

ENHANCED COLLABORATIVE MODEL TASK FORCE TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

Performance Update Report

Fiscal Years 2016–2018



Purpose

This Performance Update Report provides information about key grant activities and accomplishments of Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)-funded law enforcement grantees under the Department of Justice (DOJ) Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking (ECM) Program.

The information in this report comes from self-reported data entered by the BJA grantees in the Performance Measurement Tool, an online data collection system. Grantees report data into this online system on a quarterly basis to BJA. **This Performance Update Report covers data reported in the Performance Measurement Tool from October 1, 2015, to September 30, 2018 (fiscal years [FYs] 2016–2018), unless otherwise noted.**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 2004, BJA and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) have collaborated to develop and support multidisciplinary human trafficking task forces,¹ bringing together local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement, prosecutors, victim service providers, and other key stakeholders. The ECM Program supports these local task forces with funding to law enforcement agencies (through BJA) and victim service providers (through OVC). BJA also partners with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to provide training and technical assistance services to assist the task forces with achieving their program objectives.

The ECM Program's ultimate goal is to assist communities in developing effective and sustainable multidisciplinary task forces that implement victim-centered approaches to identify victims of sex and labor trafficking, provide services to victims, and investigate and prosecute all forms of human trafficking.

As of FY 2018, there were 29 active BJA/OVC-funded task forces. Total BJA funding was nearly \$21 million, based on awards made between FY 2015 and FY 2017. (Awards made in FY 2018 were not active during the period analyzed for this report.)

Task forces covered jurisdictions varying widely in population size, ranging from less than 500,000 to more than 5 million. The largest jurisdictions covered by a task force were the county of Los Angeles, CA, city of Houston, TX, and Cook County, IL.



29
BJA/OVC-funded Task Forces,
active as of FY 2018



\$20.7
Total Funding (in millions)

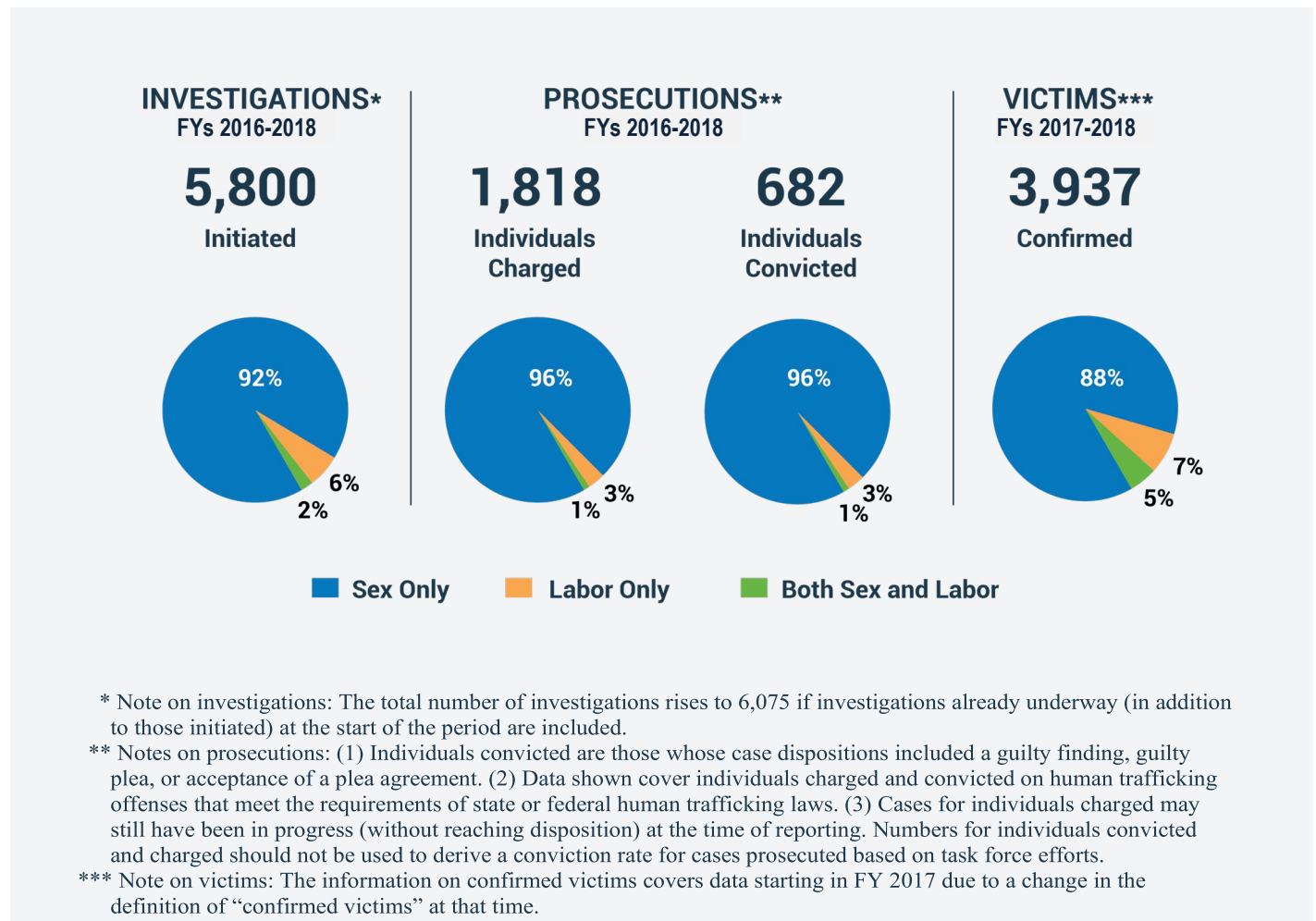
¹ These task forces uphold the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and subsequent amendments.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Law Enforcement Investigations and Prosecutions

The ECM Program supports proactive, victim-centered investigations with the goal of prosecuting traffickers and reaching victims.

Figure 1. Key Metrics Related to Investigations, Prosecutions, and Victims of Human Trafficking Crimes



BJA uses the following definitions based on the Trafficking Victims Protection Act:

Sex trafficking involves a commercial sex act that is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act is younger than 18.

Labor trafficking involves the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Sex and labor trafficking refers to instances where victims were subject to both sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

INVESTIGATIONS

New Investigations. Across all 5,800 task force cases initiated from FY 2016 to FY 2018, 92 percent investigated sex trafficking only.

At the individual task force level, the share of investigations addressing sex trafficking only varied, ranging from 57 percent to 99.5 percent and averaging 88 percent.

PROSECUTIONS

Individuals Charged. From FY 2016 to FY 2018, task force investigations led to human trafficking charges against 1,818 individuals, with 96 percent being charged for sex trafficking. State or local investigations led to 83 percent of these prosecutions.

Prosecutors may charge potential traffickers with criminal offenses that do not meet the requirements of state or federal human trafficking laws, but which are part of or similar to a human trafficking offense. Examples of these offenses include wage theft, gun or drug charges, kidnapping, or involuntary servitude. If including individuals charged with **any** criminal offense (not only those charged with human trafficking), task force investigations led to criminal charges against 2,514 individuals.

Individuals Convicted. From FY 2016 to FY 2018, task force efforts contributed to convictions of 682 individuals on human trafficking charges, with 96 percent for sex trafficking. These include individuals who were found guilty, pled guilty, or accepted a guilty plea. 81 percent of these dispositions resulted from state or local cases.

Reasons for Denied Prosecutions. Selecting from a prepopulated list, grantees rated factors contributing to denial of human trafficking cases using a scale ranging from “Not Applicable” to “Frequently.”

- The reason cited most frequently was “Victim(s) declined to participate,” followed by “Investigation(s) resulted in insufficient evidence.”
- Reasons cited less frequently included: “Resource constraints,” “Offender is already serving a long sentence for another crime,” and “Investigation(s) involved expired statute of limitations.”

Grantees provided other explanations for denied prosecutions such as:

- Cases denied/declined at the federal level but accepted at the state or local level (or vice versa)
- Offender charged in another jurisdiction or outside the jurisdiction
- No known/available victims
- Prosecutorial discretion

VICTIMS

As law enforcement investigations progress, task forces work to confirm individuals as victims of human trafficking. From FY 2017 to FY 2018,² the program's 29 law enforcement grantees reported a total of 3,937 confirmed victims.

Confirmed victims are those individuals whose victimization due to human trafficking has been verified by meeting one or more of the following three criteria:

- *Having Continued Presence requested on their behalf.³*
- *Receiving an endorsement from law enforcement on their application for a T⁴ or U⁵ visa, which would allow them to remain in the United States and assist law enforcement authorities in an investigation or prosecution.*
- *An arrest of the trafficker(s) or law enforcement confirmation of the victim's status.*

Confirmed Victim Demographics. Grantees report demographic data on confirmed victims related to age, gender, and nationality. The demographic data shown below are for all three types of human trafficking (sex, labor, and both sex and labor) from FY 2017 to FY 2018:

- 42 percent were younger than 18.
- 95 percent identified as female.
- 76 percent were U.S. citizens (as defined by the program).

² The information on confirmed victims covers data starting in FY 2017 due to a change in the definition of "confirmed victims" at that time.

³ Continued Presence is a temporary immigration status provided to individuals identified by law enforcement as victims of human trafficking. This status allows victims who are potential witnesses to remain in the United States temporarily during the ongoing investigation into the crimes committed against them.

⁴ T Nonimmigrant status (T visa) provides immigration protection to victims of trafficking. The T visa allows victims to remain in the United States and assist law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of human trafficking cases.

⁵ U Nonimmigrant status (U visa) provides immigration protection to crime victims who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse because of the crime. The U visa allows victims to remain in the United States and assist law enforcement authorities in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity.

Figure 2: Confirmed Victims by Age, FYs 2017–2018, All Human Trafficking Types

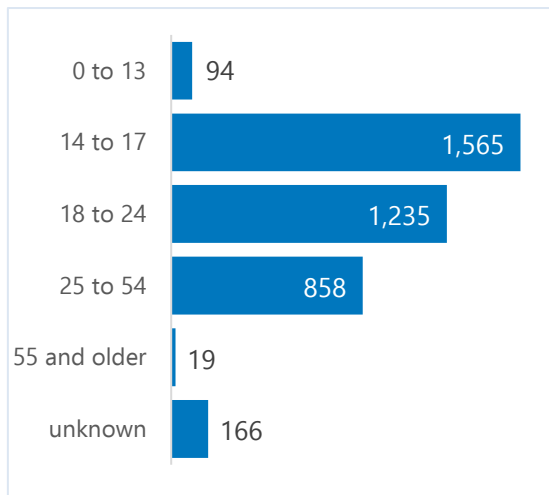


Figure 3: Confirmed Victims by Gender, FYs 2017–2018, All Human Trafficking Types

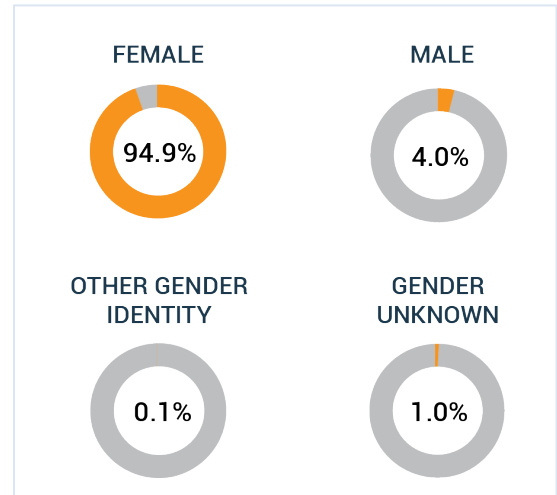
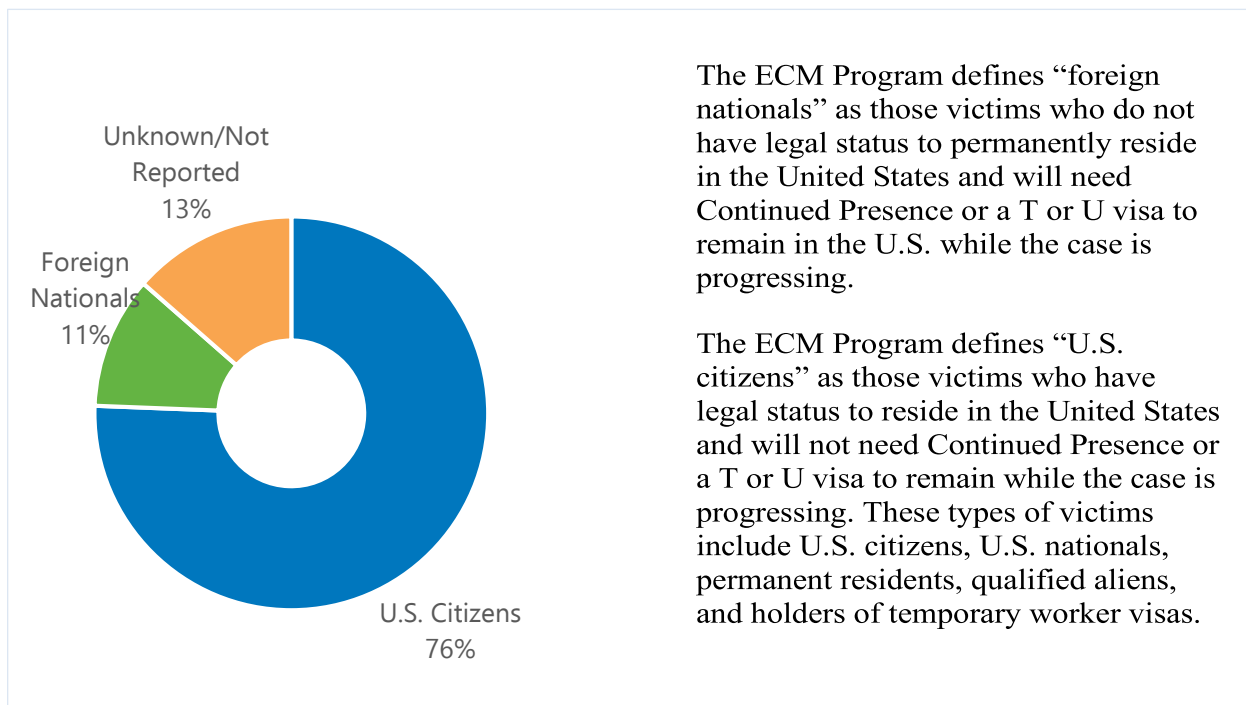


Figure 4: Confirmed Victims by Nationality, FYs 2017–2018, All Human Trafficking Types



Training

Capacity building through training is a key ECM Program element. BJA requires and supports a wide variety of training and professional development opportunities for law enforcement grantees aimed at improving victim-centered investigations and case prosecutions.

BJA-funded task force members also develop and deliver trainings for partners and stakeholders in their communities. These training audiences may include, but are not limited to, other law enforcement entities, victim service providers, community organizations, hospitality businesses, and health care providers.

Below are selected topics of trainings delivered to BJA-funded grantees or developed and delivered by grantees to stakeholders:

- Effective strategies to investigate and prosecute labor trafficking
- Crypto currency and the dark web
- Collaboration with postal inspectors
- Crimes against children and child exploitation
- Digital forensic evidence collection
- Supervising undercover units
- Community policing approaches to human trafficking
- Forensic interviewing
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Immigration options available to victims of human trafficking

Training and Technical Assistance

With support from BJA, IACP provides ECM grantees with a range of training and technical assistance resources.

For more information, visit: www.theiacp.org/humantrafficking or call 1-800-THE-IACP, ext. 802.

Does your organization have other training and technical assistance needs? Contact the [BJA National Training and Technical Assistance Center](#).

For more information, visit: <https://bjatta.bja.ojp.gov/>.

Task Force Community Outreach and Training Efforts Contribute to Successful Human Trafficking Investigations and Prosecutions

ECM grantees conduct outreach activities to build sustainable partnerships and raise awareness about human trafficking and task force efforts to combat this crime. ECM grantees target their outreach to community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and businesses. Outreach activities include hosting or attending events, leveraging social media, and distributing materials.

Through these outreach activities, task forces train community members on how to identify human trafficking, report it, and prevent it from occurring in the first place. This equips community members to be a critical asset in law enforcement efforts to identify victims of human trafficking, and it increases the likelihood of success for investigation and prosecution of cases.

Policies, Procedures, and Protocols

A core objective of the ECM Program is to establish and sustain an effective leadership structure with key operational protocols in place. To ensure all task force partners collaborate effectively, grantees must develop a set of protocols that clearly outlines task force operations and member roles and responsibilities.

Grantees work closely with BJA and IACP on developing these policies, procedures, and protocols for which the table below lists several key development areas. At the end of FY 2018, more than half of all grantees reported having established policies in place to address confidentiality, referrals, information sharing, and media.

Figure 5: Key Areas for Policy, Procedure, and Protocol Development

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Confidentiality. Includes victim, victim services, and task force initiative data protection, storage, and transfer. Also, handling of tips.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Referrals. Includes referring victims to internal/external victim service providers or referring foreign national victims for Office of Refugee Resettlement certification (for access to federal benefits and services).
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information sharing. Includes sharing information with other core task force members, partners, victim service providers, etc.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Media. Includes communication policies and procedures regarding speaking with the media, using the media as a resource when conducting task force initiatives, or establishing survivor speaker standards when addressing the media or a public audience.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Victim protections. Provides victims with all relevant protections afforded to them by law.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Case handling. Includes dealing with cases that have many victims or victims younger than 18, building strong cases against traffickers, or assisting when there is a large number of perpetrators per case.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Interpreter/Language. Provides appropriate support and resources for language assistance and interpreters as needed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continued presence. Includes providing foreign national victims with Continued Presence status or providing documentation to support Continued Presence or other immigration assistance.

SUMMARY

From FY 2016 to FY 2018, ECM task force grantees initiated 5,800 new human trafficking investigations. During this time, new and ongoing investigations yielded 3,937 confirmed victims of human trafficking and 1,818 individuals criminally charged on human trafficking offenses. There were 682 individuals who were found guilty, pled guilty, or accepted a plea agreement for human trafficking charges.

Beyond simply funding law enforcement investigation and prosecution activities, the ECM Program lays the groundwork for effective and sustainable collaboration among a multidisciplinary team to best identify victims and combat all forms of human trafficking. The ECM Program addresses key capacity building needs such as training on skills and key issues critical to effectively address evolving human trafficking challenges. With the long term in mind, the program emphasizes the development of policies, procedures, and protocols to document partner roles, outline task force operations, and foster task force sustainability.