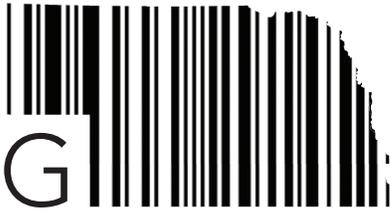


2015

HUMAN 
TRAFFICKING
in **NEBRASKA**



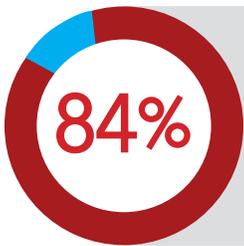


Quick Facts: TRAFFICKING in NEBRASKA



What is Human Trafficking?

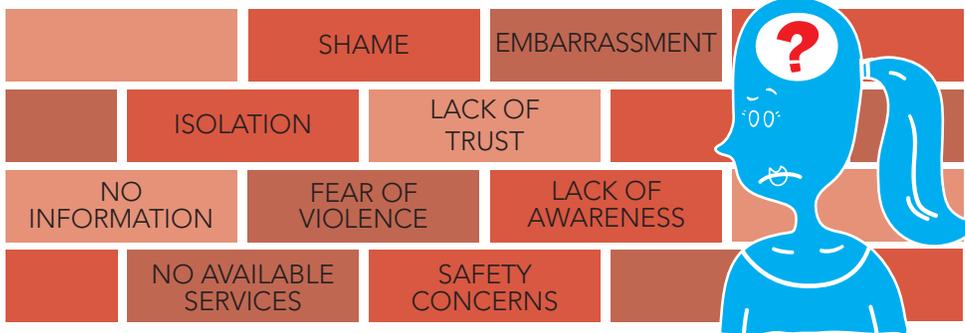
Human trafficking is the umbrella term that encompasses both the exploitation of individuals for labor as well as exploitation for commercial gain through sex. Acts of commercial sex with anyone under the age of 18 is de facto sex trafficking.



The current services landscape in Nebraska is bleak.

84% of service providers do NOT believe they are adequately meeting needs of trafficked individuals.

Adequate service provision is complicated by **barriers** that limit the ability of trafficked individuals to access services:



There is a disparity between services needed and the services Nebraska agencies currently provide. For each service identified as a top need, fewer than 30% of Nebraska providers can adequately meet these needs.

Due to this, trafficked individuals have extremely limited avenues to access the services they need.



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All of the data represented is from the "Human Trafficking Capacity and Needs Assessment" survey conducted by the Women's Fund of Omaha in 2015.

For more information, please contact Meghan Malik, Trafficking Coordinator at (402) 827-9280 or MMalik@OmahaWomensFund.org

WHO IS BEING TRAFFICKED?



47%
ADULT



32%
MINOR



44%
USA NATIVE



36%
NEBRASKA NATIVE

TOP 3 NEEDS:



MENTAL HEALTH



EMERGENCY SHELTER



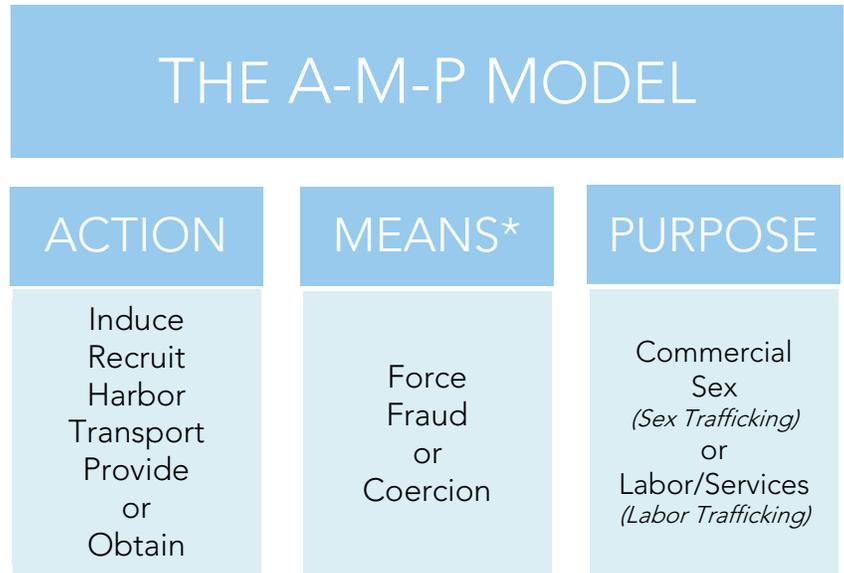
CRISIS INTERVENTION



SEX TRAFFICKING IN NEBRASKA

Human trafficking is the umbrella term that encompasses both the exploitation of individuals for labor in industries such as agriculture, fishing, mining, and clothing, as well as exploitation for commercial gain in the sex industry.

Sex trafficking includes commercial sex plus (1) a specific "action" and (2) a "means". Where a pimp is involved, if he engages in any form of force, fraud, or coercion, then this is a case of sex trafficking and the pimp is considered a trafficker. Coercion or fraud can include psychological manipulation. Given that commercial sex often involves pimps who engage in psychological manipulation, many individuals in the sex trade have, in fact, been trafficked.



*Minors induced into commercial sex are considered to be trafficked – regardless if force, fraud, or coercion is present

However, acts of commercial sex of anyone under the age of 18 is de facto sex trafficking. This is an important point since the average age of entry into sex work is around 16 years old.ⁱ

Sex trafficking exists in many diverse forms and occurs in many different venues.

<u>Forms</u>	<u>Venues</u>
Inner-city females	Outdoor (street) commercial sex
Middle-class suburban females	Indoor commercial sex
Domestic males	• Massage parlors
Foreign migrants	• Residential brothels
LGBTQ community	• Strip clubs

Each of these populations has its own set of vulnerabilities on which traffickers prey. Common factors are extreme poverty, family dysfunction, sexual abuse, and social or cultural isolation.

Evidence of Sex Trafficking in Nebraska

What we know is limited to a very small set of communities and venues in which sex trafficking occurs. Therefore, the data represent the minimum number of sex trafficking victims in Nebraska.

A survey of Nebraska high school girls conservatively estimated that at least 47 girls are trafficked annually. The number is likely to be much higher given the survey had only a 6% response rate.ⁱⁱ

Trafficking as a System: An Initial View

The Human Trafficking Initiative (HTI) began as a graduate project at Creighton University in 2012. With the support of the Women's Fund of Omaha, it has recently evolved into a research agenda aimed at empirically studying human trafficking. HTI takes a purposefully systemic approach to identify how human trafficking networks function from the international to the local level. The following illustrates some beginning findings of the online commercial sex industry in Nebraska.

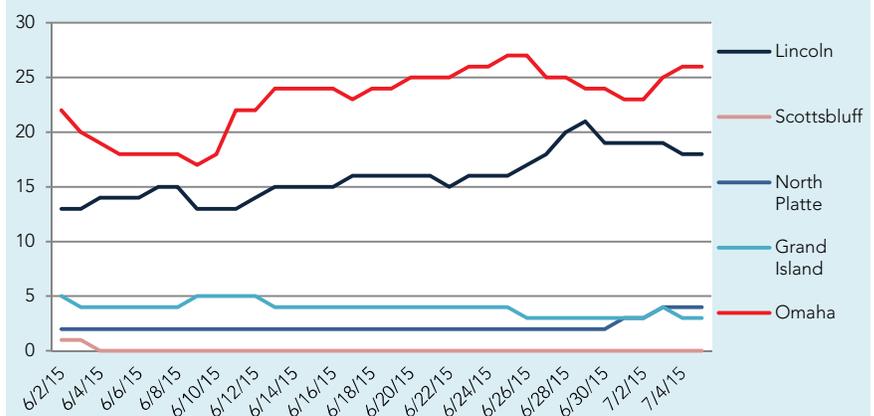
Sex work overwhelmingly occurs within indoor venues and is facilitated by the Internet.ⁱⁱⁱ Law enforcement records indicate that about 25-33% of all sex trafficking cases are discovered on the Internet.^{iv}

Backpage.com is the market hub, accounting for 80% of online commercial sex advertising.^v **More than 150 cases of minors advertised on the website have been prosecuted in 31 states.**^{vi} **Backpage self reports 400 ads selling minors per month.**^{vii} While the proportion of minors trafficked for sex is unknown, classification of Backpage ads across Nebraska indicates that approximately 8% of ads on any given day may be selling minors. There are undoubtedly adults who have been trafficked as well.

Nebraska has 5 cities with Backpage escort sections: Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, North Platte, and Scottsbluff.

- 92 phone numbers on Backpage nationally have Nebraska area codes.
- There were on average 45 females advertised in Nebraska on a given day in early summer.
- Of these, 81% were advertised in more than one city.

Number of Females Advertised per Day across Nebraska Cities

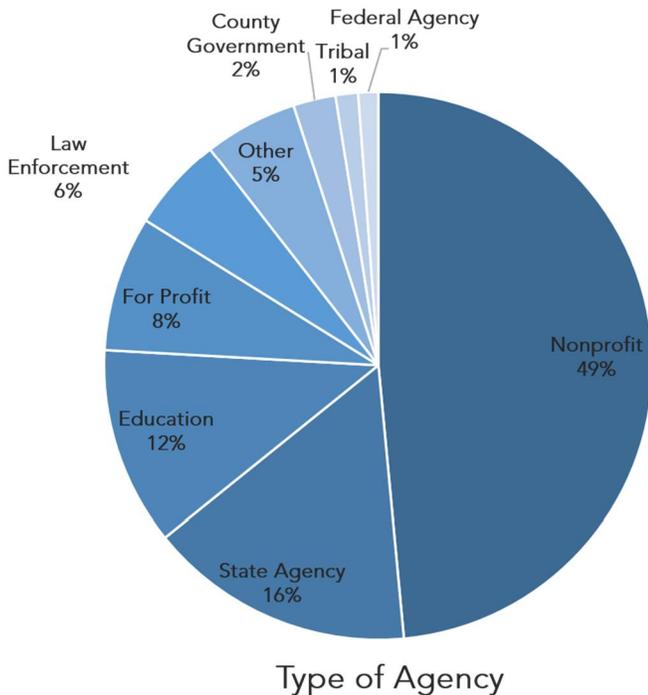


Nebraska is embedded in a regional trafficking network largely defined by I-80 and I-29. These interstates also facilitate national movement. For example, the map shows routes taken by sex workers^{viii} traveling to and within Nebraska for the College World Series. The national reach of these routes illustrates that Nebraska is part of and affected by the national system. Moreover, this movement into Omaha affected other Nebraska cities located along these routes.

Continued research using Backpage is necessary to understand market dynamics related to fluctuations in demand. Additional research must also identify population vulnerabilities to assess pockets of potential supply across Nebraska and the United States, given that there are numerous paths to victimization. Specifically, more information is needed on trafficking in underreported populations including immigrants, Native Americans, LGBTQ+ individuals, males and high class escort agencies.

NEBRASKA SERVICE CAPACITY AND NEEDS

In August 2015, the Women's Fund of Greater Omaha, with assistance from numerous members of the Nebraska Attorney General's Human Trafficking Services workgroup, conducted an environmental scan of services available to people in Nebraska who have been trafficked.



- The survey reached 677 respondents from all 93 Nebraska counties and 4 Indigenous Nations.
- The greatest proportion of respondents represented non-profit organizations throughout the state.
- The high proportion of response from non-profit service providers indicates the survey reached the vast majority of Nebraska's service providers.
- The survey captured a reliable representation of Nebraska's services landscape.

Victims and Survivors in Nebraska

Over 1/3 of respondents report encountering one or more trafficked people in the past year.

These people were:



47%
ADULT



32%
MINOR



44%*
USA NATIVE



36%
NEBRASKA
NATIVE

Non-profit service providers have identified individuals under the age of 17 who have been sex trafficked at least **176 times** in the last year.^{ix}

* A number of respondents reported not knowing the origins of the trafficked individuals that they encountered.

Current Service Landscape in Nebraska

Despite the fact that **57% of respondents believe trafficking is a problem** in their community, **76%** do not provide services for people who have been trafficked and **56% have no plans to provide services**. Currently, a majority of service providers are **under-equipped to respond to instances of trafficking** and **do not have the tools to identify people who have been trafficked**:

- 76% do not provide services for trafficking
- 70% do not screen for indicators of trafficking
- 78% do not track people who have been trafficked

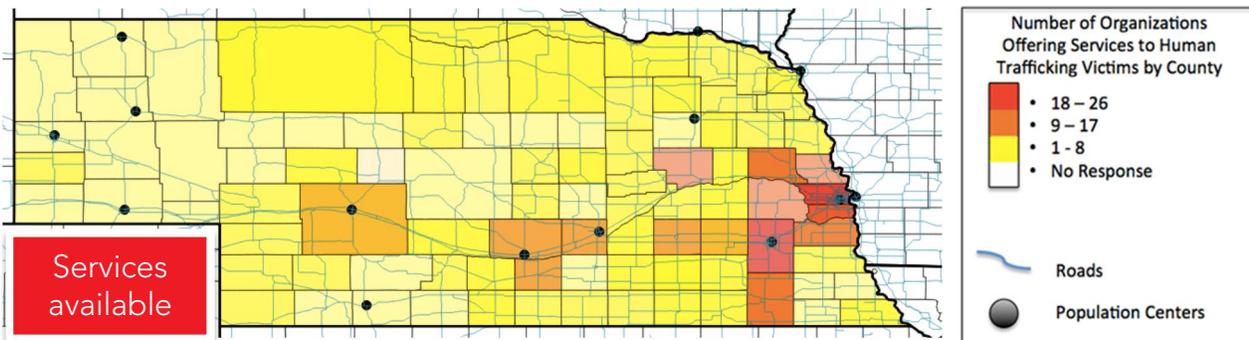
75% want training on identifying and assisting people who have been trafficked

Of those who do have the capacity to respond to instances of trafficking...

- 35% lack funding/resources
- 49% lack training and knowledge about human trafficking

84% do NOT believe they are adequately meeting needs of trafficked individuals

As a result, the services landscape is bleak:

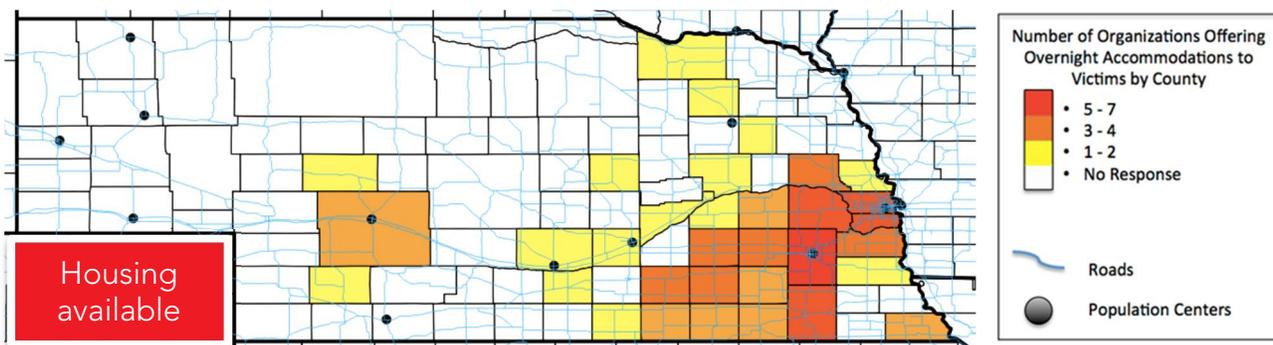


Map 1: Regional concentration of 129 providers who responded "Yes" to the question "Does your program/department currently respond to or provide services for human trafficking victims?"

Of the providers represented above, **the majority provided services that were neither comprehensive nor long term.**

42% provided referral for services

27% provided service coordination & crisis services



Map 2: Regional concentration of 64 providers who responded "Yes" to the question "Do you provide residential/shelter services (overnight accommodations) for individuals who are or have been victims of human trafficking?"

Of the 129 providers responding to trafficked individuals, **only 14% offer long-term housing.**

Disparity between Service Needs and Service Provision

Most respondents recognize that the needs of trafficked individuals are significant: **nearly 50% say trafficked individuals' needs are high or very high**. When asked to identify the needs of people who have been trafficked, **respondents reported the same needs, across sectors**.

TOP 10 NEEDS IDENTIFIED

1. MENTAL HEALTH
2. EMERGENCY SHELTER
3. CRISIS INTERVENTION
4. SOCIAL SERVICE COORDINATION
5. MEDICAL
6. COUNSELING / SUPPORT GROUPS
7. FOOD / CLOTHING
8. SHORT-TERM HOUSING
9. TRANSPORTATION
10. EMPLOYMENT / JOB TRAINING

Despite respondents' recognition of the needs of people who have been trafficked, there is a disparity between services those individuals need and the services Nebraska agencies provide. **For each service identified as a top need, fewer than 30% of Nebraska providers can adequately meet those needs.**

For example:

Mental Health : 24% can provide services
Emergency shelter : 17% can provide services
Crisis Intervention : 27% can provide services
Service Coordination : 27% can provide services
Medical : 16% can provide services

Due to this disparity, **people who have been trafficked have extremely limited avenues to access the services they need.**

Adequate service provision is also complicated by **barriers experienced by people who have been trafficked that limit their ability or willingness to access services**. Respondents recognized a variety of barriers for trafficked individuals seeking services. Once again, the barriers reported by respondents were consistent across sectors. They included:

No knowledge of available services : 64%

Lack of trust in the system: 63%

Shame or embarrassment : 58%

Isolation or lack of support : 57%

Fear of violence against self or family : 56%

Lack of community awareness about human trafficking : 56%

There are serious, negative implications for the wellbeing of people who have been trafficked that result from insufficient service provision, numerous barriers to service receipt, and a limited institutional capacity to respond to their needs.

Simply, people who have been trafficked are not getting the services they need.

What Providers Need – In Their Words

"I see the extreme need for more education and services about this topic."

"We 'stumble upon' individuals who are victims of human trafficking, so screening and coordinated referrals would be ideal."

"We struggle to accurately identify [victims] with little training."

"We have barely touched on this subject and we would like to have more information and get an awareness out to the community."

"We have not had the training or awareness of identifying and addressing those needs. We are interested in helping if we are able to receive training."

"I think our area could use a lot more information on trafficking and how to help these victims if we did encounter them."

FUTURE STEPS

The above information and figures illustrate the need for future steps including the following:

Public Education - Awareness to facilitate prevention efforts and identification of human trafficking occurrences.

Training - Training for service providers and law enforcement on national promising practices to increase the intentionality of service provision, resulting in increased provider efficacy in meeting the needs of people who have been trafficked. Explore existing training resources throughout the state while identifying top training priorities to improve and expand current practices.

Service Provision - Enhance, develop, and implement services for people who have been exploited via human trafficking. Collective action is needed to:

1. Ensure full access to a comprehensive array of trauma-informed services to best aid people who have been trafficked
2. Safe options for shelter and long-term housing
3. Real opportunities to exit the commercial sex industry that ensure economic security

Funding - Identify, secure, and leverage funding and resources to support ongoing initiatives and services to combat trafficking.

Research - Continued research in the online commercial sex market to better understand and ultimately affect the market demand. Survivor voice research to gather in-depth information on the "lived experience" of adult sex trafficking survivors in Nebraska will help inform statewide efforts enhancing prevention, protection, and prosecution.

Nebraska can do better. Our people are not for sale. Join us as we combat this issue.

NOTES & REFERENCES

ⁱ Banks, D., and Kyckelhahn, T. "Characteristics of Suspected Trafficking Incidents, 2008-2010." US Department of Justice. (*54% of confirmed sex trafficking cases were aged 17 or younger*); Dank, M., B. Khan, M. Downey, C. Kotonias, D. Mayer, C. Owens, L. Pacifi, and L. Yu. (2014). *Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Eight Major US Cities*. The Urban Institute. (*78% started between the ages of 15-28*); Raphael, J., Ashley, J. 2008. *Domestic sex trafficking of Chicago women and girls. (Average age of entry was 16 years old, but they only looked at girls up to the age of 25)* ; Silbert, M.H. (1982). "Entrance into Prostitution." *Youth & Society* 13(4): 471-500. (*Average age 16*).

ⁱⁱ See Hampton, R. and Ball, D. 2015. "On the Estimation of Sex Trafficking Victims in Nebraska." University of Nebraska- Lincoln.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dank, Meredith, Bilal Khan, Mitchel Downey, Cybele Kotonias, Deborah Mayer, Colleen Owens, Laura Pacifi, and Lilly Yu (2014). *Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Eight Major US Cities*. The Urban Institute. Available:

<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/413047-Estimating-the-Size-and-Structure-of-the-Underground-Commercial-Sex-Economy-in-Eight-Major-US-Cities.PDF>

^{iv} Heil, Erin and Andrea Nichols (2014). "Hot spot trafficking: a theoretical discussion of the potential problems associated with targeted policing and the eradication of sex trafficking in the United States." *Contemporary Justice Review* 17(4): 421-433.

^v AIM Group (2013). "Online Prostitution Ad-Revenue Crosses Craigslist Benchmark." Available:

<http://aimgroup.com/2013/07/10/online-prostitution-ad-revenue-crosses-craigslist-benchmark/>

^{vi} See <http://legalnewsline.com/news/236738-mckenna-files-response-in-backpage.coms-lawsuit>

^{vii} See <http://www.kirk.senate.gov/pdfs/naagbackpage.pdf>

^{viii} Throughout this brief, individuals involved in the commercial sale of sex are referred to as sex workers. The use of this term does not seek to disregard the degree of coercion often involved in the commercial sale of sex, but rather seeks to recognize the continuum of agency in that exists in the sex trade. Moreover, the use of this term does not seek to discount that pimps and traffickers often exercise significant control over the lives of sex workers, including posting their ads and transporting them.

^{ix} The results are not meant to imply that there are 176 minors who are victims. Multiple people in one agency could have taken the survey, resulting in over counting. It is also likely that multiple agencies served the same victim.