

**A Research Study on Human Trafficking Victims:  
Survivors Speak Out about Long-Term Needs**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the direct services Refugee Services of Texas, Inc. (RST) provides as a coordinator of the Central Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CTCAHT). The study is a follow-up to Phase I research conducted in 2007 (Busch et al.). The Phase I study, *Assessing the Needs of Human Trafficking Victims* (Busch et al., 2007) revealed that the CTCAHT has made, and continues to make, tremendous progress in building a coalition and in providing comprehensive services to victims and survivors of human trafficking. This Phase II project varies from Phase I research by exploring in-depth the services available to human trafficking clients from RST. Research indicates that victims are identified by traffickers because of their perceived “vulnerabilities” or lack of opportunities. The aim of this study is to explore if clients of RST are getting more needed services, and feel a sense of efficacy, after having received victim services, thus making them less likely targets of re-victimization because of these opportunities.

For this project, nine interviews (n = 9) were conducted with victims and survivors of human trafficking. Researchers gathered data using a semi-structured questionnaire that queried about barriers and success factors related to victims’ services and coalition operations. Interviews were conducted in participants’ homes using bilingual research staff and/or trained interpreters and were digitally-recorded and subsequently transcribed. Participation in this study was completely voluntary, and participants could end their interviews at any time. Specific steps were taken to ensure that the participants’ identities were protected. Open coding of data was utilized and the data were subsequently organized or grouped into properties and later developed into contextual themes around the research questions. The findings are grounded with the use of direct quotes from participants.

Data are organized into two sections based on the sources of data. Part A includes findings from in-depth interviews with victims and survivors of human trafficking who received services from RST and pertains to services needed and used. Part B represents data collected by RST, in compliance with the OVC grant. This includes primarily output data: number and type of victim services; the coalition’s collaborative partners; and training activities.

In general, findings suggest that the services provided by RST improve the self-sufficiency and self-efficacy of victims of human trafficking. RST’s clients generally feel safer and more self-sufficient than they did immediately following the trafficking experience. Data illustrate that these services are provided in an atmosphere of compassion and patience, and foster client empowerment. Participants in this study easily identified the strengths of the RST program and staff.

Nonetheless, RST services designed specifically for victims of human trafficking are limited in time and in scope. Findings demonstrate the continued vulnerabilities experienced by victims and survivors, with particular challenges around financial stability and family reunification. While participants work toward English proficiency, better-paying jobs with better conditions and work hours are difficult to find, and victims continue to experience difficulty making ends meet. Participants also experience a new array of needs in anticipation of and following reunification with their families. Help-seeking also

continues to be an obstacle for victims, as their social network is not knowledgeable about the legal system or how to access public benefits.

The IDVSA research team has found that the long-term needs of victims of human trafficking may be similar to clients from other low-income communities, however what is missing is an understanding of human trafficking among mainstream service providers. Barriers that may be unique to this population include safety, trust, language, and culture. There is an unstated assumption that human trafficking clients will quickly access mainstream services, and that those mainstream services will be adequate. However, clients' needs and the structure of both mainstream services and services for victims of human trafficking are not always in harmony. Further dialogue is needed on the topic of long-term needs and family reunification. In the absence of extended or formally-structured services, creative, culturally relevant community-based solutions are needed.

## BACKGROUND

The Central Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CTCAHT) was founded in the summer of 2003 in response to Austin's first case of human trafficking. The case involved three minors and alerted law enforcement and social service providers to the need for greater preparation in responding to future victims of trafficking. The CTCAHT has members from law enforcement and social services from the local, state, and federal levels. While the broader CTCAHT coordinates outreach and training activities, RST is specifically responsible for providing the direct victim services funded by the Office for Victims of Crime. RST continues to provide services to victims of human trafficking and to improve identification, rescue, outreach, and training to law enforcement.

The Phase I study, *Assessing the Needs of Human Trafficking Victims* (Busch, Fong, Heffron, Faulkner, & Mahapatra, 2007) revealed that the CTCAHT has made, and continues to make, tremendous progress in building a coalition and in providing comprehensive services to victims and survivors of human trafficking. The CTCAHT's structure, communication, and use of resources are considered a model for other coalitions striving to increase awareness about human trafficking and to provide essential victim services. Interviews with social service providers, law enforcement professionals, and victims and survivors of human trafficking (n=19) also identified challenges CTCAHT faces in serving victims and survivors of human trafficking: 1) Need for standardized protocols; 2) Inadequate resources and available services; 3) Barriers within law enforcement procedures; 4) Victims'/survivors' fears and emotional needs; 5) Cultural competence barriers; and 6) Communication and information barriers.

This Phase II project varies from Phase I research by exploring in depth the services available to human trafficking clients. Research indicates that victims are identified by traffickers because of their perceived "vulnerabilities" or lack of opportunities. The aim of this study is to explore if over time clients of RST have more opportunities by getting more of the needed services, and gaining a sense of efficacy.

Throughout this report, victims and survivors of human trafficking may be referred to simply as 'victims' for narrative efficiency and is not meant to be demeaning or judgmental. The research team recognizes that at the time they are receiving services from RST, these clients have survived a horrifying combination of physical and emotional abuse, trauma, and financial distress. We honor the journey they are making from victim to survivor.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The subject of human trafficking is an area of interest, research, and intense debate. Federal legislation and prosecution of cases have made human trafficking a politically volatile issue as media attention informs the American public that human slavery is a robust industry in our country. Through the same federal legislation that allows prosecutors to hold human traffickers accountable for their crimes, victims are able to receive social services and immigration relief. While much progress has been made in the fight against this hidden crime, research gaps remain, and issues related to the effectiveness of interventions need to be addressed.

### Extent of the Problem

Human trafficking, often referred to as modern day slavery, has emerged in the past decade as a major criminal and social justice issue, both in the United States and around the world (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2008; Polaris Project, 2009). The U.S. Department of State *Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP)* (2008) estimates 800,000 victims of human trafficking worldwide. The Polaris Project, which staffs a human trafficking hotline and is one of the largest national organizations engaged in anti-trafficking efforts, estimates 200,000 American minors are at risk for human trafficking ([www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)).

In a recent effort to capture better data, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2007–2008) collects information on the number of *alleged* human trafficking incidents as reported by federally funded law enforcement human trafficking task forces using a relatively new Human Trafficking Reporting System (HTRS). Reporting on initial HTRS data, Kyckelhahn, Beck, and Cohen (2009) identify 1,229 total alleged incidents of human trafficking. Of those, 83 percent were sex trafficking, 12 percent were labor trafficking, and 5 percent were identified as other or unknown forms of trafficking. Given that there is missing data for 62.7 percent of these cases, limitations of these data persist, and strategies are being developed to improve reporting to HTRS.

While the HTRS attempts to standardize data from federal task forces, an accurate estimate of the number of trafficked persons remains elusive. This is in part due to barriers faced by law enforcement with identification, investigation, and prosecution of these crimes. The lack of agreement on statistics of human trafficking is largely due to the scarcity of empirical studies on human trafficking (Gozdziak and Collett, 2005). Literature on trafficking largely focuses on defining the problem of trafficking or calling for increased attention to the issue. Researchers face methodological issues in conducting studies on human trafficking because victims are hidden and therefore difficult to identify (Brennan, 2005; Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005; David, 2007). However, recent efforts have focused on this dilemma. For example, Clawson and Layne (2007) developed and applied statistical models for estimating the magnitude of human trafficking. Using a different approach, Weiner and Hala (2008) designed a screening tool to collect standardized data and applied this tool in New York City. As the body of research on human trafficking advances, a shift toward identifying and investigating cases and the successful prosecution of those cases is necessary. Understanding the factors that promote and hinder law enforcement strategies will effectively guide future programs, policies, and laws on human trafficking.

### Policy Responses & Laws

While many governments around the world are addressing the issue of human trafficking, the United States may be leading the way toward a better understanding of the issue through the implementation of effective criminal justice and social service responses. The attention paid to trafficking in the 1990s led to federal legislation to protect victims and increase prosecution. Landmark acts in this country are the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) signed by President Clinton in 2000 and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Acts of 2003, 2005, and 2008. These acts have set domestic and international standards for anti-trafficking efforts, including prevention, prosecution of traffickers, and protection of victims.

The TVPA defines human trafficking as: “the recruitment, harboring, transporting, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, slavery, or forced commercial sex acts.” (TVPA, section 103(8)). The TVPA also entitles trafficked persons to benefits, services, and protection from deportation.

Thirty three states have anti-trafficking laws (<http://www.humantrafficking.neu.edu/responses/>). In Texas, the first anti-trafficking law was passed in 2003 and amended in 2007. Further state anti-trafficking legislation is under discussion during the 81<sup>st</sup> session of the Texas Legislature which ends May 2009.

### Types of Trafficking

Victims of human trafficking fall into two broad categories—sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Women and children trafficked into sex industries are often forced into activities such as prostitution and pornography. The foundation of the sex trafficking trade is female victims and male perpetrators, and the gender roles of victims and perpetrators merit gender-focused strategies to combat sex trafficking (Hughes, 2000; Banzon, 2005).

Victims of trafficking for labor may be forced into domestic servitude or industrial labor. One crucial component in labor trafficking is migration. Industries that demand cheap labor, such as agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing and construction, encourage migration of unskilled workers. In the absence of standards to protect their human rights, migrants become particularly vulnerable to exploitation (Richards, 2004).

While sex trafficking receives a great deal of attention, trafficking for labor purposes is actually in greater demand (Feingold, 2005). Labor trafficking applies to men, women, boys, and girls. Currently, only numbers concerning the trafficking of women and children are used in estimate models (Clawson, Layne, Small, 2006). Excluding data on men actually reduces the number of victims that receive attention. While research on sex trafficking is criticized for being ideological, there is very little attempt to analyze labor trafficking through the development of a theoretical framework for understanding this phenomena (Gozdziak, Bump, 2008). Without further research on labor trafficking as separate from sex trafficking, it remains difficult to adequately address the problem.

### Smuggling vs. trafficking

Despite the general agreement around broad definitions and types of trafficking, there are still some sticking points amongst advocates working on trafficking issues. For example, there is still an unclear line for some between smuggling and trafficking (Albanese et al., 2004; Omelaniuk, 2005). Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (2005) defines smuggling as “the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person(s) across an international border, in violation of one or more countries laws, either clandestinely or through deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents (Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, HSTC@State.gov).” Smuggling is generally defined as illegal transport of an individual into a country (Albanese et al., 2004). Smuggling and trafficking are similar in that both re-direct benefits of migration away from the individual to illicit businesses (Omelaniuk, 2005). The main difference between smuggling and trafficking is the lack of coercion in smuggling. However, it is well recognized that smuggling often involves deceit on the part of the smuggler and that people smuggled across borders are vulnerable to victimization. Smuggling is also often a short term venture while exploitation through trafficking continues once a victim is in another country (Albanese et al., 2004). Often individuals are willingly smuggled into the U.S. but later become trafficking victims through forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation. Because of the grey area between smuggling and trafficking, laws may fail to identify trafficking victims because their movement into an area was not physically forced (U.S. Department of State, 2006). Moreover, victims of human trafficking are considered victims of a federal crime, where individuals who are smuggled into the U.S. are considered criminals and are subject to deportation.

### Services for victims of trafficking

Short-term services for survivors of human trafficking are essential to rebuilding lives. As part of the mission to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims, the federal government created grants administered through the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) to provide critical services to newly identified victims of human trafficking (Caliber Associates, 2007). Grant monies allow community agencies to address acute or immediate needs, and provide housing, mental health services, medical care, food, clothing, legal services, advocacy, and community referrals for victims during a critical time (Caliber Associates, 2007).

More focus is required to identify and develop services for the long-term needs of human trafficking survivors. As service agencies help survivors regain independent lives, victims have cited the need for long-term employment assistance, English language acquisition, immigration status, independent and permanent housing, and family reunification (Caliber Associates, 2007). If a trafficker is not caught, safety continues to be a long-term concern for victims (Caliber Associates, 2007). Long-term mental health needs are an area of importance as survivors begin to create their new lives. Many survivors state that their initial focus on basic necessities led them to set aside their mental health concerns. However, as survivors become independent, their mental health problems begin to surface, and some survivors report receiving subsequent mental health services (Caliber Associates, 2007). As the discussion of trafficking progresses, a shift towards in-depth research on the long-term needs of victims is necessary.

### Non-governmental providers

Two main types of non-governmental organizations provide services to victims of trafficking: social service agencies that provide direct services to victims; and advocacy groups that may be only indirectly involved with victims. Social service agencies provide direct services that may include legal, health, education, immigration, refugee resettlement agencies, prostitution recovery assistance, sexual assault and domestic violence interventions, child-focused services, and faith-based services. Advocacy groups interact with government agencies, the legislatures and other political entities to promote awareness and advocate for the needs of victims (Perkins, 2005).

### Service delivery

Because the needs of trafficking victims are often very extensive, few agencies exist whose sole mission is to serve victims of trafficking, and so the service needs of victims are met by a variety of agencies (Clawson et al., 2003). Often these agencies primarily serve clients with similarities to victims of trafficking, including domestic violence victims, immigrants and refugees, and victims of sexual exploitation (Clawson et al. 2003). Clawson et al (2003) report, for instance, that immigration and refugee agencies provide a majority of the services to the victims of trafficking. Many agencies have had to adapt their service delivery systems to serve victims of trafficking. Fewer than one-third of service providers included in the needs assessment study conducted by Clawson et al. (2003) had some sort of formal procedure or a protocol to assist the victims. Other providers relied on informal protocols by dealing with victims on a case-by-case basis, or they adapted existing protocols used with other client populations such as domestic violence victims, refugees, and others. This finding indicates that service providers are grappling with how to integrate services for victims of trafficking into their existent service delivery models. Children have proven to be a particularly difficult population to identify and serve. Further research is necessary to assist these young victims of human trafficking (Bhaba, 2004; Bump et al., 2005).

### Human Traffickers – characteristics, networks, and recruitment

While much has been written on the experiences of victims and survivors of human trafficking, less is known about their perpetrators. The biggest challenge involved in studying human traffickers lies in the fact that, similar to human trafficking victims, traffickers are a hidden population. Law enforcement agents who have broken up human trafficking rings have reported that traffickers tend to be males and older than their female victims (Farrell, McDevitt, Fahy, 2008). Troshynski and Blank (2008) sought to develop a theoretical base and trafficker profile. In attempting to find a human trafficker, researchers ultimately developed a relationship with a “gatekeeper.” Such research, while sincere in its attempt to provide relevant information, is problematic in terms of safety and reliability. Some current knowledge of human traffickers comes from trafficking survivors (Clawson, Layne, Small, 2006).

The authors of this report are currently conducting a study designed to develop typologies of human trafficking (Busch-Armendariz et al., expected August 2009). The goal of the project is to explore types of traffickers based on key characteristics found in the literature and in prosecuted cases. The initial phase of this research involved a review of literature and media reports of prosecuted cases related to human trafficking. The second, and current, phase involves in-depth interviews with prosecutors and investigators at local, state, and federal levels who have extensive experience working cases involving

human trafficking crimes. In a future phase, currently unfunded, interviews will be conducted (using non-OVC funds) with human traffickers who have been convicted on charges related to human trafficking. Trafficker typologies will serve as a guide for successful investigations and prosecutions, improved service delivery to victims and survivors, and enhanced knowledge related to preventing this crime.

The literature offers more insight into the formal and informal networks that are central to human trafficking operations. Some human traffickers are linked to ethnic diasporas. Traffickers will exploit their connections to a group's movement and migration and use it to hide their chain of human trafficking (Turner & Kelly, 2008). Human traffickers are also linked to transnational organized crime. Traffickers in the U.S. tend to be associated with small criminal groups, gangs, entrepreneurs and corrupt individuals exploiting their fellow compatriots (Finckenaure & Schrock, 2006). Ninety-two percent of law enforcement agents surveyed in a NIJ-sponsored project stated that human trafficking is linked to criminal networks involved in drugs and prostitution (Farrell, McDevitt, Fahy, 2008).

Current research on human smugglers sheds light on the role of informal connections used in recruitment, which may be relevant to human trafficking. Zhang & Chin (2003) discovered that human smugglers relied on informal networks composed of friends, relatives, and business associates for potential referrals. Family members can also be traffickers or a source of referrals of potential victims, including their own children (Gjermeni, et al, 2008). Women, who compose the majority of victims, appear to sometimes serve as recruiters for the trafficking chain. Women thought to be previous victims may be "promoted" within the organization to recruit new victims, thereby avoiding further victimization (Turner & Kelly, 2008).

#### Legal responses to human trafficking: Investigation, prosecution, and collaboration

Challenges to the legal response to human trafficking are varied and complex and are related to perceptions about the prevalence of human trafficking, training on investigation and prosecution, and forming effective collaborations. Between 73 and 77 percent of local, state, and national law enforcement surveyed perceive human trafficking as rare or non-existent in their communities (Farrell et al., 2008). Law enforcement training is the best method for eliminating these perceptions. A NIJ sponsored project of law enforcement responses to human trafficking found that thirty-two percent of trafficking cases were discovered through the investigation of other cases (Clawson et al., 2006), which highlights the need for broadly-trained law enforcement. Law enforcement agents themselves have called for more training on identification and response techniques for investigating human trafficking cases (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2008 & Clawson et al., 2006).

Human trafficking investigations, central to a successful prosecution of a human trafficker, are time- and resource-intensive for law enforcement (David, 2008). Given this reality, law enforcement agents have cited the need for additional techniques and resources specific to the investigation of human trafficking cases - such as dedicated agents and new technology (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2008 & Clawson et al., 2006).

Law enforcement agencies face a multitude of challenges with human trafficking cases. A common challenge for law enforcement agencies is the lack of state involvement in anti-human trafficking activities and/or state legislation for human trafficking (Farrell et al., 2008; Clawson et al., 2008). As law enforcement agencies are called to respond to more criminal activity, the need for more agents becomes acute. Law enforcement agents have also called for more dedicated staff/investigators for human trafficking. Federal prosecutors also point to the importance of a victim-centered approach among law enforcement investigators and the need for closer relationships among all investigative agents working a case (Clawson et al., 2008).

The prosecution of human trafficking cases is also fraught with hurdles, especially among state and local prosecutors, who operate with fewer resources and less training. Among state and local prosecutors surveyed, 68 percent stated that human trafficking was not a problem in their jurisdictions, and only 7 percent had prosecuted a case since 2000 (Clawson et al., 2008). While Clawson et al. (2008) found that federal prosecutors have largely been trained on human trafficking and found it very useful, forty-seven percent of state and local prosecutors said there was no need for training on human trafficking prosecution in their areas (Clawson et al., 2008). Sentencing and punishment for human traffickers is another identified area of concern for law enforcement (Clawson et al., 2008).

Collaboration on human trafficking cases is critical to a successful legal response to human trafficking. Law enforcement agencies working collaboratively within their communities are more likely to identify and prosecute human trafficking cases (Farrell et al., 2008) than those who do not work collaboratively. One barrier to effective collaboration appears to be knowledge of other agencies and their roles within investigation and prosecution. Clawson et al. (2006) discovered that local law enforcement agents are often unclear on the role of federal agents within human trafficking cases. Further education on the different roles and jurisdictions of different agencies would help create and strengthen law enforcement collaborations.

#### Victim services: Collaboration through coalitions

With so few agencies devoted exclusively to serving victims of trafficking, the most common service delivery system is collaboration among agencies. Collaborative partners frequently include refugee resettlement providers, domestic violence providers, immigration attorneys, victim assistance providers, health services providers, social workers, and local and federal law enforcement (Clawson et al., 2003). Law enforcement agents and service providers have cited the need for creating and improving mechanisms for collaborative efforts (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2008).

Collaborations foster more formal structures, such as coalitions against human trafficking, which exist at the state and local level across the country. Coalitions provide a wide range of services to victims of trafficking, including shelter, safety, empowerment of victims, public education, dialogues with local and state governmental entities to formulate policies to combat trafficking, national training programs, and conferences to exchange information, knowledge and technology on the issue (Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking, 2006). Despite their increasing numbers, information about the effectiveness of these coalitions is not widely available. Because coalitions are the

most widely used form of collaboration for serving victims of trafficking, more information is needed to identify best practices and measure the effectiveness of coalitions.

### Texas – Positioned for challenges and success

Given its size and geographic location as a border state, Texas is situated to experience a wide range of human trafficking crimes. With five federally funded task forces, it is also positioned to pilot innovative approaches to preventing, investigating, and prosecuting crimes related to human trafficking.

First of all, large agencies serving populations of 250,000 or more are significantly more likely to identify and investigate cases of human trafficking (Farrell et al., 2008). Within the state of Texas, there are eight cities with populations greater than 250,000 and 11 counties with populations greater than 250,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The demographic makeup of Texas makes it appropriate for further study of rural and/or small communities' perceptions of and responses to human trafficking. Farrell et al. (2008) found that all types and sizes of law enforcement agencies have, in fact, investigated human trafficking crimes. Farrell et al. (2008) also found that law enforcement agencies in border states are more than twice as likely to have investigated human trafficking cases than non-border states.

The 2008 *Human Trafficking in Texas: A Statewide Evaluation of Existing Law and Social Services* (Busch-Armendariz et al.) has significant relevance for the present study. This study was funded by the Office of the Attorney General of Texas and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to evaluate the effectiveness of existing laws and social services in meeting the needs of human trafficking victims in the state of Texas, and to make recommendations to address the inefficiencies, and shortcomings. To achieve this, researchers interviewed and surveyed 138 law enforcement officers and prosecutors from all five federally funded task forces, state policy makers, and direct service providers. Law enforcement investigators and prosecutors were interviewed in-person (n = 45) and policy makers and direct service providers were included using a Web-based survey (n = 93). Findings suggest that human trafficking efforts in those five geographic areas demonstrate great progress in the collaboration matrix of investigation and prosecution of cases and the provision of services to victims of human trafficking. Given the complexity of human trafficking cases and the relative newness of both federal and state statutes and attention to the issue, questions and challenges persist. Those working to eliminate human trafficking continue to struggle with identifying victims, providing comprehensive and culturally competent victim services, appropriately addressing the needs of domestic victims, and securing the adequate resources and support needed to effectively investigate cases. Opportunities remain for improved information sharing across the state and increased awareness among state agencies and the broader community.

The most common recommendations across all participant groups were: maintain a victim-centered approach; increase focus on and understanding of domestic victims, particularly underage victims of human trafficking; develop and improve mechanisms for collaboration efforts across disciplines (nongovernmental organizations and law enforcement) and jurisdictions (local, state, and federal); consider a statewide organizational structure for improved services; and increase efforts toward prevention, investigation, and prosecution. Furthermore, findings indicate that additional study is necessary to better understand the scope of human trafficking in Texas regarding both international

and domestic victims. In addition, continued inquiry is necessary to determine the most appropriate avenues for improvement in prosecutorial tools, investigation strategies for increased victim cooperation, and enhanced victim services.

While Texas has shown great progress in its response to human trafficking, there is room for improvement on many levels. Of the five areas addressed in the Center for Women Policy Studies (2007) report card, Texas failed to receive a passing grade in three: victim services and protections, interagency task forces, and regulation of travel-service providers (Center for Women Policy Studies, 2007). Texas received a “B-” for its criminal statute and an “A” for legislation regarding marriage brokers. Texas’ grade was based on laws already “on the books” and did not reflect changes made by the Texas Legislature during its 80<sup>th</sup> session or any legislative changes that might be forthcoming in the 81<sup>st</sup> Session.

In general, research indicates that those working to combat human trafficking are highly committed to justice. They also face many challenges in that pursuit. By drawing on existing capacities and narrowing gaps, there are opportunities to lead and improve the criminal justice system’s response to human trafficking.

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Central Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CTCAHT) program administered by Refugee Services of Texas, Inc. (RST). The study is a follow-up to Phase I research conducted in 2007 (Busch et al.). This project varies from Phase I research by exploring in-depth the services available to human trafficking clients from RST. Research indicates that victims are identified by traffickers because of their perceived “vulnerabilities” or lack of opportunities. The aim of this study is to explore if clients of RST over time have more options, are getting more of the needed services, and feel a sense of efficacy. A portion of the participants in this study were approximately 24 months post formal services from RST. The study addresses the following two research questions:

1. What are the initial and long-term barriers to services for victims of human trafficking?
2. Are victims’ needs or “vulnerabilities” sufficiently addressed?

### Sample

Victims and survivors of human trafficking participated in the study in order to provide insight into the adequacy of services available to victims/survivors in Central Texas. All participants (n=9) were female adults age 18 years and older who were trafficked to the United States. All participants were residents of either Houston, Texas, or the Central Texas area. All participants, including Houston residents, received initial 6 months or more of victim services from RST in Austin, Texas. Other demographic information, such as age, gender, language, country of origin, or type of trafficking case was not collected in order to protect the confidentiality and identity of participants.

*Thank you for taking us into account, and it was a pleasure sharing my experience and story.*

### Recruitment

Clients served by RST were approached by staff of RST and allied service providers for possible participation in the evaluation. Using purposive sampling, participants were selected based on their having received victims’ services by RST. For purposes of privacy and confidentiality, research staff did not make any initial contact with clients. Any immediate issues that clients may have had were addressed prior to being recruited for this project and any on-going case management issues were addressed by RST staff. RST staff made a professional judgment about the readiness of these clients to participate in this project and only approached individuals whose basic, emotional and health needs were being addressed. RST staff assured all possible client participants that their participation was completely voluntary and would not impact their relationships with or access to any community services. Clients were also informed that they can change their minds about participating or stop the interview at any time without penalty. In addition, RST staff served as a support and resource agency for participants in the event that during the research interview additional issues or distress arose. Participants were paid fifty dollars in cash to compensate them for their time and expertise.

### Protection of Human Subjects

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Texas at Austin and The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Written consent was waived for this study due to the safety concerns of the population. No signatures were collected; however, verbal consent was obtained from all victim/survivor participants, in English or in Spanish, by the interviewer or interpreter. Clients were not asked any personally-identifying information, and the interview protocol did not include questions about their trafficking history. Participation in this study was completely voluntary.

The research team did not directly recruit victim/survivor participants. Rather, RST staff first approached them about participation. The IRB believed this to be a safer way to protect participants' right to decline. Participants were given the name and contact information of the research team and the IRB in case they had any concerns about this study.

### Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in interviews conducted in participants' homes, based on their preference, safety, and comfort. All interviews were conducted in Spanish by bilingual research staff or with trained language interpreters. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Recordings were destroyed after transcriptions were completed.

### Instrumentation

A semi-structured questionnaire with 22 opened-ended questions was developed for participant interviews (See Appendix A). RST's standard trafficking population report was also used in presenting output data included in Part B of the findings.

### Data Analysis Procedures

Since the research questions are exploratory in nature, a qualitative methodology using content and thematic analysis techniques was utilized. The textual data was systematically gathered and analyzed. Open coding of data was utilized and the data were subsequently organized or grouped into properties and later developed into contextual themes around the research questions. The findings are grounded with the use of direct quotes from participants. In order to be representative in selecting comments for inclusion, all responses that represent diverse thought, actions, or decisions associated with the research questions are reported.

### Challenges and Limitations to this Study

This study utilized a non-probability convenience sample, and therefore the findings are not generalizable to other coalitions or groups of trafficking victims and survivors.

## FINDINGS

Data are organized into two sections, based on the sources of data. Part A includes qualitative data gathered from the interviews conducted with victims and survivors of human trafficking about services needed and used. Part B represents data collected by RST, in compliance with the OVC grant. This includes primarily output data: number and type of victim services; the coalition's collaborative partners; and training activities.

## FINDINGS: Part A

Part A includes qualitative data gathered from the interviews conducted with clients of RST. Based on data gathered from in-depth interviews with victims and survivors who received services from RST, five themes emerged that are related to the needs and vulnerabilities of victims and survivors of human trafficking:

1. *Initial needs and services*
2. *Long-term needs*
3. *Self-efficacy*
4. *Client goals – looking forward*
5. *Program/staff strengths*

In the subsequent sections, each of these five themes will be discussed in greater depth, and will also be contextualized by victims' own words, presented separately in text boxes. All quotes are actual remarks made by study participants during interviews.

### 1. *Initial needs and services*

Participants described their initial needs and the challenges they recalled experiencing in the first months of receiving services from RST. Researchers also inquired into participants' experiences receiving services in a city different from the site of their trafficking situation, in addition to their decisions to return to that city after an initial six months of receiving services from RST.

#### Initial basic needs

Participants highlighted the basic needs they had during the initial period of receiving services from RST – housing, food, medical care, and others - and reported that these needs were well-met by RST staff. First, their safety was taken into consideration with housing provided and with other considerations, such as gift cards to purchase food items. Participants felt that having cash on hand would have made them feel unsafe and more vulnerable. Staff was also helpful in providing participants with orientation and accompaniment to the local public transportation system. Participants' need to maintain contact with family and children in their home country was also taken care of with phone cards. English as a Second Language was provided free in a very convenient location, although participants admitted that they did not always take advantage of this opportunity. Finally, participants recalled being offered counseling services in their first language.

#### Initial challenges

While participants responded positively about initial services, they also recalled the challenges they felt in those early days. There was a general sense of confusion and of being uninformed or unaware of the process and the expected outcomes of their case and situation. Participants were concerned about not knowing how long the process would take and whether or not their children would eventually be able to join them. Passing the time and finding ways to entertain themselves during this waiting period was particularly difficult.

One participant also noted that being housed with other victims from the same trafficking case was challenging. She reported that other victims demonstrated racist feelings towards her and mistreated her. Although this was the experience of one woman, it is an important consideration for the future and how housing is handled when a group of victims is rescued. In addition, there may be circumstances during the crime and between victims that direct service staff do not fully understand at the initial phase of service delivery.

#### Decisions to move back to Houston/site of crime

A majority of the participants (n=6) were trafficked in Houston as part of a larger organized crime operation involving over 80 victims. These victims had been victimized for more than a year while they were forced to work in cantinas. Houston social services were overwhelmed by the needs of this large group of women, coming soon after the large influx of people re-located to Houston from Hurricane Katrina. Although initially rescued in Houston, a small group of these women were re-located to Austin so that RST could provide services.

These six human trafficking victims discussed their reasoning for returning to Houston, the scene of their exploitation and victimization, and how they currently view this decision. (Note: the other three (n=3) participants, from unrelated trafficking crimes, received all services in Austin and were still living in Austin at the time of the interview.)

Participants reported that they felt the need to return to Houston because of an existing social network in Houston and their feelings of isolation in Austin. Even with the added fear of the traffickers, they felt more comfortable and better adjusted in Houston. They were also under the impression early on that it would be more difficult to find work and childcare in Austin, without a social network to rely on. While they reported high satisfaction with the services provided in Austin, they noted the difficulty in feeling adjusted to a new city under such stressful circumstances. Some of the decision-making to return to Houston was made collectively, as opposed to individually.

After returning to Houston, this group continued as clients of the same legal services provider in Austin. They felt comfortable with the agency and trusted the legal personnel therefore they decided it was worth the occasional trip back to Austin to continue with this agency. During the time of the interviews, participants continued their contact with the legal services agency in Austin and many had been reunified with their child as a result of this legal advocacy from Austin.

During our interviews, many participants discussed difficulty they were having with Houston social services. Although participants were highly motivated to reconnect with Houston services, particularly after their children joined them in the U.S., many reported difficulty making appointments and not having their calls returned. As a result, participants turned to RST in Austin for guidance, resource information, and support. By the time of the interviews, participants had discontinued their attempts to obtain any services in Houston. Because many of the participants needed services, particularly for their children, the research team immediately shared this feedback with RST staff who brought it to the attention of the Houston agency. The agency was open to receiving and responding to these concerns and as a result participants were given follow up services.

One participant from this group decided to stay in Austin when the others initially returned to Houston. She reported having felt isolated when the others left for Houston. Eventually the others convinced her to join them in Houston. She also wanted to have that support network in place in preparation for reunification with her child. However, at the time of the interview, she stated that she regretted the decision to move back to Houston, and that remaining in Austin would have given her more access to needed services and also given her a sense of safety.

## 2. Long-term needs

For the majority of research participants (n=7), their human trafficking experience ended two years prior to their participation in this Phase II of the study. Therefore, participants were able to identify the complex array of needs they continue to face or are beginning to face. These needs are grouped into five themes:

- Safety
- Medical health
- Emotional & psychological health
- Financial stability
- Social & familial equilibrium

*[Feeling safe] is hard. For now they are in prison, but they will be released pretty soon. Before it was just me, but now it is my son as well.*

### Safety

In general, participants' traffickers are in prison, yet these survivors expressed concern for their own safety when the perpetrator is released. They also feared for the safety of their children and for family back home in their native country. Participants also feel a sense of apprehension about those who were involved in the crime and never arrested, knowing that the traffickers' networks extend beyond prison walls. Participants talked candidly about feeling exposed to traffickers, because they are near the same communities where they were trafficked. Their move back to Houston was based on the need to have extended community support and familiarity, however, these decisions have created some fear about their safety. Several participants noted that their need for safety has increased with the arrival of their children.

*I do not feel completely safe, but I do feel safer than before. Before I did not have anything, and I was scared. I cried a lot because I have my daughter in Honduras. Even if I do not eat here I need to make sure I send money to my daughter back home. What I need now is a job so that I can feel more secure. I used to be scared because of the threats people would make like deportation but my lawyer showed me not to be scared because she told me that I have the same rights as everyone else. I feel like a real citizen because this country has been there for me and has done more for me than my own country. I wish I was born here. In my country they hurt people and no one says or does anything. Before meeting them I did not know I had rights. I do not want anything bad to happen to my daughter.*

While participants discussed their fears about traffickers' release from prison, they identified some strategies for feeling safer. One participant reported that since the group of victims from Houston are

from the same organized crime operation, they support one another by listening for and sharing news of danger or any information about the traffickers. Another participant reported going to the home of her cousin, who lives in the same city, when she feels unsafe. Finally, one participant recalled a positive experience during the early service period with RST, in terms of allaying initial fears. As part of the Houston group that was rescued simultaneously, they discussed their fears with RST staff, and she felt their fears were truly “heard” by caseworkers. They were given the time to discuss those fears and how to cope with them.

*The traffickers know a lot of people, and those people we do not know. There are a lot of people involved [that were not arrested]. For right now, I am OK. But when I get together with other victims, we talk about all these things and what can happen in the future. But we take care of each other and we are always tuned in with everything and listening for anything and right away we let each other know what we hear. That is why we also do not live together – so we can have different places to listen to what is going on.*

In general, participants had little information about their traffickers’ sentences and release status. They relied heavily on information from other victims which was not always correct. They did not access information from victim witness personnel or other government officials such as prosecutors who would have information and updates on the traffickers’ case.

*In the beginning I felt scared to move around on my own, and [the caseworkers] would go everywhere with me. Little by little I got to know places and started to lose the fear. I began to want to explore a little bit on my own. I wanted to get on the buses and start learning new things. But when I did not feel that confident yet, they were willing to take me everywhere even if it was to go buy food.*

### Medical health

Participants described challenges addressing chronic health problems and obtaining health insurance for themselves and for their children. For the most part, concerns were focused on their children’s needs. For example, participants needed information about requirements for school vaccinations. Navigating the maze of public health benefits requires a great deal of knowledge of the system, determination, and English language proficiency. While participants certainly demonstrated great determination, they often lack information and linguistic access to these services. The lack of health insurance for their children was a cause of stress and anxiety among participants.

*I try my hardest, because I know others depend on me. I have too many things on my shoulders and do not have time to feel bad.*

### Emotional & psychological health

When describing their emotional and psychological needs, participants identified that priority is given to immediate, basic needs, rather than to emotional needs. Because of the demands of everyday life, survivors are sometimes not able to devote time and energy to trauma recovery until after their lives have stabilized and their and their children's basic needs were met. Since many of them struggled month-to-month, financially addressing the recovery from trafficking seems unobtainable. Several participants did, however, express interest in identifying mental health counseling for their children. Given this, the trusting relationship that victims and survivors build with victim service providers continues to serve a vital role. Findings related to relationship-building with service providers are discussed further in this section.

*I would like to go to counseling, because part of me has not overcome everything. But I do feel much stronger than before. If you all had met me before I received all the support from the agency, I think you may have felt sorry for me. When I found out that in this country I had support, actually in this country I felt safer and more supported than I ever did in my own country. That is why I love you all so much. I do not know everyone that helped me, but in my heart I love them all.*

### Financial stability

Most participants had stable employment and were utilizing their work authorization permits. These victims were working difficult, inconsistent hours and earning low wages. They expressed great challenges in making ends meet. One participant had recently been laid off and was depending on considerable financial aid from local community organizations while she looked for a new job. All participants identified a desire for career advancement in order to be better able to make ends meet and to have more consistent work schedules. Participants also identified the need to learn English and to own a personal vehicle in order to increase the possibility of finding better work and earning higher wages. Those anticipating the arrival of their children or having recently reunited with their children expressed a heightened desire for financial stability and consistency in their employment. Furthermore, the arrival of children may stop or limit the amount of money that can be sent to the home country. This money provided the necessities for those who've been serving as caretakers of the children, often the children's grandmother. This causes stress for the women in the United States in regards to how they care for both their children as well as their parents.

*I need to learn how to manage my finances, because I know that in this country you need to work and save. I have worked until now, but the job I had earned me very little. With that job, I could not make ends meet. With roommates I paid \$200, half the normal rent, and I still had barely enough for food and to send money to my son in Mexico and then I did not have anything left. I hope with this new job which offers more money that I can be referred to someone who can help me save. In the beginning I know someone told me how, but it was not very helpful, because at that time I did not have anything to save. I would get my check and I would spend it that same day, because I needed to buy food, pay the bills, the rent, and the electricity.*

Participants also expressed a desire to be financially independent and not rely on support from community organizations or governmental assistance. This related to a sense of self-reliance and also to apprehension that using public benefits will hinder future adjustment of their legal immigration status. One participant was starting her own business and was making significant steps toward an income-generating activity.

### Social & familial equilibrium

All findings related to social and familial wellbeing among this group are related to the process of bringing children to the U.S. and victims' experiences once their children arrive. Seven of nine participants were either waiting for their children's arrival or had recently welcomed their children to the U.S. within the past several months. Their experiences illustrate a new phase of vulnerability brought by family reunification, given additional financial, social, and health needs associated with reunification.

Victims in the process of reunifying with their children first described it as an agonizing waiting game. The process takes a long time, and several participants described being ready to give up and return to their home country in order to be with their children. They also stated that it is difficult to trust the process itself and to know when or if their children will ever arrive. Documentation presented difficulties for participants on both the U.S. side and their home country. Completing all the necessary paperwork in the U.S. with competent, available legal assistance was one obstacle. However, obtaining proper passports, birth certificates, spousal approvals, and visas from the home country proves extremely difficult and time-consuming. While the wait can be agonizing and the challenges that lay ahead can be considerable, participants also draw strength from their children and from the hope and anticipation of their reunification. Since some of the women had been reunited with their children, others were given hope that their reunification was drawing closer.

*I left [my daughter] when she was two years old, and now she will be turning 13 years old. It has been a lot of years. My daughter gives me the strength to continue.*

A second concern during this waiting period is the financial preparation for the children's arrival. Participants expressed the need to have more financial stability in order to provide for their children. One participant had recently moved into a two-bedroom apartment in preparation for her three children's arrival. Earning low wages from a housecleaning job, she was not sure how she was going to be able to continue paying for the bigger apartment.

Both those waiting for their children and those whose children had recently arrived identified challenges with public benefits, health insurance, and health care for their children. Some had questions about receiving Medicaid and Food Stamps and how it will affect their legal cases for permanent residence. Participants expressed vague understandings of who is eligible for which benefits and what risks they may run into when applying for needed social services. One participant's child had been denied Medicaid. Although her child may have been eligible for CHIP, she had not applied for that program, even after having asked the Houston agency for assistance. Another

participant described having lost her job because her son was sick and she missed too much work. She then lost eligibility for Medicaid.

In addition to difficulties related to healthcare and social services, participants cited challenges preparing for school registration and arranging childcare. During interviews that took place in August, less than a month before the beginning of school, several participants were not sure which school their children would go to, how to get them enrolled, or where to get low-cost vaccinations. Several participants expressed interest in bringing over their children's caretakers (often the victims' mother) in order to help with childcare.

*They have not told me anything yet, but when my kids get here I guess they will tell me who I can ask for help if I need anything.*

In addition, participants described concern for the stress their children may experience during this transition to the U.S. One participant identified the need for mental health counseling for her child, given all the changes he'd experienced. Other participants described their children's difficulty seeing them as a parental figure, because during their long separation someone else (often the victim's mother) had served as the sole caretakers of the children. This situation is both difficult for the child, whose entire system of support has been upended and for the victim who may not be accustomed to identifying herself in the parental role.

One participant also described challenges in parenting and providing for a blended family, including a biological son in addition to a nephew who had immigrated illegally. This participant was nervous about seeking legal help for the nephew, for fear that it would hinder her son's status or cause the nephew to be deported. This reflects difficulties faced by families in the broader community who are blended in terms of legal status.

All participants in the study who had moved from Austin to Houston (n=6) chose to continue receiving legal assistance from an Austin-area provider. Participants expressed satisfaction with this decision and with the services they received around family reunification. Victims were in frequent contact with the legal services provider from the initiation of legal services to the time of these interviews.

*I left my son when he was three, and he says he cannot remember. He says I am his mom because I picked him up from the airport but not because he remembers me as his mother. He is very friendly and trusts quickly. I know it hurt him when I left him, but I told him he needed to get used to it and that now things are different. I always wanted to be with him. Two months after he arrived, he started crying a lot. I asked him why he was crying, and he said he needed his mother. I told him, 'I am here,' and he said, 'no, the one in El Salvador.' It hurt me to see him this way. I felt like I was hurting him a lot. I asked him several times if he wanted to go back, and he said no. When I left him I thought I would never see him again, and I am sure he feels the same way about his grandma. He calls her and tells her he wishes she were here.*

In general, participants lacked intentional preparation and information about the new array of needs and services required in relation to the arrival of their children. One participant was expecting her three children to arrive in one month and stated that she still did not know how to get them in school, get health insurance, or arrange child care. Given that intensive case management for victims of human trafficking is not extended to include the period surrounding family reunification, there is not a designated entity to fill this role. There exists no formal structure to initiate discussions about childcare, health insurance, school, and other parenting challenges victims may anticipate. This is extremely problematic in terms of new vulnerabilities and victims' increased risk for financial, health, and emotional instability.

### 3. *Self-efficacy*

Researchers and the staff of RST were interested in participants' current levels of self-efficacy, independence, and the degree to which participants felt they could handle their affairs successfully and navigate formal and informal systems of support. While participants demonstrated a higher level of self-sufficiency two years after having completed services, vulnerabilities persist. Given low-wage employment, limited English proficiency, and new stressors associated with family reunification, victims may find themselves on the precipice of financial and emotional instability. The loss of employment can greatly alter this precarious balance.

Given the continuing struggle to become self-sufficient and to develop networks of support, participants noted an increase, over time, in self-efficacy, or their ability to successfully manage their lives and achieve their goals. In comparison to having recently been rescued from the trafficking situation, all but one participant expressed higher current levels of confidence in their abilities and independence. Participants thanked RST, their networks of friends, having purchased a car, and having made considerable efforts to orient themselves as the reasons for this increase.

Even with an increase in self-efficacy, the transition out of victim services is a difficult one. Participants described feeling nervous or scared when their service-oriented relationship with RST ended. One participant, in fact, expressed a decrease in self-efficacy. She had moved from Austin to Houston and encountered tremendous challenges. She had felt well-protected and well-served in Austin, yet felt lost in Houston.

*The truth is that after the caseworker gave me my work permit, they told me they had finished with my services, and I got scared. I do not feel comfortable calling them back. I feel like they would not help me since they are done with me and have others to help.*

Participants still rely heavily on RST for guidance and information, even when the initial period of services has been completed. It surprised participants that RST was open and welcoming to them after services were finished. This is an extremely helpful approach and gives the agency an opportunity to provide needed information and referrals.

Once services are complete, the goal is for victims to not only become self-sufficient, but also to access mainstream financial and social services as well as to have developed a social support network. As discussed earlier, those mainstream services may prove elusive to victims. Participants identified systems of social support, although these systems were not necessarily helpful or adequate. Participants' friends, family, and community members do not necessarily know how to direct victims when they have questions or needs. In this study, many friends and family were undocumented and unfamiliar with the needed systems of help. In response to questions about help-seeking behavior, many participants stated that they simply do not know where to find help for the challenges they face. As noted before, attempts to seek help at a Houston social services provider were unproductive for those living in Houston.

*We were all trained over there (Austin). They taught us a lot. We knew we were going to be alone, so we learned how to be independent. And I do not like to depend on the government.*

#### 4. Client goals – looking forward

Participants were asked about their current goals as well as future goals. Their responses indicate both a sense of hope for a better future and their considerable motivation for recovery and stability.

Current goals identified by participants included: finding a better job with better hours and pay, becoming independent of social services and other public support/assistance, obtaining a GED, reunifying with children, and becoming proficient in English.

Long-range goals included: remaining in the U.S., sending children to college, attending cosmetology school, owning a home, starting a small business, and working for RST with other victims of human trafficking. The last goal is a true indication of survivorhood – summoning the capacity, the confidence, and the strength to give back to others who've experienced similar trauma and exploitation. It also reveals great appreciation and high regard for the services provided by RST.

#### 5. Program/staff strengths

Participants were specifically asked about the services they received, although throughout the interviews they also spontaneously and voluntarily initiated feedback about their experiences with the RST program and its staff. This feedback reveals considerable strengths of RST staff – the ability to build trusting relationships with clients, supporting a sense of empowerment and control among clients, and their willingness to learn from clients.

*I have personally contacted [Caseworker A] and [Caseworker B] directly. Right now I am also talking to [Caseworker C], but there are many people at the agency. When I go they make me feel really good. They all have a good personality. They have good manners and they make me feel comfortable enough to ask for something or say I do not want something. I can talk with total confidence.*

From the beginning, participants recalled feeling a great sense of trust with RST staff. They described feeling like they could be open and honest with RST staff and that staff were good listeners. One participant also stated that RST helped her feel strong and that she wasn't alone.

*When I received my visa, I went to them to share my experience, because they always made me feel trustful. And it was like sharing my story with a friend.*

*In the beginning it's hard to imagine that someone can offer you so much help. I had many questions, but as time passed I was able to trust them and see how helpful they were.*

Participants also appreciated being given choices about how some of the services were delivered. This contributed to their regaining a sense of control over their lives. One participant described staff's accompaniment to appointments and classes in the beginning and how it helped her develop more independence. When she no longer needed their accompaniment, simply knowing they were there in case she needed them helped her build confidence in herself.

*I had the opportunity to choose where I would feel the most comfortable, what would be the easiest for me, and this all helped me gain more trust in them. I got to choose an ESL class that was close to my apartment and a normal hour in the afternoon - not too late or too early. Little by little I started to get out of my apartment and learn about new places, and all of this was something I liked a lot. They gave me the opportunity to choose what I would feel the most comfortable with.*

Finally, participants identified the open communication used by staff and their willingness to learn from clients as a plus. Most participants felt well-prepared for the conclusion of services from RST. Even after the financial help from RST has ended, clients often need someone to call for guidance or information, and RST has proven to be very open and helpful in offering this extended relationship. Furthermore, participants illustrated the extra effort RST makes in delivering services.

There is a fundamental difference in case management delivery between handing out food stamp applications and giving names or numbers for jobs, and the intensive, supportive case management style of RST. This is an effective strategy and helps clients be able to complete these tasks independently the next time. When a telephone number or application is provided without discussion or follow-through, clients tend to give up, throw these materials away, use other avenues for help, or resign to no help.

*For being beginners, I think they are doing a good job, because they always say they are always learning and want to know more. But I do not think they make mistakes. And if they have flaws, they are so small that to this date I have not seen them.*

*They paid for my rent and when they were going to stop helping me they notified me in sufficient advanced notice so that I could prepare myself and not fall down.*

FINDINGS: Part B

Part B presents data collected by RST, in compliance with the OVC grant. This includes primarily output data: number and type of victim services; the coalition’s collaborative partners; and training activities. The reporting period for this data spans October 1, 2005 to March 30, 2009.

Table 1. Clients on the Current Caseload

Trafficking Population	Number of OVC-Eligible Clients	Number of Potential OVC-Eligible Clients	Total Number of Clients
Total New Clients Served	23	4	27
Total Existing Active Clients Served	1	0	1
Total Existing Inactive Clients Served	2	0	2
<b>Total Open Client Cases</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 2. Trafficking Client Certification Status by Number and Type of Trafficking Clients

Client Certification Status	Sex Only	Labor Only	Both Sex and Labor	Total
Precertified	0	8	3	11
Became Certified	15	4	0	19
Already Certified Before Entered	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 3. Total Number of Adult Trafficking Clients by Gender and Type of Trafficking  
(Note: one client was a minor)

Types of Trafficking Clients	Number of Adults Represented in this Category		
	Males	Females	Total
Sex	0	15	15
Labor	4	8	12
Both Sex and Labor	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>29</b>

Table 4. Countries of Origin of Trafficking Clients

Country of Origin	Number of Clients
El Salvador	13
Guatemala	1
Honduras	5
Mexico	8
Myanmar	1
Nigeria	1
Pakistan	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 5. Immigration Status of Trafficking Clients upon Entering the United States by Type of Trafficking

Immigration Status Upon Entering the United States	Number of Trafficking Clients			
	Sex Only	Labor Only	Both Sex and Labor	Total
<b>K-Visa (Marriage Visa)</b>	0	1	0	1
<b>Student Visa</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Temporary Work Visa</b>	0	1	0	1
<b>No Documentation</b>	15	9	3	27
<b>Other (specify)</b>	0	1	0	1

Table 6. Total Number of Active Partner Organizations and Staff/Volunteers Working with Trafficking Clients

Type of Partners	Number of Organizations
Key Partner	14
Informal Partner	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

Table 7. Target Audiences for Training Events by Organization Type and Number of Attendees

Target Audience for Training Event	Number of Attendees
Federal Agencies Other Than Law Enforcement	15
Federal Law Enforcement	208
State & Local Government Agencies Other Than Law Enforcement	38
State & Local Law Enforcement	374
Victim Service Providers	254
Immigrant Service Providers	134
Legal Providers	87
Prosecutors	29
Medical/Public Health Providers	291
Mental Health/Substance Abuse Providers	104
Faith-Based Organizations/Religious Institutions	292
Housing/Shelter	113
Legislators/Lawmakers	70
Civic/Business Community	100
Schools/Educational Institutions	250
Vision/Dental Providers	0
Trade/Professional Affiliation Associations	16
<b>Total Number of Individuals Trained</b>	<b>2375</b>

Table 8. Training Topic/Objective by Number of Attendees

Training Topic	Number of Attendees
Global Dimensions of Human Trafficking	1617
Definition of Human Trafficking	1791
Techniques for Screening/Interviewing Human Trafficking Victims	1495
Identification of Human Trafficking Victims	2159
Procedures for Reporting Human Trafficking Victims	1603
Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services for Human Trafficking Victims	1595
Legal Assistance for Human Trafficking Victims	1396

## DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, findings suggest that the services provided by RST are effective in improving the self-sufficiency and self-efficacy of victims of human trafficking. RST's clients generally feel safer and more self-sufficient than they did immediately following the trafficking experience. Data illustrate that these services are also provided in an atmosphere of compassion and patience, and foster client empowerment. Participants in this study easily identified the strengths of RST's program and their staff.

*They empowered me and gave me confidence. I feel like I always had the intention of being independent, to move on my own. But I always knew that if I got a little stuck, that I could count on them to get me out, that I could call them and tell them.*

Nonetheless, the extent of services designed specifically for victims of human trafficking is limited by funding sources and by time and scope. Findings demonstrate the continued vulnerabilities experienced by victims and survivors, with particular challenges around financial stability and family reunification. While participants work toward English proficiency, better-paying jobs with better conditions and hours are difficult to find, and victims continue to experience difficulty making ends meet. Participants also experience a new array of needs in anticipation of and following reunification with their families, making a significant shift from their own individual needs to those of their children and family. Help-seeking also continues to be an obstacle for victims, as their social network is not knowledgeable about how to answer legal questions or access public benefits.

Further dialogue is needed on the topic of long-term needs and family reunification. In the absence of extended or formally-structured services, creative, culturally relevant community-based solutions are needed. While the long-term needs of victims of human trafficking may not be altogether different than those of other low-income communities, the broad array of needs are often not addressed by mainstream services in a holistic way. Barriers to services may be unique to this population, and include safety, trust, language, and culture. Service providers and policymakers sometimes operate under an assumption that clients will quickly access mainstream services, and that those mainstream services will be adequate. However, clients' needs and the structure of both mainstream services and services for victims of human trafficking are not always in harmony. For example, time-limited services are not able to accommodate trauma-related needs that may not show up during the first six months of services.

In response to the considerable long-term needs found among participants, researchers developed several tools for service providers working with this community of victims. These were presented at the Freedom Network conference in Dallas, Texas, in March 2009 (Appendices B, C, D, and E). These tools include guidelines for initiating discussion and preparation around long-term needs and the arrival of children in the U.S., in addition to related resource forms to be given clients. Tools are intended to be modified to the style, population, and service delivery system of providers. Tools were designed based on data provided by research participants. Thus, there is a focus on the specific needs

identified by these data, such as the preparation for the arrival of victims' children. Other victims may be approaching the arrival of parents or spouses, and modified tools may be useful for victims who are applying to bring over other family members. These tools are also geared towards foreign-born victims of human trafficking and may not be appropriate for US-born victims and survivors.

Further study on the help-seeking strategies of victims of human trafficking is also merited. It is not clear if victims particularly from Central America and Mexico develop social networks that are primarily comprised of undocumented, under-the-radar communities. If this is widespread, does this contribute to clients' difficulty getting the answers and guidance they seek among friends, since others are not eligible for the same services and benefits and do not know where to turn? Likewise, does it increase their sense of hesitancy to apply for benefits due to a misunderstanding about how it may affect their immigration status? Is there a broader feeling that their immigration status is not entirely secure? Is there a general feeling of fear and that it is better to remain under the radar?

As victims of human trafficking continue along their path of recovery and stability, and as new victims are identified and assisted, the community of service providers will continue to learn about the challenges faced by victims. We also have a great deal to learn about the strengths and resilience of victims in surviving and recovering from the crimes and trauma. Program evaluation and sound research are necessary to improve our understanding and to further improve the service delivery system to victims and survivors of human trafficking.

Interviewer: *I think you were very brave.*

Participant: *I learned that from the organization.*

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APPENDIX A  
Interview Protocol for  
Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking

Initial needs/services

1. What services did you need initially? Were these services available? Were they helpful?
2. Were there services that were not helpful or not needed? Were there services or actions that were actually harmful to you or your situation?
3. Did you feel safe?

If initial services were provided to you in a different city and you've since returned to the city where you were rescued,

4. What prompted you to return to the original city?
5. Did you feel safe when you returned?

Current needs/services

6. What services do you currently need? Are these services available to you?
7. What makes it difficult for you to access the services you need?
8. What would make it easier for you to access needed services?
9. What helped you most during this process?
10. Would you change anything about the way services are provided to other victims of trafficking?
11. What was most challenging for you about this experience?
12. In your current situation, do you feel safe?
13. What are your hopes and plans for the future?

General self-sufficiency

14. Do you have work? If so, are you utilizing your Employment Authorization Document?  
Describe your employment.
15. Do you have children? If so, are you working towards bringing them or other family members here? Describe how that is going.
16. Do you have an interest in learning English? What kinds of resources do you need/are available to you for learning English?
17. Do you have an interest in counseling? What kinds of resources do you need/are available to you for counseling?
18. When you need help, do you know how to get it? Do you feel comfortable knowing who to call?  
How do you go about finding the resources and support you need?
19. Think about self sufficiency or the degree to which you are confident about 'making it' in American on your own. How would you say that you are doing right now? (on a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being high)
20. How would you say that you were doing when you first starting working with RST?
21. If appropriate, what would you attribute to that change? How did you move up/down the scale?
22. What do you need to continue to be self sufficient, or to move up the scale?

## APPENDIX B

### Preparing for Children's Arrival – Topics for Discussion *For Provider to Use in Work with Client*

Reuniting with children can be an extremely exciting, stressful, and possibly traumatic experience for both the parents and the children, especially after a long period of separation. By talking through some of the preparation before the children arrive, we hope to lessen some of the confusion and frustration associated with this transition. In an ideal situation, a designated case manager will be available for the family during the reunification process – beginning before the arrival of the children and extending for several months after the arrival. Communication should include follow-up calls for a period of time following the children's arrival.

The topics below are not intended as answers. Rather, they are topics proposed for dialogue to begin BEFORE the children arrive - questions and scenarios that should be brought to the client's attention in order for him/her to begin preparing, asking questions, and finding solutions. This discussion may take place over the course of several meetings or phone calls with your client, and your client may have areas of concern in addition to, or different from, these listed below.

#### Medical care and insurance

- Is your child eligible for health insurance?
- How and when should you apply?
- Does your child have any special needs that will require immediate medical attention?

#### School preparation

- Which school will your child attend?
- When and how do you register your child for school?
- What is required for your child to attend the first day of school – for example vaccinations, uniform?
- What kinds of assistance are available at the school – for example, reduced-fee lunch and other support services?

#### Child care

- Will your child need supervision while you are at work?
- Who will take care of your child if you leave for work before your child leaves for school and/or if you return home after your child returns from school?
- Does your child have any special needs that need to be considered in finding child care?

### Parenting

- What will it be like to be reunited with your child after such a long absence?
- How might your child respond to you as a parent and figure of authority?
- What will it be like for your child to be separated from, or grieve the loss of, his/her caregiver or grandparent? What might make this transition easier for both your child and the caregiver?
- What expectations do you have of your child regarding helping around the house or household chores?

[Consider making available existing resources for other populations, such as *Raising Children in a New Country* by BRYCS, available at: <http://www.brycs.org/documents/RaisingChildren-Handbook.pdf>.]

### Home

- Do you have sufficient space and furnishings for your child/children?
- Is your home safe for your children?

### Other

- What kind of social support might help you and your child through this transition?
- Who can you go to for help or guidance as you make this transition with your child?
- Do you have other concerns about your child's arrival?
- Do you have other questions about your child's arrival?

APPENDIX C

Resource List for Children's Arrival

*To be Filled out by Provider/Client and Left with Client*

School

Locating my child's school: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrolling my child in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Vaccinating my child: \_\_\_\_\_

Health care

Health clinic for my child: \_\_\_\_\_

Health insurance for my child: \_\_\_\_\_

Urgent and emergency medical care: \_\_\_\_\_

Child care

Child care resources: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling

Counseling resources for children: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling resources for adults: \_\_\_\_\_

Other

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX E

Long-Term Needs - Resource List

*To be Filled out by Provider/Client and Left with Client*

Safety

Information about perpetrators' sentences and release: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency assistance: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Health

Assistance with adult health insurance or medical expenses: \_\_\_\_\_

Assistance with children's health insurance: \_\_\_\_\_

Assistance with children's health care and vaccinations: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional & Psychological Health

Counseling services: \_\_\_\_\_

Spirituality/Faith community: \_\_\_\_\_

Financial Stability

Financial assistance: \_\_\_\_\_

Apply for food stamps: \_\_\_\_\_

Food bank resources: \_\_\_\_\_

Social & Familial Equilibrium

Questions about bringing children to the US: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions about enrolling children in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions about parenting, supervision, laws related to children: \_\_\_\_\_

Language

Translation/interpretation: \_\_\_\_\_

Other

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

