heartdance Foundation**

"As a survivor of human trafficking who now advocates for those like me, I know firsthand the lack of services that typically have been available to survivors. By collecting the data and housing it in one place, those of us in the fight have a better idea of where trafficking occurs, how it occurs in different regions, and what services are already available. Complete data collection will allow both law enforcement and service providers to focus their attention where the needs are the greatest while showing legislators where more help is needed with funding and support. "

- **Marianne Thomas | Founder, My Name, My Voice**

"In the law enforcement world, the increasing strain on resources, manpower, and response, coupled with the rise in criminal precursors brought on by AI, online platforms, and digital marketplaces, the Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data is not just a valuable resource; it's crucial. Data-driven analysis enables a more targeted response to potential human trafficking activity, ultimately leading to a safer Florida."

- **Alan Wilkett | (Ret.) Corporal, Pasco County Sheriff's Office**

2024 State Report on Human Trafficking

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Note:

List of Abbreviations

ABA	Applied Behavioral Analysis
BRIGHT	Bridging Information and Resource Gaps in Human Trafficking
CAC	Children's Advocacy Center
CJDT	Criminal Justice Data Transparency
CPI	Child Protective Investigator
CPS	Child Protective Services
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
DCF	Florida Department of Children and Families
DJJ	Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
DOE	Department of Education
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCASV	Florida Council Against Sexual Violence
FDLE	Florida Department of Law Enforcement
FIBRS	Florida Incident-Based Reporting System
HT	Human Trafficking
HTST	Human Trafficking Screening Tool
IBCSA	Image-Based Child Sexual Abuse
IMB	Illicit Massage Business
INTERCEPT	Inter-Agency Child Exploitation and Persons Trafficking
KPE	Known Period of Exploitation
MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIBRS	National Incident-Based Reporting System
QYIT	Quick Youth Indicator for Trafficking
SB	Senate Bill
SRS	Summary Reporting System
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TIPSTR	Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data
TVPA	Trafficking Victims Protection Act
UCR	Uniform Crime Report

I. Executive Summary

For over two decades, it has been acknowledged that Florida's risk for human trafficking is elevated due to the convergence of compounding community risk factors including our many airports and ports, major highways transversing the state, and rapidly growing economy. In addition, Florida is home to large industries particularly vulnerable to human trafficking such as our agriculture, tourism, hospitality, construction, and entertainment industries. In response to this grave and growing risk, Florida has made concerted efforts to disrupt human trafficking and is a recognized national leader in combatting human trafficking, ranking second in a recent report grading all 50 states on anti-child trafficking legislative and policy efforts (Shared Hope, 2023).

However, the state has been lacking crucial data to effectively combat this pervasive and destructive issue. Accurate, comprehensive data on the prevalence, geographic distribution, trends, and community risk and resilience factors related to human trafficking are essential for developing targeted prevention efforts, identifying and assisting victims, and prosecuting perpetrators. This first *Annual State Report on Human Trafficking* brings together Florida's distinct and siloed sources of human trafficking data to present a comprehensive view of human trafficking risks, resiliency, and responses. Armed with this information, the state can pursue key anti-human trafficking objectives more efficiently and with transparency.

Working in collaboration with over 30 different state agencies and organizations, the USF Trafficking in Persons Research Lab (TIP Lab) received previously collected human trafficking data to create Florida's first Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking (TIPSTR). The overarching objectives of TIPSTR are to:

- Aggregate and analyze human trafficking data currently being collected by various sectors and agencies related to sex and labor trafficking of children and adults. Human trafficking data sources include human trafficking screenings, human trafficking survivor surveys, crime incidents, arrest and court data, local demand indicators, regional risk indicators, and service providers/provision. Agencies with human trafficking data are *not to* be required to reenter data. USF TIP Lab researchers and data analysts provide the required manpower and resources.

- Inform anti-human trafficking stakeholders throughout Florida of regional risk, response, and resiliency to human trafficking to finally answer: "Is human trafficking occurring here 'in my backyard'? When an area is resilient to human trafficking, TIPSTR can inform other regions of the promising practices that increase resiliency to human trafficking.

- Provide needed information to law enforcement agencies regarding hot spots of human trafficking in their jurisdictions to facilitate data-driven and targeted policing interventions resulting in crime reduction and better use of limited resources.

- Identify vulnerable populations and regions experiencing high levels of demand for human trafficking, thereby encouraging targeted demand reduction efforts with specific programming and messaging for specific populations who are consumers of human trafficking.

- Provide urgently needed information for better care coordination for human trafficking survivors by informing social service providers throughout the state on service gaps and redundancies.

- With multi-year data, human trafficking trends are used to evaluate the effectiveness of human trafficking efforts throughout the state and predict where more resources are needed to proactively address human trafficking.

The report findings are organized around the the 5-P focal areas of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Policy, and Partnership.

Prevention Highlights:

Screenings: Florida has a strong record of screening youth for human trafficking. The HTST screener used by DCF and DJJ is effective at identifying trafficked youth with a high concordance between the screener-identified risk level and verified trafficking victims. The findings indicate that the greater the number of screenings that occur in a county, the greater the number of identified trafficked victims. This strong association between the number of screenings and the number of identified youth victims indicates that screenings are assisting with the identification of youth victims and that the higher number of verified victims in certain counties is likely due to greater response efforts rather than being solely due to higher risk. As planned, to estimate the prevalence of adult and youth victims of human trafficking in Florida, we administered a victimization survey conducted for us by YouGov using a representative sample of Floridians. The survey screened for human trafficking and the results illuminated a concerning estimate of human trafficking - an extrapolated estimate of 1.7M human trafficking survivors - in our state.

Education: The DOE provided varied levels of HT prevention education. The majority of counties (53) provided basic education (HT covered briefly within a course loosely related to HT). Fourteen counties provided related education courses (HT covered within a course closely related to HT). Two counties provided three HT dedicated courses. Two counties offered both related and dedicated education with seven courses being given across all grade levels (Kindergarten through 12th grade).

Awareness: Highlights of this section reinforce and heighten our concerns regarding Florida's risk for human trafficking. Data findings show that over 300,000 commercial sex ads were posted in Florida during a 90-day period – indicative of high demand for commercial sex – a known community factor for risk for human trafficking. Over 1,200 illicit massage businesses were operating in Florida in 2024. These types of illicit businesses are often associated with human trafficking.

Key Takeaways: Human trafficking is a serious problem in Florida and while prevention efforts are growing, there is still much more that needs to be done to prevent this crime that often carries life-long consequences for its victims. Based on the findings, we recommend additional screening tools to include adult screenings and dedicated human trafficking education in all Florida schools.

Protection Highlights

Location of Services: Over 600 service providers across Florida are able to provide a variety of services to human trafficking survivors. The majority of services are clustered in major metropolitan areas with many suburban and rural areas experiencing "service deserts".

Types of Services: The most available services are daily needs services (food, clothing, and hygiene products) followed by education and workforce readiness programs. Healthcare and housing are next in terms of availability; however, many of these are not specialized in human trafficking. Only a few service providers in the state offer translation services and financial literacy or financial services are rare.

Key Takeaways: There is a need to expand services to areas of the state that have none. Those regions lacking the five most critical services for human trafficking survivors (housing, mental health, substance use, case management, and crisis response) should make arrangements with services in neighboring counties to temporarily fill existing gaps.

Prosecution Highlights

Federal Prosecutions: Florida is a leading state in the nation for human trafficking prosecutions.

FDLE HT Incidents and Arrests: The number of HT incidents reported by Florida law enforcement agencies is increasing; however, the number of HT arrests slightly decreased from 2023 to 2024. When comparing HT offense trends with prostitution offense trends, prostitution offenses remain high with three to four times the number of HT offenses. However, there does seem to be a downward trend in prostitution offenses and a steady upward trend in HT offenses. Also, there is an upward trend in prostitution offenses involving those who are facilitating prostitution.

Florida HT Prosecutions: The trend of Florida prosecutions of HT is up with a large jump in the number of prosecutions occurring in 2020 and continuing through 2024.

Key Takeaways: Law enforcement's response to HT is trending in the right direction. The growing emphasis on pursuing HT offenses and prostitution-facilitation offenses in comparison to prostitution offenses, which may harm HT victims, is commended and reflects an HT victim-centered approach. Regarding data, Florida's law enforcement data is currently split between two reporting structures. Harmonization of all of the FDLE data into the more detailed FIBRS reporting structure could increase our understanding of trends.

Policy Highlights

Human Trafficking Legislation: Florida is a national leader in HT policy. Out of 20 recommended HT policies covering HT prevention, protection, and prosecution, Florida has passed 18. Regarding prosecution policy, Florida's maximum sentence for conviction of any trafficking crime is life imprisonment, well above the national average.

Wage Theft Ordinances: Wage theft has been consistently linked to labor trafficking. Preventing and responding to wage theft may give workers remedies before they succumb to more severe trafficker control mechanisms like debt bondage or other work-related vulnerabilities. To date, only six Florida counties have wage theft ordinances.

Key Takeaways: Continue to craft and enact survivor-informed legislation to keep Florida a zero-tolerance state for HT.

Partnership Highlights

HT Task Forces, Coalitions, and Commissions: Florida has between one and three anti-trafficking groups operating in every county. When observing the overall response to HT by county, those counties with more active task forces, coalitions, or commissions, tend to show a greater overall response to HT. This finding highlights the benefits of strong advocates working in partnership to disrupt HT in the local area.

BRIGHT: The BRIGHT project provides a free referral system to a vetted network of services for human trafficking survivors in Florida. To date, there are 100 vetted providers in BRIGHT. When using the BRIGHT referral system, the average time from request for services to receipt of that request by an available service provider is five hours. No other state has this tool.

Key Takeaways: Based on the data received, some HT task forces are more active and engaged in anti-trafficking activities than others. For those who wish to increase activities, we recommend engagement and partnership with the more active task forces in their neighboring counties. BRIGHT is an amazing free resource that facilitates the connection of survivors to vetted services. Given the estimated number of HT survivors in Florida, a more efficient connection to and use of services is critical. If you are providing and/or in need of HT services for HT survivors, please join BRIGHT.

Concluding Remarks

Regional Risk, Response, Resiliency: TIPSTR merged diverse data sources to create a measure of human trafficking risk, response, and resiliency in Florida counties. These composite measures are based on the data available to the TIP Lab at the county level. The 2024 county scores can serve as a benchmark for evaluating improvements over time.

In its first year, TIPSTR has successfully advanced toward accomplishing its key objectives. With the publishing of the State Annual Report, we invite those who have not yet participated in TIPSTR, to contact us to receive information on how to contribute anonymous HT data to be used to support and advance anti-trafficking efforts in Florida.

2024 Florida Data Snapshot

~200K
ESTIMATED VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING

669
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCREENINGS

164
CSEC VICTIMS VERIFIED BY CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

41
CJDT CLERK OF COURTS HUMAN TRAFFICKING CHARGES

100*
VETTED SERVICE PROVIDERS IN BRIGHT

8,527
DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE SCREENINGS

146
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING OFFENSES (FIBRS)

90
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING ARRESTS (FIBRS + SRS)

214
NUMBER OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING COURSES AVAILABLE

340,389
COMMERCIAL SEX ADS POSTED THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF FLORIDA IN A 90 DAY PERIOD

1,207
ILLICIT MASSAGE BUISNESSES THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF FLORIDA

~540K
ESTIMATED VICTIMS OF LABOR EXPLOITATION AND/OR LABOR TRAFFICKING

~581K
ESTIMATED VICTIMS OF CYBER EXPLOITATION

II. Data Collection Requirements & Process

In May 2023, Governor DeSantis signed SB 7064, which authorizes the USF Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Lab to create the Statewide Repository for Anonymous Human Trafficking Data (TIPSTR) and mandates that state agencies and state-funded organizations share anonymous human trafficking data.
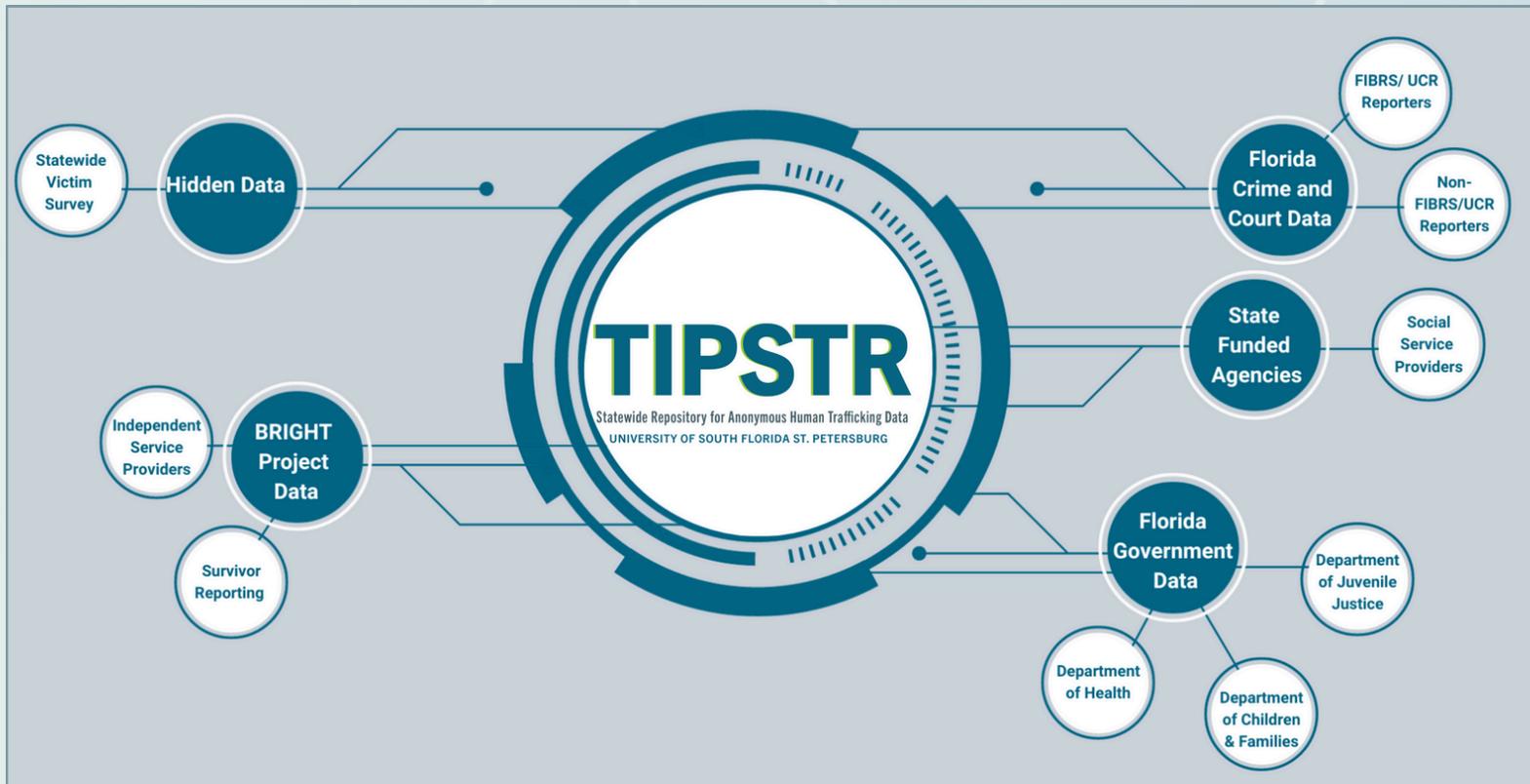
TIPSTR PURPOSE

- **Collect and Analyze Anonymous Data**
  - To provide data regarding the magnitude and trends in human trafficking throughout the State of Florida
- **Informing Statewide**
  - To inform efforts among law enforcement agencies, state agencies, and others to better apprehend and prosecute those who engage in human trafficking
- **Evaluating Effectiveness**
  - To provide data regarding the efficacy of various state-funded initiatives to combat human trafficking and support evidence-based decision-making regarding the state's investments in these initiatives
- **Better Serve Survivors**
  - To provide data to assist in determining which intervention strategies have been most effective

IN ACCORDANCE WITH SB 7064, THE USF TIP LAB:

- Developed an efficient, user-friendly system for submitting anonymous human trafficking data at no additional cost to the required reporting entities in consultation with FDLE and other partners
- Collects, maintains, and analyzes data in TIPSTR to identify initiatives and interventions that are effectively combating human trafficking, prosecuting traffickers, and assisting survivors of human trafficking
- Actively collaborates with law enforcement and state agencies to report data on human trafficking investigations and prosecutions to aid agencies in the fight against human trafficking

The enactment of SB 7064 demonstrates Florida's efforts to lead the nation in the fight against human trafficking.

Image Source: Governor Ron DeSantis - Twitter/X

Governor Ron DeSantis signed SB 7064 into law in 2023, creating Florida's first statewide repository for human trafficking data to be housed and operated by the USF TIP Lab. This unprecedented legislation requires state agencies and service providers, as well as other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that serve victims of human trafficking through state or federal funding, to contribute all human trafficking-related data to the statewide repository.

Image Source: West Palm Beach News, WPEC

The unification of human trafficking data collected throughout the state provides a more accurate picture of the prevalence and patterns related to human trafficking. Understanding the magnitude and trends of human trafficking is crucial in effectively combating this heinous crime. The repository also informs evaluations of state-funded initiatives and enables the development of a cohesive, data-driven statewide anti-human trafficking strategy.

The absence of granular, localized data impedes the ability of policymakers, law enforcement, and service providers to effectively allocate resources and tailor interventions to high-risk areas and the most vulnerable populations. The unified statewide repository addresses this critical data gap, providing a comprehensive assessment of human trafficking incidents, hotspots, trends, and community risk and resilience factors.

III. Data Results and Findings

The findings in this report are based on data collected from reporting entities in accordance with SB 7064 by the USF TIP Lab for 2024. The findings of this report are drawn from the HT data shared with TIPSTR. HT data are only available where frontline agencies and other data-producing organizations are operating and able to collect and share their data (IOM & UNODC, 2023). Hence, HT data may not be available in all counties or regions of Florida, and in some areas where data do exist and are shared, they may not be comprehensive. As a result, when interpreting HT data, it is important to note that large quantities of HT incidents or victims of trafficking identified in a region do not necessarily indicate a higher prevalence of HT. Indeed, it could be equally indicative of an effective counter-trafficking response and/or frontline agencies with strong data collection capacity. Secondly, the HT data for this report is derived from identified HT incidents, victims, or perpetrators, which should be understood as a sample from the largely unidentified population of HT incidents, victims, or perpetrators. As a result, the findings from the sample may be biased and not representative.

Findings are organized around the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) five Ps: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Policy, and Partnership.

Enacted in 2000, TVPA establishes a framework addressing prevention, protection, and prosecution for the federal government to combat human trafficking. This legislation has been reauthorized several times to strengthen and enhance anti-trafficking efforts, evolving to include policy and partnership as key components of the framework.

What are the Five Ps?

Prevention - Raising awareness, educating the public, addressing risk factors

Protection - Safeguarding rights and well-being of victims, providing services

Prosecution - Criminalizing human trafficking offenses, holding offenders accountable

Policy - Developing and implementing policies supporting anti-trafficking efforts

Partnership - Highlighting collaboration between law enforcement, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community organizations

Prevention

Prevention

Prevention focuses on reducing the risk of HT by raising awareness, disseminating accurate and targeted information, educating vulnerable populations, and implementing measures to prevent HT from occurring. Much of what has been labeled prevention is actually intervention and prevention of revictimization after initial exploitation in HT has already occurred. Primary prevention, which aims to change the environmental and situational factors that facilitate HT, is rarely attempted. However, due to the devastating consequences of HT, prevention is the first and most urgent focal area to be considered when addressing HT.
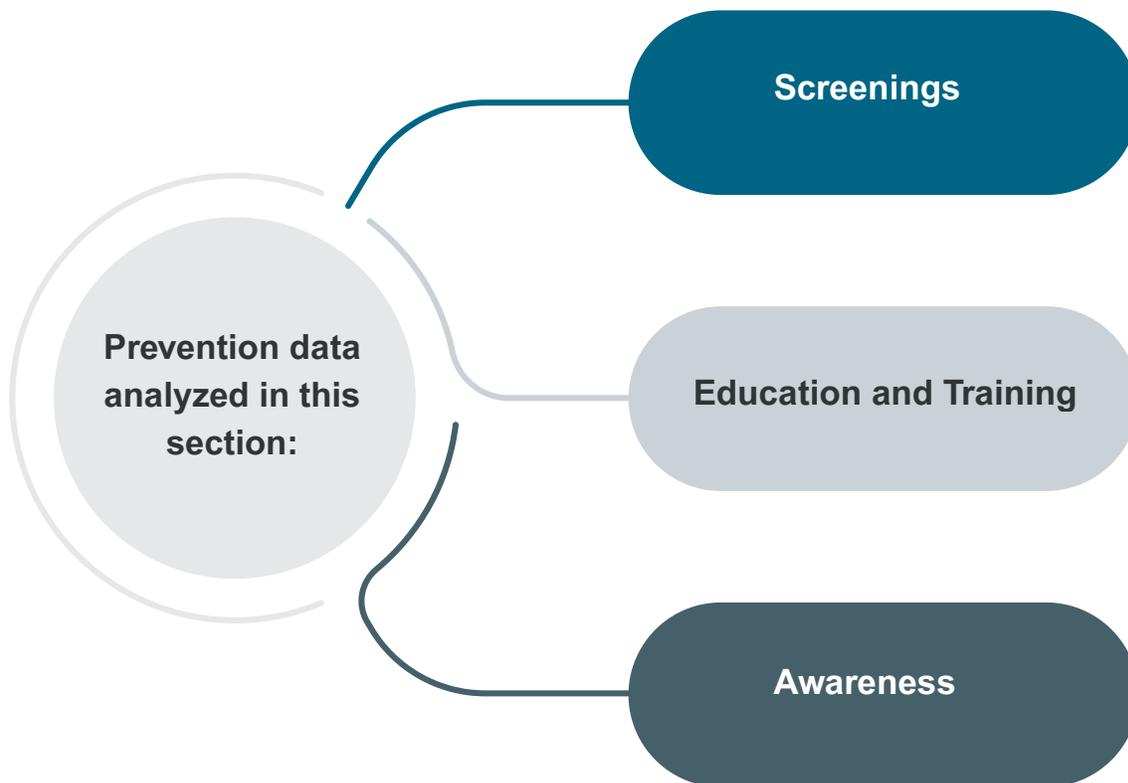
Prevention data analyzed in this section:

- Screenings
- Education and Training
- Awareness

In 2014, CS/CS/HB 7141 was passed and signed into law, establishing the Florida Statewide Council on Human Trafficking and Florida's local human trafficking task forces. This statute required DCF, DJJ, and lead agencies to participate in task forces or similar organizations to coordinate local responses to human trafficking and mandated that DCF and DCF employ screening instruments to identify appropriate services for sexually exploited children.

In 2019, the State Board of Education approved Rule 6A-1.094124, making Florida the first state to mandate the delivery of child trafficking prevention education for grades K-12 students. This rule requires school districts to document the delivery of the required instruction, submit an annual implementation plan to the commissioner, post the plan on the school district website by December 1st, and submit an annual report to the commissioner by July 1st to verify instruction completion.

In May 2025, HB 1237 was signed into law. This legislation requires the Department of Education (DOE) to identify a free training curriculum regarding human trafficking awareness by December 1st, 2025. Each public school, including charter schools, must require that all instructional personnel, administrative personnel, and educational support personnel who have contact with students receive training on human trafficking awareness.

Human Trafficking Screenings

The Florida Screenings Data represents human trafficking screenings conducted by the <u>Department of Children and Families (DCF)</u> and the <u>Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)</u> using the <u>Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST)</u>.

In 2014, the Florida State Legislature amended the Florida Safe Harbor Act of 2012 to require the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to jointly develop a tool for identifying, assessing, and locating youth who may be victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC) (Florida Safe Harbor Act, 2012). In 2015, the Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST) was developed to identify youth at high risk or currently experiencing sex and/or labor trafficking in efforts to enhance identification efforts.

Organizations may complete more than one screening for an individual as needed, or the same individual may be screened by more than one organization. The Florida Screenings Data includes information on location, demographics, indicators, and screening results. Interpretation of location data varies by the organization conducting the screening. For DCF screenings, location refers to the youth's home county or place of origin. For DJJ screenings, location refers to the judicial circuit where the youth's case is being processed.

Indicator	Risk Focus	Indicator	Risk Focus
Evidence of Coercion to Stay on the Run	Asses whether youth has been prevented from returning home while on a run episode through tactics such as force, threats, coercion or manipulation.	**Evidence of Unsafe Living Environment**	Asses whether youth is in unstable or precarious living conditions, lack of safety or adult supervision, potentially exposing them to trafficking risk, or have previous contact with child protective services.
Evidence of Sexual Activities for Money, Support, or Gifts	Assess whether youth has performed sexual activities (i.e., dancing, stripping, posing) in exchange for survival needs or material goods while away from home.	**Evidence of Deceptive Payment Practices**	Assess whether youth has experienced unfair or deceptive practices related to employment, such as unpaid or underpaid work.
Evidence of Compensation for Sexual Activities	Assess more broadly any situation where youth or others have received compensation for youth's engagement in sexual activities, constituting commercial sexual exploitation.	**Evidence of Forced Labor**	Assess whether youth has been forced or coerced into work situations they cannot freely leave.
Evidence of Inability to Leave	Assess whether youth has been physically confined, movement restricted, or otherwise prevented from leaving a place.	**Evidence of Unsafe Online Activity**	Assess whether youth engages in risky or unsafe online behaviors that may expose youth to online exploitation and recruitment.
Evidence of Forced Identity Deception	Assess whether youth has been forced or coerced into using false identification documents for work or other purposes.	**Evidence of Forced Tattooing/Branding**	Assess whether youth has physical marks (i.e., brands, trafficking-related imagery) that may indicate control, marking, or ownership by traffickers.
Evidence of Sexual Exploitation	Assess whether youth has been pressured or forced to engage in unwanted sexual activities (i.e., physical/sexual contact, sexual abuse) both inside and out of the home.	**Evidence of Excessive Running Away**	Assess whether youth has a pattern of frequent and/or prolonged runs from home, which may increase vulnerability to exploitation.
Evidence of Potential Trafficking	Synthesized parent/guardian observations about concerned patterns of behavior (i.e., unexplained phones, money, and/or gifts, verification of tattoos).	**Evidence of Questionable Support While Away**	Asses whether youth has received suspicious financial or material support during runaway episodes. This may be an indication of risky or exploitative relationships or engagements in illegal activities for survival.

Table 1: A Description of the HTST Indicators and Risk Focus

The HTST consists of 5 key sections, broken down into 14 trafficking indicators encompassing a total of 55 questions. These indicators are designed to capture both behavioral and environmental risk factors associated with youth trafficking, including an unsafe living environment, unsafe online activity, illegal labor practices, runaway history, sexual exploitation, and more. The tool is designed to assess the likelihood that the screened youth is a victim of trafficking, ranging from *Definitely Not* to *Definitely Is*. Table 1 provides a brief breakdown of each HTST indicator and the risk factors or behaviors each indicator is designed to assess during the screening process.

Human Trafficking Screenings
Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) employs a human trafficking screening for at-risk youth involved in the child welfare system. Under DCF implementation, the tool is primarily administered by CPIs after engaging in multiple trauma-informed conversations with the youth and collateral contacts. CPIs are prompted to conduct the assessment on youth after a youth is identified as having at least one of fifteen triggers, such as a report of suspected trafficking, multiple runaway incidents, self-acknowledgment of trafficking, engaging in inappropriate sexual behaviors, etc. This is typically done through the Florida child welfare system as an investigative tool in child maltreatment investigations, with data entered electronically since 2024 by staff who receive specialized training on human trafficking and trauma-informed practices. In 2024, DCF screened a total of 669 youth throughout the state of Florida, displayed by county in Figure 1. The darker the color, the more screenings that occurred in that county.
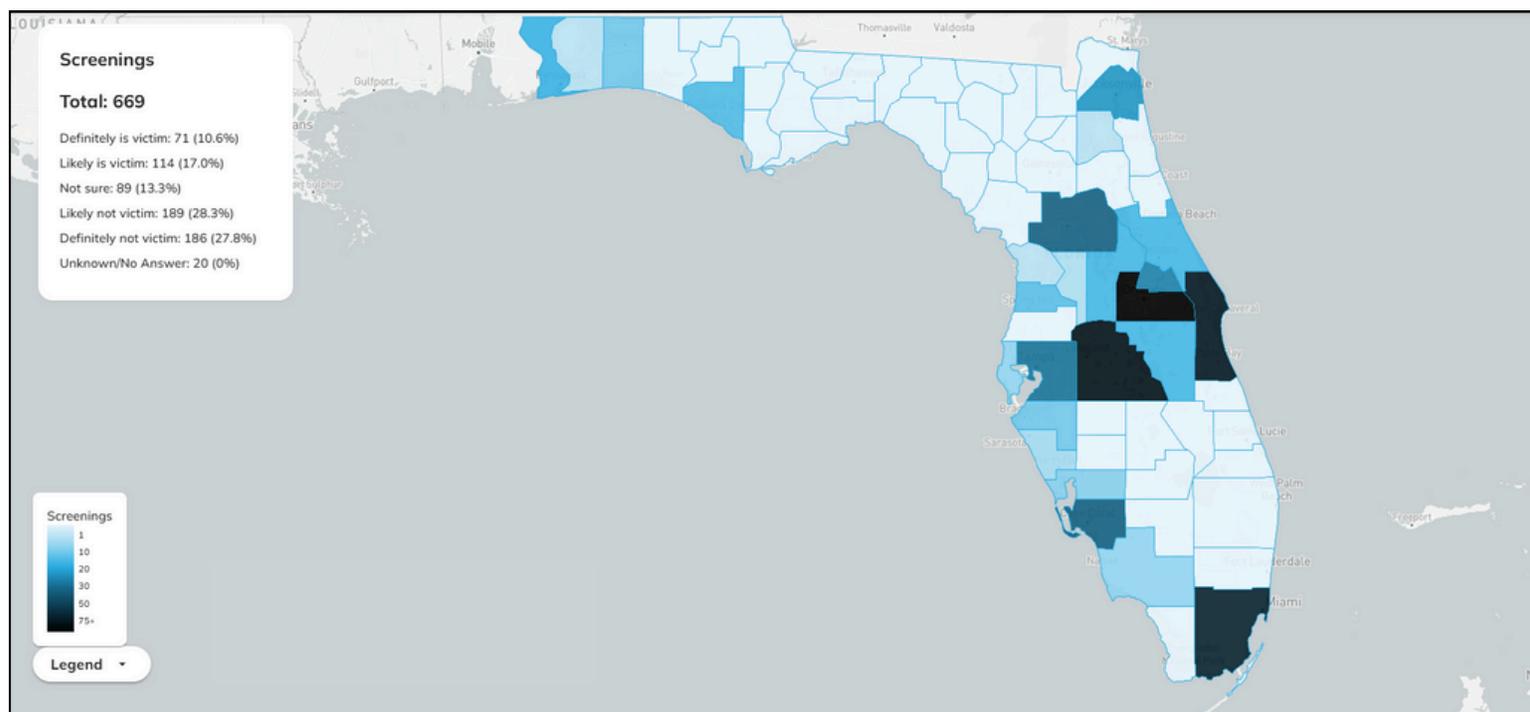
Figure 1: Total DCF Screenings by County*

Figure 2 below displays DCF HTST screenings based on the screener observed likelihood that the youth is a victim of trafficking. The tool is designed to assess the likelihood that the screened youth is a victim of trafficking, ranging from *Definitely Not* to *Definitely Is*. This determination is made by the screener after the completion of the HTST, prior to the completion of the final investigation results.

Of the 669 screenings completed by DCF in 2024, 10.6% were observed to be *Definitely Is*, 17% were observed to be *Likely Is*, 13.3% were observed to be *Not Sure*, 28.3% were observed to be *Likely Not*, and 27.8% were observed to be *Definitely Not* for the likelihood of trafficking victimization.
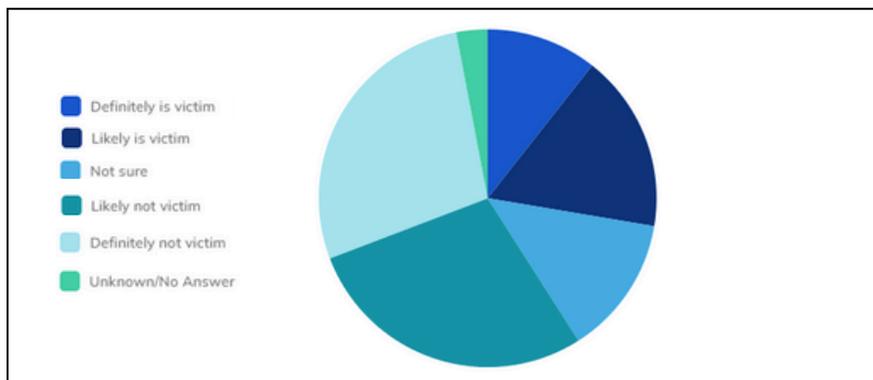
Figure 2: DCF Screenings by Victim Status*

Figure 3: DCF Screenings by Location (All Screenings)
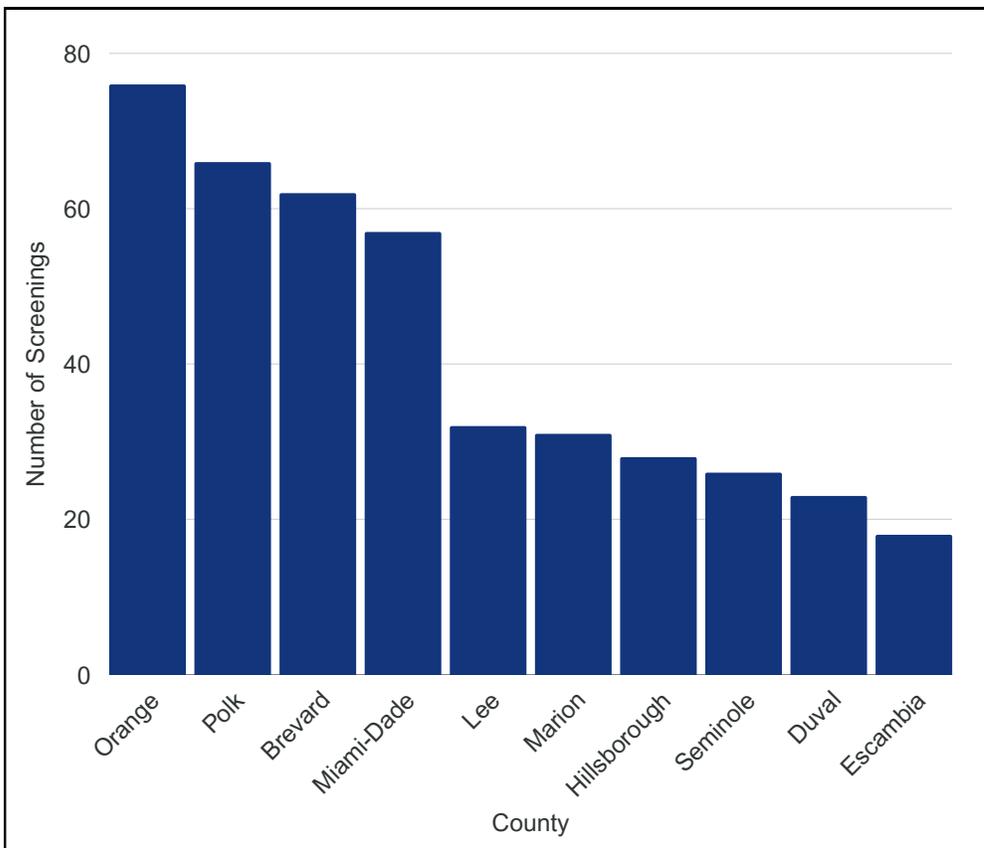
Figure 3 displays the prevalence of screenings by county, focusing on the ten counties with the greatest number of HTST screenings conducted. Orange County (11.4%) conducted the highest prevalence of HTST screenings, followed by Polk County (9.9%), Brevard County (9.3%), and Miami-Dade County (8.5%).

ALACHUA, BROWARD, CALHOUN, CITRUS, CLAY, COLUMBIA, DESOTO, DIXIE, FLAGLER, GILCHRIST, HARDEE, HENDRY, HIGHLANDS, HOLMES, INDIAN RIVER, JACKSON, LEON, LEVY, MARTIN, PALM BEACH, PASCO, PUTNAM, SANTA ROSA, ST. LUCIE, & WALTON ALL CONDUCTED <1% OF SCREENINGS EACH DURING THE YEAR 2024.

Figure 4 displays the prevalence of screenings per capita by county, focusing on the ten counties with the most HTST screenings conducted per 100,000 residents. Brevard County (14%) conducted the most screenings per capita in 2024. This is followed by Bay County (12%), Polk County (12%), Marion County (11%), and Hernando County (10%).
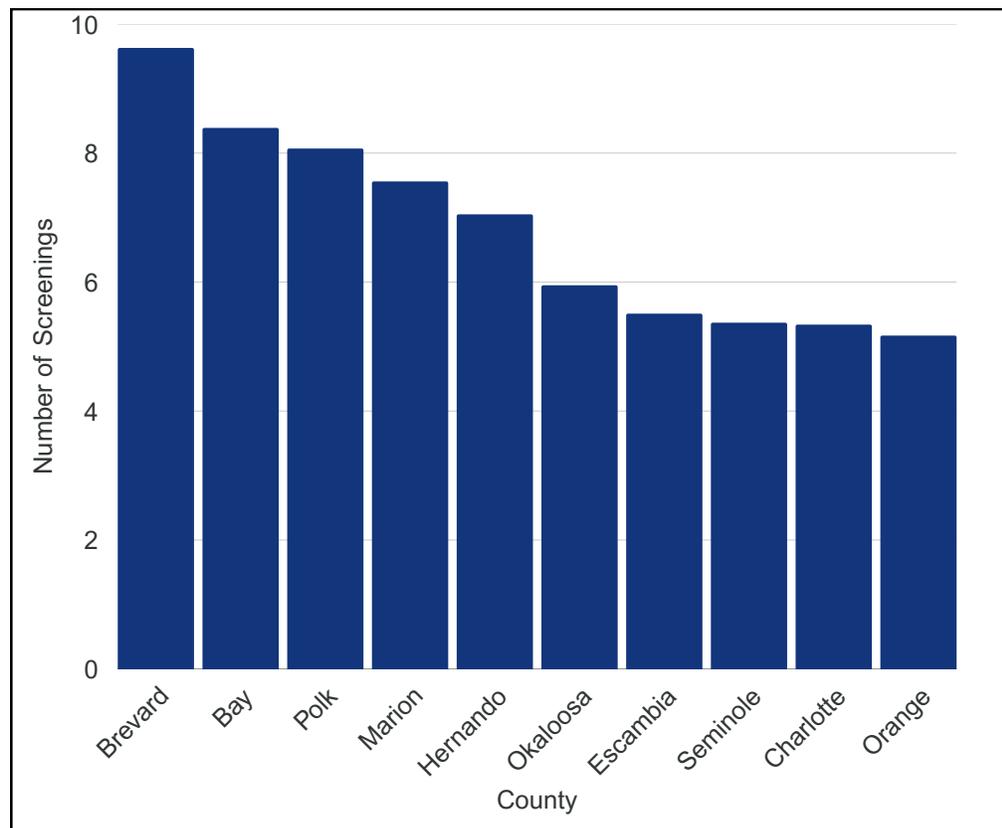
Figure 4: DCF Screenings by Location and Population (All Screenings)

Race Characteristics

54.9%

White

36.8%

Black

7.6%

Other
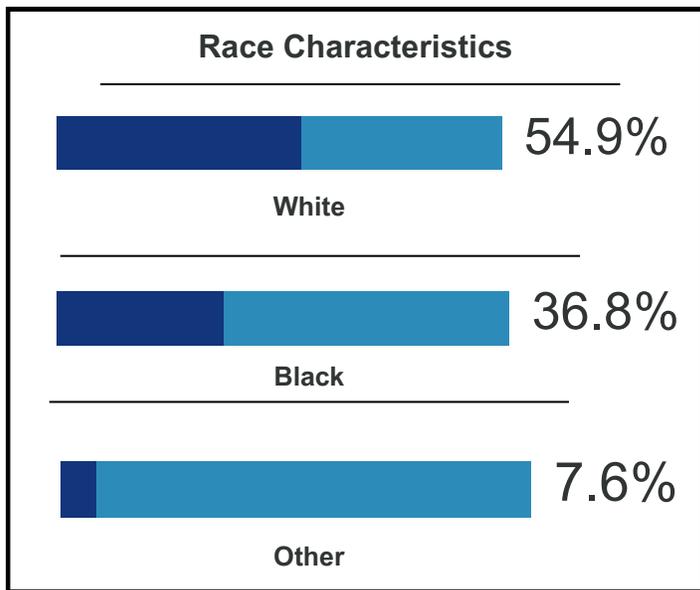
Figure 5: DCF Screenings by Race (All screenings)

Figure 5 displays the prevalence of HTST screenings by race. A majority of youth screened for human trafficking by DCF were White or Caucasian (54.9%), followed by Black or African American (36.8%). 7.6% of screened youth fell into an Other-Race category, while <1% of youth were identified as Asian, American Indian, or Alaska Native decent.

Figure 6 displays the prevalence of screening based on ethnicity. A majority of youth were identified as non-Hispanic or Latino, though 21.5% of youth screened for human trafficking by DCF were identified as Hispanic or Latino heritage.

Ethnicity Characteristics

21.5%

Hispanic or Latino

78.5%

Not Hispanic or Latino
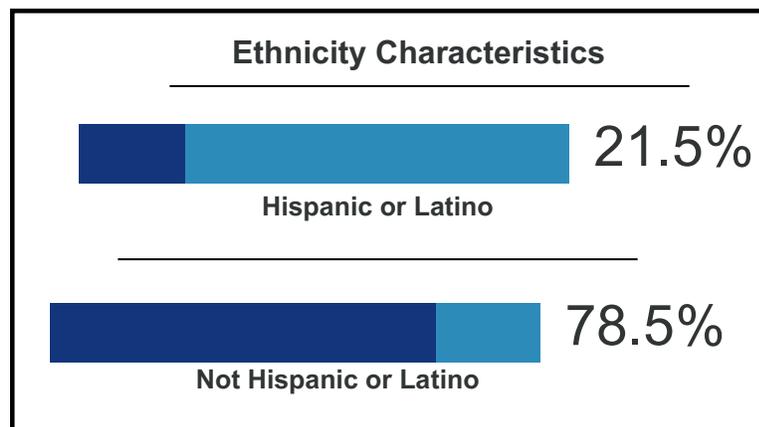
Figure 6: DCF Screenings by Ethnicity (All screenings)

16.1% Male
83.9% Female
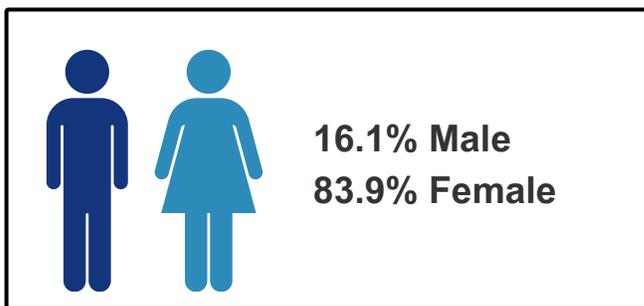
Figure 7: DCF Screenings by Sex (All screenings)

Figure 7 displays the prevalence of HTST screenings based on the sex of youth. A majority of youth screened by DCF were female (83.9%). Only 16.1% of the youth screened were male.

Youth screened by DCF for human trafficking ranged in age from 0 to 18 years old. A majority of youth screened were between the ages of 15 and 17 years old, with the most youth being screened at 17 years old. The mean age of screened youth was approximately 15 years old (see Figure 9).
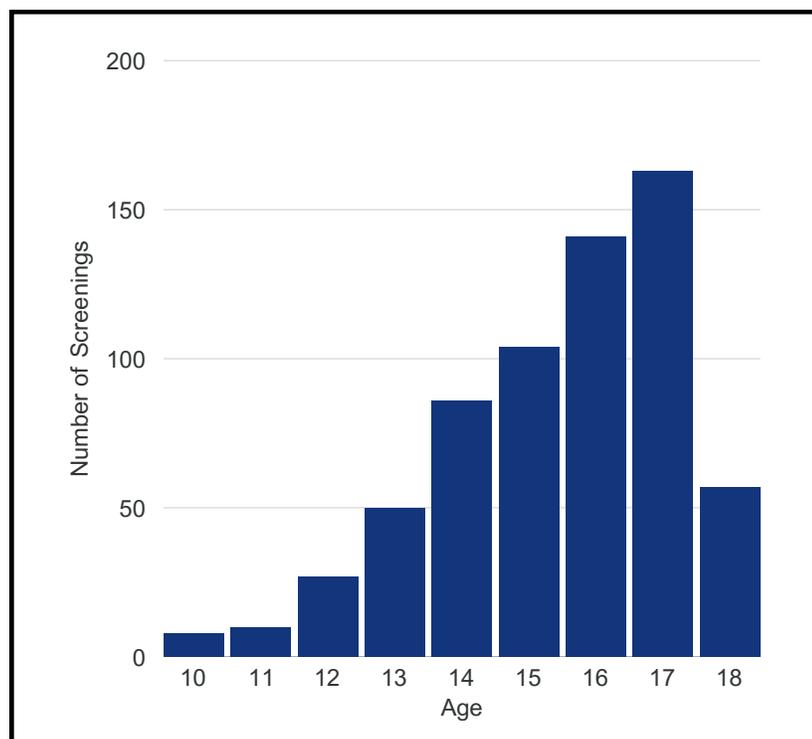
Figure 8: DCF Screenings by Age (All screenings)
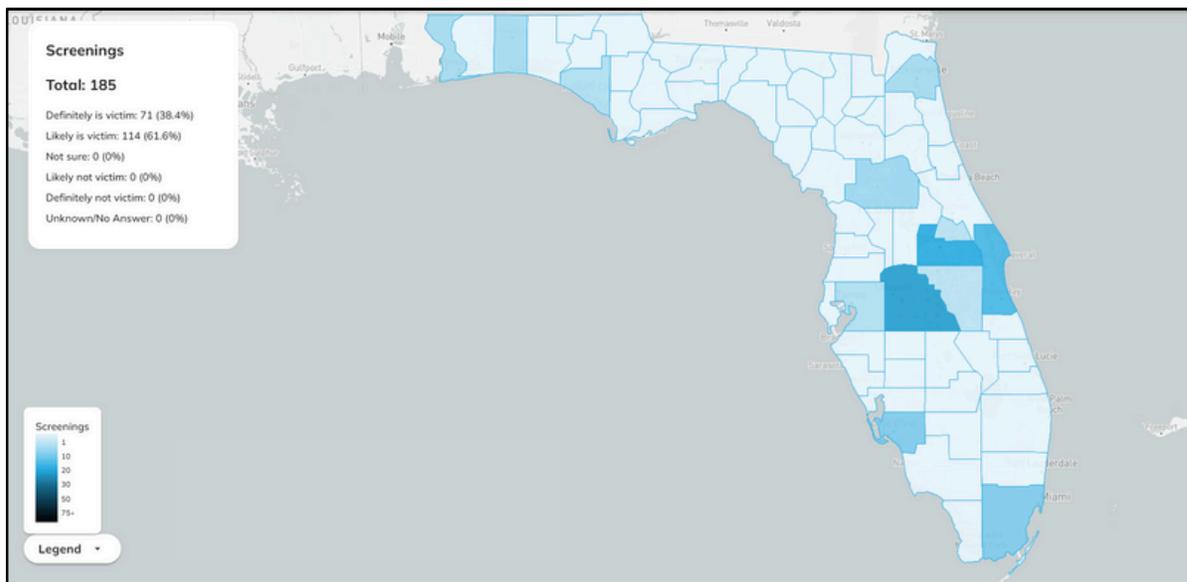
Figure 9 displays HTST screenings resulting in a CPI observation that a youth is *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of human trafficking.

A total of 185 screenings resulted in an observed *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* for potential youth trafficking victimization.

Figure 9: DCF Screenings per County by Victim Status (*Definitely Is Victim* and *Likely Is Victim*)*

Figure 10 displays the prevalence of screenings resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking by county, focusing on the 10 counties with most observed potential trafficking cases. Polk County (n=22) has the greatest number of cases, resulting in a screener observed likelihood that a youth is *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a potential trafficking victim at 15% (n=22). Polk County is followed by Orange County with 14% (n =20) (20), Brevard County with 12% (n=17), Lee County with 8% (n=12), and Miami-Dade County with 8% (n=12).

Figure 10: DCF Screenings by Location (*Definitely Is Victim* and *Likely Is Victim*)

Figure 11 displays the prevalence of HTST indicators for screenings, resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a possible trafficking victim. Evidence of potential trafficking, as identified by the parent/guardian, had the highest prevalence in these screenings (75%). Additionally, endorsements for indicators, such as Evidence of Sexual Activities for Money Support or Gifts (59%), Evidence of Excessive Running Away (50%), Evidence of Compensation for Sexual Activities (49%), Evidence of Sexual Exploitation (43%), and Evidence of Questionable Financial Support (40%) were highly prevalent amongst screenings with a *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* designation.
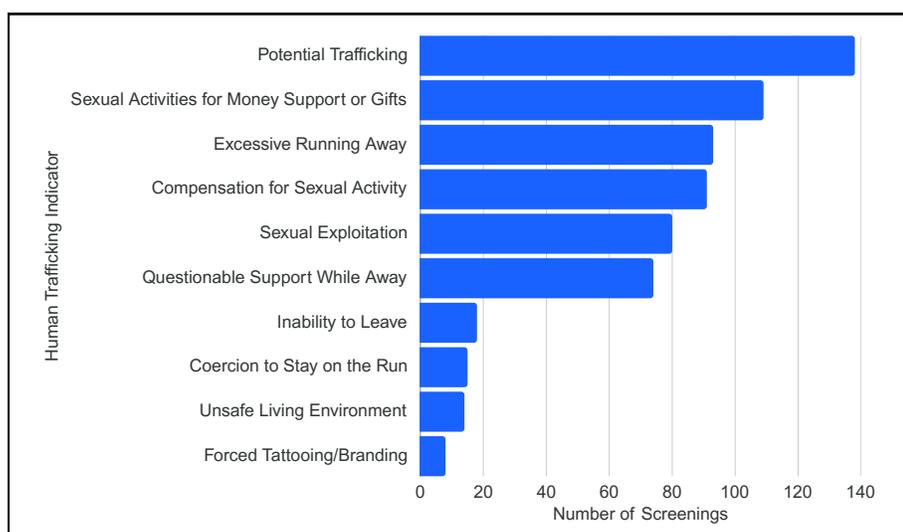
Figure 11: Prevalence of Human Trafficking Indicators in DCF Screenings (*Definitely Is Victim* and *Likely Is Victim*)

Race Characteristics

62.2%

White

32.4%

Black

5.4%

Other
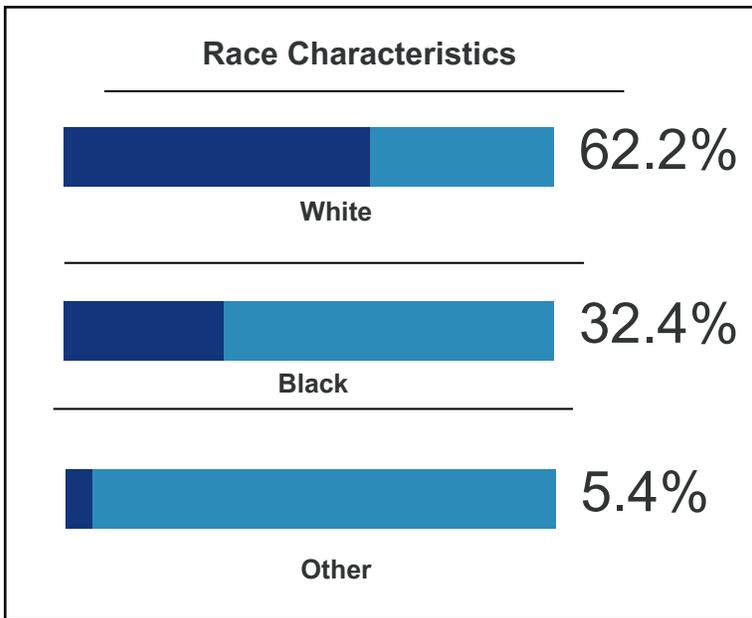
Figure 12: DCF Screenings by Race (*Definitely Is Victim* and *Likely Is Victim*)

Figure 12 displays the prevalence of HTST screenings, resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking by race. A majority of youth screened for human trafficking by DCF were White or Caucasian (62.2%), followed by Black or African American (32.4%). 5.4% of screened youth fell into an Other-Race category.

Figure 13 displays the prevalence of HTST screenings, resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking based on ethnicity. A majority of youth were identified as non-Hispanic or Latino, though 20.5% of youth screened for human trafficking by DCF were identified as Hispanic or Latino.

Ethnicity Characteristics

20.5%

Hispanic or Latino

79.5%

Not Hispanic or Latino
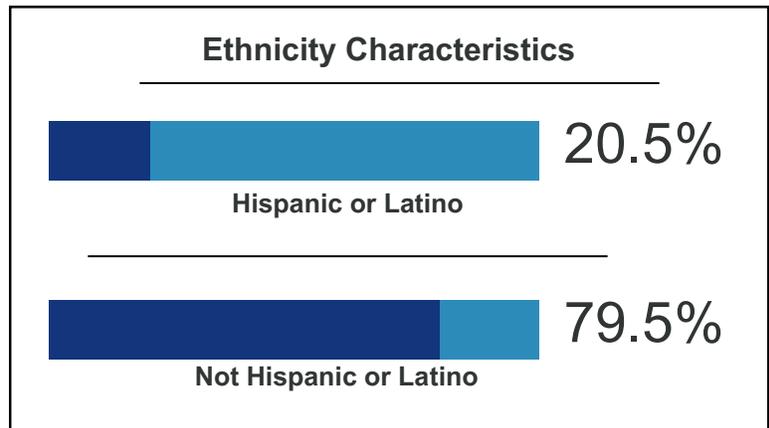
Figure 13: DCF Screenings by Ethnicity (*Definitely Is Victim* and *Likely Is Victim*)

11.9% Male
88.1% Female
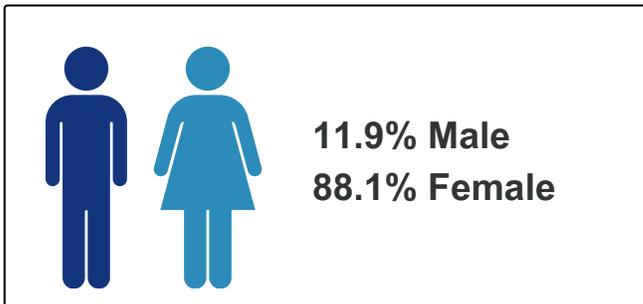
Figure 14: DCF Screenings by Sex (*Definitely Is Victim* and *Likely Is Victim*)

Figure 14 displays the prevalence of HTST screenings, resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking based on the sex of the youth. A majority of youth were female (88.1%). Only 11.9% of those screened were male.

Figure 15 displays the prevalence of HTST screenings, resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking based on age. Youth whose screening resulted in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking ranged in age from 0 to 18 years old. A majority of youth were between ages 15 to 17 years old, with the most youth with screenings resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking being 17 years old.
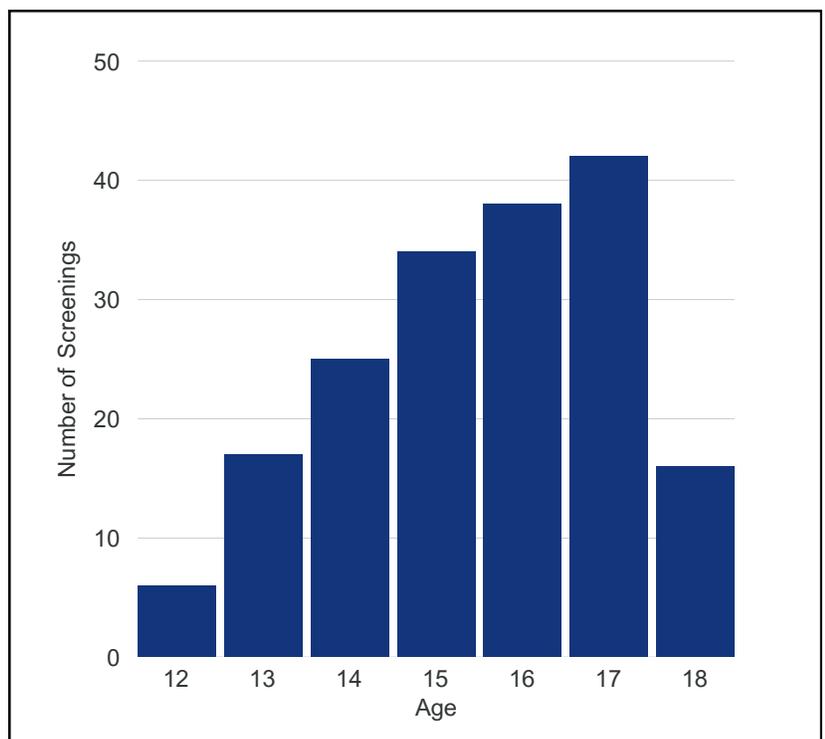
Figure 15: DCF Screenings by Age (All screenings)

Child Protective Investigation Data
Department of Children and Families

Figure 16 displays the number of verified child trafficking maltreatment allegations in Florida per county in 2024. A total of 164 HTST screenings resulted in a verified human trafficking case. A majority of these cases identified were in Orange County (n=26, 16%), followed by Polk County (n=23, 14%). These counties conducted the highest number of HTST screenings. This strong association between the number of screenings and the number of identified victims indicates that screenings are assisting with the identification of youth victims and could suggest that these counties have higher numbers of identified victims due to greater response efforts dedicated to identifying victims rather than being solely indicative of greater risk for youth in the county.
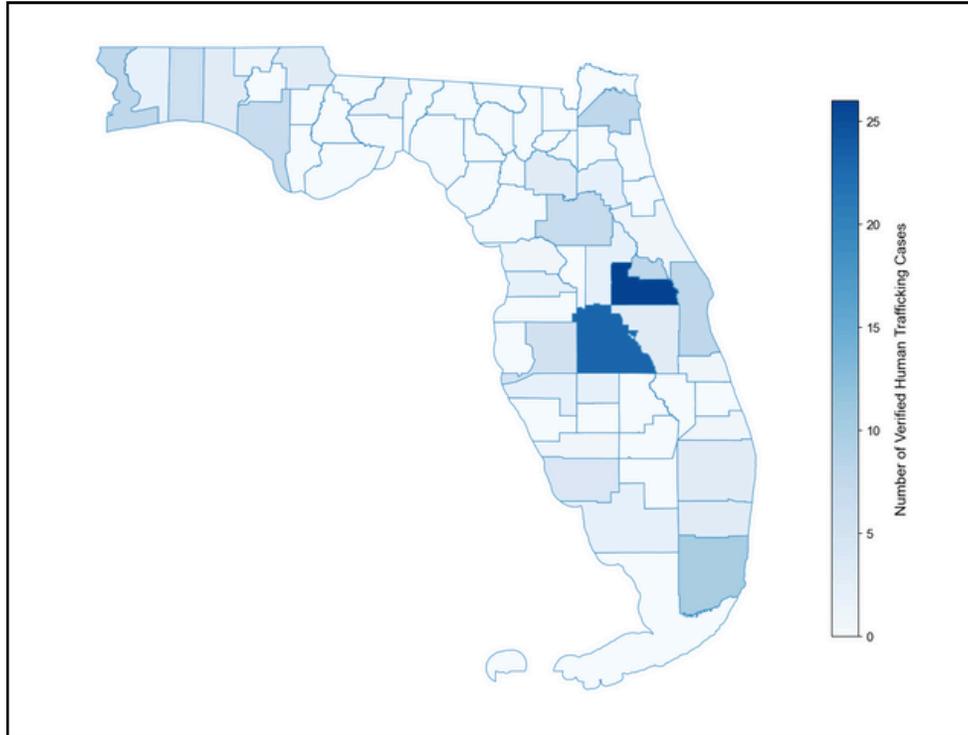
Figure 16: County Location of Verified Child Human Trafficking Cases Based on Child Protective Investigations

Table 2 displays the percentage of verified cases in relation to the HTST screening outcomes. These data are comprised of HTST screenings by DCF in 2024 that resulted in a verified outcome. Under DCF screening procedures, after the HTST and investigation of child maltreatment allegations are completed, CPIs make a determination of whether the youth is a victim of trafficking. Investigations can be closed as *(1) verified, (2) not substantiated, or (3) no indicator*.

HTST Classification Victim Status	Verified HT Cases	
	n	%
Definitely Not	6	4%
Likely Not	14	9%
Not Sure	19	12%
Likely Is	67	41%
Definitely Is	54	33%
Unknown/No Answer	4	2%

Table 2: HTST Classification for Verified HT Cases

A majority of verified human trafficking cases (76%) were cases in which the screener observed that the youth was *Definitely Is* (33%) or *Likely Is* (41%) a victim of human trafficking. These findings indicate the HTST screener is useful in assisting with the identification of youth victims of trafficking.

(1) "Verified" is used when a preponderance of the credible evidence supports the allegations of human trafficking.
(2) "Not Substantiated" is used when there is credible evidence which does not meet the standard of preponderance to support the allegations of human trafficking.
(3) "No Indicators" is used when there is no credible evidence to support the allegations of human trafficking.

Missing Child Data
Department of Children and Families

In 2024, The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCEMC) reported that 1 in 7 cases of missing children were likely victims of child sex trafficking. Provided by DCF, the following data consists of a summary of missing child alerts in 2024. In 2024, there were 742 missing child reports made. These reports were made to local law enforcement agencies across several Florida counties (see Figure 17).

The majority of reports were made to law enforcement agencies in Miami-Dade County (n=470, 63%), followed by Hillsborough County (n=47, 6%), and Orange County (n=38, 5%). Figure 17 displays the counties with the highest number of alerts. The remaining counties had less than 10 alerts in 2024.

It is important to note that 62 youth accounted for the total 742 missing child reports in 2024. The majority of youth were reported missing at least two times (see Figure 17).

Missing Child Alerts in 2024

Total Number of Alerts: 742

Total Number of Youth: 62
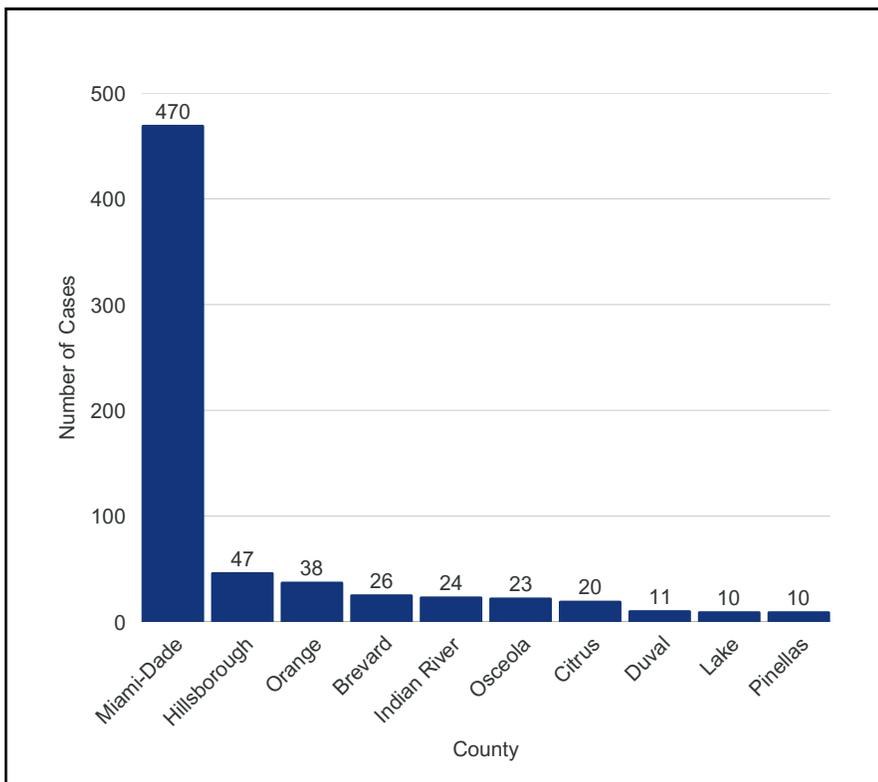
Figure 17: Missing Child Alerts Across Florida by County
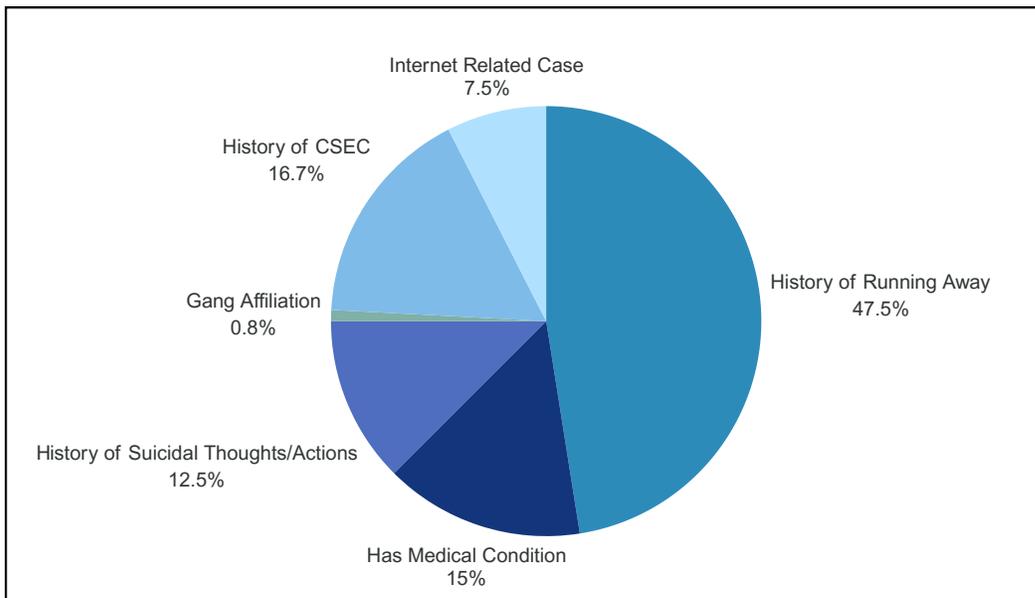
Figure 18: Missing Child Alerts Across Florida by Behavioral Risk Factor

These youth also presented with several behavioral risk factors (see Figure 18). The majority of the youth reported missing had a previous history of running away (n=57, 92%) and a history of drug and/or alcohol use (n=34, 55%). Approximately 32% of youth reported missing had a known history of CSEC (see Figure 18).

Human Trafficking Screenings
Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) data is from DJJ's version of the Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST). The HTST was jointly developed in 2014 by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the DJJ. The tools are similar, with certain key differences. The DJJ version is designed to screen for potential indicators of trafficking that may lead DJJ staff to report possible child abuse. The DJJ version of the HTST is administered by DJJ and DJJ-contracted staff to youth at certain contact points with the juvenile justice system through a semi-structured interview conducted utilizing Motivational Interviewing™ skills.
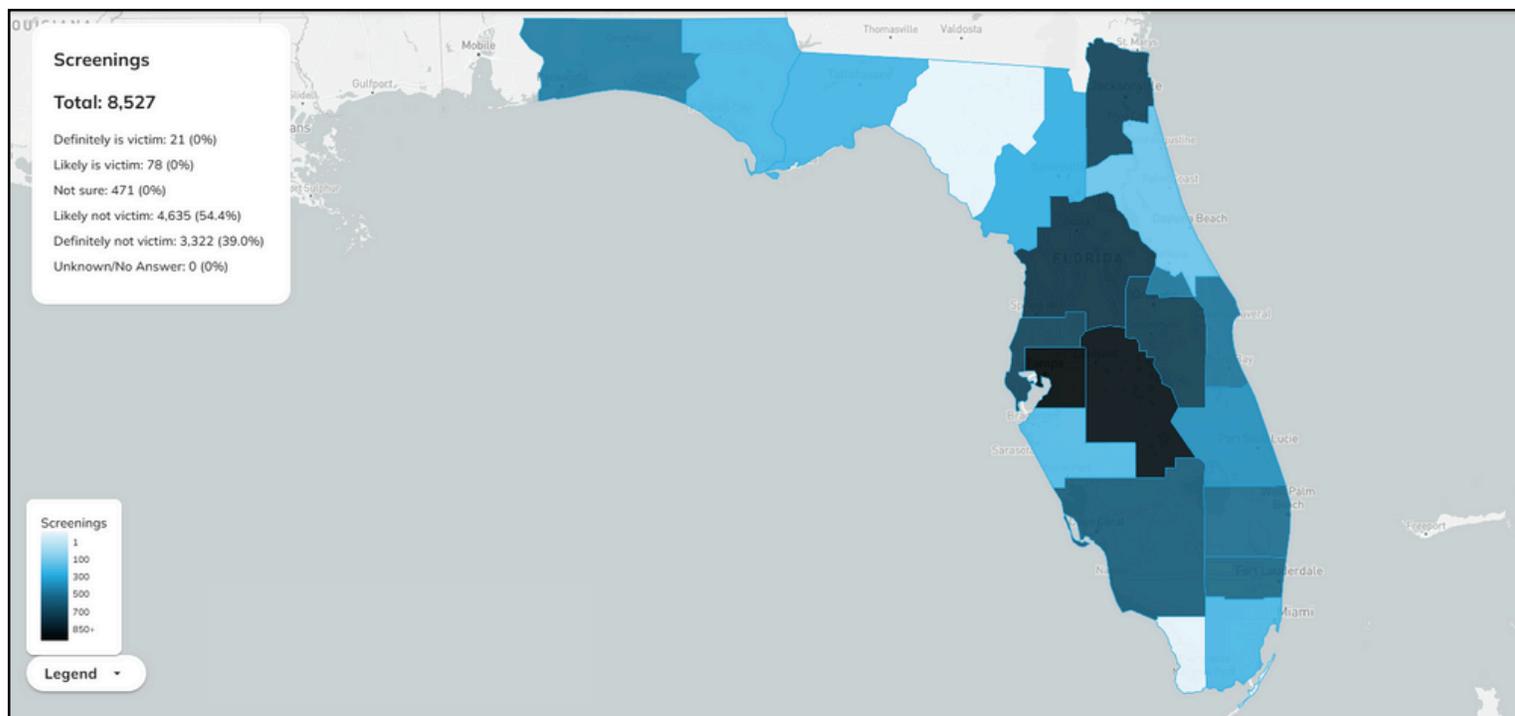
Figure 19: DJJ Screenings by Judicial Circuit for 2024*

Figure 19 displays DJJ HTST screenings based on the screener's observed likelihood that the youth is a victim of trafficking. This determination is made by the screener after the completion of the HTST.

Of the 8,527 screenings completed by DJJ in 2024, 0.2% (n=21) were observed to be *Definitely Is*, 0.9% (n=78) were observed to be *Likely Is*, 5.5% (n=471) were observed to be *Not Sure*, 54.4% (n=4,635) were observed to be *Likely Not*, and 39% (n=3,322) were observed to be *Definitely Not* for the likelihood of trafficking victimization (see Figure 20).
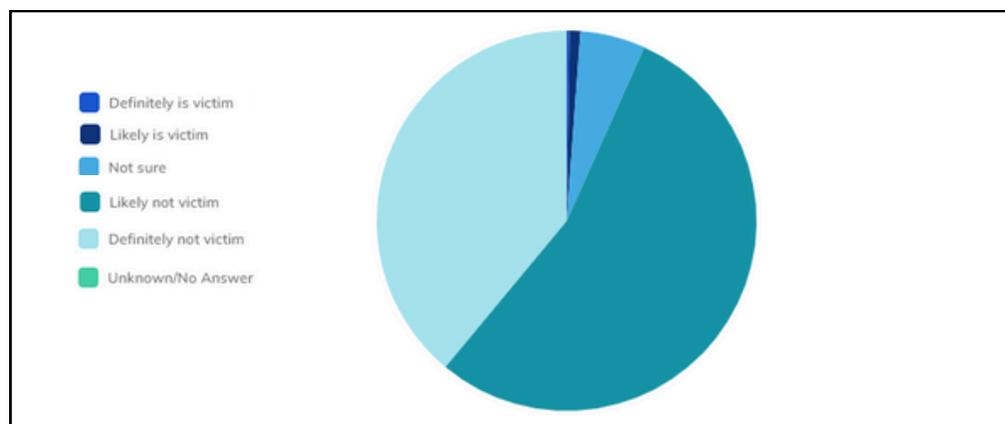
Figure 20: DJJ Screenings by Victim Status*

Variable	Category	Likely/Definitely Is Victim	Likely Not/Definitely Is Not Victim/Not sure	Significance
Total	N	99	8,428	
Sex	Female	87 (87.9%)	2,466 (29.3%)	***
Sex	Male	12 (12.1%)	5,962 (70.7%)	***
Race	Black	38 (38.4%)	4,988 (59.2%)	***
Race	White	61 (61.6%)	3,404 (40.4%)	***
Race	American Indian	0 (0.0%)	4 (0.0%)	ns
Race	Asian	0 (0.0%)	22 (0.3%)	ns
Race	Pacific Islander	0 (0.0%)	10 (0.1%)	ns
Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic	79 (79.8%)	7,064 (83.8%)	ns
Ethnicity	Hispanic	16 (16.2%)	1,201 (14.3%)	ns
Ethnicity	Jamaican	1 (1.0%)	34 (0.4%)	ns
Ethnicity	Haitian	3 (3.0%)	129 (1.5%)	ns
Age	Mean (SD)	15.91 (1.25)	15.62 (1.55)	*

Note: Significance calculated using chi-square tests for categorical variables and t-tests for continuous variables. *p¡0.05, **p¡0.01, ***p¡0.001, ns=not significant.

Table 3 demonstrates the demographic characteristics of the DJJ-screened youth classified by the screener as *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a victim of trafficking (n=99) in comparison to all other DJJ-screened youth (n=8,428). The higher-risk youth based on the screening classification were more likely to be White females in comparison to the other DJJ-screened youth classified as less likely trafficked. There were no substantial differences in age or ethnicity distribution when comparing the two subgroups.

Table 3: Demographics of DJJ-Screened Youth by Youth Classification According to the Screener Observation

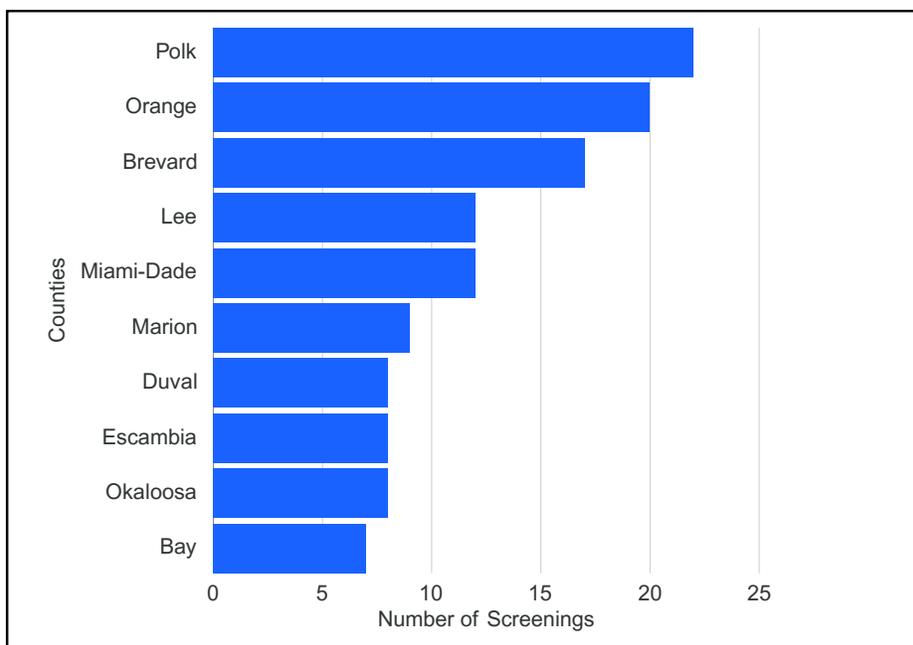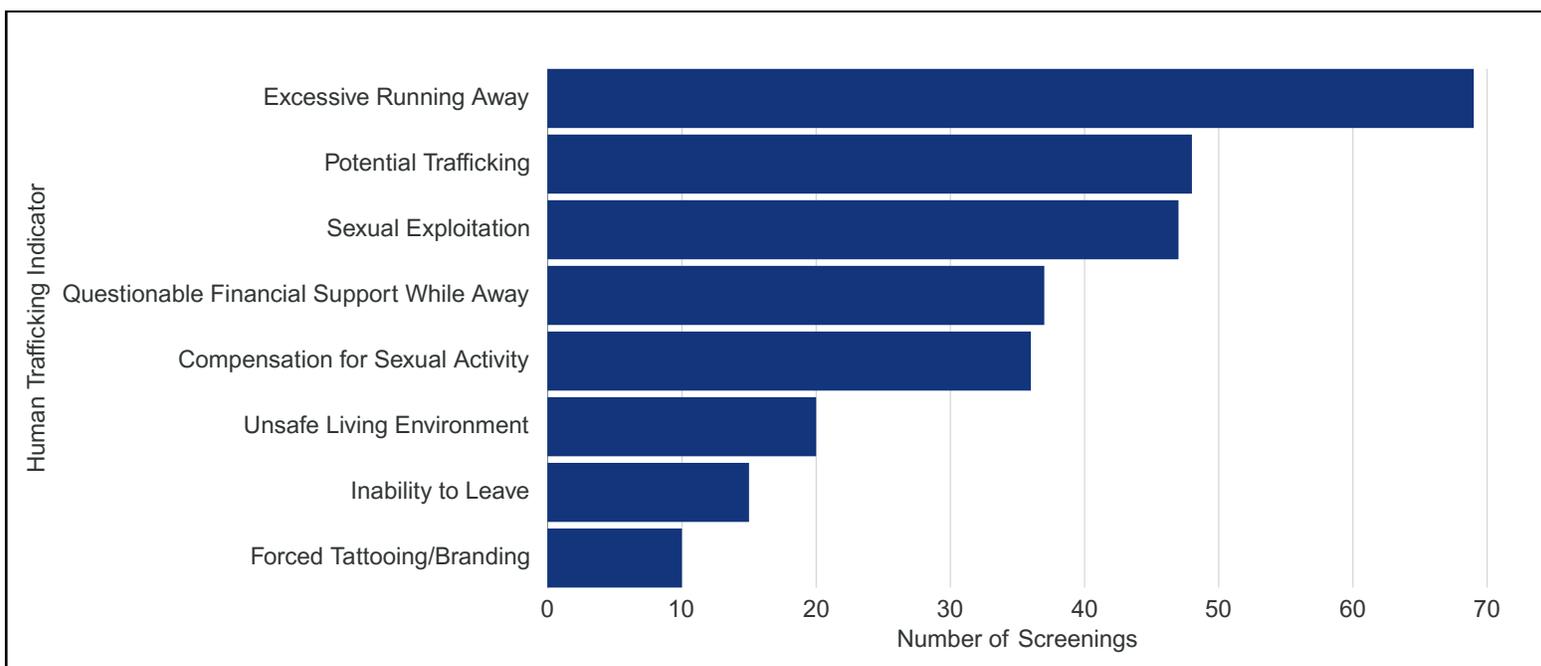Figure 21: DJJ Indicator Prevalence for Definitely Is Victim and Likely Is Victim

Figure 21 displays the prevalence of HTST indicators for screenings, resulting in a screener observed likelihood of *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* a possible trafficking victim. Evidence of Excessive Running Away had the highest prevalence in these screenings (70%). Additionally, endorsements for indicators such as Potential Trafficking (48%), Evidence of Sexual Exploitation (47%), Questionable Financial Support While Away (37%), and Evidence of Compensation for Sexual Activities (36%) were highly prevalent among screenings with a *Definitely Is* or *Likely Is* designation. For definitions of these indicators, see page 18.

Florida Statewide Victimization Survey
A Brief Snapshot

The full scope of human trafficking remains largely unknown (De Vries & Dettmeijer-Vermeulen, 2015). Decker (2015) notes that prevalence rates of human trafficking (HT) are notoriously difficult to gauge because "[o]ffenders are organized to prevent victimizations from being 'visible' to citizens, work to prevent victims from reporting their victimization to the police, and the police themselves typically fail to see the victims as 'true victims' and often treat them as offenders" (p. 291).

Due to the inherent limitations of official reporting of HT, victim surveys have been recognized as an essential methodological tool for HT research (ILO, 2011). The field of victimology has relied on self-report victimization surveys to uncover the prevalence and nature of different victimization experiences in the population (Fisher et al., 2000), including HT (Kulig, 2022). Hence, one of the most important sources of data for understanding the prevalence of HT victimization is HT victimization survey data.

Human trafficking victim survey data provide crucial information for TIPSTR. This data is crucial for bypassing issues related to the hidden figure of human trafficking, providing us with more precise prevalence rates and a more nuanced understanding of the variations of trafficking-based victimization occurring in Florida. To that end, survey data offers insight into instances of trafficking in Florida that *go unreported to law enforcement or social service providers*, given that human trafficking remains significantly underreported in official records.

The USF TIP Lab had **TWO MAIN OBJECTIVES** for the Florida Statewide Victimization Survey:

Develop and deploy an anonymous statewide survey to capture unreported trafficking victimization—revealing the "dark figure" of exploitation that never reaches police or formal agencies—providing a more comprehensive prevalence estimate than official law enforcement data alone.

Inform research, practice, policy, and other anti-trafficking efforts using a data-driven approach, which is crucial to effectively reducing and preventing human trafficking victimization in Florida.

The Statewide Victimization Survey was administered by YouGov and collected 2,500 responses from adult (18 years old or older) Florida residents. Due to the substantial sample size and through the use of statistical weighting, this survey sample is representative of the Florida population of adult residents, with most items having a 1% margin of error with a 95% confidence level.

The Florida Statewide Victimization Survey drew from previously validated measures of human trafficking and gathered data regarding three types of exploitation: (1) sex trafficking, (2) labor exploitation, and (3) cyber exploitation.

QYIT Screening Tool Measures:

1. It is not uncommon for people to stay in work situations that are risky or even dangerous, simply because they have no other options. *Have you ever worked or done other things in a place that made you feel scared or unsafe?*
2. Sometimes people are prevented from leaving an unfair or unsafe work situation by their employers. *Have you ever been afraid to leave or quit a work situation due to fears of violence or threats of harm to yourself or your family?*
3. Sometimes people who are homeless or who have difficulties with their families have very few options to survive or fulfill their basic needs, such as food and shelter. *Have you ever received anything in exchange for sex (e.g., a place to stay, gifts, or food)?*
4. Sometimes employers don't want people to know about the kind of work they have young employees doing. To protect themselves, they ask their employees to lie about the kind of work they are involved in. *Have you ever worked for someone who asked you to lie while speaking to others about the work you do?*

Overall Estimate of Human Trafficking

To gain an overall estimate of the prevalence of victims of human trafficking in Florida, the survey included the Quick Youth Indicators for Trafficking (QYIT) screener, which has been found effective at identifying human trafficking victims among homeless adult youth (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2019) and in hospital emergency room settings (Chisolm-Straker et al., 2021), and is the first screening tool that does not require a trained expert for administration. The screener has been found to be effective at both identifying those who have been trafficked (*sensitivity*) and accurately excluding those who have not (*specificity*). Sensitivity refers to how well a tool can reliably identify someone who is a trafficking victim. Specificity refers to how well a tool can reliably identify someone who is not a trafficking victim. The QYIT screener is the most researched and validated adult human trafficking screener available. As shown in Table 4, a QYIT score of 1 or more has high sensitivity and identifies 87% of true HT victims and correctly identifies 76% of respondents who have not been trafficked. A score of 2 or more has higher specificity, accurately identifying 96% of respondents who have not been trafficked, but has lower sensitivity (57%) and may miss many true HT victims. In the Florida survey, 9.4% of participants scored 2 or more on the QYIT.

An estimated **1.7M human trafficking survivors** in Florida may be in need of services.

	Distribution of QYIT Scores	Sensitivity	Specificity	Extrapolated Estimate of HT Victims in FL Based on Adult Population (N= 18,837,639)
Score of ≥ 1	24.8% (+/-1%)	86.67%	76.45%	
Score of ≥ 2*	9.4% (+/-1%)	56.67%	95.81%	**1,770,738**
Score of ≥ 3	3.2% (+/-1%)	40.00%	99.68%	
Score of ≥ 4	0.6% (+/-1%)	23.33%	100.00%	

Note*: Score of ≥1 correctly captures 86.67% of HT victims while a score of ≥2 correctly excludes 95.81% non-HT respondents. We used the more conservative score (i.e., Score of ≥2) to estimate the potential number of HT victims in Florida (Chisolm et al., 2019, 2021)

Table 4: Distribution of QYIT response and QYIT Sensitivity and Specificity and Extrapolated Estimate of HT Victims Based QYIT Score Applied to the Adult Population in Florida. *Table updated on 01/20/2026

Measuring Types of Trafficking and Exploitation

Based on the definitions in the TVPA (2000), the survey included *sex trafficking* items, asking if the respondent had engaged in a sex act in exchange for anything of value: 1) when under the age of 18 years old, or 2) because you were coerced, forced, or tricked when you were 18 years old or older. The survey included additional items indicating sexual exploitation with higher response rates. However, for this report, we are sharing the most conservative estimate.

Labor trafficking is difficult to identify and differentiate from other types of labor crime. However, the identification of labor trafficking is critical as the global estimates of the prevalence of labor trafficking are three times the prevalence of sex trafficking (77% vs. 23%) (ILO, 2022). The victim survey included items previously used to identify labor exploitation and labor trafficking (Zhang, 2021). These items asked respondents if they had experienced various forms of exploitation at work, ranging from sexual and physical assault to threats to them or their families, as well as restricting access to food, sleep, legal documents, or outside communication (Zhang, 2021).

Cyber exploitation may or may not involve human trafficking. However, it is often linked to human trafficking and can be utilized as a tool by human traffickers as a means of control and coercion. Items asked respondents if they had experienced image-based sexual abuse, the non-consensual creation or distribution of intimate or sexual content, spyware misuse, cyber abuse and harassment, and blackmail (or "sextortion"). (Results on page 47).

Victimizaton Survey Results

3.6%
Reported experiencing **sex trafficking as an minor**

4%
Reported experiencing **sex trafficking as an adult**

31.2%
Reported experiencing **labor exploitation and/or labor trafficking**

Figure 22: Percentages Reporting Ever Experiencing Sex Trafficking or Labor Exploitation

Sex Trafficking Of Minors

Of those who experienced **sex trafficking** as a minor...

... 58% experienced this in Florida

... 28% occurred in the last two years

... 66% told someone about it

... 12% reported to law enforcement

... 33% attempted to seek services or help

Figure 23: Characteristics of Survey Respondents Who Experienced Sex Trafficking as a Minor
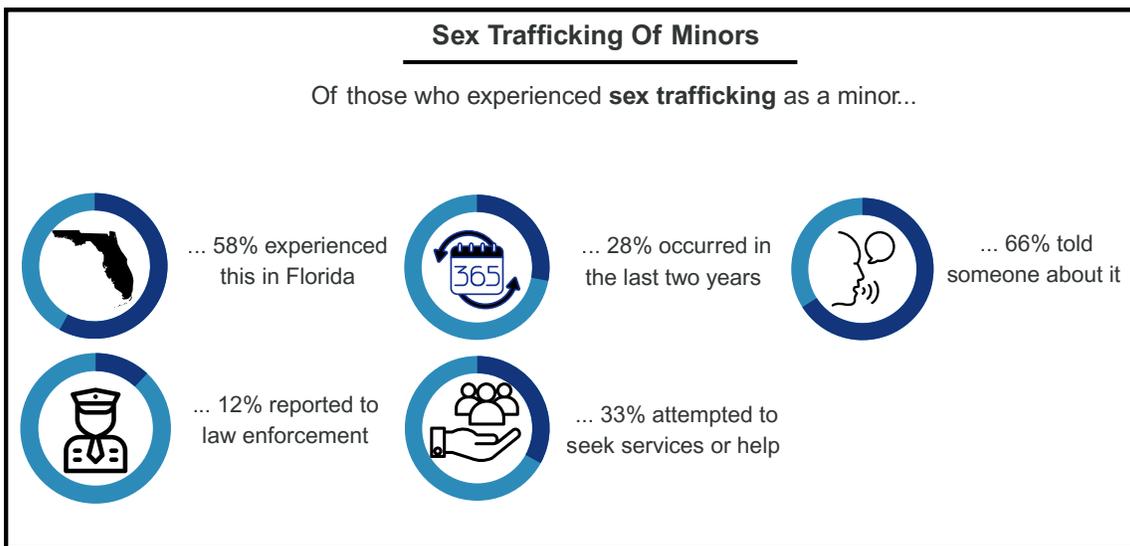
As shown in Figure 23, among the respondents who reported experiencing sex trafficking as a minor (under the age of 18 years), 58% reported that the exploitation occurred in the State of Florida, 28% reported that the exploitation occurred in the last two years, 66% told someone about the exploitation, 12% reported their exploitation to law enforcement, and 33% reported that they sought services.

As shown in Figure 24, among the respondents who reported experiencing sex trafficking when they were adults (18 years or older), 68% reported that the exploitation occurred in the State of Florida, 26% reported that the exploitation occurred in the last two years, 54% told someone about the exploitation, 10% reported their exploitation to law enforcement, and 42% sought out services.

Sex Trafficking Of Adults

Of those who experienced **sex trafficking** as an adult...

... 68% experienced this in Florida

... 26% occurred in the last two years

... 54% told someone about it

... 10% reported to law enforcement

... 42% attempted to seek services or help
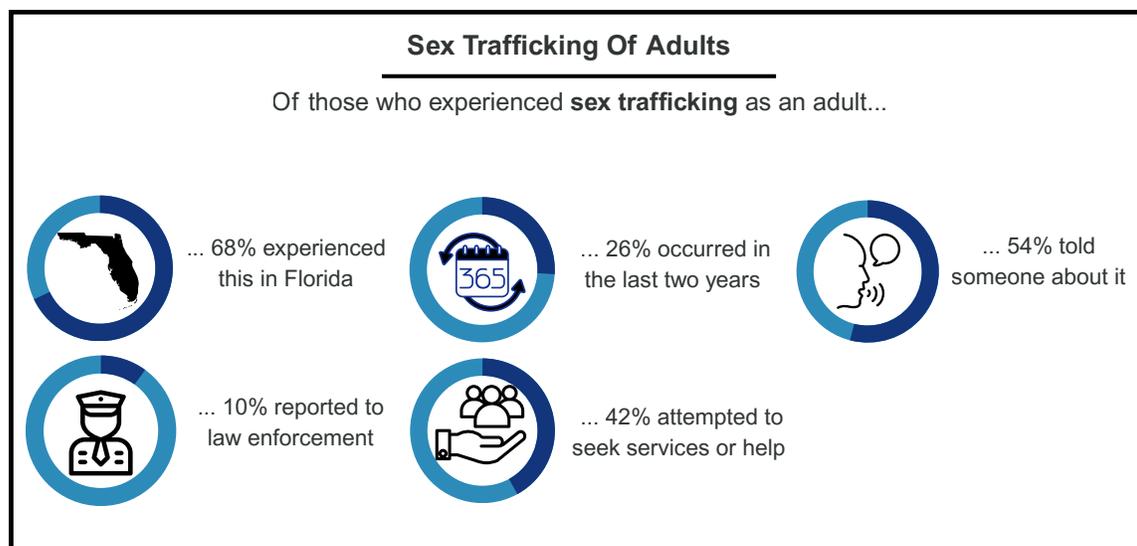
Figure 24: Characteristics of Survey Respondents Who Experienced Sex Trafficking as an Adult

Labor Exploitation

Of those who experienced **labor exploitation...**

... 63% experienced this in Florida

... 18% occurred in the last two years

... 65% told someone about it

... 9% reported to law enforcement

... 21% attempted to seek services or help

... 28% indicated this occurred when they were a minor
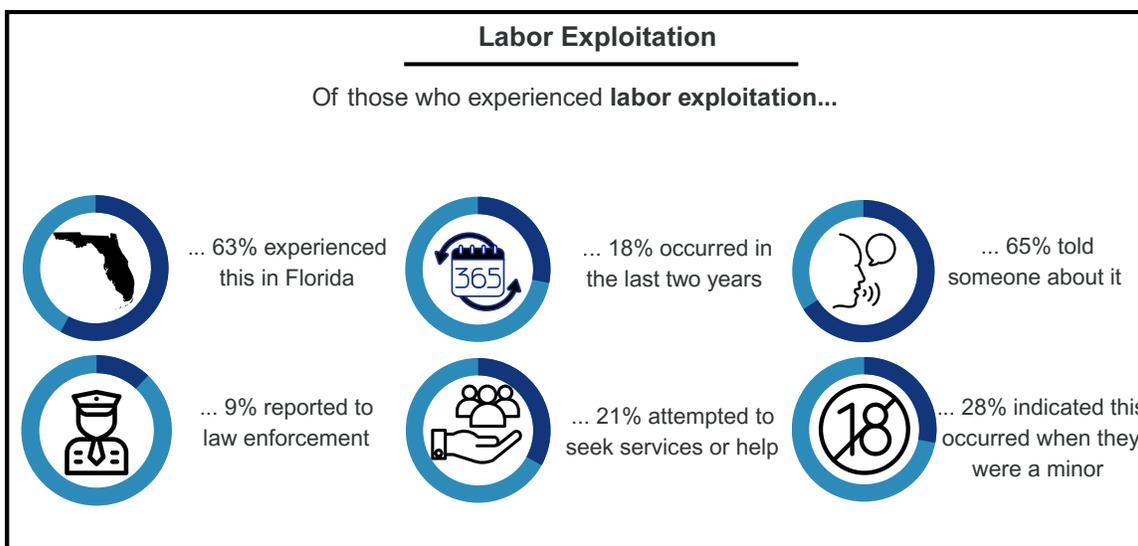
Figure 25: Characteristics of Survey Respondents Who Experienced Labor Exploitation

As demonstrated in Figure 25, among the respondents who reported experiencing labor exploitation, 63% reported that the labor exploitation occurred in the State of Florida, 18% reported that the exploitation occurred in the last two years, 65% told someone about the labor exploitation, 9% reported their exploitation to law enforcement, and 21% sought out services. Of these individuals, 28% indicated the exploitation occurred when they were minors.

Education, Awareness, and Training

Two significant contributors to Florida's prevention efforts are the Florida Department of Education (DOE) and the local human trafficking task forces, coalitions, and commissions. The USF TIPSTR team accessed the publicly available data from the DOE to explore each school district's efforts in the anti-trafficking movement further.

Education, Awareness, and Training Data

- Methods, materials, and resources utilized to deliver the required child trafficking prevention instruction by county
- Grade level in which youth are receiving the required instruction
- Professional qualifications required for the individual delivering the required instruction
- Human trafficking task force training, awareness, and education event data

Using the DOE and task force data, the team analyzed Florida's prevention and education efforts, specifically exploring efforts by county and monthly trends.

Department of Education

In 2019, the State Board of Education approved Rule 6A-1.094124, making Florida the first state to mandate the delivery of child trafficking prevention education for grades K-12 students. In addition to mandating prevention instruction, this rule requires school districts to document the delivery of the required instruction. Each school district must submit an annual implementation plan to the commissioner and post the plan on the school district website by December 1st. The information required to be provided by December 1st for the following school year must include the methods in which instruction will be delivered for each grade level, the professional qualifications of the individual delivering instruction, and a description of the materials and resources utilized to deliver instruction. This rule also requires each school district to submit an annual report to the commissioner by July 1st to verify instruction completion.

The curriculum for students must include age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on child trafficking prevention and awareness. It must address:

> **1) human trafficking signs, 2) awareness of national, state, and local resources, and 3) the prevention of alcohol, nicotine, and drug abuse and addiction**

Additionally, it should cover the prevalence and nature of human trafficking, strategies to reduce risk, techniques for setting healthy boundaries, and guidance on how to safely seek help. Instruction must also include information on how social media and mobile device applications are used in human trafficking.

The USF TIPSTR team accessed publicly available data from the Department of Education (DOE) to further examine each school district's involvement in the anti-trafficking movement as mandated by Rule 6A-1.094124. The analysis included descriptions of the instructional methods, educational materials, and resources used to deliver the required child trafficking prevention education, as well as the grade levels receiving the instruction and the professional qualifications of those delivering it.

To better understand the scope and focus of these efforts, data on grade level, educational courses, and delivery methods were categorized by school district into groups, reflecting whether the instruction was specifically focused on human trafficking or addressed the topic more generally. Additionally, the team incorporated data from human trafficking task force training, awareness, and education events to analyze Florida's overall prevention and education efforts, with a focus on county-level initiatives and monthly trends.

Basic:	**Related:**	**Dedicated:**
Education provided to the students either lacked details as to what materials were included, or the materials were focused on another topic that could be loosely related to human trafficking	HT course has another primary focus; however, still provides anti-trafficking education to students, such as online safety, substance abuse education, and boundary setting	HT course, which primarily focuses on anti-trafficking methods such as identification, boundaries, and safety
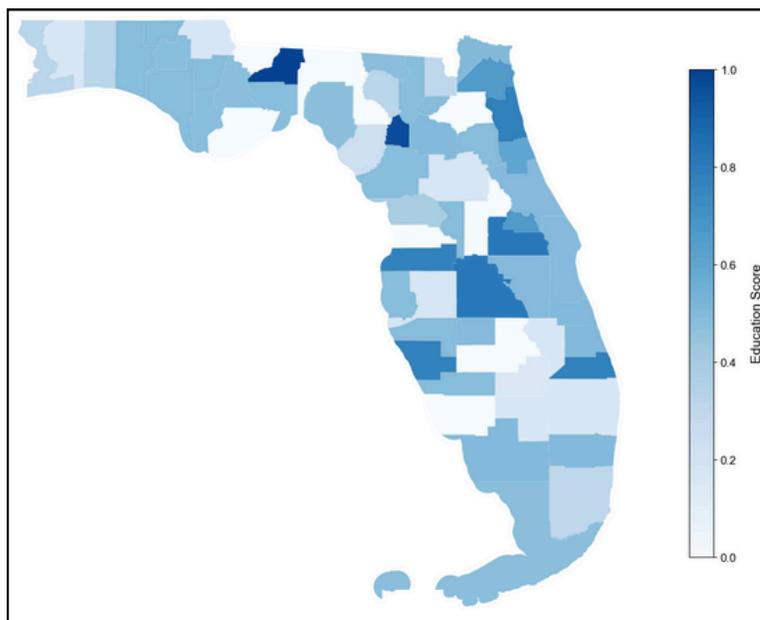
Figure 26: Department of Education Courses by County

Presented here are education maps that demonstrate the available curriculum for students on human trafficking. There are three types: basic, related, and dedicated. The way to assess the overall education availability in the state of Florida was to create a ratio of the number of classes divided by the number of students to whom those classes are available. To best capture availability, this score calculates the number of students within a particular grade range for whom those courses are offered.

For the full education score, each class type received a "weight," meaning a numeric value to assess most related, depending on how much of the time is dedicated to human trafficking.

For the basic course, it was weighted as 1 and measured by the overall ratio of classes to students. The related course was weighted as 2, and the dedicated course was given a weight of 3 (for each, the ratio is multiplied by either 2 or 3 to give more impact for making such courses available). The map of the full score can be seen in Figure 26, with darker shades indicating more human trafficking education. The maps presented in Figure 27 demonstrate the availability of the three types of courses, basic, related, and dedicated, by county.
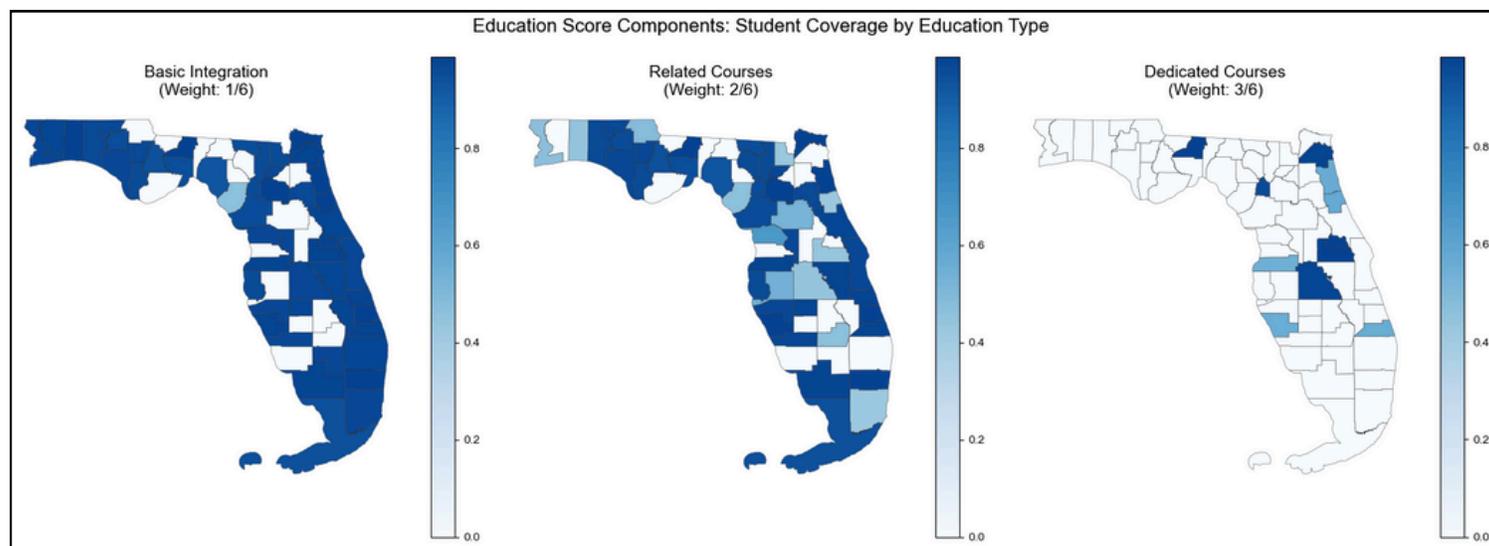
Figure 27: Department of Education Courses by Education Type and County

The majority of counties (53) provided basic education. Fourteen counties provided related education courses to youth in the state. Two counties provided 3 dedicated courses: Sarasota County and Duval County. Two counties offer the most related and dedicated education with 7 courses being given across all grade levels (Kindergarten through 12th grade): St. John's County and Levy County. The most common curriculum was the Florida DOE's Human Trafficking Course.

Local Human Trafficking Task Forces

In 2014, CS/CS/HB 7141 was passed and signed into law, establishing the Florida Statewide Council on Human Trafficking and Florida's local human trafficking task forces. Lead agencies, including DCF, DJJ, and community-based care agencies (CBCs), are required to participate in these local human trafficking task forces, coordinating local responses to human trafficking.
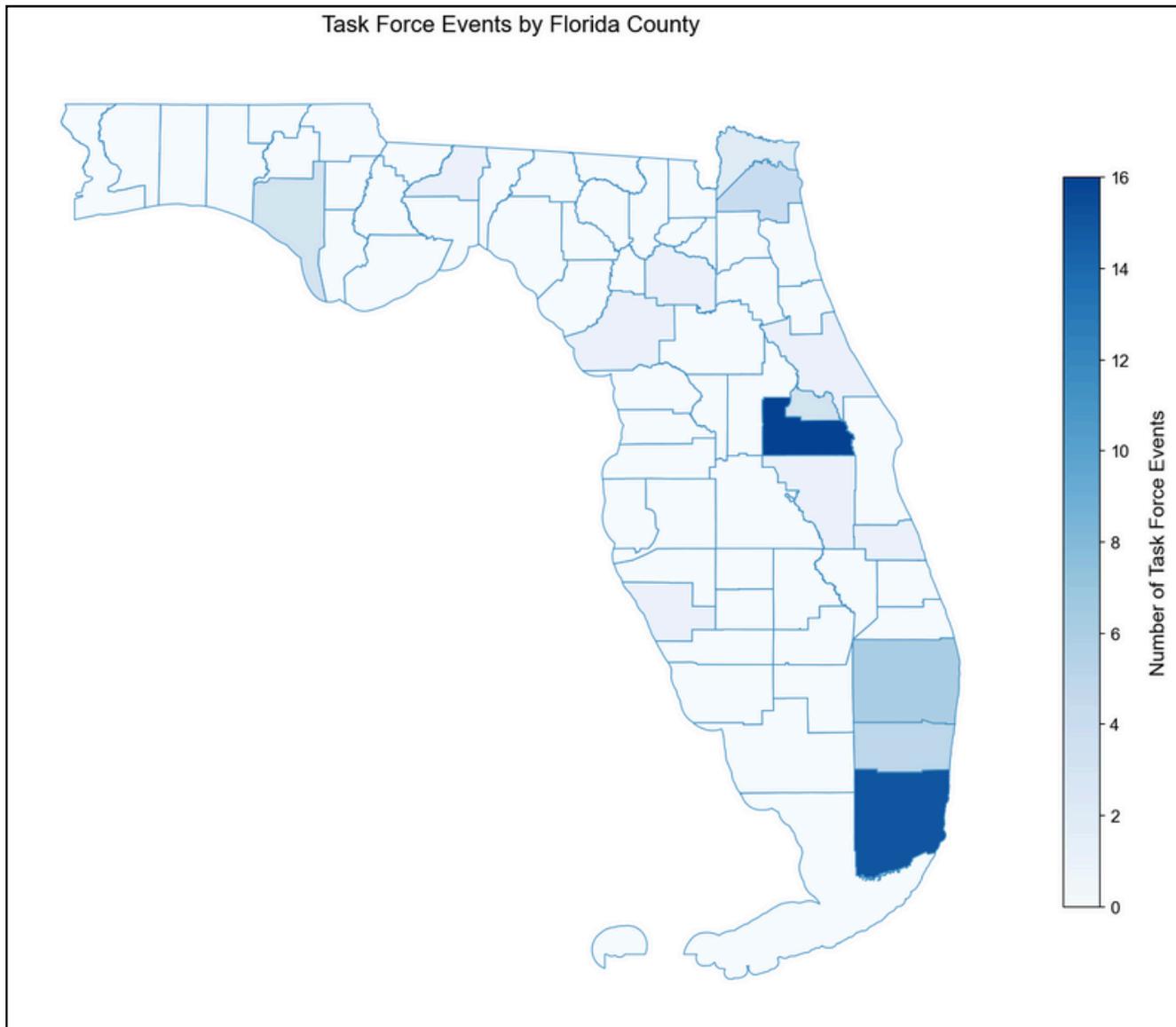
Figure 28: HT Task Force Events by County

The 27 local human trafficking task forces, coalitions, and commissions comprise all of Florida's 67 counties. The task forces collaborate with community partners to facilitate human trafficking-related training, education, and awareness events. Some events are for specific participants, such as law enforcement or medical professionals, while other events are open to the entire community. This is displayed in Figure 28 above.

According to the annual Human Trafficking Task Force Event Calendar, in 2024, 28 out of the 67 counties in Florida held human trafficking-related events sponsored by the task forces. Orange County had the greatest number of events with 16, followed by Miami-Dade County with 15 events.
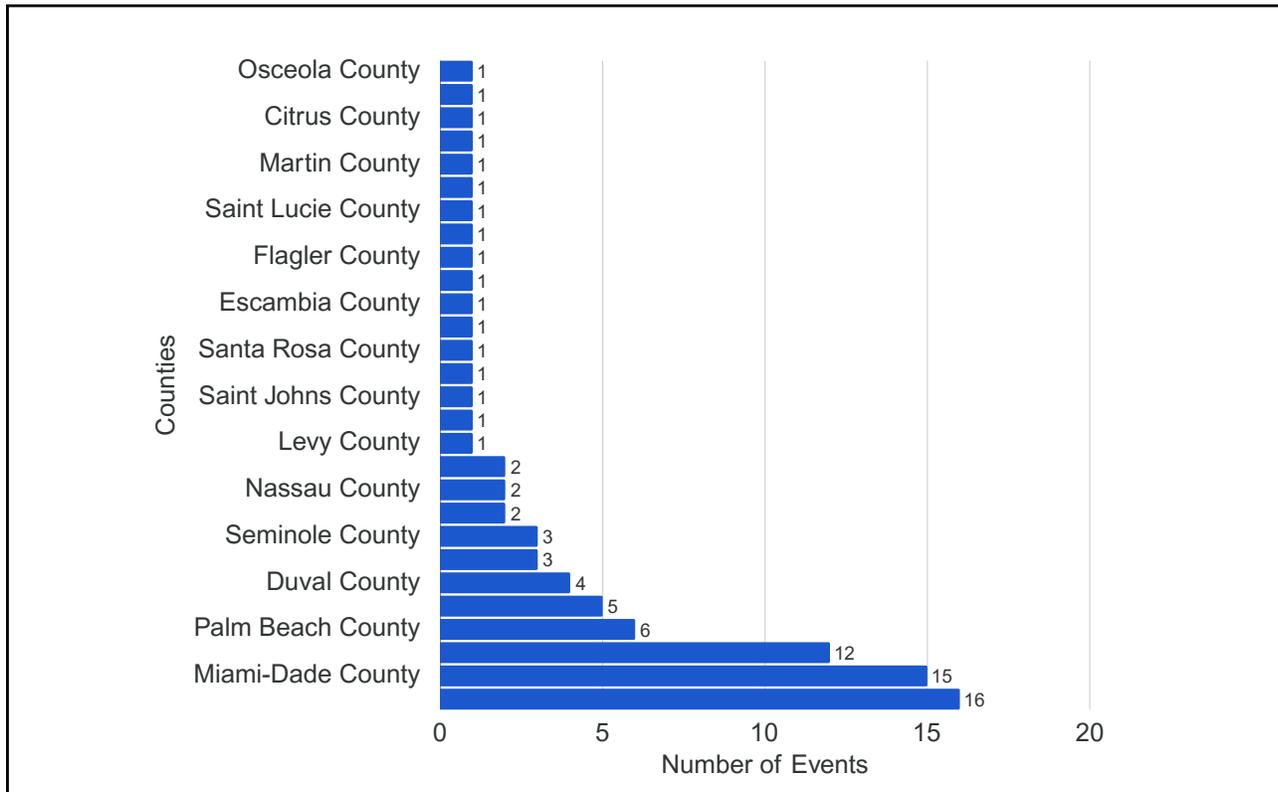
Figure 29: HT Task Force Events by County

Miami-Dade County and Orange County held human trafficking-related events the most consistently throughout the year, with Miami-Dade County holding events 8 out of the 12 months and Orange County holding events 7 months out of the year. Events without the county specified took place in 6 out of the 12 months.

As demonstrated in Figure 30, the highest number of events were held in January, which is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Each month in 2024 had at least one human trafficking-related event in Florida, excluding December.

Figure 30: HT Task Force Events by Month

Typologies of Child Sex Traffickers in Florida

Recent research has highlighted that traffickers are not all the same, but rather, they employ a range of distinct tactics to find, target, recruit, groom, and entrap victims, further demonstrating the complexity of human trafficking dynamics. In a Florida study, Dr. Joan Reid and research assistant Klejdis Bilali investigated the find, groom, and ensnare tactics employed by child sex traffickers in Florida.

In this study conducted in coordination with the Pasco County Child Protective Investigative Unit, Reid et al. (2023) drew data from 78 child sex trafficking cases involving 54 child sex traffickers and 48 minor victims. Seven distinct types of child sex traffickers were identified, each characterized by shared and unique methods of recruitment, grooming, and entrapment: (1) peer traffickers; (2) organized crime traffickers; (3) family traffickers; (4) romantic coercive traffickers ("Romeo pimps"); (5) "mate" coercive traffickers (prey on disabled youth); (6) opportunistic traffickers; (7) cyber traffickers.

Figure 31: Process of Exploitation Through Human Trafficking

Profiles of Child Sex Traffickers

Trafficker Type	Find Tactics	Grooming Tactics	Ensnare Tactics
Peer Trafficker	• Chat online • Meet at places frequented by youth	• Normalize selling sex • Build trust via friendship	• Aggression toward victim and others in front of victim
Organized Crime Trafficker	• Peer recruitment via syndicate members • Meet in high crime drug trafficking areas	• Promise and provide drugs • Give gifts • Provide youth with basic needs	• Threaten harm • Control drugs • Aggression toward others in front of victim
Family Abuser Trafficker	• Reside with victims • Frequently visit child's residence	• Create obligations to exchange sex • Increase intrusiveness of sex abuse • Promise victim rewards (e.g., ungrounding) • Withhold valuables	• Abuse physically and sexually • Threaten harm • Neglect medically • Use drugs to disorient
Romantic Coercive Conman Trafficker	• Chat online via dating sites • Meet at places frequented by youth	• Love bomb • Shower with gifts • Claim unique connection • Provide drugs	• Isolate from family • Impregnate and use child to control • Threat to harm • Use drugs to disorient
"Mate" Coercive Conman Trafficker	• Meet youth w/ disabilities at drug hotspots, group homes, juvenile justice facilities • Chat via social media	• Fill a need through providing youth with basic needs (money, food) • Promise/provide drugs	• Abuse physically • Control victim drug use • Blackmail • Shame victim into submission
Opportunistic Trafficker	• Meet runaway youth at truck stops, gas stations, outside hospitals, tattoo shops, on the street	• Fill a need through providing transportation/shelter • Provide drugs	• Threaten to harm • Abuse physically • Hold captive • Stalk victim when they try to leave
Cyber Trafficker	• Target primarily via social media • Recruit via teen modeling websites	• Offer money for explicit images, extra money for "custom jobs" • Provide drugs	• Blackmail with recorded sex acts ("revenge porn") • Promise job in pornography

Table 5: Profiles of Child Sex Traffickers

Note. Results based on Reid et al. (2023).

In Their Words
Grooming and Cyber Exploitation

Often, human traffickers only need two things to exploit children: for youth to be vulnerable and for youth to have access to technology. In recent years, with the rising use of technology and the proliferation of social media apps across the Internet, human traffickers are able to leverage virtual spaces as more fruitful means for grooming and exploiting vulnerable youth (Baird & Connolly, 2025). As such, it is crucial to be cognizant of the dangers of technology in the facilitation of child trafficking.

Whether online or in-person, when examining grooming in the context of human trafficking, it is important to remember that grooming is a manipulative, calculated process. It involves building a relationship with a vulnerable individual to exploit them. The term "grooming" has recently surged in use, particularly when talking about dangerous behaviors that aim to induce sexual behaviors of, and engagement with, minors (Reid, 2016; Reid, 2024). Over time, the term has broadened to include various meanings, such as seduction, manipulation, and coercion, occurring both in-person and online. Some literature suggests that grooming, as it is understood today, means "nonviolent techniques by [individuals] to gain sexual access to and control over potential and actual child victims" (Lanning, 2017, p. 11).

To that end, online spaces create an ideal environment for the grooming and exploitation of youth due to several factors: the ease of accessing young individuals, the availability of personal or sensitive information that can be used to build trust and manipulate victims, the ability to maintain constant communication and presence in their lives, and the general lack of adequate supervision—especially in adult-oriented online spaces (Gezinski & Gonzalez-Pons, 2024). Additionally, insufficient safeguards, such as weak age verification procedures and the anonymity these platforms afford perpetrators further enable undetected grooming and exploitation (Latonero, 2022).

One of the most pressing emerging trends in online-facilitated human trafficking is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to automate youth trafficking efforts (see Gibson et al., 2024). AI may exacerbate recruitment efforts through mining social media for personal data and profiling youth based on certain vulnerabilities (e.g., posts about one's need for a romantic partner or financial assistance).

Other concerning trends include the rise in sextortion and image-based child sexual abuse (IBCSA), both of which have been observed in child trafficking cases and both of which involve the exploitation of youth through easily accessible and often poorly regulated technologies and apps. Research has indicated that sextortion is expanding through online grooming, phishing scams, and digital blackmail that can occur virtually anywhere there is Internet access. Traffickers may coerce or manipulate youth into sharing explicit content and then threaten to release this information or explicit content unless demands are met —this is also often referred to as "revenge porn" (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020; Wolak et al., 2018). These tactics resemble patterns previously observed by experts and service providers, in which traffickers lure victims with offers of so-called "professional" photography or modeling services and then entrap victims by using explicit photographs for blackmail and threats of public exposure.

Similarly, IBCSA involves emerging technologies like "nudification" apps (which digitally remove clothing from images), deepfake video creations (i.e., putting someone's face and voice into fake, explicit scenarios), and the distribution of non-consensual explicit videos, images, and other content for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation (see Singer, 2024; Pater et al., 2025). To that end, what makes IBCSA particularly insidious is its creation has a lasting digital footprint.

Even when traffickers are successfully prosecuted for creating or disseminating this content, the material remains online, where it can be easily redistributed and sold to buyers from all over the world, which has lasting consequences for youth victims of trafficking.

Apps that facilitate these forms of exploitation—many of which are popular among youth—are often overlooked by parents and guardians. While these platforms are not typically designed with harmful intent, traffickers frequently exploit them, making it increasingly challenging for developers to keep pace with the need for effective safety features. This indicates an urgent need for updated awareness and education for parents, youth, and other stakeholders.

Legislation is only beginning to grapple with the ethical and legal implications of youth trafficking occurring through these digital spaces. These tools continue to outpace current legal protections, which often require a clearly identifiable human victim to successfully prosecute (O'Malley, 2025). Recent progress includes the passage of the Take It Down Act (2025), a federal law that criminalizes the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, including those generated by AI. Under this legislation, platforms are required to remove such content within 48 hours of being notified.

Overall, grooming and exploitation facilitated by technology represent a very complex aspect of human trafficking. As such, education on this topic must address and correct common misconceptions about exploitation, clarify how youth become vulnerable to technology-facilitated trafficking, and illuminate the methods traffickers use to groom, recruit, and entrap victims through online spaces.

-Klejdis Bilali, M.A. | Ph.D. Candidate | University of South Florida
-Liana Dean, MSW | Chair | Pasco County Commission on Human Trafficking
-Alan Wilkett | (Ret). Corporal | Pasco County Sheriff's Office

In the Statewide Representative Victim Survey, 17% of respondents reported cyber exploitation such as image-based sexual abuse, the non-consensual creation or distribution of intimate or sexual content, spyware misuse, cyber abuse and harassment, or blackmail (or "sextortion"). Of these individuals, 29% indicated that this exploitation occurred when they were minors. Further, among those who reported cyber exploitation, 36% indicated that it occurred within the past two years (see Figure 32).

Cyber Exploitation

Of those who experienced **cyber exploitation...**

... 36% occurred in the last two years

29%

...had the exploitation occur as a minor

71%

...had the exploitation occur as an adult
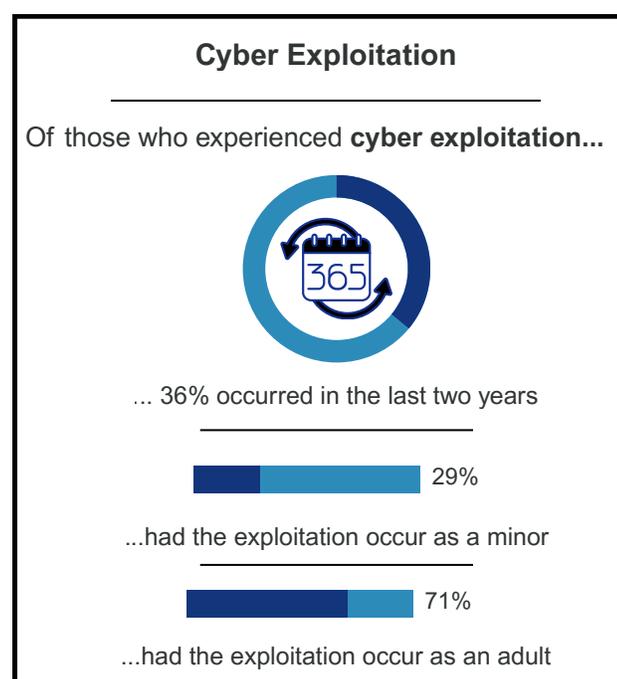
Figure 32: Characteristics of Survey Respondents Who Experienced Cyber Exploitation

Commercial Sex Advertisement Indicative of Demand

Human trafficking, especially for sexual exploitation, operates on basic market principles: where there is demand, traffickers supply. Traffickers respond to demand by coercing or deceiving individuals into the sex trade. Although the number of commercial sex advertisements posted does not directly indicate these are cases of human trafficking, it is a representation of how much demand exists in the State of Florida and each county (Freeman et al., 2025).
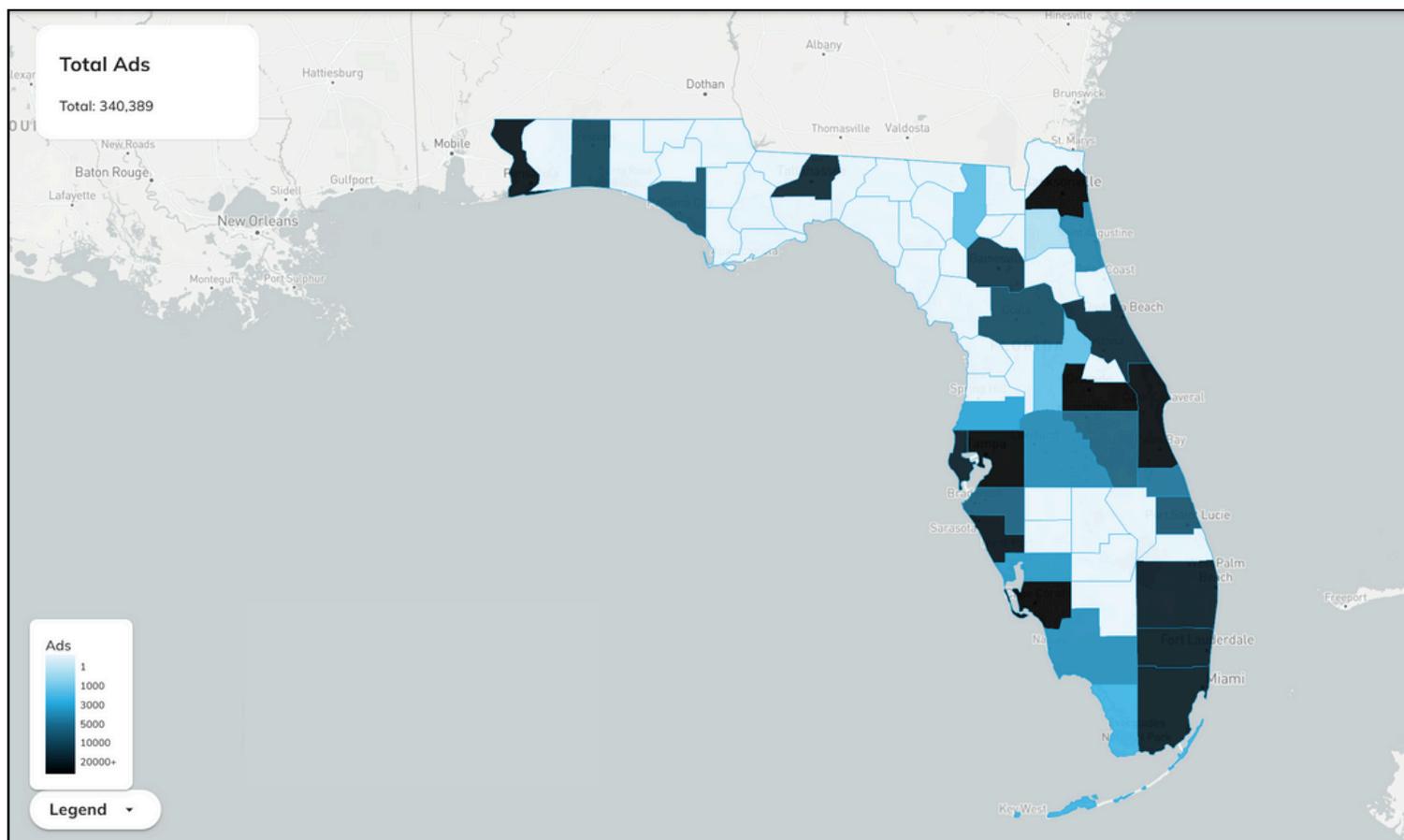
Figure 33: Total Number of Commercial Sex Advertisements by County*

Figure 33 displays data from 340,389 ads extracted from online advertisement websites (e.g., CallEscort, MegaPersonals, SkipTheGames) by the University of Alabama Institute of Data and Analytics. Data is based on a 90-day snapshot that is refreshed and updated quarterly. Figure 33 snapshot is from July 1 - October 2, 2024. Ads are extracted by city and aggregated by county in Lighthouse. The map shows the total ads per county based on the city location of the post. The location data represents the location where the ad is posted, not the location of the poster. Note that duplicate ad posts are common, as ads may be posted multiple times.

Figure 34 displays the cities in Florida with the highest number of commercial sex ads per 100,000 residents. Examining the number of ads per 100,000 residents provides an estimate of the demand for commercial sex in a city, taking into account the city population. While not directly measuring human trafficking incidents, these data indicate a greater likelihood of human trafficking incidents in cities with a higher number of commercial sex ads (Freeman et al., 2025).
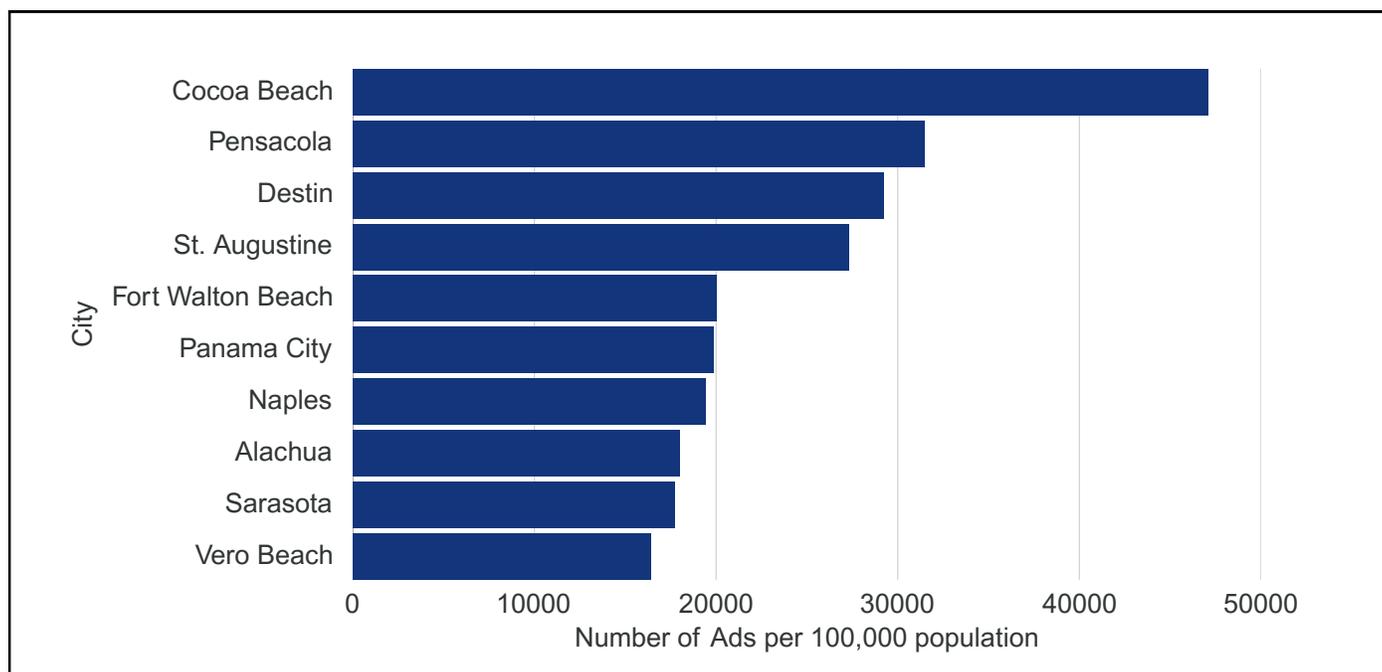
Figure 34: Total Number of Advertisements per 100,000 People by City

In comparison to Figure 34, Figure 35 displays the cities in Florida with the highest number of commercial sex ads, irrespective of the city population size. These data are indicative of which cities have the greatest need for counter-trafficking interventions addressing demand.
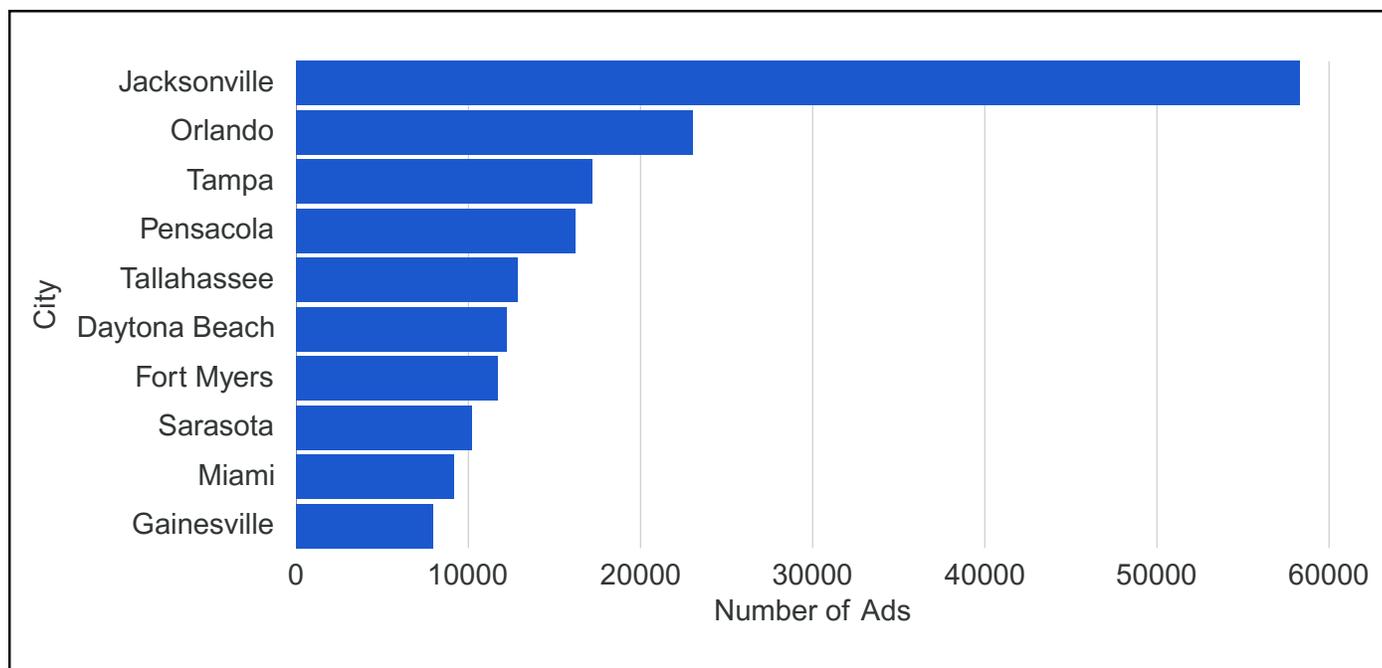
Figure 35: Total Number of Advertisements by City

Businesses Indicating Community Risk

Risk for human trafficking arises from societal, community, family, and individual vulnerabilities. Decreasing community risks in order to prevent human trafficking involves the identification of problematic environmental or situational factors that facilitate human trafficking within neighborhoods and communities, including illicit industries such as the illicit massage industry. The illicit massage industry is one of the largest and most networked sex trafficking markets in the United States.

The illicit massage industry consists of storefronts known as illicit massage businesses (IMBs) that put on the façade of a legitimate massage business to facilitate commercial sex services (Axon et al., 2019; Bouche & Crotty, 2017; The Network, 2023). Unlike legitimate massage businesses, these illicit businesses exploit individuals, primarily women, in sex and labor trafficking. Following typical criminal patterns of operation, these businesses lure victims with false promises of legitimate work and good pay. However, rather than receiving good pay, traffickers employ debt bondage combined with isolation and coercive tactics to prevent women from exiting the exploitative situation.
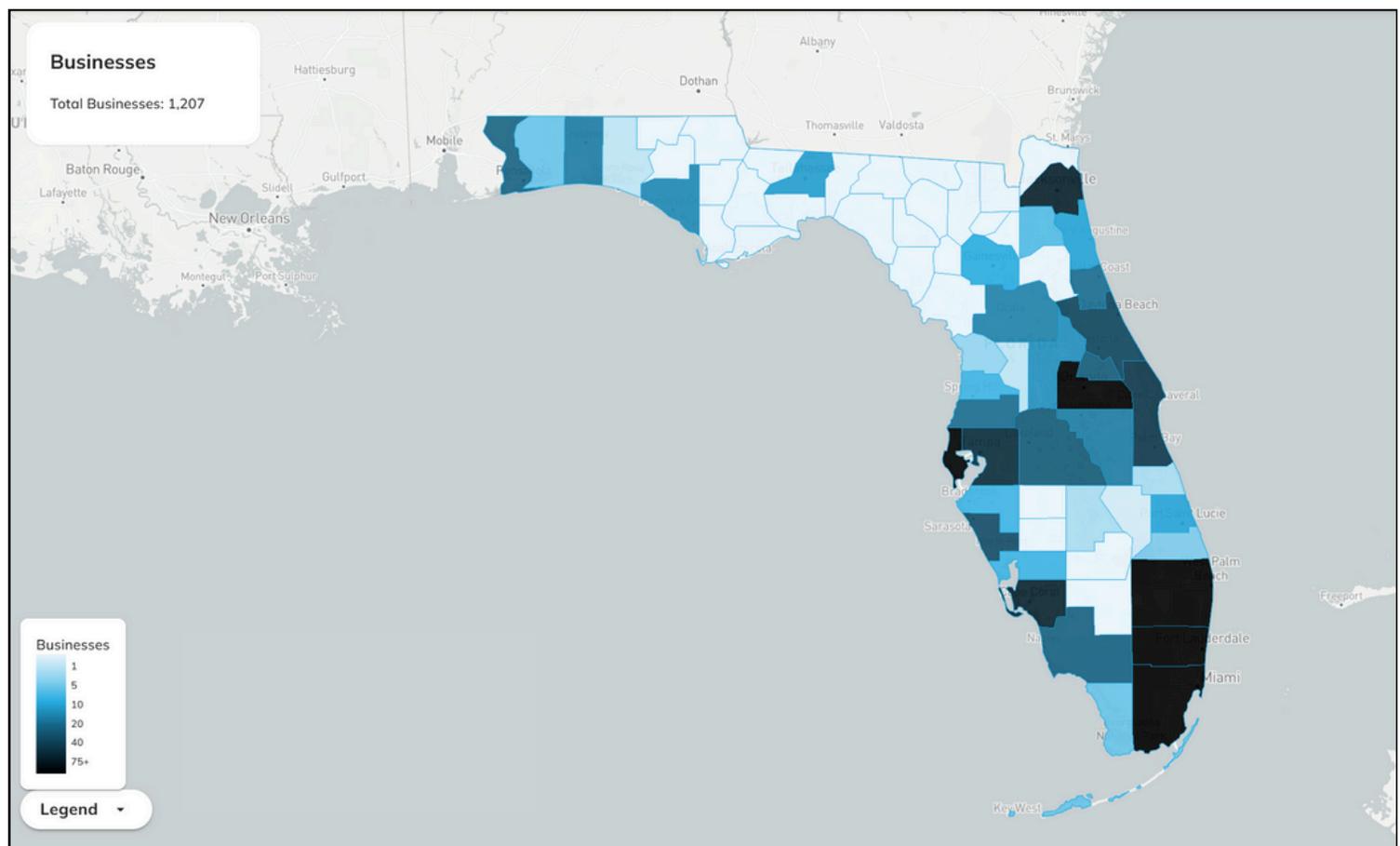
Figure 36: Illicit Massage Businesses in Florida*

The Illicit Massage Business (IMB) data displayed in Figure 36 is from The Network, an intelligence-driven counter-human trafficking organization that collects and analyzes information for suspected illicit massage businesses. Data are derived from businesses listed as open and erotic on Massage Parlor Reviews and Find Escorts, Strip Clubs, Sex Shops / Adult Search Engine, and includes business locations and a preliminary analysis of identified IMBs based upon sex buyer reviews. Based on data collected by The Network in 2024 from explicit sex buyer review websites, a total of 1,207 illicit massage industry locations were identified in Florida.

Figure 37: Growth of Illicit Massage Businesses Throughout Florida from 2019 to 2024*
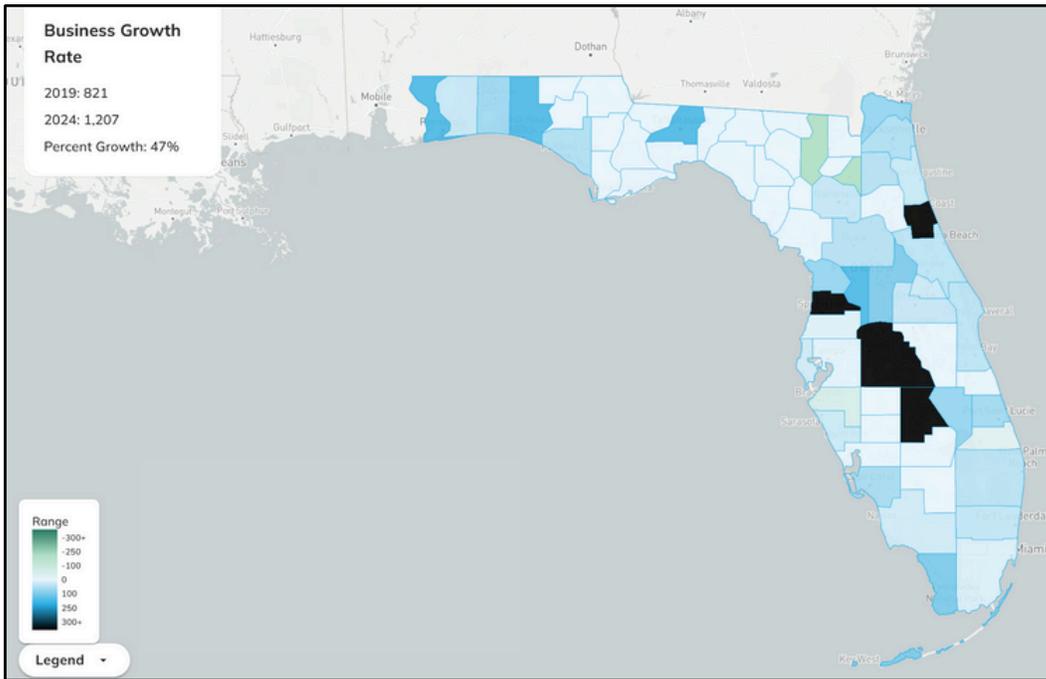
Figure 37 is a map of the percentage of growth or reduction of IMBs by county. The overall growth of illicit massage business locations throughout the state between 2019 and 2024 was 47%. Many of the counties in Florida experienced growth in the percentage of IMBs between 2019 and 2024. However, contrary to the norm, several counties experienced a decrease in the percentage of identified businesses between 2019 and 2024, including Columbia, Bradford, and Manatee Counties.

Figure 38 displays the cities in Florida with the highest number of IMBs per 100,000 residents. Examining the number of businesses per 100,000 residents provides an estimate of the size of the illicit massage industry in a city, taking into account the city population.
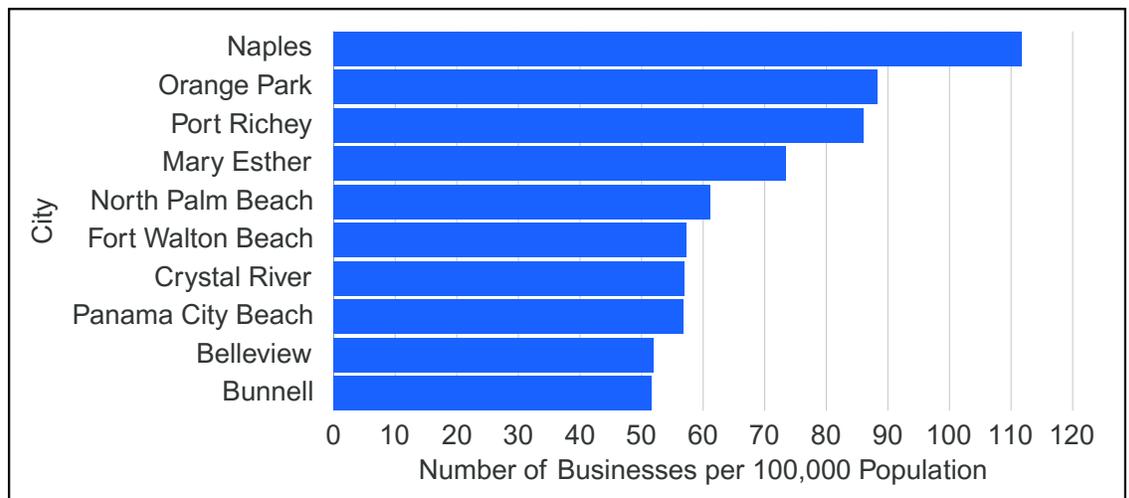
Figure 38: Location of Businesses per 100,000 People by City
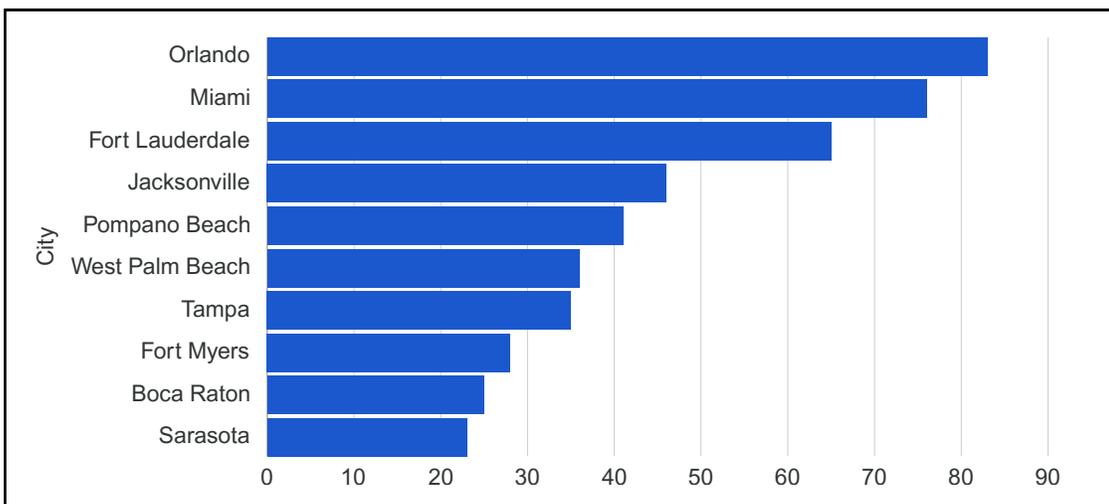
Figure 39: Total Number of Businesses by City

In comparison to Figure 39, Figure 39 displays the cities in Florida with the highest number of illicit massage businesses, irrespective of the city population. Using information on hotspots, HT prevention strategies targeting IMBs can be geographically focused to raise local awareness and reduce crime opportunities (de Vries, 2023).

Figure 40: Location of Businesses per 100,000 People by City*
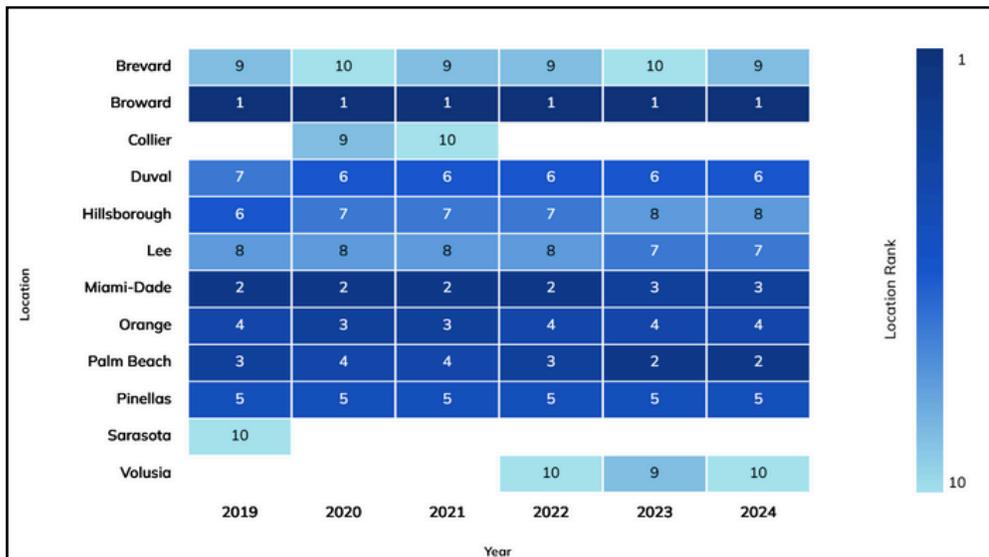
Table 40 displays the county rankings based on the number of identified IMBs by year beginning in 2019 to 2024. As shown, Broward County has been ranked first every year. Miami-Dade County was consistently ranked second until 2023 when Palm Beach County was ranked second in 2023 and 2024. There is little change in the ranking of the counties with the highest number of IMBs between 2019 and 2024.

Figure 41 displays the most frequent time of day for visits to IMBs and the amount paid for services from reviews posted by 22,000 buyers in Florida. Afternoon is by far the most common time for visits to iIMBs. Pay for services ranges from around $50.00 to over $250.00.
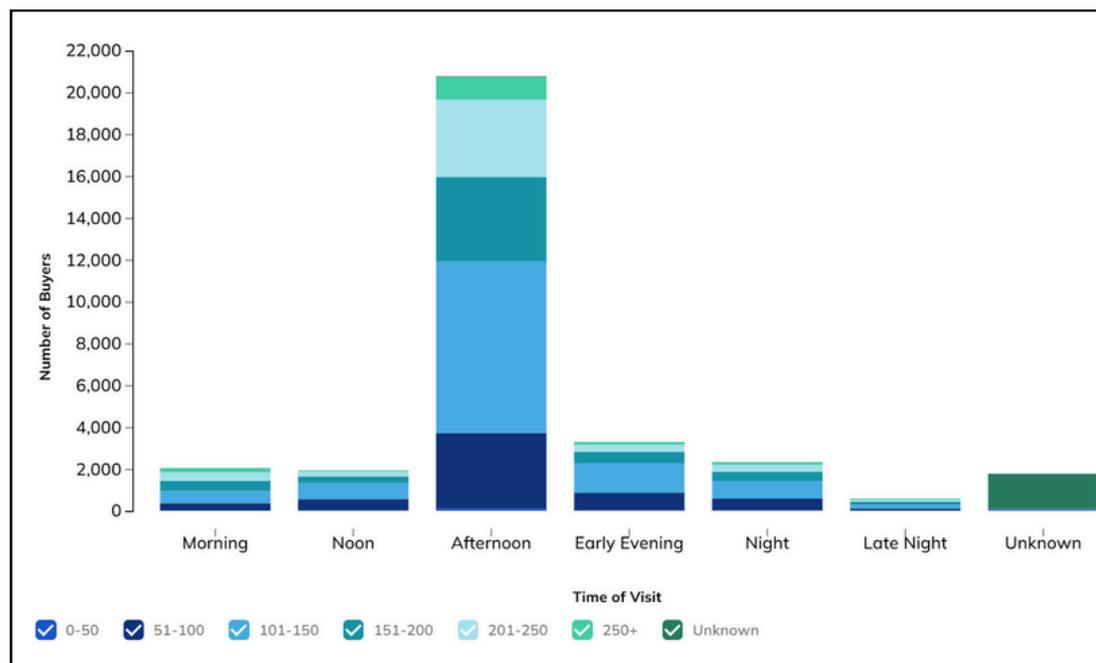
Figure 41: Total Number of Visits by Time of Day and Amount Paid*

Information regarding the most popular time of day for visits to IMBs indicates that these businesses are primarily operating within normal business hours rather than in the evening or late at night. In Florida, the regulation of massage establishment operating hours is governed by Florida Statute § 480.0475 (2013), which includes operating hours restrictions prohibiting most massage establishments from operating between midnight and 5:00 AM.

This restriction is intended to deter illicit activity, including human trafficking, which is more likely to occur during late-night hours. These data indicate that the statute has had a substantial impact in curbing late-night illicit activities at massage businesses. However, illicit businesses continue to exist and operate primarily within normal business hours, indicating that additional efforts are required to disrupt this illicit industry in Florida.

Prevention: From Data to Action
Key Takeaways for Future Prevention Efforts in Florida

The data presented in this section can and should be used to accelerate Florida's prevention efforts. Below are select recommendations for improving Florida's anti-trafficking response in terms of **Prevention**:

1 — **Evaluate Education and Training Programs:** Increase coordination between agencies (DOE, DJJ, DCF) on educational best practices and including lived experience experts could lead to more effective primary prevention education, thereby, stopping human trafficking before it occurs.

2 — **Improve and Expand Use of HT Screening Tools:** Provide resources for future development of current tools to more accurately and precisely identify sex and labor trafficking among both youth and adults.

3 — **Address Community Risk:** Provide resources for investigation of, and research on, high-risk illegal activities that increase the probability of human trafficking and exploitation.

In these endeavors, the TIPSTR team is dedicated to contributing to Florida's anti-trafficking efforts in the realm of **Prevention**. Future goals include:

Establish research opportunities to examine and expand innovative educational and training approaches to human trafficking	Study patterns related to risk factors across various Florida regions to assist prevention efforts
Assist in establishing research-informed metrics to assess prevention outcomes across the state	Conduct needs-based evaluations of existing prevention efforts and screening tools to identify gaps in resources

Protection

Protection

Protection focuses on protecting victims of human trafficking from further exploitation. Types of protections include identifying victims of human trafficking, providing referrals, providing services or supporting service providers, and prioritizing victims' rights and needs.

Safeguarding Victims of Human Trafficking

Protection

Providing Comprehensive Care

Protecting victims of human trafficking occurs in various forms. The Florida Bureau of Victim Compensation provides financial support for human trafficking victims, including assistance with treatment and relocation costs. The TVPA increased protections for victims of human trafficking by expanding federally funded or administered benefits to foreign victims, regardless of immigration status, and creating immigration protections.

Additional protections, including safeguarding victims from intimidation or retaliation from traffickers, immigration relief, and vacating or expunging records for crimes committed resulting from being trafficked are critical in supporting victims of human trafficking as they begin to rebuild their lives.

Protection also involves the need for comprehensive and accessible services for victims of human trafficking. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are crucial in providing quality care to victims. Service needs for victims of human trafficking can include medical care, emergency shelter, education and career training, case management, legal assistance, visa support, mental healthcare, long-term housing, and more.

With the complex needs of individuals who experience trafficking, it is essential that all entities involved work collaboratively to protect victims of human trafficking. Lived experience experts, government agencies, NGOs, and law enforcement must work together to effectively provide the range of services victims of human trafficking need.

Safeguarding Victims of Human Trafficking
Florida Bureau of Victim Compensation

The Florida Bureau of Victim Compensation at the Office of the Attorney General works to ease the financial hardships suffered by victims in the aftermath of a crime. Individuals who suffer personal physical injury or death as a direct result of a crime can apply for a victims' compensation claim through the Victims' Compensation (VC) program. The VC program has several types of claims available. Victims of human trafficking can apply for victims' compensation for assistance with economic losses such as wage loss, disability, loss of support, treatment costs, and funeral costs. The Human Trafficking (HT) Relocation program is also available for victims of human trafficking.

The Florida Bureau of Victim Compensation offers assistance with:

- Medical Expenses
- Dental Expenses
- Mental Health Counseling
- Wage Loss
- Disability Allowance
- Funeral/Burial Expenses
- Loss of Support
- Grief Counseling
- Property Loss
- Relocation (Housing) Expenses
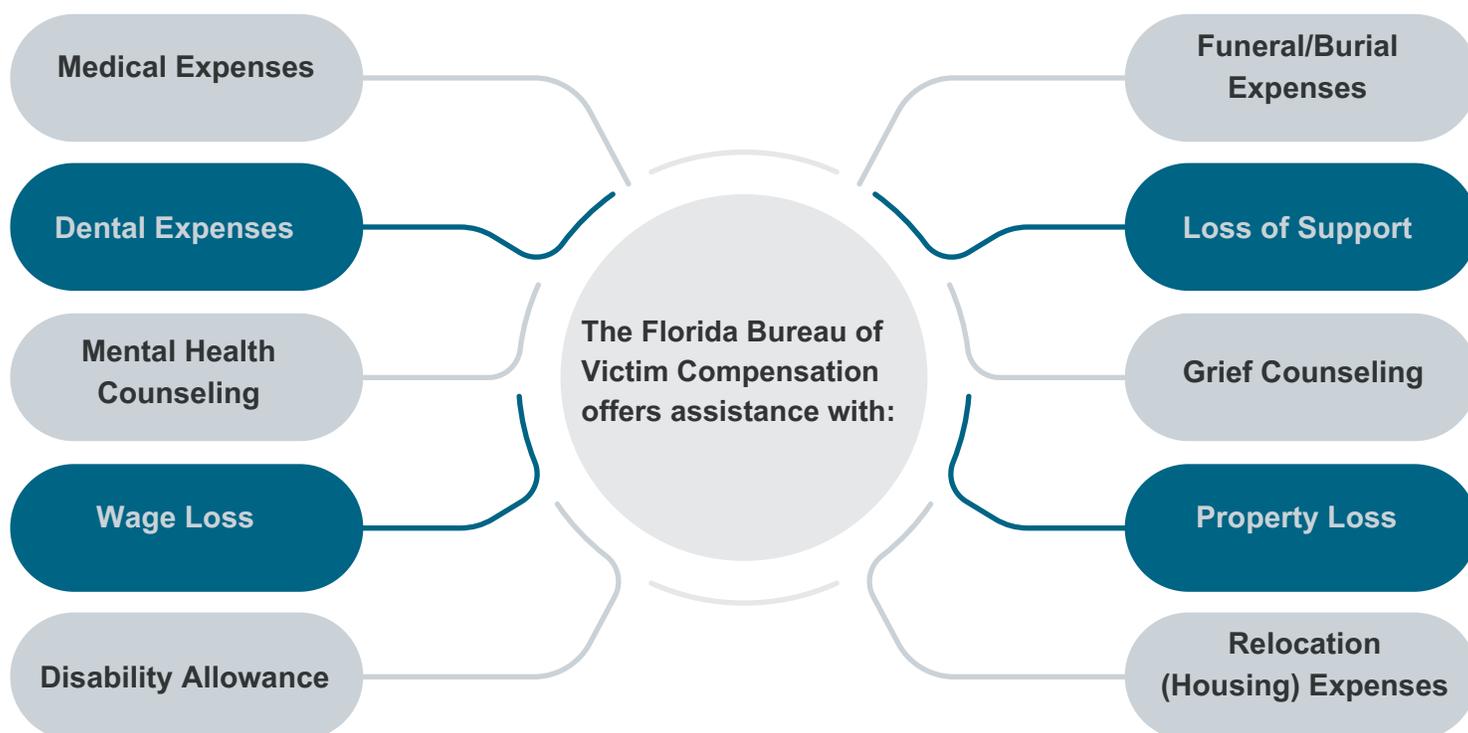
For Additional Information on Victim Compensation:

Call 800-226-6667
or visit http://VANext.MyFloridaLegal.com

Figure 42 shows the distribution of monetary awards to trafficking victims. The vast majority of monetary awards were for $0. The average amount of compensation for the 25 Active-Eligible victims was $175.4. However, this number is highly skewed by the finding that only two of the 25 victims in this category have received a monetary payment, one for $160 and another for $4,225. This $4,225 payment thus skews the average payment dramatically.
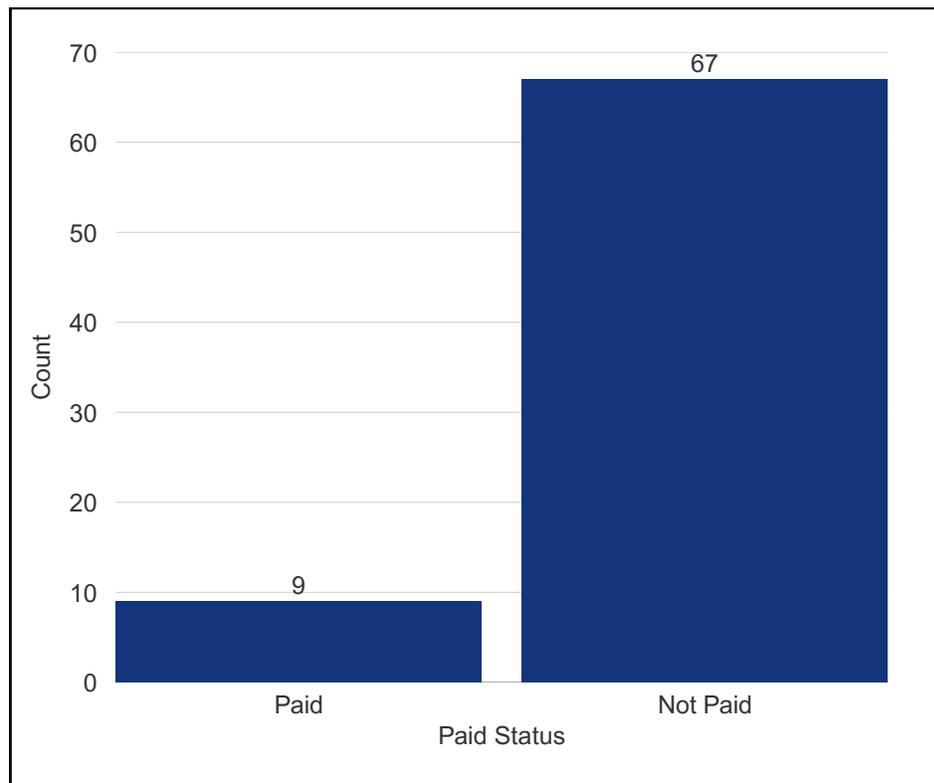
Figure 42: Total Victims' Compensation Claims by Amount Paid to Victims

All seven records that were listed as "Inactive- Benefits Exhausted" received a non-zero payment. The average benefit paid out in this group was $1,285.71, with a standard deviation of $267.26 and a maximum of $1,500. These two categories represented the entirety of payments for trafficking victims.

The numbers of victims in each compensation category are listed in Figure 43. The slight majority (51%) of cases were listed as "Active - Denied", while the next largest category were victims who were listed as "Active-Eligible" (32.9%). A total of ten victims had inactive claims, but seven of these claims had paid out benefits and were now exhausted. Of the six claim statuses, only victims in the "Active-Eligible" and "Inactive-Benefits Exhausted" received monetary payments, which are summarized below.

Figure 43: Total Victims' Compensation Claims by Claim Status
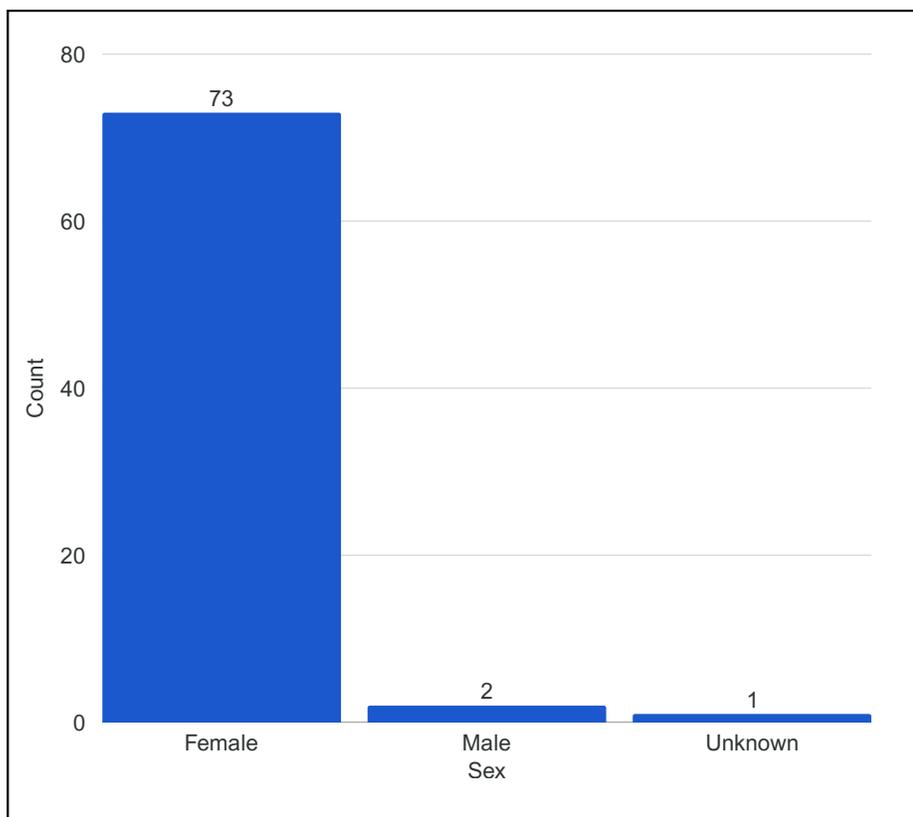
Figure 44 displays the distribution of participants according to their self-reported sex. The majority of participants reported as female, comprising 73 individuals, which represents a substantial portion of the sample. In contrast, only two participants reported as male. An additional one participant did not report their sex.

Figure 44: Victims' Compensation Claims by Sex

This distribution suggests a significant sex imbalance in the sample, with females being highly overrepresented relative to males. Such an imbalance may have implications for interpreting findings, particularly if sex is a variable of interest in subsequent analyses.

The geographic breakdown of victim compensation is presented in Figure 45. Of the nine victims who received compensation, one-third were located in Miami-Dade County, and two were located in Broward County. Clay, Orange, Pinellas, and Seminole counties each had one victim who was compensated. The remaining 61 counties in Florida did not pay out any victim compensation.
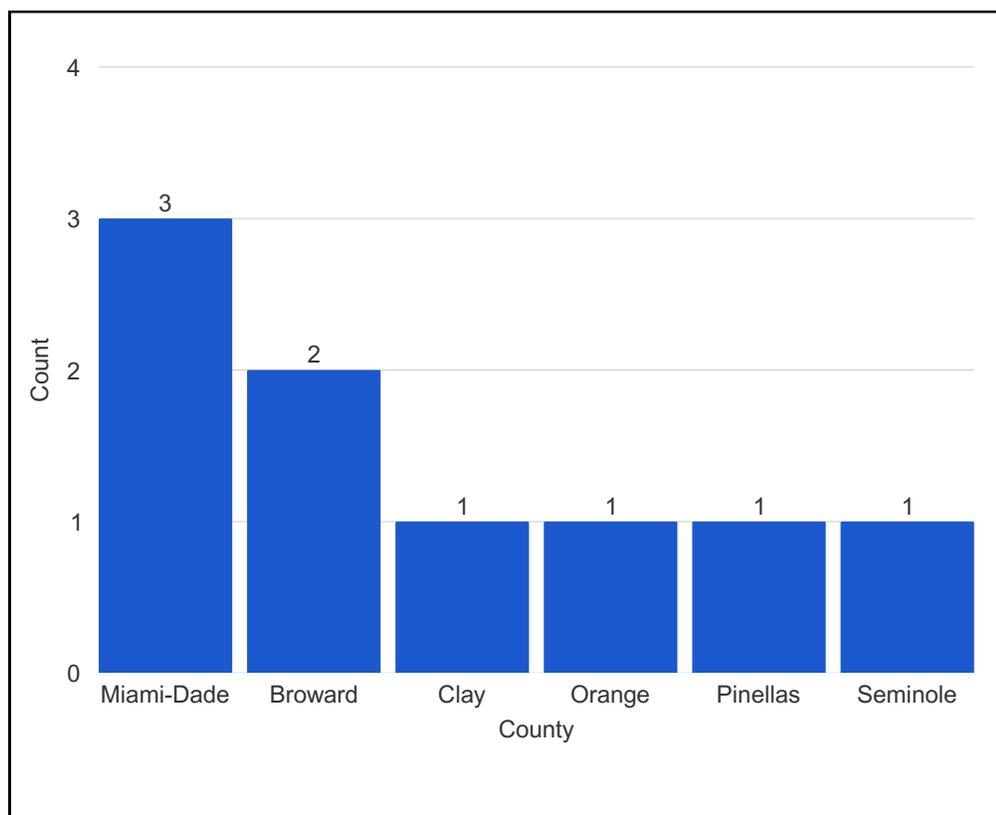
Figure 45: Total Victims Compensated by County

Comprehensive Care and Services

Crime victims face a number of challenges in receiving social services following their victimization and those issues are especially compounded for victims of human trafficking. Due to the unique nature of the crime, survivors of human trafficking often have multiple needs that warrant accessing a variety of social services. As a consequence of the effects of human trafficking, the services required by survivors often incorporate a much broader array of resources and often require a lengthier period of provision compared to services typically provided to child and adult survivors of other forms of crime. The array of services that a survivor may need is indicated in the figure below. However, many survivors face barriers to obtaining these services based on their demographics, such as being male or female, or the type of trafficking they have experienced.
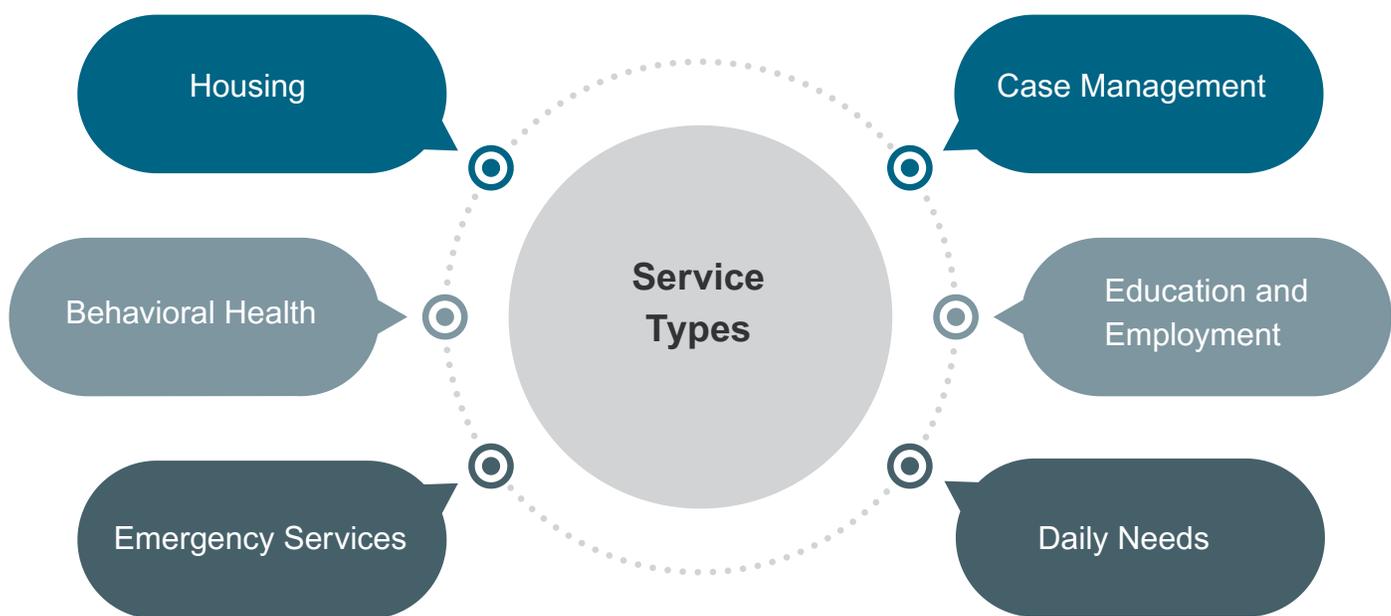
Other issues arise if the survivor is pregnant or has a young child, and overall, providers find it challenging to serve human trafficking survivors because "...many clients essentially lived in perpetual crisis and instability," resulting in stressful conditions for service providers as well as the survivors themselves (Potocky, 2010, p. 380). In some instances, even if services are technically available, they may not be accessible. As the needs of trafficking survivors are complex and tend to require the provision of services from multiple sources, it often results in a scarcity of program availability and inadequate funding for the programs that are able to meet these survivors' needs, which can increase the likelihood of subsequent revictimization and traumatization.

In addition to the scarcity of program availability, there may also be eligibility restrictions for programs, wait lists, fees for services, county-specific requirements, grant-specific requirements (i.e., type of individuals served), or abilities to address specific needs (i.e., crisis, short-term, long-term). Without a doubt, to continue as a state leader in anti-human trafficking efforts, Florida requires a more comprehensive means to address these resource barriers, in addition to incorporating lived experience experts in the development of programs that are made to address individuals who have experienced trafficking. By incorporating those with lived experience in the planning of human trafficking programs, some of these barriers to resources may be alleviated through new understanding.

The data that is presented in the following pages comes from BRIGHT's Data Tracker. Throughout 2024, the BRIGHT team collected lists of available services for victims of human trafficking by compiling various resource lists, provider recommendations, and online search results. Moreover, the data that is available in the tracker was compiled through administrative records and verified by the organizations themselves. The Data Tracker collects information on organization location, service provision type, demographics of individuals served, and counties that an organization serves.

To date, the BRIGHT team has identified over 605 providers throughout the State of Florida that are direct providers of services to human trafficking victims or are able to serve them in a dedicated program (e.g., a specialized program in a domestic violence center). Despite that the data can demonstrate the services available within the State of Florida, this data does not show the demand for specific services. Over time, through usage of the BRIGHT Platform, the data will be able to demonstrate together the needs of survivors compared to the actual services available.

Figure 46: Map of Identified Providers Throughout the State of Florida

As is demonstrated by the map above, the majority of service providers tend to be clustered around major cities and metropolitan areas, such as Tampa, Miami, Orlando, and Jacksonville. These areas often have more resources available, due to the infrastructure of larger cities, such as accessible transportation (e.g., multiple stops in a smaller proximity) and reliable internet coverage (e.g., for virtual service provision). Other factors impacting the greater level of services available may be attributed to population density and economic activity. Typically, rural areas have an overall dearth of services, making it difficult to connect to a service a survivor may need and qualify for when having to travel outside of county bounds or when public transportation has less of an area of reach, such as in Gainesville and the Florida Keys.

Figure 47: Least Prevalent Services Throughout the State of Florida

There is a clear lack of some services throughout the state. For instance, there are only two identified organizations that provide translation services for survivors whose primary language is not English, without being connected to an interpretation line.

Notably, there are a handful of organizations focused on demand reduction (<.1%), but those dedicated toward this effort are minimal. Despite being a need that is often cited by survivors, only 2% of the identified organizations are able to provide financial services, such as financial literacy, safe banking, or loans for utilities to survivors in the state.

At a quick glance, the most present service throughout the state is daily needs, including items such as food, clothing, and hygiene products, with approximately 31.4% of organizations able to provide, followed by education (28.7%). This includes a wide variety of services for survivors including literacy programs, GED courses, and vocational training.

Healthcare, including various medical services, ranks third at 28% followed by housing at 25.8%. Although here housing appears to be prevalent, this can be misleading because it includes homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, non-trafficking-specific residential programs, and youth centers.
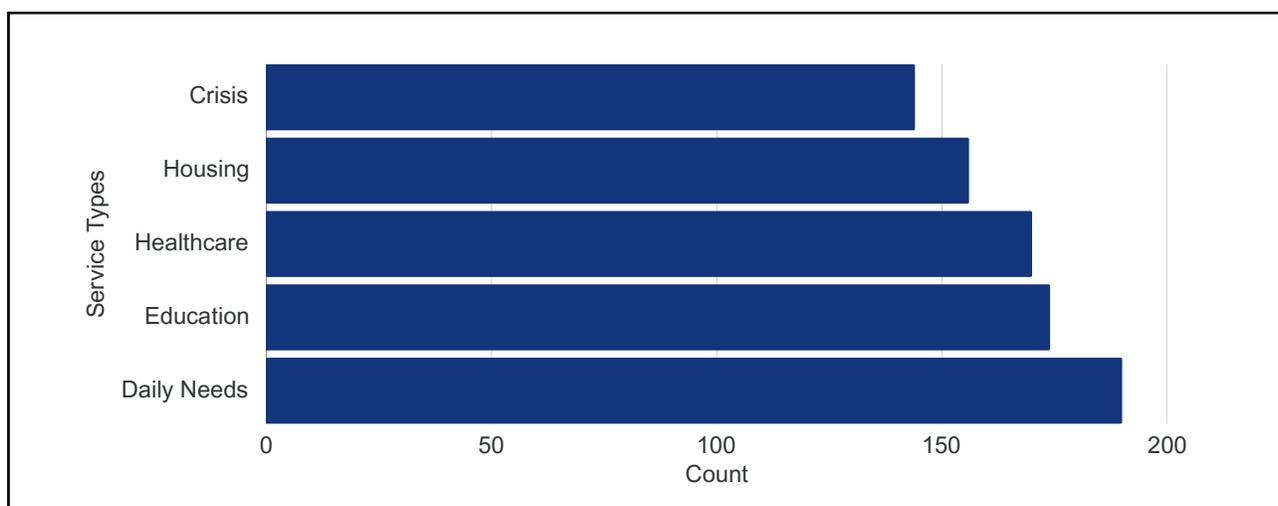
Figure 48: Most Prevalent Services Throughout the State of Florida

The top 5 types of services most commonly needed by trafficking survivors are residential/housing services, crisis/recovery, case management, mental health, and peer-led support. Due to the complex needs of trafficking survivors, best practices indicate these specific types of services should require a human trafficking-specific designation. This designation typically means that they have higher levels of safety and security measures among their facilities, more advanced training in human trafficking and complex trauma amongst their staff and have the ability to respond promptly to urgent needs, while simultaneously having the capacity for holistic support. Moreover, specific to peer-led support, this designation indicates that it is integral and required for those who are supporting more recently recovered survivors to have lived experience in trafficking. The figure below utilizes the BRIGHT data to illustrate for these 5 service categories the number of programs indicating they can service trafficking victims compared to the number who actually have obtained a trafficking-specific designation following best practices.
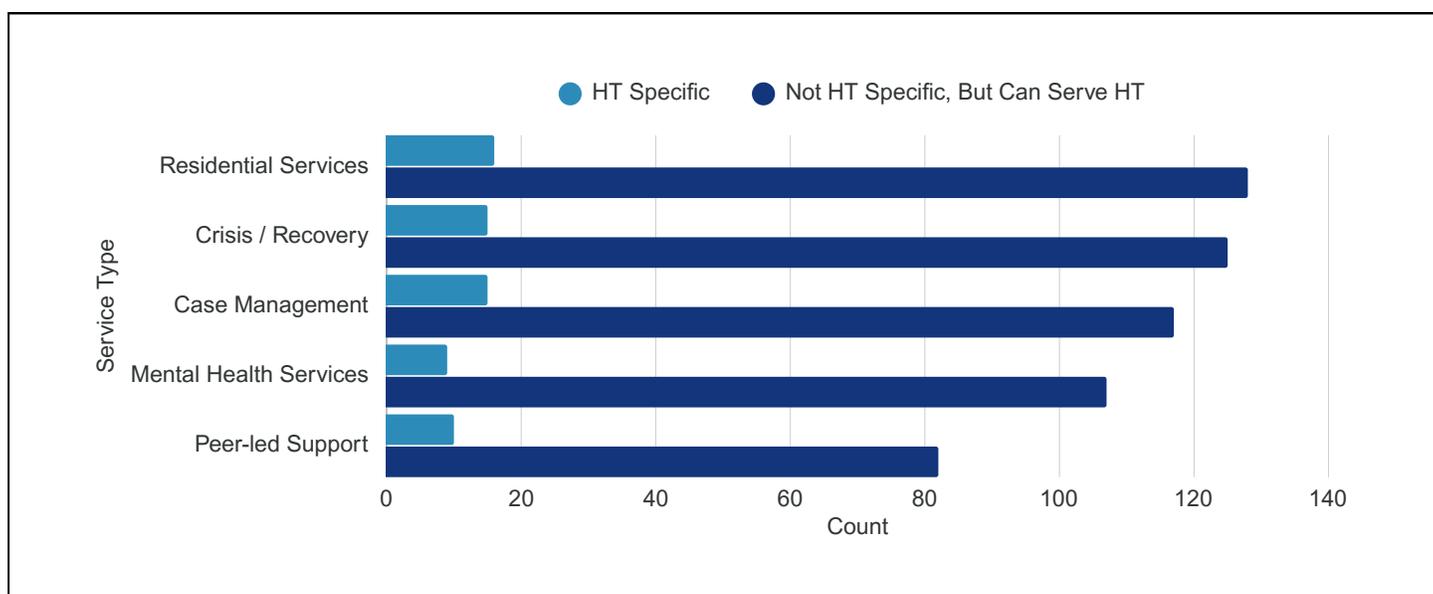
Figure 49: A Comparison of Identified Most Needed Services by Human Trafficking Victims Being Specific to Human Trafficking

A closer examination of the comparative data from these 5 service categories indicates the number of service providers that do not have a human trafficking designation far outweighs the number of programs with a human trafficking-specific designation (See Figure 49 above). This illustrates that only a few of these programs are meeting the best practices required to properly treat the myriad needs of trafficking survivors. For example, the majority of peer-led support (89%) programs identified, may have expertise in other areas, such as child abuse or domestic violence, but lack expertise in trafficking. To meet best practices, residential programs should be designed for and exclusive to trafficking survivors; however, only 11% of the residential services available fit these criteria. A recent DCF press release indicated there are only 98 beds available for both youth and adults designated as trafficking specific. Through building collaborations with survivors and providers, BRIGHT is working to better address the complex needs of trafficking survivors by helping to expand the capacity of trafficking-designated services in Florida (see Partnership section for further).

Department of Health

County health departments, located in all of Florida's 67 counties, have trained staff to identify and serve individuals who have experienced trafficking through the use of the Health Management System (HMS) Violence Screening Tool. County Health Departments, overseen by the Department of Health, are state-local partnerships that annually enter agreements with their host Board of County Commissioners to serve their corresponding county. The contract specifies the services to be provided and the revenues that fund the services. County health departments are supported by a variety of funding including state, county, federal, service fees, Medicaid, grants, and contracts.
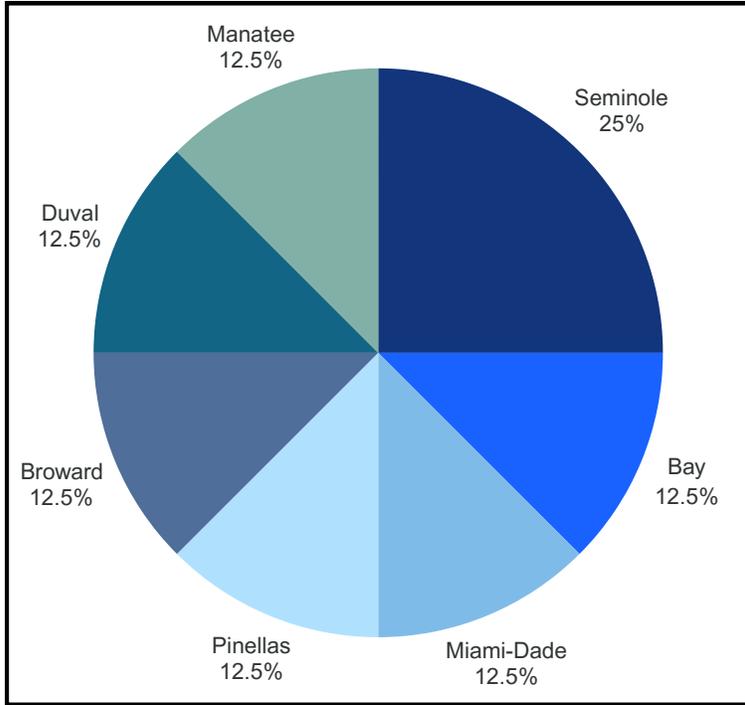
Figure 50: HMS Violence Screenings in 2024 by County

In 2024, 25% (n=2) of the HMS Violence Screening Tools were administered in Seminole County, while Manatee County, Duval County, Broward County, Pinellas County, Miami-Dade County, and Bay County each had 12.5% (n=1) screenings administered.
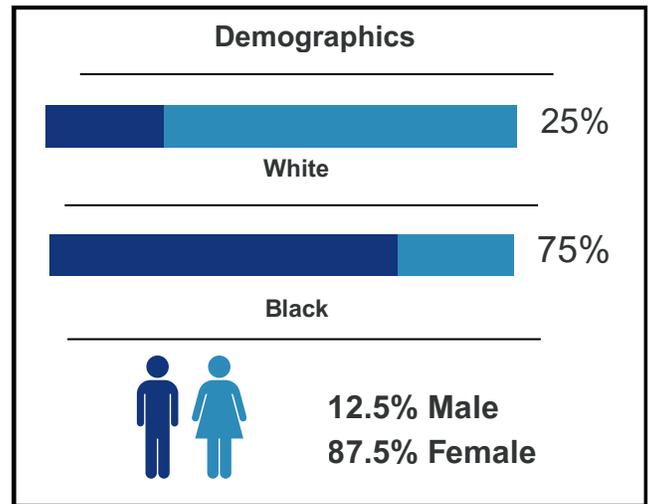
Figure 51: HMS Violence Screenings in 2024 by Race and Sex

All individuals screened were identified as adults. Figure 51 displays the prevalence of HMS Violence Screenings based on race and sex. A majority of individuals screened were Black or African American (75%), followed by White or Caucasian (25%). A majority of individuals screened were female (87.5%), with only 12.5% being male.
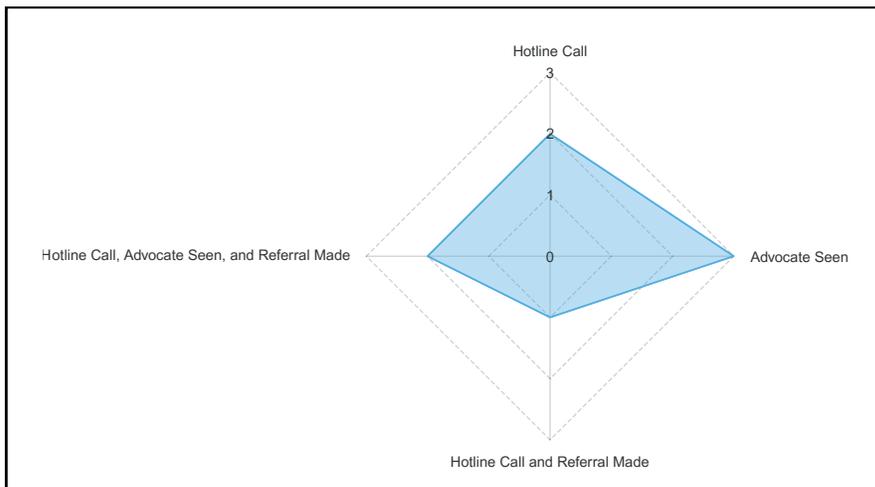
Figure 52: Visits Resulting in Hotline Call, Advocate Seen, or Referral Made in 2024

Figure 52 displays the prevalence of HMS Violence Screenings resulting in a hotline call, the patient seeing an advocate, and/or a referral being made in 2024. Of the patients identified as possible victims of human trafficking (n=8), 25% of visits resulted in a hotline call, the patient seeing an advocate, and a referral being made. 12.5% made a call to the hotline and received a human trafficking-related referral, 25% only called the hotline, and 37.5% only saw an advocate.

Of the total visits that administered an HMS Violence Screening, 62.5% (n=5) resulted in the patient seeing an advocate. Of the total patients who saw an advocate, 40% (n=2) received a referral. Of the total visits resulting in a hotline call (n=5), 40% saw an advocate and a referral was made, 20% resulted in a referral being made, and 40% did not see an advocate nor result in a referral being made.

Certified Domestic and Sexual Violence Centers

The Florida Council Against Sexual Violence (FCASV) is a statewide nonprofit organization committed to victims and survivors of sexual violence and the sexual assault crisis programs that serve them. FCASV certifies and supports sexual assault programs within the state of Florida to ensure access to high-quality, survivor-centered and trauma-supportive services for victims and their families, serving any individual over the age of eleven.

This information is a cumulative report from the 26 centers throughout the State of Florida. Of the clients served, 158 had experienced trafficking.
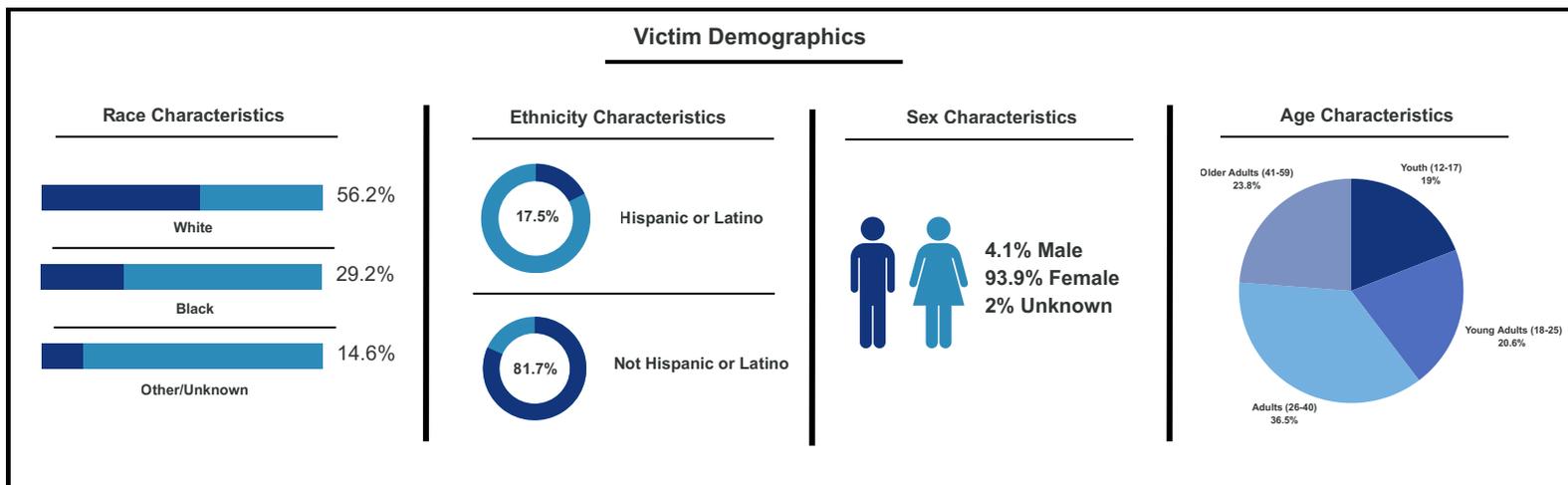
Figure 53: Certified Centers Victims Served Demographics

Figure 53 displays the differences in race, ethnicity, sex, and age among the victims who were served. The majority of individuals were White (56.2%), followed by Black (29.2%). Those that fell under the "Other" category (14.2%) include Multiracial, Asian, and Native American. The majority of these individuals were not Hispanic or Latino (81.7%). The various ages served ranged from 12-59 years old. The majority of those served were between the ages of 26-40 (36.5%). Youth were still served in these centers, but at the lowest percentage (19%).
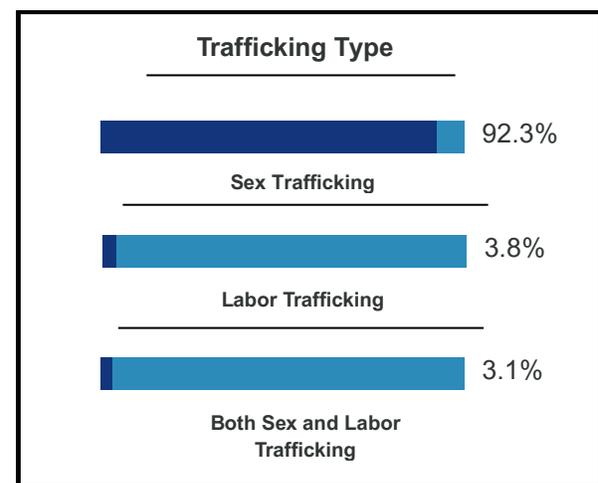
Figure 54: Certified Centers Victims Served by Trafficking Type

Figure 54 displays the prevalence of trafficking among victims served. The clear majority of individuals experienced sex trafficking (92.3%), with only 3.8% experiencing either labor trafficking, or both sex and labor trafficking.

Among the victims served, the most commonly reported perpetrator relationship to the victim was a romantic partner (25.5%), followed by acquaintances (19.1%) and strangers (19.1%). Other relationships reported include work/employment (6.4%), friend (4.3%), parent (4.3%), other family member (7.4%), drug dealer/gang affiliation (4.3%), or other (9.6%).
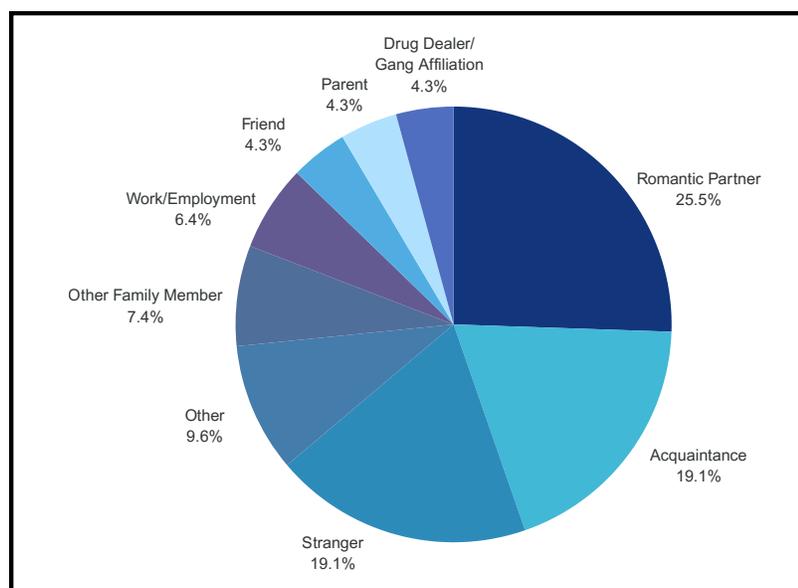
Figure 55: Certified Centers Victims Served by Relationship to Perpetrator

In Their Voice
Evaluating Survivor-Centered Human Trafficking Designated Programs

"*Individuals who have experienced human trafficking often struggle to reintegrate into society and everyday life. Research indicates that prolonged, specialized services aimed at reducing the risk of revictimization lead to measurable improvements for survivors (Garcia et al., 2024), such as obtaining safe and stable housing, employment, and improved well-being. Access to essential resources and support, such as legal services, mental health services, and assistance with housing and employment, can further improve the likelihood of successful reintegration (Bath et al., 2020; Pierce et al., 2018; Potocky, 2010). Comprehensive services that address immediate, ongoing, and long-term needs are crucial for the sustained recovery of victims and survivors (Macy & Johns, 2011). For these service providers, it is essential to find ways to quantify progress toward these outcomes. Identifying measurable indicators of success is crucial for determining program effectiveness, guiding resource allocation, and maintaining accountability.*

While the definition of "success" varies based on the unique needs and experiences of individual survivors, it is essential for service providers to establish significant and standardized measures or outcomes of success. Tangible indicators can be operationalized and measured across programs to meet immediate, ongoing, and long-term needs. Drawing on principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), an evidence-based approach focused on observable behavior and data-driven decision-making, service providers can define target behaviors, or outcomes, measured over time to assess progress. For example, a comprehensive housing goal may include:

An immediate need (or goal) for "housing" could require identifying (1) a dwelling that accommodates all family members, (2) any additional resources required, such as transportation or employment, and (3) a safe location with minimal exposure to criminal activity. Ongoing needs might include (1) establishing legal employment, such as being employed for 90 days, (2) obtaining reliable transportation, and (3) gaining financial literacy, such as learning to budget and track expenses. Long-term need may focus on (1) increasing independence by gradually reducing reliance on external support, such as increasing financial responsibilities for paying rent/mortgage, (2) continued financial literacy, like financial planning through savings and long-term budgeting, and (3) meeting additional responsibilities, such as completing dependency case plans or expunging criminal records.

Behavior-analytic strategies emphasize individualized goal setting, ongoing progress monitoring, and observable indicators. By combining survivor-defined goals with observable and measurable indicators, organizations can create responsive systems of accountability that reflect individual progress and demonstrate overall program effectiveness. This approach allows for organizational-level goals to be established without omitting the individual needs of the survivors. Additionally, this approach would establish data systems that track change over time, enabling the providers to make informed (data-driven) adjustments to their services. As a result, these programs can deliver services that are both person-centered and outcome-driven, effectively merging survivor well-being with program success"

-Arturo Garcia, M.A., BCBA, LBA | Doctoral Candidate | USF Applied Behavioral Analysis Program

Protection: From Data to Action
Key Takeaways for Future Protection Efforts in Florida

The data presented in this section can and should be used to accelerate Florida's protection efforts. Below are select recommendations for improving Florida's anti-trafficking response in terms of **Protection**:

1   **Support Quality and Safe Services:** Establish and support trauma-informed resources and survivor-led programming to address the comprehensive needs of both sex and labor trafficking victims at all stages of recovery.

2   **Expand Access to Services**: Counties lacking critical HT programs and services (housing, mental health, substance use, case management, crisis response) should make arrangements with neighboring counties to temporarily fill existing gaps.

3   **Prevent Repeat Traumization and Exploitation:** Prioritize the inclusion of the expertise of lived-experience advocates when creating response protocols for agencies to address and reduce re-victimization and re-traumatization for survivors of trafficking.

In these endeavors, the TIPSTR team is dedicated to contributing to Florida's anti-trafficking efforts in the realm of **Protection**. Future goals include:

Examine the effectiveness of ongoing protection protocols and safety planning approaches utilized by providers	Analyze gaps in the service continuum from identification to long-term recovery
Evaluate the availability and quality of human trafficking programs and resources	Research the economic impact and cost-saving implications of various protection programs and policies

Prosecution

Prosecution

Prosecution involves rigorous enforcement of anti-trafficking laws, comprehensive human trafficking investigations, and effective prosecutions of traffickers.

Prosecution is crucial in combating human trafficking and delivering justice to victims.

Since the enactment of the TVPA in 2000, legislation has continued to be passed that equips the federal government with tools to fight human trafficking and hold traffickers accountable for their crimes. In the last two decades, the U.S. Congress has worked to pass bills enhancing prosecution and strengthening penalties for trafficking crimes.

The TVPA added criminal provisions prohibiting human trafficking, criminalized attempts to engage in these activities, and strengthened penalties for existing trafficking crimes. Multiple reauthorizations of the TVPA have continued to implement new measures to prevent and deter trafficking through expanding criminal laws and increasing penalties.

This section analyzes:

- Federal Prosecutions Data
- FDLE Arrest Data
- CJDT Clerk of Court Case Data
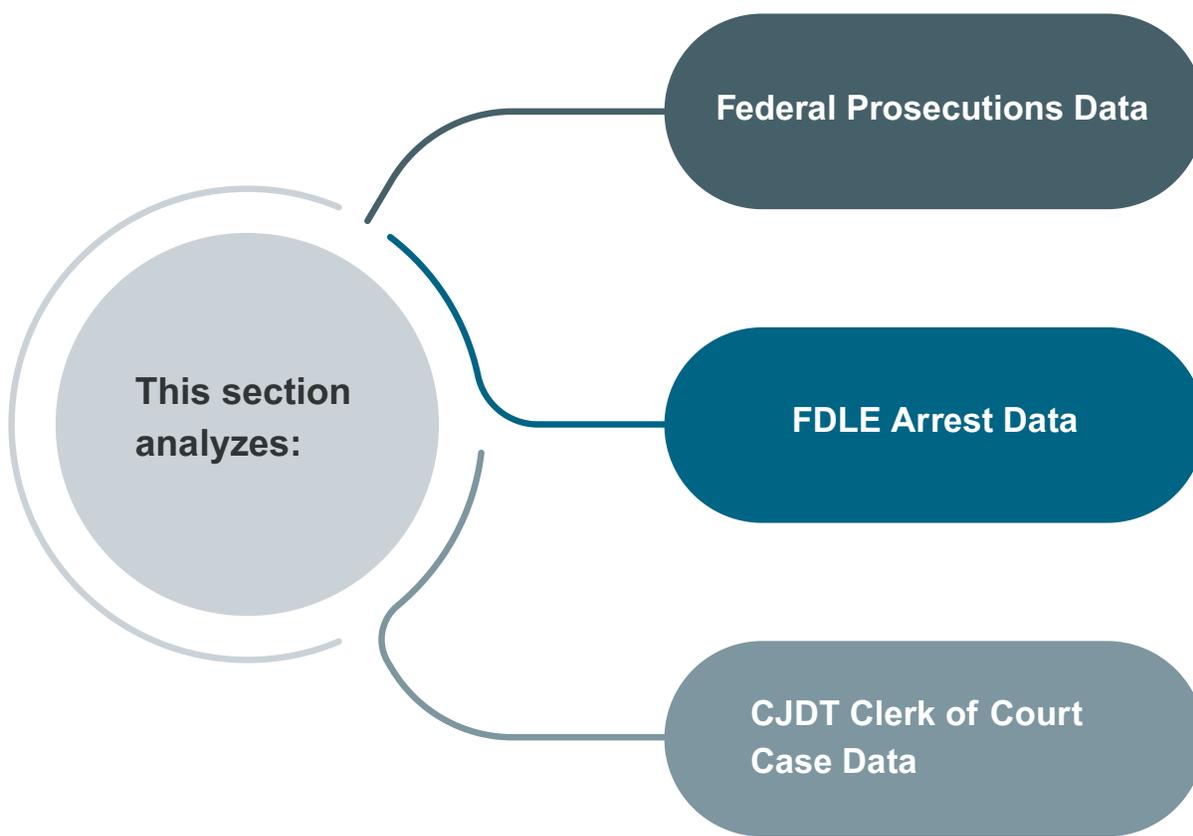
Federal Prosecutions

The federal case data comprises human trafficking cases that the United States government has decided to prosecute. The federal prosecution data in this section contains two types of human trafficking cases: (a) cases in which prosecutors charge defendants under the principal federal human trafficking statutes, 18 U.S.C. §§ 1581-1596 (Chapter 77) and 18 U.S.C. §§ 2421-2425 (Mann Act), and (b) cases in which defendants are charged under other statutes for crimes related to human trafficking, such as 8 U.S.C. § 1324 (Bringing in and Harboring Certain Aliens), 18 U.S. Code § 2251 (Sexual Exploitation of Children) and 18 U.S.C. § 2252 (Certain Activities Relating to Material Involving the Sexual Exploitation of Minors).

The Federal Human Trafficking Prosecutions Data contains federally prosecuted human trafficking cases in the United States between the years 2000 to 2022 (see Figure 56). The Allies Against Slavery team utilizes a systematic methodology to identify federal cases and extract data from case records, which involves two phases.
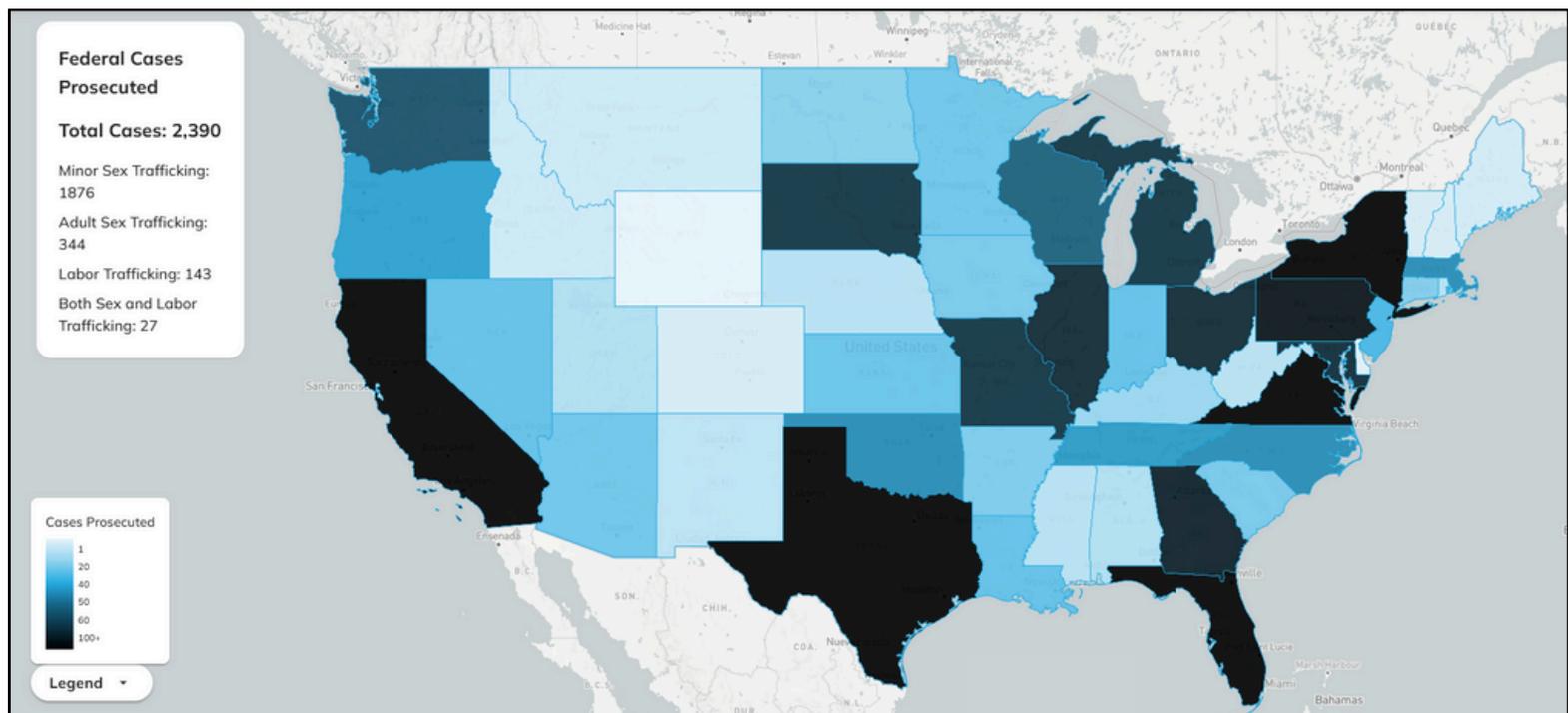
Figure 56: Number of Federal Human Trafficking Cases Prosecuted in the U.S. from 2000-2022*

From 2000-2022, there have been 2,390 total federal cases prosecuted, with 215 total federally prosecuted cases filed in Florida, making Florida the leading state in human trafficking federal prosecutions. Of the total 2,390 federal cases prosecuted, 1,869 were minor sex trafficking, 344 were adult sex trafficking, 143 were labor trafficking, and 27 were both sex and labor trafficking (see Figure 56).

Of the 215 total federally prosecuted human trafficking cases in Florida, 173 were minor sex trafficking, 25 were adult sex trafficking, 11 were labor trafficking, and 6 were both sex and labor trafficking. Florida is the leading state in minor sex trafficking federal prosecutions and one of the leading states in adult sex trafficking and labor trafficking federal prosecutions.

Florida's three federal districts handled 222 cases, representing 9% of the national total. The Northern District, which contains Tallahassee, filed 16 cases. The Middle District, home to Jacksonville, Tampa, Orlando, St. Petersburg, and Cape Coral, filed 82 cases. The Southern District, containing Miami, Hialeah, Port St. Lucie, and Fort Lauderdale, filed 117 cases (see Figure 57).

Florida

215
Cases of human trafficking prosecuted in the state

311
Cases of human trafficking that had a trafficking location in the state

340 : 789
The number of defendants and victims in cases prosecuted in the state

Locations
1
2
5
10
20
30+

Legend ▾
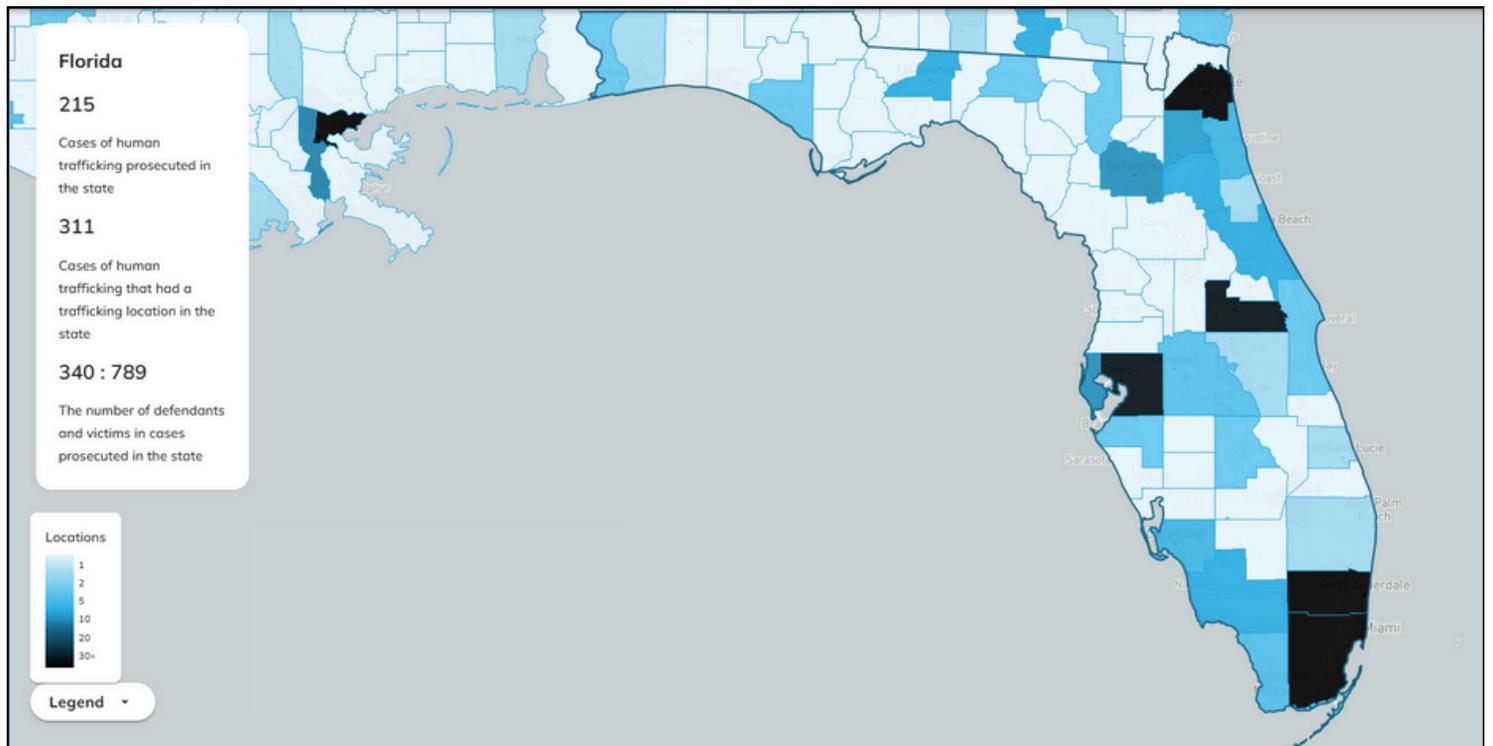
Figure 57: Number of Federal Human Trafficking Prosecutions Filed in Florida from 2000-2022*

Miami-Dade County has the leading number of trafficking location references from 2000-2022 with 102 locations, followed by Duval County with 36 locations, and then Hillsborough County and Orange County both with 27 trafficking locations referenced.

From human trafficking cases prosecuted nationwide, there were 472 trafficking locations referenced in Florida. Among Florida's cities, Miami had the most trafficking location references with 42, followed by Jacksonville with 31, and Orlando with 28. Additionally, there were 197 instances where the trafficking city was "Unlisted" (i.e., not specified in the court documents). See Figure 58 for more information.
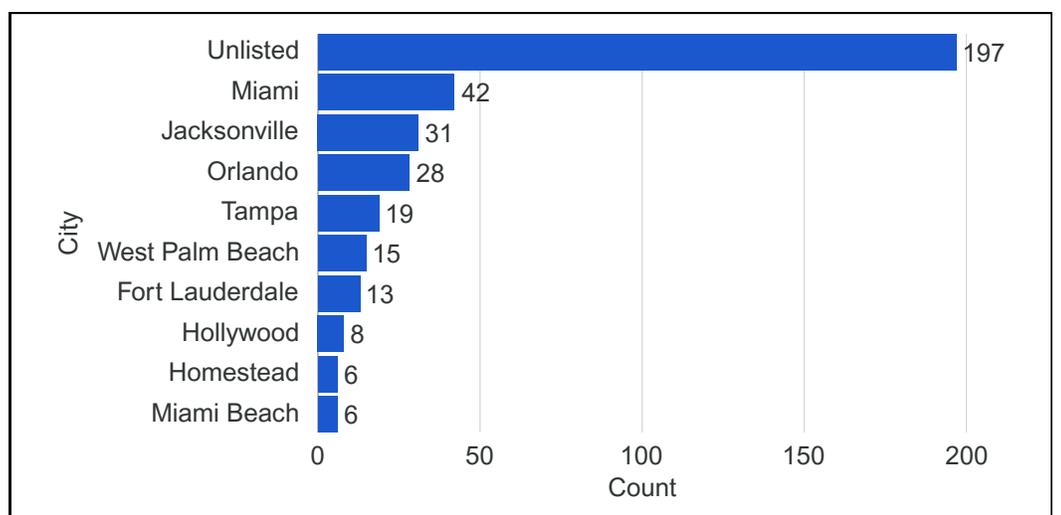
Figure 58: Trafficking Locations Reported in Florida by City

Of the 215 federally prosecuted cases filed in Florida from 2000-2022, 80% (n=173) are classified as minor sex trafficking, 12% (n=25) are adult sex trafficking, 5% (n=11) are labor trafficking, and 3% (n=6) are both sex and labor trafficking. This total represents a total of 340 defendants and 789 victims.

Of the total 789 victims identified, 57% (n=456) are classified as victims of sex trafficking and 43% (n=346) victims of labor trafficking, while 2% (n=13) of the total victims are classified as victims of both sex and labor trafficking.

Of the total 340 offenders, 85% (n=300) were defendants in a federal sex trafficking case and 15% (n=51) were defendants in a federal labor trafficking case, while 3% (n=11) were defendants in both a sex and labor trafficking case.
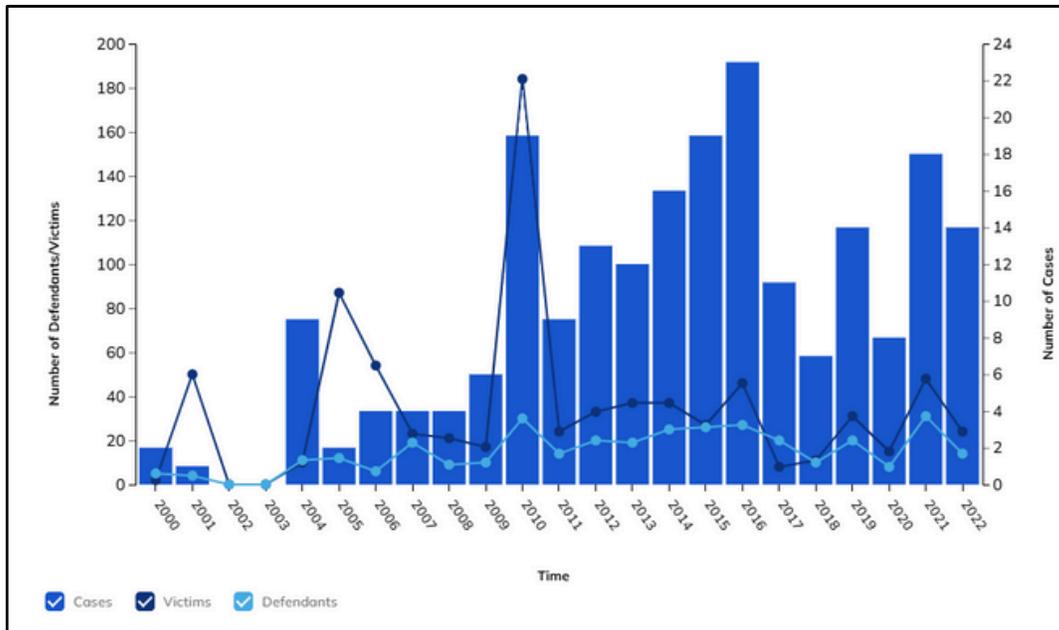
As demonstrated in Figure 59, according to the federally prosecuted cases filed in Florida, 2005-2010 had 49% (n=386) of the total human trafficking victims from 2000-2022 (n=789), with only 25% of offenders (n=86). The greatest number of victims in one year was in 2010 (n=184). Figure 59 displays an increase in the number of federal human trafficking cases prosecuted beginning in 2010.

Figure 59: Number of Federal Human Trafficking Offenders and Victims from Cases Filed in Florida Over Time*

From 2000-2022, there were 173 cases of minor sex trafficking, 25 cases of adult sex trafficking, and 11 federal cases of labor trafficking filed. The first minor sex trafficking case was not filed until 2004, and the first adult sex trafficking case was not filed until 2009. There was an increase in the number of minor sex trafficking cases beginning in 2010, while adult sex trafficking cases remained fairly consistent from 2009-2022 (see Figure 60).
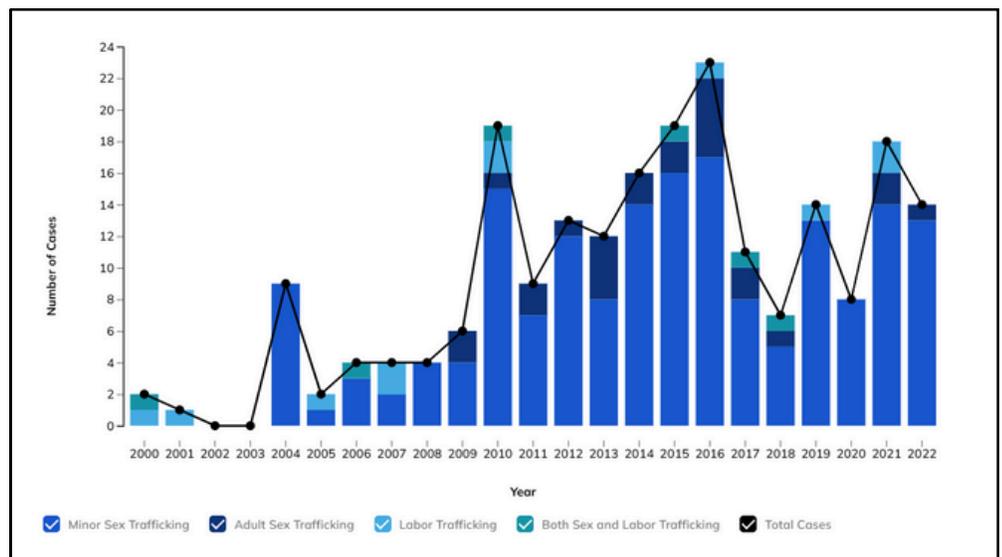
Figure 60: Number of Federal Human Trafficking Prosecutions Filed in Florida by Type of Trafficking and Year*

According to the federal prosecutions filed from 2000-2022, 86% (n=175) of cases involve human trafficking victims whose country of origin is the United States, 5% (n=11) involve victims whose country of origin is Mexico, and 2% (n=5) involve victims whose country of origin is Guatemala. The remaining 7% of cases involve victims whose country of origin is Haiti (n=3), Columbia (n=2), Cuba (n=2), Honduras (n=2), Philippines (n=2), Cambodia (n=1), and unknown country of origin (n=1).

Of the total minor sex trafficking victims from 2000-2022, 78% (n=299) were classified as minors at the time of the prosecution, while 22% (n=86) were classified as adults. Of the adult sex trafficking cases, 100% (n=61) were classified as adults. Of the total labor trafficking victims, 99% (n=33) were classified as adults and 1% (n=3) were minors. Of the victims of both sex and labor trafficking, 100% (n=10) were classified as adults.
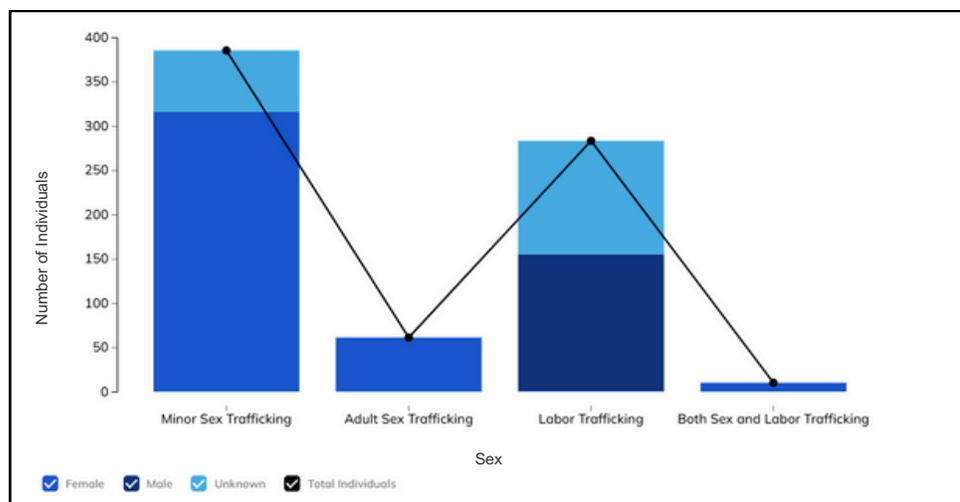
Figure 61: Federal Human Trafficking Victims by Trafficking Type and Sex in Florida from 2000-2022*

As demonstrated in Figure 61, 82% (n=316) of minor sex trafficking victims were female and 18% (n=69) were unknown, while 100% (61) of adult sex trafficking victims were female. Of the total labor trafficking victims from 2000-2022, 54% (n=154) were male and 48% (n=128) were unknown. Of the total sex and labor trafficking victims, 100% were female (n=10).

As shown is Figure 62, the greatest number of defendants exploited their victim(s) for less than one year. Out of the total defendants with a Known Period of Exploitation (KPE) of less than one year, 88% (n=190) were defendants in minor sex trafficking cases, 6% (n=12) in adult sex trafficking cases, 3% (n=7) in labor trafficking cases, and 3% (n=6) in both labor and sex trafficking cases. The least number of defendants exploited their victim(s) for 6 to 9 years and 10 or more years. Of the total defendants with a KPE from 6 to 9 years, 85% (n=11) were defendants in labor trafficking cases, 15% (n=2) in minor sex trafficking cases. Of the total defendants with a KPE from 10 or more years, 50% (n=7) were defendants in labor trafficking cases, 29% (n=4) in minor sex trafficking cases, and 21% (n=3) in adult sex trafficking cases.
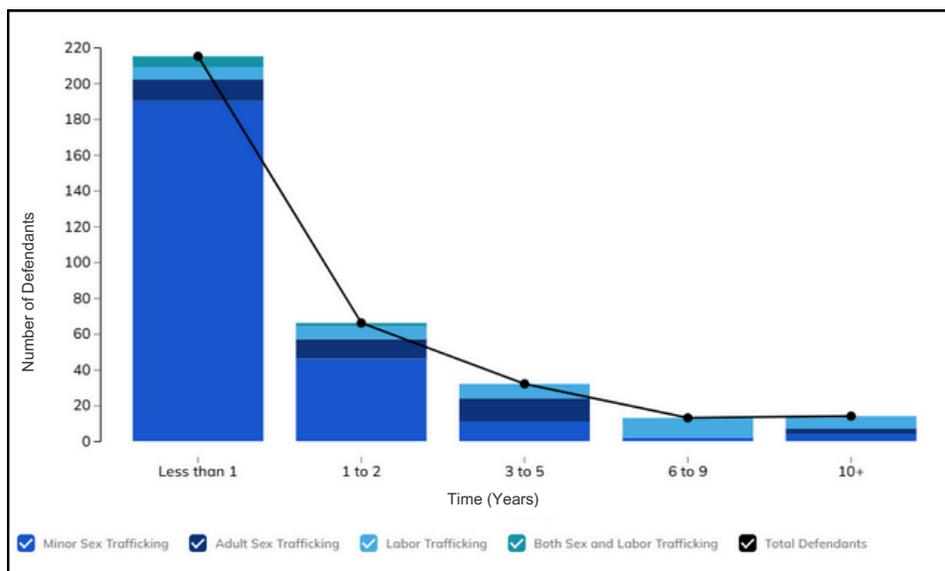
Figure 62: Number of defendants in Federal Human Trafficking Prosecutions Filed in Florida by Known Period of Exploitation from 2000-2022*

Note: Figure 62 demonstrates the number of defendants in federal human trafficking prosecutions filed from 2000-2022 in Florida categorized by the known period of exploitation (KPE) and trafficking type. The KPE is calculated by finding the difference between the first known date that trafficking began and each defendant's arrest date. If a defendant has no arrest date, they are not included in this chart.
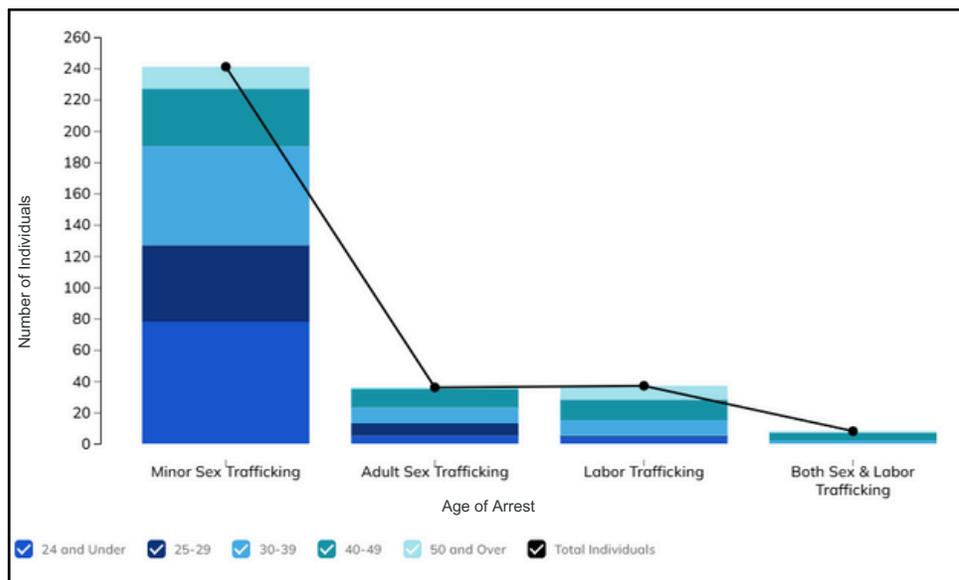
Figure 63: Federal Human Trafficking Prosecutions Filed in Florida by Type and Offender Age at Arrest*

Figure 63 demonstrates that while defendants 29 or under account for 52% of the total minor sex trafficking defendants, 36% of adult sex trafficking defendants 30 and older account for 64% of adult sex trafficking defendants and, 86% of the total labor trafficking defendants.

Findings show that defendants 29 or under account for approximately half of the total minor sex trafficking defendants a majority of adult sex trafficking and labor trafficking defendants are age 50 or older.

Of the total defendants in minor trafficking cases from 2000-2022, 32% (n=78) were 24 years old and under, 20% (n=49) 25-29, 26% (n=63) 30-39, 15% (n=37) 40-49, and 6% (n=14) were 50 or older. Of the adult sex trafficking cases, 14% (n=5) were 24 and under, 22% (n=8) were 25-29, 28% (n=10) 30-39, 33% (n=12) 40-49, and 3% (n=1) 50 or older. Of the total defendants in labor trafficking cases, 11% (n=4) were 24 and under, 3% (n=1) 25-29, 27% (n=10) 30-39, 35% (n=13) 40-49, and 24% (n=9) 50 or older.

A majority of defendants in all types of federal human trafficking prosecutions filed from 2000-2022 were identified as male. Of the total defendants in minor sex trafficking cases, 78% (n=198) were male, 83% (n=32) were males in adult sex trafficking, 75% (n=30) in labor trafficking, and 63% (n=5) in both sex and labor trafficking cases.

Of the total male defendants, 75% (n=198) were involved in a minor sex trafficking case, 12% (n=32) in adult sex trafficking, 11% (n=30) in labor trafficking, and 2% (n=5) in both sex and labor trafficking.

Of the total female defendants, 73% (n=55) were involved in a minor sex trafficking case, 9% (n=7) in adult sex trafficking, 13% (n=10) in labor trafficking, and 4% (n=3) in both sex and labor trafficking (see Figure 64)
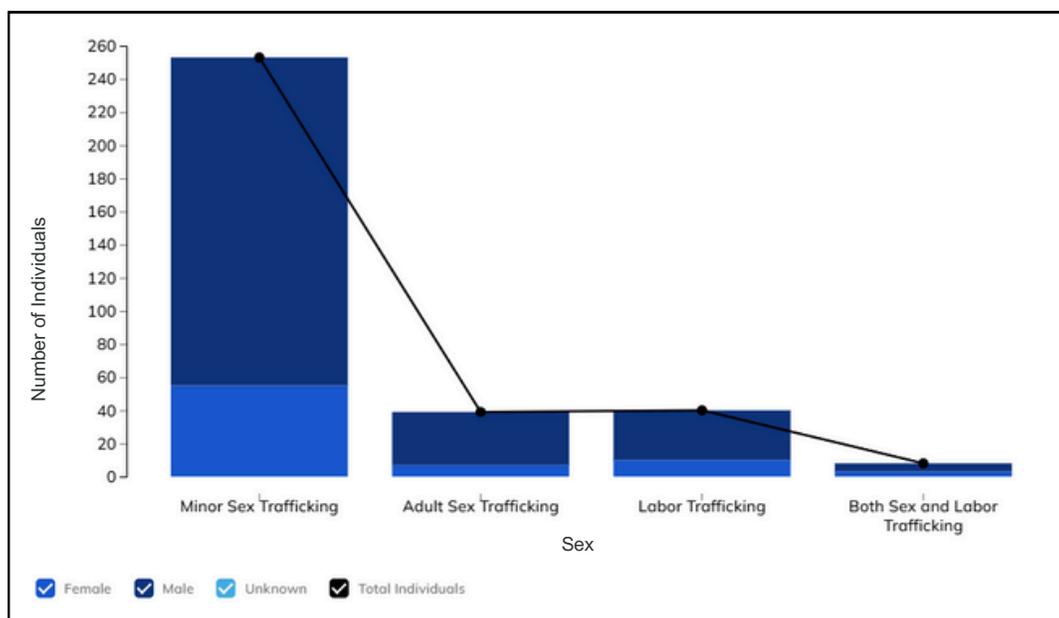
Figure 64: Number of Offenders in Federal Human Trafficking Prosecutions Filed in Florida by Trafficking Type and Sex*

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) is a statewide department of the Executive Branch of government, headed by the Governor and the Florida Cabinet. Appointed by the Governor, with approval from the Cabinet, the Commissioner (Executive Director) leads the department, comprised of five divisions: Executive Direction and Business Support, Criminal Investigations and Forensic Science, Criminal Justice Information, Criminal Justice Professionalism, and the Florida Capitol Police.

FDLE data analyzed in this section:

- Uniform Crime Report (UCR)
- Florida Incident-Based Reporting System (FIBRS)
- Criminal Justice Data Transparency (CJDT)
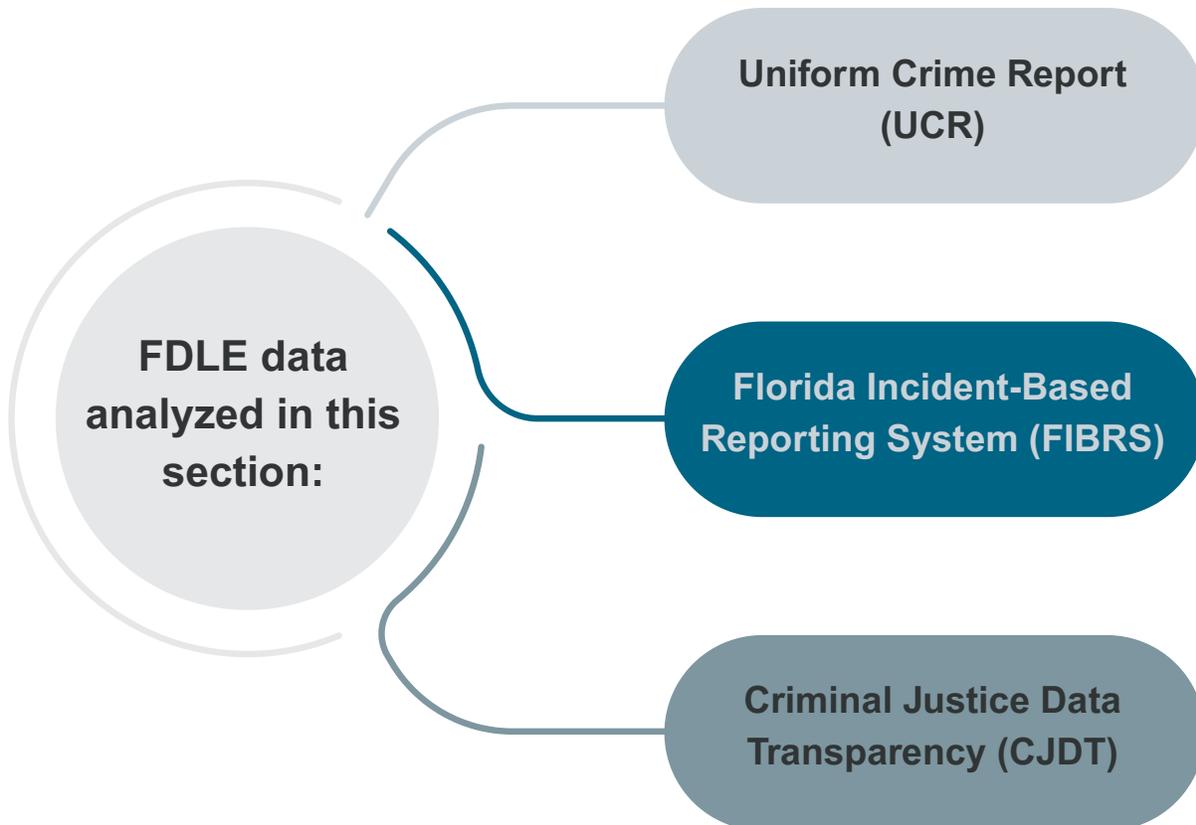
UCR and FIBRS Data

In accordance with new federal reporting standards, Florida implemented the **Florida Incident-Based Reporting System (FIBRS)** to centralize the state's law enforcement data in 2021. Florida law enforcement agencies are actively updating their record management systems to meet FIBRS requirements. This transition means that, as of 2024, approximately 64.5% of Florida agencies now submit data through FIBRS, while 35.5% continue using the legacy SRS system until their record management systems can be updated.

Consequently, the USF TIP Lab currently receives arrests related to the trafficking of persons and prostitution from both data sources provided by the FDLE to ensure comprehensive coverage of statewide crime patterns (for more information, see here). **In this section, we present findings from all SRS and FIBRS data on all offenses and arrests related to human trafficking from 2021-2024.** When applicable, we also present prostitution-related arrests from the same timeframe. *Please see Appendix C for more information on FIBRS and SRS, including key differences.*

CJDT Clerk of Courts Data

This section also analyzes data from the Criminal Justice Data Transparency (CJDT) initiative. The Florida Legislature established the CJDT initiative in 2018, mandating seven key entities to contribute data to FDLE to create a publicly available dataset that shall be updated once daily with all submissions by participating agencies from the previous day until 11:59 pm.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Florida Incident-Based Reporting System (FIBRS)

The USF TIP Lab receives all human trafficking and prostitution-related FIBRS data. For more information on the criminal statutes corresponding to these arrest categories, please see Florida Statutes.

Data from FIBRS will be presented in the context of the number of incidents, offenses, and arrests in addition to the number of identified victims and offenders. In order to effectively contextualize the forthcoming analyses, please see the following definitions from FDLE (see here):

An **Incident** is an occurrence or event requiring a response, often involving one or more offenses committed by the same offender, or group of offenders acting in concert, at the same time and place. Each incident may be associated with multiple offenses, arrests, offenders, and victims.

An **Offense** is a violation of a criminal statute, ordinance, or rule. Each offense is associated with only a single incident.

An **Arrest** involves taking a person(s) into law enforcement custody. Therefore, an incident or offense may be documented that did not result in an arrest for many reasons, such as lack of evidence or inability to identify a suspect. Each arrest is associated with only a single incident.

One key data limitation is that while offenses, arrests, victims, and offenders can all be linked to a specific incident, offenders are not directly linked to specific offenses. Instead, any connection between an offender and an offense must be inferred through their shared incident.

Between 2021-2024, there were 3,411 incidents related to at least one human trafficking or prostitution offense or arrest.

Offense Category	n	%
Human Trafficking-Related Offenses	**445**	
Human Trafficking - Commercial Sex Acts	395	88.76%
Human Trafficking - Involuntary Servitude	50	11.24%
Prostitution-Related Offenses	**3,072**	
Prostitution	1,785	58.11%
Assisting or Promoting Prostitution	1,219	39.68%
Purchasing Prostitution	68	2.21%

Notes: (1) Conditional percentages are based on the subsample for each overarching type of offense.

Table 6: Offense Categories from FIBRS (2021-2024)

Table 6 compares the frequency and percentages of prostitution-related offenses and human trafficking-related offenses. Among all incidents, there were 3,072 related to prostitution via (1) prostitution (58.11%), (2) assisting or promoting prostitution (39.68%), or (3) purchasing prostitution (2.21%). Of 445 offenses related to human trafficking, 88.76% were associated with sex trafficking (i.e., commercial sex acts), and 11.42% were associated with labor trafficking (i.e., involuntary servitude).
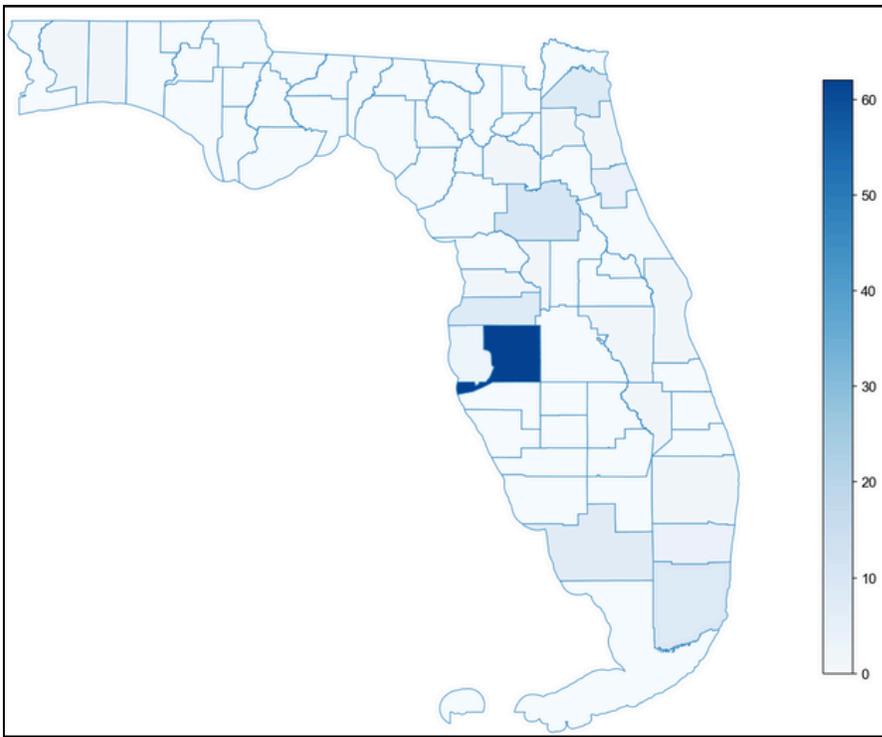
Figure 65: Total Human Trafficking Arrests from 2021-2024 (FIBRS-ONLY)

Figure 65 demonstrates the prevalence of human trafficking-related arrests from 2021-2024 reported to FIBRS. The greatest number of arrests occurred in Hillsborough County (n=62), followed by Marion County (n=10), and Miami-Dade County (n=9). Some arrests were associated with multiple offenses.

Figure 66 shows the ten counties with the highest number of reported human trafficking offenses. For example, Hillsborough County accounted for 143 offenses—approximately one-third of all reported cases. Although not shown in the figure, eight cases were _exceptionally cleared_ for reasons such as the suspect being in custody in another jurisdiction, the victim declining to participate in prosecution, or the prosecutor choosing not to pursue charges (fewer than 10 offenses total).
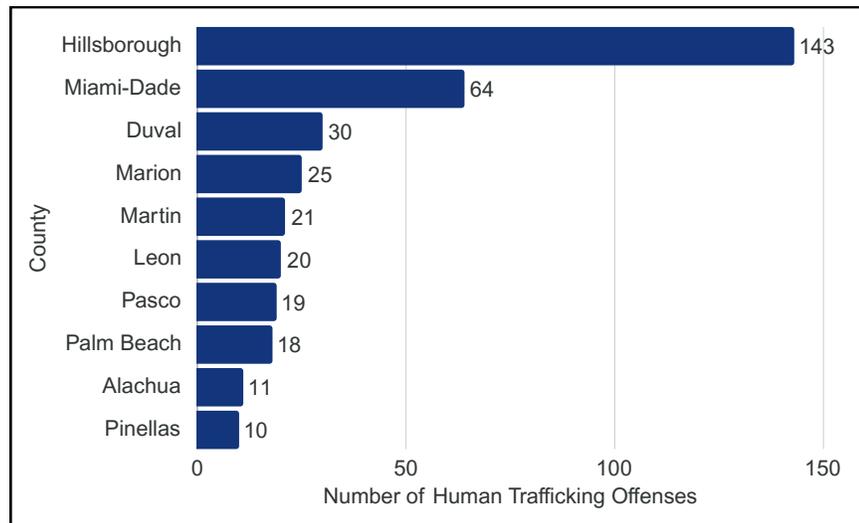
Figure 66: Offenses from FIBRS by the Top Ten Counties (2021-2024)
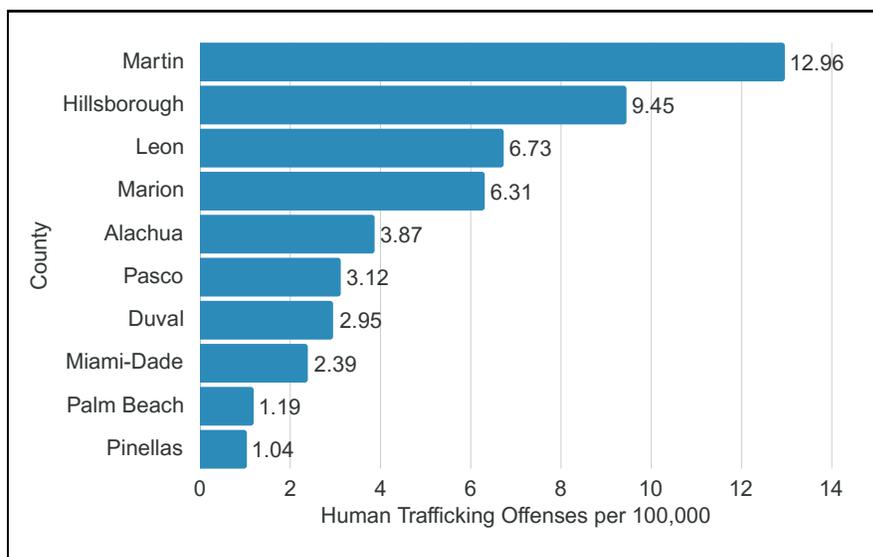
Figure 67: Offenses from FIBRS by the Top Ten Counties per 100,000 (2021-2024)

Given the fact that counties in Florida have vastly different populations, it is critical to also show per capita estimates. In this regard, Figure 67 shows the ten counties that had the highest number of alleged human trafficking offenses per 100,000 people. For example, Martin County had the highest per capita rate of human trafficking offenses between 2021-2024: 12.96 offenses per 100,000 people.

Figure 68. shows the annual offenses known to law enforcement for (1) human trafficking, (2) prostitution, and (3) facilitating prostitution (i.e., assisting or promoting prostitution and purchasing prostitution). More specifically, **each year saw a steady increase of identified human trafficking offenses between 2021-2024** (62, 105, 132, 146, respectively). Offenses related to the facilitation of prostitution also saw a gradual increase in identified offenses over time, even with a small decline in 2023 (162, 355, 346, 424, respectively). The highest number of identified offenses were related to prostitution, but its trends seem to fluctuate yearly (489, 387, 471, 438, respectively).
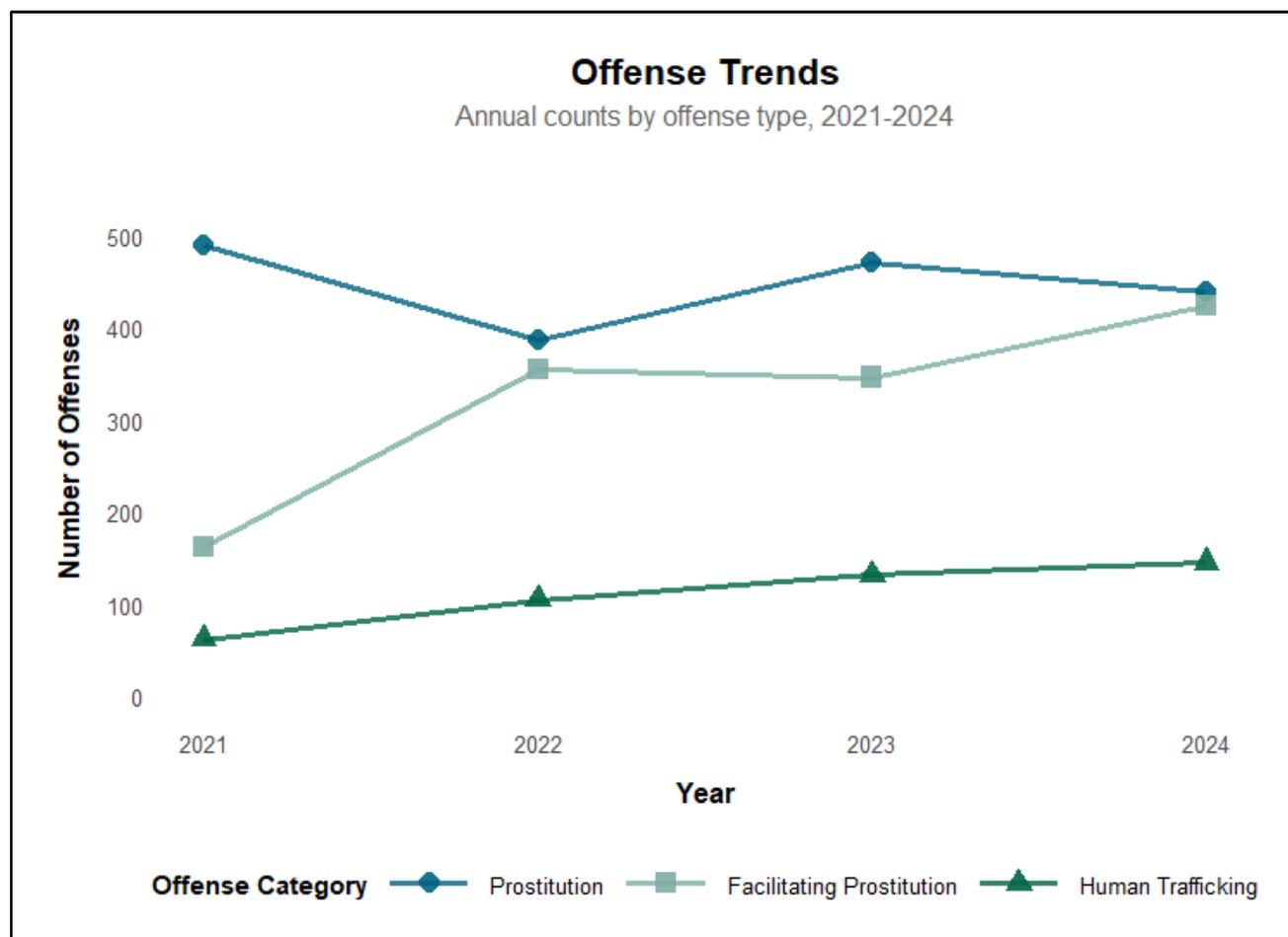
Figure 68: Human Trafficking Offense Trends Reported to FIBRS (2021-2024)

Figure 69. shows the location of the alleged human trafficking offenses. The majority of alleged offenses (69.89%) occurred in private (e.g., private residence, hotel/motel room). Semi-private locations refer to spaces that exist in public but may allow for some privacy such as restaurants, stores, shelters, and so on. Public locations referred to primarily outdoor, public spaces such as parking garages, woods, and parks. Examples of "Other" locations include cyberspace and abandoned structures.
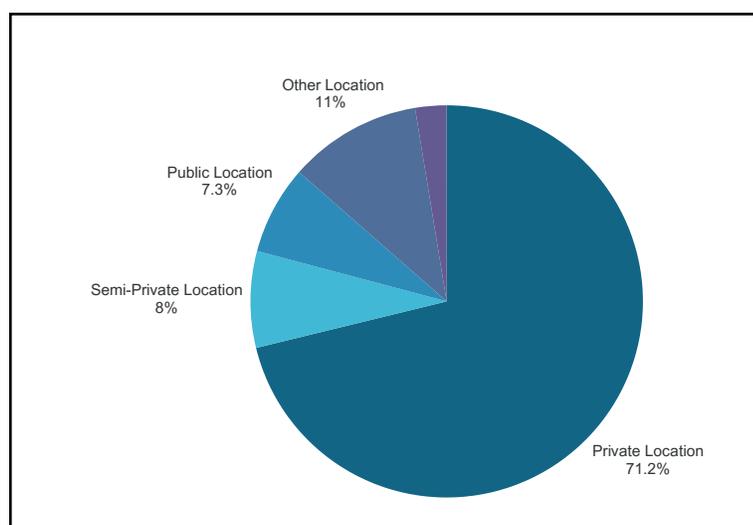
Figure 69: Human Trafficking Offenses by Location (2021-2024)

One of the many benefits of FIBRS is the additional victim and offender information that is collected. Figure 70 shows the available victim demographic information collected by FIBRS. Specifically, this figure shows victim demographic information when there was an arrest for either form of human trafficking (i.e., sex or labor).
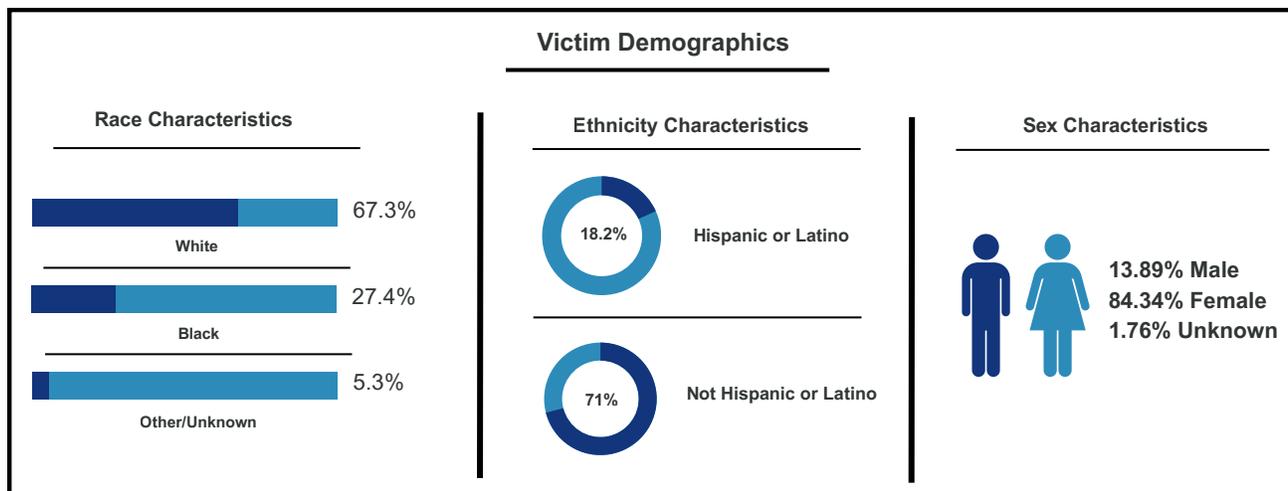
Figure 70: Victim Demographics

On average, were 19.82 years old, most victims were female (84.34%) and identified as White (67.32%). Notably, about a quarter of identified victims (27.40%) identified as Black. Approximately 13.20% of victims identified as Hispanic.

Figure 71: Victim-Offender Relationship Type Among Human Trafficking Offenses (2021-2024)
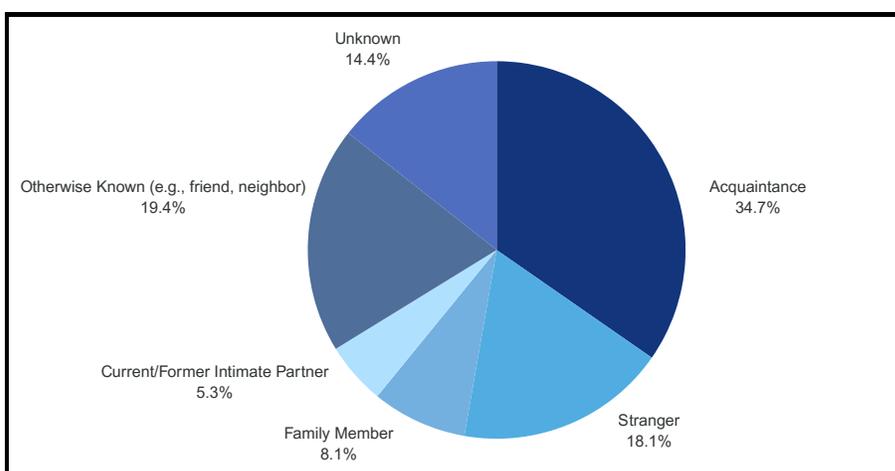
Among human trafficking offenses, there were 675 unique victim-offender relationships (see Figure 71). The most common relationships were acquaintances (34.67%), otherwise known relationships (e.g., friend neighbor, someone at work), and strangers (18.07%).
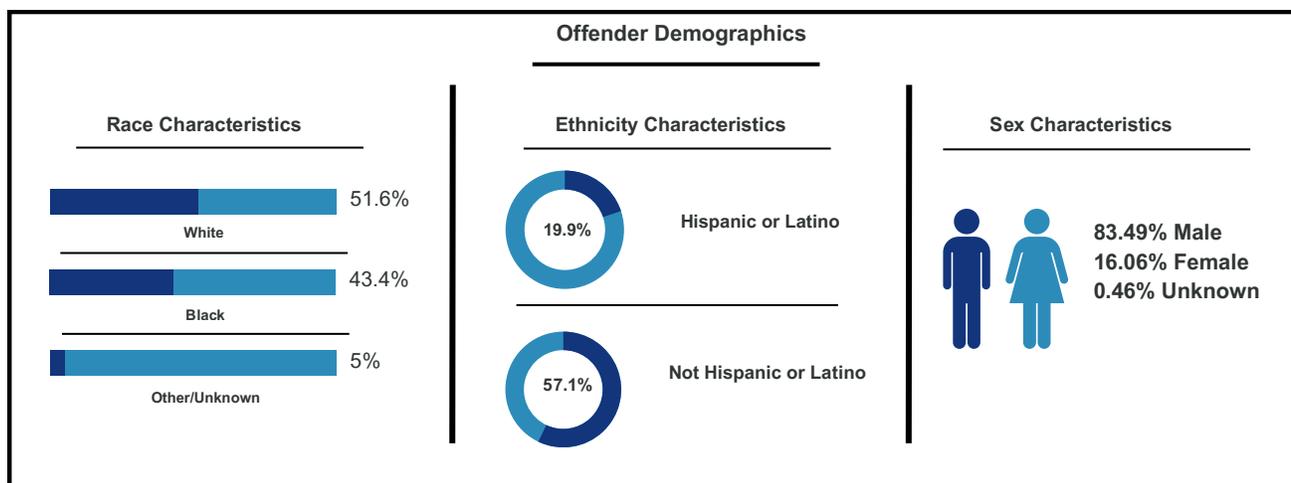
Figure 72: Offender Demographics

On average, offenders were 34.42 years old and most were male (83.49%). About half of offenders identified as White (51.61%) and less than half identified as Black/African American (43.35%). Only 19.95% of offenders identified as Hispanic, however, there were many instances where this information was not known at the time of recording (22.94%).

Combined FIBRS and SRS Data
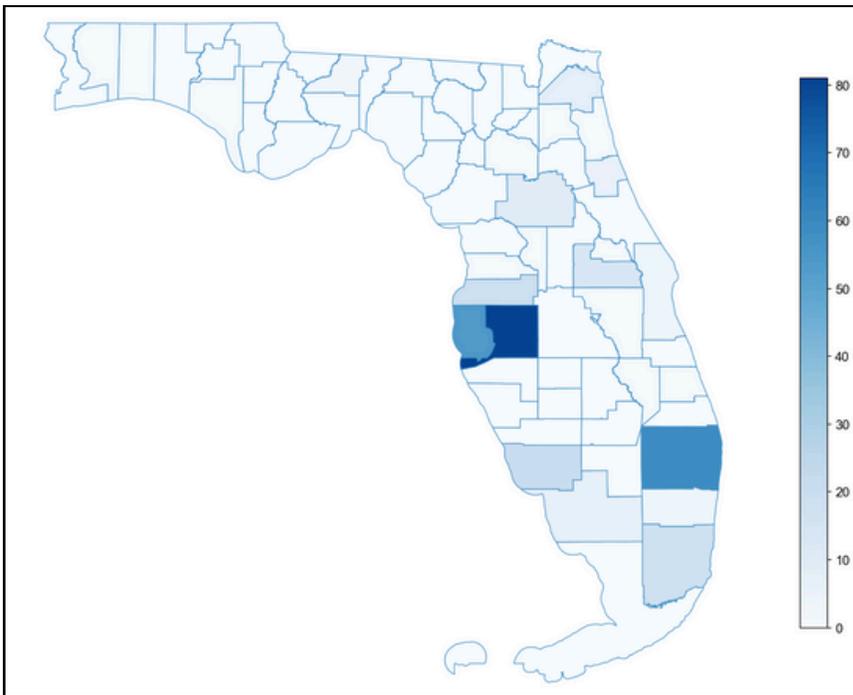
Figure 73: Total Human Trafficking Arrests from 2021-2024 (FIBRS and SRS)

Florida law enforcement agencies currently report arrest data through two systems: **FIBRS and SRS**. To provide the most complete picture of human trafficking arrests from 2021–2024, we combined data from both.
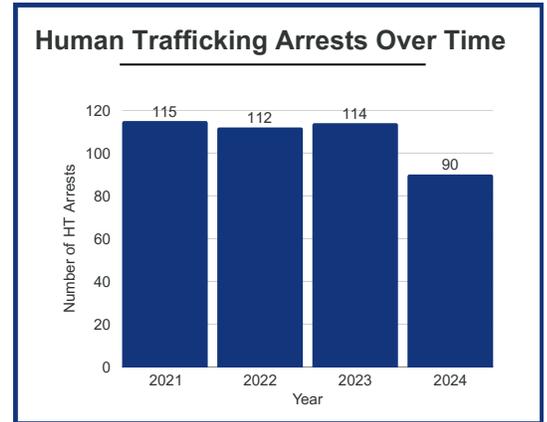
Figure 74: Total Human Trafficking Arrests Over Time (FIBRS and SRS)
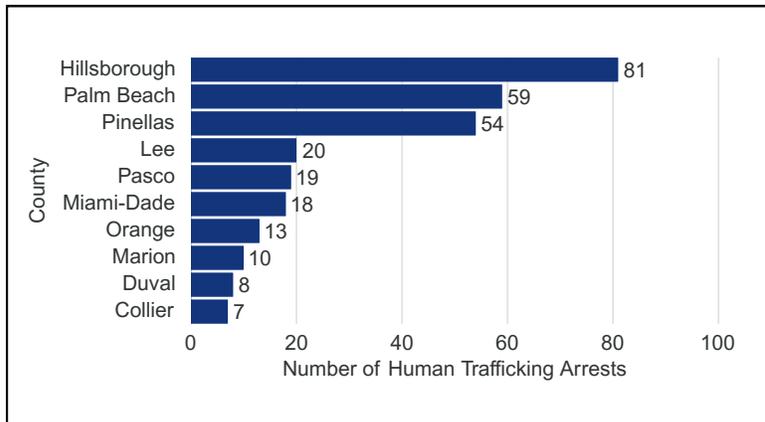
Figure 75: Total HT Arrests from 2021-2024 (FIBRS and SRS)

Figure 75 shows the total number of human trafficking arrests in the top ten counties in Florida after combining data from SRS and FIBRS. For example, Hillsborough County had 81 arrests for human trafficking between 2021-2024.

Figure 76 displays the ten counties with the highest rates of human trafficking arrests per 100,000 residents. Pinellas County ranked highest, with 5.61 arrests per 100,000 people, followed by Hillsborough County with approximately 5.35 arrests per 100,000.
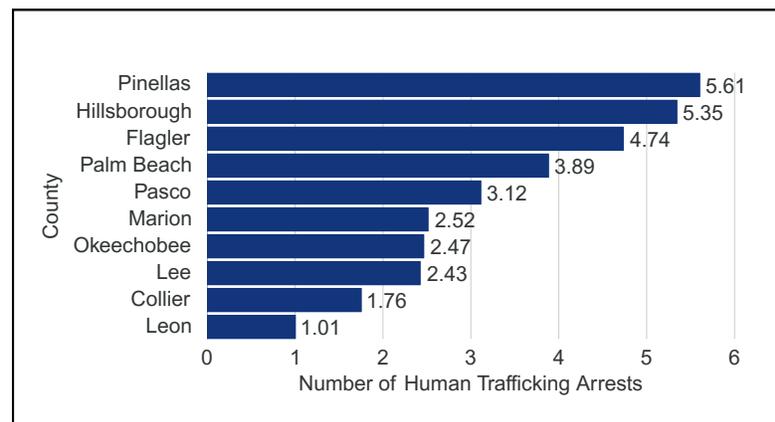
Figure 76. HT Arrests Per Capita from 2021-2024 (FIBRS and SRS)

Notes: (1) Minor discrepancies may exist due to differences in how each system collects data. In cases where agencies reported to both, we prioritized FIBRS, as it is more comprehensive and the system Florida is transitioning toward. (2) While agencies can update previously submitted data, any changes made after FDLE shared the data with the TIP Lab are not reflected in these analyses. (3) These analyses only consist of arrest data as SRS does not distinguish between incidents, offenses, and arrests as FIBRS does. (4) There may be a time lag between an offense and a related arrest due to the length of investigations. (5) These data do not capture instances where a human trafficking offense led to an arrest for a different charge.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Criminal Justice Data Transparency: Florida Clerk of Courts Data

Florida's Criminal Justice Data Transparency (CJDT) initiative, established in 2018, represents a significant advancement in criminal justice reform. Created through Florida Statutes §900.05 and §943.6871, this initiative established a framework for expanded criminal justice data collection and sharing across the state. The CJDT initiative was created to increase visibility into criminal justice processes statewide and provide policymakers with evidence-based information for informed decision-making.

Data collection began in 2020, with contributing agencies submitting monthly data to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). The FDLE displays this information through five publicly accessible dashboards that update regularly. The CJDT contributing entities include: Clerk of Court, County Detention Facilities, Department of Corrections, Justice Administrative Commission, State Attorney Offices, Public Defender Offices, and Regional Conflict Counsel.

In this section, we analyze data from the Clerk of Court Case Reports dashboard, specifically examining charges filed under Florida Statute §787.06 (Human Trafficking) and the key characteristics of these cases.
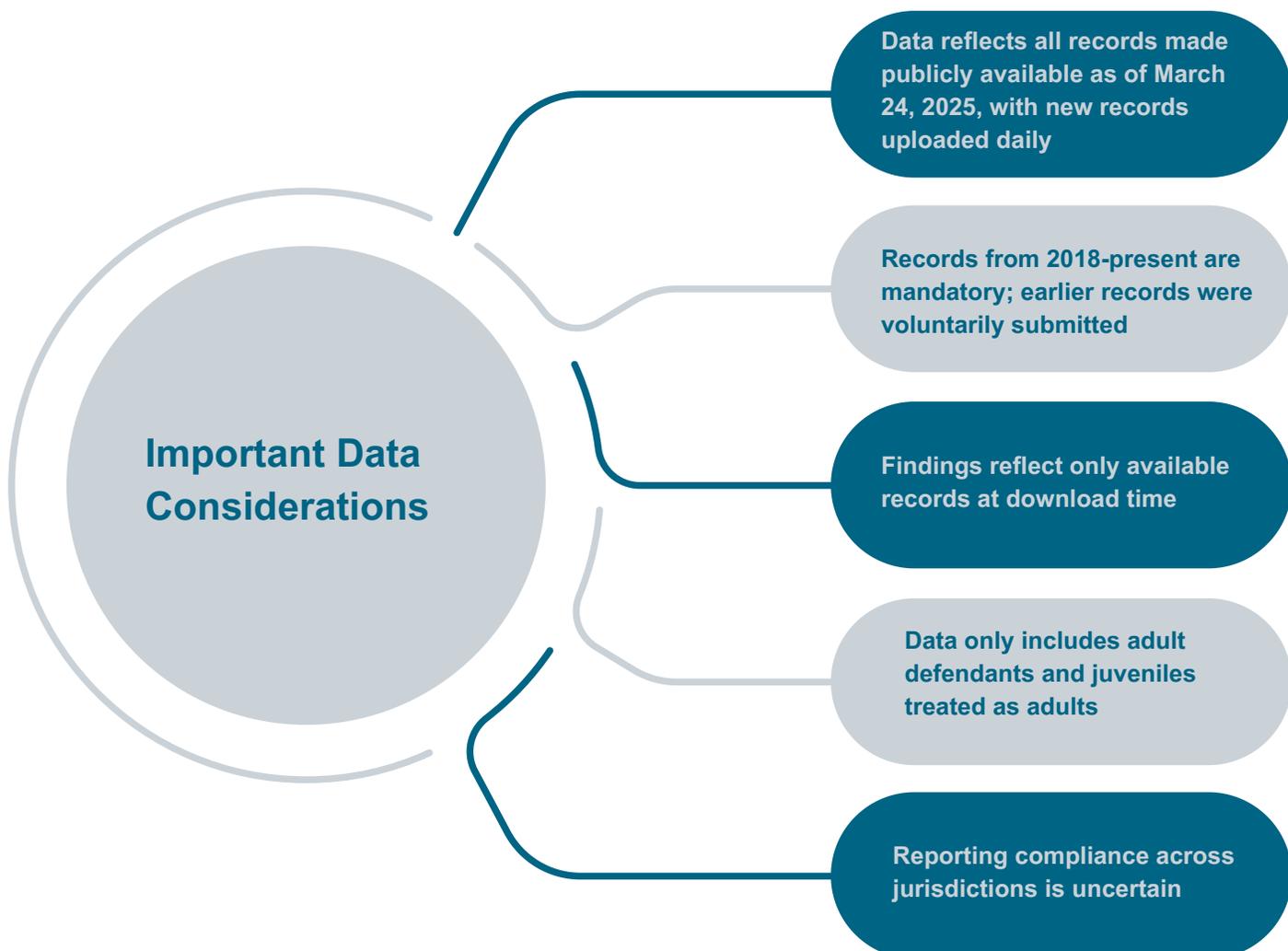
Important Data Considerations

- Data reflects all records made publicly available as of March 24, 2025, with new records uploaded daily
- Records from 2018-present are mandatory; earlier records were voluntarily submitted
- Findings reflect only available records at download time
- Data only includes adult defendants and juveniles treated as adults
- Reporting compliance across jurisdictions is uncertain

Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Criminal Justice Data Transparency: Florida Clerk of Courts Data

Figures 77 and 78 present two line graphs that illustrate the total number of human trafficking charges filed by prosecutors under Florida Statute §787.06. Figure 77 (top graph) displays year-by-year trends in new cases, while Figure 78 (bottom graph) shows the cumulative total of cases over time. It is important to note that while mandatory reporting began in 2018 (see Florida Statutes §900.05 and §943.6871), agencies have the option to submit records from earlier years, which explains why cases appear in the data from 2014 through 2025. However, these numbers may not capture the full scope of human trafficking charges across Florida, as some cases may not yet be reflected in the centralized reporting system. Regardless, this data provides valuable insight into documented human trafficking cases while acknowledging that the actual number of charges may be higher as reporting systems continue to be refined and updated.
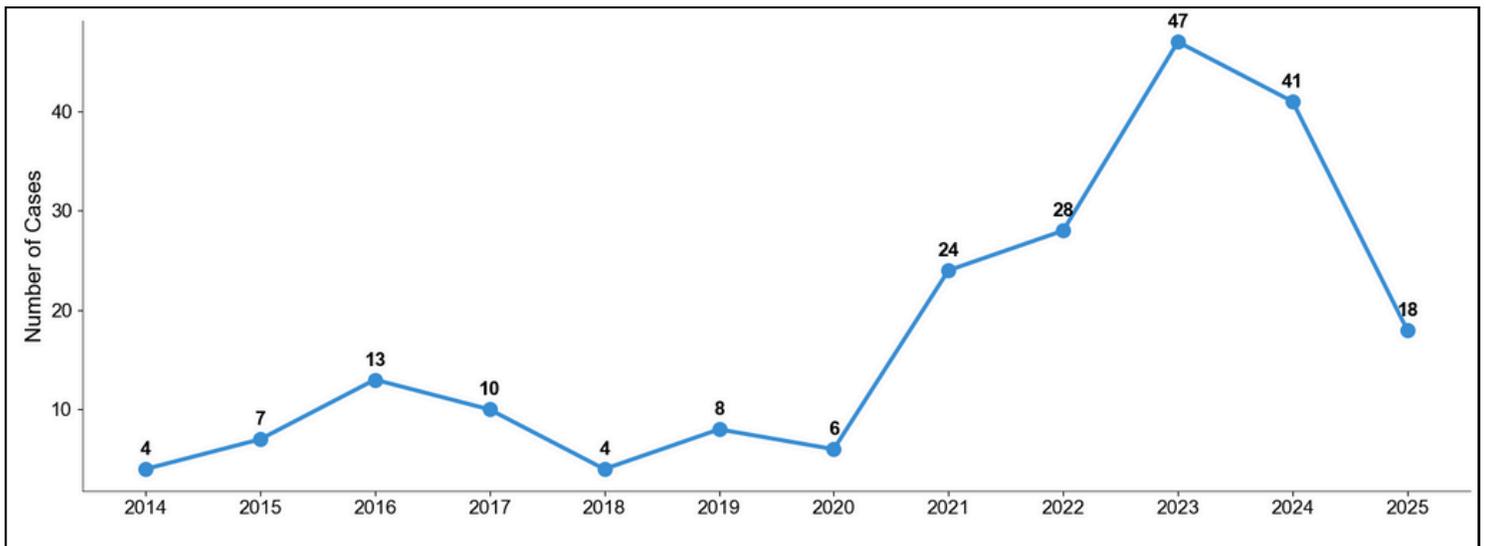
Figure 77: Total Number of Charges by Year
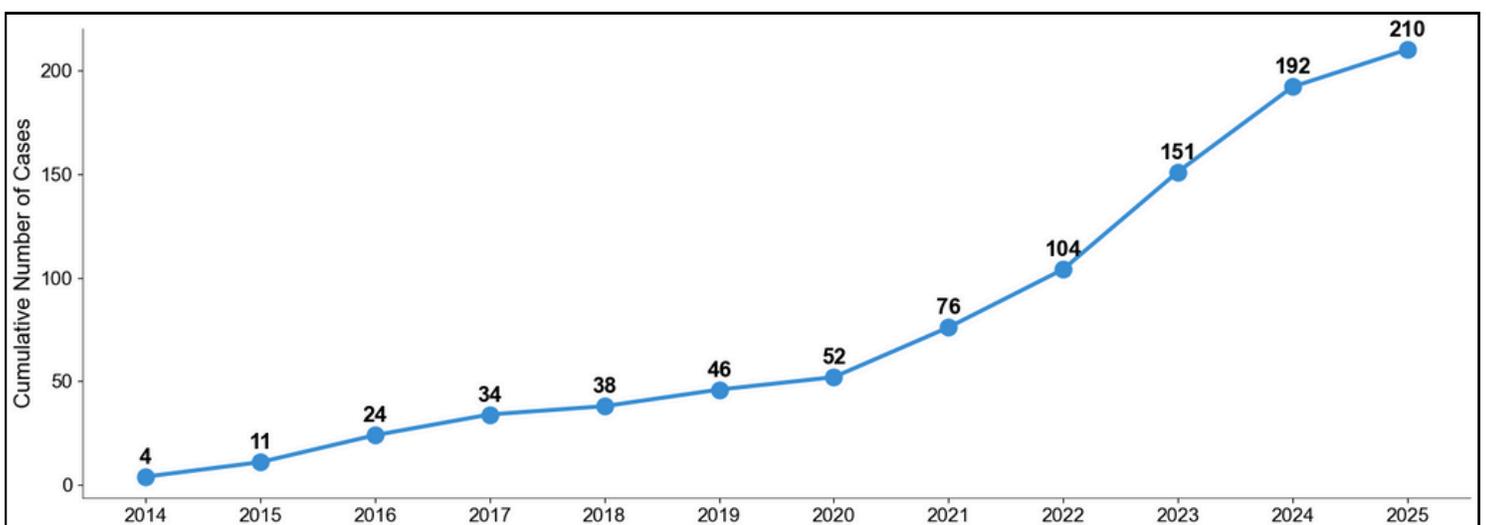
Figure 78: Cumulative Total Number of Charges Over Time

In total, we identified 210 human trafficking-related charges reported to the CJDT system as of March 24, 2025. The data shows a notable increase in reported charges beginning in 2018, which coincides with the implementation of mandatory reporting requirements for law enforcement agencies.
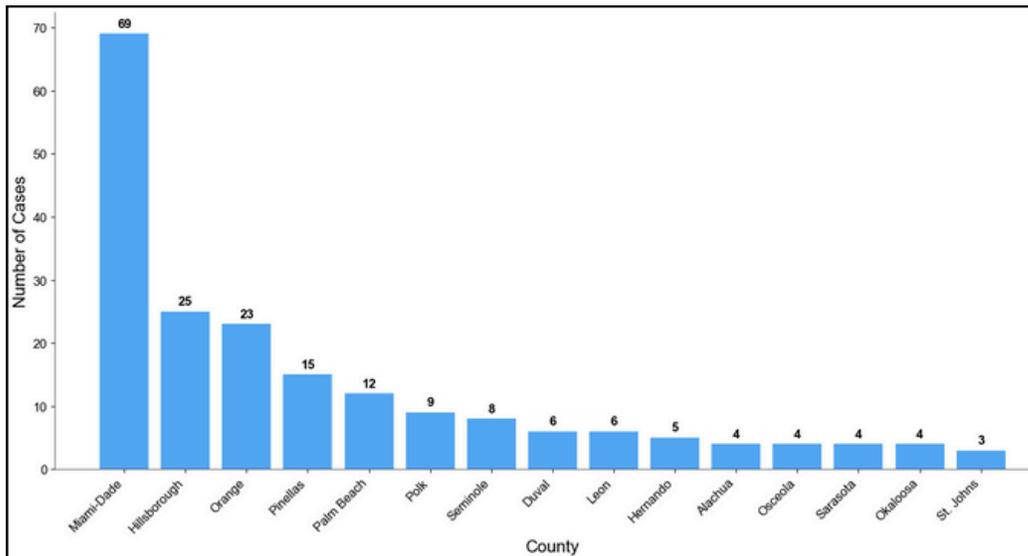
Figure 79: The Total Number of Charges for Human Trafficking in the Top 15 Counties from the CJDT

Figure 79 shows significant regional variation in human trafficking charges across Florida counties. Overall, 23 of Florida's 67 counties reported at least one human trafficking charge to the CJDT as of March 24, 2025, demonstrating that while case concentration varies significantly, trafficking activity has been documented across a substantial portion of the state.

Miami-Dade County reported the most charges with 69 cases (32.86% of all charges), followed by Hillsborough County with 25 cases (11.90%) and Orange County with 23 cases (10.95%). These three counties account for over half of all trafficking charges. The next tier includes Pinellas County with 15 charges (7.14%), Palm Beach County with 12 charges (5.71%), Polk County with 9 charges (4.29%), and Seminole County with 8 charges (3.81%). Additional counties with notable activity include Duval and Leon Counties (6 charges each), Hernando County (5 charges), Alachua, Okaloosa, Osceola, and Sarasota Counties (4 charges each), and St. Johns County (3 charges).

Figure 80 displays the rate of human trafficking charges per 100,000 residents, which allows for meaningful comparisons between counties of different population sizes. By adjusting for population size, this provides a clearer understanding of where human trafficking charges occur most frequently relative to population size.

For example, Miami-Dade County leads with 2.6 charges per 100,000 residents (69 total cases), followed closely by Hernando County at 2.5 per 100,000 despite having only 5 cases. Leon County ranks third at 2.0 per 100,000 (6 cases), and Okaloosa County fourth at 1.9 per 100,000 (4 cases). Seminole and Hillsborough Counties both show 1.7 charges per 100,000 residents, though with very different case totals—8 and 25 cases respectively.
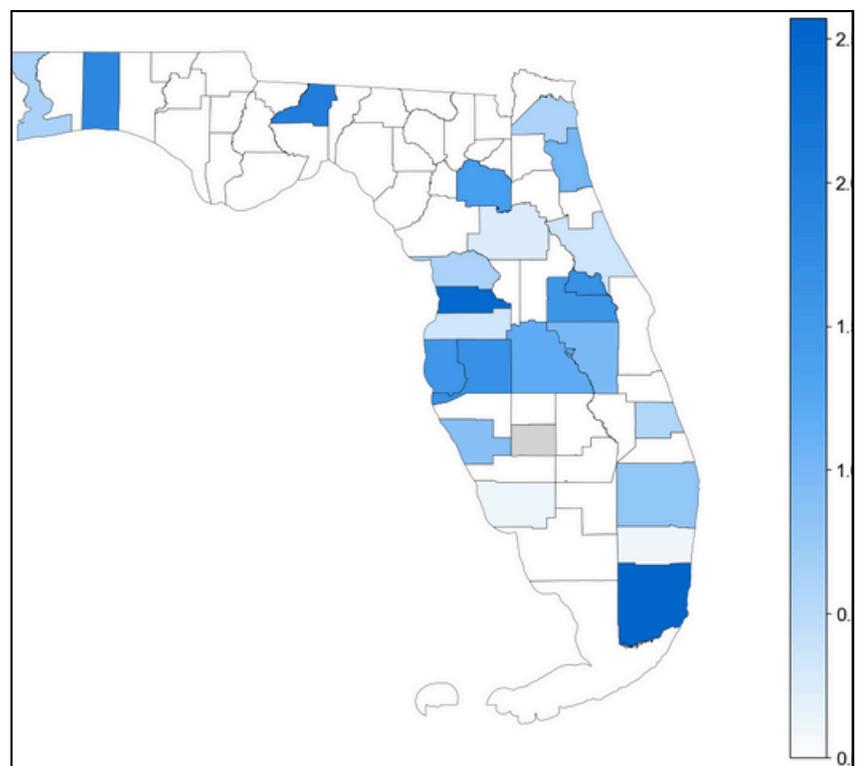
Figure 80: Human Trafficking-Related Charges per 100,000

Among the 210 trafficking-related charges, defendants were, on average, **33.78 years old** at the time of charge. Of particular note is the presence of one juvenile case within the sample. This defendant, who was 17 years old at the time of charge, was processed as an adult despite their minor status. The inclusion of this juvenile-treated-as-an-adult case represents less than 0.5% of all charges

The CJDT collects the sex of the defendant (see Figure 81). The overwhelming majority of charges involved male defendants, accounting for 90.9% of all cases in the sample. This substantial proportion highlights the predominant presence of male defendants across the charges examined in this study.

90.95% Male
8.10% Female
<1% Missing Data
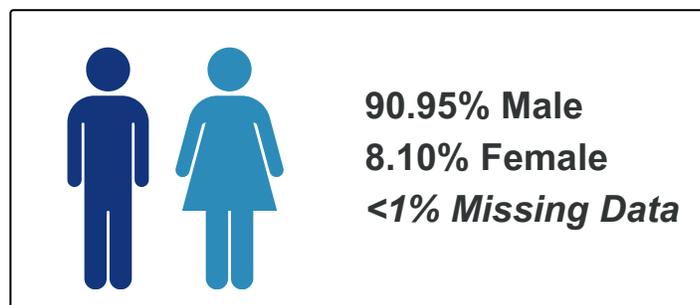
Figure 81: Distribution of Defendant Sex

Female defendants comprised a considerably smaller portion of the sample, representing only 8.1% of all charges.

Data completeness for this demographic variable was notably high, with missing or unknown sex information occurring in fewer than 1% of charges. This minimal level of missing data suggests consistent recording practices.
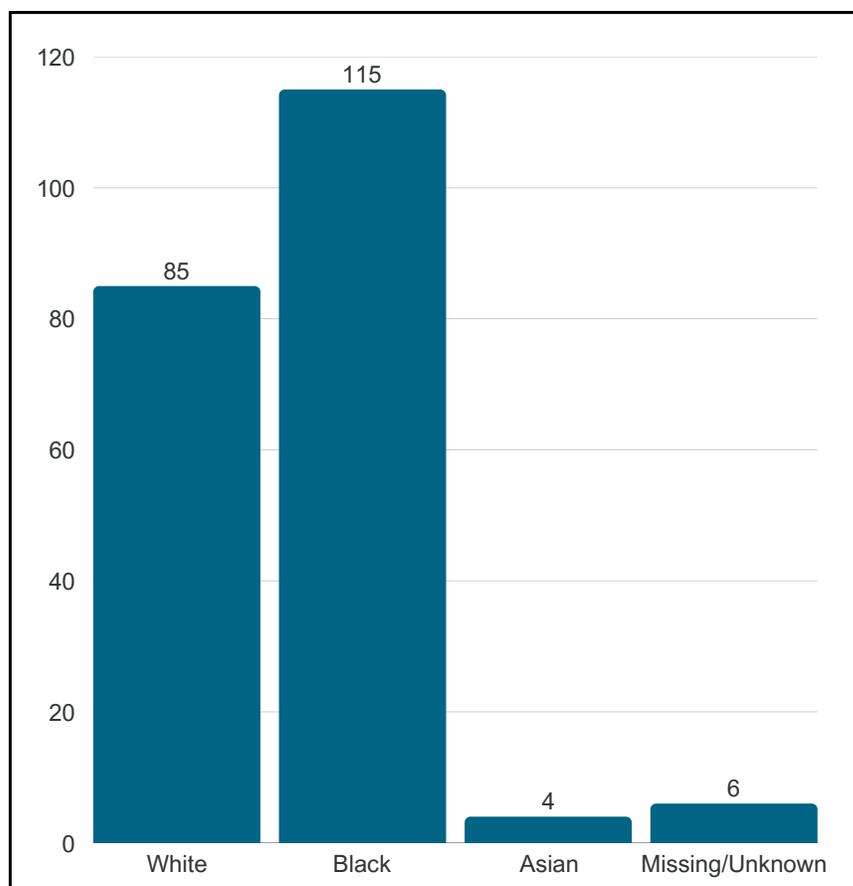
Figure 82: Total Number of Defendants by Race

The racial and ethnic composition of defendants in this sample reveals notable patterns, as illustrated in Figure 82. The majority of defendants were identified as Black/African American, representing more than half of all cases (n = 115; 54.76%). White defendants comprised the second-largest group, accounting for a little less than half of the sample (n = 85; 40.48%). There were notably few Asian defendants, appearing in fewer than 2% of cases (n = 4; 1.90%). Additionally, demographic information was unavailable for a small portion of the sample, with race/ethnicity data missing in 2.86% of charges (n = 6).

Though not depicted in Figure 82, regarding ethnicity, it is important to note that 10.95% of defendants (n = 23) identified as Hispanic/Latino. It is worth noting that there was more missing data with regard to ethnicity.

In Their Words
Definition of Human Trafficking from Law Enforcement Perspectives

Law enforcement is often described as the gatekeeper to the criminal justice system. In many instances of trafficking, victims are forced or coerced into committing crimes as part of their exploitation. Consequently, law enforcement is typically the first criminal justice actor to interact with victims of trafficking.

Despite the Trafficking Victims Protection Act providing a clear definition of what human trafficking entails, there still exist differences across jurisdictions on how law enforcement defines trafficking. At the federal level, the TVPA clearly outlines the distinction between labor and sex trafficking, whilst emphasizing force, fraud, and coercion, with the exception being cases where minors are involved.

Contrarily, on the State level, while the general consensus concerning force, fraud, or coercion remains, there often exists confusion over smuggling and prostitution for instance, and how that relates to identifying victims of trafficking. Furthermore, local and state agencies' interpretations of the definition tend to vary based on training, experience, and certain agency policies.

Preliminary findings from research conducted with various law enforcement stakeholders indicated a need for information connection across jurisdictions. The current law enforcement structure makes it challenging for different jurisdictional levels and/or organizations within the same county/city/state to share intelligence and case data efficiently. This can result in the creation of duplicative investigations, as there is an inability to utilize each other's intelligence for effective collaboration discussions.

Consequently, there should be a focus on aligning law enforcement's practices with standardized definitions regardless of jurisdiction. Offering consistent, relevant training can facilitate more accurate identification; thereby, strengthening any State's law enforcement response to trafficking.

**- Soriyah Khan, B.S. | Graduate Student Assistant |
University of South Florida**

*"How it works in the field is I may see five girls that are being trafficked...and one of them may talk to me and I know the other five are connected to her, but I don't know who's running those five. If we had a way to know...well that gives me a starting point."
[comments of Federal Agent]*

Prosecution: From Data to Action
Key Takeaways for Future Prosecution Efforts in Florida

The data presented in this section can and should be used to accelerate Florida's prosecution efforts. Below are select recommendations for improving Florida's anti-trafficking response in terms of **Prosecution**:

1 **Standardize and Improve Data Collection:** Harmonize law enforcement agency HT data collection by encouraging the use of the FIBRS system to increase knowledge of HT through the collection of a common set of detailed data on each individual HT incident.

2 **Establish Deconfliction Efforts:** Develop a centralized secure real-time mechanism for reporting trafficking-related investigations to support deconfliction efforts and to strengthen trafficking-related prosecutions.

3 **Improve Link between Sources of HT Law Enforcement Data:** Expand the linking of data related to a human trafficking incident, from arrest to prosecution through a system of unique identifiers.

In these endeavors, the TIPSTR team is dedicated to contributing to Florida's anti-trafficking efforts in the realm of **Prosecution**. Future goals include:

Collaborate on a method to link the "life course" of human trafficking cases from arrest to conviction and sentencing

Establish research partnerships with local and state law enforcement to analyze incident data

Policy

Policy

Policy involves advocating and implementing legislation that aids anti-trafficking efforts, supporting the other four Ps, ensuring policies are in place to prevent human trafficking, protecting victims of human trafficking, and prosecuting traffickers.

The State of Florida has been at the forefront of human trafficking responses for over 20 years. In that time, Florida has established itself as a leader in combating human trafficking through comprehensive legislation and coordinated response systems. Figure 83 highlights Florida as a leader in passing anti-trafficking legislation.
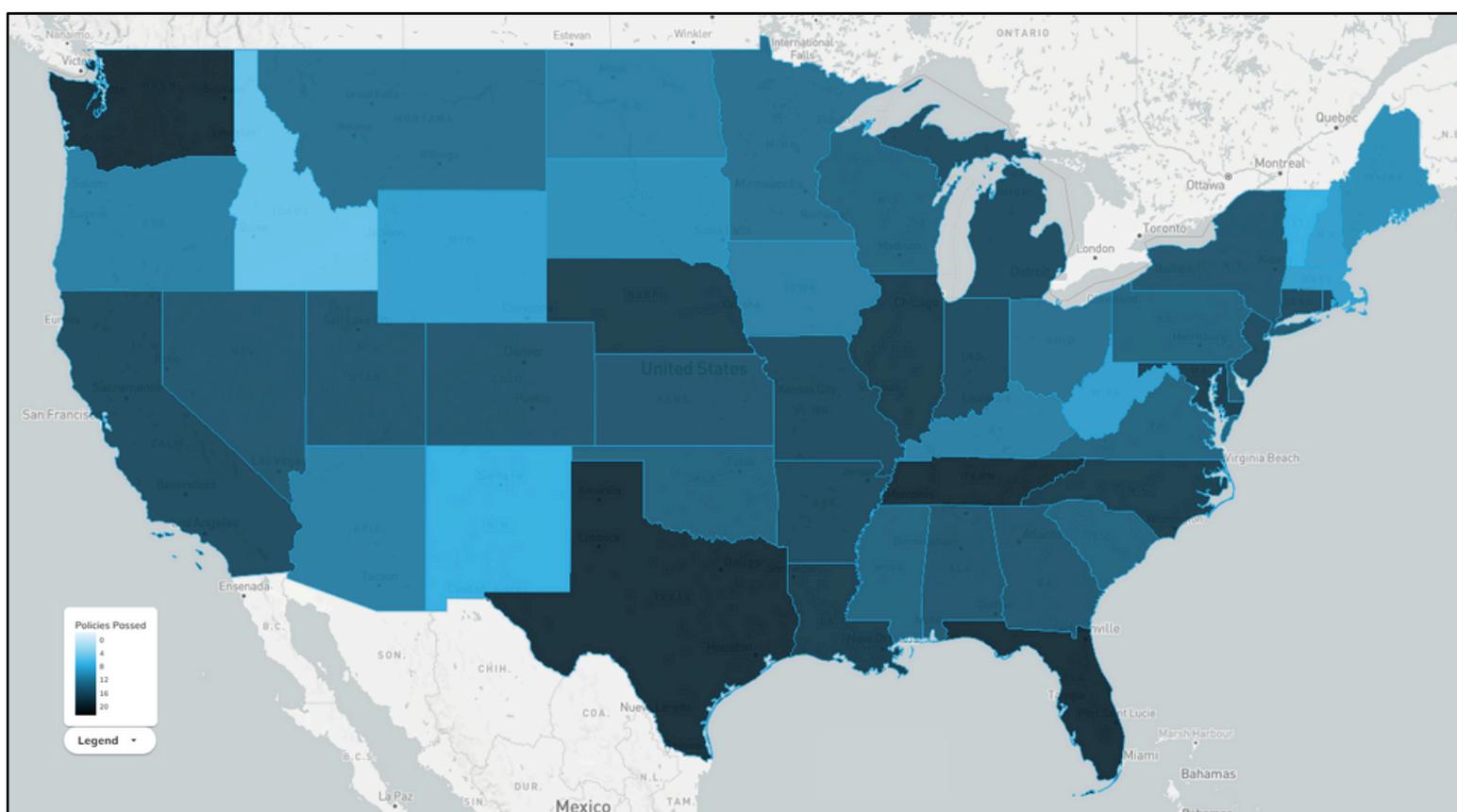
Figure 83: Total Number of Policies Passed by State From 2003-2023

Figure 83 demonstrates findings from Allies Against Slavery's State Human Trafficking Policy Database. The State Human Trafficking Policy Database tracks 20 different state human trafficking policies over a 20-year period from 2003 to 2023. All 20 policies are classified as either prevention, protection, or prosecution.

Policy Trends

Since 2003, there has been a steady increase in the number human trafficking policies passed and policy provisions aimed at prevention, protection, and prosecution in Florida. These policy trends represent a clear, concentrated, and coordinated effort by lawmakers to combat human trafficking, as demonstrated by Figure 84.
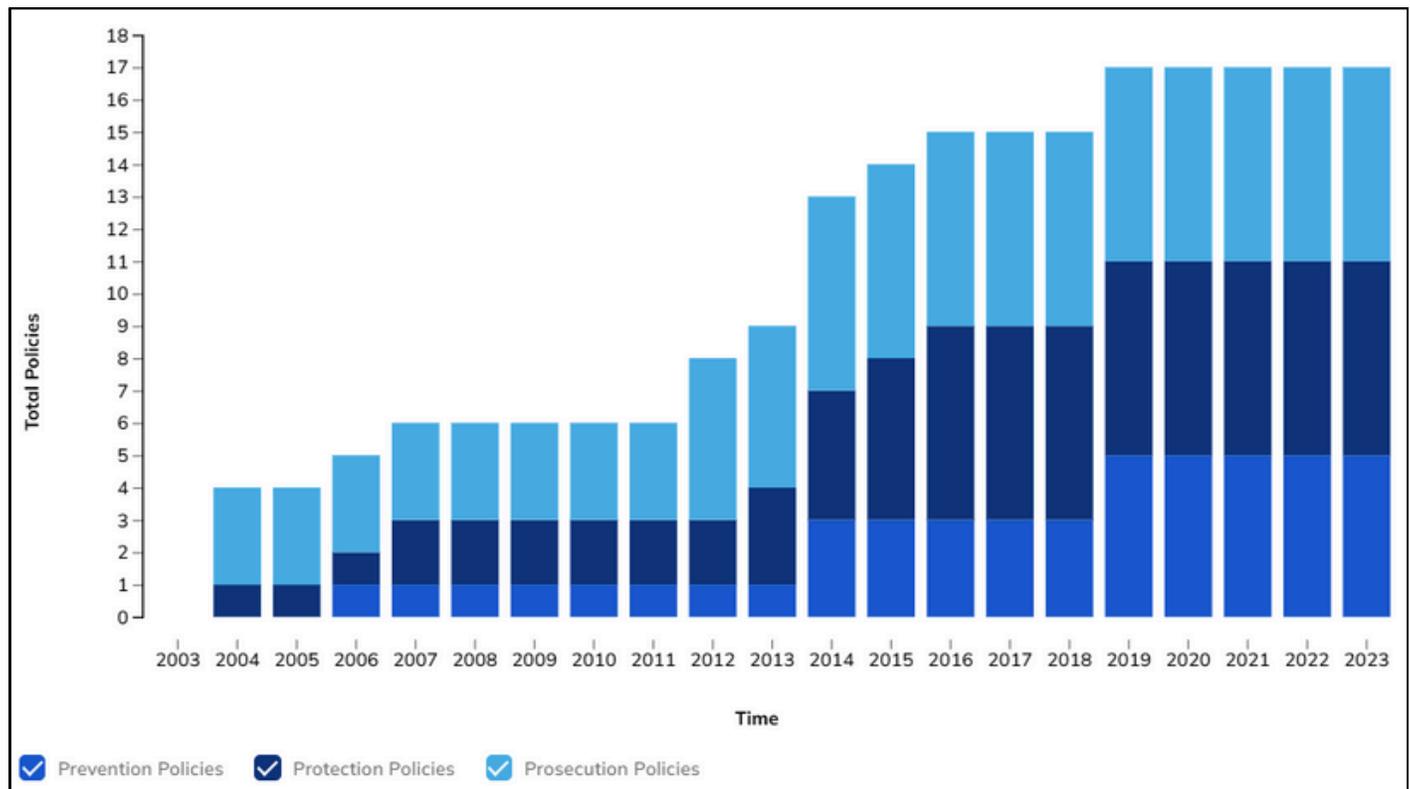
Figure 84: Total number of Policies Passed in Florida from 2003-2023*

Prevention	Protection	Prosecution
5 of 6 Policies Passed	*6 of 7 Policies Passed*	*7 of 7 Policies Passed*
CSEC Screening Fla. Stat. § 409.1754, 2014; Fla. Admin. Code r. 65C- 43.001, 2015 **Education for Students** Fla. Stat. § 1003.42(2), 2021 **Regulation/Licensing** Fla. Stat. §§ 509.096, 2019 **Reporting** Fla. Stat. §§ 409.16791 & 16.617(5), 2014 **Task Force** Fla. Stat. §16.617, 2014	**Civil Action** Fla. Stat. §§ 772.104, 2006; 787.061(3), 2023 **Hotline Posting** Fla. Stat. §§ 787.29, 2015; 509.096, 2019 **Restitution** Fla. Stat. § 775.089(1)(a), 2004 **Safe Harbor: Immunity** Fla. Stat. § 796.07(2)(e), 2016 **Survivor Assistance** Fla. Stat. §§ 402.87, 2007; 39.001(5), 2012; 960.196, 2015 **Vacating Prior Convictions** Fla. Stat. § 943.0583, 2013	**Asset Forfeiture** Fla. Stat. §§ 932.701(2)(a)5 & 932.703(1)(a), 2004; 787.06(7), 2012 **Buyer Penalties** Fla. Stat. § 787.06(2)(d), 2004 **Criminalization** Fla. Stat. § 787.06, 2004 **Increased Investigative Tools** Fla. Stat. § 934.07(1)(a), 2012 **Low Burden for Minors** Fla. Stat. § 787.06(a)(1), 2012 **Mistake of Age** Fla. Stat. § 787.06(9), 2014 **Law Enforcement Training** Fla. Stat. § 787.06(5), 2006; 943.17297, 2019

Sentencing Requirements

Modeled after the TVPA (2000), human trafficking in Florida is defined under statute §787.06(2)(d) as "transporting, soliciting, recruiting, harboring, providing, enticing, maintaining, or obtaining another person for the purpose of exploitation of that person." The state recognizes both sex trafficking –commercial sex acts induced by force, fraud, or coercion (or involving minors under 18)—and labor trafficking—obtaining a person for labor through force, fraud, or coercion. Florida's legislative framework addresses these crimes through a multi-faceted approach emphasizing victim protection, interagency coordination, and strong criminal penalties.
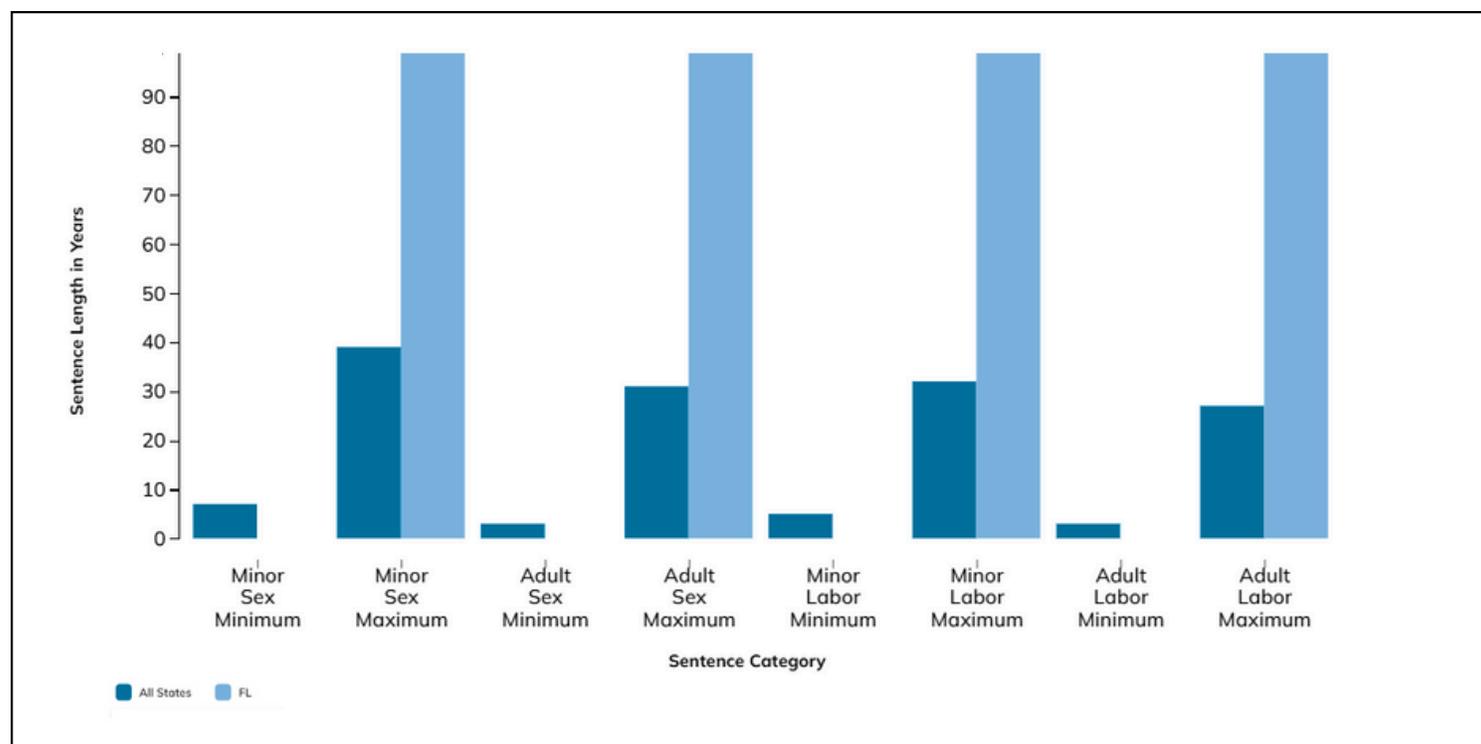
Figure 85: Sentencing Requirements for Florida Compared to All Other States*

Strengthening sentencing requirements and penalties for trafficking-related crimes, including those who knowingly benefit financially from trafficking, those conspiring to commit trafficking-related crimes, and those who obstruct or attempt to obstruct trafficking-related investigations and prosecutions, is essential in dismantling human trafficking operations.

In addition to ensuring justice and accountability, strong sentencing requirements serve as a preventative and protective strategy through removing offenders from the community and safeguarding victims.

The State of Florida recognizes the importance of strong prosecution policies and sentencing requirements, as demonstrated by the adoption of comprehensive legislation and strong sentencing requirements. Florida's maximum sentence for conviction of any trafficking crimes is life imprisonment, significantly exceeding the national average.

Florida has implemented all seven of the identified human trafficking-related prosecution policies, including Asset Forfeiture, Buyer Penalties, Criminalization, Increased Investigative Tools, Low Burden for Minors, Mistake of Age, and Law Enforcement Training. Still, Florida continues to work to enhance its human trafficking prosecution legislation (see Figure 85).

Wage Theft Ordinances

In general, county-level ordinances often act as a mechanism to address local concerns and provide communities access to local resources and remedies. Wage theft ordinances serve a critical purpose by addressing underpayment or nonpayment of wages to workers within a jurisdiction. These ordinances offer multiple benefits for the community. In addition to ensuring the economic security of workers, in recent years, policymakers and advocates have aimed to increase local protections for workers to protect against exploitative labor practices.
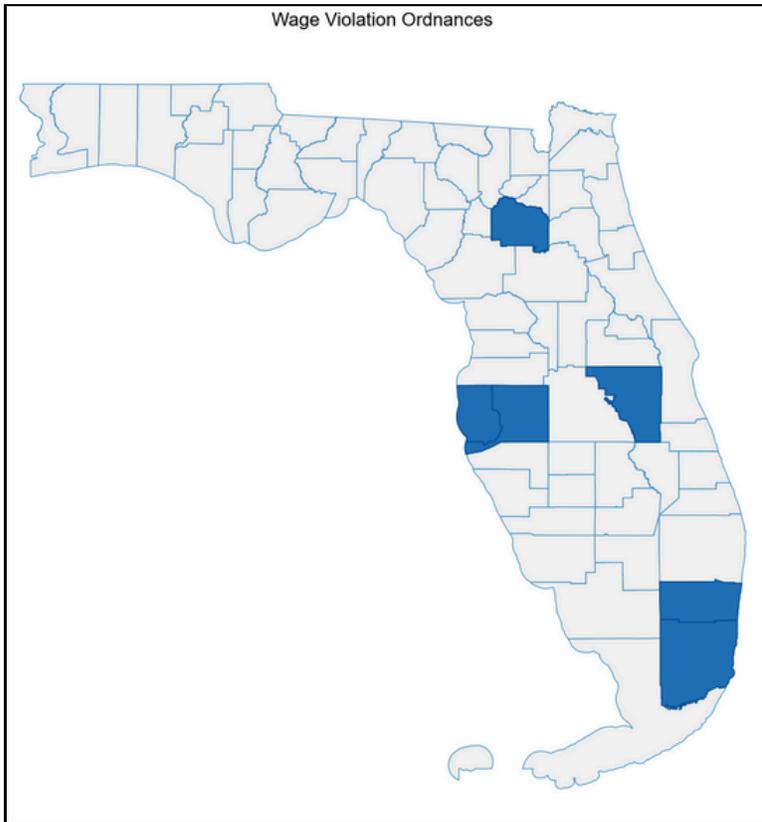
Figure 86: Counties with Wage Theft Ordinances

For exploitation and trafficking response, preventing and responding to wage theft may give workers remedies before falling victim to more severe control mechanisms like debt bondage or other work-related vulnerabilities that can keep workers connected to illicit employment.

In the state of Florida, only six counties have wage theft ordinances: Alachua, Broward, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Osceola, and Pinellas.

These county ordinances were previously reviewed in a 2019 report (National Employment Project, 2019), and findings suggest that workers were able to recover thousands of dollars of stolen wages.

In Miami-Date, the county wage theft program "recovered more than $3.65 million for workers" between 2013-2018 (National Employment Project, 2019).

This year, an additional review was conducted to determine if more Florida counties have adopted a wage theft ordinance. This was accomplished by systematically searching all 67 county public web pages and proposed ordinance information. As of 2024, no additional counties have enacted wage theft ordinances.

Recommendations for counties seeking to enact wage theft ordinances include:

Ensuring clear mechanisms for reporting wage theft, such as an easily accessible web page or help-line	Including specific response mechanisms in the ordinance, especially resources for enforcement or investigation professionals

In Their Voice
Legislative Impacts

"There is much left to accomplish in terms of human trafficking legislation. Arresting and prosecuting traffickers is important, but it only addresses one component of trafficking. In fact, arresting traffickers, while necessary, is neither sufficient nor the most effective measure to reduce human trafficking. Rather, buyers of prostituted individuals create the demand that drives the sex trafficking industry, leading to victims who suffer trauma, addiction, human trafficking, and a host of other harms caused by the sex buyer. Accordingly, laws that prohibit buying others for sex must be strengthened to get at the core issue of sex trafficking – demand. Moving towards that goal requires a public message that comprehensively communicates the devastating consequences of one person purchasing another person for sexual exploitation.

A lack of public awareness of the connection between commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking hinders the efforts of policymakers and legislators to craft policies and pass legislation that directly address human trafficking. It is critical to shift the public and cultural narrative of a "boys will be boys" mentality toward sex buying and focus on the serious individual, community, social, and financial harms that result from sex buying.

Survivor leadership is the sine qua non of any effective anti-human trafficking movement. It is not enough to include survivor "voices" in developing and advocating for legislation and policy. Indeed, survivors possess the expertise, resilience, and perseverance to navigate roadblock after roadblock in the process and continue leading until change is accomplished.

- Brent Woody, Lead Attorney | Justice Restoration Center

Policy: From Data to Action
Key Takeaways for Future Policy Efforts in Florida

The data presented in this section can and should be used to accelerate Florida's policy efforts. Below are select recommendations for improving Florida's anti-trafficking response in terms of **Policy**:

1 **Ensure All Policy is Data-Driven with Zero-Tolerance for Human Trafficking:** Utilize data and experts in crafting or modifying HT policies to ensure that Florida remains a zero-tolerance state for HT and avoid legalization of any gray areas making labor or sexual exploitation harder to detect.

2 **I**ncrease **Public Awareness and Accountability of Facilitators, Buyers, and Traffickers**: Leverage public messaging to build support for legislation that strengthens penalties against facilitators, buyers, and traffickers and ensuring that all policies benefits victims and survivors.

3 **Create Infrastructure for Survivor-Informed Policy:** Prioritize input from lived-experience experts and support partnerships with survivor-led networks to monitor the impact of existing policies and identify needed reforms.

In these endeavors, the TIPSTR team is dedicated to contributing to Florida's anti-trafficking efforts in the realm of **Policy**. Future goals include:

Assist in the development of model legislation informed by data-driven insights.

Promote data-sharing policies to assess the outcomes of anti-trafficking legislation.

Partnership

Partnership

The U.S. State Department added an additional "P" - Partnership - when examining the TVPA in 2009, to acknowledge that efforts to prosecute, protect, and prevent are only possible, and even enhanced, by working together. The Pillar of Partnership highlights the need for collaboration across sectors in order to effectively combat human trafficking and serve victims. In other words, Partnership can be considered the "glue" holding all other 4 P's together.

Most often, different organizations serving victims of human trafficking become affiliated with one another via word-of-mouth and attending community events, which coalitions, task forces, and multi-disciplinary teams can facilitate. While these groups serve more than one function, the primary role of an interagency coalition or task force in the fight against human trafficking is the bringing together of multi-disciplinary groups to better coordinate efforts. The premise of face-to-face relationship building and knowledge sharing is amongst some of the key benefits in the creation of effective collaboration.

Survivor Leadership

Partnership

BRIGHT

Collaborative Efforts

Strong interagency bonds can help increase collaboration, trust, and willingness to rely on one another. Outside of these benefits, interagency and multi-disciplinary collaboration among those who work with survivors of human trafficking is key to successfully assisting these individuals in transitioning out of the life. Among service providers, benefits of collaboration include an awareness of services that exist, having alternative options when an organization that offers a particular needed service is at capacity, overcoming the downfalls in staff turnover, as well as providing a warm handoff to organizations that can aid in increasing survivor engagement with services. Strong interagency relationships also facilitate the building of trust between survivors and the services designed to assist them. Further, by having advocates with lived experience taking part in interactions with survivors who have recently exited as they are engaging with programs, feelings of trust can also be promoted, and thus lead to higher participation.

In Their Voice
"We Don't Just Deserve a Seat at the Table, We Built the Table"

There has been notable progress in the anti-trafficking field, particularly with organizations becoming more intentional about elevating survivor-leadership. Some have created mentorship opportunities or advisory roles, and many are increasingly recognizing the importance of having lived experience experts present in anti-trafficking responses, such as in the development of programs or policies. True partnership between survivors and organizations fosters trust, authenticity, and empowerment.

*Despite these important strides, survivors continue to encounter challenges in having our voices heard and our expertise acknowledged. In the anti-trafficking space, we are too often seen through the lens of our trauma rather than subject matter experts, professionals, and leaders. At times, we are told what to say and when to say it – primarily called upon to share our stories by pulling on the heartstrings of others. What we have been subjected to enduring in many cases, is a form of re-exploitation, this time from those meant to support us. **Instead of being offered the scaffolding to build better futures, we are told how to live and what steps to take.***

Survivors are not alone in this fight, and partnering with other organizations or individuals helps to fill any gaps and build stronger, more informed approaches. We acknowledge that at times, our own passion can appear overwhelming and that meaningful collaboration with those who do not share lived experience is essential. However, it is important to recognize that anti-trafficking efforts cannot be successful without survivor-leaders.

*Further steps are also needed to ensure equitable compensation for survivor-leaders. Survivors in professional roles should be paid according to our qualifications and contributions – consistent with standards applied to all employees. It is also important to acknowledge that data used to inform anti-trafficking legislation and policies represent real people. **We are not abstract figures or case studies, but real people with valuable insights into how programs and policies affect lives***.

*Our presence in these conversations is not optional, but vital. Organizations in the anti-trafficking space should not operate without survivor-leaders who feel empowered to set boundaries and are equipped with the personal support we may need to navigate a world that can often be re-traumatizing. **Not every survivor's experience is the same, and this reiterates the need for multiple perspectives in this fight.***

*Just as major financial decisions would not be made without consulting numerous relevant experts, decisions impacting survivors should not be made without others who have been trafficked. **Why claim expertise in an issue you have not lived yourself?** Survivors also need to continue to be willing to provide honest, yet uncomfortable feedback to organizations with limited survivor representation.*

*When survivors are recognized as leaders in this fight, anti-trafficking efforts have the potential to become more effective, sustainable, and accountable. Take actionable steps to include us from the beginning of discussions - not as an afterthought, halfway through, or to tokenize. The reality is: **we built the table**, and the invitation is extended to others to join us in this fight.*

-A Collective of Leaders with Lived Experience (anonymous)

Taskforce, Coalitions, & Commissions

	Taskforce	Coalition	Commission
Goal	solve a specific problem	advocate and coordinate	study and recommend
Duration	short-term	long-term / ongoing	temporary or permanent
Authority	operational or investigative	informal, advocacy-based	advisory, sometimes regulatory
Membership	expert, officials	broad, multi-sector	appointed experts and stakeholders
Output	actions, operations, and enforcement	campaigns, partnerships, advocacy	reports, recommendations, and oversight

Table 7: Outline of Similarities and Differences Between Taskforces, Coalitions, and Commissions

Research has indicated that different organizations serving victims of human trafficking become affiliated with one another via word-of-mouth and attending community events, which task forces, coalitions, and commissions can facilitate. Hence, it appears that the primary role of an intra-agency coalition, task force, or commission in the fight against human trafficking is the bringing together of multi-disciplinary groups to better coordinate efforts. Among these centralized consortia, the premise of face-to-face relationship building and knowledge sharing are among some of the key benefits in the creation of effective partnerships and collaboration. Strong intra-agency bonds can help increase collaboration, trust, and willingness to rely on one another.

Outside of these benefits, it has been noted that intra-agency and multi-disciplinary collaboration among those who work with survivors of human trafficking is key to successfully assisting these individuals transitioning out of the life. Among service providers, benefits of collaboration include an awareness of services that exist, having alternative options when an organization that offers a particular needed service is at capacity, overcoming the downfalls in staff turnover, as well as providing a warm handoff to organizations that can aid in increasing survivor engagement with the services. Moreover, an additional benefit of these groups is an increased public awareness of the issue of human trafficking.

Collaboration in Florida

Florida's anti-trafficking infrastructure is strengthened by a network of task forces operating at both the state and local levels. The Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, a 15-member body chaired by the Attorney General, coordinates responses across agencies and develops recommendations for comprehensive programs and services, established through the passing of HB 7141. This council brings together law enforcement officers, prosecutors, legislators, and health, education, and social services experts to enhance the development and coordination of anti-trafficking efforts. Complementing this state-level coordination, both unofficial and official task forces, coalitions, and commissions operate in all 67 Florida counties, implementing community-specific approaches to prevention, identification, and victim services. Utilizing data from BRIGHT the map below demonstrates the overlapping areas that these groups reach, with the darkest shade of blue representing three groups, and the lightest shade representing one.
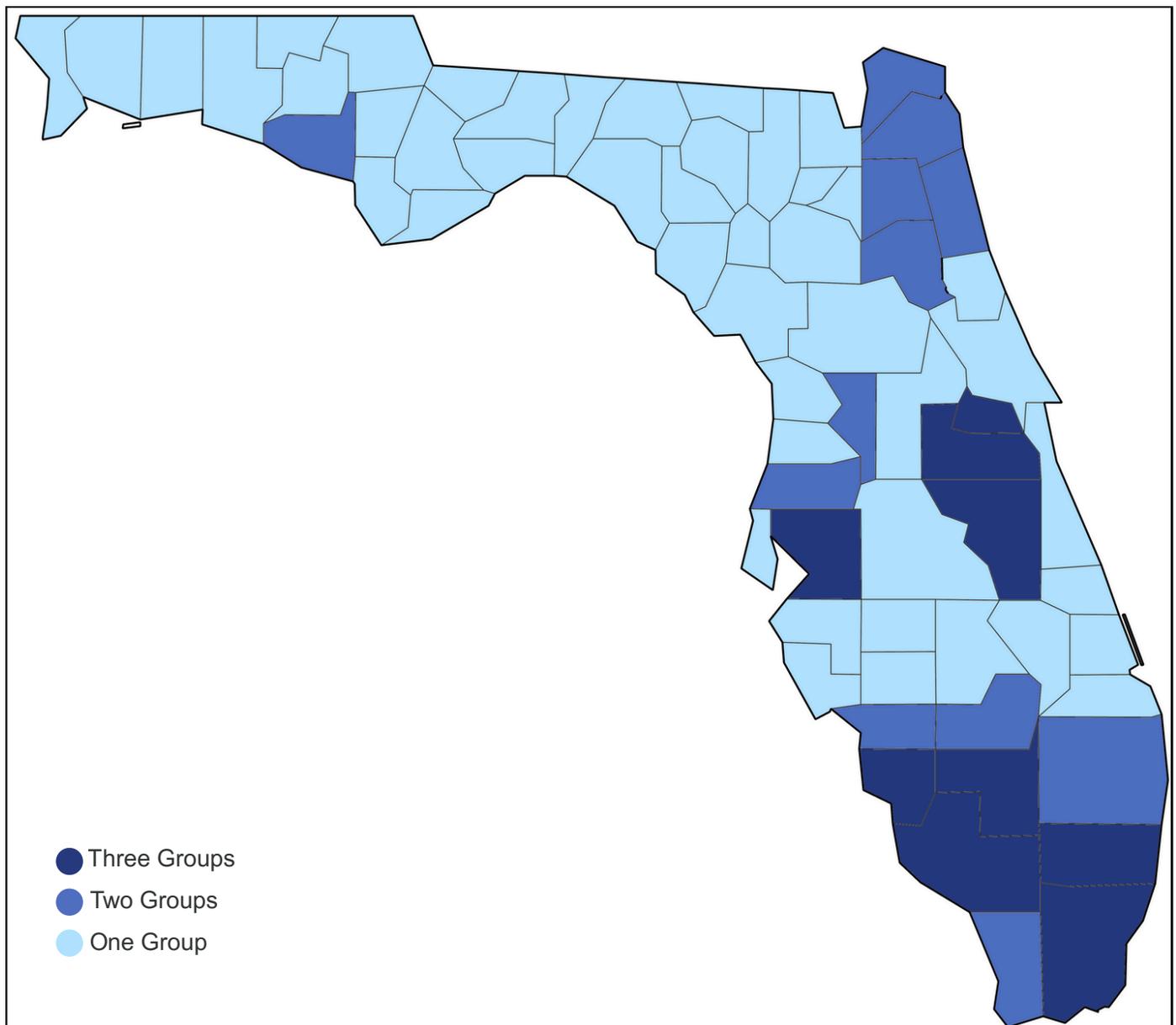
Figure 87. Map Outlining Overlapping Both Official and Unofficial Taskforces, Coalitions, and Commissions Throughout the State

Partnership in Action
INTERCEPT Taskforce - Case Study
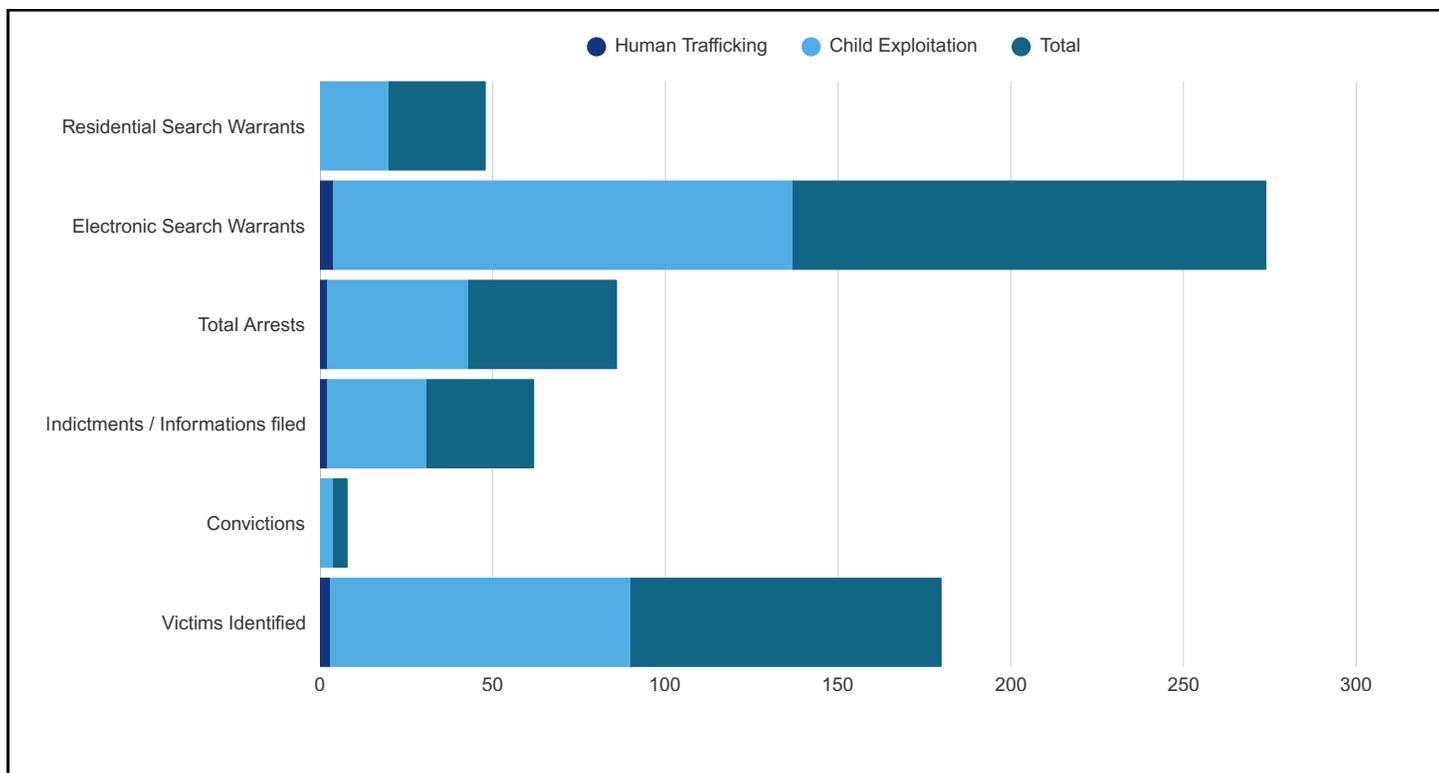
Figure 88: A Chart Outlining Various Efforts by the Fort Meyers INTERCEPT Taskforce and Cumulative Totals

Recently, a group of new task forces called INTERCEPT (Inter-Agency Child Exploitation and Persons Trafficking), have been established throughout the state in Jacksonville and Fort Meyers. These task forces were established with the assistance of an organization, Operation Lightshine, which provides funding, staff, and resources to carry out the INTERCEPT mission. These taskforces bring together Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement agencies in collaboration to identify and interrupt sex trafficking throughout the State. Through their objectives, the INTERCEPT task forces review and recover electronics, images, and videos to aid in the identification of minors who have been exploited and apprehend the offenders.

Moreover, through their collaborative efforts, they also work with non-profit organizations, medical providers, and prosecutors to create a holistic approach to serving the individuals they have recovered. The figure above demonstrates the efforts of the Fort Meyers INTERCEPT Task force through 2024. The taskforce was able to successfully identify 90 victims in their region, leading to 43 total arrests. Through their efforts in this region working to recover victims of child exploitation and trafficking, the INTERCEPT team reviewed 176,773,352 images, and 55,397,629 videos, leading to 141,443 child sexual abuse materials being successfully recovered.

Partnership in Action
Multi-Disciplinary Teams - Case Study

Under the purview of the Department of Children and Families, the State of Florida coordinates a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) response for children suspected or confirmed of being victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

A Multidisciplinary Team generally consists of coordinated responses of professionals across disciplines or agencies (Kenny & Helpingstine, 2022). Partnerships within MDT responses can change based on regional considerations, available resources, and qualified personnel. In Florida, such partnerships often include the Department of Children and Families, law enforcement, victim service providers, community agencies, and the Department of Juvenile Justice (Florida Senate; Chapter 409 section 1754). Additional partners can include school staff, healthcare providers, legal service providers, victim advocates, or local task force representatives (Florida Attorney General, nd).

Mandated by law (Ann. Stat. § 409.1754), such teams are to "develop or adopt one or more initial screening and assessment instruments to identify, determine the needs of, plan services for, and determine the appropriate placement for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation" (Child Welfare Information Gateway, website). The State of Florida has had MDT responses since 2014 (House Bill 7141). The typical responsibilities of the MDT include:
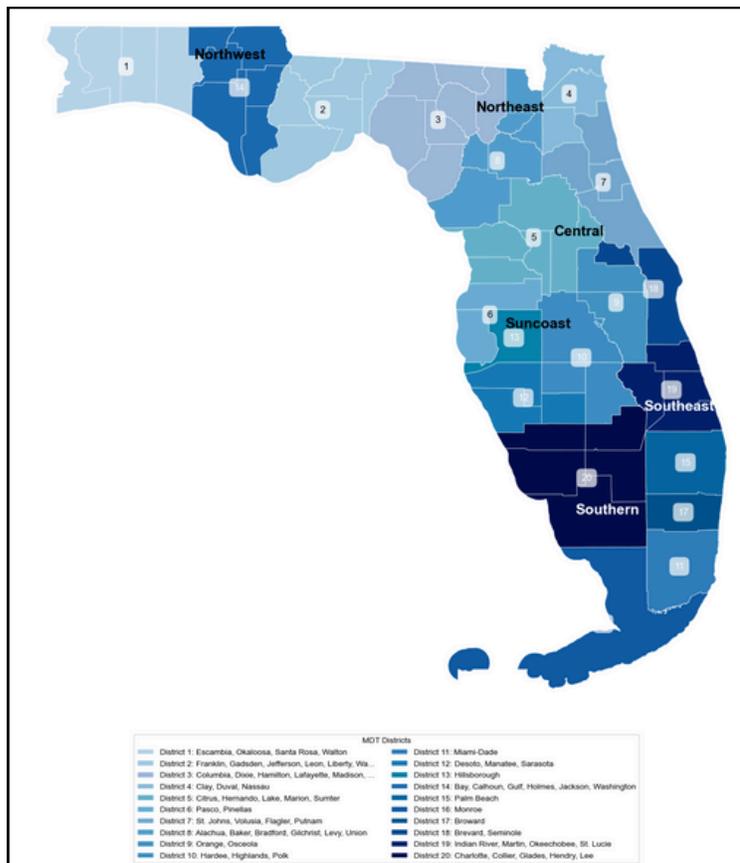
Figure 89: Florida MDT Regions

Creating a service plan:
- Identify the needs of the child and their family
- Utilize local services to meet those needs

Often, service needs for children suspected or verified to be victims of trafficking or exploitation span from residential placement, substance use treatment, counseling, employment training, mentorship, diversion from prosecution, and physical and mental health care needs.

It is legislatively mandated that all professionals, particularly investigators and case managers, have specialized training for handling cases involving sexually exploited and trafficked children (Ann. Stat. §§ 409.1754; 409.1678).

The importance of MDT responses cannot be overstated. MDT models are designed to guarantee that child victims of sexual exploitation receive coordinated and responsive care.

Collaboration among cross-disciplinary professionals leads to a more holistic and informed approach to create treatment plans and safety responses for children. The primary goals of MDTs include enhancing prosecution outcomes, minimizing victim trauma, and increasing victim safety.

In Their Voice
The Power of Institutional Knowledge

*In the context of the anti-trafficking movement, I often find that **institutional knowledge and memory are best understood through the challenges we face.** For example, there are counties that excel at investigating trafficking cases, but a recurring issue is the turnover within law enforcement. As individuals are promoted or new officers are assigned, there's often a sharp drop in expertise. What was once a highly effective investigation can quickly go back to square one.*

*The incoming personnel, of course, need time to get up to speed, a learning curve that's both expected and understandable. However, **in a field where every moment counts**, the time spent training new staff members diverts precious resources away from the urgent work of connecting victims with necessary services. While I fully recognize that these newer individuals lack the same depth of experience we have in handling trafficking cases, the high turnover remains a significant hurdle. This is why **preserving institutional knowledge is critical,** particularly in our field, **where the stakes are so high and the margin for error so small**.*

*Another challenge we face is the **lack of proper documentation**, which complicates the transition when one employee leaves and another steps into their role. In some cases, the outgoing employee provides a helpful paper trail, allowing their replacement to get up to speed more quickly. However, **there are countless situations where the new employee receives no guidance at all, forcing them to start from scratch**.*

*Given that we now live in a digital age, it's **essential that we harness technology** to streamline learning and reduce the burden of starting over. This is where the **BRIGHT system plays a pivotal role**. Its framework and model **directly address the issue of lost institutional memory in the anti-trafficking field**. While staff turnover is an inevitable part of any organization, the BRIGHT system ensures there is no gap in documentation, no siloed information, and no need for new employees to reinvent the wheel. **As a result, practitioners have more time to focus on our primary mission, connecting victims to life-saving services quickly**.*

*Moreover, embracing more technology in our processes is key to ensuring the sustainability of anti-trafficking programs and organizations. The current leaders and experts in the field won't be around forever, and **it's crucial that we establish systems to support the next generation of practitioners**. This is why prioritizing sustainability is vital—it lays a strong foundation for future work and helps ensure the continued success of the movement.*

* **Collaboration and relationship-building are absolutely essential in the anti-trafficking field**, and in my view, they go hand in hand. Ideally, we would all be able to sit around the same table as equals, without the pressures of competing for funding or hoarding information. I truly believe that sharing our knowledge and best practices is crucial for the health of the movement—**we are not competitors, but allies in the same fight**. There's no reason to withhold information that could benefit all anti-trafficking organizations.*

*While we understand that funding is often limited, **the real harm comes when we fail to be genuinely collaborative**. **The ones who suffer the most are the survivors we have all committed to helping**. By not working together, we risk undermining our collective efforts and, ultimately, the well-being of those we are here to serve.*

-Tomas Lares | President and Founder | United Abolitionists

BRIGHT: Bridging Resource and Information Gaps in Human Trafficking

BRIGHT is an online, vetted, resource referral network for those who look for or provide services to, individuals that have experienced trafficking. 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.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG

100+ Vetted Providers

12 Categories of Service

10 Law Enforcement Partners

5 Hour Average Response Time

Launched as a Statewide initiative in July of 2024, BRIGHT serves to efficiently locate and connect providers across the state to each other for more effective service connection. BRIGHT serves as a full system response model, addressing the "and now what?" after a victim is recovered from their exploitation. The model was created through a Participatory Action Research framework, integrating the anti-trafficking community (i.e., survivors, law enforcement, service providers, and nonprofit organizations) directly in the development of the platform, creating a socially responsive application.

By leveraging technology, BRIGHT is able to provide a more efficient use of resources by demonstrating all services available, versus an overreliance on established relationships. The system also assists in combatting turnover, as there is more than one individual connected to each organization. Over time, BRIGHT will create a real-time longitudinal, dynamic database that can uncover gaps in anti-trafficking service provision, detailed insights on victim needs as they recover from exploitation, and trends in demographics by partner organizations' use of the system. As use increases, the potential for predictive analytics on service needs and the times of the year trafficking occurs may be revealed.
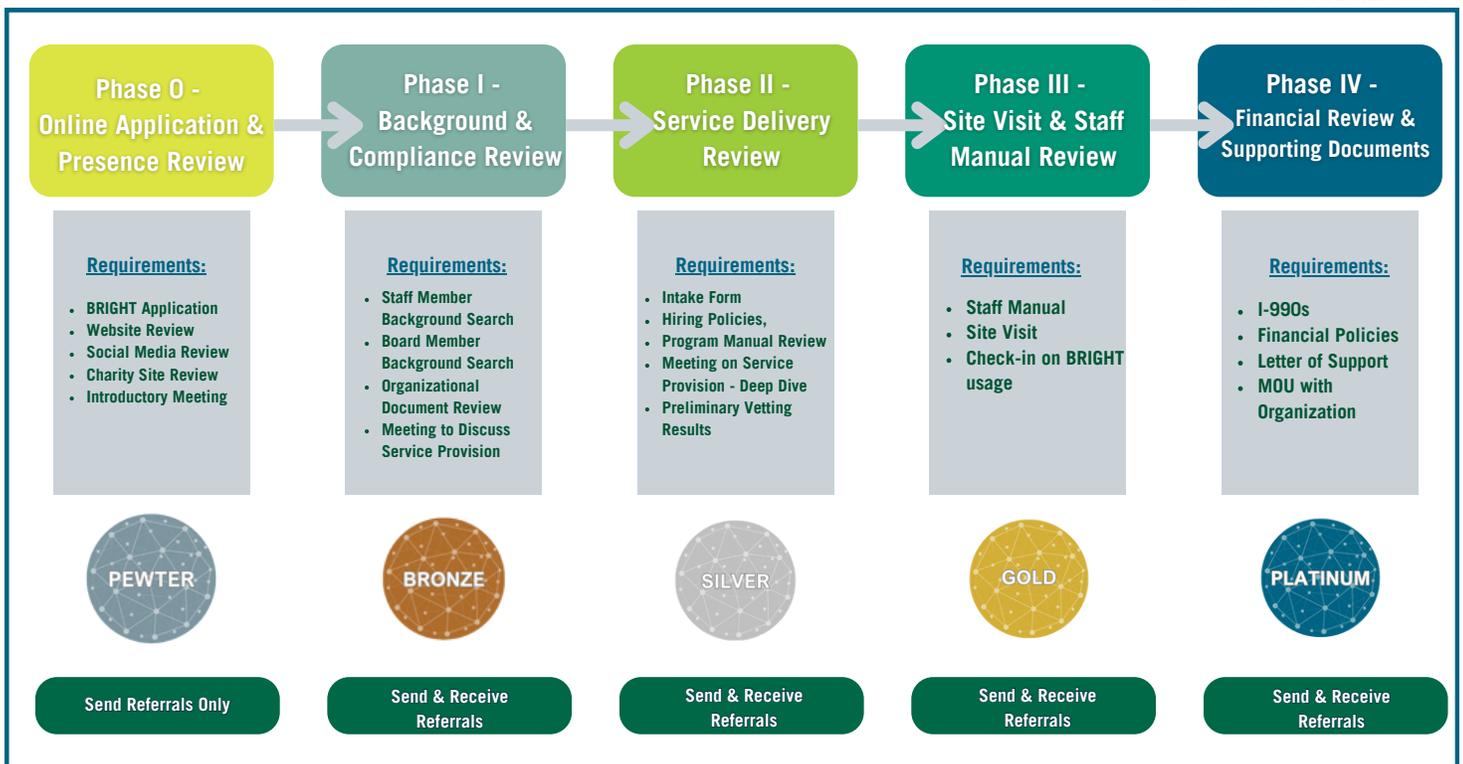
Figure 90: An Overview of the BRIGHT Vetting Process.

The Vetting Process is an integral part of the BRIGHT model. Developed with a team of key anti-trafficking stakeholders representing survivors, non-profits, law enforcement, and healthcare, the vetting process consists of 112 components that organizations are assessed on related to ethical considerations, survivor safety, trauma-informed practices, and victim-centered approaches. BRIGHT's overarching goal is to demonstrate who is truly equipped to serve individuals who have experienced trafficking.

The BRIGHT Vetting process, as seen in Figure 90, is broken down into five stages. Depending on the services that an organization provides, there is a different minimum threshold of vetting that is required before their services can be listed in the network. For instance, an organization that provides residential services must reach the Gold level before their services are added. This threshold is dependent on the depth of the interaction with a survivor.

Any organization has the ability to reach the Platinum level of vetting, as this is reserved for those organizations that have exceeded standards in every prior tier. The organizations displayed in Figure 91 are those that have reached the three highest tiers of vetting.

SILVER
- Harbour Hope International
- Power and Equality Immigration
- Take Flight Survivors

GOLD
- Catholic Charities of Central Florida
- Created Women, Tampa
- Hadassah's Hope
- I Rise
- Karen Drack Counselling, LLC
- Life Reins, Inc.
- Mary & Martha House
- Pensacola Dream Center
- Survive and Thrive Advocacy Center
- United Abolitionists
- Women Voice Network

PLATINUM
- Anew Gainsville
- ANEW Life International
- Crisis Center of Tampa Bay
- Empowered to Change
- Gulfcoast Legal Services
- Justice Restoration Center
- Restored to Dream
- Selah Freedom
- United Way of Pasco County

Figure 91: A Listing of the Higher Tier BRIGHT Organizations

As indicated on the prior pages, the true role of BRIGHT is to identify the organizations that are truly equipped to serve victims of human trafficking and elevate the standards of care for those who do serve them, so that all organizations are participating in best practices. While the efforts of BRIGHT were first centralized in the Greater Tampa Bay region for the pilot, currently the BRIGHT network spans the state of Florida, with the majority of providers fully vetted and onboarded into the system being located in the Greater Tampa Bay, Greater Orlando, and Greater Miami areas, as indicated by Figure 92. For some survivors, remaining in the same county as where their trafficking experience occurred can be detrimental to a successful exit; having services available in alternative locations far removed from their place of exploitation can serve as a benefit and a pathway for restoration.
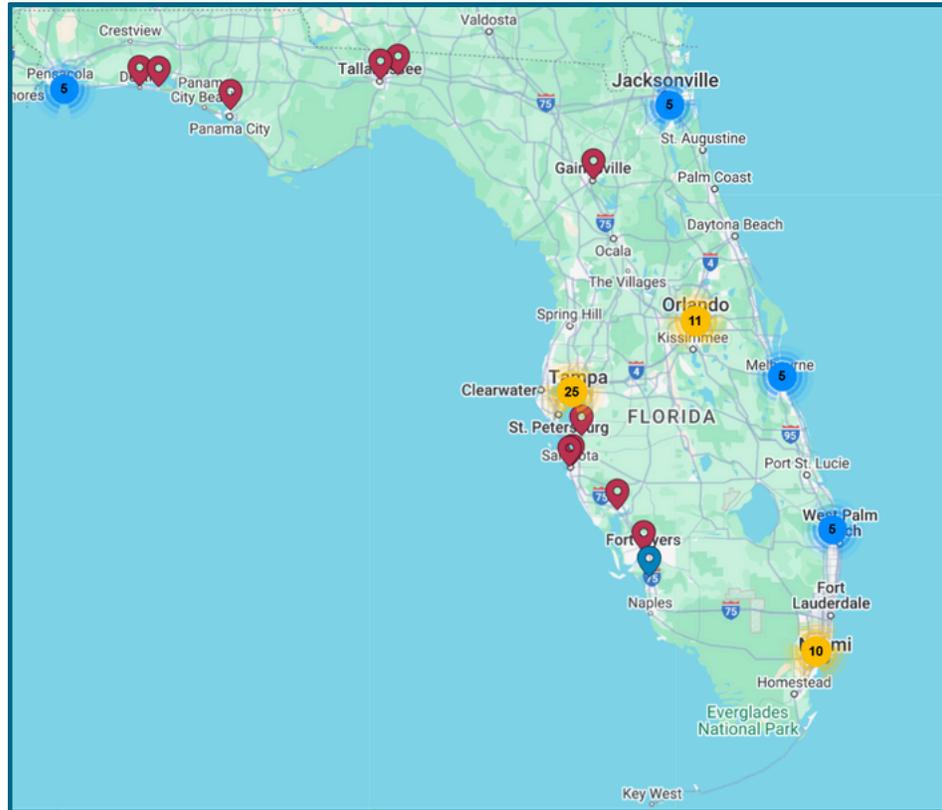
Figure 92: Map Showing the Vetted Providers by BRIGHT Throughout the State of Florida
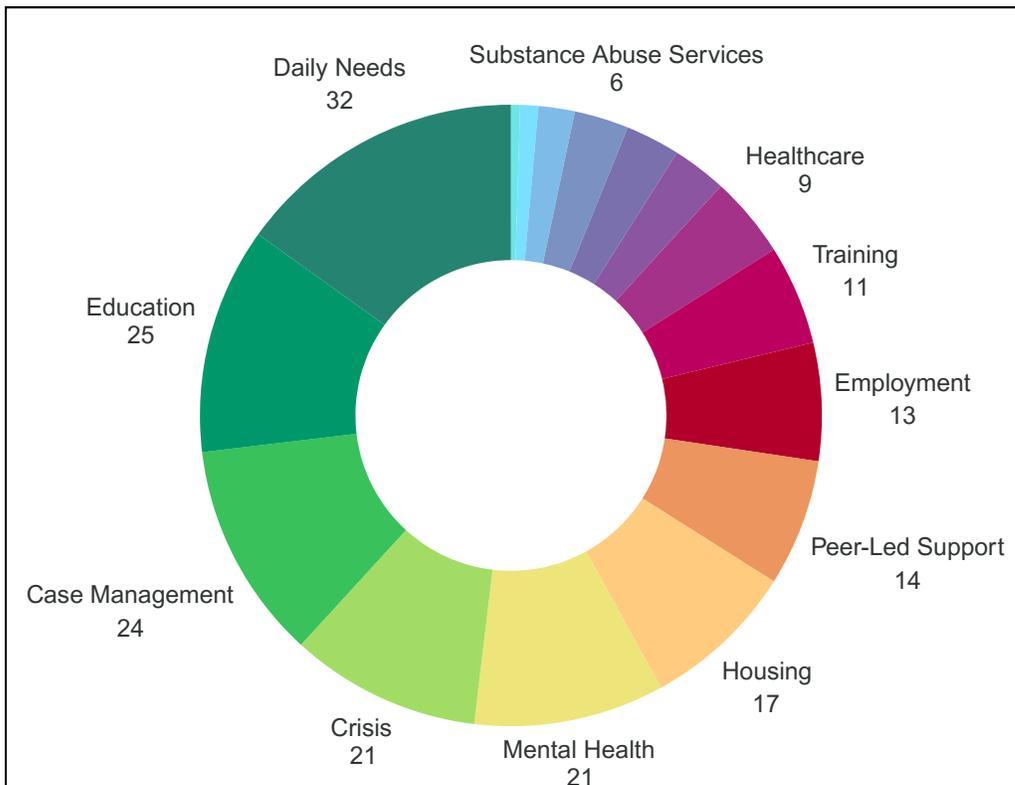
Figure 93: Chart Showing the Vetted Services by BRIGHT Throughout the State of Florida

However, accessing these services in a wide geographic span may sometimes be impeded by a lack of transportation, as there are currently only two organizations that provide this service in BRIGHT. Other services that are present, but not outlined in the figure, include demand reduction (1), prevention (4), legal services (6), and financial services (6). Although all service categories are represented in the BRIGHT network, the most common service that is currently available is daily needs, followed by education and case management, as can be seen in Figure 93.

BRIGHT
Coordinating the State vs. Coordinating the County

When collaborative efforts are targeted at a county level, it can ultimately lead to stronger relationships with those who participate, as there are more opportunities locally to build trust via in-person networking and follow through on immediate requests. While coordination at the county level is beneficial to tailor needs for each community and adapt to relevant changes based on current partnerships, it is integral to also enmesh these coordinated efforts to the larger, state-wide picture to truly promote effective collaboration throughout the state.

When operating at a county or jurisdiction-specific focus, intelligence and coordinated efforts may unintentionally become siloed, leading to limited reach. Moreover, when there is an over-reliance on local partnerships with nonprofit organizations and providers, there may quickly become a shortage of available resources. By uniting collaboration at a state level, there inherently become more opportunities for partnerships and resource availability. However, building true collaboration and partnership takes time. Trust, particularly in the anti-trafficking movement, is key in building the confidence needed to collaborate on efforts. To establish this trust, it is important to not only promote a singular effort but to be responsive to the needs of all survivors and the community at large.

Recognizing the importance of a concerted statewide effort in anti-trafficking, BRIGHT serves to be the aggregator of anti-trafficking partnerships throughout the state - a tool to assist in more effective partnership building. Since the launch of the network in 2024, through presentation and active participation BRIGHT has integrated into nearly all of Florida's known taskforces and coalitions. Having a singular, dedicated presence helps unify as information can be disseminated amongst the groups by the central, aggregating entity.

In addition to task force and coalition participation, BRIGHT has developed informal opportunities for providers to gather, educate on best practices, while brainstorming with the anti-trafficking community ways to further improve Florida's response to human trafficking. Specifically, BRIGHT has created and hosted 10 "Friday Frontline Forums," occurring on the second to last Friday of each month, where frontline providers gather and get to know each other, despite being in differing regions of the state. While these meetings often have themes each month, (i.e., mental health awareness, self-care, best practices), these gatherings also serve as a place to share success stories, challenges, and bridge gaps in service provision. For instance, one provider indicated:

> ...you know, that this has been very useful. Very useful and helpful, because for me like it was so funny, I was telling a co-worker of mine, I said, you know, **it's hard when you transition.** When I moved into this new position, you know, **how lonely it can feel, right** because sometimes *you feel like you're the only one*, and but this is...this is gonna sound cheesy, maybe, this was like a good self-care break for me to be like, **OK**, **I'm not alone**

BRIGHT
Coordinating the State vs. Coordinating the County

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are an essential tool for fostering formalized interagency partnerships. By clearly outlining roles and responsibilities, MOUs help to build mutual accountability, minimize duplication of efforts, and, in the case of anti-trafficking responses, streamline care for survivors.

An example of this approach in action is the existing MOU BRIGHT has established with DCF. This MOU enables BRIGHT to maintain real-time data on available beds throughout the State of Florida for trafficking victims. This, in turn, helps service providers make more informed decisions when making referrals on behalf of the survivors they serve. Through this partnership, the time it would have taken for service providers to clarify information on the availability of beds, and for whom they are available to, is reduced. Consequently, survivors are able to be placed in safe, appropriate housing in a more timely manner. Furthermore, this MOU enables BRIGHT to more accurately track service gaps, which can generate valuable insights that can be used to inform funding and resource allocation.

In addition to BRIGHT's MOU with DCF, there are several others currently in progress, which span a diverse range of expertise and applicable advancements as expressed by the anti-trafficking community. These include relationships with universities, Federal law enforcement agencies, demand reduction entities, and health care groups. Diversifying MOUs across sectors enhances the reach and sustainability of anti-trafficking efforts by incorporating various levels of expertise, perspectives, and resources. BRIGHT is therefore able to provide a more holistic framework of support for trafficking survivors. Moreover, such cross-sectional partnerships are a direct reflection of the multi-faceted nature of trafficking and reinforces an "it takes a village" approach to anti-trafficking efforts.

I just I think finding a place where, you know...we have the full support and knowing that it is about partnerships. I see a lot more of that happening now versus...ten years ago, I think everything was in silos... you can feel that that strength is only getting stronger. I think in terms of the partnership, this is here, and I love this, so thank you.

Partnership: From Data to Action
Key Takeaways for Future Partnership Efforts in Florida

The data presented in this section can and should be used to accelerate Florida's partnership efforts. Below are select recommendations for improving Florida's anti-trafficking response in terms of **Partnership**:

1 **Integrate Survivor-leadership into Formal Partnerships:** Expanding on promising practices from existing survivor-involved models such as the Central Florida Human Trafficking Task Force, Pasco and Hillsborough County Commissions, and BRIGHT.

2 **Increase Access to Safe, Specialized, Trauma-informed Services:** Promote the use of standardized and streamlined referral pathways, such as BRIGHT. Support organizations already serving trafficking survivors through more flexible funding opportunities.

3 **Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships between anti-trafficking organizations and other sectors, such as medical groups and law enforcement, to address the continuum of care survivors require.

In these endeavors, the TIPSTR team is dedicated to contributing to Florida's anti-trafficking efforts in the realm of **Partnership**. Future goals include:

Evaluate collaborative models for survivor engagement and develop a framework for more ethical involvement and shared leadership.

Expand formal partnerships with universities, law enforcement, and medical groups through MOUs to diversify pathway referrals and resources available.

Toward a Coordinated Response

IV. Mapping Risk and Resilience: A Data-Driven Look at Human Trafficking in Florida

Often, human trafficking data remains at the individual level, including risk factors, victimization histories, and survivor outcomes. Having the ability to contextualize, analyze, and respond to large-scale patterns regarding human trafficking in our communities is vital to the formation and continuation of effective multi-institutional responses.

Across demographic, regional, economic, and environmental considerations, each county will have varying levels of resources, coordination capacity, and levels of vulnerability related to exploitation. Given the multi-faceted nature of examining macro-level data across a geographic space, this score aims to contextualize as much of the available data as possible.

The terms *risk, response, and resiliency* can have multiple meanings based on the context in which they are used. For human trafficking data, these terms often point towards threats of exploitation or the capacity to address trafficking. Often, these terms are narrowly deployed, such as among individuals, groups of stakeholders, or specific communities. When discussing macro-level perspectives on risk, response, and resilience, there are usually barriers to providing sufficient context and detail across vastly different areas and communities. Using data provided by multiple stakeholders, community agencies, and departments, this score is a composition of available human trafficking data and publicly available contextual information. It is important to note that the goal of this score is that it be continuously updated and improved as more information, data, and ongoing efforts are shared with the TIP Lab over time.

Methodology

Our approach included two data processes:

| SUBMITTED DATA PER SB 7064 | RISK, RESPONSE, AND RESILIENCY SCORE | PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA |

However, human trafficking represents a significant challenge that requires targeted and strategic approaches for prevention and response. This analysis examines Florida counties using three critical metrics:

Risk Score:
Measures environmental factors that might enable trafficking, focusing on illicit massage businesses (70% weight) and posted ads (30% weight)

Response Score:
Captures active intervention through human trafficking arrests (30% weight), prostitution arrests (20% weight), DCF HT screenings per youth population (25% weight), and vetted organizations per capita (25% weight)

Resilience Score:
Assesses prevention infrastructure, including education programs (20% weight), organization presence (60% weight), task forces per capita (10% weight), and task force events (10% weight)

For the purposes of this report, we use the following conceptualizations for risk, response, and resilience in the context of human trafficking at the county level. The definitions below offer two things: 1) a **goal post to continuously aim for with more data and information provided at the county level over time**, and 2) **provide a conceptualization to recognize ongoing efforts based on available information.** To get to the final scores, they are calculated based on county population by weighting the importance of various risk, resilience, and response factors as they relate to human trafficking to land on a range of zero to one. The higher colors demonstrate higher scores.
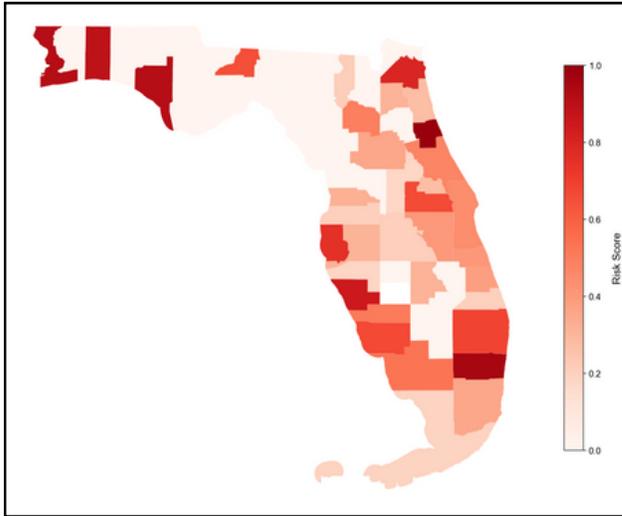
Figure 94: Map showing the Risk Score by County

Risk refers to the confluence of structural, economic, social, and institutional factors that create environments where trafficking is more likely to occur, remain undetected, or be inadequately addressed. This composite measure refers to the interplay between vulnerability factors, exploitation opportunities, and increased prevalence of offending incidents.

Response refers to the existence and effective implementation of systems designed to identify trafficking victims, provide comprehensive support services to survivors, and actively disrupt ongoing trafficking operations. This encompasses the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, social services, and community organizations to address trafficking incidents after they have occurred and to hold perpetrators accountable.
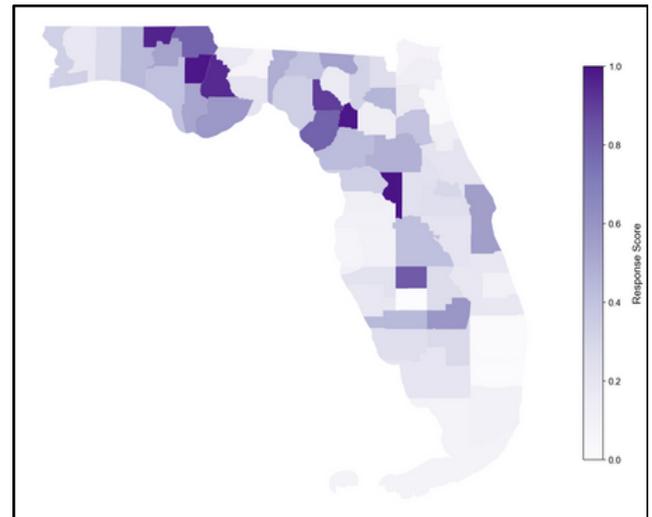
Figure 95: Map Showing the Response Score by County
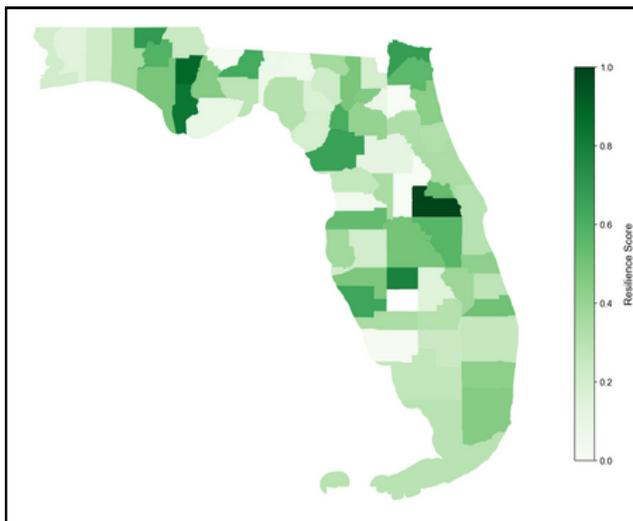
Figure 96: Map Showing the Resilience Score by County

Resilience refers to the integrated network of protective systems, social structures, economic opportunities, and community initiatives that collectively enhance a region's proactive capacity to prevent human trafficking. This encompasses the development and maintenance of strong proactive mechanisms that mitigate vulnerability factors and create environments naturally resistant to exploitation before trafficking can occur.

Key Findings and Interpretations

Our analysis reveals several important patterns and insights. One such pattern is between predominantly rural and urban counties and their prevention approaches. For a more detailed explanation of these typologies, please see Appendix D and Appendix E.

County Typologies

High Response Counties: Counties like Hillsborough, Marion, and Sumter demonstrate exceptionally high response levels, with Hillsborough showing the strongest performance (0.526 response score). These counties represent best practices in active intervention and enforcement.

High Risk Urban Counties: Major urban areas including Pinellas, Palm Beach, and Okaloosa face significant trafficking risk (average 0.535 risk score) but show concerning gaps in response capacity. These counties represent the highest priority areas for enhanced intervention resources.

High Resilience, Low Risk Counties: Rural counties like Hardee, Holmes, and Gilchrist demonstrate strong prevention infrastructure (average 0.238 resilience score) despite zero measured risk, suggesting proactive prevention-focused approaches.

Moderate Risk, High Resilience Counties: Counties including Miami-Dade, Seminole, and Osceola show balanced prevention approaches with moderate risk levels (0.236 average) and strong resilience infrastructure (0.190 average).

Low Activity Counties: Twenty-five counties show minimal activity across all metrics, representing areas that may need enhanced awareness and capacity building.

Cross Metric Relationships

Rural-Urban Response Paradox:

Rural counties with zero risk scores consistently outperform expectations in response metrics, while high-risk urban counties often underperform, suggesting different enforcement priorities or resource allocation patterns.

Prevention-Response Disconnect:

Many counties show a weak correlation between resilience infrastructure and actual response activity, indicating that prevention planning may not effectively translate to intervention capacity.

Risk-Independent Response Patterns:

Response levels show significant variation independent of both risk and resilience scores, suggesting that local law enforcement priorities, federal task force presence, or specialized training may be the primary drivers of anti-trafficking activity.

The purpose of the risk, response, and resiliency score is an attempt to more holistically examine the state of Florida across these domains to examine the overall ability of communities to respond and address human trafficking, and the vulnerabilities or instances of exploitation existing within counties.

All three of the risk, response, and resiliency scores and their components are calculated per county population, except for education, which is based on county enrollment population and, DCF screenings which are based on county youth population. Each component was normalized to be between 0 and 1. Using these normalized components, each score was a weighted average.

By understanding how these metrics interact and identify counties with unique profiles, we can develop more effective, targeted strategies for combating human trafficking.

Priority Recommendations

Based on our clustering and residual analysis, we recommend:

Immediate Intervention Focus:
High-risk, low-response counties (Cluster 1) including Pinellas, Palm Beach, and Okaloosa require immediate enhancement of response capacity and coordinated intervention efforts.

Best Practice Replication:
High-response counties (Cluster 2) like Hillsborough and Marion should serve as models for developing response capacity in other high-risk areas.

Resource Optimization:
Counties appearing as outliers in multiple relationships (Gadsden, Holmes, Marion, Calhoun, Gilchrist, Leon) represent unique cases requiring tailored approaches rather than standard interventions.

Capacity Building:
Low-activity counties (Cluster 0) need foundational capacity building across all three metrics to establish baseline prevention and response infrastructure.

Limitations: Key to consider regarding this score: it does not account for any sources of data not previously submitted to the TIP lab, any efforts to combat trafficking that are not publicly available or easily identifiable, or any private organizations that collect information on human trafficking in the State of Florida that currently do not participate in TIPSTR. We encourage agencies to respond to this report with additional data to improve our ability to accurately reflect Florida's regional environments. The other notable limitation is that, among the data provided to TIPSTR, not all are compatible or complete for the purposes of county-level examination.

County Profiles: A County-Level Look at Anti-Trafficking Strategies

The County Profiles aim to provide a data-driven snapshot of anti-trafficking efforts at the county level based on the data provided to TIPSTR. The benefit of using counties as a measurement unit compared to cities is that many human trafficking responses (i.e., task forces, coalitions, commissions, law enforcement, and school systems) are based at the county level. Similarly, if an entity is specific to a city, it can be further expanded to be incorporated by a county. An additional benefit of using a county-specific lens is that you can utilize population metrics, which are often calculated at the county level, providing expedient data enrichment (Freeman et al., 2025).

These profiles focus on a county's performance and potential challenges as they relate to their efforts in various capacities. These profiles should be utilized to inform targeted recommendations and changes, as well as strategic planning, based on geographic needs. The counties highlighted for this report were those with populations exceeding 500,000 residents, as seen in Table 8.

County	2025 Population
Miami-Dade County	2,714,489
Broward County	1,993,815
Hillsborough County	1,579,746
Palm Beach County	1,561,669
Orange County	1,510,726
Duval County	1,058,444
Pinellas County	961,204
Polk County	878,226
Lee County	858,937
Pasco County	680,706
Brevard County	670,523
Volusia County	611,741

Table 8: Florida's Most Populous Counties with Estimated 2025 Populations

These profiles provide an overview of the county's individual Risk, Resilience, and Response Scores, indicating opportunities for advancement within these areas. County-specific data is presented, including arrest and prosecution figures, Department of Children and Families (DCF) screenings, verified child victims, and the factors that triggered the use of the Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST) for minors. Additionally, reports on identified illicit businesses and online advertisements are included to provide further targeted insights.

Note: If your county of residence is not included in the selected counties, please reach out to Taylor Algerio, Annual Report Managing Editor and Research Services Administrator, at tjalgerio@usf.edu for a copy of your county profile.

Brevard County

DCF Screenings:
62
Verified Child Victims:
8
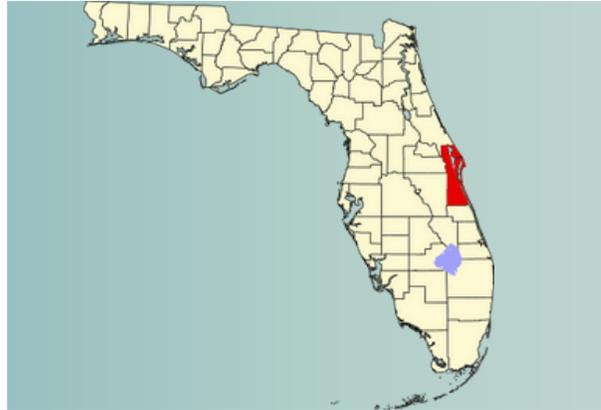
Arrests:
9
Prosecutions*:
0
Commercial Sex Ads:
18,114
Illicit Massage Businesses:
38

Brevard County, located on the Central East coast of Florida, has a **moderate** resiliency score. In addition, their risk score is **high,** and their response score is **high.**

From their publicly reported DOE data, students in kindergarten through 12th Grade, receive prevention education in courses with content related to human trafficking. Based on data gathered on task force events in the county, there were no annual or monthly community events.

In Brevard County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers, which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 97 (on right): reports of concerning behaviors followed by running away were the most commonly reported triggers.
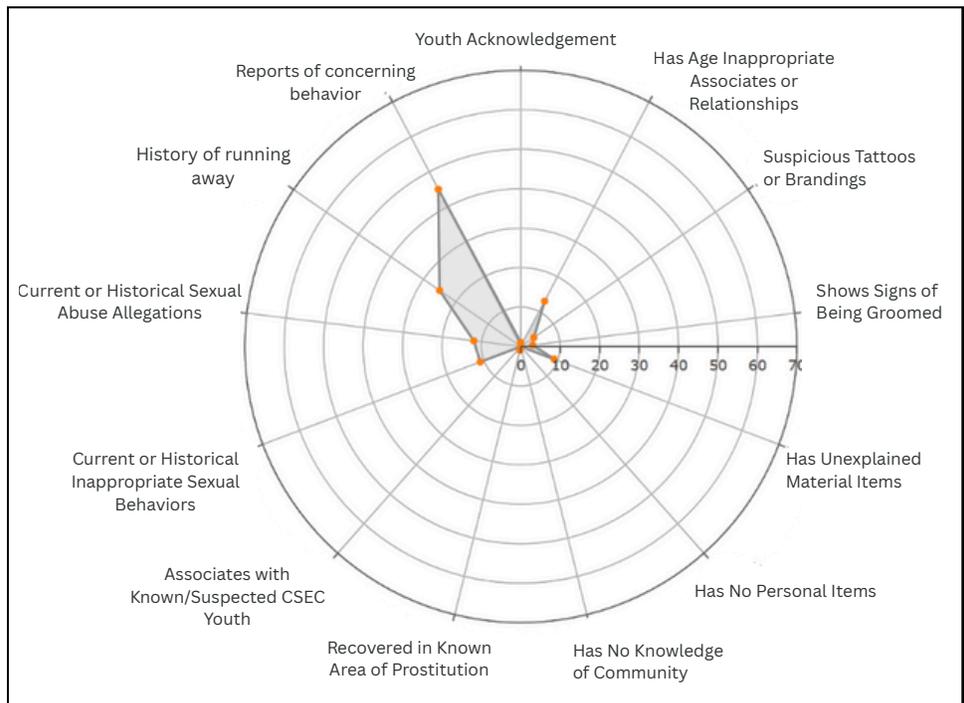
Figure 97: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Brevard County
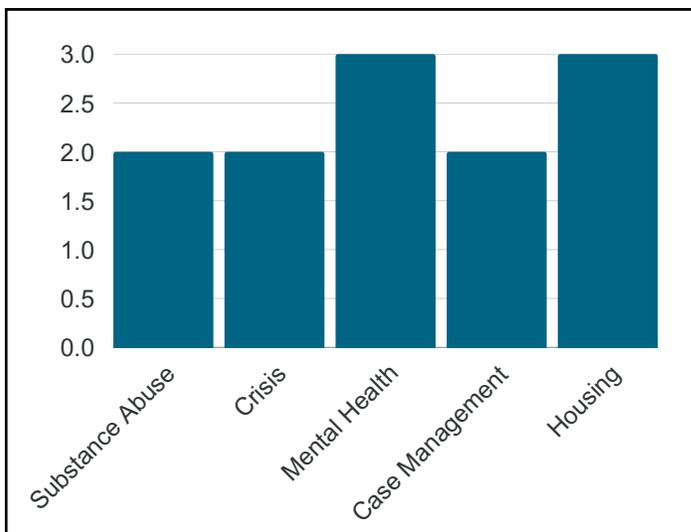
Figure 98: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Brevard County

Brevard County has twelve identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 98). The county has two substance abuse, crisis, and case management service providers. There are three of both mental health and housing service providers.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Brevard County has all 5 key types of human trafficking victim-serving organizations.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Broward County

DCF Screenings:
< 5
Verified Child Victims:
3
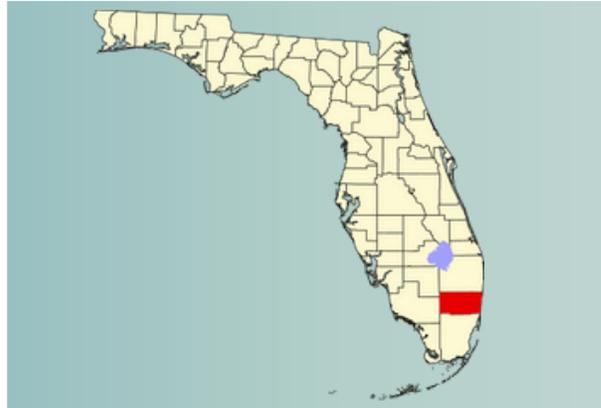
Arrests:
9
Prosecutions*:
2
Commercial Sex Ads:
15,047
Illicit Massage Businesses:
227

Broward County, located on the Southeast coast of Florida, has a **moderate** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **high**, and the response score is **low.**

From their publicly reported DOE data, students in Kindergarten through 12th Grade, receive prevention education in courses with content related to human trafficking. Based on data gathered from their regional task force, Broward County had four Education/Awareness events and one Training/Certification event in 2024.

In Broward County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers, which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 99: reports of concerning behavior being the most prevalent, followed by suspicious tattoos/brandings, running away, inappropriate sexual behaviors, and unexplained material items.

Figure 99: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Broward County

Figure 100: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Broward County

Broward County has two identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 100). These organizations provide mental health services and substance abuse services.

This data is gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the County.

The human trafficking task force in Broward County held five events in 2024.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Duval County

DCF Screenings:
23
Verified Child Victims:
8

Arrests:
8
Prosecutions*:
6
Commercial Sex Ads:
58,298
Illicit Massage Businesses:
52

Duval County, located on the Northeast coast of Florida, has a **high** resiliency score. The county risk and response scores are also **high.**

According to publicly reported DOE data, Duval County students, in kindergarten through 12th Grade, receive education specifically tailored to human trafficking. Based on data gathered from its regional task force, Duval County held four training and awareness events in 2024.

In Duval County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 101. The most frequently reported trigger was reports of concerning behaviors, followed by running away.

Figure 101: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Duval County

Duval County has two identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 102). These organizations provide mental health and housing services.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.
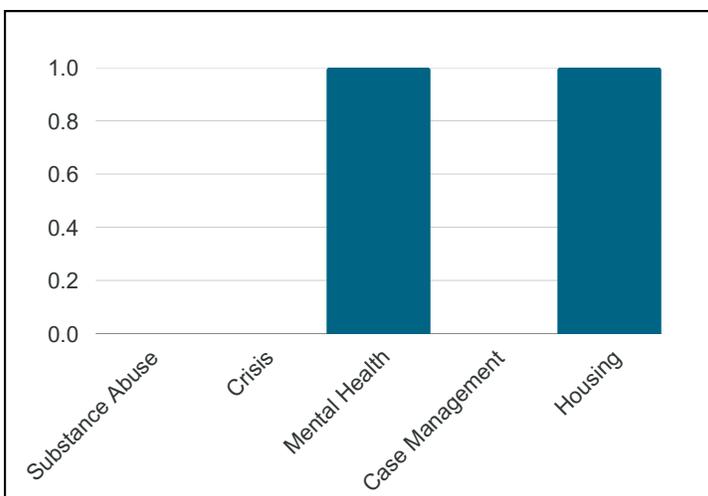
Figure 102: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT in Duval County

Duval County is ensuring their youth are receiving human trafficking prevention education at all age levels.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Hillsborough County

DCF Screenings:
28
Verified Child Victims:
5
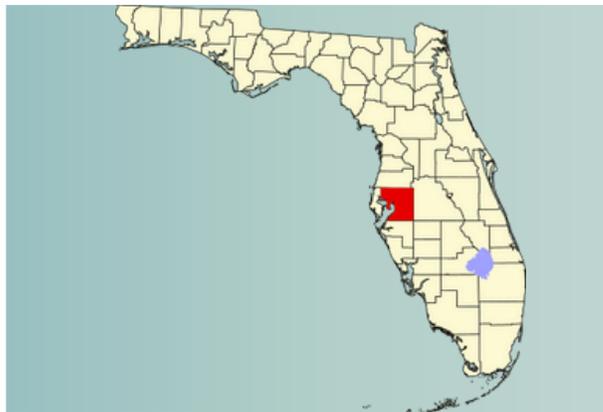
Arrests:
81
Prosecutions*:
25
Commercial Sex Ads:
19,591
Illicit Massage Businesses:
44

Hillsborough County, located near the Central West coast of Florida, has a **low** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **moderate**, and the response score is **high**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Hillsborough County's students are provided some form of Human Trafficking Awareness education from 6th through 12th Grade.

In Hillsborough County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 103: reports of concerning behavior, running away, and inappropriate sexual behaviors.

Figure 103: Triggers Which Led To a HTST Screening for Minors in Hillsborough County

Figure 104: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Hillsborough County

Hillsborough County has four identified organizations that can serve an individual that has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 104) including services for mental health, housing, and substance abuse.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Hillsborough County participates in two human trafficking coalitions and hosts one human trafficking commission.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Lee County

DCF Screenings:
32
Verified Child Victims:
4
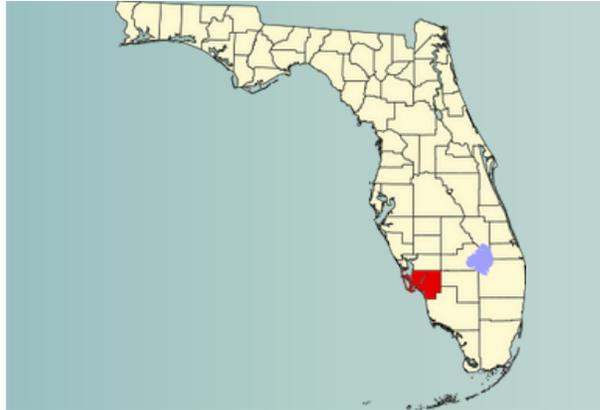
Arrests:
20
Prosecutions*:
1
Commercial Sex Ads:
20,316
Illicit Massage Businesses:
51

Lee County, located on the Southwest coast of Florida, **low** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **high**, and the response score is **low**.

Lee County did not have any data available from the publicly available DOE website. It is unknown whether Lee County provides any Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Education to its students at any grade level.

In Lee County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 105: reports of concerning behavior, followed by age-inappropriate associates or relationships, and inappropriate sexual behaviors.
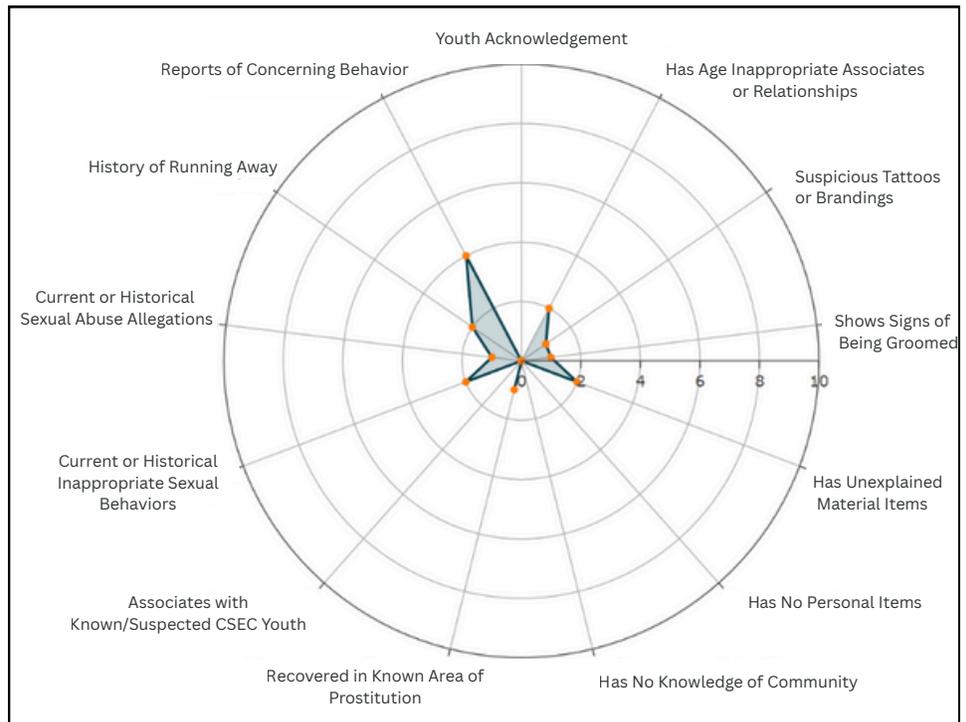

Figure 105: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Lee County
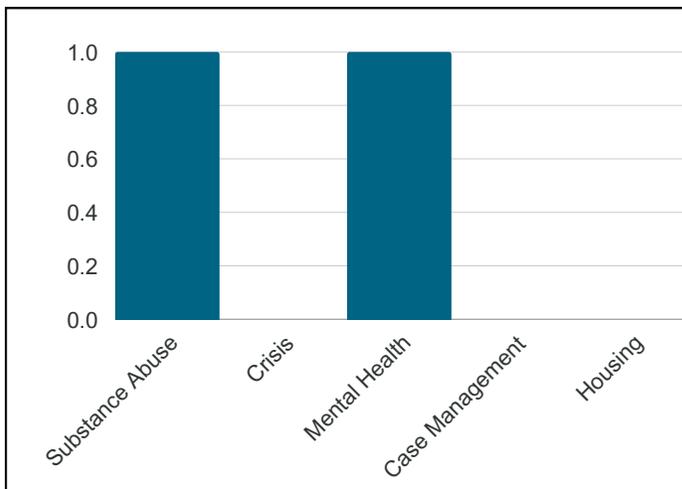

Figure 106: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Lee County

Lee County has four identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 106). Across the county, there are services available for mental health, housing, and substance abuse.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Lee County participates in two human trafficking task forces and one human trafficking coalition.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Miami-Dade County

DCF Screenings:
57
Verified Child Victims:
10
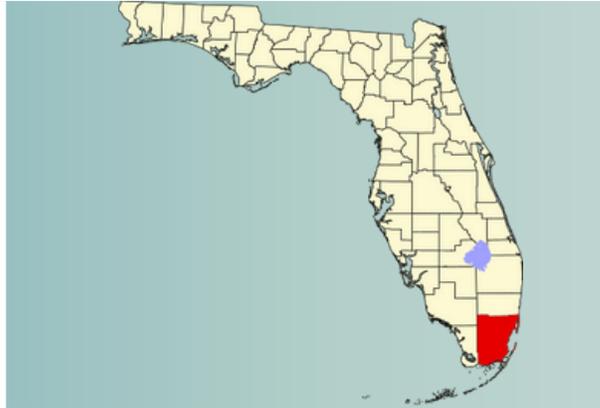
Arrests:
18
Prosecutions*:
69
Commercial Sex Ads:
15,161
Illicit Massage Businesses:
106

Miami-Dade County, located on the Southeast coast of Florida, has a **moderate** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **high**, and the response score is **moderate**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Miami-Dade County's students are provided some form of human trafficking awareness education from kindergarten through 12th Grade. The education materials and courses utilized fall under the related category, with students receiving human trafficking prevention information within courses that cover topics related to human trafficking.

In Miami-Dade County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 107: most common was reported concerning behaviors, followed by running away, suspicious tattoos or branding, having age-inappropriate associates or relationships, and sexual abuse allegations.
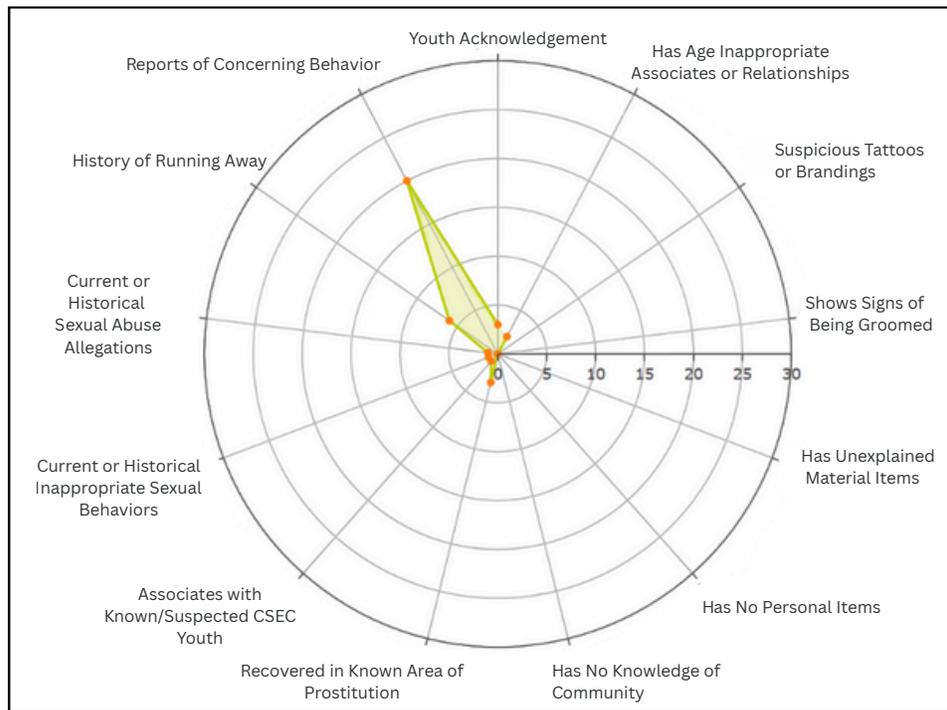

Figure 107: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Miami-Dade County

Figure 108: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Miami-Dade County

Miami-Dade County has eleven identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 108). The county has a high number of mental health services for human trafficking survivors, as well as services available for substance abuse, case management, and housing.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Notably, 57 youth were screened as potential human trafficking victims, and of those, 10 youth were verified human trafficking victims.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Orange County

DCF Screenings:
76
Verified Child Victims:
26

Arrests:
13
Prosecutions*:
23
Commercial Sex Ads:
23,057
Illicit Massage Businesses:
103

Orange County, located in the Central East region of Florida, has a **high** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **high**, and its response score is **low**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Orange County's students are provided specific Human Trafficking awareness education, with some K-5 students receiving human trafficking prevention information within courses that cover topics related to human trafficking. The human trafficking task force in Orange County held 16 events last year. Ten of the events fall under the Education and Awareness Category, followed by six under Training and Certification.

In Orange County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 109: reports of concerning behavior, running away, and youth acknowledgment.
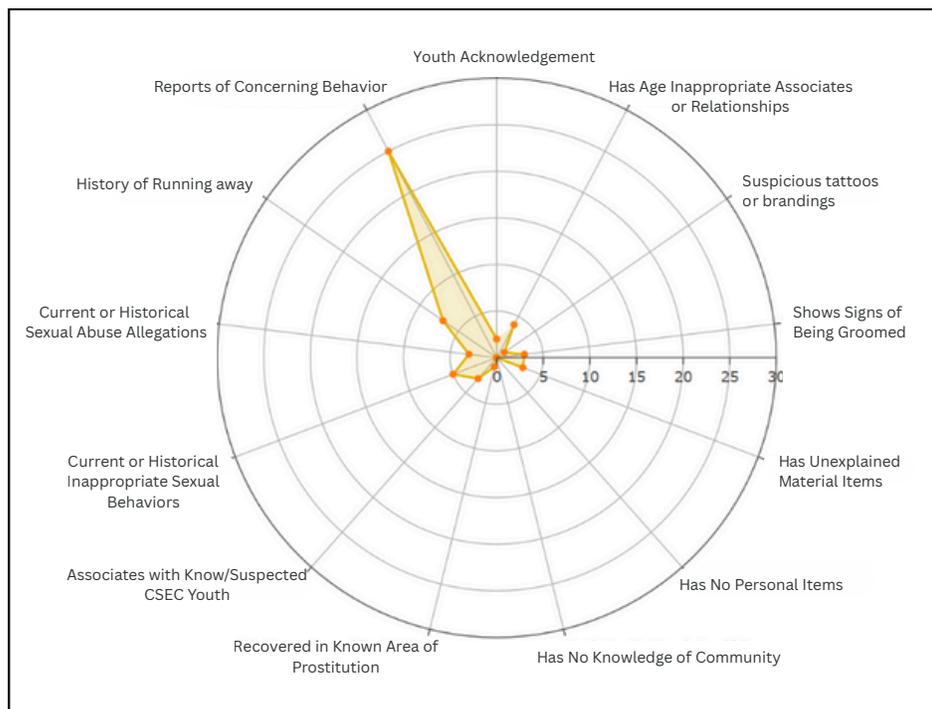

Figure 109: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Orange County
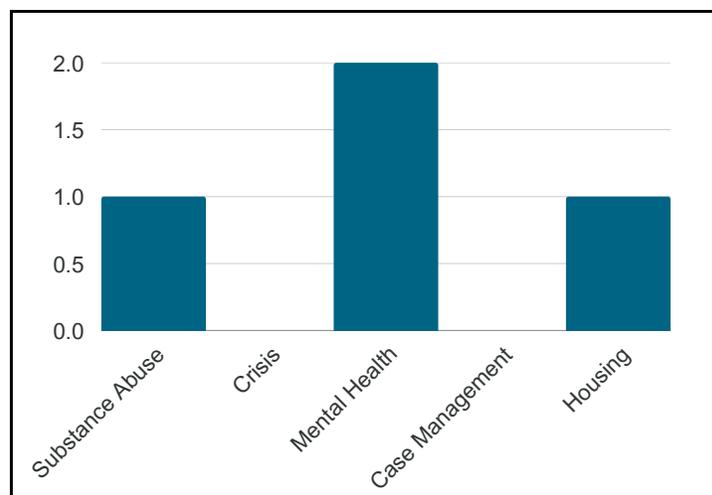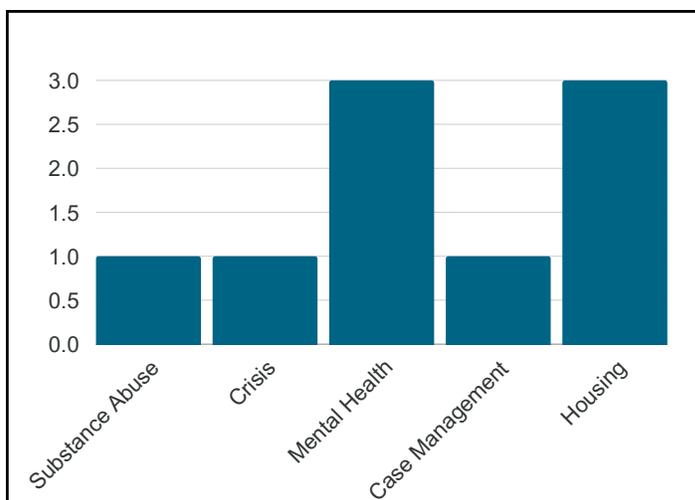

Figure 110: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Orange County

Orange County has nine identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced human trafficking and provide services within the most crucial service categories (see Figure 110). The county has a higher number of mental health and housing services in comparison to crisis, substance abuse, and case management.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

The task force in Orange County held 16 events in 2024, bringing opportunities for community awareness to the county.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Palm Beach County

DCF Screenings:
< 5
Verified Child Victims:
3
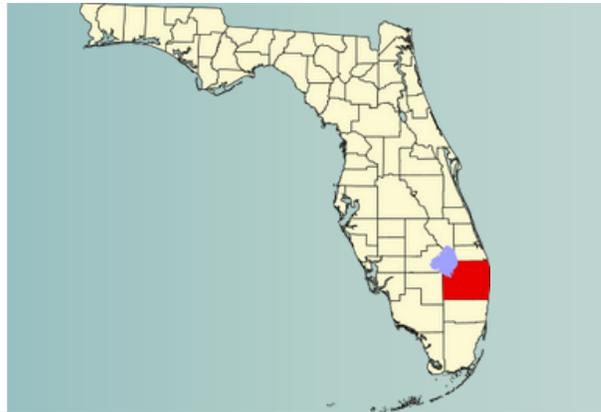
Arrests:
59
Prosecutions*:
12
Commercial Sex Ads:
14,740
Illicit Massage Businesses:
120

Palm Beach County, located on the Southeast coast of Florida, has a **low** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **high**, and response score is **low**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Palm Beach County provides human trafficking prevention education delivered within basic courses not related to human trafficking to all their students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The Palm Beach County Task Force held six events, including education and awareness events as well as training and certification events.

In Palm Beach County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 111: running away, age-inappropriate associates or relationships, inappropriate sexual behaviors, and sexual abuse allegations.
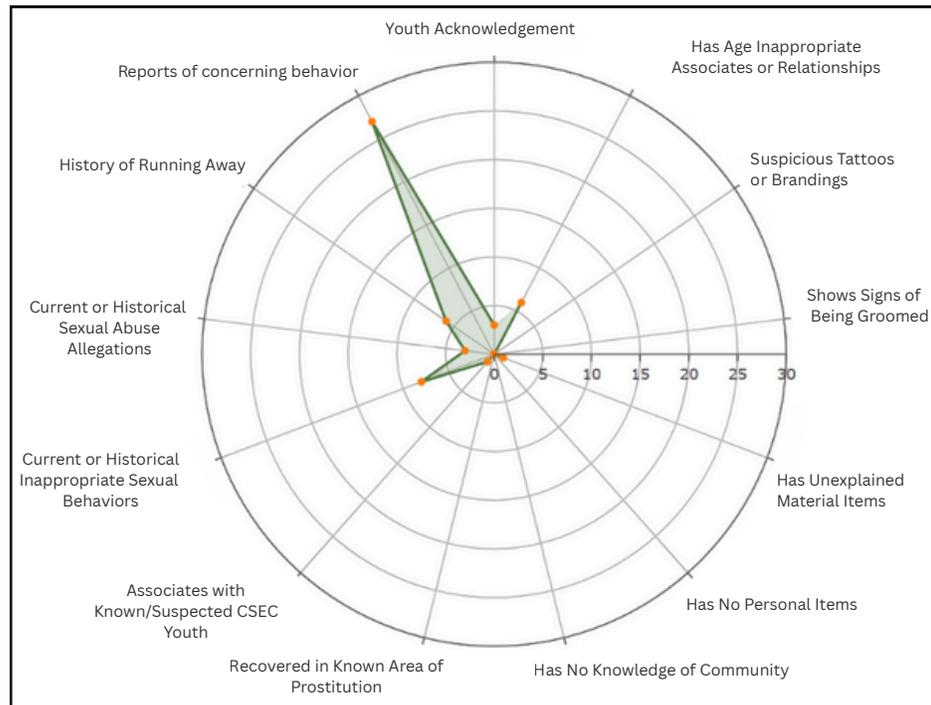

Figure 111: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Palm Beach County
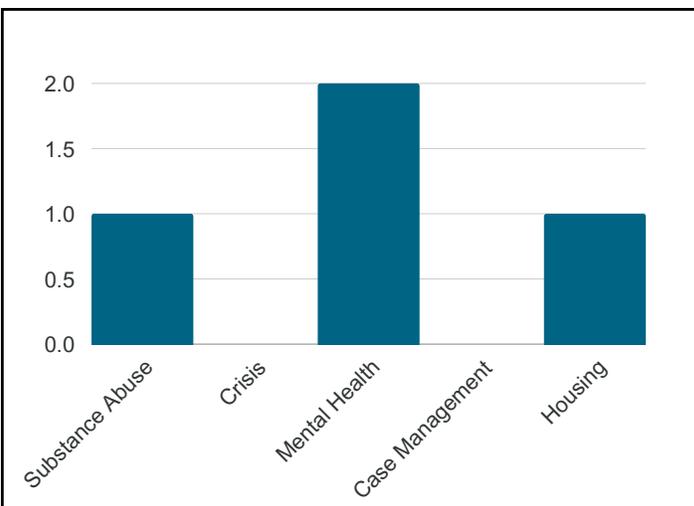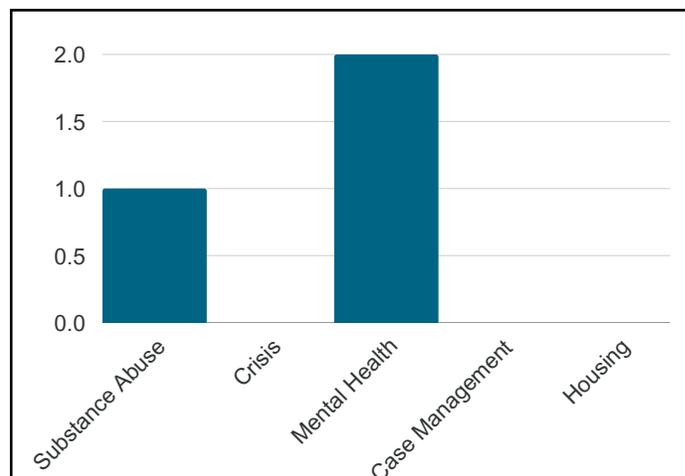

Figure 112: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Palm Beach County

Palm Beach County has three identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking the most crucial categories (see Figure 112). The county has mental health and substance abuse services available.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

The human trafficking task force in Palm Beach County held 6 events in 2024 for the community.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Pasco County

DCF Screenings:
< 5
Verified Child Victims:
0

Arrests:
19
Prosecutions*:
9
Commercial Sex Ads:
3,209
Illicit Massage Businesses:
19

Pasco County, located on the Central West coast of Florida, has a **high** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **moderate**, and its response score is **moderate**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Pasco County provides both specific and related human trafficking prevention education for students in 6th to 12th grades. Students in kindergarten to 5th grades are provided human trafficking prevention education in courses that cover content related to human trafficking.

In Pasco County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 113: reports of concerning behavior.
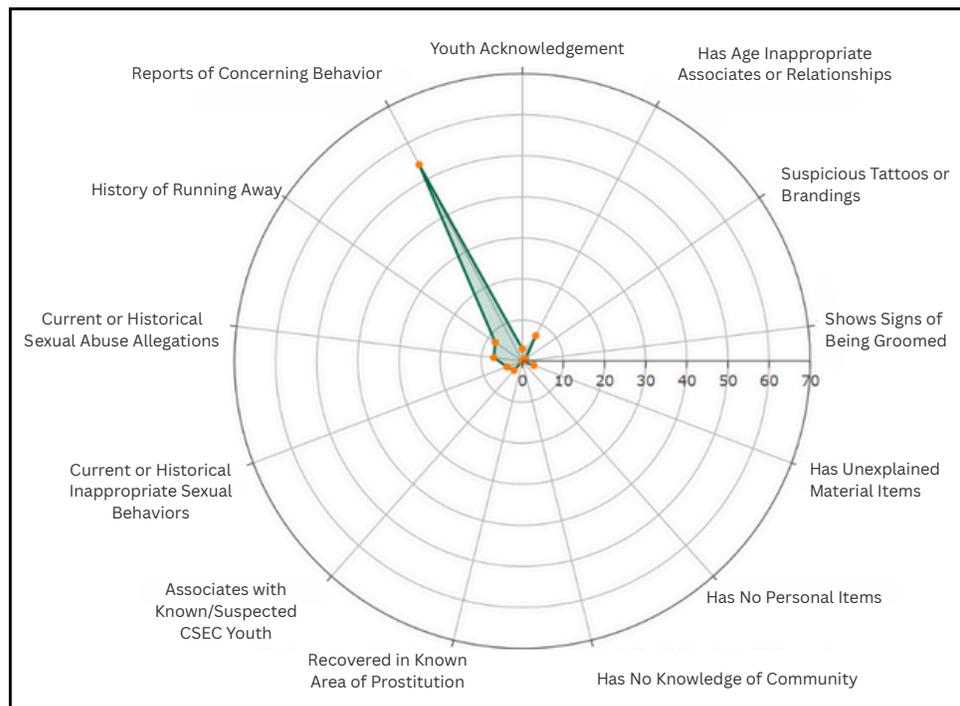

Figure 113: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Pasco County
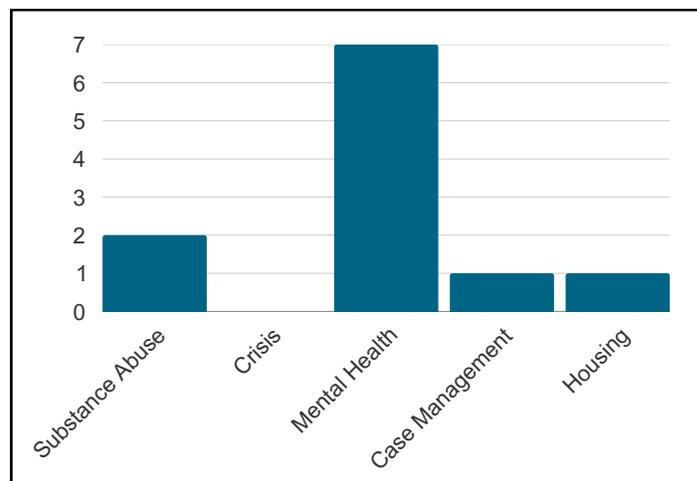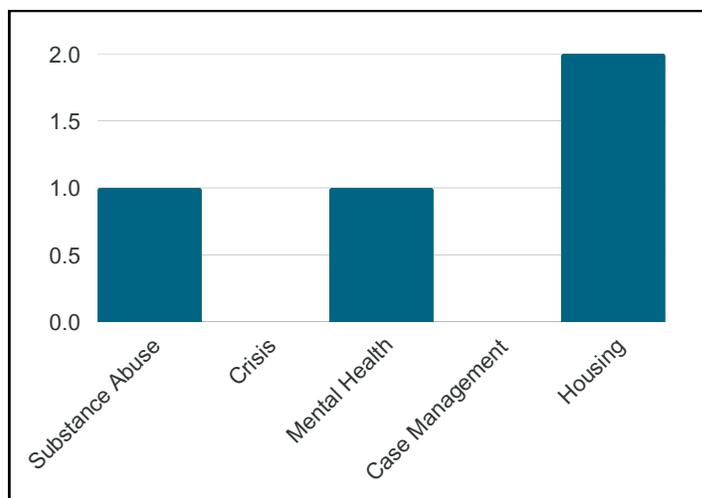

Figure 114: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Pasco County

Pasco County has four identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 114). The county has mental health, housing, and substance abuse services available.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Pasco County has both a human trafficking coalition and a human trafficking commission.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Pinellas County

DCF Screenings:
10
Verified Child Victims:
0

Arrests:
54
Prosecutions*:
15
Commercial Sex Ads:
14,877
Illicit Massage Businesses:
74

Pinellas County, located on the west-central coast of Florida, has a **moderate** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **high**, and its response score is **low**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Pinellas County's students, Kindergarten through 12th grade, are provided human trafficking prevention education in courses that cover content related to human trafficking.

In Pinellas County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 115: reports of concerning behaviors, primarily, followed by running away.
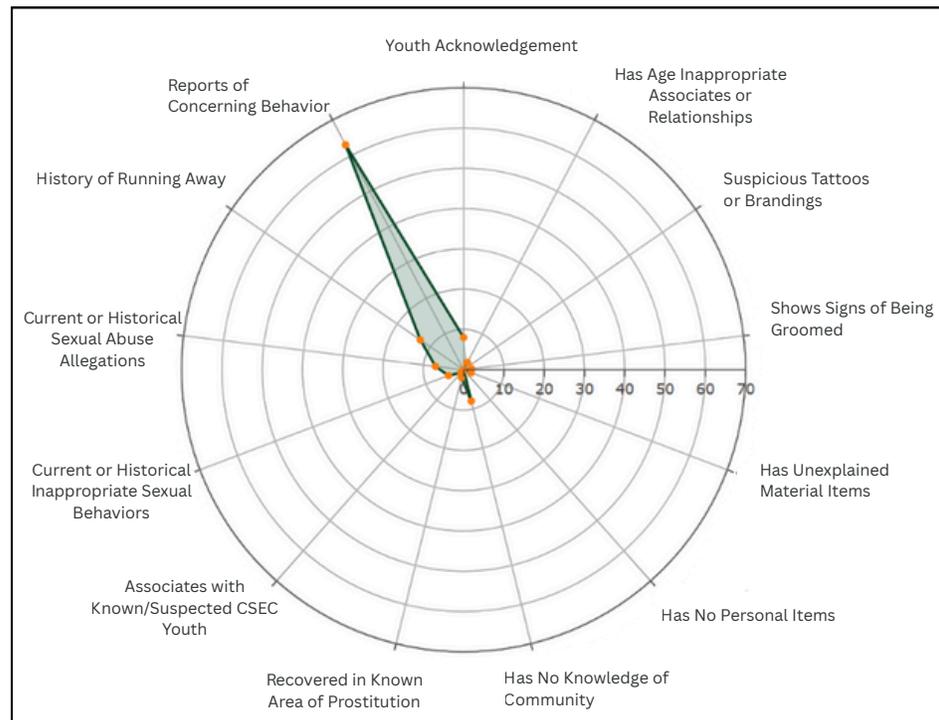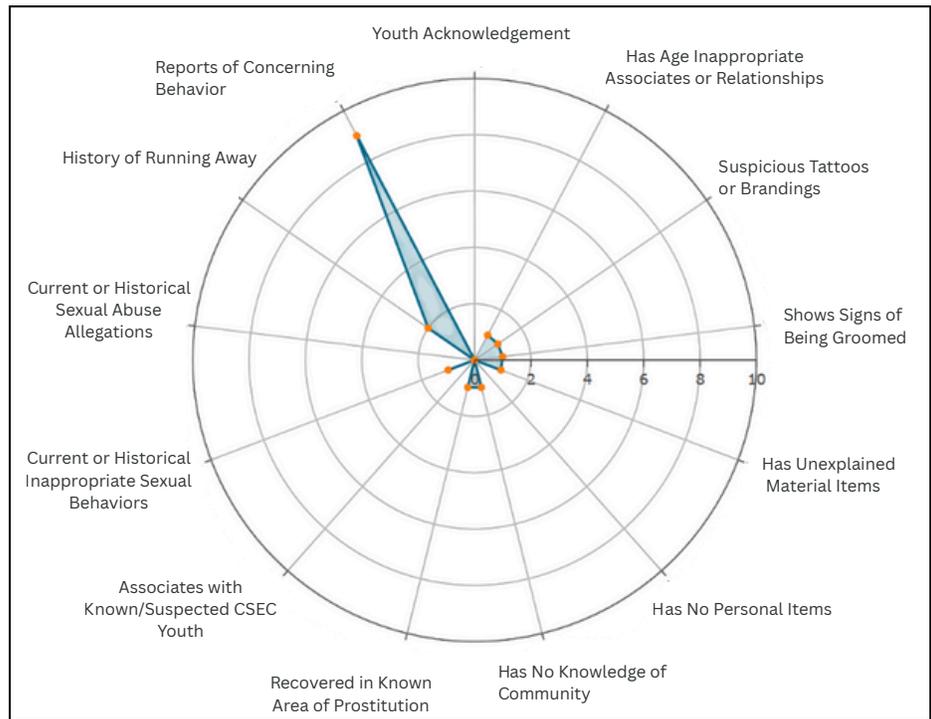

Figure 115: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Pinellas County
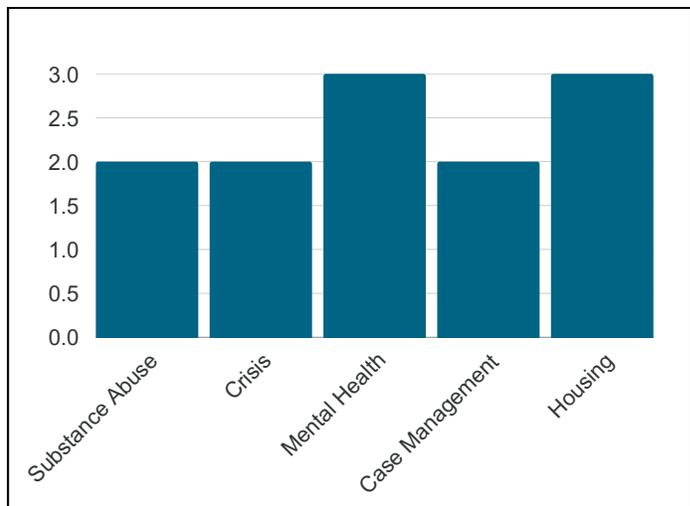
Figure 116: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Pinellas County

Pinellas County has twelve identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 116). The county has at least two service organizations in each of the five categories which provide a well-balanced array of the most crucial services.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Pinellas County has services available across all crucial service types.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Polk County

DCF Screenings:
66
Verified Child Victims:
23
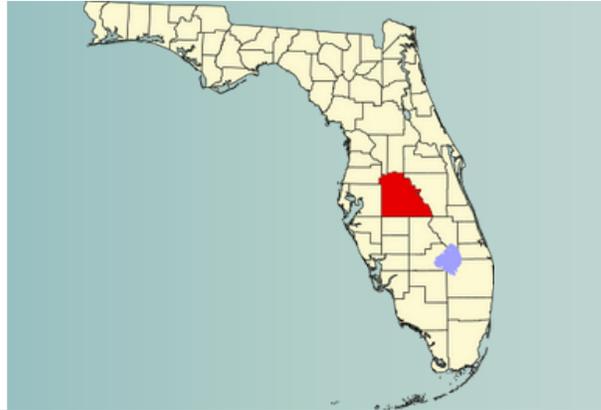
Arrests:
7
Prosecutions*:
9
Commercial Sex Ads:
3,972
Illicit Massage Businesses:
25

Polk County, located in the Central region of Florida, has a **high** resiliency score. In addition, the county risk score is **moderate**, and its response score is **moderate**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Polk provides specific Human Trafficking awareness education for K-12th grades, as well as providing human trafficking prevention education in courses with content related to human trafficking for K-5 students as well as some general district-provided materials.

In Polk County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 117: reports of concerning behaviors, followed by youth acknowledgment and running away.
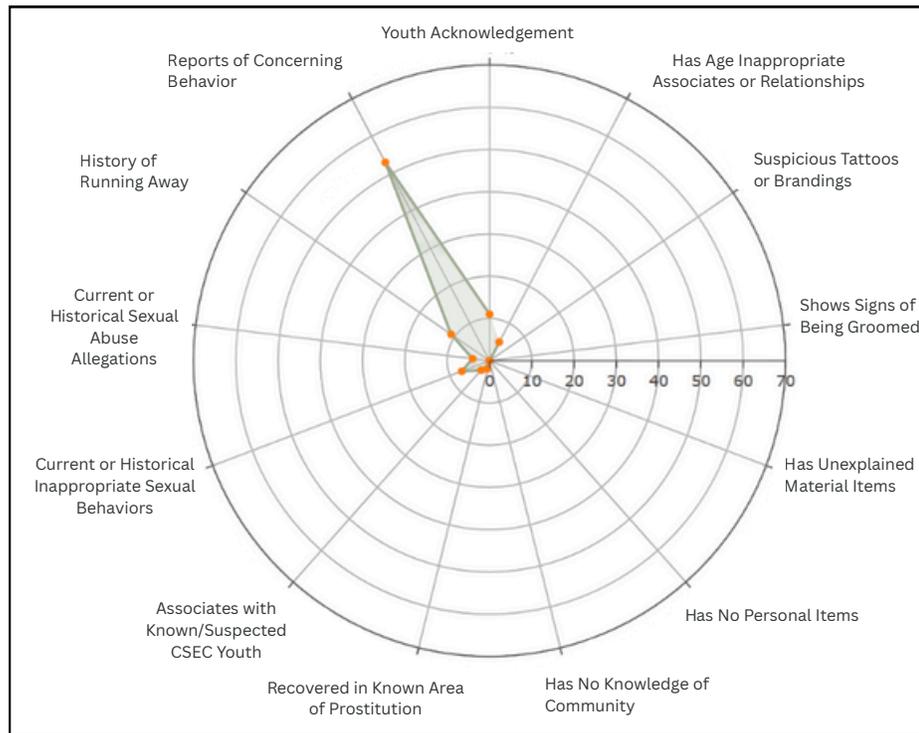
Figure 117: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Polk County
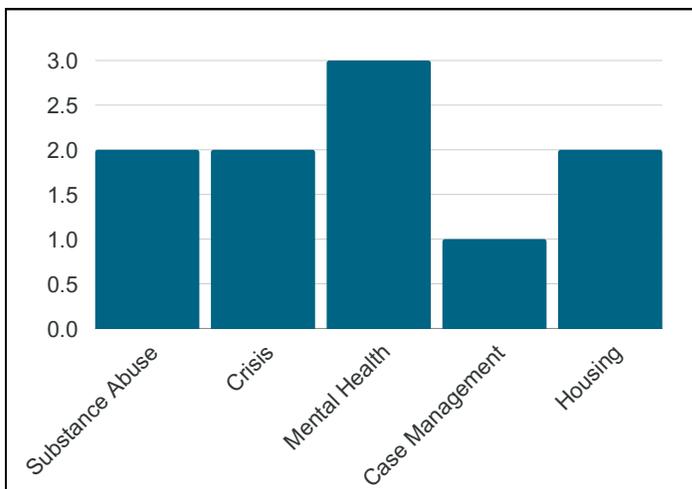
Figure 118: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Polk County

Polk County has ten identified organizations that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 118). There is a relatively even distribution, with an average of two organizations accessible across all five categories.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Polk County school district ensures their students receive specific human trafficking awareness education.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Volusia County

DCF Screenings:
17
Verified Child Victims:
1
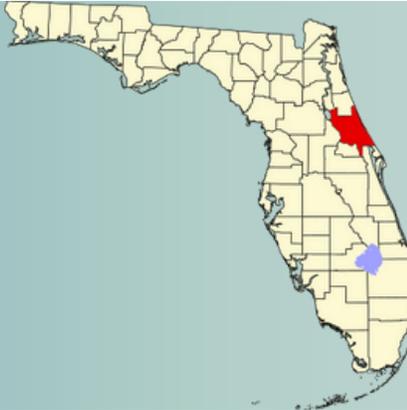
Arrests:
0
Prosecutions*:
2
Commercial Sex Ads:
12,203
Illicit Massage Businesses:
32

Volusia County, located in the Northeast region of Florida, has a **moderate** resiliency score. In addition, their risk score is **high**, and their response score is **low**.

According to publicly reported DOE data, Volusia County provides human trafficking prevention education in courses with content related to human trafficking for students in K-12th grades as well as supplementary district materials. The Volusia County task force held two events, with one in partnership with Flagler County.

In Volusia County, DCF data revealed the following initial triggers which resulted in human trafficking screenings of minors as shown in Figure 119: reports of concerning behavior, followed by running away, age-inappropriate associates or relationships, inappropriate sexual behaviors, and sexual abuse allegations.
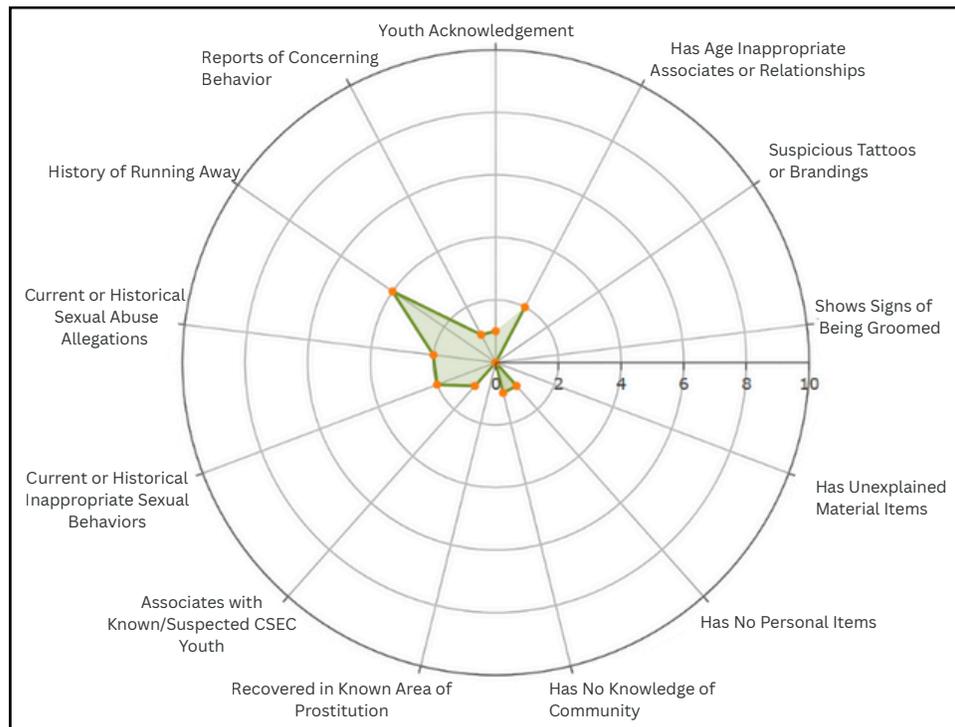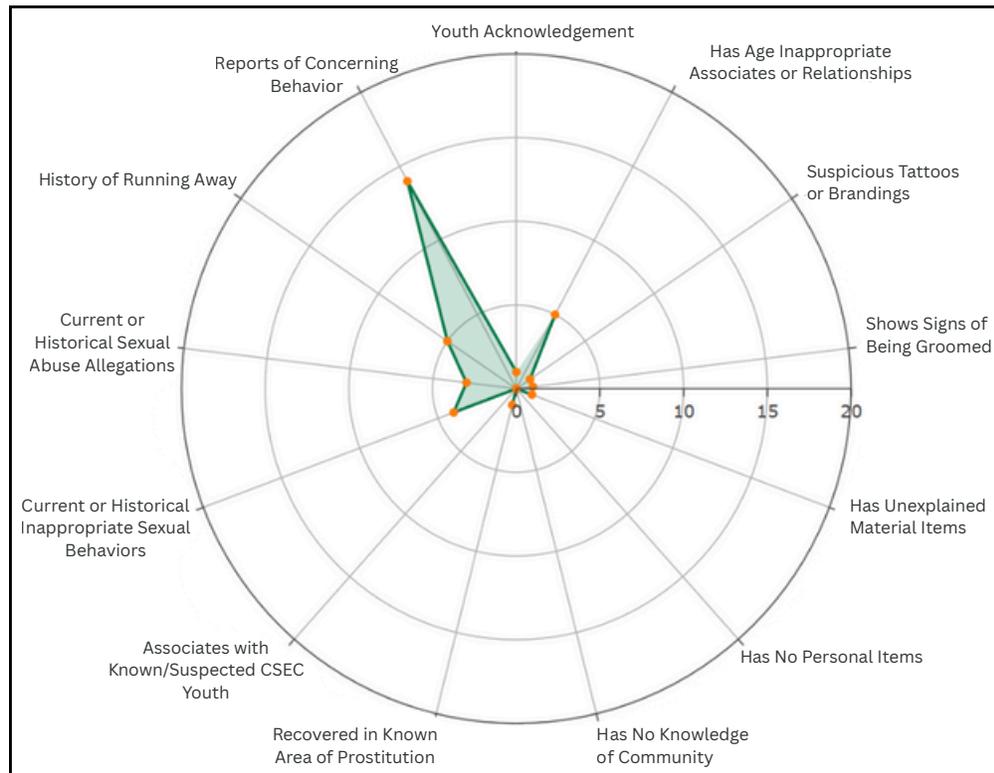

Figure 119: Triggers Which Led to a HTST Screening for Minors in Volusia County
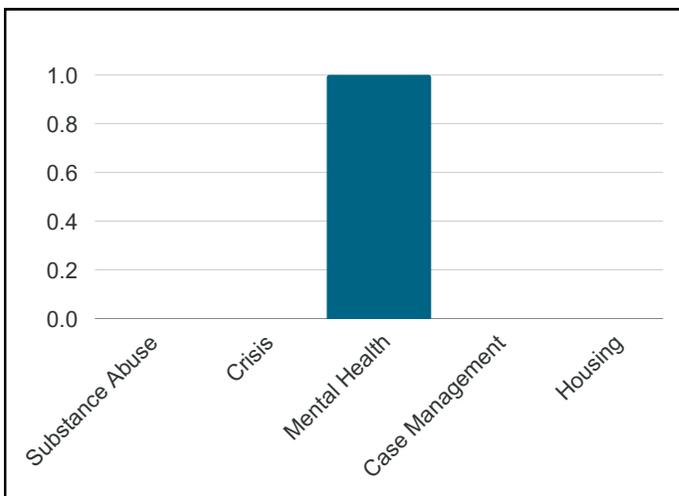
Figure 120: Victim Services Available by Category from BRIGHT Data in Volusia County

Volusia County has one identified organization that can serve an individual who has experienced trafficking across the most crucial categories (see Figure 120). The county has one mental health service provider identified as available.

These numbers are gathered from BRIGHT data and may not encompass all available service-providing organizations across the county.

Volusia County participates in one human trafficking taskforce.

* charges filed by the prosecutor

Conclusion

VII. Concluding Thoughts

In order to efficiently combat human trafficking, policies must be rooted in a comprehensive framework encompassing all elements of the 5 P's related to human trafficking outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Policy, and Partnership. Developing anti-trafficking efforts integrating each of these aspects ensures sustainable and trauma-informed responses that meet the evolving needs of victims and survivors while also ensuring strong deterrents and accountability for facilitators and perpetrators.

Prevention

Effective and sustainable trafficking prevention requires a comprehensive approach. This includes accurate and consistent screening practices, education and training for professionals across all sectors, and ongoing awareness efforts that address the root causes of trafficking. These efforts must focus on identifying risk factors and vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit while empowering individuals, communities, and broader systems to take informed action. The data used for this report illustrates Florida's long-standing commitment to HT prevention. However, many of Florida's existing prevention efforts to combat trafficking, such as screenings, and even most prevention education, are interventions *after* trafficking has occurred aimed at the prevention of further exploitation. While important, a more proactive approach can then extend beyond awareness to include targeted investments to address known vulnerabilities or risk factors most often associated with trafficking populations, such as poverty, lack of education, or inadequate job training. Therefore, policies should support early intervention strategies, workforce development, and educational programs that reduce susceptibility to exploitation. For instance, Florida's move to mandate the delivery of child trafficking prevention education in schools for grades K – 12 represents a forward-looking policy that attempts to address risk factors before exploitation occurs. Similar approaches or investments in more structural prevention strategies are essential to combating trafficking before it occurs.

Protection

Protecting victims of trafficking includes providing comprehensive and accessible services through collaborative efforts to serve victims of trafficking. Services must go beyond immediate crisis intervention and shelter to encompass victim compensation and proper medical and mental health care, legal advocacy, safe and stable housing, educational and vocational support, long-term case management, and follow-up with victims and survivors. However, as evidenced in the data reported, there currently exists significant gaps in service provision throughout the State. For instance, there are only two identified organizations within the BRIGHT data tracker providing translation services for those victims of trafficking whose primary language is not English. This serves as an example of a potential barrier victims face when trying to access services. Survivors often encounter ongoing systemic barriers—such as housing instability, lack of access to healthcare, legal challenges, and social stigma—which hinder their long-term healing and reintegration. Additionally, as mentioned, the Victim Compensation program data has indicated an overall low number of applications. Potentially, this can be attributed to a general lack of awareness of programs such as this amongst victims of trafficking or perhaps difficulties in navigating the application process. This highlights a key area to be strengthened moving forward, as ease of access and utilization of services need to be prioritized. Policies that expand access to victim assistance, such as Victim Compensation, are needed due to the complex reality of harm experienced by trafficking victims.

Prosecution

Prosecution remains a key pillar in responses to combatting trafficking. It involves not only the enforcement of human trafficking laws but also comprehensive human trafficking investigations. Undoubtedly, accurate and consistent data on arrests, charges, and prosecutions are vital to identifying trends and even allocating resources. As evidenced by the federal case data analysis provided, Florida is currently the leading state in human trafficking federal prosecutions and minor sex trafficking federal prosecutions. However, to strengthen the State's reporting on the number of trafficking cases and their related outcomes, it is recommended that all law enforcement agencies report to a single data collection source, such as FIBRS. Tools such as FIBRS, allow for the standardization of data collection in turn, leading to more consistent and comprehensive reporting on trafficking incidences. Furthermore, this has the potential to facilitate more interagency coordination and inform training and prevention efforts. Policies, therefore, should focus on prioritizing the use of a single reporting system to yield more data-informed decisions and to enhance prosecutorial responses.

Policy

Policy is thought to be the foundational pillar supporting the other 4 P's. Policies that prioritize the advocacy for human trafficking victims and legislation that significantly aids anti-trafficking efforts truly make or break a State's anti-trafficking framework. Generally, policies have evolved over time, especially since the passage of the TVPA, to better reflect the complexities of human trafficking. Notably, Florida has been at the forefront of human trafficking legislature for the past 15 years – passing legislation related to the establishment of task forces, expungement of prior convictions for victims, and law enforcement training all related to trafficking. Additionally, Florida's maximum sentence for conviction of any trafficking-related crime is life imprisonment, which as mentioned, is well above the national average. However, as explained, there remains much to be accomplished in the realm of trafficking legislation. Policies should focus on centering survivor voices in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking responses. Policymakers and legislators should make targeted efforts to have survivors champion certain legislative proposals.

Partnership

If policy is considered to be the foundational pillar supporting all other P's then partnership can be considered the glue holding all 5 P's together. Efforts to prosecute, protect, prevent, and create policies related to human trafficking are enhanced through true collaborative partnerships. Combatting human trafficking is not a task to be undertaken alone - various agencies, service providers, and law enforcement personnel actively work together in order to address different dimensions of trafficking. Within Florida, these partnerships manifest in the creation of MDTs, Taskforces/Coalitions, and BRIGHT. These examples of cross-sector partnerships working together to develop responses, provide comprehensive investigations, and enhance victim service coordination. Therefore, policies should focus on establishing formal partnerships with agencies across different sectors to facilitate streamlined collaborative efforts. These strong interagency bonds not only improve the aforementioned aspects of anti-trafficking responses but also work to enhance the trust between service providers and the ones benefitting from the services.

In a perfect response to human trafficking, we would focus on these five P's of the TVPA with each entity and group examining what programs and measures are effective, which services need to be delivered, which screening tools are most effective, and so forth. Each component within, and surrounding, the five P's is equally important - but they are all measured and tracked by different entities, naturally creating critical gaps in understanding. Many agencies throughout Florida collect data on human trafficking as a part of daily operations, also known as administrative data. Still, there remain obstacles in the collection and production of high-quality administrative data. The 2023 UN report on leveraging administrative data on trafficking in persons, identified four notable challenges, including the absence of standardized indicators, data privacy concerns, coordination challenges, and data quality. Unfortunately, often valuable data remains siloed, hindering the identification and analysis of the factors influencing this crime. To drive change, all facets of Florida's human trafficking response must be examined holistically. Through the utilization of TIPSTR, we can begin to monitor the way that the five P's come together to illuminate the whole picture.

The enactment of SB 7064 was a monumental step towards addressing this critical data gap, creating the statewide unified human trafficking repository and mandating that state agencies and service providers or other NGOs that serve victims of human trafficking through state or federal funding contribute their administrative data. TIPSTR addresses the critical data gap in Florida by aggregating the data collected by human trafficking serving agencies throughout the state. By transforming data into actionable knowledge, TIPSTR can enable the development of a cohesive, data-driven statewide anti-human trafficking strategy. Through continuous collaboration with organizations, policymakers, and others involved in the anti-human trafficking movement, TIPSTR is actively addressing each of these obstacles and providing the needed information.

To truly dismantle the systems that perpetuate human trafficking, Florida must move beyond fragmented efforts and embrace a unified, data-driven approach. TIPSTR is not just a tool, it is the foundation for a statewide model that transforms isolated data into collective action. By breaking down silos across the five P's and equipping communities with localized insights, Florida can lead the nation in building a survivor-centered, trauma-informed, and evidence-based response to human trafficking. The path forward is clear: collaboration, transparency, and the strategic use of data will drive the change we need.

Appendices

Appendix A
About the Lab

The University of South Florida's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Risk to Resilience Research Lab was founded in 2020 with the goal of bringing together academics to conduct interdisciplinary research on human trafficking. Rather than operating in siloes, the lab exists to merge research endeavors from multiple disciplines and take a comprehensive approach to human trafficking. By examining this issue through criminological, psychological, public health, applied behavioral analysis, and social work lenses, it provides a holistic understanding of the issue and how to best address it. As faculty and students at the leading research university in the Tampa Bay region, we dedicate our skills and knowledge toward the goal of eradicating human trafficking in our community and beyond. The TIP Lab aims to address human trafficking by working with the community to serve the community through three main goals: knowledge building, resourcing, and spreading knowledge.

TIP | Trafficking in Persons - Risk to Resilience Lab

Knowledge Building

Conducting innovative and interdisciplinary research to address knowledge gaps that currently exist and impede advances in human trafficking prevention and intervention.

Resourcing

Providing critical resources to the Tampa Bay community and the State of Florida through the establishment of a data depository.

Spreading Knowledge

Sharing effective solutions to human trafficking by addressing this complex violation of human rights and societal norms from an interdisciplinary approach that merges criminological, victim-centered, trauma-informed, and public health perspectives.

Appendix B
Local Human Trafficking Task Forces, Coalitions, and Commissions

Organization	Circuit/Region	Counties
Circuit 1 HT Task Force	**Circuit 1**	Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton
Big Bend Coalition Against Human Trafficking	**Circuit 2**	Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla
Gateway to Fr33dom HT Task Force	**Circuit 3**	Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor
Northeast Florida HT Coalition	**Circuit 4**	Clay, Duval, Nassau
Sumter-Lake County HT Task Force	**Regional**	Lake, Sumter
Marion County HT Task Force	**County**	Marion
Nature Coast HT Task Force	**Regional**	Citrus, Hernando, Sumter
Free Network	**Regional**	Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas
Pasco County Commission on Human Trafficking	**County**	Pasco
Freedom 7 HT Task Force	**Circuit 7**	Flagler, Putnam, Saint Johns, Volusia
North Central Florida HT Task Force	**Circuit 8**	Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, Union
Central Florida Human Trafficking Task Force	**Regional**	Orange, Osceola, Seminole
Tri-County Alliance on Human Trafficking	**Regional**	Orange, Osceola, Seminole
Circuit 10 HT Task Force	**Circuit 10**	Hardee, Highlands, Polk
Miami-Dade County HT Coalition	**Circuit 11**	Miami-Dade
South Florida HT Task Force	**Regional**	Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe
Circuit 12 Human Trafficking Task Force	**Circuit 12**	DeSoto, Manatee, Sarasota
Hillsborough County Commission on Human Trafficking	**County**	Hillsborough
Circuit 14 HT Task Force	**Circuit 14**	Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington
Palm Beach HT Task Force	**Circuit 15**	Palm Beach
Human Trafficking Coalition of the Palm Beaches	**Circuit 15**	Palm Beach
Broward HT Coalition	**County**	Broward
Broward HT Task Force / FBI HT Task Force	**Regional**	Broward, Miami-Dade
Space Coast HT Task Force	**County**	Brevard
Human Trafficking Coalition of the Treasure Coast & Okeechobee	**Circuit 19**	Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Saint Lucie
Southwest Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking	**Circuit 20**	Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee
Human Trafficking Task Force for the 20th Judicial Circuit	**Circuit 20**	Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee

Appendix C
FDLE - FIBRS and SRS Key Differences

In the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) provides a centralized system for aggregating crime data submitted by participating law enforcement agencies nationwide. Historically, this occurred through the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) using a Summary Reporting System (SRS); however, in 2021, the FBI transitioned exclusively to the more detailed National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) (for more information on the benefits of NIBRS, see here).

Law enforcement agencies throughout Florida submit the required human trafficking data to its local jurisdiction to the Department of Law Enforcement's UCR system or Florida Incident-Based Reporting System (FIBRS). The UCR and FIBRS data is provided to the USF TIP Lab by FDLE quarterly.

The UCR Program is a statistical summary reporting system aiming to collect accurate summary crime data, maintain agency crime statistics in a statewide database, and provide data on the types, magnitude, and trends of crime in Florida.

The UCR Program collects the number of offenses in various categories. As authorized by the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, the UCR Program collects human trafficking-related offense and arrest data.

Key Differences Between SRS AND FIBRS

FIBRS collects all crimes related to an incident

FIBRS not limited to index crimes and eliminates heirarchy rule

FIBRS allows for more frequent submissions

In accordance with the FBI mandate, Florida is transitioning from summary-based to incident-based reporting. The FBI UCR Program discontinued and established NIBRS to receive this data. Florida will replace SRS with the FIBRS. Contrary to the SRS, FIBRS collects all crimes relating to an incident, provides context on all reported crimes, and allows for timely data availability.

Law enforcement agencies throughout the state of Florida are in the process of transitioning to reporting through FIBRS. While some agencies are currently reporting to FIBRS, some are still working to transition to this new reporting system and are reporting to FDLE through the UCR Program SRS. Therefore, this report contains UCR summary-based data in addition to FIBRS data to provide a comprehensive view of human trafficking throughout the state.

Appendix D
Risk, Response, and Resiliency Methods

Table demonstrating the components of the risk, response, and resiliency score:

Components of the Risk, Response, & Resiliency Score:		
Risk	**Response**	**Resiliency**
Commercial Sex Ads	Human Trafficking Arrests	HT K-12 Education
Illicit Massage Businesses	Prostitution Arrests	HT Task Forces
	DCF Screenings	HT Task Force Events
	Service Provision - HT Specific	Service Provision - General

Our analysis employed multiple statistical techniques to identify patterns across Florida counties.

Clustering Analysis:

We applied two complementary clustering approaches to group counties with similar profiles:

- K-means Clustering: Using standardized scores for Risk, Resilience, and Response, we identified 5 distinct clusters. The optimal number of clusters was determined using silhouette score analysis.
- Hierarchical Clustering: We employed Ward's method for hierarchical clustering, cutting the dendrogram to form 3 distinct clusters.

Hierarchical Clusters by Florida County

K-Means Clusters by Florida County
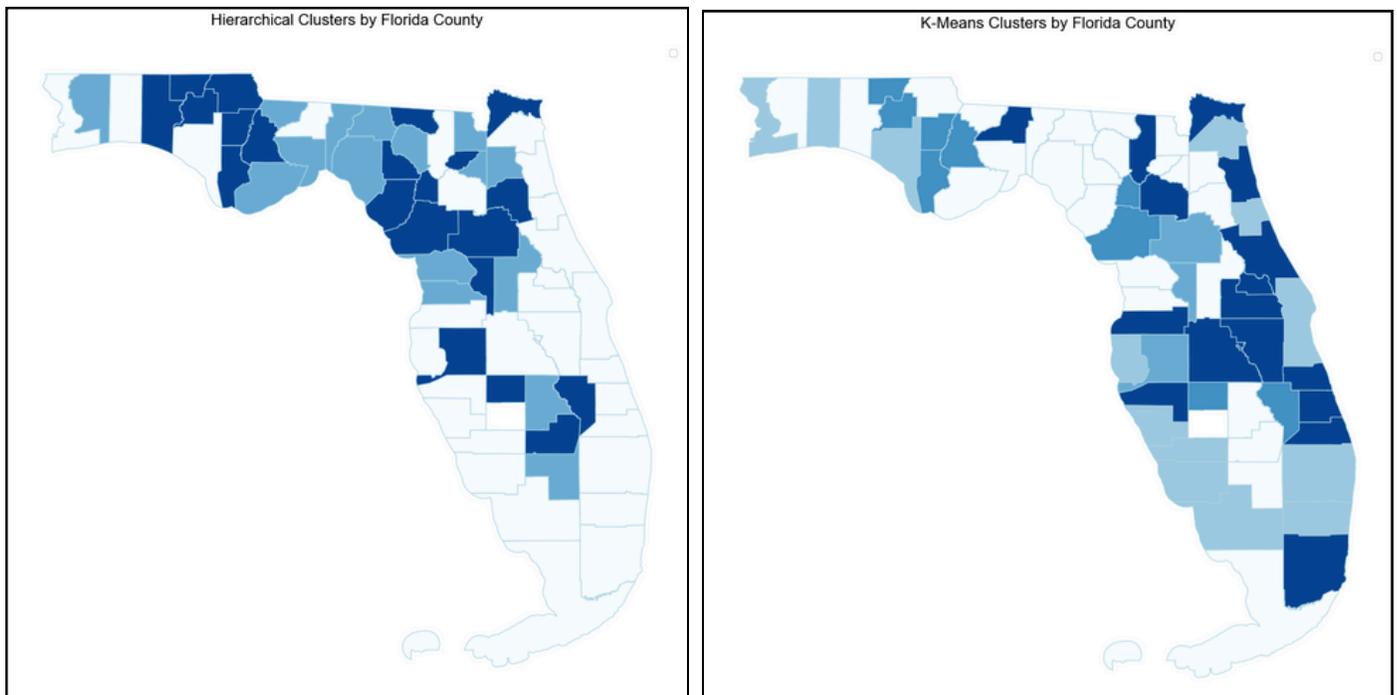
K-Means Clusters (5 clusters)

Cluster	Size	Risk	Resilience	Response	Description
0	25	0.037	0.080	0.110	**Low Activity Counties**: Low risk with minimal resilience infrastructure and response
1	13	0.535	0.130	0.116	**High Risk, Low Response Counties**: Very high risk with inadequate response capacity
2	3	0.156	0.089	0.400	**High Response Counties**: Counties with exceptionally strong response capacity
3	9	0.000	0.238	0.208	**High Resilience, No Risk Counties**: Rural counties with strong prevention infrastructure
4	16	0.236	0.190	0.072	**Moderate Risk, High Resilience Counties**: Balanced prevention with moderate risk

Table 1: K-Means Cluster Characteristics (Mean Values)

Cluster	Description	Representative Counties
0	Low Activity Counties	Santa Rosa, Citrus, Hendry
1	High Risk, Low Response Counties	Pinellas, Palm Beach, Okaloosa
2	High Response Counties	Marion, Hillsborough, Sumter
3	High Resilience, No Risk Counties	Hardee, Holmes, Gilchrist
4	Moderate Risk, High Resilience Counties	Miami-Dade, Seminole, Osceola

Table 2: Representative Counties by K-Means Cluster

Hierarchical Clusters (3 clusters)

Cluster	Risk	Resilience	Response	Description
1	0.375	0.159	0.090	**High Risk Group**: Counties with significant risk but moderate response capacity
2	0.049	0.059	0.087	**Low Activity Group**: Counties with minimal activity across all metrics
3	0.022	0.171	0.213	**High Response/Resilience Group**: Counties with strong prevention and response systems

Table 3: Hierarchical Cluster Characteristics (Mean Values)

Appendix E
Risk, Response, and Resiliency

Residual Analysis

We conducted regression analysis between pairs of metrics to identify counties that deviate significantly from expected relationships:
- Risk predicting Resilience
- Risk predicting Response
- Resilience predicting Response

For each regression, we calculated standardized residuals to identify counties that perform significantly better or worse than expected.

Risk-Resilience Relationship

County	Risk Score	Resilience Score	Predicted Resilience	Std Residual
Orange	0.465	0.357	0.144	2.800
Calhoun	0.000	0.317	0.135	2.389
Gulf	0.000	0.299	0.135	2.148
Hardee	0.000	0.283	0.135	1.935
Holmes	0.000	0.249	0.135	1.499
Nassau	0.000	0.245	0.135	1.441
Levy	0.000	0.240	0.135	1.376
Sarasota	0.598	0.234	0.146	1.147
Gilchrist	0.000	0.222	0.135	1.144
Leon	0.457	0.226	0.144	1.084

Table 4: Counties with Higher Resilience Than Expected Given Their Risk

County	Risk Score	Resilience Score	Predicted Resilience	Std Residual
Clay	0.219	0.013	0.139	-1.659
Lee	0.470	0.019	0.144	-1.639
Lake	0.126	0.013	0.137	-1.628
Gadsden	0.000	0.018	0.135	-1.539
Hernando	0.225	0.026	0.139	-1.486
Madison	0.000	0.032	0.135	-1.353
Jefferson	0.000	0.039	0.135	-1.257
Bradford	0.000	0.041	0.135	-1.229
Franklin	0.000	0.046	0.135	-1.163
Marion	0.250	0.053	0.140	-1.136

Table 5: Counties with Lower Resilience Than Expected Given Their Risk

Risk-Response Relationship

County	Risk Score	Response Score	Predicted Response	Std Residual
Hillsborough	0.217	0.526	0.126	4.503
Marion	0.250	0.357	0.123	2.632
Flagler	0.700	0.279	0.087	2.155
Sumter	0.000	0.317	0.143	1.960
Calhoun	0.000	0.263	0.143	1.346
Gilchrist	0.000	0.262	0.143	1.338
Holmes	0.000	0.255	0.143	1.265
Liberty	0.000	0.250	0.143	1.204
Lafayette	0.000	0.238	0.143	1.069
Duval	0.559	0.191	0.099	1.040

Table 6: Counties with Higher Response Than Expected Given Their Risk

County	Risk Score	Response Score	Predicted Response	Std Residual
Monroe	0.134	0.030	0.132	-1.150
Suwannee	0.000	0.043	0.143	-1.123
Gadsden	0.000	0.044	0.143	-1.114
St. Lucie	0.268	0.031	0.122	-1.024
St. Johns	0.192	0.042	0.128	-0.965
Leon	0.457	0.026	0.107	-0.904
Wakulla	0.000	0.063	0.143	-0.897
Baker	0.000	0.068	0.143	-0.844
Lake	0.126	0.062	0.133	-0.798
Broward	0.670	0.019	0.090	-0.792

Table 7: Counties with Lower Response Than Expected Given Their Risk

Resilience-Response Relationship

County	Resilience Score	Response Score	Predicted Response	Std Residual
Hillsborough	0.084	0.526	0.126	4.426
Marion	0.053	0.357	0.124	2.575
Sumter	0.131	0.317	0.128	2.091
Flagler	0.123	0.279	0.128	1.673
Gilchrist	0.222	0.262	0.132	1.431
Calhoun	0.317	0.263	0.137	1.387
Holmes	0.249	0.255	0.134	1.344
Liberty	0.170	0.250	0.130	1.327
Lafayette	0.071	0.238	0.125	1.248
Okeechobee	0.145	0.230	0.129	1.117

Table 8: Counties with Higher Response Than Expected Given Their Resilience

County	Resilience Score	Response Score	Predicted Response	Std Residual
Broward	0.162	0.019	0.129	-1.217
Leon	0.226	0.026	0.133	-1.175
Monroe	0.115	0.030	0.127	-1.074
St. Lucie	0.109	0.031	0.127	-1.064
St. Johns	0.163	0.042	0.130	-0.969
Pinellas	0.141	0.042	0.128	-0.950
Suwannee	0.090	0.043	0.126	-0.917
Sarasota	0.234	0.053	0.133	-0.885
Indian River	0.160	0.051	0.129	-0.870
Gadsden	0.018	0.044	0.122	-0.868

Table 9: Counties with Lower Response Than Expected Given Their Resilience

Counties Appearing in Multiple Outlier Lists

County	Lists	Risk Score	Resilience Score	Response Score
Gadsden	3	0.000	0.018	0.044
Holmes	3	0.000	0.249	0.255
Marion	3	0.250	0.053	0.357
Calhoun	3	0.000	0.317	0.263
Gilchrist	3	0.000	0.222	0.262
Leon	3	0.457	0.226	0.026
Lake	2	0.126	0.013	0.062
Sumter	2	0.000	0.131	0.317
Flagler	2	0.700	0.123	0.279
Hillsborough	2	0.217	0.084	0.526

Table 10: Counties Appearing as Outliers in Multiple Relationships (Top 10)

Appendix F
Popular Apps Among Youth That May Be Used To Facilitate Grooming and/or Trafficking

REDDIT	*REDDIT* is a chat/discussion board app. Users can post whatever they want and there is no identity verification. Reviewers say they have been fronted with racial slurs, explicit content, cyberbullying, and more.
ROBLOX	*ROBLOX* allows users to play games, create games and chat online. Predators can use the chat feature to obtain information about other users, such as phone numbers and addresses.
SIGNAL	*SIGNAL* is a cross-platform centralized encrypted instant messaging service. Users can send one-to-one and group messages, which can include files, voice notes, images and videos.
SKOUT	*SKOUT* is a location-based dating app and website. While users under 17 years old are unable to share private photos, kids can easily create an account using a different age.
SNAPCHAT	*SNAPCHAT* while the app promises the users can take a photo/video and it will disappear, new features including "stories" allow users to view content for up to 24 hours. Snapchat also allows users to view your location.
TELEGRAM	*TELEGRAM* is a secure messaging and audio calling cloud-based app that allows you to send messages, photos, videos and files of any type to your contacts for free. You can also create groups for up to 200,000 people or channels for broadcasting to unlimited contacts or audiences.
TIKTOK	*TIKTOK* is a mobile device app popular with kids used for creating and sharing short videos. With very little privacy controls, users are vulnerable to cyber bullying and explicit content.

TINDER	*TINDER* is an online dating and geosocial networking application. Users can "swipe right" to like or "swipe left" to dislike other users' profiles, which include their photos, a short bio, and some of their interests.
TUMBLR	*TUMBLR* is a free microblogging social networking app where users can blog about their ideas and interests via text, photos, quotes, links, music and videos. The blogs are often short-form and often include more visual images rather than long text entries.
HINGE	*Hinge* a dating app where users can chat, share photos, video, and voice. Fasting growing dating app. App is intended for adults however teens are creating profiles.
VSCO	*VSCO* is popular image editing and sharing app for mobile devices. Like other image sharing apps such as Instagram, VSCO provides editing features and filters, and allows users to share their pictures with other members on the platform.
VOXER	*VOXER* you can hear messages as people speak or listen later at your convenience. Use instant voice communication alongside text, photos, video, gifs, and share your location. Works on any network on iPhone, Android, and the web.
WHATSAPP	*WHATSAPP* is a popular messaging app that allows users to send texts, photos, voicemails, make calls and video chats worldwide. WhatsApp uses the internet connection on your smart phone and computers.
WHISPER	*WHISPER* is an anonymous social network that promotes sharing secrets with strangers. It also reveals a user's location so people can meet up.

YIK YAK	**YIK YAK** allows users to post messages anonymously on its platform within 5-mile radius of their location. Can upvote or downvote to increase or decrease a post's visibility.
AMONG US	**AMONG US** is a 2018 online multiplayer social deduction game. The game was inspired by the party game Mafia and the science fiction horror film The Thing. The game allows for cross-platform play; it was released on IOS and Android devices in June 2018.
ASK.FM	**ASK.FM** is known for cyber-bullying. The app encourages users to allow anonymous people to ask them questions.
BADOO	**BADOO** is a dating and social networking app where users can chat, share photos and videos and connect based on location. While the app is intended for adults only, teens are known to create profiles.
BEST SECRET FOLDER	**BEST SECRET FOLDER** is specifically meant to "hide photos and videos," according to app store descriptions. It features password protection, decoy videos and alarm settings.
BIGO LIVE	**BIGO LIVE** is a global social live streaming platform. The artificial intelligence features are used to enhance user engagement and experience during live streaming.

BUMBLE	**BUMBLE** is similar to the popular dating app "Tinder" however, it requires the woman to make first contact. Kids have been known to use BUMBLE to create fake accounts and falsify their age.
CALCULATOR%	**CALCULATOR%** is only one of SEVERAL secret apps used to hide photos, files and browser history.
DISCORD	**DISCORD** allows users to talk to friends or strangers in real time via voice, text or video chat while playing video games. Reviewers say they have been confronted with racial slurs, explicit content, cyberbullying, grooming and more.
GRINDER	**GRINDER** is a dating app geared towards gay, bi and transgender people. The app gives users options to chat, share photos and meet up based on a smart phone's GPS location.
HOLLA	**HOLLA** is a self-proclaimed "addicting" video chat app that allows users to meet people all over the world in just seconds. Reviewers say they have been confronted with racial slurs, explicit content, and more.
HOT OR NOT	**HOT OR NOT** is an app that allows you to look at the profiles of other people who use the same service, focusing particularly on their photographs, in order to decide if you like them or not.

HOUSEPARTY	**HOUSEPARTY** is a social networking service that enables group video chatting through mobile and desktop apps. Users receive a notification when friends are online and available to group video chat.
LIVEME	**LIVEME** is a live streaming video app that uses geolocation to share videos so users can find out a broadcasters exact location. Users can earn "coins" as a way to "pay" for photos.
MEETME	**MEETME** is a dating/social media app that allows users to connect with people based on geographic proximity. As the app's name suggests, users are encouraged to meet each other in person.
MYLOL	**MYLOL** designed for students 13-19 years old. Built in features of MyLOl encourage users to send private messages to random strangers.

Note. It is also important to recognize that some websites marketed as adult platforms can be easily manipulated—with minimal deception—to recruit, groom, and exploit youth. Platforms such as OnlyFans and dating sites like Plenty of Fish, among others, may be misused by traffickers to target vulnerable youth under the guise of adult interaction. Source: You Thrive Florida Children's Advocacy Center.

Appendix G
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