

# Emergency Funding for California's Trafficking Victims in the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis

A PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL BUDGET RESOURCES TO COMBAT THE  
IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

**#STOP  
TRAFFICKING  
IN ITS TRACKS**



**Cast**

COALITION TO  
ABOLISH SLAVERY  
& TRAFFICKING

# PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SPECIALIZED TRAFFICKING VICTIM SERVICES, FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING, AND A CALIFORNIA HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

## I. Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking

Victims of human trafficking are deceived and coerced into providing forced labor or sexual services for the benefit of their traffickers. **Human trafficking, whether for sexual or labor exploitation, is already difficult to combat in “normal” times. The novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”) pandemic has exacerbated the risks faced by this vulnerable group.**

The pandemic has increased the exposure-related health risks of trafficking victims and created a larger pool of potential trafficking victims.<sup>1</sup> Already vulnerable individuals will become even more vulnerable to trafficking during and after the pandemic, while individuals experiencing newfound economic hardship may find themselves newly at risk of being recruited into trafficking. The pandemic has also undermined assistance efforts to trafficking victims already connected with services who now have lost jobs and are suffering increased mental health concerns due to government restrictions put in place during the pandemic--restrictions that in some ways mirror restrictions placed on them by their traffickers. Further COVID-19 has directly impacted funding for human trafficking service providers.<sup>2</sup> These service



providers, considered essential workers, must be able to continue functioning and supporting victims and potential victims during the extraordinary circumstances created by the pandemic and its aftermath, which has required unexpected and unbudgeted novel methods of service provision.

COVID-19 has created instability and prevented access to critical services for large numbers of the population, which in turn increases the number of individuals vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers.<sup>3</sup> While anyone can potentially fall victim to human trafficking, vulnerable populations with limited

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<sup>1</sup> UN News. COVID-19 crisis putting human trafficking victims at risk of further exploitation, experts warn (May 6 2020) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1063342> (last accessed 27 Aug. 2020); COVID-19 May Increase Human Trafficking in Vulnerable Communities, THE POLARIS PROJECT (April 7, 2020)

<https://polarisproject.org/blog/2020/04/covid-19-may-increase-human-trafficking-in-vulnerable-communities/>.

<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 May Increase Human Trafficking in Vulnerable Communities, THE POLARIS PROJECT (April 7, 2020)

<https://polarisproject.org/blog/2020/04/covid-19-may-increase-human-trafficking-in-vulnerable-communities/>.

<sup>3</sup> Trafficking in Persons Report, United States Department of State (20th ed. June 2020) <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf>.

political, social and legal protection are the most at-risk.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, COVID-related measures like stay-at-home orders, lay-offs and travel restrictions disproportionately affect certain categories of people at risk of exploitation.<sup>5</sup> For example business shutdowns and the slowdown of the economy have impacted migrant and other temporary workers who, already on the verge of poverty, are facing the loss of health care and social services as well as their wages.<sup>6</sup> For individuals working in the “informal economy,”<sup>7</sup> income loss and layoffs can force them to turn to higher-risk employment situations to meet basic needs or avoid homelessness. The widespread economic impact of lost jobs or unstable employment, decreases in income due to cuts or unstable hours, and potential risk of losing homes, coupled with the likely increase in recruiting efforts by traffickers exploiting the conditions created by the pandemic, makes it essential for California to expend additional resources up front to prevent human trafficking and serve those who have and will be victimized during COVID-19 and its aftermath.

## II. The Impact of COVID-19 on Human Trafficking in California

**Within the United States, human trafficking has had a particularly dramatic impact on the state of California.** Thousands of women, men, and children, representing both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals, are victimized by traffickers every year in California.<sup>8</sup> According to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (“NHTRC”), California has consistently ranked at the top of the NHTRC hotline calls from 2012 through 2019.<sup>9</sup> In 2019 alone, the NHTRC received 4,820 “contacts” (i.e., phone calls, texts, online chats, emails, and webforms) from California, with a total of 1,507 human trafficking cases reported. Indeed, 2019 statistics indicated a nearly **49% increase in cases** reported to the hotline since 2015 and show that California represents approximately 13% of the reported contacts received nationwide by NHTRC. While shocking, these numbers represent a world before COVID-19 began to spread across our county. While “we do not – and cannot – know exactly how [COVID-19] will affect sex and labor trafficking in America, we can be pretty sure that

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<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., *An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action*, UNITED NATIONS, OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (2008), [https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/An\\_Introduction\\_to\\_Human\\_Trafficking\\_-\\_Background\\_Paper.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/An_Introduction_to_Human_Trafficking_-_Background_Paper.pdf) (discussing the manner in which human trafficking disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations as well as establishing a global definition of “vulnerability”); see also, *7 Facts You Didn’t Know about Human Trafficking*, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, August 1, 2018, [https://dworakpeck.usc.edu/news/7-facts-you-didnt-know-about-human-trafficking%3Futm\\_source%3Dtest](https://dworakpeck.usc.edu/news/7-facts-you-didnt-know-about-human-trafficking%3Futm_source%3Dtest).

<sup>5</sup> *Impact Of The Covid-19 Pandemic On Trafficking In Persons*, UNITED NATIONS, OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME 2 [https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS\\_Thematic\\_Brief\\_on\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS_Thematic_Brief_on_COVID-19.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> *Migrant Workers and the COVID-19 Pandemic*, FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (07 Apr. 2020) <http://www.fao.org/3/ca8559en/CA8559EN.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> The term “informal economy” refers to economic activities that are not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements. This includes wage workers without social protection or other formal arrangements in both informal and formal sector enterprises, own-account workers such as street vendors and domestic workers. ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work, INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION 6 note 3 (April 7, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., *The State of Human Trafficking in California*, CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (2012), <http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/ht/human-trafficking-2012.pdf> (reporting that the majority of sex trafficking victims identified in California are U.S. citizens); see also Abby Sewell, *Most L.A. County Youths Held for Prostitution Come from Foster Care*, L.A. TIMES, November 27, 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/nov/27/local/la-me-1128-sex-trafficking-20121128>.

<sup>9</sup> *Hotline Statistics*, NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESOURCE CENTER, <http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/states>.

**[vulnerable] communities will be even more vulnerable** to violence, abuse, and exploitation in the wake of this massive, worldwide economic and social disruption.”<sup>10</sup> The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (“CAST”) monitors the influx in requests for assistance every month and, as the chart below indicates, **CAST has documented a nearly 111% increase in cases of in-person emergency response to escaping survivors in COVID-impacted months in 2020 as compared to COVID-free months in 2019.** <sup>11</sup>

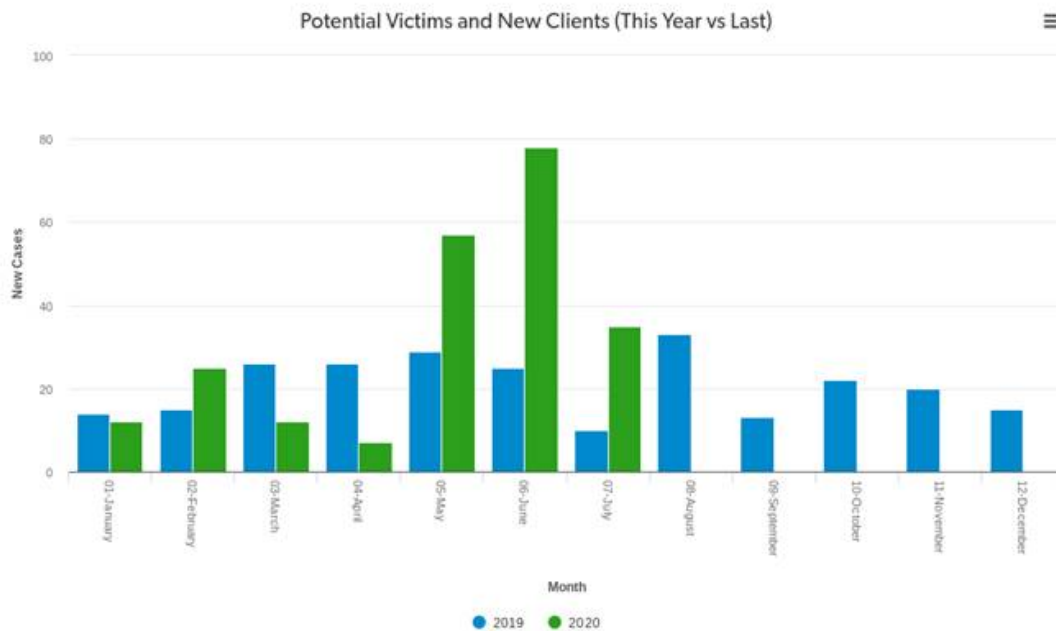


Figure 1

**Even without the heightened threat of COVID-19, California is particularly vulnerable to human trafficking because of factors such as large runaway and homeless youth populations, proximity to international borders, the number of ports and airports, a significant immigrant population, and a large economy including industries that attract forced labor and sex trafficking.**<sup>12</sup> Good data on the prevalence of human trafficking in California is lacking, with the most recent comprehensive report on human trafficking in California released in 2012. The available data indicates California has a long way to go in order to address this issue and must expand specialized resources to assist this vulnerable population. For example, the 2012 report indicated that California human trafficking taskforces identified 1,300 victims of human trafficking and made 1,798 arrests related to human trafficking.<sup>13</sup> Further, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), three of the nation’s thirteen High Intensity Child Prostitution areas are in

<sup>10</sup> COVID-19 May Increase Human Trafficking in Vulnerable Communities, The POLARIS PROJECT, <https://polarisproject.org/blog/2020/04/covid-19-may-increase-human-trafficking-in-vulnerable-communities/>.

<sup>11</sup> The chart directly compares the number of new client records in 2019 as compared to 2020. These numbers include referrals from the CAST hotline, legal inquiries from public defenders, and other newly rescued victims, regardless of whether the individual has formally enrolled in any CAST service.

<sup>12</sup> *What is Human Trafficking*, CALIFORNIANS AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, <http://www.caseact.org/learn/humantrafficking>.

<sup>13</sup> See *supra* note 4, *The State of Human Trafficking in California*.

California – Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, a 2017 survey found that 19% of the homeless youth population in California have experienced some form of trafficking, with 14% experiencing sex trafficking, 8% experiencing labor trafficking, and 3% experiencing forms of both.<sup>15</sup>

Trafficking victims require specialized programs that offer “shelter, nutrition, and appropriate medical treatment, as well as psychological evaluation, counseling, alcohol and drug treatment programs, education programs and life skills training.”<sup>16</sup> **Service providers in California consistently report wait lists for trafficking victim services and law enforcement partners struggle to find shelter for victims they have identified.** The pre-existing needs of California’s service providers and law enforcement are now amplified by the impacts of COVID-19. Providing funds to organizations that provide comprehensive services to victims of human trafficking during the COVID-19 pandemic, including supplemental funding for critically needed housing, social services, and basic necessities, is essential to ensure victims are provided long-term, trauma-informed services to help them escape their traffickers, receive the support they need, and move toward healing and stability.

### III. History of Funding Allocations by the California State Legislature

In 2014, the California State Legislature took an important first step in improving access to comprehensive services by approving a \$10 million, one-time funding request for organizations providing comprehensive direct services to victims of trafficking. In 2015, the California State Legislature established a Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Fund, to which it allocated another \$10 million one-time award. In 2017, the California State Legislature approved an additional one-time funding request of \$5 million. Through these funding allocations, California Governor Jerry Brown’s Office of Emergency Services (“Cal OES”) solicited funding proposals from human trafficking service providers for an allocation of funds for a 24-month grant period, beginning January 1, 2016 and ending December 31, 2017. A total of 24 applications were submitted to Cal OES, out of which the top 21 scoring applications were funded, together providing services in a multitude of legislative districts across California. In 2018, the California State Legislature approved an additional one-time funding request of \$10 million, which was allocated to Cal OES for disbursement to the 21 already funded human trafficking service providers. In 2019, the California State Legislature ensured continuing funding in the amount of \$10 million for specialized services. Cal OES has indicated that in 2021 it will conduct a competitive grant process once again to ensure the highest level of service provision provided by the 21 service providers who receive this funding. Cal OES monitors these service providers by conducting pre-award site visits, making regular performance assessment site visits every two years, and asking service providers for periodic progress reports.

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<sup>14</sup> *The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Effort to Combat Crimes Against Children*, Audit Report 09-08, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Ch. 4 (2009), <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/FBI/a0908/final.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth*, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS, MODERN SLAVERY RESEARCH PROJECT, <https://nspn.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/NSPN/labor%20and%20sex%20trafficking%20among%20homeless%20youth.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> *National Survey of Residential Programs for Victims of Sex Trafficking*, ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY, 6 (2013); see also *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States 2012-2017*, 6, PRESIDENT’S INTERAGENCY TASKFORCE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, (January 2014), <http://www.ovc.gov/pubs/FederalHumanTraffickingStrategicPlan.pdf>.

## IV. The Increased Need for Services for Trafficking Victims During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The most recent data available shows<sup>17</sup> over 9,710 victims of human trafficking have been served through the Cal OES Grant Program. Together, these programs have provided over 330,638 comprehensive services to victims of human trafficking, including, but not limited to, crisis counseling, case management, shelter services, and legal assistance. Of those individuals served, 1,073 had disabilities, 8,260 were female, 4,334 were minors (ages 0-17), and 3,237 were transitional aged youth (ages 18-24). During the COVID-19 crisis, these programs funded by Cal OES must continue to offer vital services to assist individuals and families in need, as the pandemic has exacerbated the risks and difficulties faced by those who are already victims of trafficking.



For victims currently in confinement by their traffickers, measures taken to combat COVID-19 may make their desperate situation even worse. Identifying victims of human trafficking is also more difficult during the pandemic, as the state-mandated lockdown can keep victims physically and emotionally isolated, which is a key strategy utilized by traffickers to control their victims.<sup>18</sup> Many current victims will be unable to access the healthcare and shelter needed to protect themselves adequately from exposure to the virus.<sup>19</sup> Lack of housing, healthcare, and loss of income can increase vulnerabilities both to re-trafficking and to COVID-19 infection. Social distancing measures can exacerbate mental health issues and disrupt access to victim support networks.<sup>20</sup> **Staff at one California service provider reported that the demand for food, shelter and other emergency assistance from May to July of 2020 was nearly double from 2019 levels,**

<sup>17</sup> Updated data from CAL-OES is delayed due to COVID-19. CAL-OES has indicated they should have this data by November 2020.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., THE POLARIS PROJECT, <https://polarisproject.org/labor-trafficking>.

<sup>19</sup> Corinne Redfern, *Anti-human trafficking organizations are struggling under COVID-19*, PBS (Aug. 3 2020) <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/anti-human-trafficking-organizations-are-struggling-under-covid-19>.

<sup>20</sup> *Supra* note 5, at 2.

**impairing the ability to deliver other needed services like education, jobs, and health and wellness.<sup>21</sup>**

Journey Out, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit and Cal OES funding recipient, documented an increased need for emergency housing and rental assistance due to COVID-19. They report a **44.57% increase in the cost to provide this rental assistance, when compared to the same time period in 2019. Staff indicates:**

**This year we've faced increasing challenges in trying to meet the needs of our clients, which have not only increased, but are more complex, and requiring long term financial support. The COVID-19 pandemic has only proven that any form of social disruption initially and most greatly impacts vulnerable populations.** For our clients, victims of sex trafficking and/or crossover sex and labor trafficking, this has resulted in loss of employment (including the loss of employment of family members whom they may have reconnected with and depended upon for support), homelessness/housing insecurity, and thus an extreme increase in vulnerability. . . In comparison to this time last year (March 1 - August 19) we provided services to 148 clients and their families. This year we provided services to 176 clients and their families. What this increase in the number doesn't really convey, is the fact that the clients that we have served over the past few months need more substantial & long term support, particularly rental assistance (a key component in client stabilization keeping them and their families in permanent housing).

In addition to victims' increased exposure and heightened risk of contracting COVID-19, the financial impact of the virus has affected the budget and operational capability of entities offering support to trafficking victims.<sup>22</sup> The realignment of state resources to fight the pandemic leaves current trafficking victims without the support they so desperately need.<sup>23</sup> One survey conducted indicated that 84% of survivors reported seeking services from one or more of the following: domestic violence shelter, domestic violence hotline, domestic violence drop-in center, human and/or sex trafficking organization, a family/human support organization, or Legal Aid.<sup>24</sup> However, those services have not been accepting new clients or are even harder to access. For example Polaris reported that in March 2020, Polaris conducted a survey of service providers to whom we actively refer human trafficking crisis cases to assess their expectations of service impact as a result of COVID-19. Of the 80 providers who responded before beginning of April, 54 percent had stopped accepting referrals or were either considering or already implementing measures that would limit receiving referrals. Further the loss of grants and donations to these types of organizations as a

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<sup>21</sup> See Figure 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons*, UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME | [https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS\\_Thematic\\_Brief\\_on\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Advocacy-Section/HTMSS_Thematic_Brief_on_COVID-19.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> *Crime and Contagion: The Impact of a Pandemic on Organized Crime*, GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (March 2020) <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GI-TOC-Crime-and-Contagion-The-impact-of-a-pandemic-on-organized-crime-1.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Kirkley Doyle, Amy Durrenre & Sonya Passi, *Survivors Know Best: How to Disrupt Intimate Partner Violence During COVID-19*, FREEFORM 27, Figure 6 (Aug. 13, 2020).

consequence of COVID-19 has impacted the ability to serve survivors of trafficking, who are at higher risks of being re-victimized.<sup>25</sup>

Interface Children and Family Services, based in Ventura County, and an organization which also received one of the Cal OES human trafficking grants, shared a survivor's story that demonstrates the direct impact of COVID-19 on victims of human trafficking and the integral part that service providers play in assisting victims of trafficking. After being identified by law enforcement and provided shelter, case management, advocacy, therapy, and life skills coaching services:

The survivor was able to secure independently secure employment and was able to move out of the shelter autonomously. . . However, **when COVID-19 hit our community, the survivor was laid off from employment and, as a result, requested housing support from our organization.** Our agency continues to provide emotional support and basic needs support to assist her during this pandemic.

Programs like CAST, Journey Out and Interface Children and Family Services need California to act boldly and strategically by allocating additional funding to fight human trafficking and provide ongoing services. The pre-pandemic gap in services for victims is alarming and is only widening in the wake of COVID-19. There is a significant need for additional emergency housing during the pandemic, and due to risks to current shelter-based clients, new victims have to be quarantined in hotels for 14 days prior to admission. Subsequently, agencies are forced to incur this new cost, on top of searching for long-term housing for victims, which was already difficult to locate pre-COVID-19. Increased funding in the form of Cal OES grants for dedicated shelter and direct assistance can help meet this urgent need.

## V. Emergency Funding Is Necessary to Prevent a California Trafficking Epidemic in the Wake of COVID-19

To meet the increasing need for services amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, a more robust and adaptive funding strategy for direct services is required. An emergency funding source is essential to build increased capacity for a network of organizations throughout California to provide trafficking survivors with specialized, evidence-based services throughout the pandemic. **We therefore request that California lawmakers allocate one-time funding in the amount of \$30 million to fighting an increased surge in human trafficking in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing a source of funding for comprehensive human trafficking service provision and human trafficking technical assistance that is proportional to the increased challenges faced during COVID-19, Governor Gavin Newsom will continue to cement a powerful legacy of combatting human trafficking in California during a challenging chapter in the state's history.**

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<sup>25</sup> Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, COVID-19 Position Paper: The Impact and Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Trafficked and Exploited Persons, UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIAL PROCEDURES 6 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Trafficking/COVID-19-Impact-trafficking.pdf> (June 8, 2020).



This \$30 million budget allocation would provide one-time funding for (i) program services for specialized service providers for human trafficking victims, (ii) training for first responders on the frontlines of encountering and identifying trafficking victims, and (iii) creating and running a centralized, statewide emergency hotline for trafficking victims. This emergency, one-time funding would bolster funding for services to organizations already vetted and receiving funding from CAL-OES that are able to provide much-needed additional services to victims of human trafficking during the COVID-19 pandemic and aftermath. With this funding available, organizations will have far greater capacity to provide special supportive programs for trafficking victims amidst the pandemic. Moreover, first responder training and the creation of a California emergency trafficking hotline will help prevent and identify trafficking situations, thereby halting trafficking before it starts, helping more victims, and bringing more traffickers to justice. Targeted funding can make a significant difference in preventing the COVID-19 pandemic from turning into a human trafficking epidemic in California.<sup>26</sup>

## VI. Explanation of Benefits

### I. Program Services

#### a. Case Management Resources

The onslaught of COVID-19 impacts the physical and mental health of existing trafficking clients and makes navigation of complex systems and access to support even more difficult. Additionally, as outlined above there is an expected increase in newly identified victims. Therefore, increased case management support at CAL-OES funded programs is desperately needed. A survey of specialized service providers to human trafficking victims demonstrated that the case load of a human trafficking caseworker in California is anywhere between 10 and 30 victims. An average salary plus overhead costs for a specialized case manager is about \$63,718 annually.<sup>27</sup> New resources provided will allow programs to hire two additional full-time human trafficking case managers funded to ensure around the clock coverage, as well as victim and staff safety.

#### b. Basic Needs and Rental Assistance

Human trafficking survivors, whether currently accessing services or seeking services for the first time, need even greater support for basic necessities in the aftermath of COVID-19. **Some shelters for trafficking survivors have had to close because of reported infections and others have partially suspended services due to government regulation or lack of funding.**<sup>28</sup> Covering the cost of basic necessities like rent, utility payments, credit check costs, furniture assistance for victims moving into permanent housing, and long term education costs will help victims become established and remain in a stable environment. Providing funding for items such as diapers, wipes, food cards, transportation (bus passes, taxi vouchers, etc.), and WiFi access and computer equipment for victims and their children who are distance learning will also help to address the immediate needs exacerbated by the pandemic. To address these critical needs in California, one-time funding of \$100,000 per organization is requested to enable the victim service providers funded by Cal OES to

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<sup>26</sup> COVID-19 May Increase Human Trafficking in Vulnerable Communities, THE POLARIS PROJECT (April 7, 2020) <https://polarisproject.org/blog/2020/04/covid-19-may-increase-human-trafficking-in-vulnerable-communities/>.

<sup>27</sup> For an illustrative example of salary alone, see Salary for Program Coordinator (Non-Profit) in California, [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com), <https://www.salary.com/Program-Coordinator-Salary.html>.

<sup>28</sup> *Supra* note 5, at 2; Redfern, *supra* note 18.

assist the most vulnerable clients and to allow for modest assistance which has dramatic impacts of preventing clients from being re-trafficked.

One of the human trafficking survivors served by CAST demonstrates the need for this funding:

Kaitlin<sup>29</sup> is a 22-year old foreign national survivor of commercial sex trafficking. Kaitlin was working and studying towards a career in the medical field. On or around the first week of August 2020, Kaitlin was diagnosed with COVID-19 and was unable to return to her job. She had to quarantine for fourteen days and in the process her mother also became ill with COVID. Kaitlin's family experienced loss of income due to COVID-19 and were unable to pay their basic household expenses. CAST was able to assist Kaitlin and her family by helping to pay Kaitlin's September rent, but has limited to no funds remaining for this assistance for future months.

**Without funding for rent and other basic necessities, trafficking survivors may face increased vulnerability to re-trafficking, due to their financial need.** Targeted funding can help prevent further re-trafficking, as often without resources, victims have nowhere to turn but back to their trafficker.

#### c. Shelter Resources

Costs to secure a specialized shelter bed for an adult victim of human trafficking during COVID-19 are approximately \$38 a day, or \$13,870.00 annually.<sup>30</sup> Demand for shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic has outpaced California's ready supply, with staff at one California service provider reporting that the demand for food, shelter and other emergency assistance from May to July of 2020 was nearly double from 2019 levels.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, ensuring shelter for the victims identified and served under this program will require additional shelter/hotel beds. New funding requested will secure an additional 1200 beds. This is a significant new number of shelter beds/ hotel bed access dedicated to trafficking survivors.

**In order for these crucial services to be accessible to trafficking victims experiencing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, specialized service providers across the State must be provided with additional emergency funding.**

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<sup>29</sup> Victim's name changed to protect privacy.

<sup>30</sup> This figure is approximated from the data reported from Cal OES service providers and comparable costs associated with the cost of shelter beds coupled with supportive services for homeless persons and the experience of direct service providers for victims of human trafficking. See, e.g., *Costs Associated with First-Time Homelessness for Families and Individuals*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH (2010), [https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/costs\\_homeless.pdf](https://www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/costs_homeless.pdf) (stating "In almost all cases, the costs associated with providing housing for individuals and families who are homeless within a program exceeds the Fair Market Rent cost of providing rental assistance without supportive services.").

<sup>31</sup> Figure 1.

Need	Cost Per Program
Case Manager	\$63,718.00 annually, including overhead <sup>32</sup>
Case Manager	\$63,718.00 annually, including overhead <sup>33</sup>
Basic Needs Assistance	\$100,000
Shelter bed/hotel	\$13,870.00 x 60 beds = \$832,200.00 annually
<b>Total per program</b>	<b>\$1,059,636.00</b>

\*Estimates provided from survey of 17 direct service providers for victims of human trafficking, serving Los Angeles County, San Diego County, Riverside County, Fresno County, Ventura County, Orange County, Kern County, San Bernardino County, South Bay, San Francisco Bay Area, and the Sacramento Region.

<b>Approximate total cost of additional funding for 20 Cal OES specialized service providers</b>	<b>\$21 Million</b>	<b>1,200 trafficking survivors served</b>
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## II. Training for First Responders

To aggressively fight and prevent the spread of human trafficking as the State is simultaneously battling COVID-19, California must strategically allocate resources to ensure early identification and prevention of human trafficking throughout the state. Accordingly, CAST is requesting \$6 million in one-time funding for training resources that will enable first responders to identify and prevent human trafficking. This funding is especially crucial now, in light of the increased number of individuals who are newly vulnerable to trafficking due to the ongoing economic crisis in California and throughout the United States. This one-time funding will be used to develop and deliver statewide training to the diverse groups of front-line “responders”--individuals and entities who might be the first to encounter potential victims being recruited into trafficking, including law enforcement agencies, labor inspectors, child welfare workers, school educators, health care providers, housing/homeless services, and public defenders. Funding will also create increased opportunities for training and professional development to ensure that all victim services agencies funded by Cal OES are committed to trauma-informed, high-quality care for the individuals that they serve and strategies for outreach that are safe during COVID-19 for staff.

This additional funding for responder-specific training would allow for an extensive range of outreach points to touch the full diversity of potential human trafficking victims during the pandemic, including both adults and children involved in labor and/or sex trafficking. As more individuals on the “front lines” are trained, new trafficking cases will be prevented and more victims will be identified and connected with the services they need to escape from trafficking situations and to rebuild their lives.

Need	Cost	Outcome
Training for service providers, first responders, and law enforcement.	<b>\$6 million</b>	Thousands of human trafficking cases prevented or identified earlier.

<sup>32</sup> For an illustrative example of salary alone, see Salary for Program Coordinator (Non-Profit) in California, [www.Salary.com](https://www.salary.com), <https://www.salary.com/Program-Coordinator-Salary.html>.

<sup>33</sup>Id.

### III. Centralized California Human Trafficking Hotline

Recruitment tactics of traffickers have pivoted and evolved during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>34</sup> The stay-at-home orders and restrictions on business operations have forced traffickers to shift to a more internet-based operation.<sup>35</sup> The U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline predicts a significant increase in the use of the internet to exploit victims in 2020 compared to 2019, when only 9% of the reported venues for victimization were internet-based (i.e., online pornography channels).<sup>36</sup>

During the pandemic, “many criminal activities are already moving online, taking advantage of the increased time people spend connected at home, or going further underground. **Crime detection and investigation are more demanding, and victims become less visible to the authorities. Services provided via the internet such as hotlines and helplines are often the only possible option for victims in the current circumstances.** However, this switch is not possible in many parts of the world that lack infrastructure. Even where it is possible, providers may not be equipped to meet the sudden surge in demand, while victims may be restrained from accessing such means of communication.”<sup>37</sup>

The risk of increased online activity is even more threatening to potential school-age victims of human trafficking:

For children around the world...**global school closures increase their risk of exploitation.** Children are spending more time on the internet for school work and social interaction, and traffickers are increasingly targeting them for sexual exploitation online. There was a **200 percent spike in posts on child sex abuse forums between February [2020] and March [2020]**, combined with a nearly 90 percent drop in the amount of child abuse material removed from the internet, as investigators struggled to keep pace due to reduced staff capacity and the closure of hotlines used to report abuse.<sup>38</sup>

The number of crisis trafficking cases reported to the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline **increased by more than 40% in the month following the shelter-in-place orders** compared to the prior month.<sup>39</sup> The Polaris Project reported that the number of situations in which people

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<sup>34</sup> Brian Monroe, *Special ATII Contributor Report: COVID-19 and Human Trafficking – Exacerbating Modern Slavery with a Global Health Pandemic*, ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED FINANCIAL CRIME SPECIALISTS (May 12, 2020)

<https://www.acfcs.org/covid-19-and-human-trafficking-exacerbating-modern-slavery-with-a-global-health-pandemic>.

<sup>35</sup> Statement by OSCE Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings on need to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts in a time of crisis, OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND COORDINATOR FOR COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS (April 3, 2020) <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/449554>.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Breslin, *The Dynamics of Human Trafficking: Before & After COVID-19*, DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS (June 24, 2020) <https://www.domesticpreparedness.com/resilience/the-dynamics-of-human-trafficking-before-after-covid-19>.

<sup>37</sup> *Supra* note 5, at 2.

<sup>38</sup> Jamille Bigio and Hayden Welch, *As the Global Economy Melts Down, Human Trafficking is Booming*, FOREIGN POLICY (August 10, 2020), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/08/10/as-the-global-economy-melts-down-human-trafficking-is-booming/>

<sup>39</sup> *Human Trafficking During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, THE POLARIS PROJECT (June 10, 2020) <https://polarisproject.org/press-releases/human-trafficking-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>.

needed immediate emergency shelter nearly doubled (from around 29 in pre-shelter-in-place periods to 54 in April 2020).<sup>40</sup> In California, CAST reported in June 2020 that **the need for in-person emergency response for escaping survivors has increased by 111% as compared to June 2019.**<sup>41</sup>

**To provide a response to this dramatically increased need, \$1 million is requested for a centralized, statewide emergency human trafficking hotline annually for a period of three years.** This statewide emergency hotline is based on domestic violence and sexual assault models of statewide emergency hotline support already available in California. This funding for a specialized human trafficking hotline will provide victim service providers, law enforcement, and government agencies with a common resource across the state to field individual requests for resources or information and will provide emergency assistance to human trafficking victims.

The case managers, staff, computer hardware, software and networking, and a telephone system and service required to operate a statewide emergency hotline quickly accumulate into significant costs. Other state hotlines report that in automated call distribution systems alone can cost over \$100,000.<sup>42</sup> The centralized, statewide emergency hotline would also need to account for an appropriate management information system to track calls and services, hire full-time staff members, provide appropriate training and protocols for how counselors assist callers, coordinate with the media and first responders and conduct community outreach.<sup>43</sup> California needs to adapt to the needs of its vulnerable citizens and it needs to adapt quickly. By creating a centralized, statewide emergency hotline dedicated to providing trafficking victims and survivors with emergency services, California can be proactive in addressing the needs of a larger pool of potential trafficking victims due to COVID-19.

Need	Cost*	Outcome
Centralized, statewide emergency hotline	\$1 million per year	Hundreds of human trafficking cases identified earlier and existing programs can more effectively serve survivors
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3 million</b>	

<sup>40</sup> *Crisis in Human Trafficking During a Pandemic*, THE POLARIS PROJECT 2 (April 2020), <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Crisis-in-Human-Trafficking-During-the-Pandemic.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> *Emergency Response and Hotline Services*, COALITION TO ABOLISH SLAVERY & TRAFFICKING (June 2020).

<sup>42</sup> *Costs of a Hotline*, Michigan’s Support for Older Adults Portal (Mi-SOAP) (March 6, 2017), <https://misoap.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/03/CostsofaHotline.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> *Setting up a Hotline*, CENTER FOR MEDICARE EDUCATION [https://www.orau.gov/cdcynergy/soc2web/Content/activeinformation/resources/SOC\\_Setting%20up\\_a\\_Hotline.pdf](https://www.orau.gov/cdcynergy/soc2web/Content/activeinformation/resources/SOC_Setting%20up_a_Hotline.pdf).

## VII. Total Cost Analysis of Funding Request

### Program Services

Need	Cost	Survivors Served
Case Manager	\$63,718.00 annually, including overhead <sup>44</sup>	20*
Case Manager	\$63,718.00 annually, including overhead <sup>45</sup>	20*
Basic Needs Assistance	\$100,000	60
Shelter/hotel bed	\$13,870.00 x 60 beds = \$832,200.00 annually	60
<b>Total per program</b>	<b>\$1,059,636</b>	<b>60</b>

\*Estimates provided from survey of 17 direct service providers for victims of human trafficking, serving Los Angeles County, San Diego County, Riverside County, Fresno County, Ventura County, Orange County, Kern County, San Bernardino County, South Bay, San Francisco Bay Area, and the Sacramento Region.

Approximate total cost for 20 Cal OES programs providing specialized services to human trafficking victims across California	<b>\$21 Million</b>	<b>1,200 trafficking survivors served</b>
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### First Responder Training

Need	Cost	Outcome
Training for service providers, first responders, law enforcement, and other entities on the frontlines of the trafficking crisis.	<b>\$6 million</b>	Thousands of human trafficking cases prevented or identified earlier and existing programs can more effectively serve survivors.

### Centralized California Human Trafficking Hotline

Need	Cost*	Outcome
Centralized, statewide emergency hotline for trafficking victims	\$1 million	Thousands of human trafficking cases identified earlier and more victims connected with necessary services.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3 million</b>	

## VIII. Conclusion

Despite the devastating toll COVID-19 has taken on vulnerable communities, California now has an opportunity to establish and fund services that will allow the community to recover in a more effective way. Investing in specialized resources will not only help current victims, but will mean better protection and support for trafficking survivors in the future. Especially now, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, specialized funding is needed to protect the most vulnerable populations from being ensnared by traffickers.

<sup>44</sup> For an illustrative example of salary alone, see Salary for Program Coordinator (Non-Profit) in California, [www.Salary.com](https://www.salary.com/Program-Coordinator-Salary.html), <https://www.salary.com/Program-Coordinator-Salary.html>.

<sup>45</sup>Id.

California must act strategically to fund multi-disciplinary networks that provide survivors with better access to comprehensive care and must allocate resources to ensure early identification, prevention and an understanding of the dynamics of the problem throughout California. While the focus on ending the sex trafficking of children in California is crucial, we must not underestimate the need to also fund specialized services for women, men, and child victims of sex and labor trafficking amidst COVID-19.

In recent years, the California State Legislature has taken important steps in improving access to comprehensive services by approving prior funding requests. These historic funding allocations have greatly impacted and benefitted the victims of human trafficking and the people of California. **Now, an additional one-time budget allocation of \$30 million will ensure the funding of necessary service providers, training for first responders, and the creation of a statewide emergency hotline during these unprecedented times in our State's history.** Providing additional funding for responsive supportive services would allow greater coverage across the state of California to fight and prevent the growing tidal wave of increased trafficking cases that is growing exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This one-time funding allocation will establish California as an exemplar for the nation in addressing the pervasive, horrific evils of human trafficking during a time of unprecedented crisis.

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**COALITION TO ABOLISH SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING**

Systemic change is at the core of CAST's mission. Taking a survivor-centered approach to ending human trafficking, CAST has a proven track record of working directly with survivors of human trafficking which builds an important bridge between practice and policy to inform effective policy initiatives. By developing broad-based partnerships, CAST effectively advocates for policies that work to end human trafficking and help survivors rebuild their lives.

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