Human Trafficking Data Collection Activities, 2024

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 by state law enforcement officers for human trafficking offenses
- 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.

BJS obtains information on human trafficking through several data collections, including those on victim service providers, law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication, and corrections. For each collection, these data are available for some combination of the federal, state, local, and tribal levels.

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 factors.

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 and activities across various jurisdictional levels that include various offenses that may be categorized as human trafficking, and it presents the most recent statistical findings.

COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES DURING 2023 AND 2024

In 2023 and 2024, BJS continued to examine 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.

Victimization

BJS's current collections are unable to produce estimates for the prevalence of human trafficking in the United States. In 2023 and 2024, BJS conducted a feasibility study into various methods for estimating this type of victimization. Working with Abt Global through a cooperative agreement, BJS conducted an environmental scan and convened an expert panel to discuss various methods for a potential pilot study. Additional information about this study will be described in a forthcoming third-party report.

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 person 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 UCR-HT 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.

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 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.

Beginning with data for 2021, national estimates of crime known to law enforcement were based on NIBRS data. To calculate national estimates, BJS and the FBI partnered with RTI International to establish a new set of statistical procedures to incorporate the NIBRS data structure and account for agencies that did not report data to the system. In October 2022, the FBI published the first set of national estimates derived from the new methodology.[1]

The latest data on human trafficking is available through the FBI's Crime Data Explorer at https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov.

Crime statistics published by the FBI only represent offenses known to law enforcement, and therefore do not account for all human trafficking that occurs in the United States.

---

[1]For more information, see *Estimation Procedures for Crimes in the United States Based on NIBRS Data* (NCJ 305108, BJS, August 2022), available at https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/epcusbnibrsd.pdf.

Prosecution and adjudication

BJS has sponsored periodic data collections on criminal trial and appellate litigation in state courts since 1986. Its current collection, **Criminal Cases in State Courts (CCSC)**, is an administrative collection that gathers data on the number and attributes of cases closed in state trial courts of general jurisdiction. The CCSC is designed to examine data on the processing of felony cases in state courts and 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 initial data collection and processing are 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. The FJSP collects, standardizes, and reports on administrative data received from six federal justice agencies: the U.S. Marshals Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and U.S. Sentencing Commission.[2]

---

[2]For more information on the FJSP, see *Federal Justice Statistics, 2022* (NCJ 307553, BJS, January 2024), available at https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/fjs22.pdf.

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.[3]

Through the FJSP, the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys provides to BJS 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 receives 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 2012 to 2022 **(figure 1)**. A total of 1,912 persons were referred to U.S. attorneys for human trafficking offenses in fiscal year 2022, a 26% increase from the 1,519 persons referred in 2012. The number of persons prosecuted for human trafficking more than doubled from 2012 to 2022 (from 805 to 1,656 persons). The number of persons convicted of a human trafficking offense increased from 578 persons in 2012 to 1,118 persons in 2022.
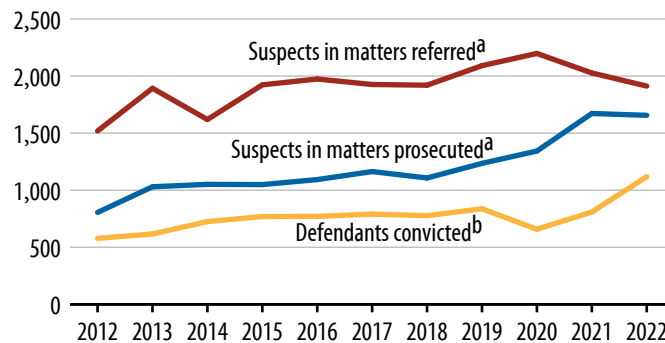
Of the 1,070 defendants charged with any of the three types of human trafficking offenses in U.S. district court in fiscal year 2022:

- 91% were male
- 58% were white
- 20% were black
- 18% were Hispanic
- 95% were U.S. citizens
- 71% had no prior convictions **(table 1)**.

Of the 203 defendants charged with peonage, slavery, forced labor, and sex trafficking, 69% were male and 53% were black. In comparison, of the 523 defendants charged with sexual exploitation and other abuse of children, 94% were male and 71% were white.

---

[3]For more information about the classification of federal 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/fphtc15.pdf.

Note: See appendix table 1 for counts.
[a]Includes 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.
[b]Includes 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 2012–2022.

TABLE 1
Characteristics of human trafficking defendants in cases charged in U.S. district court, fiscal year 2022

Defendant characteristic	Total Number	Total Percent	Peonage, slavery, forced labor, and sex trafficking Number	Peonage, slavery, forced labor, and sex trafficking Percent	Sexual exploitation and other abuse of children Number	Sexual exploitation and other abuse of children Percent	Transportation for illegal sex activity Number	Transportation for illegal sex activity Percent
Total	1,070	100%	203	100%	523	100%	344	100%
Sex								
Male	970	90.7%	141	69.5%	494	94.5%	335	97.7%
Female	99	9.3	62	30.5	29	5.5	8	2.3
Race/Hispanic origin*								
White	582	58.1%	32	16.1%	343	70.7%	207	65.3%
Black	197	19.7	105	52.8	57	11.8	35	11.0
Hispanic	182	18.2	57	28.6	70	14.4	55	17.4
American Indian or Alaska Native	12	1.2	1	0.5	4	0.8	7	2.2
Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander	28	2.8	4	2.0	11	2.3	13	4.1
Age								
18–24	165	15.4%	42	20.7%	74	14.1%	49	14.2%
25–34	381	35.6	71	35.0	200	38.2	110	32.0
35–49	371	34.7	64	31.5	183	35.0	124	36.0
50–64	126	11.8	21	10.3	53	10.1	52	15.1
65 or older	27	2.5	5	2.5	13	2.5	9	2.6
Median age	34 years		33 years		34 years		36 years	
Citizenship								
U.S. citizen	1,000	94.7%	175	87.1%	503	97.5%	322	95.0%
Documented non-U.S. citizen	20	1.9	6	3.0	4	0.8	10	2.9
Undocumented non-U.S. citizen	36	3.4	20	10.0	9	1.7	7	2.1
Prior conviction								
No prior convictions	756	70.7%	132	65.0%	375	71.7%	249	72.4%
Prior misdemeanor only	131	12.2	22	10.8	68	13.0	41	11.9
Prior felony conviction	183	17.1	49	24.1	80	15.3	54	15.7

Note: The unit of count was a defendant interviewed, investigated, or supervised by federal pretrial services. Data were missing for the following: sex (1), race/Hispanic origin (71), and citizenship (14).
*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 2022.

Corrections

The **National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP)** collects person-level administrative data annually on state prisons for participating jurisdictions, including custody status, admissions, releases, and parole entries and discharges. For this program, 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.

The most recent NCRP data available are for the year 2022. For the 47 states that reported for that year:

- 35 reported at least one person with a human trafficking offense was admitted to, held in, or released from custody or post-custody community supervision

- 825 state prison admissions were for a human trafficking offense

- 537 persons were released from state prison after serving a sentence for a human trafficking offense

- 1,939 persons were in the custody of a state prison serving a sentence for a human trafficking offense at yearend

- 142 persons who had been imprisoned for a human trafficking offense began a term of post-custody community supervision

- 130 persons who had been imprisoned for a human trafficking offense exited their term of post-custody community supervision (not shown in table).

Most states that reported to the NCRP included information on admissions. Of these states, between 27 and 32 states reported at least one prison admission related to a human trafficking offense each year between 2018 and 2022 **(table 2)**. For states reporting admissions to the NCRP, the percentage of admissions related to human trafficking increased each year during this period.

TABLE 2
Number of states that reported admissions to the National Corrections Reporting Program and admissions to state prison for human trafficking, 2018–2022

Year	Number of states that reported admissions to the NCRP	Number of states that reported at least one human trafficking admission to the NCRP	Total admissions	Admissions for human trafficking	
				Number	Percent
2018	49	32	567,186	551	0.10%
2019	46	28	512,311	632	0.12
2020	46	30	303,344	396	0.13
2021	46	27	370,276	564	0.15
2022	45	28	395,059	825	0.21

Note: Includes data for all states that reported admissions to the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) between 2018 and 2022. See https://bjs.ojp.gov/data-collection/national-corrections-reporting-program-ncrp. The states that did not report are Connecticut (2018–2022); Arizona, Michigan, New Jersey (2019–2022); and Virginia (2022).
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Corrections Reporting Program, 2018–2022.

SELECTED PREVIOUSLY RELEASED BJS REPORTS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- *Human-Trafficking Offenses Handled by State Attorneys General Offices, 2018*, NCJ 254803, BJS, March 2021

- *Federal Prosecution of Human-Trafficking Cases, 2015*, NCJ 251390, BJS, June 2018

- *Federal Prosecution of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Cases, 2004–2013*, NCJ 250746, BJS, October 2017

Numbers for figure 1: Human trafficking suspects referred to and prosecuted by U.S. attorneys and human trafficking defendants convicted, fiscal years 2012–2022

Fiscal year	Suspects in matters referred[a]	Suspects in matters prosecuted[a]	Defendants convicted[b]
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	2,198	1,343	658
2021	2,027	1,672	809
2022	1,912	1,656	1,118
Percent change, 2012–2022	25.9%	105.7%	93.4%
Percent change, 2021–2022	-5.7%	-1.0%	38.2%

[a]Includes 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.

[b]Includes 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 2012–2022.
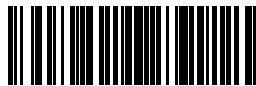
NCJ 309422

Office of Justice Programs
Building Solutions • Supporting Communities • Advancing Justice
www.ojp.gov