

The Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking

The coronavirus pandemic is dramatically increasing the danger to victims and survivors of human trafficking across the country.



The National Survivor Law Collective (NSLC) is responding in this moment to helping victims and survivors of human trafficking, whose condition has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Human trafficking - the exploitation of another person for labor or sex through force, fraud, or coercion - preys on many at-risk communities and exacerbates existing social ills. The NSLC, composed of member organizations focused on providing legal services to human trafficking survivors across four states, recognizes that the current crisis creates unique and severe hardships for survivors.

“Human trafficking happens in our local communities. Wherever there is homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, and lack of safety - we know these individuals are at increased risk of human trafficking because of their vulnerabilities,” notes Jamie Beck of NSLC member Free to Thrive.

The likely impacts of this pandemic on victims/survivors of human trafficking are far-reaching:

- Increased recruitment of school-age children who are home from school and spending more time online, where predators lurk
- Increased recruitment of former foster youth, youth released from detention centers and college students who do not have a safe home (or home at all) to return to, as traffickers commonly lure victims with promises of safety, love, and support

Increased harm to those who are in live human trafficking situations, as sex buying decreases and they are compelled to participate in web-based sexual activity or criminal activity

Increased intimate partner violence where victims cohabit with their traffickers and increased interpersonal violence where victims share children with their traffickers

Infection of COVID19 by survivors who are currently serving at county jails and at state and federal prisons

Increased child custody issues at the same time as courts are closed to resolve those issues where survivors co-parent with a former trafficker, as traffickers often leverage children for their own gains

Increased trauma of survivors, many of whom already experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and struggle with depression, anxiety, and overcoming addiction with limited support

Significant economic harm as survivors often leave everything behind when escaping their traffickers, and, moreover, those with criminal records due to traffickers' abuse are blocked from employment and other opportunities to access services

“As isolation and the risk of violence to survivors are increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSLC was formed to respond and act,” explains Marianna Kosharovsky of NSLC member ALIGHT.

It may mean that “whatever momentary decrease we are seeing for some agencies in calls for service may be the calm before the new storm,” according to Andrea Lampert and Joel Shapiro of NSLC member Trafficking Law Center.

For more detail on these impacts, read the full blog article “The Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking Victims & Survivors” [here](#).

About The National Survivor Law Collective (NSLC)

Founded in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Survivor Law Collective (NSLC) is composed of U.S. organizations focused on providing free legal services to victims and survivors of all forms of human trafficking, regardless of gender identity, nationality, or age.

The Founding Members are:

[ALIGHT \(Alliance to Lead Impact in Global Human Trafficking\)](#), CO
[Free to Thrive](#), CA

[Justice Restoration Center](#), FL

[Trafficking Law Center](#), OR

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