



# Cast

COALITION TO  
ABOLISH SLAVERY  
& TRAFFICKING

IMPACT REPORT 2024

# BRIDGING PRACTICE WITH POLICY

*To end human trafficking*





# FROM OUR CEO

KAY BUCK, CEO *K. Buck*

Following our 25th anniversary, we've had another year of relentless efforts to serve survivors and to push for systemic change that will end human trafficking. *We served 1,779 survivors and their family members and helped secure state funds for victim services to bridge a dramatic shortfall from the federal government.*

I am shocked but not surprised that we had almost 20% more calls than last year to Cast's 24-hour hotline—despite us being past the worst of the pandemic and what we thought was peak demand for our direct services. But we all know the truth: that the impacts of the last few years will ripple for a generation, and the cost of living has become unbearable for many. It may be that this year is only a sign of what is yet to come. We are humbled that 75% of hotline calls were from potential victims and survivors who were often referred to us by others—demonstrating the trust that survivors have in our services and approach and proving that survivors are key to reaching out to others who may need our services.

As we continue to reach more survivors than ever, we face great challenges. Starting this year, federal (VOCA) funds for services to crime victims will unexpectedly be cut by almost 45%—amounting to a loss of \$500,000 per year for Cast. Survivors may soon lose access to our life-changing services, with the most underserved and marginalized communities hit hardest. With homelessness also at its highest ever in LA County and 71% of hotline callers coming to us homeless, we simply cannot and will not cut corners

in serving survivors. We are looking to our supporters to help us meet the increasing need.

On a lighter note, I was thrilled to see so many of our supporters at our 25th Anniversary celebration, the first event we have held since the pandemic. With most of our original founders in attendance, it was so rewarding to reflect on Cast's local and national impact despite small beginnings, thanks to the backing of our incredible supporters and champions. One of the people we honored on the night was [Romeo](#), a former Cast client who has inspired our ground-breaking civil litigation work and whose story is in this report. He's the embodiment of Cast's vision of connecting what we learn from survivors to the systems that can help end human trafficking for good.

Though the future is—as always—uncertain, Cast remains committed to serving survivors and advocating for justice—in courthouses, legislatures, and our communities. So long as human trafficking persists and survivors are in need, we will be here to support them to build the futures they envision.

## 1,779

Survivors and family members served

## 2,091

*hotline calls*

(19% higher than last year)

## 100%

Cast graduates have safe housing



Cast 25th Anniversary Celebration Honorees: (T-B) Jessica Sarowitz, Impact Media Award Honoree, pictured with civil rights activist, Dolores Huerta; Stasia Washington, Founders' Leadership Award Honoree; Rob Bonta, Attorney General of California, Butch Schuman Human Rights Defender Award Honoree.

Photos: Leroy Hamilton



# ABOUT CAST

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## Mission

To end human trafficking through *education, advocacy, and empowering survivors.*

## Vision

To create a bridge between practice and policy, where survivors are working with practitioners to inform a survivor-centered policy agenda.

## What We Do

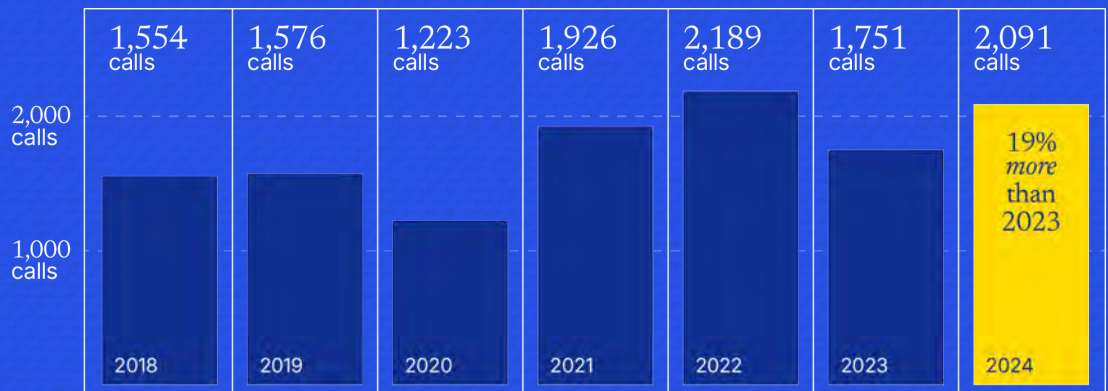
Cast is the United States' largest provider of comprehensive services to survivors of human trafficking and an advocate for groundbreaking policy and legislation.

## About Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the exploitation of human beings through force, fraud or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex or forced labor. Anyone under 18 who performs a commercial sex act is considered a victim of human trafficking.

Human trafficking can happen to anyone, but it affects marginalized groups more than others. **At Cast, 88% of the survivors we have ever served identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).**

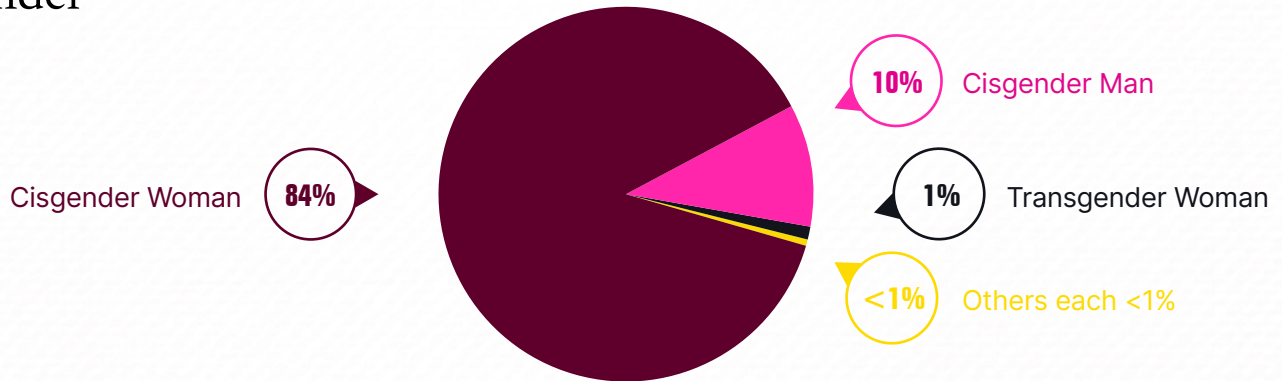
## Hotline Calls Over the Years



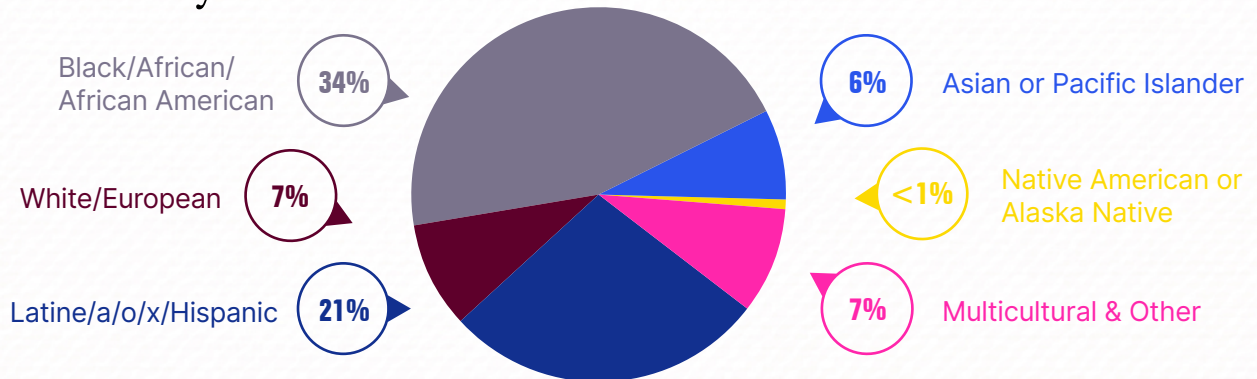
# WHO WE SERVE

Survivors who Cast served over the past year and who reported their information:

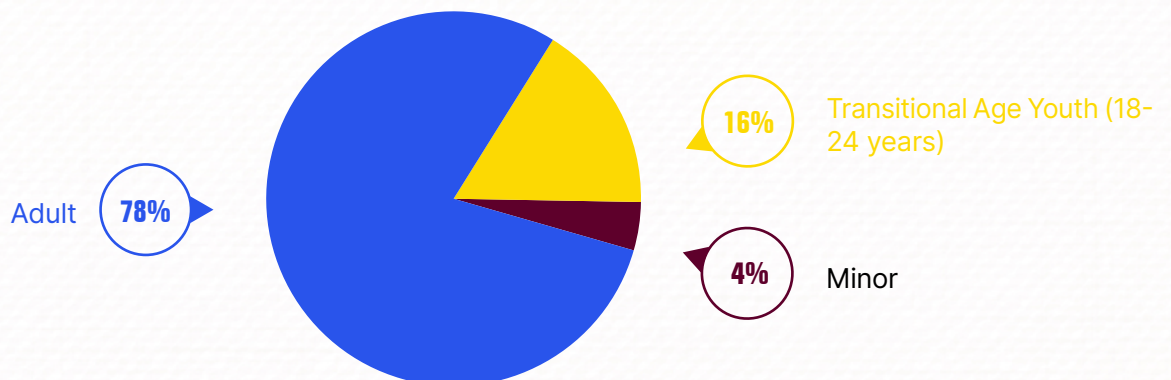
## Gender



## Race/Ethnicity

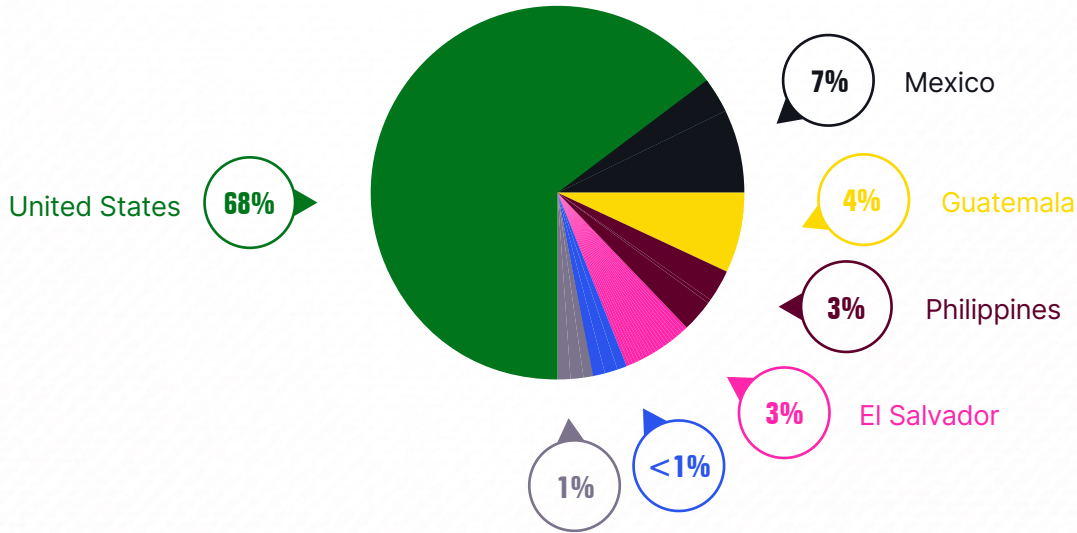


## Age



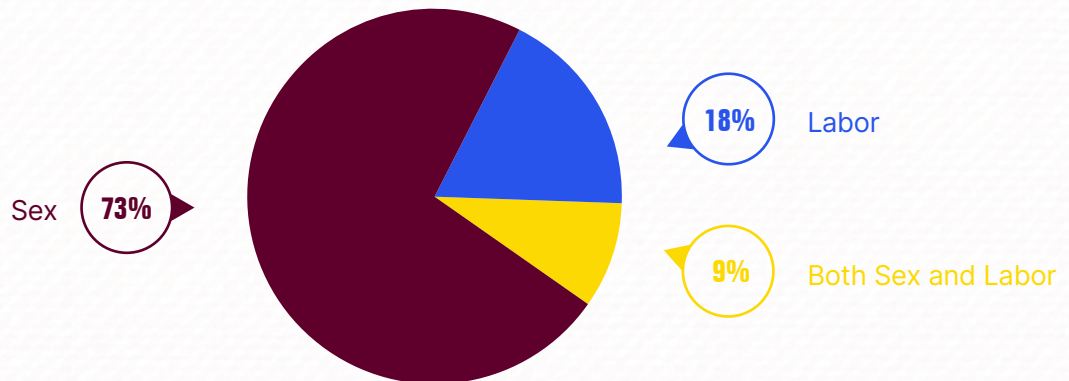


# Nationality



Peru	1%	Albania	<1%	Myanmar	<1%	Chile	<1%
Taiwan	1%	Angola	<1%	Netherlands	<1%	Cuba	<1%
Canada	1%	Bolivia	<1%	Nigeria	<1%	India	<1%
Belize	1%	Eritrea	<1%	Pakistan	<1%	Italy	<1%
Russian Federation	1%	France	<1%	Sri Lanka	<1%	Malaysia	<1%
Indonesia	1%	Ghana	<1%	Turks and Caicos Islands	<1%	Trinidad and Tobago	<1%
Nicaragua	1%	Hungary	<1%	Uganda	<1%	United Kingdom	<1%
China	1%	Jamaica	<1%	Uruguay	<1%	Colombia	<1%
Honduras	1%	Latvia	<1%	Zambia	<1%	Ethiopia	<1%
Afghanistan	<1%	Mongolia	<1%	Cambodia	<1%		

# Type of Trafficking



\* Due to rounding, categories may add up to slightly above or below 100%.





Romeo, Cast 25th Anniversary Courage Award Honoree. Photo: Cast

# SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

In 2014, Romeo was recruited by two brothers from his hometown in Guatemala to work on a strawberry farm in Southern California. They promised him \$1,200 a week and convinced him to pay \$3,000 upfront and another \$3,000 upon arrival—*reassuring him his debt would be cleared quickly.*

When Romeo arrived at the farm after entering the US on a legitimate H-2A visa, he found that he'd been lied to. He was under constant supervision, placed in cramped living conditions with other men, and not allowed to contact his family, under the threat of deportation.

The work was grueling, and the pay far below what he had been promised. He was forced to pay off his unexpected, unjust debt through his paycheck, leaving him unable to ever pay it off.

The situation changed when a community organizer visited the farm. Initially afraid to speak out, Romeo and one of his coworkers told them what was happening, prompting an investigation by the Department of Labor. When they heard about this, the recruiters—who were really traffickers—decided Romeo was a troublemaker and threatened his family. Romeo and his coworker were forced to sign documents giving up their right to work and found themselves at the airport for deportation back to Guatemala, without any pay for the work they'd done. In desperation at the airport, Romeo and his coworker contacted the community organizer, who connected them with the FBI, ultimately leading them to Cast.

When we first met Romeo, his goal was to get legal status in the US and reunite with his wife and two young sons, who he'd had to leave behind when he came to the US. With the support of Cast's staff attorneys and pro bono lawyers, Romeo, his wife, and his sons all received T-visas allowing them to remain in the US and to get US work permits. Three years later, the whole family received Green Cards. Today, Romeo is a bar manager at one of California's top restaurants, and he and his family are thriving. Romeo received Cast's 2024 Courage Award at our 25th Anniversary celebration.



Watch *Romeo's story*



**100%**

of T visa and Green Card applications were approved

*“The impact of Cast goes beyond my story. Cast’s commitment to listening to survivors like me and ensuring that our voices are not only heard but also influence policies, laws, and even programs like Cast’s Impact Litigation Unit is crucial in the fight against human trafficking. Knowing that my experience is helping protect others fills me with pride.”*

**Romeo**, Cast Courage Award Recipient





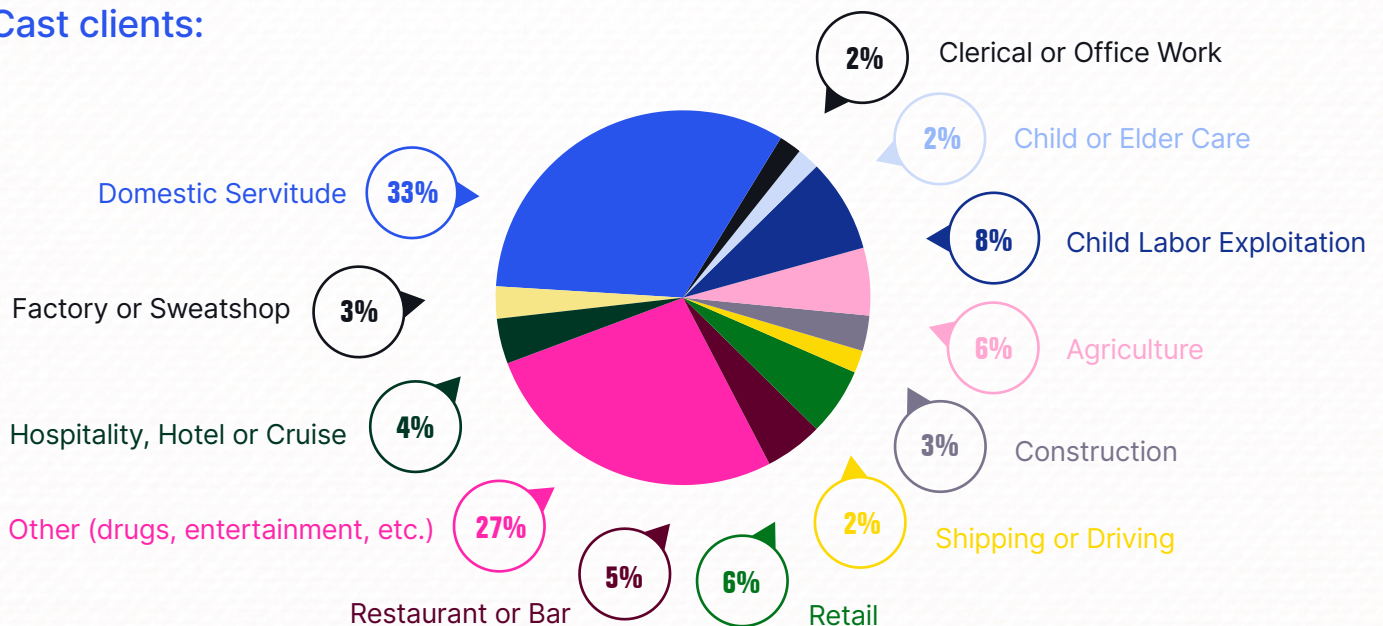
Courage Award Honoree, Romeo, with Rob Bonta, Attorney General of California, at Cast's 25th Anniversary Gala. Photo: Leroy Hamilton

## Advancing justice for labor trafficking survivors: How we're taking labor trafficking cases like Romeo's to court

Romeo's case played a crucial role in Cast establishing our Impact Litigation Unit last year. When Romeo and other Cast clients shared similar experiences of being exploited on the same farms, we realized the urgent need for greater legal action to address labor trafficking. In fact, we discovered that the same brothers who trafficked Romeo were doing the same to others. Since labor trafficking is not well understood by law enforcement, criminal cases against traffickers are rare. And since civil cases are not often being filed, many large companies are trafficking people with impunity and no financial deterrent. Survivors are being denied justice and life-changing monetary damages. We realized we needed a specialized legal team empowered to file first-of-their-kind lawsuits against companies in California accused of human trafficking. This led to the creation of our Impact Litigation Unit in 2023, with the goal of holding corporations engaged in human trafficking legally accountable and protecting the rights of survivors like Romeo. Cast is currently working on several potential cases and lawsuits that will have far-reaching consequences for survivors and those who exploited them.

### Most common industries where labor trafficking happened among Cast clients:

Source: Cast database, 2023-24.







Dawn Schiller, Training Director, LA County Program, moderated a panel human trafficking on Los Angeles' Mega and La Raza radio stations. Photo: Cast

# EDUCATING TO PROTECT YOUTH AND SUPPORT SURVIVORS

Cast provided [online training webinars](#) on Labor and Sex Trafficking of Youth to those working for law enforcement, service providers, government agencies, healthcare partners, corporations, faith-based organizations, and community groups, as well as members of the public. Cast's Training and [Technical Assistance \(TTA\)](#) program also provided online courses and individualized technical assistance to support attorneys and social service providers assisting trafficking survivors with legal needs nationwide.

Cast is now one of few nonprofits in the country to be certified to provide letters to individuals establishing they are victims of human trafficking so that they can then obtain debt relief under the Debt Bondage Repair Act – specifically, the ability to clear and fix their credit as a result of their trafficking experience. Cast's TTA program created a [Debt Bondage Repair Act Guide](#) to support survivors and practitioners in applying for relief. TTA also created guides for [applying to the California Victim Compensation Program](#) and [understanding changes to T visa regulations](#).

**Trained  
7,054 people**

in LA County and beyond on how to recognize, understand and address human trafficking, through the Human Trafficking of Youth program in partnership with LA County.

**Provided 490  
instances of  
technical assistance**

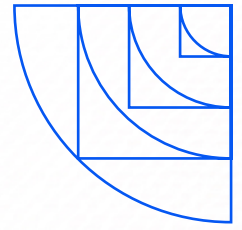
to social and legal service providers who needed help to navigate challenges in supporting survivors, through the national TTA program.

**Trained 2,661  
social workers  
& attorneys**

across the US on how to meet the needs of survivors, through the national TTA program.



# ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGE THROUGH SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP



“ At Cast, we are deeply honored to work alongside survivors whose courage drives every step of our advocacy. This year, we were fortunate to collaborate with incredible co-sponsors, learning from their expertise and shared commitment to justice. Together, we championed efforts to secure vital funding, expand access to essential resources, and protect human rights for all. As we reflect on this year’s successes, we remain steadfast in our mission to fight for systemic change and stand with survivors in building a future rooted in dignity and equity.”

**Leigh LaChapelle**, Associate Director of Survivor Advocacy

## **STOPPED →** Federal [H.R. 2601](#) (Lee) National Human Trafficking Hotline Enhancement Act

Cast’s National Survivor Network was one of the leading voices that successfully campaigned against the National Human Trafficking Hotline Enhancement Act, which proposed to transform the national human trafficking hotline into a law enforcement tip line. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee was so moved by the response from survivors that she changed her mind about her own bill.

“ [H.R. 2601] is not the improvement we thought it was. Survivors, advocates, and service providers support the hotline’s existing protocols, which give victims and survivors the power to decide how to and if to involve law enforcement... To combat human trafficking and truly support and empower victims and survivors of human trafficking, we must prioritize their needs, involve them in decision-making processes, and resist the urge to tell them what is best for them.”

**Congresswoman Lee**



## CAST CO-SPONSORED:

### **PASSED →** [California Victims of Crime Act Budget Request](#) (Reyes)

The California VOCA Advocacy Alliance, of which Cast is a founding member, secured \$103 million in funds for crime victim service providers across California.

Co-Sponsors: California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Children's Advocacy Centers of California, Cast, The Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network, Legal Aid Association of California, Los Angeles LGBT Center, The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, ValorUS.

### **PASSED →** [California AB 2432](#) (Gabriel) Funding Victims Services Through Corporate Accountability

Creates a new revenue source for crime victim services in California by holding bad corporate actors accountable for financial and legal wrongdoing.

Co-sponsors: California Attorney General, California Partnership to End Domestic Violence, Children's Advocacy Centers of California, Cast, The Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network, Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC), ValorUS.

### **PASSED →** [California AB 2224](#) (Santiago) Immigrant Juvenile Justice Act

Requires procedural changes and expands access for immigrants to 'special immigrant juvenile status' which provides a legal path to stability and safety for those under 21 years old who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected by one or both parents.

Co-Sponsors: Bet Tzedek, Cast, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice.

### **PASSED →** [California SB-963](#) (Ashby) Human Trafficking Prevention Act: Enhancing Emergency Responses to Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence

Requires all emergency departments to develop a self-identifying system for survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence.

Co-Sponsors: California Medical Association, Cast, San Francisco Safe House.

## CAST ENDORSED:

### **PASSED →** LA County's [Measure A](#) to advance affordable housing and solutions in Los Angeles.

Housing insecurity is both a significant risk factor and a common result of human trafficking. Housing is one of the top reported needs of survivors seeking Cast services. Increasing funding for affordable housing solutions is a critical tool in the prevention and response to human trafficking.

### **ADOPTED →** City of Los Angeles's [Fair Wage Ordinance](#)

To provide increased wages, greater access to healthcare, workplace protections, and critical safety and anti-trafficking training for LAX and hotel workers.

### **ADOPTED →** City of Los Angeles's [Sanctuary Ordinance](#)

To prohibit city resources from being used for immigration enforcement or cooperation with federal immigration agents.

### California's [Proposition 6](#)

To end the constitutional exception allowing involuntary servitude in California prisons, which has been used to exploit incarcerated people, particularly from Black communities.

Cast collaborated with groups including Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, and ACLU California Action. Although it did not pass, Cast will continue to push to 'end the exception'.



# EXPANDING OUTREACH AND DIRECT SERVICES

## Piloting In-House *Mental Healthcare*

Mental healthcare is critical for survivors' healing and recovery. But providers are overwhelmed, and survivors regularly have to wait up to six months for care. What's more, many therapists don't understand human trafficking and the traumas survivors face that can lead to depression, anxiety, symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, physical health issues, or self-harming behaviors. To address this, Cast expanded its comprehensive service model to include enhanced mental health services for our clients. We contracted with a bicultural and bilingual therapist, trained by Cast staff on human trafficking to provide trauma-informed therapy services.

When we first met Matt, 24, a survivor of labor trafficking from El Salvador, he lacked confidence, was very shy, and had difficulty making decisions due to his trauma. After failing to get a restraining order against his trafficker, Matt began wearing hats, glasses, and scarves so he would not be recognized.

He also was having nightmares every night. After noticing the stress he was under, Matt's Cast case manager connected him with our contracted therapist, Maria. Matt is undocumented, so he had reservations about sharing his story with anyone due to fear of deportation. Maria made him feel safe and comfortable to share his story and his fears. While working with Maria, he learned healthy coping skills and worked through his stress by talking through it. Matt says he no longer has nightmares and, on the nights when his thoughts are racing, he writes them down and throws them away, a coping skill Maria taught him. He also no longer feels the need to hide his identity - leaving his disguises at home.

*“ I found it very helpful and understand the importance of therapy and taking care of your mental health. I learned how to manage my emotions.”*

**Matt**, Cast client

## Expanded Services for *API Survivors*

Cast is constantly analyzing which groups vulnerable to human trafficking we could be serving more and better. We already serve many Asian and Pacific Islander (API) survivors, but there is always more we can do to reach them. We have expanded our culturally appropriate and trauma-informed support for API survivors in partnership with Special Service for Groups, Inc., the Thai Community Development Center and the Chinatown Service Center. We've enhanced our hotline and emergency response services and offered case management, legal assistance, safety planning, mental health services, housing, and access to medical care for API survivors.

## Hospitality Training for *Survivors*

Cast is collaborating with the University of Maryland's SAFE Center to train survivors who want to work in the hospitality industry. The Future in Training Curriculum, co-developed by Marriott International and the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery, is a job readiness program designed to equip survivors with market-driven employment skills and to introduce them to career paths in the hospitality sector through training workshops and hospitality tours. It helps survivors build the knowledge, skills, and credentials necessary for employment in the hospitality sector.





The updated Marisa Haven's welcome sign, living room and kitchen coffee bar. Photos: Cast

## TRAUMA-INFORMED HOUSING

# OUR 20-YEAR-OLD SHELTER GETS A MAKEOVER

*Mariposa Haven*, Cast's transitional shelter program offering housing for up to two years, received a much-needed facelift and is now a more welcoming and cozy home environment for survivors staying there.

Staff used trauma-informed design principles, including the use of color and light, to create a more welcoming communal space for our clients. Improvements include new furniture, paint, electrical work, a dedicated 'coffee bar' in the kitchen, and frosted windows that let in more light while maintaining privacy. The project was made possible by United Way of Greater Los Angeles, with support from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the Home for Good Funders Collaborative.

Between Cast's emergency and transitional shelter programs:

**5,306** *nights*

for survivors of trafficking were provided in bed stays.



LA Councilmember Nithya Raman (right) visited Mariposa Haven to learn more about its unique role in LA's shelter ecosystem. Also pictured L-R: Christina Torres, Mariposa Haven Program Manager; Steve Hirsh, Cast Board Member; Emily Williams, Cast Board Member. Photo: Cast



# EVALUATING SERVICE IMPACT AND PROVIDERS' PERSPECTIVES



Source: Cast website

## Data-Driven Research to Enhance Direct Services: *Measuring the Impact of Services Over Time*

To guarantee that we deliver services that lead to healing, Cast relies on feedback from survivors – such as the impact of our services on them, over time. Our briefing note, [Measuring the Impact of Services Over Time](#), highlights the importance of measuring how well services are working to ensure they are truly helping clients improve their lives. By tracking changes in areas such as clients' housing, emotional wellness, and employment, we can identify which services are most effective and make necessary adjustments to better meet the needs of survivors.

A key finding is that long-term services are essential for meaningful improvement in survivors' lives. Many clients do not show measurable progress until they have been receiving supportive services from Cast for several months, underscoring the need for sustained, consistent care. Another important finding is the value of broad assessments and referrals. Even though Cast does not provide medical services directly, our comprehensive assessments and connections to external resources have significantly improved clients' medical outcomes. Ultimately, using clinically significant improvement as a standard has improved the accuracy of data analysis, ensuring that even small but meaningful changes in clients' lives are acknowledged and appreciated.

## Gaining Service Providers' Perspectives

Cast's Provider Perspectives Study asked anti-violence professionals across California about the criminalization of survivors, as well as policy issues that affect survivors (e.g., immigration, drugs, homelessness/houselessness). Our goal was to learn about service providers' perspectives on issues that affect survivors of sexual violence, domestic violence, and human trafficking—particularly, matters that connect survivors with criminal legal systems, like homelessness/houselessness, immigration, the sex trades, and drugs; reporting victimization to law enforcement; and experiences of criminalization and forced criminality. The results were [published in an interactive dashboard](#).

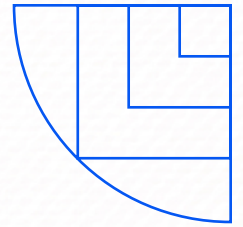
Although there was no single, universal perspective—anti-violence professionals' understandings are diverse, as are their policy positions—most had served survivors who were harmed by systems that should have supported them. Most participants had worked with survivors who were previously arrested. These experiences were often traumatizing: only 12% of service providers reported that being arrested had ever made a client safer.





Rebekah Layton (right), Cast Survivor Leadership Program Manager, during filming about the SETTA project. Photo: Cast

# MAKING SURVIVOR ENGAGEMENT MEANINGFUL



The [National Survivor Network](#) (NSN), a Cast project, has been playing a key role in the federal Office for Victims of Crime's (OVC) National Survivor Engagement Training and Technical Assistance Project (SETTA). The initiative is crucial for fostering meaningful and sustainable engagement with survivors of human trafficking as part of anti-trafficking efforts. SETTA's survivor-led approach ensures that the voices and experiences of those with lived experience of human trafficking are central to shaping effective anti-trafficking programs. NSN members on the SETTA team were featured in a [video for OVC's National Crime Victims' Rights Week 2024](#), highlighting how SETTA is helping to reshape these initiatives by integrating survivor perspectives.

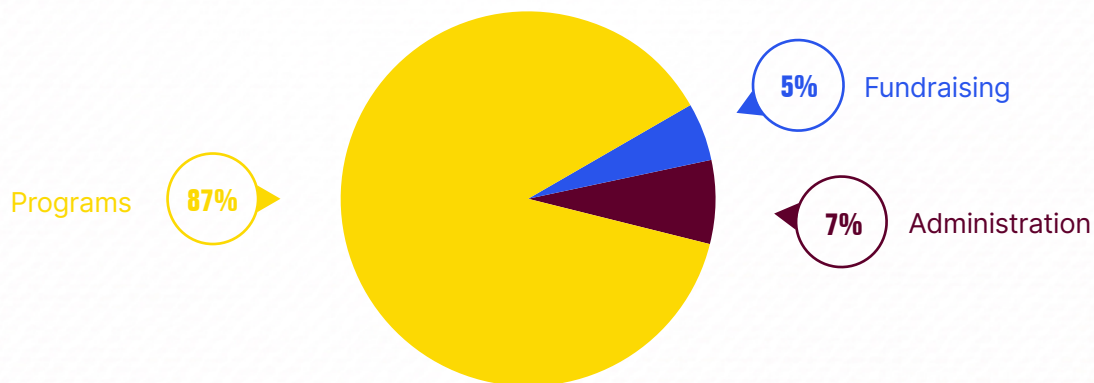
“Survivors are a community with very diverse perspectives. Instead of identifying a person as someone who has a trauma experience, how do we engage with victims of crime in ways that seek to enhance their humanity and also create best practices?”

**Rebekah Layton**, Survivor Leadership Program Manager



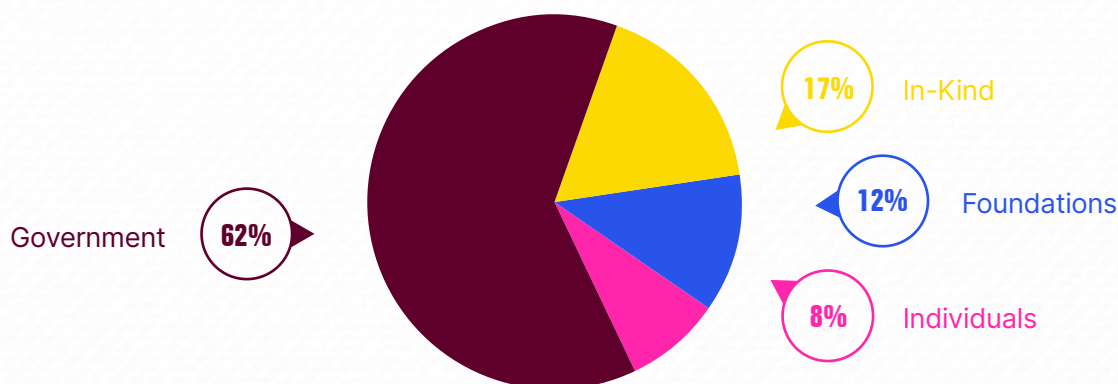
# GOVERNANCE

## Expenditure



Charity Navigator sets the industry standard for an organization's performance to at least 70% spent on program expenses

## Income



\* To be confirmed in our 2024 Financial Statement. Due to rounding, categories may add up to slightly above or below 100%.

## Board of *Directors*

Sister Ann Carla Costello, President

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Gerrick Pickering

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Sister Mary Genino

Dr. Kathryn McMahon, Founder and President Emeritus

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# THANK YOU TO OUR BIGGEST DONORS

(Jul 2023-Dec 2024)

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	Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority	Smith-Walker Foundation	
	McLamore Family Foundation		

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# Cast


COALITION TO  
ABOLISH SLAVERY  
& TRAFFICKING

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Front cover: Romeo accepts the Courage Award at Cast's 25th Anniversary celebration. Photo: Leroy Hamilton

Back cover: The annual Los Angeles Walk for Freedom to End Human Trafficking in Hollywood. Photo: Cast