

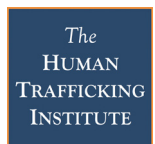


Federal
**HUMAN
TRAFFICKING** *Report*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A publication of





Federal
HUMAN
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To view the complete report and methodology,
visit www.TraffickingMatters.com.

The Human Trafficking Institute

18 April 2018

Dear Reader,

The 2017 Federal Human Trafficking Report represents a long-lasting desire to capture and analyze what federal courts in the United States are doing to combat human trafficking. The Human Trafficking Institute undertook this project with the ambitious goal of capturing an exhaustive list of all the criminal and civil human trafficking cases in the United States. Through the tireless work of the Institute's team members, this Report contains wide-ranging information about every human trafficking case that federal courts handled during 2017.

While this Report provides significant details about certain aspects of human trafficking cases, it does not answer all questions. An effective public justice system is an essential part of a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach to handling trafficking cases. This Report focuses on data about cases moving through the justice system. It does not capture the important work of reducing vulnerabilities or providing tailored survivor care, which is also essential.

The Report draws from public court documents, agency press releases, and news sources. It does not attempt to provide a reason or rationale for the number, type, or location of cases, but instead, the Report objectively presents what occurred during 2017. It will be for policymakers, researchers, advocates, and others to use this data to explain current practices, argue for changes in policy, or recommend new approaches.

By its nature, this Report is not a prevalence estimate nor an account of the state of trafficking in the United States. Instead, it summarizes and analyzes the cases moving through the federal court system. It is limited to the federal system and does not contain cases filed in various state courts or cases never taken to any court at all.

The 2017 Federal Human Trafficking Report represents a significant step forward in our understanding of federal human trafficking cases in the United States. The Institute will continue to refine and analyze the case data, and it looks forward to expanding this Report in the coming years. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with many government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and survivors during the collection and analysis of this data.

Sincerely,



Kyleigh E. Feehs



John Cotton Richmond



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human trafficking is an economically motivated crime where traffickers compel people to work or to engage in commercial sex acts. U.S. federal law criminalizes the trafficker’s exploitive conduct and provides protections for victims. An effective public justice system is an essential part of a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach to handling trafficking cases.

The Human Trafficking Institute reviewed every criminal and civil human trafficking case in the federal court system in 2017 and compiled the Federal Human Trafficking Report, which provides data regarding the cases within the justice system.

The Report’s findings are not a prevalence estimate of trafficking in the United States, but instead serve as an objective summary of what the federal system has done to address human trafficking. The Report does not capture data from state prosecutions, state civil suits, or unreported human trafficking cases.

In 2017, there were 783 active criminal and civil human trafficking cases involving 1,930 defendants that were working their way through the federal court system. 88.8% of active human trafficking cases were criminal matters and 11.2% were civil suits.

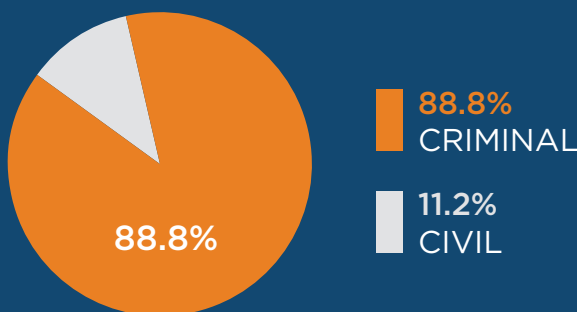
The 695 active criminal human trafficking cases included 6,036 individual federal charges against 1,474 defendants. The government initiated 230 new criminal human trafficking cases in 2017; 216 were sex trafficking cases and 14 were labor trafficking cases.

2017 ACTIVE CRIMINAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASES

■ SEX TRAFFICKING
■ LABOR TRAFFICKING



2017 ACTIVE HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASES

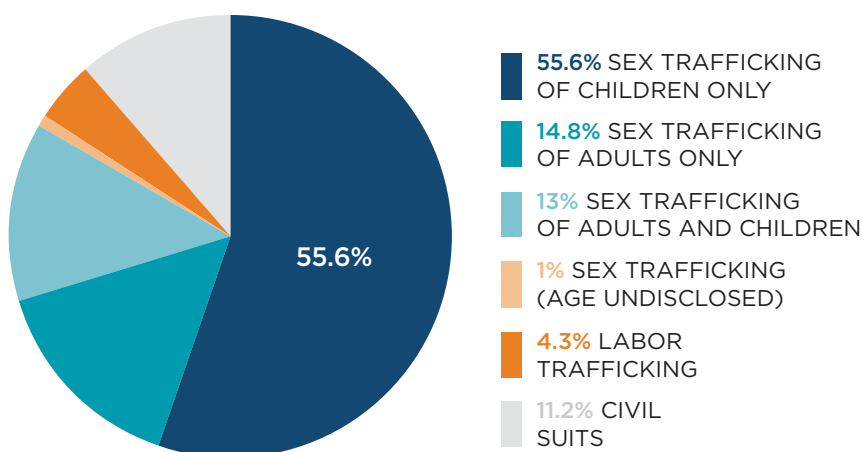


ACTIVE HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASES IN 2017

	CASES	DEFENDANTS
CRIMINAL TOTAL	695	1474
Sex Trafficking	661	1396
Only Child Victim	435	701
Only Adult Victims	116	280
Both Child and Adult Victims	102	393
Victims Age Undisclosed	8	22
Labor Trafficking	34	78
CIVIL TOTAL	88	456
Sex Trafficking	8	48
Labor Trafficking	80	408
ALL HUMAN TRAFFICKING	783	1930

In 2017, criminal sex trafficking cases dominated 84.4% of the total federal efforts to combat human trafficking. Of the 783 active federal human trafficking cases, over half, 55.6% (435), were criminal sex trafficking cases that involved only child victims. The remaining 44.4% (348) of the cases were divided among all other criminal sex trafficking cases, criminal labor trafficking cases, and civil suits.

2017 ACTIVE CASES BY TYPE*

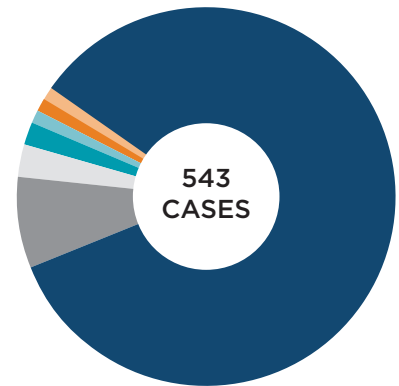


*All sections are criminal except the section designated as civil.

IN 2017, CRIMINAL SEX TRAFFICKING CASES DOMINATED 84.4% OF THE TOTAL FEDERAL EFFORTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.



2017 SEX TRAFFICKING BUSINESS MODELS



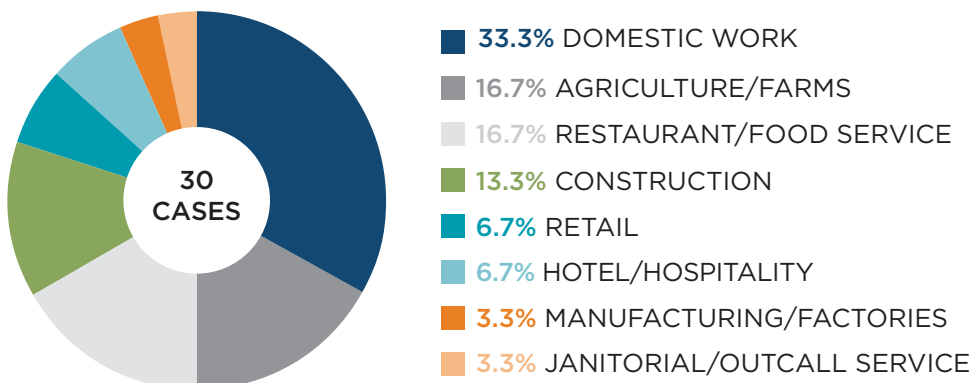
BUSINESS MODELS

In 2017, the overwhelming majority (84.3%) of criminal sex trafficking cases relied on the trafficker using the internet to solicit purchasers for sexual services. Public court documents expressly stated that 72.3% of the internet-based sex trafficking cases involved traffickers posting advertisements on the website Backpage.com to advance their trafficking enterprise. In the remaining 15.7% of the criminal sex trafficking cases, traffickers solicited purchasers through the following means or venues: street-based commercial sex, illegal brothels, erotic services, massage parlors, bars or clubs, or through a bartering system.

Labor traffickers most commonly compelled victims to work as domestic servants, in agricultural fields, or in restaurants. Additional industries where traffickers exploited victims included: construction, retail, hotels, manufacturing plants or factories, and janitorial or outcall services.

72.3%
OF THE
INTERNET-BASED
SEX TRAFFICKING
CASES INVOLVED
BACKPAGE.COM.

2017 LABOR TRAFFICKING BUSINESS MODELS



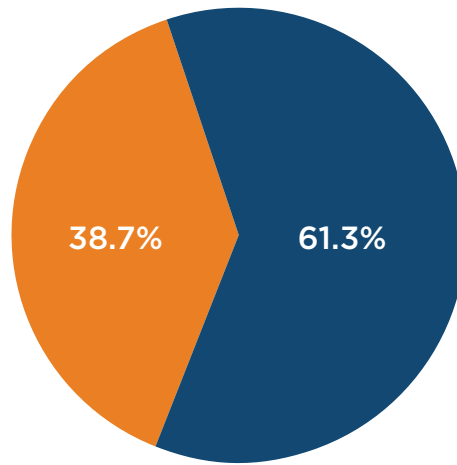
CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS

The 695 criminal cases in 2017 included a total of 1,474 defendants. When considering all the active criminal human trafficking cases in 2017, the majority of cases (61.3%) were single defendant cases. However, the opposite is true when looking at labor trafficking cases alone. In 2017, 61.8% of the active criminal labor trafficking cases were multi-defendant cases.

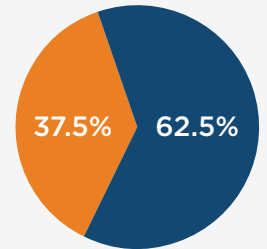
The majority of defendants in active criminal cases in 2017 were male defendants in their mid-thirties. Of the 1,470 individual criminal defendants in 2017, 77.7% were male. There was a slightly higher percentage of female defendants in labor trafficking cases than in sex trafficking cases.

The average age at arrest for sex trafficking defendants was 33, while the average age at arrest for labor trafficking defendants was 47.

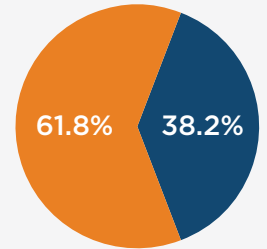
2017 ACTIVE CRIMINAL SINGLE & MULTI-DEFENDANT CASES



SINGLE DEFENDANT
MULTI-DEFENDANT



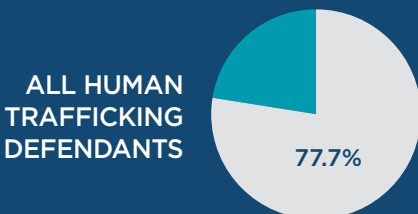
SEX TRAFFICKING CASES



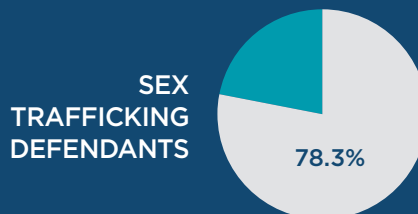
LABOR TRAFFICKING CASES

GENDER OF DEFENDANTS IN 2017 ACTIVE CRIMINAL CASES

MALE ■ FEMALE ■



ALL HUMAN TRAFFICKING DEFENDANTS



SEX TRAFFICKING DEFENDANTS



LABOR TRAFFICKING DEFENDANTS

PURCHASER DEFENDANTS IN ACTIVE 2016 & 2017 CRIMINAL CASES



PURCHASER CASES

There was an 18.3% increase in the number of active purchaser cases in 2017. In the 97 purchaser cases, the government charged 108 purchaser defendants. The overwhelming majority of these cases involved child victims in sex trafficking cases. The government did not charge any purchaser defendants in labor trafficking cases.

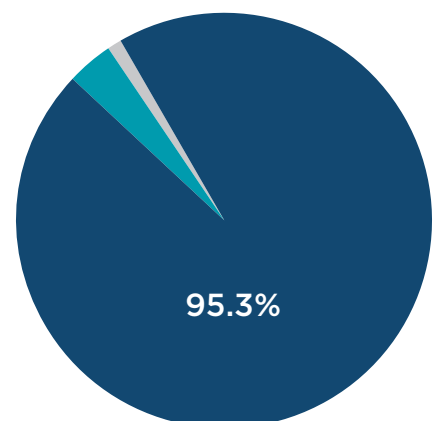
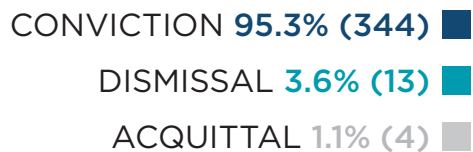
THERE WAS AN 18.3% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE PURCHASER CASES IN 2017.



CONVICTIONS, ACQUITTALS & DISMISSALS

The conviction rate of defendants in 2017 criminal human trafficking cases was 95.3%. In 2017, federal courts resolved 361 criminal trafficking defendants.

CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS RESOLVED BY CONVICTION, ACQUITTAL, OR DISMISSAL IN 2017



NUMBER OF VICTIMS IN 2017 ACTIVE CRIMINAL CASES



COURTS ELECTED NOT TO ORDER MANDATORY RESTITUTION FOR 78.6% OF THE DEFENDANTS SENTENCED.



In addition to convicting 95.3% (344) of the defendants, federal courts acquitted 1.1% (4) of the defendants and dismissed charges against 3.6% (13) of the defendants. Of the 344 convicted defendants, 86.6% (298) entered a guilty plea and did not have their case tried before a jury. 13.4% (46) defendants were found guilty by a jury at trial.

PUNISHMENT

Of the 342 defendants sentenced in 2017, courts ordered an average of 150 months in sex trafficking cases and 31 months in labor trafficking cases. Courts ordered 7 convicted defendants to life imprisonment during 2017.

RESTITUTION

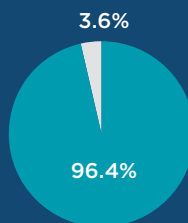
Although victim restitution is mandatory under federal law, it remains uncommon. In 2017, courts sentenced 342 defendants in human trafficking cases. Of those sentenced, 224 defendants were convicted of a crime triggering mandatory restitution. Courts elected not to order mandatory restitution for 78.6% of the defendants sentenced.

VICTIMS

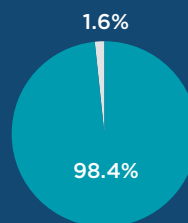
A trafficker may have exploited more victims than those identified in the public court documents. Therefore, the number of identified victims should

GENDER BREAKDOWN IN ACTIVE CRIMINAL CASES

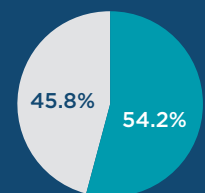
FEMALE ■
MALE ■



ALL VICTIMS



SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIMS



LABOR TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

not be confused with the number of actual victims exploited. There were 1,701 identified victims in the active 2017 criminal cases (1,595 sex trafficking and 106 labor trafficking).

It is worth noting that court documents only identified 58 male victims in all of the criminal human trafficking cases that were active in 2017. 96.4% (1,536) of the victims were female and 3.6% (58) were male.

Criminal labor trafficking cases were far more likely to seek relief for male victims than sex trafficking cases. In criminal sex trafficking cases, only 1.6% (25) of victims were male, while 98.4% were female. In labor trafficking cases, 45.8% (33) of the victims were male and 54.2% (39) were female.

CIVIL SUITS

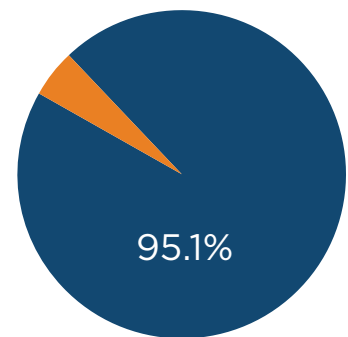
The number of active federal human trafficking civil suits remained remarkably low in 2017. There were only 88 active civil suits nationwide and only 25 newly initiated civil suits. It is worth noting that in 2017, there were 2.4 times more active civil labor trafficking cases (80) than active criminal labor trafficking cases (34). 90.9% of the civil suits arose from labor trafficking.

Businesses, organizations, and corporations were more likely to be sued civilly for human trafficking than charged criminally. 39.7% of the 456 defendants in active civil human trafficking suits in 2017 were entity defendants. In comparison, only 0.3% of the defendants in active criminal cases in 2017 were entities.

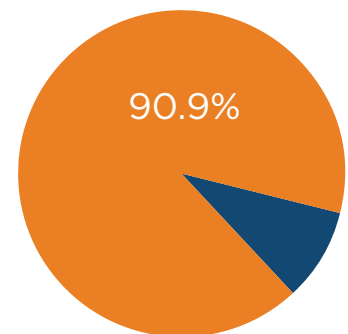
38.9% of the 167 civil defendants resolved in 2017 entered into a settlement agreement with the plaintiff(s). Only 1.8% of the defendants were resolved by a district court entering a judgment against the defendant in the civil suit. The majority (59.5%) of the civil defendants resolved in 2017 were dismissed, either by the court or by the plaintiff, with no indication of a settlement agreement between the parties.

IN 2017, THERE WERE ONLY 88 ACTIVE CIVIL HUMAN TRAFFICKING SUITS NATIONWIDE.

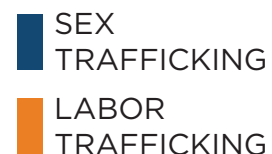
SEX & LABOR TRAFFICKING BREAKDOWN IN CIVIL & CRIMINAL CASES



CRIMINAL



CIVIL



To read the full

2017 Federal Human Trafficking Report

and a detailed description of the methodology used, visit

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