



Report on Labor Trafficking Services Grant Program

VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS UNIT

Injury and Violence Prevention Section, Injury Prevention and Mental Health Division

01/15/2026

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Annual report submitted pursuant to Minnesota Statute section 144.3885.

As requested by Minnesota Statute 3.197: This report cost approximately \$1,500 to prepare, including staff time, printing and mailing expenses.

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, or audio recording.

Printed on recycled paper.

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Labor Trafficking Services Grant Program

The labor trafficking services grant program administered by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Human Trafficking Prevention and Response Program funds supportive services to assist victims and survivors of labor trafficking and exploitation of all ages in Minnesota. In compliance with Minnesota Statutes section 144.3885, MDH must submit this report every year on January 15 to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees over health policy. The law was passed in 2023, and two annual reports have been submitted the legislature thus far (2024 and 2025). This report fulfills all statutory reporting requirements.

For program background, see the [2024 Report on Labor Trafficking Services Grant Program \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/humantrafficking/documents/2024laborleg rpt.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/humantrafficking/documents/2024laborleg rpt.pdf). For data from 2025 please see [Report on Labor Trafficking Services \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/humantrafficking/documents/2025laborleg rpt.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/humantrafficking/documents/2025laborleg rpt.pdf). The following quantitative and qualitative data comprises the 2026 report.

Grantees

This section describes the geographic reach and range of services provided by grantees through state funds only. Additional support may be provided through federal, penalty, or philanthropic funds.

Organization Name	Grant Period	Description	Amount
The Advocates for Human Rights Service area: Statewide	December 26, 2023, through June 30, 2026 (FY24-FY26)	Grantee will provide pro bono representation for individuals seeking humanitarian protection in the United States related to labor trafficking and exploitation, including trafficking-related visas and legal protections for unaccompanied minors who are at risk for child labor violations. Grantee will also provide training and technical assistance.	\$270,000
The Enitan Story Service area: Statewide	October 23, 2023, through June 30, 2026 (FY24-FY26)	Grantee will provide case management services statewide to victims and survivors of labor trafficking and exploitation by assessing their needs, providing trauma-informed, culturally relevant services, incorporating their voices, and coordinating referrals. Grantee will also offer training, technical assistance, and life skills education for survivors.	\$50,000*

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<p>Refugee Services, Lutheran Social Services</p> <p>Service area: Central Minnesota</p>	<p>October 23, 2023, through June 30, 2026 (FY24-FY26)</p>	<p>Grantee will provide trauma-informed and culturally relevant case management services and referrals to refugee and immigrant victims and survivors of labor trafficking and exploitation to help meet their basic needs, address the harm caused by trafficking and exploitation, and move them toward healing. Grantee will also provide training with a focus on prevention.</p>	<p>\$350,000</p>
<p>Dodge & Olmsted Victim Services, Olmsted County</p> <p>Service area: Southeastern Minnesota</p>	<p>October 23, 2023, through June 30, 2026 (FY24-FY26)</p>	<p>Grantee will provide advocacy, case management, and supportive services specially designed to meet the needs of victims and survivors of labor trafficking and exploitation, as well as those who are at risk. Services will be victim-centered, trauma-informed, strengths-based, age-appropriate, and culturally responsive.</p>	<p>\$350,000</p>
<p>Someplace Safe</p> <p>Service area: West Central Minnesota</p>	<p>October 23, 2023, through June 30, 2026 (FY24-FY26)</p>	<p>Grantee will provide ongoing trauma-informed, victim-led, and culturally responsive case management and services to victims and survivors of labor trafficking and exploitation. A full-time Regional Labor Trafficking Advocate will provide services, build partnerships, give referrals and trainings, and work to strengthen system responses.</p>	<p>\$325,000</p>
<p>Standpoint</p> <p>Service area: Statewide</p>	<p>October 23, 2023, through June 30, 2026 (FY24-FY26)</p>	<p>Grantee will enhance services and support to domestic and sexual violence survivors who have experienced labor trafficking or exploitation. Services will include pro bono representation of victims who qualify for trafficking-related immigration relief. Grantee will also update its screening tool, recruit volunteer attorneys, and provide outreach and training.</p>	<p>\$155,000**</p>

Total amount awarded: \$1,500,000

* The Enitan Story received an additional \$50,000 from federal funds managed by the Human Trafficking Prevention program for a total grant of \$100,000.

** Standpoint received an additional \$15,000 from penalty funds managed by the Human Trafficking Prevention program for a total grant of \$170,000.

Summary of Services Provided

Between November 1, 2024, and October 31, 2025, 184 victims and survivors of labor trafficking or exploitation were served by our grantees. Due to privacy and confidentiality requirements, as well as the potential that individual victims and survivors sought services from more than one grantee, this number and related percentages may include duplicates. This number is more than double the number of victims and survivors reported in the previous period (91). The increase is likely due in part to more awareness about the services due to dedicated staffing and trainings, as well as brochures and a media campaign supported by MDH. The largest numbers of participants identified as Hispanic or Latino at 57% and African American, African or Black at 17% (Chart 1), indicating the need for culturally specific services and language access.

Participants ranged in age across the lifespan from 12 years old and younger to over 65. In this reporting period 20 children under the age of 18 received services. The age groups with the largest representation were 25-34 at 23% and 35-44 at 17% (Chart 2). The broad age range indicates the importance of services that not only address victimization but also support for shelter, families, employment, education, health care, immigration relief, and other needs.

Victimization by gender was almost evenly divided at 52% girls/women and 40% boys/men (Chart 3), further refuting the still common perception that human trafficking and exploitation affects primarily cisgender women and girls.

Data Charts

The following charts describe demographic data reflecting services provided during the time period of November 1, 2024 through October 31, 2025. The data is collected from all six grantees receiving labor trafficking and exploitation services funding from MDH. Data limitations may include the presence of duplicated numbers affecting percentages due to privacy and confidentiality requirements as well as the potential that individual victims and survivors sought services from more than one grantee. There are no other additional data limitations to report.

Chart 1: Largest Number of Participants Identified as Hispanic/Latino

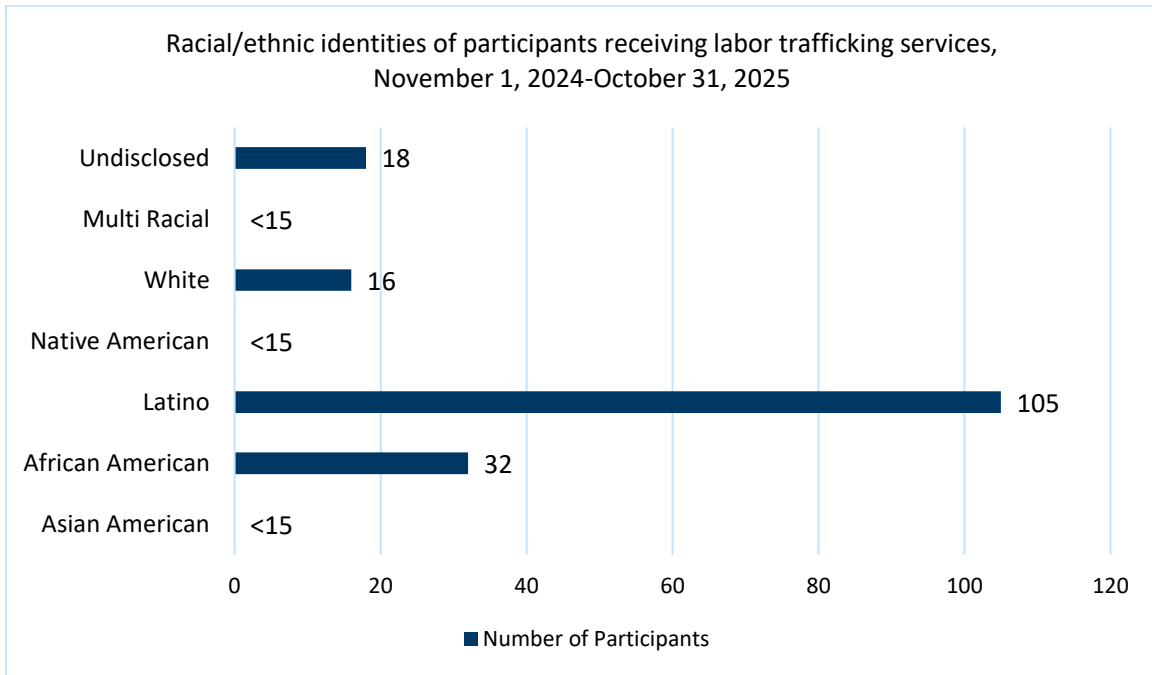


Chart 2: Children and Adults Receiving Services

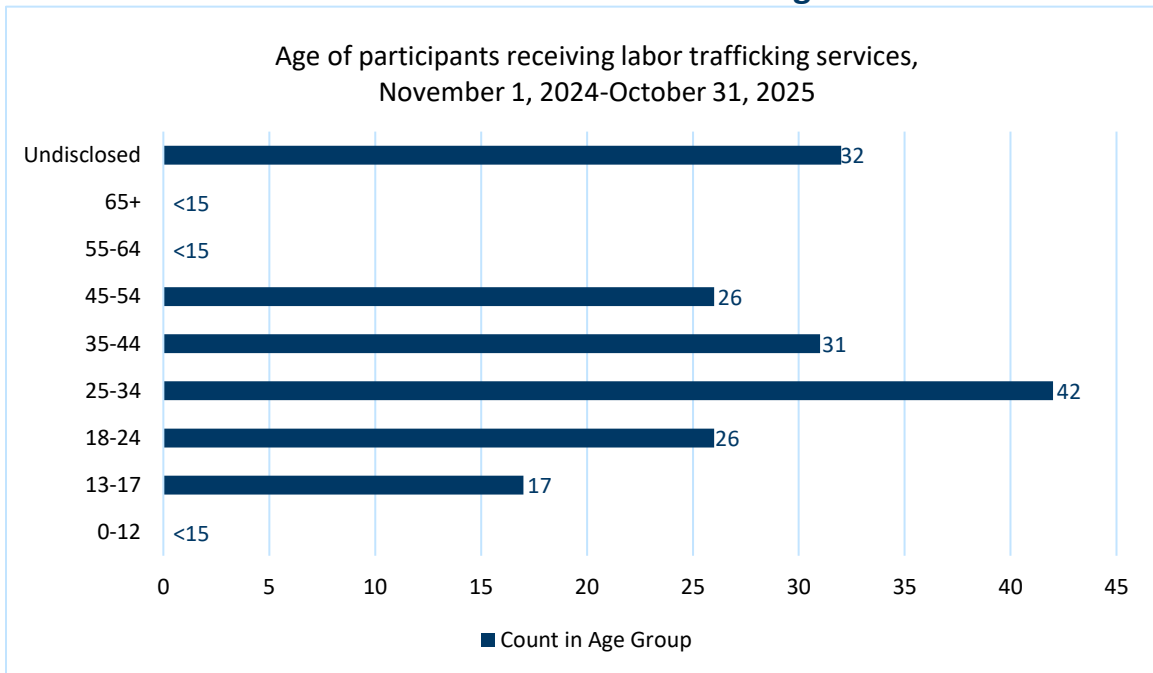
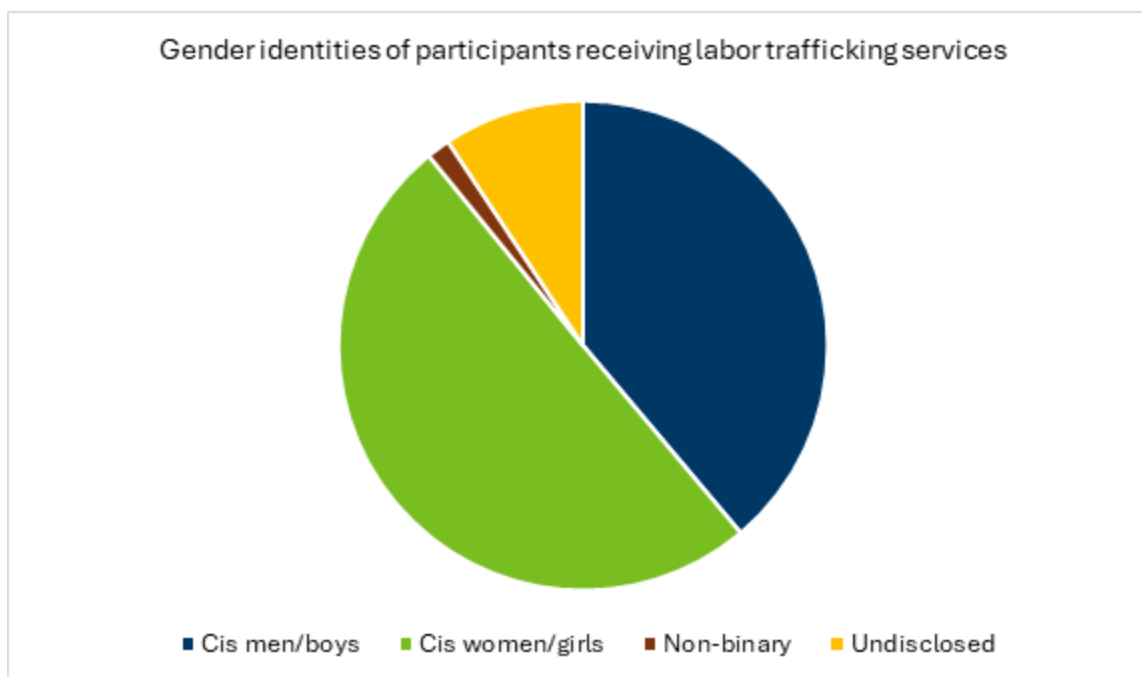


Chart 3: Gender of Participants Almost Evenly Divided



Types of Services

Grantees provided a wide range of services including but not limited to case management, criminal justice advocacy, culturally specific services, employment assistance, financial assistance, family support, housing assistance, legal services, interpreter/translation services, and transportation services. Additionally, referrals were made for childcare, dental care, education services, housing assistance, medical assistance, social services, substance use treatment, and mental health services. More in depth analyses about services and referrals will be available in the future as more long-term data from grantees becomes available.

Success Stories

Grantees report ongoing success in their work, citing collaboration with Minnesota’s Safe Harbor network to create pathways for participants to receive culturally specific services and find housing when crises occur. Grantees have increased their victim identification, as the number of program participants doubled since the last reporting period, with the caveat, as noted above and noteworthy for all reporting years, that due to privacy and confidentiality requirements and the potential that victims and survivors sought services from more than one grantee, this number may include duplicates.

In this reporting period there is a wider array of ages and racial identities than were reported in the previous year. This increase may be due to the increased number of services provided as well as grantee outreach to culturally specific communities. While facing much uncertainty from funding and policy changes at the federal level, the grantees persevere to serve victims of labor trafficking and exploitation. With each successive year of data reporting, MDH is better

positioned to strengthen service and referral outcome tracking on a longitudinal basis and make adjustments in the program to support the most significant needs of victims and survivors.

Additional successes, described below, include activities in the areas of legal relief, housing stability, and economic justice:

Legal Relief

- Several grantee agencies securing citizenship and work authorizations for their clients.

Housing Stability

- Grantee agencies demonstrating effective ongoing collaboration to find adequate shelter or housing for participants who need immediate housing assistance.
- Grantee agencies, government personnel, and subject matter experts with lived experience participating in a summit during spring 2025 organized by Freedom Network USA to establish a working group organizing efforts to create shelter and housing specifically for victims of labor trafficking.

Economic Justice

- Grantee staff collaborating with the Department of Labor and Industry to receive long-delayed wages from an employer of their client.

Note, these examples are presented in aggregate to protect participant confidentiality.

Aside from celebrating successful grantee activities, the MDH Human Trafficking and Response Program, in collaboration with multidisciplinary partners as well as subject matter experts who advise on survivor needs, also strengthened private sector partnerships over the past year. These partnerships improve and expand the response to labor trafficking and exploitation.

In addition, the state is seeing increasing support from philanthropic sources. Since 2024, MDH has managed funds from the McKnight Foundation to support the Office of the Minnesota Attorney General response to human trafficking and wage theft cases. In 2025 the Howard G. Buffett Foundation awarded a five-year grant to MDH to build a statewide multidisciplinary response to labor trafficking, support investigations and prosecutions, and engage subject matter experts with lived experience in developing policy and protocols.

A stable state funding commitment assures private sector funders that Minnesota is invested in building an effective and sustainable response to labor trafficking and exploitation. The same holds true for federal funders. MDH has managed three “Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking” grants from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) in the United States Department of Justice since 2016; the current grant ends on September 30, 2026. MDH plans to apply to OVC again this year.

Challenges

Some victims of labor trafficking and exploitation seek legal immigration status or citizenship in the United States. Significant challenges persist in the immigration process for program

participants, compounded by evolving uncertainties in federal policy and enforcement. Grantees report wait times for U and T visa processing have grown longer and T Visa denials are more frequent; in addition, over the past year deportation risks for applicants have increased.¹ U and T visas are available to victims of crime, with T visas available specifically for human trafficking victims and survivors. Interim guidance from United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement eliminates victimization screenings during immigration enforcement. The effect is that many eligible individuals are excluded from necessary services and relief, leading to rapid detention or deportation.² The interim guidance is currently the subject of litigation.³

This environment has intensified fear among victims, deterring some from seeking aid and resulting in a reluctance to disclose personal information due to the risk of identification. While the current situation has not deterred help-seeking altogether, the risks of doing so are a stronger consideration for victims now than they were in the past.

Further, victims are struggling with basic needs due to federal funding cuts and altered eligibility for housing and food programs. Such challenges not only exacerbate their vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation but also increase the risk of revictimization.

Conclusion

The labor trafficking and exploitation services grants offer an array of services across the state. They are administered under the guiding principles of the MDH Human Trafficking Prevention and Response Program, which include commitments to equity, dignity, trauma-informed response, and survivor-centered care. These guiding principles align with Minnesota's longstanding interest, aligned with funding and policy priorities, in supporting a robust statewide multidisciplinary response to human trafficking and exploitation.

Several systems benefit from partnerships with these grantees, including child welfare, criminal justice, health care, and social services. This report demonstrates the growth of the program over the two years since the initial funding and need for ongoing financial support and collaboration. The grantees' experiences, coupled with their service data, will continue to inform future efforts to improve Minnesota's response to labor trafficking and exploitation. Based on the progress of this program and positive impacts reported by grantees, MDH encourages continued funding to sustain these valuable services that support the safety and wellbeing of all people in Minnesota.

¹ Do, P. (2025, Aug. 23). More human-trafficking survivors are seeking visas, but face longer waits and risk deportation. *The Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2025-08-23/more-human-trafficking-survivors-are-seeking-visas-but-face-longer-waits-and-risk-deportation>.

² United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (2025, Jan. 31). *Interim Guidance on Civil Immigration Enforcement Actions Involving Current or Potential Beneficiaries of Victim-Based Immigration Benefits*. <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/policy/11005.4.pdf>.

³ *Immigration Center for Women and Children et al. v. Noem*, U.S. District Court, C.D. Cal. (Filed Oct. 14, 2025).