A woman with long dark hair is shown from the chest up. She is wearing a blue denim jacket over a tan jacket. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# The Typology of Modern Slavery

Defining Sex and Labor Trafficking  
in the United States

<sup>+</sup>**Polaris**



# The 25 types of modern slavery



Escort Services  
Illicit Massage, Health, & Beauty  
Outdoor Solicitation  
Residential  
Domestic Work  
Bars, Strip Clubs, & Cantinas  
Pornography  
Traveling Sales Crews  
Restaurants & Food Service  
Peddling & Begging  
Agriculture & Animal Husbandry  
Personal Sexual Servitude  
Health & Beauty Services  
Construction  
Hotels & Hospitality  
Landscaping  
Illicit Activities  
Arts & Entertainment  
Commercial Cleaning Services  
Factories & Manufacturing  
Remote Interactive Sexual Acts  
Carnivals  
Forestry & Logging  
Health Care  
Recreational Facilities

# The Typology of Modern Slavery

**Defining Sex and Labor Trafficking  
in the United States**

March 2017

**“These are the tools that survivors and advocates need to revolutionize a movement and put an end to modern slavery.”**

**Rebecca Bender,**  
survivor advocate and CEO/Founder  
of the Rebecca Bender Initiative

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# Introduction

For the last 15 years, people in the modern anti-trafficking field have struggled to identify and disrupt human trafficking networks in the United States. This movement to stop modern slavery has confronted many challenges, and one of the most significant has been the absence of data that shows how human trafficking operates.

To eradicate human trafficking networks and help survivors, we must be able to identify and disrupt the manifestations of trafficking in our communities.

From sex trafficking within escort services to labor trafficking of farmworkers, the ways humans are exploited differ greatly. Each type has unique strategies for recruiting and controlling victims, and concealing the crime.

For years, we have been staring at an incomplete chess game, moving pieces without seeing hidden squares or fully understanding the power relationships between players. Many efforts to combat trafficking have generalized across too many types and created overly generic resources and responses. For example, if an anti-trafficking group is providing a training for hotels, generic “Human Trafficking 101” training is less effective than training that focuses on the types of trafficking that actually use hotels as part of their business model.

With *The Typology of Modern Slavery*, our blurry understanding of the scope of the crime is now coming into sharper focus.

Polaris analyzed more than 32,000 cases of human trafficking documented between December 2007 and December 2016 through its operation of the National Human Trafficking Hotline and BeFree Textline. This is the largest data set on human trafficking in the United States ever compiled and publically analyzed.

Polaris’s research team analyzed the data and developed a classification system that identifies 25 types of human trafficking in the United States. Each one has its own business model, trafficker profiles, recruitment strategies, victim profiles, and methods of control that facilitate human trafficking.

Cases of modern slavery are diverse and involve complex situations, and many cases lacked sufficient detail to be easily classified. We invite input from survivors, experts and practitioners in the field to help refine this classification system and make it even more accurate.

**From sex trafficking within escort services to labor trafficking of farmworkers, the ways humans are exploited differ greatly. Each type has unique strategies for recruiting and controlling victims, and concealing the crime.**

Polaris's data-driven *Typology* segments the market of human trafficking beyond the existing categories of sex trafficking and labor trafficking, revealing the dozens of manifestations of how traffickers control and exploit others for profit. Breaking up modern slavery into types allows us to expose the vulnerabilities in network business models and understand the ways that traffickers leverage and exploit legitimate businesses or institutions - such as social media, hotels, financial institutions, transportation systems, and government visas.

With this greater understanding, we can begin to develop strategic campaigns to spur systematic action, unite disparate efforts, allocate limited resources, and facilitate effective interventions to combat the crime. We can close policy loopholes and adopt safeguards that make it more difficult for bad actors to abuse vulnerable and at-risk populations. Cities and communities that want to take action can better understand which of the 25 types are present in their area and design more targeted campaigns. Recognizing the heterogeneity of the survivor experience also creates more pathways for meaningful engagement of lived experience in each type. Smart, targeted interventions can be coordinated and directed at specific types of trafficking, reducing the chance that human trafficking continues to be a low-risk, high-profit crime.

*The Typology of Modern Slavery* offers a map for taking the next steps in creating a world without slavery.

## The Typology of Modern Slavery offers a map for taking the next steps in creating a world without slavery.

# Methodology

The data used to develop the 25 types in *The Typology of Modern Slavery* came from calls, emails, and webforms received by the National Human Trafficking Hotline, operated by Polaris, as well as texts received by Polaris's BeFree Textline.

Between December 7, 2007, and December 31, 2016, Polaris-operated hotlines received 32,208 cases of potential human trafficking and 10,085 potential cases of labor exploitation in the United States.

Expanding on the traditional broad categories of sex trafficking and labor trafficking, Polaris used this new data to identify 25 unique types of trafficking. Our research team studied the systems and tactics that individual trafficking networks use to conduct their business, analyzing six principal factors for each: business model, trafficker profiles, recruitment practices, victim profiles, methods of control, and geographic patterns. Data from 55 percent of potential human trafficking cases and 60 percent of labor exploitation cases is classified into distinct types.

The remaining cases could not be classified for reasons such as caller safety, privacy considerations, or limited data. For example, when Polaris hotline staff receive calls from victims in crisis situations with limited time to reach out for help, staff focus on the caller's safety and assisting with urgent needs such as emergency shelter or law enforcement assistance, and not on detailed information about the victim's trafficking experience. Individuals are never asked questions specifically for data collection purposes and are asked to share only the information that they are comfortable providing for the purposes of helping them get help and stay safe. Polaris-operated hotlines abide by strict confidentiality policies and will not release identifying information, even to law enforcement or service providers, without the caller's consent, except when we suspect child abuse or if we have reason to believe that the caller or others face imminent harm.

The information contained in this document was obtained through Polaris's interactions with individuals contacting the hotlines, as well as some additional public sources, and is not the result of a proactive, randomized survey of the landscape of human trafficking. Such a survey is not currently possible with the limited data available to the human trafficking field and the hidden nature of the crime.

**Between December 7, 2007, and December 31, 2016, Polaris-operated hotlines received 32,208 cases of potential human trafficking and 10,085 potential cases of labor exploitation in the United States.**

Some human trafficking involves both commercial sex and forced labor. Some sex traffickers may use only one business model, while other sex traffickers may use several. For example, a trafficker sometimes may force a victim to engage in commercial sex in outdoor locations such as truck stops, and other times use an escort service model and force the victim to engage in commercial sex at hotels. The types tend to be more fluid in sex trafficking cases, and traffickers can be nimble and responsive to disruption efforts by changing their business models. These statistics are non-cumulative. Cases may reference multiple victim populations, and in some cases demographic information was not provided.

Polaris staff also analyzed cases of potential labor exploitation reported to hotlines. In these cases, workers endure a wide range of abuses that put them at high risk for labor trafficking. These abuses include wage and hour violations, contract violations, sexual harassment, discrimination, child labor violations, and unsafe working conditions. We did not hear of explicit indicators of force, fraud, or coercion in these cases, and thus they were not classified as labor trafficking. Individual callers' work experiences range from fair, compensated labor spattered with isolated or minor violations, to more significant exploitation or wage theft, and finally to systematic or extreme conditions that meet the definitions of labor trafficking and slavery.

Because many victims of labor trafficking are unaware that they are the victim of a crime, or that there is a hotline to call for help, and because public awareness of labor trafficking is limited, the National Human Trafficking Hotline and BeFree Textline received fewer calls about labor trafficking than sex trafficking. Only 16 percent of the cases identified on these hotlines involved labor trafficking. However, it is important to note that, globally, forced labor is believed to be more prevalent than sex trafficking. Polaris strongly believes that labor trafficking cases in the U.S. are chronically underreported due to a lack of awareness about the issue and a lack of recognition of the significant vulnerability of workers in many U.S. labor sectors.

Trafficking cases are diverse and complex. While Polaris recognizes that traffickers use a wide variety of methods to exploit their victims, we have created these 25 classifications based on the data, determining the most common and distinct models that have been reported. We invite input into this classification system and hope it furthers our joint efforts to end human trafficking.

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# Type Profiles

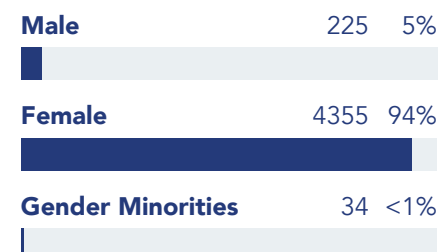
# 01

## Escort Services

4651  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

Escort Services is a broad term used widely in the commercial sex trade, referring to commercial sex acts that primarily occur at a temporary indoor location. The operations are often described as “out-call,” where traffickers deliver victims to a buyer’s hotel room or residence for “private parties,” or as “in-call,” where potential buyers cycle in and out of a hotel room where the trafficker has confined the victim for extended stays. These cyclical business operations repeat once the trafficker relocates the survivor to another city where the demand for commercial sex is booming. Over the years, there have been fluctuations in popular online advertising platforms for commercial sex, but the most prevalent online marketplace is Backpage.com. Though Backpage closed its U.S. Adult Services section in January 2017 due to rising pressure from the U.S. Senate, Backpage has accounted for more than 1,300 cases of trafficking within escort services and remains a driving force in global sexual exploitation.



### Trafficker Profile

Trafficker profiles range from a single trafficker exploiting their victim (often their intimate partner) to coordinated networks of traffickers affiliated with organized crime. All traffickers employ force, fraud, and coercion.

### Recruitment

Victims may be tricked into a situation through fraudulent job offers, such as fake modeling contracts. Traffickers may also recruit victims by pretending to have a romantic interest in the victim or falsely promising that they can provide shelter, financial support, or other benefits.

### Victim Profile

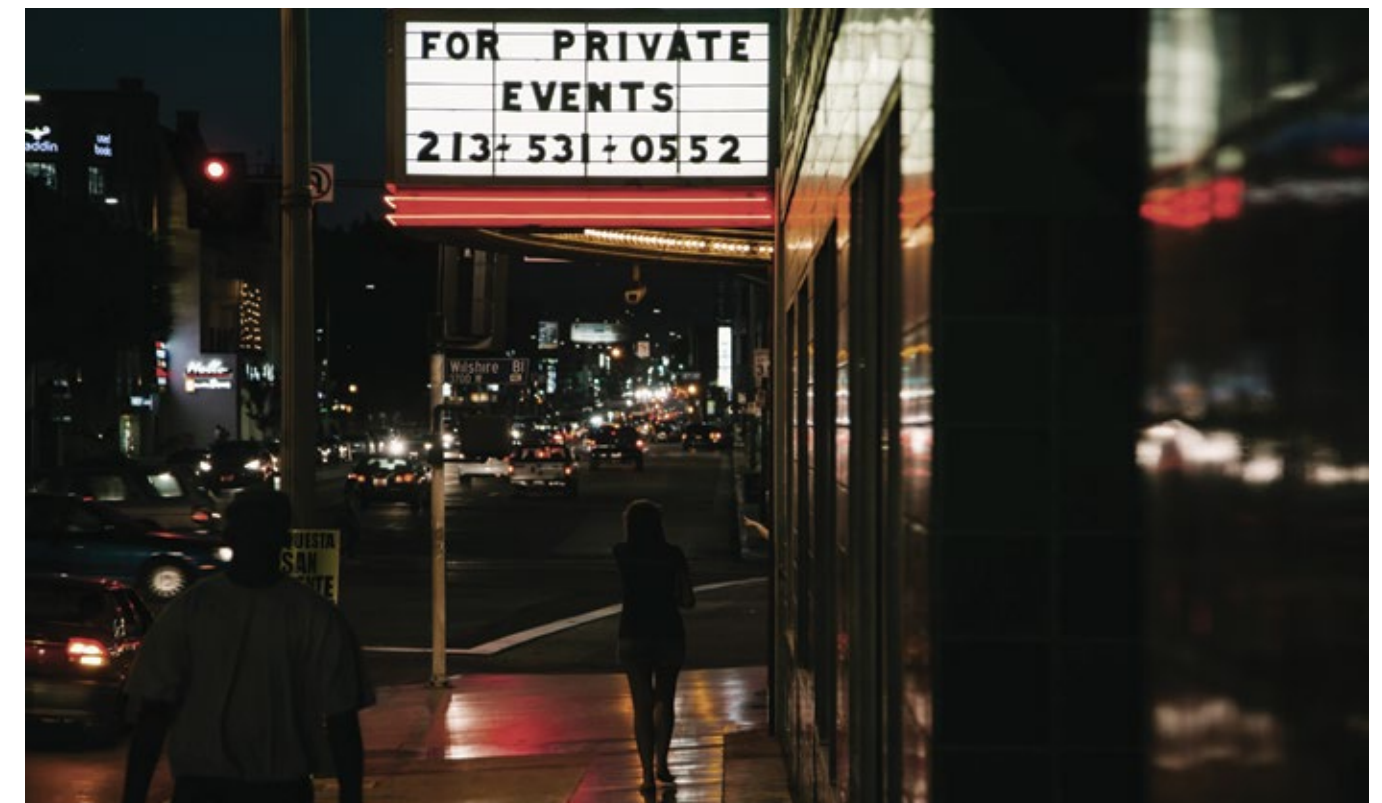
The vast majority of the survivors of “escort services” are U.S. citizen women and girls, although men and boys also make up a small percentage. LGBTQ youth are also vulnerable, as shown by the Urban Institute’s 2015 report, “Surviving the Streets of New York”<sup>1</sup>, in which homeless LGBTQ youth reported trading sex through online ads and social media, at hotels, and at customers’ residences.

<sup>1</sup> Meredith Dank et al., *Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex* (Washington: Urban Institute, 2015): [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf)

### Methods of Control

Extreme physical and sexual violence, often accompanied by weapons, is common, as is coercion in the form of unmanageable quotas, debts, threats of harm or police involvement, excessive monitoring, gang intimidation, social isolation, and constant surveillance. Traffickers often condition victims to believe they are the only ones who care for them, manipulating an attachment bond that makes the decision to leave the trafficker extremely difficult.

**Victims may be tricked into a situation through fraudulent job offers, such as fake modeling contracts.**





# 02

## Illicit Massage, Health, & Beauty

2949  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

Illicit massage, health, and beauty businesses present a façade of legitimate spa services, concealing that their primary business is the sex and labor trafficking of women trapped in these businesses. Although they appear to be single storefronts, the majority are controlled as part of larger networks – with one to three people owning several businesses at a time. Research suggests there are at least 7,000 storefronts in the U.S., and possibly far more.

### Trafficker Profile

On-site managers tend to be women of the same ethnicity and may have been trafficked themselves in these businesses before becoming part of the larger trafficking network. The similarity in age and ethnicity of managers and women who are managers-in-training can make it difficult to distinguish potential victims from potential controllers at a glance. This can add to the level of control and coercion that traffickers have over their victims. Preliminary research suggests that business owners may have a variety of racial and ethnic profiles; as noted, business owners often own several illicit massage businesses as part of a larger network.

### Recruitment

These networks are connected to larger operators that assist with recruitment of women in their home country or women who are searching for work in the United States as immigrants with limited English.

### Victim Profile

Most victims of illicit massage businesses are women from the mid-thirties to late fifties from China and South Korea. In other illicit health and beauty businesses, labor trafficking survivors are typically younger females (mid-twenties and older) from Southeast Asia.

### Methods of Control

Survivors are controlled through coercion, including extreme intimidation, threats of shame, isolation from the outside community, debt bondage, exploitation of communication barriers, and explicit as well as implied threats. Women are typically forced to live at the business or in another location with their movement controlled between work and home. Day-to-day actions tend to be monitored by a manager, who watches the store in person or off-site with a CCTV camera.

**Most victims of illicit massage businesses are women from the mid-thirties to late fifties from China and South Korea.**

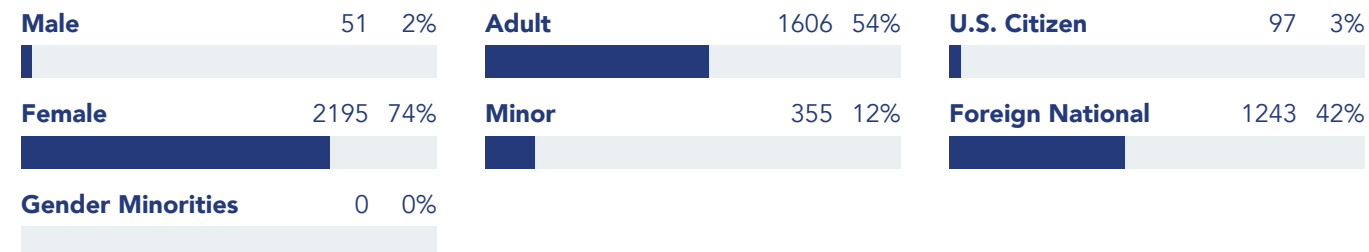


Image courtesy of Walker Larry on Flickr.

# 03

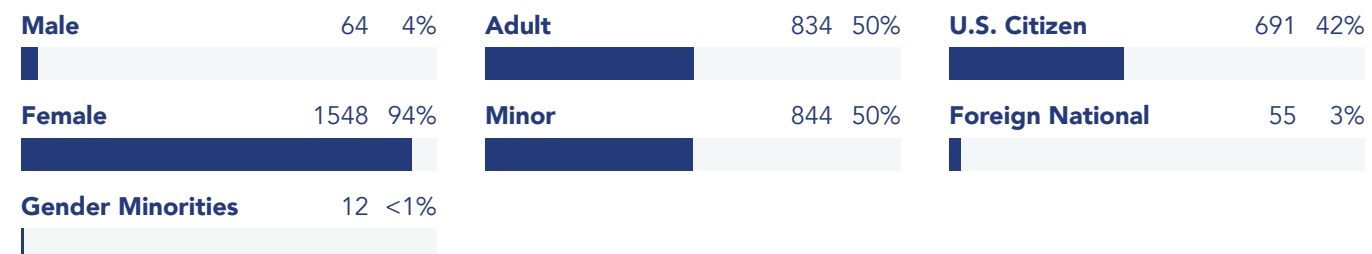
## Outdoor Solicitation

1643  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

Outdoor solicitation occurs when traffickers force victims to find buyers in an outdoor, public setting. In many cities, this occurs on a particular block or at cross streets known for commercial sex and often referred to as a “track” or “stroll.” In more rural areas, outdoor solicitation frequently takes place at truck or rest stops along major highways.

Traffickers more frequently use physical violence in outdoor solicitation than in other types of sex trafficking.





### Trafficker Profile

These individuals tend to operate more independently rather than in networks with other traffickers, although some domestic gang influences have been documented.

### Recruitment

Traffickers frequently recruit victims by posing as a romantic partner or exploiting an existing intimate relationship. Traffickers often recognize specific vulnerabilities and modify their recruitment efforts to exploit those factors by initially offering economic and emotional support.

### Victim Profile

According to Polaris-operated hotline data, survivors are overwhelmingly U.S. citizen women and girls. Additionally, 48 percent of LGBTQ youth surveyed in "Surviving the Streets of New York" reported finding customers for commercial sex on the street<sup>2</sup>. Women and girls of color are also disproportionately represented in the data. While victims represent diverse experiences and socioeconomic backgrounds, a review of the data found that certain inequalities and societal factors may make particular individuals especially vulnerable. These factors include histories of trauma and abuse, addiction, chronic mental health issues, and economic hardship such as homelessness or unstable housing. Runaway and homeless youth are particularly vulnerable.

### Methods of Control

Hotline data has shown that traffickers more frequently use physical violence in outdoor solicitation than in other types of sex trafficking, but also exploit their intimate relationship, isolating them from support networks, and inducing or exploiting substance abuse issues. Verbal abuse and other types of manipulation are also common. Traffickers often confiscate a victim's entire earnings, set unrealistic nightly quotas, and deny food and shelter as punishment if the quota is not met.

<sup>2</sup> Meredith Dank et al., *Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex* (Washington: Urban Institute, 2015): [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/lgbtq.html](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/lgbtq.html)

<sup>4</sup> [cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/StrugglingToSurvive-Final.pdf](http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/StrugglingToSurvive-Final.pdf)

### LGBTQ Survivors

While sex trafficking affects all demographics, people who lack strong support networks, have fewer economic opportunities, have experienced violence, or who are generally marginalized are particularly vulnerable. LGBTQ homeless youth are 7.4 times more likely to experience acts of sexual violence than their non-LGBTQ peers<sup>3</sup>. According to Polaris-operated hotline data, traffickers often exploit an LGBTQ person's housing insecurity and need for family, threaten to "out" them to loved ones, manipulate their self-worth, cause distrust of others, and withhold hormone therapy or other gender-expression necessities in order to control them.

Most often Polaris-operated hotlines obtain information about LGBTQ identity directly from survivors. These survivors often need more urgent assistance such as crisis intervention and direct services, which may take priority over collecting more detailed information about the nuances of their human trafficking experience. Consequently, while some sex trafficking types reveal unique intersections with the LGBTQ community, it's believed they are more than likely underrepresented in this typology. It is difficult for many individuals who have been trafficked to reach out for assistance, but this is especially true for individuals who fear that they will be mistreated or not believed because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Additionally, when faced with fewer resources, employment opportunities, or social supports, LGBTQ homeless youth are three to seven times more likely to enter the street economy and engage in survival sex to meet basic needs, such as shelter, food, drugs, and toiletries<sup>4</sup>. These individuals may not reach out for assistance because they don't see themselves as victims but are simply doing what they need to in order to survive. For more information on sex trafficking and the LGBTQ community and Polaris's recommendations to strengthen the safety net for this population, please see our other relevant reports.

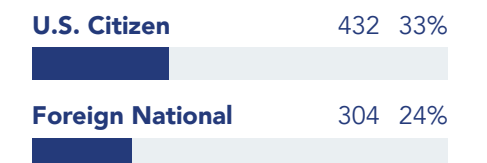
# 04



## Residential

### Description and Business Model

Sex trafficking can occur within organized residential brothels run by a network of coordinated traffickers or within private households used more informally for commercial sex. Residential brothels that follow the first, more formalized model tend to cater to commercial sex buyers from similar ethnic and/or language backgrounds, advertising through word of mouth or covert business cards. Advertisement for the second model varies but often includes word of mouth, and Backpage.com is emerging as a frequent source.





### Trafficker Profiles

In the first model, traffickers may be part of larger, organized networks, and in some cases may have formal or informal ties to organized crime groups such as gangs or cartels. In the second model, residential brothels may be private homes where inter-familial or intimate partner trafficking is taking place.

### Recruitment

The first model tends to involve victims recruited through fake romantic interests, false job offers, or fraudulent immigration promises. In the second model, hotline data indicates that family members and intimate partners usually begin exploiting victims within homes opportunistically due to extreme economic hardship.

### Victim Profile

In more formalized brothels, victims tend to be women and to a lesser extent girls, with many victims from Latin America, particularly Mexico, and from Southeast Asia, particularly China. Sex trafficking within residences informally used as brothels typically involves child victims, with boys making up a growing percentage.

### Methods of Control

In the first model, networked traffickers often employ physical violence, lethal threats to victims and their families, debt bondage, and extreme confinement and monitoring. As noted, the second model tends to involve a higher percentage of minor victims than other types of sex trafficking. Although force, fraud, and coercion may not be necessary, common methods can include confinement, inducing illicit substances, threats to harm or expose, and exploiting the familial or intimate relationship.

**Sex trafficking within residences informally used as brothels typically involves child victims, with boys making up a growing percentage.**

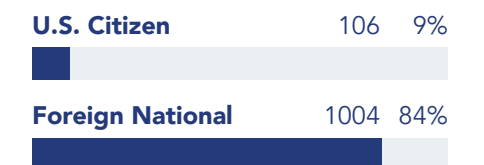
# 05



## Domestic Work

### Description and Business Model

Domestic or homecare workers often live within their employers' households and provide services such as cooking, cleaning, and caretaking for children and the elderly or infirm. Labor trafficking for domestic work may also occur within the cycle of intimate partner violence or forced marriage situations as a means of maintaining or exerting power and control.





**Labor trafficking victims in domestic work commonly work 12-18 hours a day (some as much as 24/7) for little to no pay.**

#### Trafficker Profile

Traffickers in this type have diverse profiles. Many are wealthy individuals, sometimes from the victim's home country. Domestic workers with A-3 and G-5 visas are especially vulnerable to the imbalanced power dynamic inherent in temporary work visas due to the trafficker's elevated status as a diplomat, royal, or high-ranking member of an influential international organization. This status makes the fear of speaking out even greater and can allow traffickers to continue exploiting victims under the protection of diplomatic immunity. Family members and intimate partners may also be traffickers, though less commonly.

#### Recruitment

In cases reported to Polaris-operated hotlines, most survivors enter their situation on a B-1, A-3, or G-5 temporary work visa. Fraud with J-1 Au Pair visas and, increasingly, with B-2 (tourist) visas also occurs. Additionally, U.S. citizens and foreign national women on K-1 (fiancé) visas may experience labor trafficking for domestic work.

#### Victim Profile

Hotline data reflects that survivors are predominantly middle-aged to older-aged women from the Philippines, while many are U.S. citizens or survivors from Latin America, India, and numerous countries spanning Sub-Saharan Africa. Survivors in this data came from more than 105 countries. Male victims were reported in 12 percent of the cases and child victims in 8 percent.

#### Methods of Control

Labor trafficking victims in domestic work commonly work 12-18 hours a day (some as much as 24/7) for little to no pay. They may experience extreme isolation and confinement from the outside world, sexual harassment, high levels of monitoring, debt bondage, extreme wage theft, confiscation of critical documents such as passports, and restricted access to food and medical care. Traffickers often intentionally allow the victim's visa to expire and use the newly undocumented status to create fear and distrust, which leads to even greater submission. Because of this, labor trafficking of domestic workers can often last for years or even decades.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2016). H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers. Retrieved from: [www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-2a-temporary-agricultural-workers](http://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/temporary-workers/h-2a-temporary-agricultural-workers)

#### Temporary Work Visas

Visa Category	Visa Description	Visa Portability
A-3 and G-5	Domestic worker for foreign diplomats, royalty, or staff of international organizations	No
B-1	Temporary business/ domestic worker	Yes
H-1B	Specialty occupations	No
H-2A	Agricultural worker	No
H-2B	Non-agricultural worker	No
J-1	Cultural exchange	Yes*

\* In most cases, sponsors must approve a change of employer.

Misuse or exploitation of temporary work visas occurs in most labor trafficking types. The U.S. government makes visas available for foreign workers to temporarily work in the United States to perform critical jobs in a wide variety of industries when employers have found U.S. citizens are unable, unwilling, or unqualified to perform them<sup>5</sup>. Most visas referenced in this report tie workers to a single employer, making the system ripe for exploitation. Workers without visa portability who want to leave even the most abusive jobs lose their legal status to work in the United States and are at risk of deportation proceedings. This can significantly limit their ability to re-enter the U.S. in the future. For many temporary workers, this is an impossible choice, as leaving these jobs may cause the long-term economic ruin of the worker and his or her family. Exploitative employers will take advantage of this lack of visa portability by using it as a constant threat to intimidate, maintain control, or remind victims of this unbalanced power dynamic. To learn more about temporary work visas and our recommendations to protect these workers, see Polaris's report Labor Trafficking in the U.S.: A Closer Look at Temporary Work Visas.

# 06

## Bars, Strip Clubs, & Cantinas

792 Cases

### Description and Business Model

Human trafficking in this type fronts as legitimate bars, restaurants, or clubs selling food and alcohol while exploiting victims for both sex and labor behind the scenes. Victims are forced to provide customers of the cantina with flirtatious companionship to entice them to purchase high-priced alcoholic beverages that often come with an explicit or implicit agreement for commercial sex acts as well. Polaris has identified several distinct business models within this industry. These include bars and cantinas that are entirely run by organized human trafficking networks. However, at other locations traffickers have agreements with the business owners that allow them to operate prostitution rings out of the bar or cantina in exchange for a portion of the criminal profits. In addition to the cantina-like businesses, many strip clubs and go-go clubs are associated with this type of sex and labor trafficking.

### Trafficker Profile

In some of the cantinas, organized human trafficking networks run the operations. Male and female traffickers based in Mexico or Central America operate or cooperate with criminal networks to sustain complicated, multi-year supply lines of new victims and to ensure that victims comply. U.S. citizens may also be traffickers in this network. In some cases, traffickers directly cooperate with, or are members of, cartels or U.S.-based street gangs. Traffickers may also be intimate partners or family members of their victims. Owners of the cantinas or bars may be directly involved in the trafficking and exploitation, or they may not be aware of this activity. Traffickers who use strip clubs are typically less networked than the cantina-like businesses and can often be intimate partners of the victims. Some links with Eastern European organized crime have emerged and merit more research.

### Recruitment

Victims are deceived and enticed with promises of better job opportunities, romantic relationships, and safe migration to the U.S.

### Victim Profile

Bars and cantinas frequently victimize women and girls from Mexico and Central America aged 14 to 29, and the clientele is normally limited to men from local Latino communities. Most trafficking in go-go clubs and strip clubs involves U.S. citizen women and girls, as well as some from Eastern Europe. Male victims have also been reported.

### Methods of Control

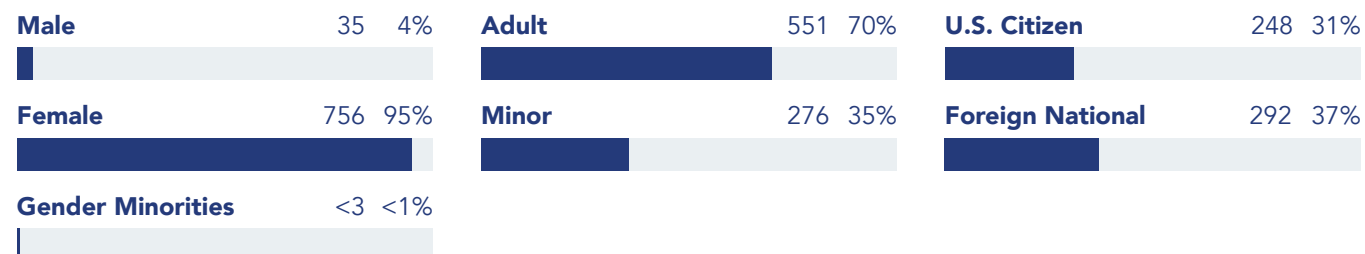
A significant degree of violence is often reported in these cases, with women and girls severely beaten into submission, sexually assaulted, and threatened with weapons and death to their families if they do not comply. They frequently are trapped due to insurmountable debts to their traffickers. In addition, victims can be exploited for labor when they are forced to waitress, sometimes for excessive hours with no breaks or pay.

### Sex Trafficking from Mexico and Central America

Thousands of women and girls from Mexico, Central America, and U.S. Latino communities are prisoners of a violent underground sex economy in the United States. Criminal networks or independent traffickers target vulnerable women and girls, often struggling with poverty, an abusive past, or a lack of opportunity, and exploit them for profit. These victims are deceived and enticed with false promises of love, good jobs, or safe passage to the United States, and are forced to engage in commercial sex. Often without legal status, money, or English fluency, they become trapped – controlled by their traffickers through brutal threats and other forms of abuse.

Traffickers who exploit these women and girls use a variety of business models and network structures. Traffickers may pose as intimate partners, employers, or recruiters, or claim that they can help with safe migration. Traffickers may be operating alone, as part of loose and informal networks, or as part of larger, organized criminal activity. Residential brothels, cantinas and bars, and escort services are the types of sex trafficking most commonly associated with these victim populations.

Polaris's Strategic Initiative to end Sex Trafficking from Mexico (STFM) focuses on analyzing and dismantling these networks while bolstering the cross-border safety net for survivors.





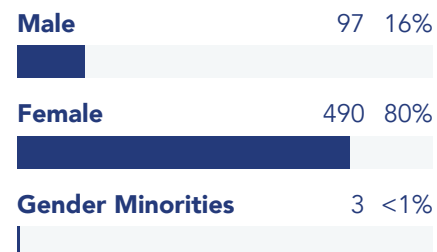
# 07

## Pornography

616  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

The National Hotline has documented cases of family members, intimate partners, and individual sex traffickers earning profit from distributing a victim’s non-consenting appearance in pornographic material. The related issue of “revenge porn” is also a concern within relationship violence and can be considered high risk for sex trafficking. For cases involving webcams, please refer to Remote Interactive Sexual Acts. This type also includes the production and distribution of child pornography. The National Hotline frequently receives tips via our online reporting tool linking to suspicious websites that may contain child pornography. While the hotline records data from these reports, the hotline is unable to investigate such links to verify the legitimacy and therefore forwards all potential child pornography tips to The National Center of Missing and Exploited Children. Please visit the center for more information.



### Trafficker Profile

Due to limited data, little is known about typical trafficker profiles, except that in many cases traffickers may be intimate partners or family members of their victims. Traffickers within formal pornography production companies have also been recorded in Polaris-operated hotline cases, but data is thin.

### Recruitment

Due to limited data, little is known, except that traffickers may exploit existing romantic or familial relationships.

### Victim Profile

While some tips of sex trafficking in pornography supply limited data due to the caller’s distance from the situation, in hotline cases where enough information was provided to establish high indicators of sex trafficking, data has revealed that survivors tend to be U.S. citizens. While most survivors in these cases are female, the rate of male victimization is four times the rate in other sex trafficking types.

### Methods of Control

An existing intimate partner may use manipulation, “gaslighting,” threats of harm, and substance abuse to coerce or defraud adult victims into pornography and subsequently sell the explicit content to websites or individual buyers. In some cases, traffickers may force a victim to engage in commercial sex, film the sex act, and then sell or threaten to sell the content. Due to limited data, little is known about methods of control in cases that may involve more formal pornography businesses.

**The rate of male victimization is four times the rate in other sex trafficking types.**





# 08

## Traveling Sales Crews

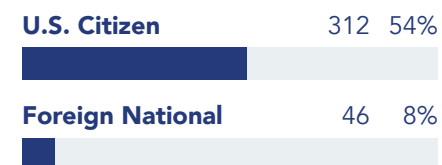
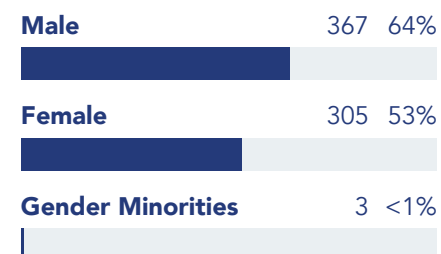
**575**  
Human Trafficking Cases

**88**  
Labor Exploitation Cases

### Description and Business Model

Traveling sales crews move between cities and states and go door-to-door, often selling fraudulent products such as magazine subscriptions that customers may never receive. Young salespeople are rarely fully compensated, they sell from morning until night, and are unable to leave due to fraud, manipulation, and coercion. As a result, sales crews find this business model of labor trafficking financially rewarding and low-risk. Data shows numerous linkages between sales crews and a larger national business network. It can be challenging to find these links because many organizations, particularly those with a long record of fraud-related complaints, frequently change their names and operating locations while remaining under the same ownership.

**Victims who wish to leave the crew are often abandoned in remote and unfamiliar areas, with no belongings or means of returning home.**





### Trafficker Profile

Traffickers may be crew managers or business owners. These crews and businesses are highly networked, with numerous connections among different business owners.

### Recruitment

Recruitment occurs through social media, online classifieds, posters at schools, and person-to-person contact (most common). Fraud is rampant in the hiring process, and crew members routinely note that working conditions and sales commissions are significantly misrepresented in advertisements or during recruitment.

**The victims in Traveling Sales Crews are overwhelmingly U.S. citizens.**

### Victim Profile

Traffickers in traveling sales crews will specifically target teens and young adults from marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities. Although most crews claim to hire those who are at least 18, minors as young as 15 can be involved. Unlike other types of labor trafficking, the victims in this category are overwhelmingly U.S. citizens.

### Methods of Control

Managers control nearly all aspects of the lives of crew members and drivers while they are on the road, and isolate them from wider society by imposing long work hours, moving frequently between regions, employing intense peer pressure and public shaming of workers, and controlling after-hours activity. Managers may deny crew members food, confiscate their driver's licenses, or threaten them if they do not meet their daily sales quotas. Victims are typically paid a stipend of \$5 to \$20, the rest allegedly covering "debts" for lodging and transportation. Victims who wish to leave the crew are often abandoned in remote and unfamiliar areas, with no belongings or means of returning home as an "example" to other crew members to keep them from complaining or seeking help. In nearly a quarter of cases reported to the Polaris-operated hotlines, callers indicated that managers or fellow crew members physically assaulted salespeople who wished to leave. Sexual assault was reported in numerous cases.

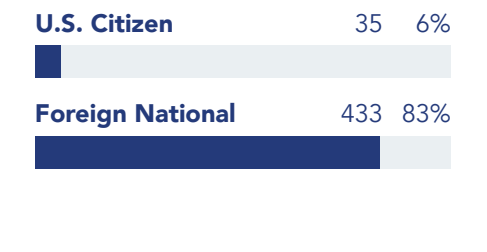
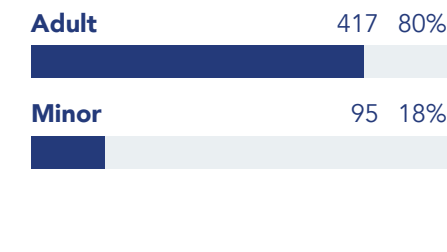
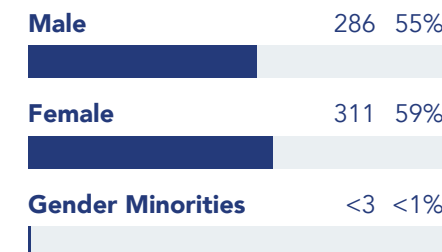
# 09



# Restaurants & Food Service

### Description and Business Model

Labor trafficking within the restaurant and food industry has been documented in nearly all kinds of food service and may involve bars, clubs, buffets, taquerias, or food and ice cream trucks. People working as cooks, bus staff, and wait staff may be exploited, with traffickers often taking advantage of language barriers between exploited workers and patrons—and in some cases other workers at the same restaurant who are not being abused—to help avoid detection.





### Trafficker Profile

With this type it can be difficult for even survivors to decipher who their primary trafficker is since the links between the smugglers, recruiters, and restaurant management are sometimes unclear and may be deliberately obfuscated by the trafficker to help avoid detection. Information suggests that in some cases a single actor is primarily responsible, while in other cases multiple actors with different roles may be working in collaboration to exploit the workers.

### Recruitment

In many cases, victims are recruited using false promises and charged extremely high fees by smugglers to ensure safety while migrating to the U.S. and a better-paying job, only to end up trapped in a restaurant and trafficked for their labor.

### Victim Profile

Data has indicated that foreign national men and women from East and Southeast Asia, Mexico, and Central America tend to be equally victimized. However, victims from almost every region of the world have been trafficked in the U.S. While a significant majority of victims are adults, nearly 20 percent of cases of potential labor trafficking in restaurants reported to the Polaris-hotlines involved minors. Of the individual victims identified in hotline cases, nearly a third were undocumented immigrants. Hotline data also shows many cases of labor trafficking in restaurants involving the same primary victim populations, but on J-1 and H-2B work visas.

### Methods of Control

Victims can be confined at the restaurant around the clock or be isolated in a nearby home provided by the traffickers. Situations become more exploitative when the employer controls employee housing where victims are charged well-above-market rates for crowded, substandard living conditions, food, and transportation, which can increase their debt and further prevent them from leaving. Victims who do attempt to leave or report abuse may face lethal threats to their families back home or be threatened with deportation. Victims on H-2B and J-1 visas face similar immigration and "blacklisting" threats due to the lack of visa portability and are subjected to poor housing conditions, wage theft, excessive hours, and discrimination.

**Victims can be confined at the restaurant around the clock or be isolated in a nearby home provided by the traffickers.**



# 10

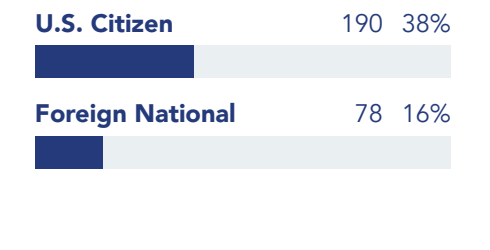
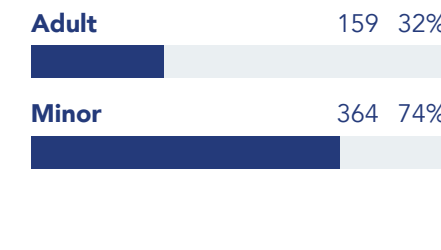
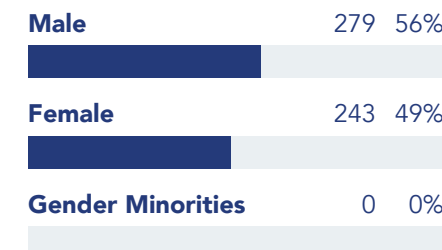
**494**  
Human Trafficking Cases

**59**  
Labor Exploitation Cases

## Peddling & Begging

### Description and Business Model

Forced peddling and begging is a well-known type of labor trafficking globally, but Polaris-operated hotlines tend to receive fewer direct reports from victims of this type in the U.S. due to a limited number of victims willing to speak out. One peddling scheme revealed by hotline data involves traffickers who pose under the guise of a seemingly legitimate charitable or religious organization claiming to provide trips and enrichment services to "at-risk youth." In fact, these rings exploit young U.S. children by forcing them to sell candy or baked goods, or solicit "donations" on streets or in shopping centers.



### Trafficker Profile

Due to limited data, little is known. Some case data has shown familial links with traffickers forcing their more vulnerable family members into begging.

### Recruitment

Due to limited data, little is known.

### Victim Profile

These victim demographics lead to the potential for increased vulnerabilities and populations ranging from foreign national men, women, and children with an unstable immigration status (such as an undocumented immigrant whose trafficker is the temporary U.S. sponsor) to foreign and U.S. citizens who have physical or intellectual disabilities and/or behavioral health concerns.

### Methods of Control

Although data is limited around elements of force, fraud, and coercion, information suggests that traffickers monitor and intimidate victims from a distance, compel excessive working hours, take most of the earnings, instill daily quotas, and deny victims access to education, food, or transportation.

**Some case data has shown familial links with traffickers forcing their more vulnerable family members into begging.**



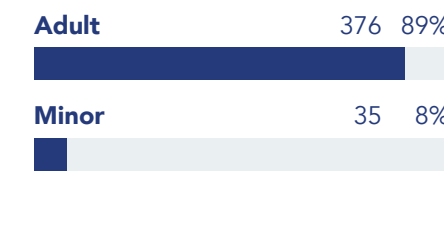
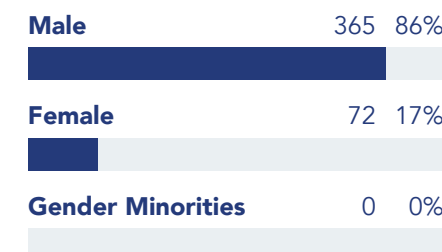
# 11




# Agriculture & Animal Husbandry

### Description and Business Model

Traffickers exploit workers in the agriculture and animal husbandry industry, from corn fields to orange orchards to dairy farms. Some crops such as tobacco require much more intensive labor to harvest, making them more susceptible to forced labor or exploitation. Tobacco is the crop cited most often on Polaris-operated hotlines, accounting for 10 percent of all agricultural labor trafficking cases. Others frequently mentioned are cattle/dairy, oranges, tomatoes, and strawberries. Often an agricultural contract will promise an hourly rate but then pay on a piece-rate basis, which severely limits earning potential and further entraps the victims. Abuse and exploitation of agricultural workers can happen at multiple levels due to the complex labor supply chain of recruiters, managers, contractors, subcontractors, growers, and buyers.







**Traffickers have been known to subject victims to squalid living conditions, often denying them even basic necessities such as beds and indoor toilets.**

#### Trafficker Profile

Workers can find it difficult to determine exactly who is responsible for the origin of the exploitation, due to this complex supply chain. In some cases, there may be a single or main trafficker who has one of these roles, while in other cases exploitation may involve multiple actors.

#### Recruitment

Recruitment usually features a more formal approach than in other industries, with recruiters charging victims recruitment and travel fees that create insurmountable debt, even though these costs are the responsibility of the employer under U.S. visa regulations<sup>6</sup> for H-2A holders. Less is known about recruitment of undocumented workers or holders of other visa types, though anecdotal hotline cases suggest that recruiters and recruitment fees may be present in some cases.

#### Victim Profile

According to cases reported to Polaris-operated hotlines, survivors of this type of labor trafficking are disproportionately Latino male migrant workers, mostly from Mexico and Central America, on seasonal H-2A visas. South African men on H-2A visas rank a distant second. Latinas and unaccompanied foreign minors are also victimized. However, this data appears to differ from the findings of farmworker advocacy groups, which have reported serving mostly workers on other visa types and undocumented victims.

#### Methods of Control

If a victim leaves an abusive work situation, they may lose their status, and some traffickers exploit this lack of visa portability to instill fears about deportation or immigration status. Traffickers in agriculture also isolate victims in rural parts of the country with little to no means of accessing community support. Despite the H-2A program requirement that employers supply workers with suitable housing<sup>7</sup>, traffickers have also been known to subject victims to squalid living conditions, often denying them even basic necessities such as beds and indoor toilets. Victims are also frequently denied the protective gear to do their jobs safely. This is most evident in tobacco fields, where despite the risk of contracting green tobacco sickness (GTS)<sup>8</sup>, tobacco workers on Polaris-operated hotlines frequently reported that their employers did not provide them with equipment that is necessary when directly handling tobacco leaves and pesticides. Oftentimes medical care is deliberately delayed or not offered for even the most severe workplace injuries or illnesses. By far the most common method of control in agriculture, as in many other types, is economic abuse, including wage theft, improper deductions, and payment at piece rates rather than hourly rates.

<sup>6</sup> Labor Certification Process for Temporary Agricultural Employment in the United States (H-2A Workers). (2010). Retrieved from: [www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=019f28cb2b081515d27508dd0c18321f&node=pt20.3.655&rgn=div5#sp20.3.655.b](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=019f28cb2b081515d27508dd0c18321f&node=pt20.3.655&rgn=div5#sp20.3.655.b)

<sup>7</sup> Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division (WHD). (2015). H-2A: Temporary Agricultural Employment of Foreign Workers. Retrieved from: [www.dol.gov/whd/ag/ag\\_h-2a.htm](http://www.dol.gov/whd/ag/ag_h-2a.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). Green Tobacco Sickness. Retrieved from: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/greentobaccosickness/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/greentobaccosickness/)





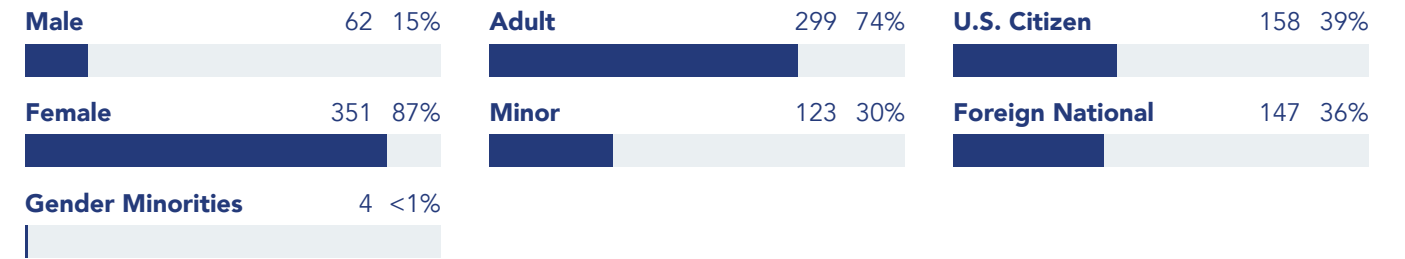
# 12

## Personal Sexual Servitude

405  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

With cases of personal sexual servitude, the lines between trafficker, recruiter, and buyer are blurred and largely depend on how the victim views each perpetrator. Personal sexual servitude takes various forms, and the payment is not always cash. In addition, the line between ongoing sexual abuse and personal sexual servitude is complex, and different survivors may define their experiences differently. Personal sexual servitude can occur when a woman or girl is permanently sold, often by her family to settle a drug debt, to an individual buyer for the explicit purpose of engaging in periodic sex acts over a long period of time. It can also occur within a commercial non-consenting marriage situation, primarily involving adult foreign national women and their families or U.S. spouses. In some of these forced marriages, the survivors can possess K-1 (fiancé) visas. Some victims are forced to do domestic work. Runaway homeless youth and LGBTQ minors without a third-party facilitator may also be victims of personal sexual servitude when they are coerced to engage in sex on an ongoing basis in order to receive basic needs such as shelter, food, and medications.



### Trafficker Profile

Trafficker profiles vary widely and may include members of organized crime syndicates, smugglers, intimate partners, family members, and landlords.

### Recruitment

As noted, this form is heterogeneous, and recruitment varies. In some cases, victims may be "sold" by a family member to a trafficker. In other cases, recruitment involves the exploiter posing as a benefactor for the victim or misrepresenting the living arrangement or relationship. Additional cases include exploitation by intimate partners.

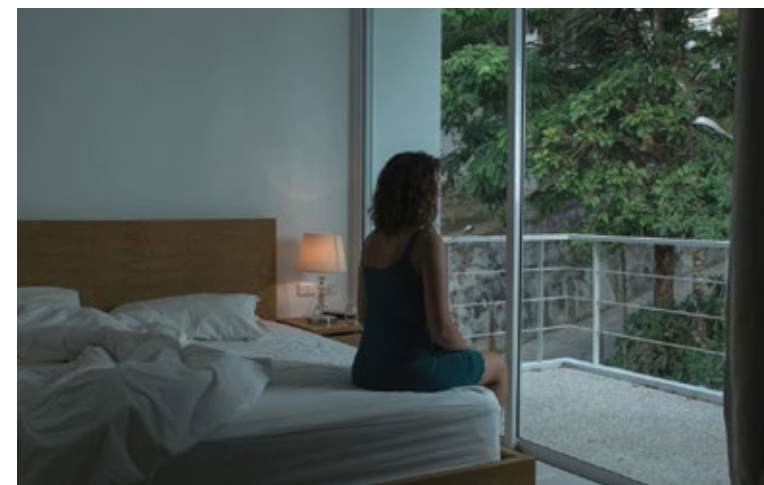
### Victim Profile

Victim profiles vary significantly. In most cases reported to Polaris-operated hotlines, victims are U.S. citizens. Runaway homeless youth and LGBTQ minors are particularly vulnerable. Adults facing economic hardship and unstable housing are also at risk. Foreign national victims are predominantly women and girls from Mexico and Central America, though victims from Southeast Asia have also been reported.

### Methods of Control

Exploiters use ongoing sexual assaults, physical abuse, confinement and isolation, threats, substance abuse, and/or withholding food, shelter, or drugs as forms of abuse or punishment.

**In some cases, victims may be "sold" by a family member to a trafficker. In other cases, recruitment involves the exploiter posing as a benefactor for the victim or misrepresenting the living arrangement or relationship.**



# 13

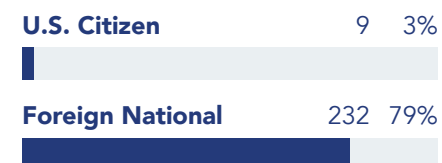
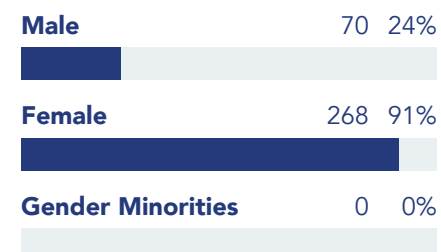
## Health & Beauty Services



### Description and Business Model

Labor trafficking and exploitation has been known to occur in businesses such as nail salons, hair salons, and health spas. Though workers interact regularly with customers, providing services such as manicures and facials, due to language barriers and intensive monitoring, it can be difficult for workers to reach out for help.

They are heavily monitored and tend to live isolated within the business or rely solely on traffickers for transportation, making it almost impossible to escape control.





### Trafficker Profile

Due to limited data, little is known, but traffickers predominantly have an employer relationship with victims, and many are from Vietnam or China. In a smaller subset of cases, the trafficker was a victim's intimate partner or spouse.

### Recruitment

Little is known due to limited data, though preliminary information from hotline cases suggests that recruitment can involve high levels of fraud and deceit such as misrepresenting wages, working conditions, and immigration and educational benefits. This recruitment fraud is also a form of control.

### Victim Profile

Hotline data indicates that most survivors are from Vietnam or China, with a smaller portion possibly being naturalized U.S. citizens. It's worth noting, however, that many of these hotline cases are reported by community members who may not have direct knowledge of victim or trafficker demographics. For example, external research has shown a substantial subset of South Korean workers within the industry, and they are not prominently reflected in hotline data. Polaris data indicates that most victims are adult women, while men are victims in nearly 25 percent of cases. Minor victims have been referenced in fewer than five percent of cases.

### Methods of Control

Victims are often not aware of the possible "intern" periods, when they work extensive hours for no wage and are lucky if they get to keep tips in cash. Exposure to harsh chemicals without proper masks and gloves is another concern, as is frequent movement between salons to further hinder victims from establishing support or accessing help. Victims never remain in the same city for a stable period of time, and they are heavily monitored and tend to live isolated within the business or rely solely on traffickers for transportation, making it almost impossible to escape control. Additionally, many victims remain in their abusive situation hoping for promised immigration and educational benefits that never materialize.



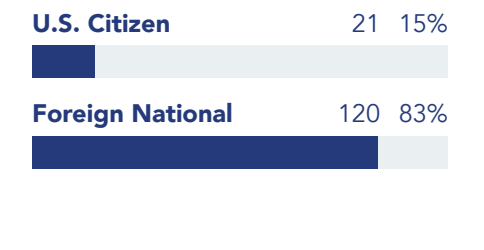
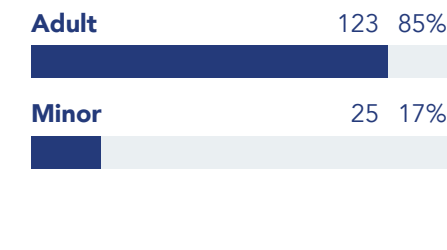
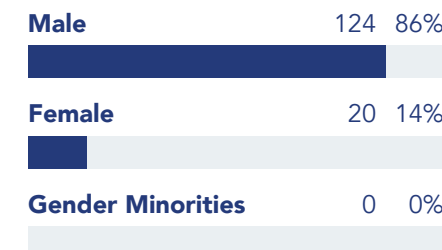
# 14

## Construction



### Description and Business Model

Victims of labor trafficking may be forced to work in the construction industry, usually within small contracting businesses completing tasks such as roofing, carpentry, welding, electrical work, and masonry on both large commercial construction sites as well as in private homes. Employers may misclassify workers as independent contractors, thus limiting their access to worker protections and benefits.





### Trafficker Profile

Because of the complicated nature of the labor supply chain and the roles of direct employers, recruiters, contractors, and smugglers, in many cases victims are unable to identify who is responsible for their exploitation. Some traffickers deliberately obfuscate the labor supply chain to avoid detection.

### Recruitment

Workers can enter their exploitative situations through formal job offers and misrepresented visa contracts. In some cases, workers may be charged illegal and exorbitant recruitment fees, which may be a method of control to keep workers in abusive situations. Recruitment may also begin through an abusive migration journey or through word-of-mouth referrals.

### Victim Profile

The majority of labor trafficking survivors in construction are men from Mexico and the Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala), most of whom have H-2B visas or are undocumented. U.S. citizen survivors have also been forced to perform construction jobs under the control of fraudulent religious organizations, unscrupulous residential and drug recovery programs, and individuals posing as landlords exploiting a victim's homelessness.

### Methods of Control

Victim wages are drastically deducted, and many experience withholding of all payment as a means of control by their traffickers. Hotline data also shows that victims are kept in their trafficking situation through threats of deportation and threats to blacklist the worker from future U.S. jobs if he leaves or reports his situation. Survivors have also reported experiencing verbal abuse, harassment, and denial of necessities such as water and safety equipment.

**Employers may misclassify workers as independent contractors, thus limiting their access to worker protections and benefits.**



# 15

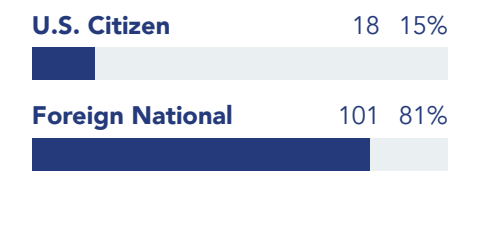
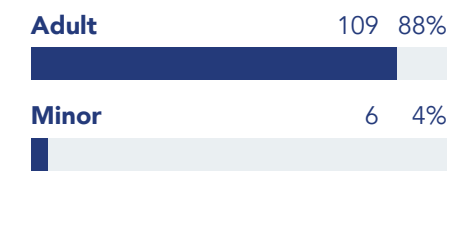
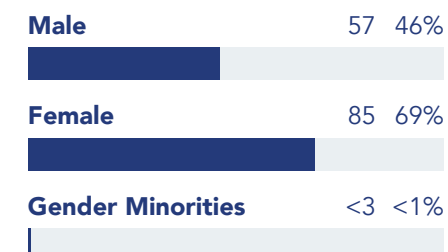
**124**  
Human Trafficking  
Cases

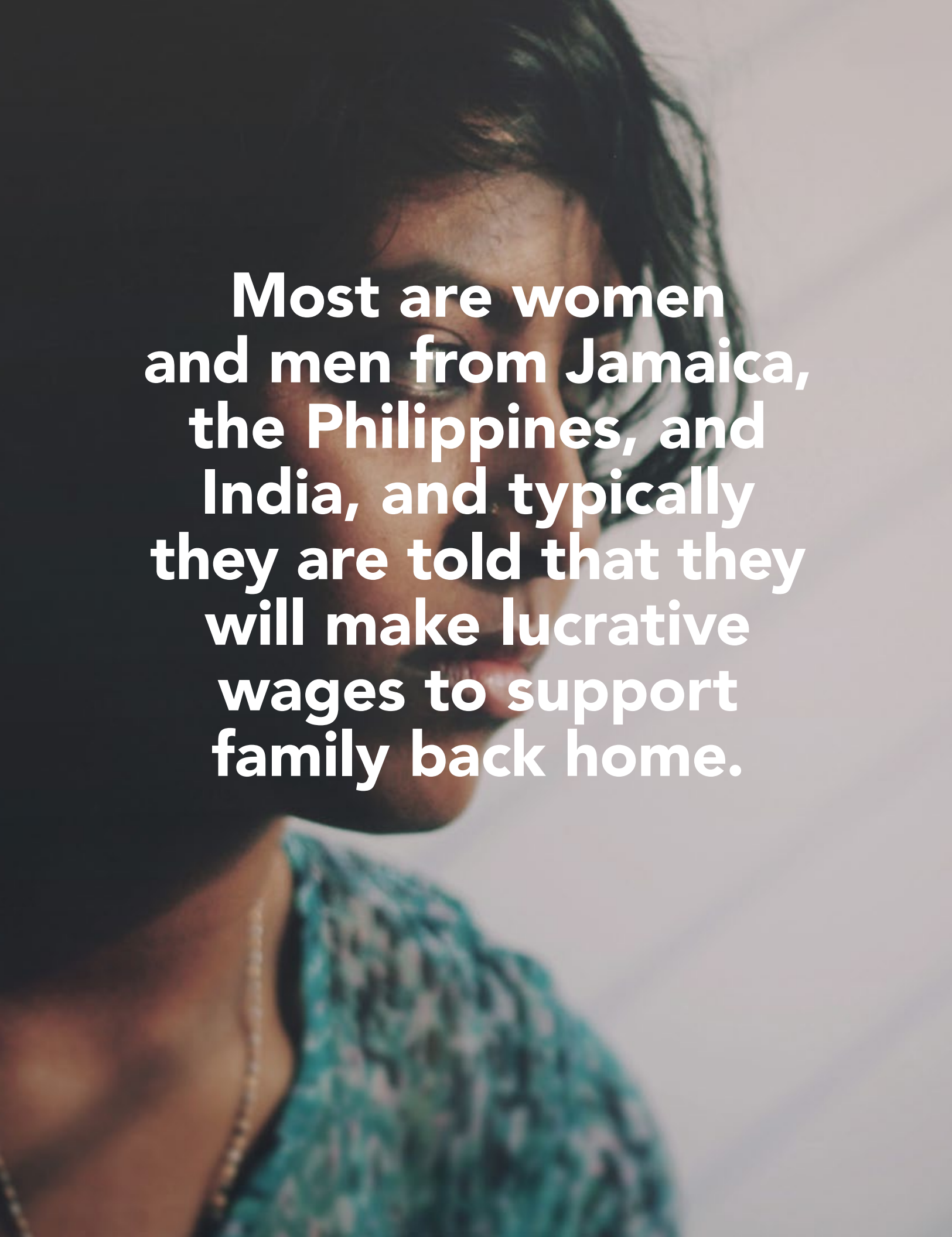
**510**  
Labor Exploitation  
Cases

## Hotels & Hospitality

### Description and Business Model

Victims of labor trafficking have been found in hospitality businesses such as hotels, motels, resorts, or casinos working as front desk attendants, bell staff, and, most frequently, in housekeeping.





**Most are women and men from Jamaica, the Philippines, and India, and typically they are told that they will make lucrative wages to support family back home.**

#### Trafficker Profile

Traffickers may be in hotel management or with a labor recruiter/labor broker that subcontracts with the hotel to provide labor. If the trafficker is a contractor, the hotel may not be aware of the abuse.

#### Recruitment

Most commonly, workers were recruited with job offers that misrepresented the working conditions, wages, and the ability to safely leave the job. In other cases, workers were recruited via other fraudulent promises.

#### Victim Profile

Most are women and men from Jamaica, the Philippines, and India, and typically they are told that they will make lucrative wages to support family back home. Most victims enter the job with an H-2B visa, which restricts visa portability, tying victims to their abusive employer. J-1 visas are also used, though less frequently. U.S. citizen victims have also been reported to the hotline. Adults made up the vast majority of victims reported to Polaris-operated hotlines.

#### Methods of Control

Debt bondage and other forms of economic abuse, such as withholding or confiscating payment, were the most common types of control reported in hotline cases. Other problems included confinement to the hotel property and constant monitoring, altered or fake contracts, physical abuse, and sexual harassment. Due to the lack of visa portability, threats of deportation and police involvement often keep workers from seeking help.





# 16

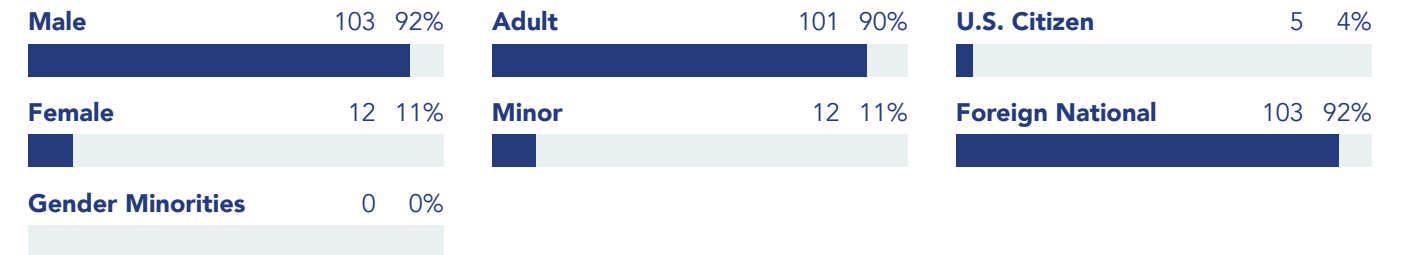
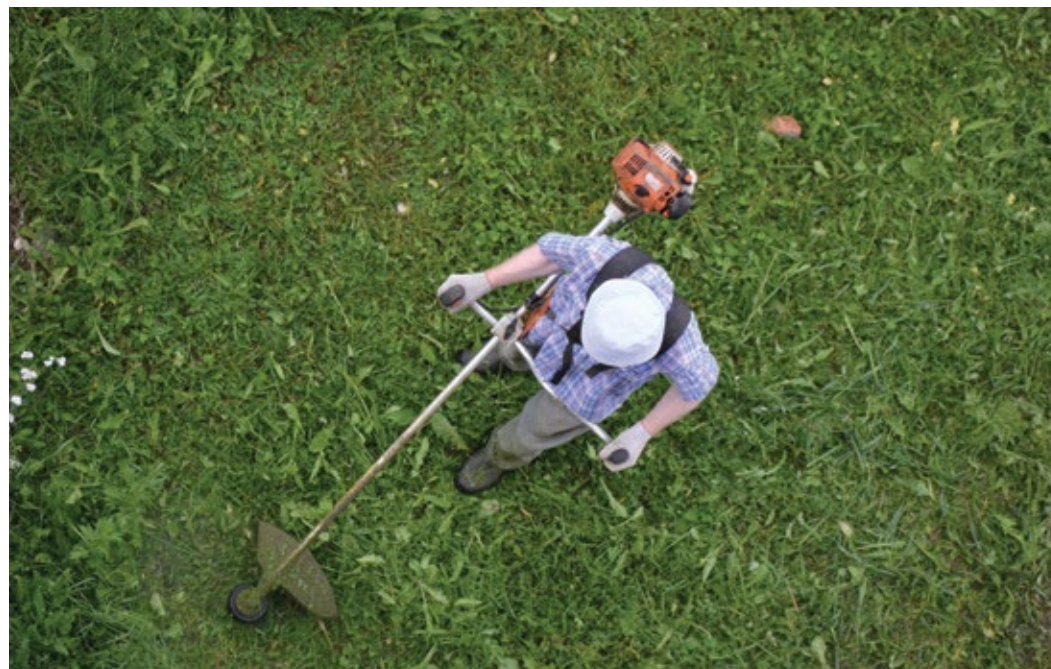
## Landscaping

**112**  
Human Trafficking  
Cases

**664**  
Labor Exploitation  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

Victims of labor trafficking in landscaping are responsible for maintaining public or private grounds, gardens, and nurseries. Landscaping is the most commonly referenced type of labor trafficking and exploitation involving H-2B visa holders in cases reported to Polaris-operated hotlines. H-2B visa holders are not eligible for federally funded legal services, making it extremely difficult to secure services for victims in landscaping.



### Trafficker Profile

Supervisors and owners of landscaping companies and subcontractors are often the exploiters, though due to limited hotline data, little is known about trafficker demographics.

### Recruitment

Most victims were recruited through job offers that turned out to be fraudulent or through other false promises or misrepresented work contracts. Some recruiters may also be responsible for the abuse and trafficking, though in cases reported to Polaris-operated hotlines, this was significantly less common than fraud by employers.

### Victim Profile

Sixty-three percent of hotline cases involved men from Mexico. Some of the workers were from Guatemala or were U.S. citizens. Cases involving women and children are rare, according to Polaris-operated hotlines.

### Methods of Control

Exploitation in landscaping sheds light on what is most problematic about the H-2B system, which allows employers and recruiters to exploit victims with little regard for standard worker protection laws. Workers may be forced to pay rent to their employers at rates much higher than market, despite sometimes not getting paid for their work. Threats to blacklist victims to prevent them from attaining employment in the U.S. in the future are not uncommon due to the lack of visa portability. Additionally, in many cases reported to the hotlines, victims' wages were confiscated or withheld to keep them from leaving. Victims also experienced various threats to themselves and/or their families if they sought help.

**Workers may be forced to pay rent to their employers at rates much higher than market, despite sometimes not getting paid for their work.**

# 17

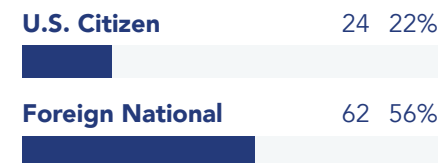
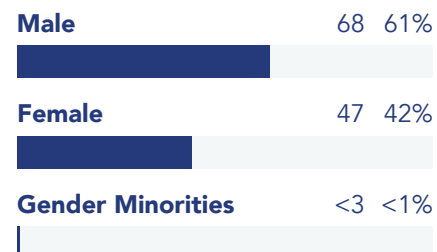
## Illicit Activities

**111**  
Human Trafficking Cases

**76**  
Cases Involving Sex Trafficking

### Description and Business Model

Criminal syndicates in illegal industries can exploit people for profit with the same levels of force, fraud, and coercion as in any legitimate labor industry. Polaris has seen this type of trafficking most frequently with street-level drug distribution businesses and cross-border drug smuggling, along with general domestic gang activity. Based on hotline data, traffickers have also exploited victims in the hazardous business of illicit drug production and in the isolated marijuana cultivation industry in Northern California and the Pacific Northwest, though limited data is available. Labor trafficking within illicit activities can occur in tandem with sex trafficking business models, as evidenced by the additional 76 cases reported to Polaris-operated hotlines that involved both sex trafficking and labor trafficking for illicit activity. The accompanying sex trafficking usually occurs when a drug distributor not only forces an intimate partner to sell drugs but to trade sex in exchange for a supply. These activities often intersect with a sub-type of residential sex trafficking that occurs in private residences used informally as commercial drug distribution homes.



### Trafficker Profile

According to hotline data, traffickers in this type include victims' intimate partners, fellow members of domestic street gangs, independent drug dealers and producers, and highly coordinated Latino cartels.

### Recruitment

Drug distributors often recruit their intimate partners to sell drugs. Domestic gangs tend to target vulnerable boys and young men who are looking for protection and a surrogate "family unit" and convince them to act as look-outs and commit burglary and sometimes more violent crimes for profit. Latino cartels and other criminal entities are known to abduct people or fraudulently promise their victims protection in their migration to the United States only to force them to carry drugs across the border.

### Victim Profile

Adult and minor female intimate partners of drug dealers, both U.S. citizen and foreign national, are routinely forced to sell drugs. In addition, domestic gangs target young U.S. citizen boys. Finally, men and vulnerable, unaccompanied boys from Mexico and Central America are chronically trafficked in cartel-controlled drug smuggling schemes.

### Methods of Control

Traffickers use extreme threats of violence against the victim and family members, intimidation in the form of gang/cartel connections, manipulation, and intense monitoring to coerce and control victims. Physical violence, often involving weapons, is also very likely in drug distribution and smuggling.

**Latino cartels and other criminal entities are known to abduct people or fraudulently promise their victims protection in their migration to the United States only to force them to carry drugs across the border.**





# 18

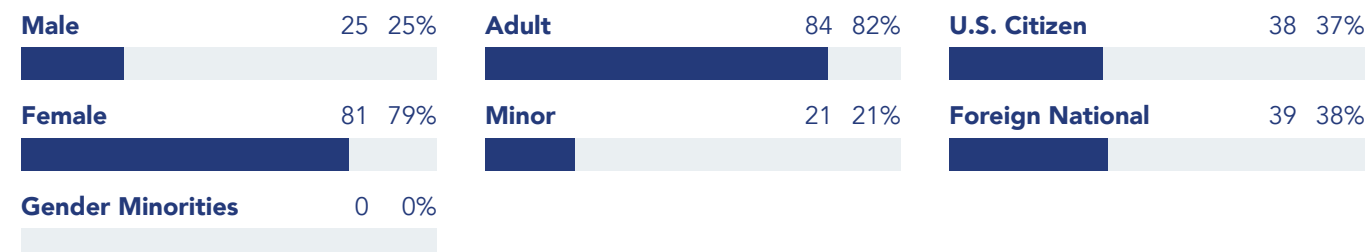
## Arts & Entertainment



### Description and Business Model

Cases of labor trafficking have been reported to Polaris-operated hotlines in a variety of sectors of the arts and entertainment industry, including modeling, athletics and, less commonly, in performing arts such as acting, choirs, and dance troupes. The hotlines also have received reports of labor trafficking in exotic dancing. While the lines between sex and labor trafficking in strip clubs is often complex, if the adult victim is forced into exotic dancing with no accompanying sex act, this would be classified as labor trafficking.

**In the modeling industry, foreign and U.S. citizen women can be fraudulently recruited through social media and online classifieds with exaggerated job offers and fake immigration benefits.**



### Trafficker Profile

Traffickers include recruiters and executives in model management companies ranging from small independent agencies to large corporate entities, as well as individual “coaches” in athletics. Strip club and exotic dancing club owners are often culpable actors in trafficking, though a significant number of cases reported to the hotline involve a victim being trafficked in a strip club by an intimate partner not affiliated with the club.

### Recruitment

In the modeling industry, foreign and U.S. citizen women can be fraudulently recruited through social media and online classifieds with exaggerated job offers and fake immigration benefits. Young boys in athletics are recruited through an individual “coach” who convinces their families to pay outlandish recruitment fees with promises of a flourishing sports career and better educational opportunities. Recruitment in strip clubs can begin with a legitimate job offer or fake romantic pursuits.

### Victim Profile

Young women (both U.S. and foreign nationals) are often victimized in the modeling industry. Although more data is needed on typical visas used by traffickers, fraud involving H-1B and B-2 tourist visas have been documented. Labor trafficking in athletics often involves boys and young men from Latin America and West Africa, and U.S. citizen women are the majority trafficked for labor in strip clubs.

### Methods of Control

Victims in the modeling industry may be sexually abused and harassed, not paid, or charged exorbitant fees for crowded housing. When victims involved in athletics arrive in the U.S., they are enrolled in competitive school teams or traveling leagues and sometimes forced to practice and exercise from morning to night, causing exhaustion. Food and hygiene are limited, and victims never see any of the prize money from competitions. The most common types of control used to coerce victims in strip clubs are economic abuse (primarily wage confiscation and sometimes high fees) and emotional abuse and psychological manipulation, which can be particularly coercive when the trafficker is an intimate partner of the victim.

**Young boys in athletics are recruited through an individual “coach” who convinces their families to pay outlandish recruitment fees.**



# 19

**93**  
Human Trafficking  
Cases

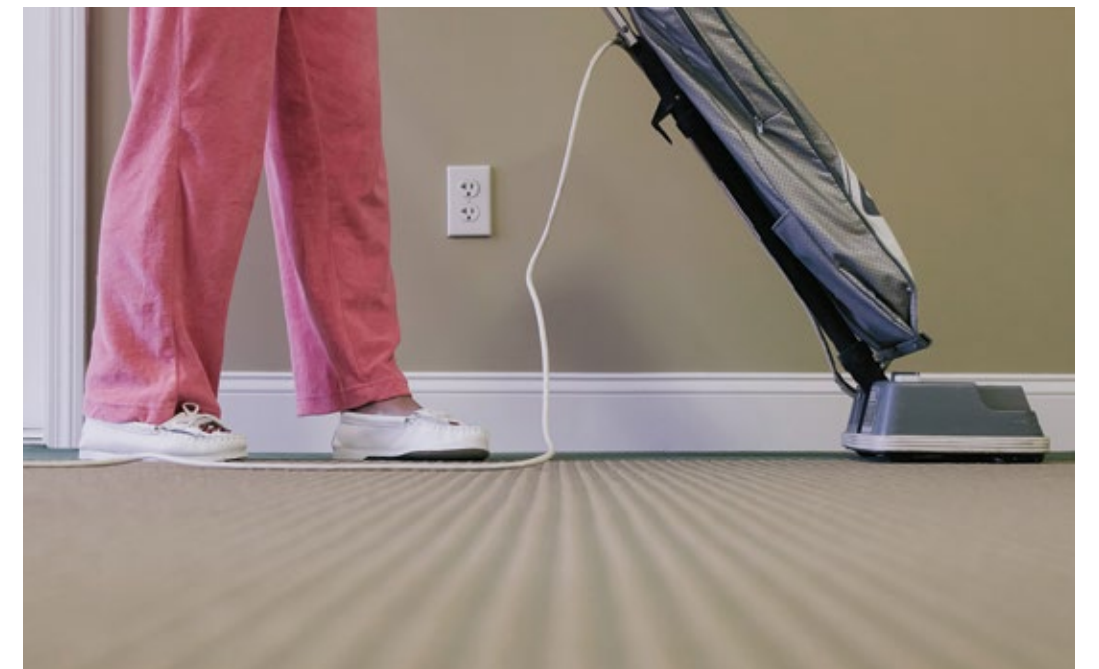
**344**  
Labor Exploitation  
Cases

## Commercial Cleaning Services

### Description and Business Model

The National Hotline has encountered trafficking and labor exploitation within commercial cleaning businesses that provide janitorial and housekeeping services to multiple private households, office buildings, and other commercial businesses.

We have not included additional data in Types #19-25 due to an insufficient number of cases.





### Trafficker Profile

Trafficker networks are largely unknown, but some data has shown traffickers can be either business owners or family members of survivors.

### Recruitment

Fraudulent job offers or other false promises are the most common methods of recruitment, according to limited hotline data. Family pressure and manipulation can also be present.

### Victim Profile

Though limited data is available, there is sufficient evidence that foreign national men, women, and unaccompanied children from Latin America are most susceptible to labor trafficking within these businesses. Others are from the Philippines and the Caribbean or are U.S. citizens.

### Methods of Control

Common methods of exploitation include withholding or confiscating wages, verbal abuse, exhausting hours, and exposure to hazardous cleaning chemicals without proper protective equipment. The situation may become trafficking when victims are told they must work off a debt, their passports are withheld, or they're coerced with threats of homelessness or deportation if they refuse to continue working.

**Foreign national men, women, and unaccompanied children from Latin America are most susceptible to labor trafficking within these businesses.**

**20**

**78**  
Human Trafficking Cases

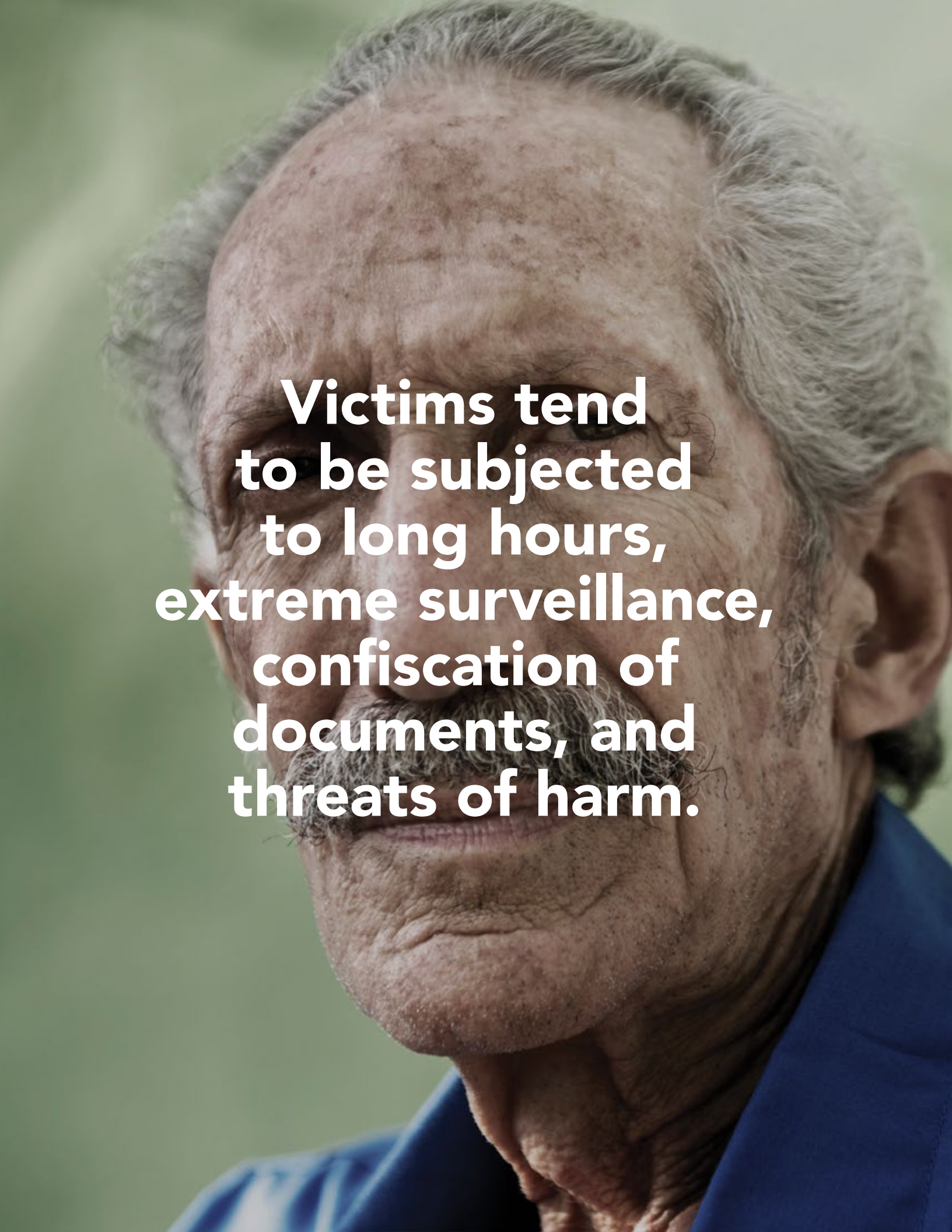
**200**  
Labor Exploitation Cases

## Factories & Manufacturing

### Description and Business Model

Workers in food processing, clothing, and shoe manufacturing factories are especially vulnerable to labor abuse and trafficking. Polaris-operated hotlines have also documented labor trafficking and exploitation cases in a wide range of other manufacturing facilities, including factories producing electronic devices and vehicles.





**Victims tend to be subjected to long hours, extreme surveillance, confiscation of documents, and threats of harm.**

#### **Trafficker Profile**

More information on trafficker demographics is needed, but as with most labor trafficking types, direct supervisors and middle managers tend to facilitate abuse. The National Hotline has also documented family connections between traffickers and survivors.

#### **Recruitment**

While data is limited, preliminary hotline data suggests that fraudulent job offers are common. Some victims have reported being recruited by family members.

#### **Victim Profile**

H-2B visa holders are often victims, but minors also have been referenced in National Hotline cases. Nationalities are much more diverse than in most other labor trafficking types, but the highest concentrations are from Southeast Asia, Latin America, and India.

#### **Methods of Control**

Victims tend to be subjected to long hours, extreme surveillance, confiscation of documents, and threats of harm. Victims have reported being denied bathroom breaks to increase assembly line productivity and being locked inside the factory. In addition to being a form of coercion used to control victims, this confinement is a significant safety concern. According to hotline data, workers also frequently experience verbal abuse and degradation as a means of control, as well as economic abuse such as the withholding of wages or creation of debts to keep workers in abusive situations. Victims may also experience threats to blacklist them from future employment opportunities or to report them to immigration authorities.

**Victims may also experience threats to blacklist them from future employment opportunities or to report them to immigration authorities.**



# 21

## Remote Interactive Sexual Acts

78  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

Remote interactive sexual acts are live commercial sex acts simulated through remote contact between the buyer and victim through technologies such as webcams, text-based chats, and phone sex lines. Because of the lack of physical contact between the victim and buyer, traffickers can frame this business during victim recruitment as a “low-risk” endeavor. However, as with all commercial sex, this business model becomes sex trafficking if the victims are compelled to participate under force, fraud, or coercion, or if the victim is under the age of 18.

### Trafficker Profile

Little is known about trafficker profiles and network structure for this type of sex trafficking, although limited hotline data suggests that a trafficker’s relationship to the victim can range from a significant other to someone a victim considers nothing more than an exploiter.

### Recruitment

Recruitment tends to involve posing as a benefactor, promising lucrative earnings, professional modeling opportunities, or false romantic interests. Hotline data also include cases where webcam websites and phone lines are used as recruitment grounds for sex traffickers.

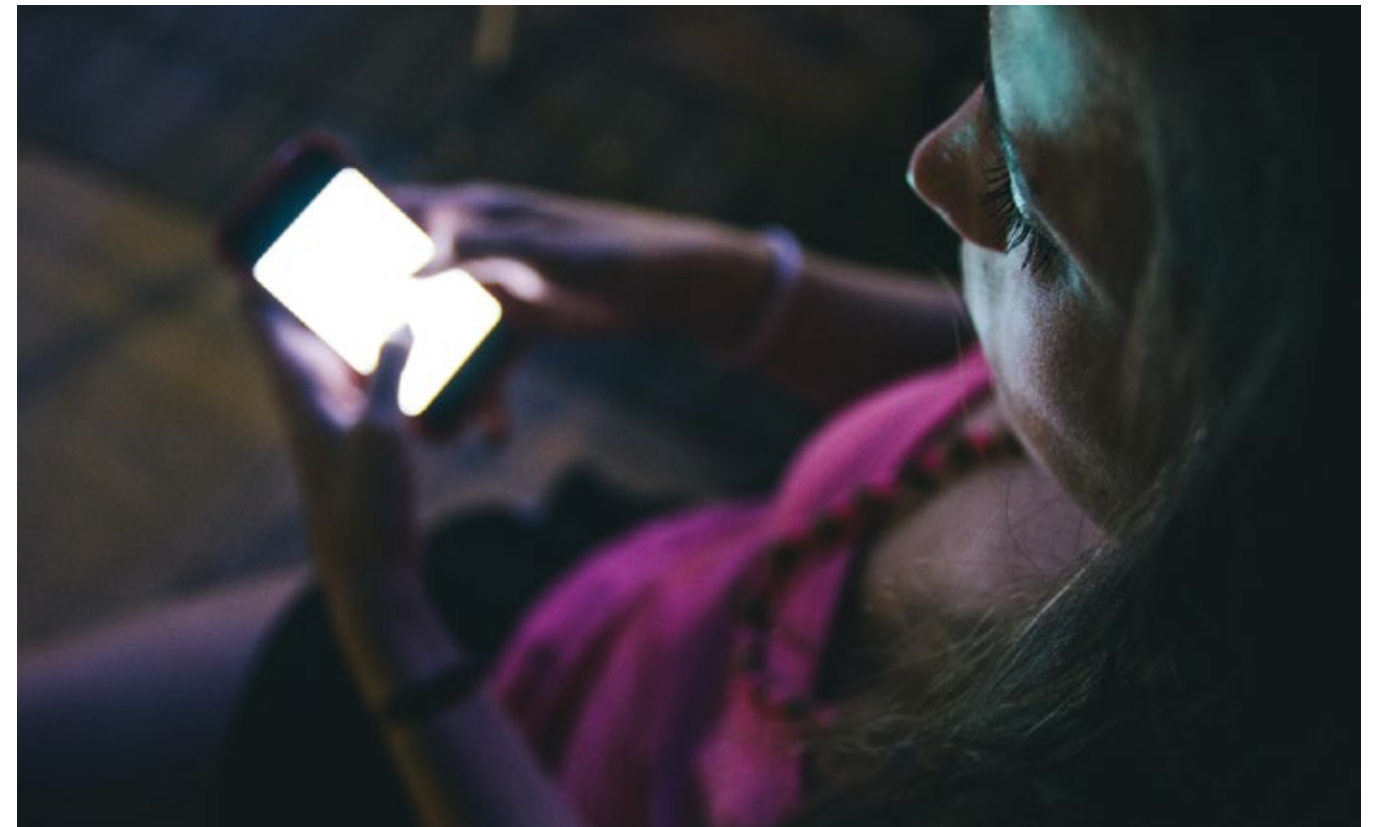
### Victim Profile

In the limited number of cases reported to Polaris-operated hotlines, U.S. citizen females are the most frequent victims; minors are victimized in just under half of all cases. The same data has also revealed a surprising 12 percent of cases involve the LGBTQ community, most commonly in regard to the identity of the victim(s). Causes for such a high incidence of LGBTQ victims merit more research because that rate is much higher than the common 2 to 5 percent of LGBTQ cases in other types of human trafficking.

### Methods of Control

In some cases victims have reported manipulation, threats of violence, isolation, and/or debt to traffickers or recruiters, though due to limited data, little is known about exact details.

**U.S. citizen females are the most frequent victims; minors are victimized in just under half of all cases.**



# 22

## Carnivals

**52**  
Human Trafficking  
Cases

**79**  
Labor Exploitation  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

Labor exploitation and human trafficking cases involving carnival workers have been reported to the National Hotline. Workers are responsible for operating rides, games, and food stands, as well as for assembling and disassembling carnival equipment for movement between cities. Carnival companies may contract with state and county fairs to provide rides and games, and a small number of companies and recruiters dominate the U.S. carnival industry.

### Trafficker Profile

Formal labor recruiters and carnival owners and supervisors tend to be responsible for abuse and exploitation. Data indicates that these are typically U.S. citizen men.

### Recruitment

Formal H-2B labor agents dominate the recruitment, falsely promising safe and fair working conditions throughout the season. Instead, some victims have attested that they were made to pay illegal recruitment fees for the job, visa, and/or transportation and had to sleep in crowded, dilapidated trailers.

**Sometimes workers are told that their wages are being held for them until the end of their contracts, so if they try to leave abusive situations before then, they will have no money.**

### Victim Profile

Most cases involve men and women from Mexico or South Africa on H-2B visas. While some U.S. citizens have been documented to work at carnivals, the extent of their potential exploitation is relatively unknown.

### Methods of Control

Victims have been known to stay awake around the clock to set up, operate, and dismantle equipment before traveling to the next city to repeat the exhausting process. This lack of sleep can cause serious workplace accidents due to extreme fatigue, for which victims are typically denied medical services. Isolation from any supportive services is also common due to the travel and lack of adequate legal protections for H-2B workers. Workers have also reported threats of blacklisting or deportation and document confiscation to keep them from leaving or reporting abuse. Workers may also experience wage theft, exorbitant fees for housing, and fraudulent payment deductions. Sometimes workers are told that their wages are being held for them until the end of their contracts, so if they try to leave abusive situations before then, they will have no money.





# 23

## Forestry & Logging

**50**  
Human Trafficking  
Cases

**163**  
Labor Exploitation  
Cases

### Description and Business Model

According to data from Polaris-operated hotlines, trafficking in the forestry industry has included pine tree farm workers, reforestation planters, loggers, and workers maintaining woodland areas.



**Victims may suffer extreme physical violence, health complications from sleeping outdoors and hazardous work conditions, denial of medical care, and death threats to them or their families back home.**



### Trafficker Profile

Traffickers are typically management or crew leaders within the forestry business, although as in other complicated labor supply chains, victims sometimes have a difficult time understanding who is responsible for their exploitation.

### Recruitment

Unfair recruitment practices are not uncommon and, as in other H-2B recruitment schemes, can include the victim being charged exorbitant and illegal fees.

### Victim Profile

Survivors in forestry are almost exclusively men from Mexico and Guatemala on H-2B visas, according to cases reported to the National Hotline.

### Methods of Control

Case data shows that victims are not paid by the hour as required by law, but are paid per acre or tree they plant, drastically decreasing earning potential. Traffickers may withhold or confiscate payment to keep workers from leaving. In some hotline cases, workers experienced debt bondage as another form of economic control. Document confiscation by traffickers is also frequently reported, along with threats to blacklist workers from future jobs or threats to have workers deported. Even though H-2B workers in forestry are entitled to government-funded legal services, victims are often kept in isolation and are unaware what city or state they are in, making it difficult or impossible to access help or report abuse. All the while, victims may suffer extreme physical violence, health complications from sleeping outdoors and hazardous work conditions, denial of medical care, and death threats to them or their families back home.

**Survivors in forestry are almost exclusively men from Mexico and Guatemala on H-2B visas, according to cases reported to the National Hotline.**

**24**

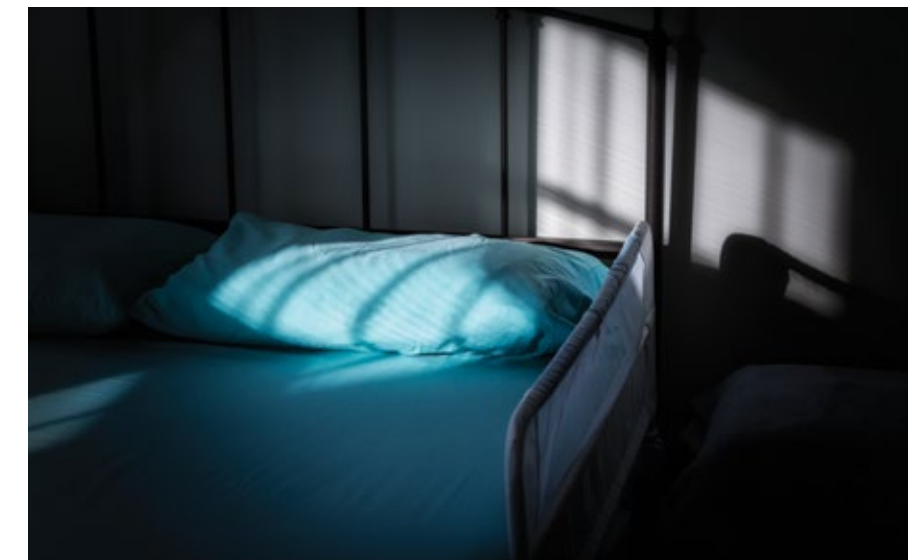
**46**  
Human Trafficking  
Cases

**59**  
Labor Exploitation  
Cases

## Health Care

### Description and Business Model

Labor trafficking victims in the healthcare industry are primarily found in nursing homes and as home health aides, according to hotline data. The lines between domestic work and in-home health care can be difficult to ascertain, since some domestic caregivers are expected to provide medical services without proper certification. Because of the intersections with home healthcare and domestic work, it is important to consider both industries when crafting intervention and disruption efforts.





### Trafficker Profile

With this type it can be difficult for even survivors to decipher who their primary trafficker is due to the complicated relationships among recruiters, staffing agencies, and employers. In some cases, the trafficker may obfuscate these relationships to avoid detection. The trafficker may even be part of the victim's family.

### Recruitment

The most frequent recruitment tactics are not known due to limited data, though preliminary hotline data suggests that misrepresented job offers and other false promises are used, and that in some cases the trafficker may use a family relationship with the victim as a recruitment strategy.

### Victim Profile

Migrant women from the Philippines are most prevalent in hotline data, followed by West African immigrant women and U.S. citizens. Victims may possess H-1B, H-2B, J-1, or H-1C (registered nurse) visas. Male survivors are involved in 23 percent of labor trafficking within the healthcare industry, according to Polaris-operated hotline cases.

### Methods of Control

As in domestic work, the overlapping methods of control include extreme isolation, monitoring, verbal degradation, threats of deportation or blacklisting, and document confiscation. High levels of fraud and misrepresentation of job conditions were also reported among victims on the hotlines. Economic abuse is the most frequent method of coercion and includes nonpayment or underpayment of wages, debt bondage, and limiting access to a victim's own funds or bank accounts.

**Migrant women from the Philippines are most prevalent in hotline data, followed by West African immigrant women and U.S. citizens.**

# 25

**37**  
Human Trafficking Cases

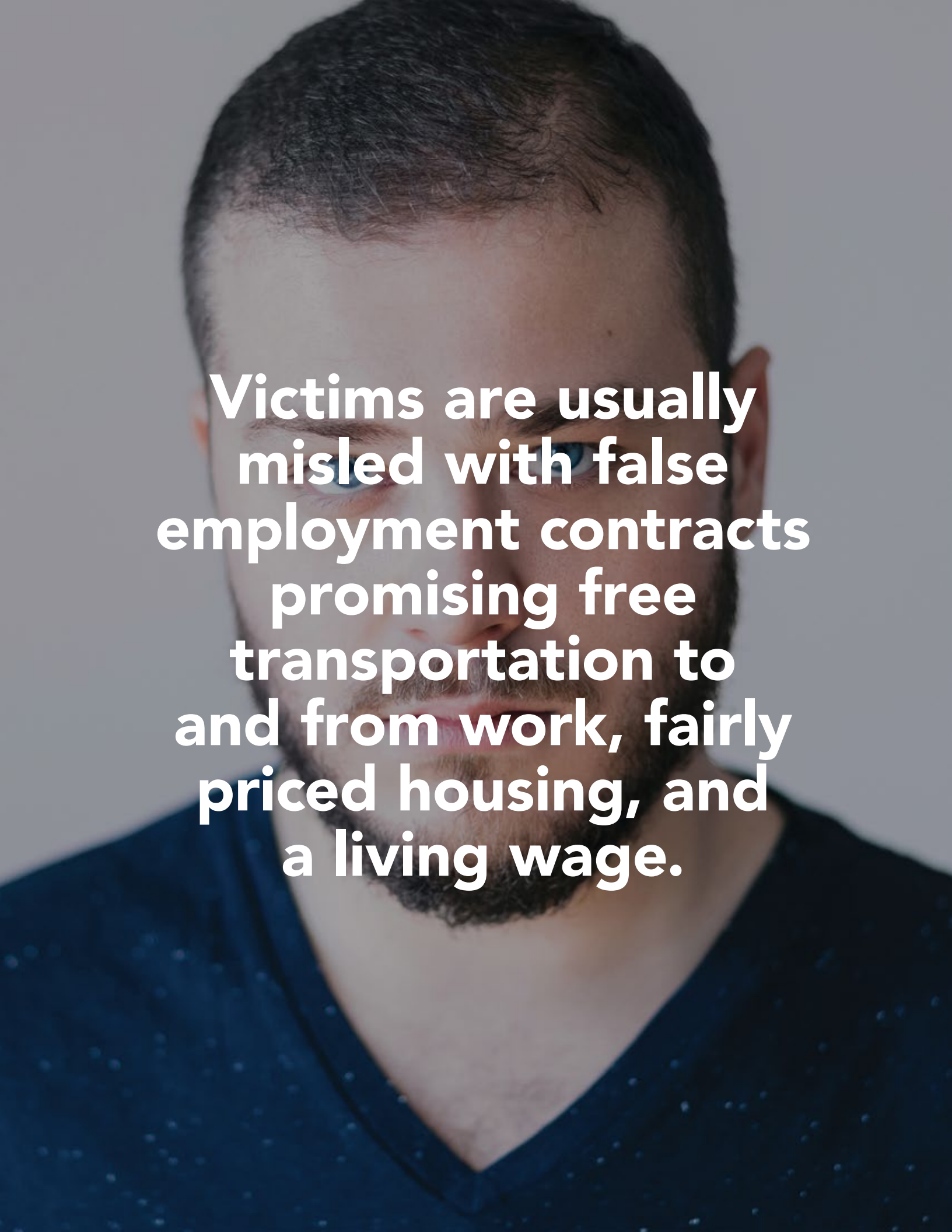
**220**  
Labor Exploitation Cases

## Recreational Facilities

### Description and Business Model

Labor trafficking for work in recreational facilities has been reported to the National Hotline in amusement parks, summer camps, golf courses, and community swimming pools, though it may also occur in other sectors of this industry. Positions at these facilities include lifeguards, camp counselors, ride attendants, and food vendors.





**Victims are usually misled with false employment contracts promising free transportation to and from work, fairly priced housing, and a living wage.**

#### Trafficker Profile

Limited data provides evidence that traffickers are typically part of the facility's management. However, some cases have involved complicit visa sponsors and recruiters.

#### Recruitment

Victims are usually misled with false employment contracts promising free transportation to and from work, fairly priced housing, and a living wage.

#### Victim Profile

While victims of labor exploitation tend to be young adults on J-1 visas as part of the work and travel program, nationalities run the gamut from countries across Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, East and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and even the U.S. (about one-third of trafficking cases), according to hotline data.

#### Methods of Control

Economic abuse, such as withholding wages, was the most common method used to control workers, along with intense monitoring and threats to deport or blacklist workers. Verbal abuse and document confiscation are also not uncommon methods used to keep workers in abusive situations. Although the J-1 is one of the only work visas that allows portability, the process for switching employers can be cumbersome and confusing for victims seeking to leave abusive employers.

#### Types Yet To Be Defined

1671 TRAFFICKING CASES

Through data collected from Polaris-operated hotlines we have also documented 10 other types of human trafficking. These may become distinct types in the future as we accrue more data.

Trafficking is occurring in legal brothels and in non-spa or bar-like commercial businesses. Labor trafficking is also known to have occurred in retail, mining, education, professional, and scientific specialty occupations, and the fishing industry. Cases involving various types of forced labor and sexual exploitation have also been documented among fraudulent religious organizations, which have been reported to employ manipulation and coercion. Additionally, certain instances of sanctioned prison labor may meet the definition of forced labor and human trafficking, depending on the circumstances. While hotline data on these industries is lacking, it is possible that such data could emerge in the future with increased awareness and outreach. Polaris's research team welcomes insight from the community on additional types of trafficking that should be highlighted or explored.



# Next Steps

*The Typology of Modern Slavery* in the U.S. lays the groundwork for igniting a new type of discussion on how to efficiently and effectively disrupt and eliminate human trafficking networks by type on a national scale.

It allows stakeholders to begin to look more precisely at each category in order to take steps to prevent and eliminate distinct forms of exploitation. Providing youth with education about human trafficking in school, for example, can help minors identify when they or their peers are at risk of recruitment.

This report should also encourage distinct stakeholders to connect across disciplines to develop action plans that address policies and practices that fuel human trafficking across types. This kind of collaboration will enable diverse experts and community actors to take collective action on the most significant factors driving human trafficking. For example, federal reform and oversight of non-immigrant work visas to better protect foreign national temporary workers would help loosen the grip of control and coercion that many traffickers leverage across multiple human trafficking types.

This report and the discussion it inspires should help the field make smarter investments that can have both deeper and wider effect on public health and safety.

We encourage stakeholders to identify ways their unique expertise can leverage this material in order to combat human trafficking, and we look forward to actively participating in the development of strategies to address all 25 types in the months and years to come.

**This report should also encourage distinct stakeholders to connect across disciplines to develop action plans that address policies and practices that fuel human trafficking across types.**

## Acknowledgements

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## About Polaris

Polaris is a leader in the global fight to eradicate modern slavery. Named after the North Star that guided slaves to freedom in the U.S., Polaris systematically disrupts the human trafficking networks that rob human beings of their lives and their freedom. Our comprehensive model puts victims at the center of what we do – helping survivors restore their freedom, preventing more victims, and leveraging data and technology to pursue traffickers wherever they operate.

