

# A Legacy of Robust Research to Better Assist California's Trafficking Victims

A PROPOSAL FOR A ONE TIME BUDGET REQUEST FOR HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING RESEARCH IN CALIFORNIA'S GENERAL FUND



**Cast**

COALITION TO  
ABOLISH SLAVERY  
& TRAFFICKING

# PROPOSAL FOR FIRST-TIME FUNDING FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESEARCH

## I. Need for Human Trafficking Research in California

Human trafficking is a form of modern day slavery in which victims are deceived and coerced into providing forced labor or sexual services for the benefit of their traffickers. Within the United States, human trafficking has had a particularly dramatic impact on the state of California. 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>1</sup>

The most recent comprehensive report on human trafficking in California was released in 2012, a year in which California human trafficking taskforces identified 1,300 victims of human trafficking and made 1,798 arrests related to human trafficking.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, while many legislative efforts in California and elsewhere have focused on how best to prosecute and punish traffickers, studies aimed at understanding and reducing this form of modern day slavery are oftentimes underfunded or disregarded altogether. What is especially needed to truly address this issue is a full understanding of the dynamics of human trafficking across the state—including the type of trafficking (sex, labor, or both) and who is being trafficked (men, women and/or children, and US citizen and/or foreign nationals). California has never undertaken a research study that looks at the prevalence of human trafficking, and it is only when we have this vital information that we can take active and appropriate steps to end modern slavery in California in our lifetime. Therefore one-time funding is needed to support a prevalence study on human trafficking for California.

Additionally, over the last four years, California has dedicated \$40 million to begin comprehensively serving trafficking victims across the state. After the expenditure of these vital funds, which have assisted over 7,000 survivors to date — the time is now ripe to evaluate the programs providing these services in the state. In the anti-trafficking movement, there is currently a lack of data around the best practices to serve this highly vulnerable, complex population of trafficking victims. Therefore one-time funding is also needed in order for all 21 funded services providers to be evaluated independently. The results of the evaluations can then be shared statewide and with legislators so California can learn and take steps to ensure that the services human trafficking victims are receiving are evidence based, trauma informed, and grounded on practical experience working with the specific dynamics of this population in our state.

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<sup>1</sup> *What is Human Trafficking*, CALIFORNIANS AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, <http://www.caseact.org/learn/humantrafficking/>.

<sup>2</sup> See *supra* note 4, *The State of Human Trafficking in California*.

## II. Background: State Funding Allocations, the Cal OES Program, and Service Providers

Since 2014, the California State Legislature has approved annual funding allocations for “qualified nonprofit organizations” providing comprehensive direct services to victims of trafficking. Through these funding allocations, California’s Office of Emergency Services (“Cal OES”) solicited funding proposals for programs from human trafficking service providers. During the first two and a half years of the Cal OES Program, these programs provided a total of 223,847 comprehensive services to victims of human trafficking, including, but not limited to, crisis counseling, case management, shelter services, and legal assistance.

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. However, no funding has currently been expended to understand the full dynamics across the state and no funding has been specifically allocated to evaluate these service providers, which is necessary to ensure the service providers are offering the most effective and highest quality services to victims of human trafficking across the state.

## III. Funding For Research to Better Serve Trafficking Victims

Currently, there is limited research focusing on the prevalence of human trafficking in the state of California. Furthermore, much of the data that is currently available is largely imprecise and not fully representative. Many local statistics are based on policing priorities, which can be misleading and reflect prioritization of investigating certain populations. Generally, prevalence studies in the past have suffered from inaccuracies and gross over-estimations.

**New one-time funding is essential to better understand the prevalence of human trafficking throughout California and to ensure survivors are receiving the highest quality and most effective services. We therefore request that California lawmakers enact a one-time Budget Request for human trafficking research in the State’s General Fund in the amount of \$6 million. By investing in these two essential studies, Governor Gavin Newsom and the State of California will cement a powerful legacy of combatting human trafficking in California by providing the state with the build blocks to better understand measures that must be implemented to address this issue.**



Investment is needed to create a framework of support for human trafficking survivors so that California spends its money with the highest level of impact when addressing this problem. Therefore, this \$6 million one-time budget request proposal contains recommendations to fund (1)

A Prevalence Study to understand the extent and location of human trafficking in California and (2) A Comprehensive Evaluation of Service Providers and recommendations for best practices for serving trafficking survivors in California, based on an evaluative study of the 21 service providers funded under the Cal OES grants.

## IV. Explanation of Benefits

### Prevalence Study

This will be the first comprehensive, statewide research study of the prevalence of human trafficking in California. It is estimated a study as complex as this will take approximately three years to fully conduct. Currently, there is very limited research on the prevalence of human trafficking in California. While California is estimated to have the highest rates of trafficking in the United States, there is no comprehensive, robust statewide research on the annual number of victims, the nature of the trafficking (sexual exploitation vs. labor exploitation), demographic breakdowns of victims, or concentrations of victims in particular geographic areas within California. This study will involve data mining of reported cases, accessing intake records from victim service providers, and selected locations for primary data collection. Collecting robust data on this information will assist both law enforcement and service providers in understanding the scope and severity of the human trafficking epidemic in California.

While there have been no statewide prevalence studies in California, two prevalence studies have occurred in San Diego County: (1) “Looking for a Hidden Population: Trafficking of Migrant Laborers in San Diego County”, led by Dr. Sheldon Zhang, and (2) “The Nature and Extent of Gang Involvement in Sex Trafficking in San Diego County,” led by Dr. Jamie Gates and Dr. Ami Carpenter. These studies, which focused on only one county, provide a helpful comparison when estimating the costs of a statewide study. Dr. Zhang’s study cost \$522,000 and lasted for three years. The study conducted by Dr. Carpenter and Dr. Gates lasted for two years and cost over \$400,000. Dr. Gates noted, “Estimating the number of victims in this clandestine activity has been profoundly difficult, time consuming and dependent on a wide range of partnerships and trusted relationships in our region that opened the door to the data we needed.” Dr. Zhang advised that covering both labor and sex trafficking in one study raises costs significantly, as these are different markets and require different sampling and field procedures.

Dr. Mark Small, a professor at Clemson University and author of a research report entitled, “Identifying Potential Instances of Human Trafficking: Applying a Novel Template of Indicators to Narratives in Police Incident Reports,” stated that the size and complexity of a prevalence study for the state of California would be a monumental and costly undertaking. Dr. Small highlighted the additional cost of studying labor trafficking, which is significantly more difficult and time consuming to research as compared to sex trafficking. He explained that this cost differential is due to a disparity in existing criminal justice records for the two different types of trafficking, which makes data collection more challenging for researchers of labor trafficking.

Based on costs for previous studies which concentrated on one geographic area and one form of trafficking, as well as discussions with the aforementioned researchers in this field, we conservatively estimate that an accurate, robust prevalence study across the state of California which examines both sex and labor trafficking will have a total cost of approximately \$3 million.

### **Evaluation of Service Providers**

This funding will provide a comprehensive audit and evaluative study of service providers receiving Cal OES grant funding. Currently, there has been very little research conducted on best practices in the field of comprehensive service provisions for human trafficking victims. While there are dozens of service providers offering assistance to trafficking victims in California, the effectiveness and quality of these services has not been rigorously studied. An evaluative study is crucial to ensure that California's funds are being well-spent in the most targeted and strategic way possible, in order to provide the greatest number of victims with the highest quality of care. This study will be used to determine best practices for serving trafficking victims statewide, which will then be implemented through training and technical resources offered to service providers, as well as provided to the legislature so they can propose new and innovative solutions to assisting trafficking survivors comprehensively in California and best designate funding for this crucial issue.

Nationwide, very few studies have been done evaluating the efficacy of service provision to trafficking victims. The most recent major study on the topic was completed in 2014 by the Research Triangle Institute ("RTI"), funded by the National Institute of Justice, entitled "Evaluation of Services for Domestic Minor Victims of Human Trafficking." This study was an evaluation of three service providers programs funded by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office for Victims of Crime ("OVC") for domestic minor victims of trafficking, and the goal of the study was to document program implementation in the three programs, identify promising practices for service delivery programs, and inform delivery of current and future efforts by to serve trafficking victims. The study was conducted over a three year period, focused on only three service providers, and cost a total of \$809,246.

A comprehensive audit and evaluative study of service providers receiving Cal OES grant funding would need to evaluate approximately twenty programs. Given the \$809,246 budget for RTI's evaluation of three programs, a substantially larger amount will be needed to study the 21 service providers across the state of California. We conservatively estimate that such a study will cost a total of \$3 million to study all service providers and also take three years to complete.

## V. Cost Analysis

### Prevalence Study

Need	Cost	Outcome
Comprehensive, statewide research study of the prevalence of human trafficking in California.	This study will cost a total of \$3 million.	California will have a data informed, evidence-based estimate of the prevalence of human trafficking within the entire state. This study will provide valuable demographic information on trafficking victims, in order to help both law enforcement and service providers in strategically targeting their efforts.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>	

### Evaluation of Service Providers

Need	Cost	Outcome
Collection and evaluation of robust data on methods and outcomes of the organizations receiving Cal OES grant funding.	This study will cost a total of \$3 million.	California can evaluate state funded trafficking programs and Cal OES can adjust its Request for Proposal process accordingly, to ensure that state funded programs are using effective, evidence based, trauma informed practices.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>	

## VI. Conclusion

California must act strategically to create 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 human trafficking 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 prevalence and evaluation studies to better understand the issue of human trafficking within the state and to provide the highest quality services to women, men, and child victims of sex and labor trafficking.

In recent years, the California State Legislature has taken important first steps in improving access to comprehensive services by approving one-time funding requests. These funding allocations directed to service providers have greatly impacted and benefitted the victims of modern day slavery and the people of California. However, the time is now ripe to enact this one-time budget request of \$6 million for prevalence and evaluation studies, which would provide California and the rest of the United States with crucially needed information about the prevalence of human trafficking and the best methods for addressing the needs of victims. By approving this budget request, Governor Gavin Newsom will cement a powerful legacy of championing the needs of human trafficking victims. With a one-time funding allocation for the prevalence studies and service provider evaluations, and the information that this research will provide, the state of California can help make a dramatic difference and fight to end the pervasive evils of human trafficking in our lifetime.

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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 modern slavery, 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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