



***Understanding the Organization, Operation and Victimization of
Labor Trafficking in the United States***

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RESEARCH TEAM

*Conducted by: Urban Institute and Northeastern University in collaboration
with Freedom Network USA*

Urban Institute

Colleen Owens, Co-PI

Meredith Dank, Co-PI

Justin Breaux

Isela Bañuelos

Northeastern University

Amy Farrell, Co-PI

Rebecca Pfeffer

Katie Bright

Ryan Heitsmith

Jack McDevitt



GOALS AND QUESTIONS

Goal: fill the knowledge gap on labor trafficking

Research Questions:

- 1.) What is the nature of U.S. labor trafficking victimization
- 2.) Who are traffickers and what is their connection to other illicit networks?
- 3.) What are the challenges of law enforcement investigation and why do so few cases that are identified by service providers get investigated or prosecuted by local or state law enforcement?

RESEARCH DESIGN

- Research sites and data:
 - 2 Northeast, 1 Midwest, 1 West
 - Multiple trafficking types/venue
 - Unit of analysis – labor trafficking survivor case files, closed between 2000 and 2012
 - Approximately 30 victim records per site
 - Interviews with victim services, law enforcement, legal advocates and victims
- Limitations:
 - Not nationally representative
 - Only victims who are connected with services
 - Lack of information on investigation

SURVIVOR AND SUSPECT CHARACTERISTICS

- **100% of sample were non-US citizens**

- 71% entered on a lawful visa
- 69% undocumented at escape

- **29 different countries of origin**

- Men (48%); women (53%); Minors (10%); adults (90%); 64% had children; Avg age 33

- 33% some college or higher

- Victimized across various work venues.

- Gender of victims varied by work venue. Almost all the agricultural workers were male, and nearly all the domestic service workers were female.

- 2/3 perpetrators male, most in thirties or forties, both foreign nationals and US citizens.

- Nearly half perpetrators arrested.

- Few formal connections found between labor trafficking and other criminal networks.

Top 6 Countries	n=122
Mexico	34%
Philippines	16%
Thailand	7%
India	9%
Indonesia	4%
Guatemala	4%
Other	27%

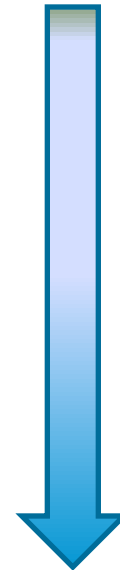
RECRUITMENT AND MOVEMENT

- High levels of fraud (93%) and coercion (54%) in recruitment
- 48% paid recruitment fees (up to \$25,000)
 - Average \$6,150
- 57% of recruiters involved in other stages of trafficking
- 54% recruited as a group; 46% individual
- 28% promised less than federal minimum wage
- Most common forms of transportation: flight (71%), the use of a car/van (52%), and walking (22%)
- Interactions with US embassy/consulate and border officials
- 64% documents seized during movement to US and/or soon after arrival

Labor Exploitation and Labor Trafficking

	Yes
Less Pay Then Promised	83%
Withheld Pay	81%
Under Minimum Wage	80%
Denial of Pay	80%
Illegal Deductions	62%
No written earnings statement	62%
No meal breaks	42%
Safe water, toilet	30%
Hazardous Work Environment	16%
Movement to work controlled	80%
Victim lived where worked	56%
Depriving/Disorienting	84%
Threats or use of Violence	82%
Demoralizing	82%
Intimidation and Control	80%
Deception of Consequences	71%
Use/Threatened Use of law	71%
Diminishing Resistance	70%

Labor
Exploitation



Labor
Trafficking

*90% experienced 8+ forms
of victimization
94% aware they were being
abused*

*Immigration status powerful
form of control*

SURVIVOR ESCAPE, NEEDS, SERVICES AND OUTCOMES

- Many came into contact with others while being trafficked
- Physical barriers, psychological abuse and fear of deportation prevented escape
- Most victims (59%) escaped by running away, few (7%) self-reported to police, many did not receive services until months or years after escape.
- 14% of victims arrested/detained (most commonly for immigration violations)
- Traffickers contacted victims after escape and expanded threats and harassment to victims' families in their home countries
- Continued Presence was rarely granted
- Shelter was the greatest need and challenge
- Desire family reunification and/or ability to travel/see family
- Acute need to begin working again stuck in low-wage work, vulnerable to abuse
- Difficulty accessing benefits due to lack of provider knowledge or state laws – often tied to location of service provision/criminal case
- Civil damages and criminal restitution rarely awarded