2019

Human Trafficking in Missouri and Metro East St. Louis: Provider Based Needs Assessment and Demographic Snapshot

Executive Summary

Andrea J. Nichols, Ph.D.
Kathleen M. Preble, MSW, Ph.D.
Ashley Cox, M.A.

Acknowledgments

This research report was funded by the Missouri Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (MCAHT). The research findings, interpretation of the data, and recommendations expressed in this executive summary, as well as the full report, are those of the authors and should not be attributed to MCAHT or its funders. MCAHT did not censor any information uncovered in this research.

The research findings, interpretation of the data, and recommendations provided in this report were supported by an MCAHT grant awarded to St. Louis Community College and the University of Missouri-Columbia. The research findings, interpretation of the data, and recommendations in this report are those of the authors and should not be attributed to St. Louis Community College or the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The authors would like to thank the survivors and practitioners in social services, in legal services/the criminal justice system, and in healthcare who participated in this study, as well as those who assisted with reviewing, providing feedback, and disseminating the survey. The authors would like to thank MCAHT for supporting this research study.

For Full Report: https://mocate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Needs-Assessment-Report11.15.19FINAL.pdf

Cite as: Nichols, Andrea J., Preble, Kathleen, M., and Cox, Ashley. (2019). Human Trafficking in Missouri and Metro East St. Louis: Provider Based Needs Assessment and Demographic Snapshot. *Missouri Collaboration Against Human Trafficking.* https://mocate.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Needs-Assessment-Report11.15.19FINAL.pdf

Executive Summary

In May and June of 2019, the research team launched a survey intended to 1) provide a needs assessment of social, medical, and legal services in the state of Missouri and Metro East St. Louis (Illinois), and 2) gather demographic data to provide insights into human trafficking occurring in the state and neighboring Illinois counties from the perspective of those working with human trafficking survivors in the social, legal, and healthcare service sectors. In all, 107 respondents who work with human trafficking survivors in various organizational contexts participated in the research. Cumulatively, respondents reported having worked with **422 survivors of trafficking**[1] in the previous **12 months** across Missouri and in the Metro East St. Louis Region in Illinois.

The needs assessment revealed the following key findings:

- When asked to rank order the top five needs for survivors of trafficking statewide, respondents indicated the top ranked needs in the following order:
    1) Mental healthcare/therapy, counseling, and support groups
    2) Transitional housing
    3) Shelter for adults
    4) Shelter for minors
    5) Substance abuse services (residential/detox)
- When asked to indicate the level of need for 37 social, healthcare, or legal services, median responses of "very high level of need" or "high level of need" were reported for nearly all of the services.
- Respondents reported needs unique to each region. Regional analyses uncovered differences in the level of need of various services in different parts of the state. See the full report for regional analyses.

The social, legal, and healthcare service populations were also examined, including basic demographic information of trafficking survivors. While the service population does not necessarily reflect the true nature and scope of trafficking in the region, as not all survivors access such services for a variety of reasons, the data does represent a facet of the trafficking population accessing social, legal, or healthcare related services.

- Over half of the survey respondents indicated that they primarily worked with adult U.S. citizens (51.28%, *n*=40), followed by U.S. citizen minors (39.74%, *n*=31). Less than 10% of the respondents indicated they worked primarily with foreign national survivor adults or children (7.69%, *n*=6 and 1.28%, *n*=1, respectively), which differs from the national response.
- When asked about the type of trafficking primarily served by their organizations, nearly 80% (*n*=62) indicated they worked primarily with sex trafficking survivors, 16% (*n*=13) reported working with both sex and labor trafficking survivors, and three respondents (3.85%) reported working primarily with labor trafficking survivors across the state of Missouri and Metro East St. Louis/Illinois.

[1] Duplication is possible, as a single survivor may have interacted with multiple respondents.

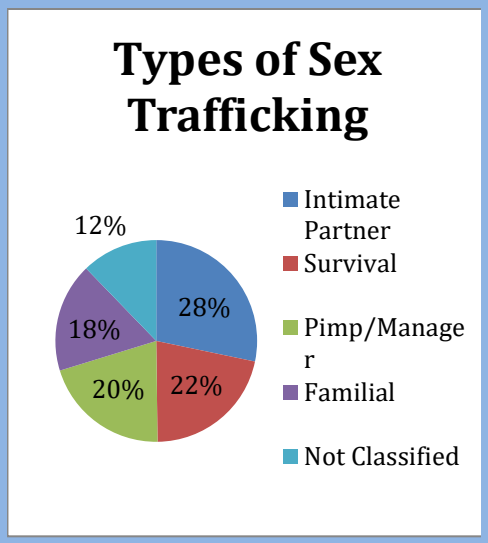
Types of Trafficking

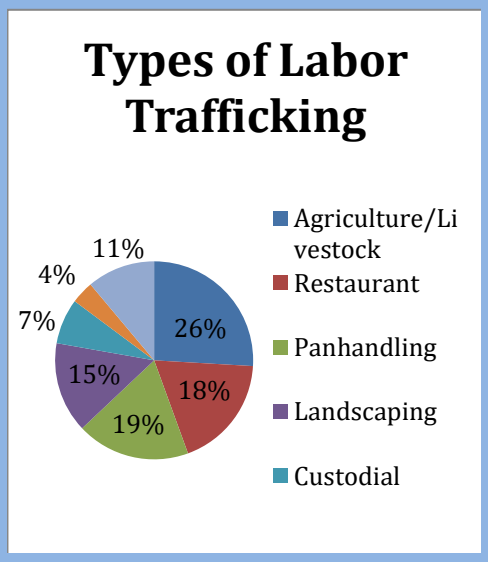
An exploration into demographic factors, as well as the types of human trafficking[2] experienced by survivors within the service population, was conducted. According to providers across the state, the types of trafficking experienced, as well as apparent prevalence, varied from region to region. See the full report for regional comparative analyses.

- ***Type of Trafficking:*** The vast majority of survivors reportedly experienced sex trafficking (82.7%, *n*=349), 12.56% (*n*=53) experienced both labor and sex trafficking, and 4.74% (*n*=20) experienced labor trafficking.

- ***Types of Sex Trafficking:*** The 349 reported sex trafficking survivors were most commonly trafficked by a boyfriend or intimate partner (28.27%, *n*=134), due to survival sex/trading sex for basic needs (21.51%, *n*=102), by a pimp/manager who was not an intimate partner (20.45%, *n*=97), or by family members (i.e., parent, sibling, foster parent, or other relative; 17.51%, *n*=83). Fifty-eight (12.23%) survivors had experienced "other/not classified" sex trafficking.[3]

- ***Types of Labor Trafficking:*** The 20 reported labor trafficking survivors experienced trafficking in the agricultural/livestock industry (25.92%, *n*=7), restaurant and panhandling sectors (18.51%, *n*=5 each), landscaping industry (14.81%, *n*=4), custodial/janitorial services (7.40%, *n*=2), construction industry (3.70%, *n*=1), and "other/unspecified" labor services (11.11%, *n*=3).[1] Respondents were asked if they had worked with survivors who experienced labor trafficking in hotels, factory work, carnival work, door-to-door sales, and health and beauty services, and none indicated that they had done so.





[2] We use the federal legal definition of human trafficking delineated in the US TVPA, sections 8A and 8B "a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

[3] Data are non-cumulative on both charts, as survivors may experience multiple types of trafficking in their lifetimes.

Human Trafficking Demographics

- ***Gender:*** Almost all of the reported survivors were cisgender female (91.48%, *n*=376), with smaller numbers reported as cisgender male (3.89%, *n*=16), binary transgender (2.68%, *n*=11), and non-binary (1.95%, *n*=8). **Cis-females appear to be overrepresented, while cis-males appear to be underrepresented and gender minorities are overrepresented.**

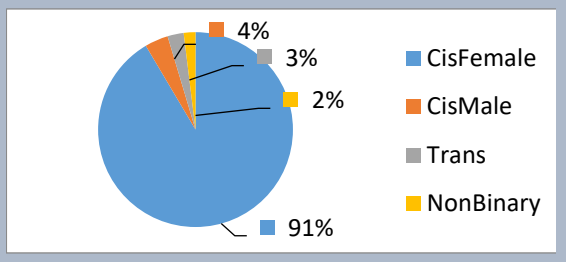
- ***Race/Ethnicity:*** Respondents indicated about 46% of survivors (*n*=191) were White/Caucasian American, 25% (*n*=104) were Black/African American, and 10% (*n*=42) were Asian. The remaining survivors served were multiracial (8.9%, *n*=37), Hispanic/Latinx (6%, *n*=25), Native American (0.75%, *n*=3), and other/not categorized (2.9%, *n*=12). Taking into consideration the demographic makeup of the state, **people of color were overrepresented, and White/Caucasian Americans were underrepresented**.

- ***Sexual Orientation:*** Just over 80% (*n*=320) of the survivors reportedly identified as heterosexual, while nearly 20% were reported as bisexual or pansexual, lesbian, gay, or queer (13.6%, *n*=54; 2.27%, *n*=9; 2.02%, *n*=8; and 1.51%, *n*=6, respectively). **Sexual minorities appear to be overrepresented as identified survivors, while heterosexual survivors make up the majority of identified survivors.**

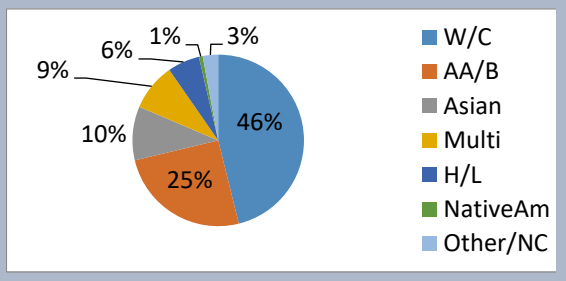
- ***Age:*** Less than 10% of the survivors reported were 8-14 years old, while **56.2% were between the ages of 18 and 35,** which implies similar risk as with intimate partner violence (IPV). Nearly one quarter were 15-17 years old. About 8% were 36-45. **These results dispute common assertions that trafficking victims are extremely young or are not found among older populations.**

- ***Socioeconomic Status*:** 94.04% of trafficking survivors were poor or working class people. The remaining 5.96% included lower middle class, upper middle class, and upper class. Overwhelmingly, **those experiencing severe financial vulnerability were trafficked.**

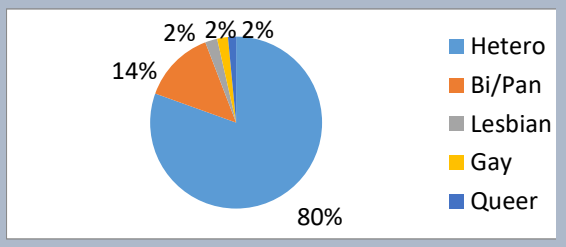
Gender



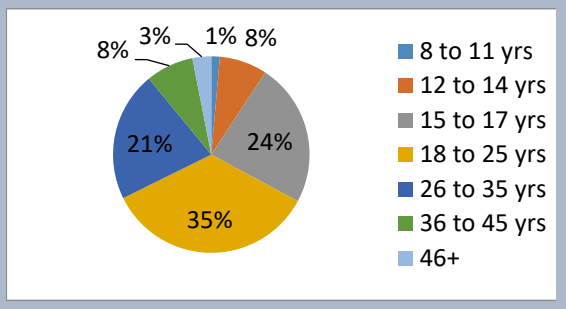
Race/Ethnicity



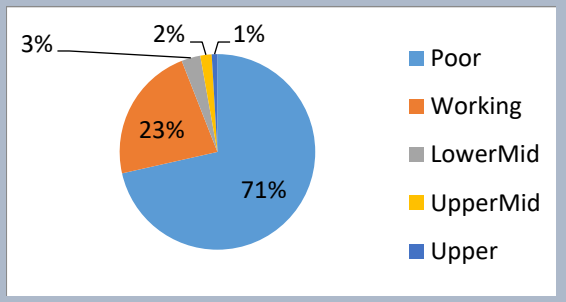
Sexual Orientation



Age



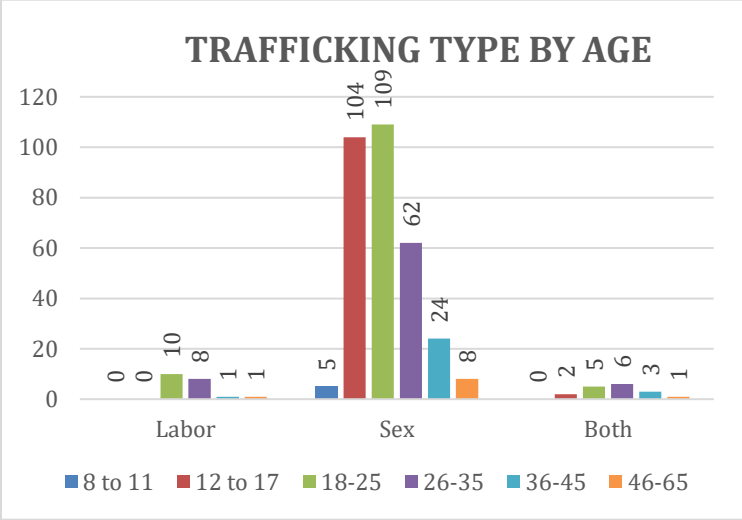
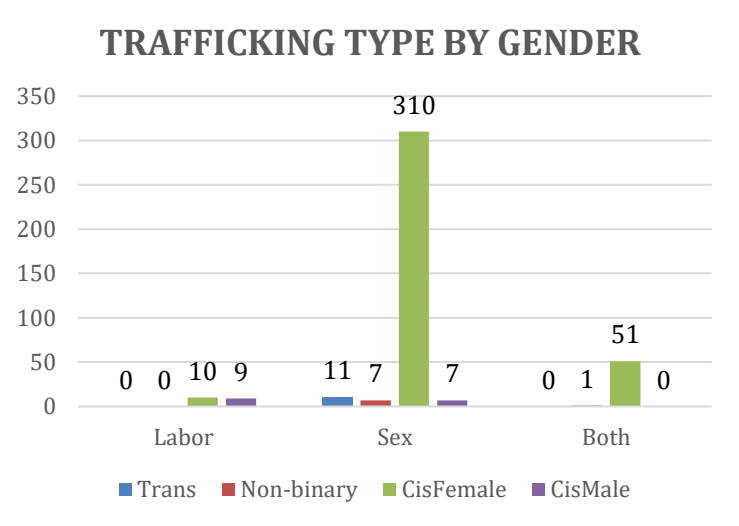
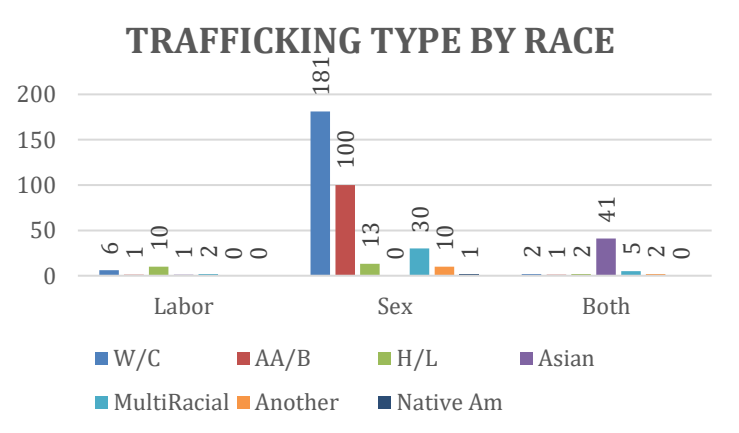
SES



Demographics by Trafficking Type

- The demographic results depicted above largely reflect sex trafficking, as there were only 20 *identified* labor trafficking survivors reported by respondents statewide. When disaggregating the data by the type of trafficking experienced, there were some noticeable differences by age, race/ethnicity, and gender; although, results should be read with caution due to the small sample of identified labor trafficking survivors.

- Respondents reported labor trafficking survivors were all adults, and all but two of those experiencing both sex and labor trafficking were adults, whereas sex trafficking survivors were 35% minors and 65% adults.

- As reported by respondents, labor trafficking was nearly evenly split between cisgender males and females, whereas those experiencing both sex and labor trafficking were exclusively cisfemales, and those experiencing sex trafficking were largely cisfemales in *identified* cases, although gender minorities were overrepresented as a proportion of the population.

- Respondents indicated Latinx/Hispanic people were significantly overrepresented as *labor trafficking* survivors. Asians were overrepresented as those experiencing *both trafficking types*. People of color were overrepresented *as sex trafficking* survivors.