



DATA COLLECTION PROFILE

October 2022, NCJ 305205

Human Trafficking Data Collection Activities, 2022

The Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015 (CHTA) (34 U.S.C. § 20709(e)) requires the director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to prepare an annual report on human trafficking. The report must include information on the following:

- arrests for human trafficking offenses by state law enforcement officers
- prosecutions of individuals in state courts for human trafficking offenses
- convictions of individuals in state courts for human trafficking offenses
- sentences imposed on individuals convicted in state courts for human trafficking offenses.

At the federal level, human trafficking offenses are defined according to federal statutes that include peonage, slavery, forced labor, sex trafficking, sexual exploitation and other abuse of children, and transportation for illegal sexual activity and related crimes. The classification of human trafficking offenses varies among state and local jurisdictions. This report describes the BJS data collections that include various offenses that may be categorized as human trafficking, and it presents the most recent statistical findings.

BJS examined options to modify its existing data collections and implement new approaches to report the data required by CHTA. In addition, BJS assessed the availability of data on human trafficking among criminal justice agencies at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels.

COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES DURING 2021 AND 2022

BJS obtains information on human trafficking in several data collections, including those on victim service providers, law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication, and corrections. The information in each data collection contributes to a general profile of human trafficking in the United States. Some differences exist across collections due to varying definitions of human trafficking, data availability, and other reasons.

Victimization

The **National Survey of Victim Service Providers (NSVSP)**, conducted in 2019, was administered to a nationally representative sample of Victim Service Providers (VSPs). This inaugural effort gathered data from a broad array of VSPs, including those that served human trafficking victims. Based on the practices and experiences of these organizations during the previous year, VSPs were asked to provide information on—

- organizational resources required to provide services to crime victims

- types of services provided to crime victims
- characteristics of victims who received services
- characteristics and background of staff who provided services to victims
- organizational policies and practices of VSPs.

Through this collection, VSPs provided data on how many sex trafficking and labor trafficking victims received services and on the demographic characteristics (sex, race, Hispanic origin, and age) of the trafficking victims served.

In October 2021, BJS published the findings from the NSVSP in *Services for Crime Victims, 2019* (NCJ 300741, BJS, October 2021).¹ The 2019 NSVSP dataset, which includes information on services for victims of human trafficking, is available through the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data.

¹For more information on the NSVSP, see <https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/national-survey-victim-service-providers-nsvsp>.

Law enforcement

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is required to collect human trafficking data under the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008. As a result, the FBI established the **Human Trafficking (UCR-HT)** data collection as part of its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program in 2013.

The UCR collects data on human trafficking based on the following definitions:

- Commercial sex acts—inducing a person by force, fraud, or coercion to participate in commercial sex acts, or in which the person induced to perform such act(s) has not attained 18 years of age.
- Involuntary servitude—obtaining of a person(s) through recruitment, harboring, transportation, or provision, and subjecting such persons by force, fraud, or coercion into involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (not to include commercial sex acts).

State UCR programs and local law enforcement agencies that participate in this collection provide counts of offenses, case clearances, and arrests for human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sex acts or involuntary servitude. Law enforcement agencies document these human trafficking offenses in their record management systems (RMS).

Human trafficking data reported by the FBI represent only human trafficking offenses and arrests submitted by states and law enforcement agencies with the ability to record and report them. Consequently, the information available understates the full scope of human trafficking offenses known to local law enforcement.

In 2021, the FBI UCR Program transitioned from a summary-based system of offense counts to an incident-based system. Agencies report crime data, including data on human trafficking offenses, to the FBI's **National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)**. NIBRS collects more information on both types of human trafficking offenses than the retired summary-based system.

For each incident, NIBRS collects the demographic characteristics of the victims, the number of associated victims and offenders, the location and time of the incident, and whether a weapon was present. NIBRS also provides information on whether the incident was cleared by an arrest.

The latest data on human trafficking is available through FBI's Crime Data Explorer at <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/pages/home>.

In 2019, BJS administered the 2019 **Census of Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies (CTLEA)**, the first BJS data collection focused solely on tribal law enforcement agencies. The CTLEA collected data from tribally operated law enforcement agencies; police agencies operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and the Alaska State Police, which reported for the Village Public Safety Officers, who provide services to Alaska Native villages that are under the jurisdiction of the Alaska State Police. The CTLEA captured information on the policies and practices of tribal law enforcement agencies, including—

- whether the agency has jurisdiction over criminal cases
- staffing, officer training, and sources of funding
- officer workload and number of arrests
- whether the agency has access to and participates in regional and national justice database systems, including domestic violence and protection-order registries
- whether the agency is responsible for monitoring sex offenders on tribal lands pursuant to the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act.

Responding agencies were also asked to indicate whether they had made any arrests for sex trafficking or for labor trafficking during the previous year.

Data collection occurred between August and December of 2019 and resulted in a 92% response rate among all tribal law enforcement agencies and a 100% response rate among federal and state police programs. Data and analyses from the CTLEA are forthcoming.

Prosecution and adjudication

The **Criminal Cases in State Courts (CCSC)** collection gathers data on the number and attributes of cases closed in state trial courts of general jurisdiction. The CCSC is an effort to collect case information from electronic court records. BJS will use this collection to produce national estimates of activities in state courts and to provide information on case characteristics and outcomes.

Through the CCSC, BJS requests case-level data extracts from case management systems maintained by state courts. These case-level data contain detailed information about the matter before the court, including defendant demographic information, the type of legal representation of the defendant, the court charges at the time of both case filing and disposition, adjudication status of the case, and the sentence imposed (when applicable). The detailed data can be used to answer a variety of questions about the work of state courts and the administration of justice in those institutions.

After the initial collection is complete, BJS will be able to assess the extent to which the CCSC can provide information on prosecutions, convictions, and sentences imposed by state courts for human trafficking offenses. BJS will also be able to examine the feasibility of identifying the non-trafficking criminal charges most commonly associated with human trafficking cases.

The **Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP)** compiles statistical information on defendants charged with a human trafficking offense across stages of the federal criminal justice system. Under the FJSP, administrative data are received from the U.S. Marshals Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the U.S. Sentencing Commission, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons each year and are standardized, maintained, linked, analyzed, and archived.²

Human trafficking offenses are defined according to the three categories of federal statutes: peonage, slavery, forced labor, and sex trafficking, 18 U.S.C. §§ 1581-1595; sexual exploitation and other abuse of

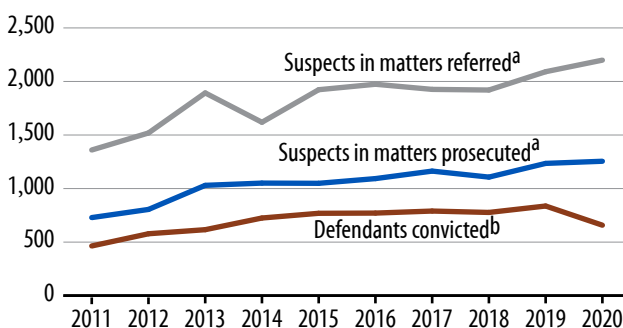
children, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2251-2251A; and transportation for illegal sexual activity and related crimes, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2422-2423.³

The Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys provides federal prosecution data, including the title and section of the U.S. criminal code (used to identify human trafficking by statute) and whether U.S. attorneys decided to prosecute the suspect. BJS also collects data from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, including the number of defendants convicted and sentenced for a human trafficking offense and the length of the imposed prison term.

The number of persons investigated and prosecuted for a human trafficking offense increased from fiscal year 2011 to 2020. A total of 2,199 persons were referred to U.S. Attorneys for human trafficking offenses in fiscal year 2020 (**figure 1**), a 62% increase from the 1,360 persons referred in 2011. The number of persons prosecuted for human trafficking increased from 729 in 2011 to 1,255 in 2020, a 72% increase.

³For more information on human trafficking offenses, see *Federal Prosecution of Human-Trafficking Cases, 2015* (NCJ 251390, BJS, June 2018), available at <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/fphct15.pdf>.

FIGURE 1
Human trafficking suspects referred to and prosecuted by U.S. attorneys and human trafficking defendants convicted, fiscal years 2011–2020



Note: See appendix table 1 for numbers.

^aIncludes suspects in matters whose lead charge was a human trafficking crime under a substantive federal statute or program category. The lead charge is the primary basis for referring the matter to a U.S. attorney and is usually, but not always, the charge with the greatest possible sentence.

^bIncludes felony defendants, Class A misdemeanants in cases handled by U.S. district judges or U.S. magistrates, and other misdemeanants in cases handled by U.S. district judges, where the most serious charge was a human trafficking crime under a substantive federal statute. The most serious offense is the one with the greatest statutory-maximum sentence at case termination, as determined by court personnel. Defendants in more than one case are counted separately.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on data from the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, National Legal Information Office Network System and Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Criminal Master File, fiscal years 2011–2020.

²For more information on the FJSP, see *Federal Justice Statistics, 2020* (NCJ 304314, BJS, May 2022), available at <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/fjs20.pdf>.

The number of persons convicted of a human trafficking offense increased from 2011 (464 persons) to 2019 (837 persons), before falling in 2020 (658 persons).

Of the 1,169 defendants charged with any of the three types of human trafficking offenses in fiscal year 2020 (table 1)—

- 92% were male
- 63% were white
- 18% were black
- 17% were Hispanic
- 95% were U.S. citizens
- 66% had no prior convictions.

Of the 208 defendants charged with peonage, slavery, forced labor, and sex trafficking, 78% were male and 50% were black. In comparison, of the 529 defendants charged with sexual exploitation and other abuse of children, 93% were male and 72% were white.

Corrections

The **National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP)** collects offender-level administrative data annually on state prison admissions and releases, custody, and parole entries and discharges in participating jurisdictions. BJS has implemented a standardized offense code for human trafficking. This code includes state offenses for sex trafficking or transport, child prostitution, forced labor trafficking, human trafficking, and similar crimes.

TABLE 1
Characteristics of human trafficking defendants in cases charged in U.S. district court, fiscal year 2020

Defendant characteristics	Total		Peonage, slavery, forced labor, and sex trafficking		Sexual exploitation and other abuse of children		Transportation for illegal sex activity	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,169	100%	208	100%	529	100%	432	100%
Sex								
Male	1,072	91.9%	162	78.3%	490	92.6%	420	97.4%
Female	95	8.1	45	21.7	39	7.4	11	2.6
Race/Hispanic origin*								
White	697	62.6%	52	25.7%	365	72.3%	280	69.0%
Black	196	17.6	100	49.5	46	9.1	50	12.3
Hispanic	187	16.8	43	21.3	79	15.6	65	16.0
American Indian or Alaska Native	12	1.1	3	1.5	6	1.2	3	0.7
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander	21	1.9	4	2.0	9	1.8	8	2.0
Age								
18–24	169	14.5%	49	23.7%	70	13.2%	50	11.6%
25–34	404	34.6	71	34.3	188	35.5	145	33.6
35–49	422	36.2	66	31.9	199	37.6	157	36.4
50–64	144	12.3	13	6.3	61	11.5	70	16.2
65 or older	28	2.4	8	3.9	11	2.1	9	2.1
Median age	35 years		32 years		35 years		36 years	
Citizenship								
U.S. citizen	1,093	94.6%	174	85.3%	509	97.0%	410	96.2%
Documented non-U.S. citizen	25	2.2	4	2.0	11	2.1	10	2.3
Undocumented non-U.S. citizen	37	3.2	26	12.7	5	1.0	6	1.4
Prior conviction								
No prior convictions	774	66.3%	110	53.1%	369	69.7%	295	68.4%
Prior misdemeanor only	149	12.8	25	12.1	72	13.6	52	12.1
Prior felony conviction	244	20.9	72	34.8	88	16.6	84	19.5

Note: The unit of count was a defendant interviewed, investigated, or supervised by federal pretrial services. Data were missing for the following: sex (2), race/Hispanic origin (56), age (2), citizenship (14), and prior conviction (2).

*Excludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, unless specified.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on data from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Probation and Pretrial Services Automated Case Tracking System, fiscal year 2020.

The most recent NCRP data available are for the year 2020. For the 47 states that reported for that year—

- 37 states reported at least one person with a human trafficking offense admitted to, held in, or released from custody or post-custody community supervision
- 392 state prison admissions were for a human trafficking offense
- 480 persons were released from state prison after serving a sentence for a human trafficking offense
- 1,564 persons were in the custody of a state prison serving a sentence for a human trafficking offense at year-end
- 181 persons who had been imprisoned for a human trafficking offense began a term of post-custody community supervision
- 117 persons who had been imprisoned for a human trafficking offense exited their term of post-custody community supervision. Persons exit prison after successful completion of supervision, to receive treatment, to serve a period of incarceration, or for other reasons.

Thirty-one states reported to the NCRP at least one prison admission involving a human trafficking offense for each year between 2016 and 2020. The largest annual number of admissions was 623 in 2019 before dropping to 389 in 2020 (table 2). The drop was accompanied by an overall drop in prison admissions in 2020. The percentage of admissions related to human trafficking was highest in 2020.⁴

⁴For more information on prison admissions in 2020, see *Prisoners in 2020 – Statistical Tables* (NCJ 302776, BJS, December 2021), available at <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p20st.pdf>.

TABLE 2

Admissions to state prison for human trafficking in 31 states, 2016–2020

Year	Admissions for human trafficking		Total admissions
	Number	Percent	
2016	487	0.09%	553,988
2017	462	0.08	584,013
2018	530	0.09	564,232
2019	623	0.12	508,876
2020	389	0.13	291,005

Note: Includes admissions for the 31 states that reported at least one prison admission involving a human trafficking offense for each year from 2016 to 2020.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP), 2016–2020

APPENDIX TABLE 1

Numbers for figure 1: Human trafficking suspects referred to and prosecuted by U.S. attorneys and human trafficking defendants convicted, 2011–2020

Fiscal year	Suspects in matters referred	Suspects in matters prosecuted	Defendants convicted
2011	1,360	729	464
2012	1,519	805	578
2013	1,893	1,030	616
2014	1,619	1,051	725
2015	1,923	1,049	769
2016	1,974	1,093	771
2017	1,926	1,163	790
2018	1,920	1,107	777
2019	2,091	1,235	837
2020	2,199	1,255	658

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on data from the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, National Legal Information Office Network System and Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Criminal Master File, fiscal years 2011–2020.

PREVIOUSLY RELEASED BJS REPORTS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- *Human-Trafficking Offenses Handled by State Attorneys General Offices, 2018*, NCJ 254803, March 2021
- *Federal Prosecution of Human-Trafficking Cases, 2015*, NCJ 251390, June 2018
- *Federal Prosecution of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Cases, 2004–2013*, NCJ 250746, October 2017
- *Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008–2010*, NCJ 233732, April 2011
- *Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2007–08*, NCJ 224526, January 2009
- *Federal Prosecution of Child Sex Exploitation Offenders, 2006*, NCJ 219412, December 2007
- *Federal Prosecution of Human Trafficking, 2001–2005*, NCJ 215248, October 2006



The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. Alexis R. Piquero is the director.

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