

DESCRIPTION

Human trafficking believed to be the third-largest criminal activity in the world, is a form of human slavery. It involves both U.S. citizens and foreigners alike, and has no demographic restrictions.¹ Here in this country, people are being bought, sold, and smuggled like modern-day slaves, often beaten, starved, and forced to work as prostitutes or to take jobs as migrant, domestic, restaurant, or factory workers with little or no pay. Over the past decade, human trafficking has been identified as a heinous crime which exploits the most vulnerable in society.¹ Sex trafficking is defined in federal law as a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age.² The FBI collects trafficking offense data on both Human Trafficking-Commercial Sex Acts and Human Trafficking-Involuntary Servitude through the Uniform Crime Reporting program from local law enforcement.³

HOW WE ARE DOING

There were 25 arrests for trafficking in Ramsey County during 2017, down from 42 arrests in 2016. The crime rate for trafficking rose steadily from 2014 (the first year of data collection) to 2016 and then dropped in 2017 to 5 per 100,000 population.

DISPARITIES

Collecting statistics on sex trafficking is particularly difficult because of the hidden nature of trafficking activities. Although the majority of labor trafficking victims are undocumented, the majority of sex trafficking victims in the U.S. are U.S. citizens.⁴ In a 2014 Urban Institute study that looked at the economics of sex trafficking, of the traffickers interviewed the majority overwhelmingly believed that trafficking white women would make them more money but trafficking black women would land them less jail time if caught. Most of the traffickers interviewed had trafficked women and girls of different races since having a variety of products to sell was good for business.⁵

RISK FACTORS

Practitioners report that traffickers often target individuals who have previous experiences of psychological trauma, histories of family violence or child sex abuse, drug dependency, homelessness, and social isolation. Individuals with limited economic resources—minors and individuals with limited educational opportunities, work opportunities or family support—are also at a heightened risk of trafficking.⁶

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

Over the past several years Ramsey County has taken a leading role in Minnesota – and even nationwide – in combating a previously hidden but major problem: the sexual exploitation, including the sex trafficking, of children. County leaders helped catalyze a new state law, the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth Act of 2011, which ensures that young people who are sexually exploited/trafficked are treated as victims, not perpetrators. Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health’s SOS program has taken the lead on reviewing (continued on next page)

Information to note

- In 2017 there were 25 arrests for trafficking in Ramsey County, down from 42 arrests in 2016
- The majority of the traffickers interviewed overwhelmingly believed that trafficking white women would make them more money, but trafficking black women would land them less jail time if caught.

¹ What We Investigate: Human Trafficking/Involuntary Servitude. FBI. <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/human-trafficking>. Accessed July 2018.

² Chapter 78-Trafficking Victims Protection. United States Code. <http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title22/chapter78&edition=prelim>. Accessed July 2018.

³ Human Trafficking in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. FBI. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/human-trafficking>. Accessed July 2018.

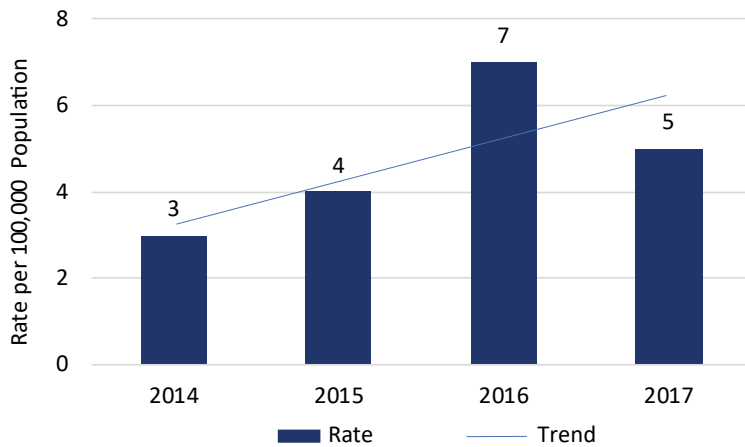
⁴ Human Trafficking. The National Center for Victims of Crime. http://victimsofcrime.org/docs/ncvrv2013/2013ncvrv_stats_humantrafficking.pdf?sfvrsn=0. Accessed July 2018.

⁵ Dank M, Khan B, Downey PM, et al. Estimating the size and structure of the underground commercial sex economy in eight major US cities. The Urban Institute. 2014. https://www.urban.org/research/publication/estimating-size-and-structure-underground-commercial-sex-economy-eight-major-us-cities/view/full_report. Published March 12, 2014. Accessed July 2018.

⁶ Carpenter A, Gates J. The nature and extent of gang involvement in sex trafficking in San Diego county. U.S. Department of Justice. 2016. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249857.pdf>. Accessed July 2018.

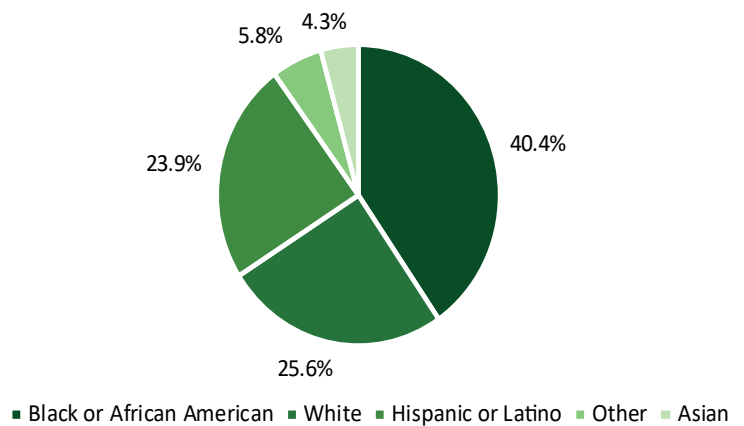
the practices of medical facilities that encounter sexually exploited/trafficked victims. The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office convened a countywide law enforcement team to collaborate on sex trafficking cases, which often cross jurisdictional lines. In 2017 a Ramsey County Sexually Exploited Youth Leadership team was formed to develop a county-wide protocol that encompasses a victim-centered, comprehensive, systemic response so the community can come together to effectively combat the sexual exploitation/trafficking of children. This group is currently working on developing a protocol by tailoring the statewide model protocol to the specific resources and needs in Ramsey County.

Trafficking Arrests, Ramsey County, 2014 - 2017



Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety Uniform Crime Reports.⁷

Sex Trafficking Victims by Race/Ethnicity, United States, 2011



Source: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.⁸

⁷ Minnesota Department of Public Safety. Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Uniform Crime Reports. <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjjs/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx>. Accessed July 2018.

⁸ Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Trafficking in Persons Report 2012, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2012), 361, accessed October 15, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192598.pdf>.