



hti labs

# The Commercial Sex Market in Illinois & its Relationship to Sex Trafficking: An Analysis of the Post-Backpage Landscape





# Table of Contents

Background ————— 3

Sex Trafficking as a Hidden Subset of the  
Commercial Sex Industry ————— 7

Segments of the Commercial Sex Industry ————— 13


The Illinois Escort Services Market ————— 21

Discussion, Findings, & Recommendations ————— 34

# Background

## About HTI Labs

### Who We Are



Our mission is to fight sex trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault by creating sustainable, data-driven research and technology in collaboration with community partners.

Building the **infrastructure behind anti-trafficking efforts** in a way that creates **ongoing data**, allowing for **ongoing research** into **how best to tackle the issues**.



#### Understanding the Issues

- Cause & Effect
- Key Indicators
- Provider Limitations



#### Building the Infrastructure

- Data-gathering systems
- Algorithms
- Ongoing measure of prevalence



#### Developing the Solutions

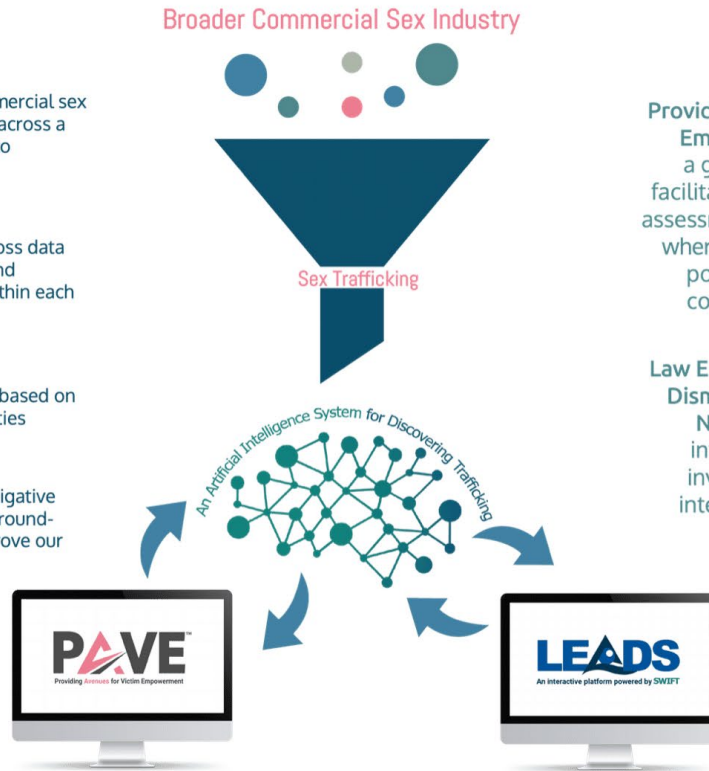
- Identification
- Response
- Investigation



# Our Strategy

## Ecosystem

- 1 Capture broader commercial sex industry, which exists across a continuum of agency to exploitation
- 2 Make connections across data to identify networks and individual personas within each network
- 3 Predict trafficking risk based on structure & vulnerabilities
- 4 Provide leads & investigative assistance; leverage ground-truth feedback to improve our algorithms



**Providing Avenues for Victim Empowerment (PAVE):** a guided platform that facilitates a single screening, assessment, & referral process where all roads lead to the potential victim being connected to services

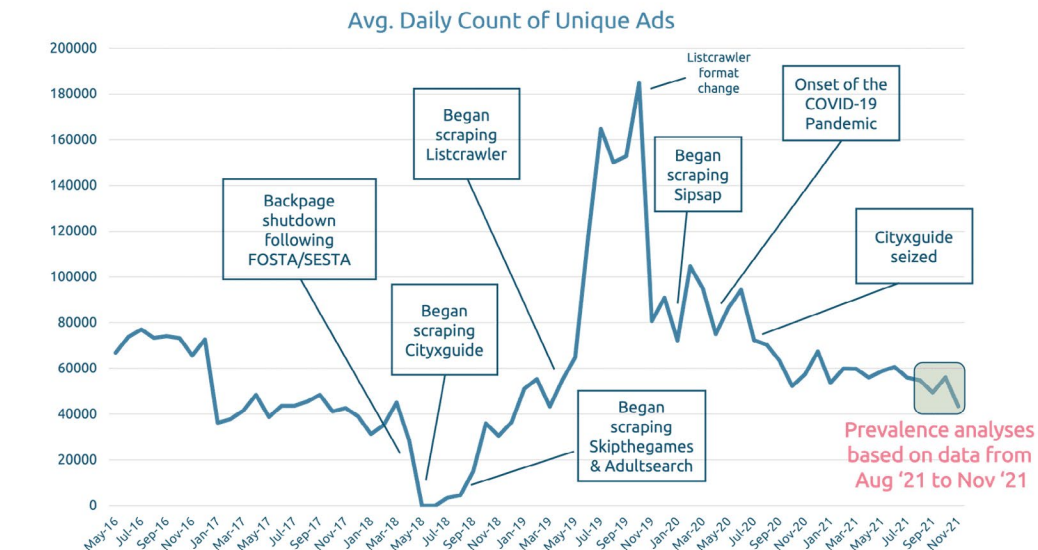
**Law Enforcement Assistant for Dismantling Sex Trafficking Networks (LEADS):** an interactive platform for investigating & building intelligence on trafficking networks

## About the Commissioned Project

### Data Source & Methodology

#### Data Collection

Data in this report are derived from the daily scraping of 7 different commercial sex websites. The specific sources have changed quite a bit over time.





1

**Ad sites:** Websites that host new ads daily, organized by the day they were posted  
(*Backpage, Cityxguide, Listcrawler, Skipthegames, TER*)

2

**Profile sites:** Websites where users have a commercial sex profile that can be updated / edited over time (*Adultsearch, Sipsap, TER*)

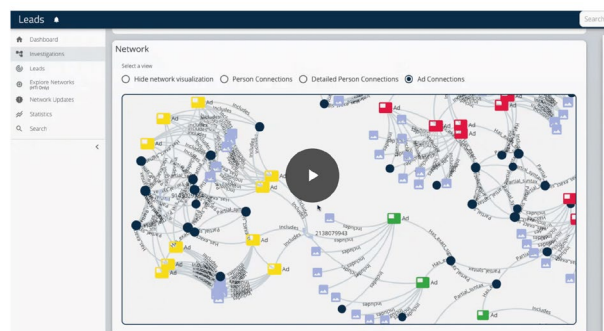
## Processing & Feature Engineering

- We process ads with our parsers and machine learning models to obtain meaningful, uniform data across websites.
- We eliminate ads identified by our spam algorithm.

## Matching Ads to Sex Providers

We use data science to make connections across data to identify networks and individual personas within the network. Identifying a network or an individual person can happen in many different ways.

- **Shared identifiers connecting the ads and people**
- **Similar marketing behavior**
- **Similar network patterns, like movement and growth**



Lastly, we designed and distributed an Illinois Sex Provider Questionnaire for this project to obtain qualitative input from individuals involved in the commercial sex industry in Illinois.

Sex providers were connected to our survey via sex provider / survivor organizations and online forums where sex providers are known to frequent.

### Illinois Commercial Sex Provider Questionnaire

#### Introduction and Eligibility

These questions and information are meant to introduce you to the scope and purpose of this questionnaire and determine your eligibility.

This questionnaire is meant for adults currently or formerly involved in the commercial sex industry in Illinois. By commercial sex, we are referring to any sexual act conducted in exchange for something of value, such as money. If you have experience with providing commercial sex in or around Illinois, please consider reading on.

This survey will take about 5-10 minutes to finish. The research has been commissioned by an Illinois-based program working to understand the scope of commercial sex activity. The motivation of the current study is not to criminalize or penalize commercial sex, but to understand the scope of the overall industry in Illinois.

If you are **currently** involved in the commercial sex industry in Illinois, you should interpret these questions to be about those recent experiences. If you were **formerly** involved in the commercial industry in Illinois, you should interpret these questions to be about your experiences from that time.

If you should choose to respond to this questionnaire, note your participation is voluntary and you may choose to skip a question or stop at any time. What you tell us is confidential. You are anonymous. We do not know your name, we will not ask your name. Your answers will be combined with responses from others and studied as a group.

As a reminder, your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to stop responding at any point. However, your cooperation would be greatly appreciated and would contribute to understanding a very important aspect of life in Illinois.

OK

## A Note on Terminology, Agency, & Exploitation in the Commercial Sex Industry

### Terminology

- **Sex providers:** Individuals exchanging sex acts for something of value.

Sex providers have diverse experiences within the commercial sex industry. The degrees of agency and exploitation they experience exist along a continuum, from those with full agency who voluntarily participate in the commercial sex industry to those who are victims of sex trafficking and have severely constrained agency. Our use of the term sex provider is meant to act as an umbrella term that captures all of these diverse experiences within the commercial sex industry.

- **Sex act:** Encompasses any sexual encounter with another person with the goal of sexual gratification, including but not limited to an erotic massage, stripping, and intercourse.
- **Venue:** The location or medium through which the commercial sex acts take place.
- **Organization:** Relatively formalized structures that sell multiple individuals for sex. (*e.g., escort agencies with a manager or a chain of massage parlors*)
- **Industry segment:** Overall packaging and delivery of the sexual service based on the client's perspective – closely related to venue & organization. (*e.g., outdoor solicitation, escort services, picture/video sales*)
- **CSA:** Commercial sex activity

# Sex Trafficking as a Hidden Subset of the Commercial Sex Industry


1

## What is sex trafficking & how does it differ from commercial sex activity?

### Understanding Force, Fraud, & Coercion

#### What is it?

ACT What is done	MEANS* How it is done	PURPOSE Why it is done
Recruitment Transport Harboring Providing Obtaining Soliciting	Force Fraud Coercion Abuse of power Abuse of vulnerabilities	Commercial sexual exploitation Forced labor Slavery or similar practices Organ removal

 \*Any minor (under the age of 18) induced into commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking.

#### Web of Manipulation & Control

Traffickers intricately weave a web of manipulation & control around victims.

It is hard to recognize & prove because this web is so **individualized**.

#### You don't know it when you see it.

- Force, fraud, and coercion manifest in a multitude of ways.
- Identification requires painstaking investigative work.

#### Self-disclosure is rare.

- Requires building trusting relationships as long-term support services are provided.



**Traffickers use criminal records as a means of making those they control even more dependent on them.**

*Example:*

A trafficking survivor left her trafficker, only to have the trafficker immediately go to Family Court to seek custody of their daughter. The trafficker based his claim that she was an unfit parent on her convictions for prostitution—acts that he had coerced her into committing.


"I think for me that was my biggest issue. They labeled me as a prostitute and not a trafficking victim. And, I had to explain to a lot of people, like yes, I might have been doing prostitution, but **it wasn't my choice**. It wasn't like, if I wanted to stop, I could stop, you know? There were times where I wish I could've stopped and I tell people all the time. I say I'd rather have been dead than doing what I was doing a lot of times, but I didn't have a choice."

NE Survivor

 Criminal records effect ability to access housing, employment, education, and financial resources.

"Outside of fast food jobs, there's none that I could land. I went from my first job working in McDonalds to going to Burger King to trying to do security. Not able to get employment because of my lengthy record of prostitution charges...I had to write a letter to the president of the company that I was going to work for explaining all the situations - that was personal info that I don't feel like I have to disclose. But just for the sake of employment, I did it anyway. I was homeless for two years because no one would hire me because of my record."

29-year-old Survivor

 Nebraska LB 1132, which was drafted by HTI Labs, allows for victims to have criminal records for crimes they were forced to commit expunged.

## Vulnerabilities / Risk Factors

- Living in poverty
- Homelessness or no family support system
- Missing from care
- Addiction
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Foreign nationals

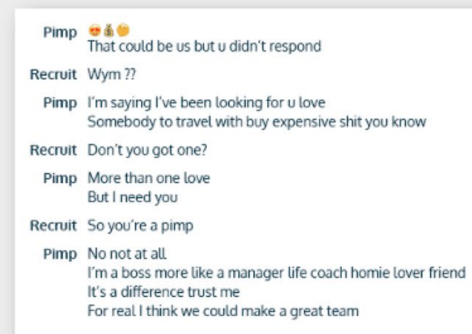
## Common recruitment strategies include exploiting an individual's underlying vulnerabilities

- Desire for material goods
- Oppressive home life
- Longing for companionship or affection
- Survival

### Large-scale network operating out of Omaha

- 33 victims
- Often recruited out of high school through Facebook Messenger
- Often seen being picked up from school
- Advertised as "two-girl specials"

**"Romeo Recruitment":** Traffickers pretending to have a romantic interest in their victims where relationship is used for recruitment and as a mechanism for manipulation and control.



"She was 18 when she was recruited and ultimately was forced into trafficking. She has a history of childhood sexual abuse and lacked healthy family relationships. Her only source of support, her grandmother, was deceased. She met her trafficker and their relationship started out as them "dating". Soon the dating turned into her doing favors for him (having sex with his friends). He kept her by buying her clothes and meeting other basic needs. She was charged with shoplifting which she was doing at the insistence of her trafficker. Her trafficker took her ID, Social Security card, and birth certificate. which made it even more difficult for her to gain employment. She ultimately returned to the street because she was discouraged and having such a hard time trying to get back on her feet."

## Challenge of effective identification & response to trafficking

We know trafficking exists & that we're coming across victims in our systems.

Trafficking victims  
are arrested, tried, and  
convicted for crimes they didn't  
choose to commit.

# 91%

of sex trafficking survivors report being arrested for crimes related to their trafficking, with **42%** arrested more than 10 times.

# 14%

of international trafficking victims in the US were jailed or put through the deportation process.

### Trafficking & Backpage

**TÉEN BBW** 🍷💋🍷 **Daddy's girl** 🍷🍷 **Sweet HiGh SKoOI Girl**

Posted: Saturday, May 21, 2016 3:04 PM

ONLY AVAILABLE FOR HEAD Hello Guys, 🍷🍷 Sweet, Young, & Submissive 🍷 My goal is

**Exxxtra small exxxtra tight xxxx** 🍷 - 18

Posted: Friday, June 24, 2016 4:59 PM

Want a good time with a tiny baby let me know !! Fetish welcomed anael.  
orrrrallwelcomed . Tired of these girls being expensive ? I will do reasonable prices  
🍷🍷🍷🍷 Just turned 18 yesterday 🍷 Get you a new tight one 🍷 Let me do the things

### Market Hub

**80%** of online commercial sex advertising.

### Child Sex Trafficking

Backpage turned over **400** potential minors monthly.

**71%** of child sex trafficking reports received by NCMEC involved ads posted on Backpage.



Most trafficking is not formally reported.

## Research on trafficking relies on known, reported instances.

The Criminal Justice System



The Service Provider System



Voluntary Responses to Surveys / Interviews



As a community, we are collectively missing it.

Example from our work: A vulnerable adult fell through the cracks.

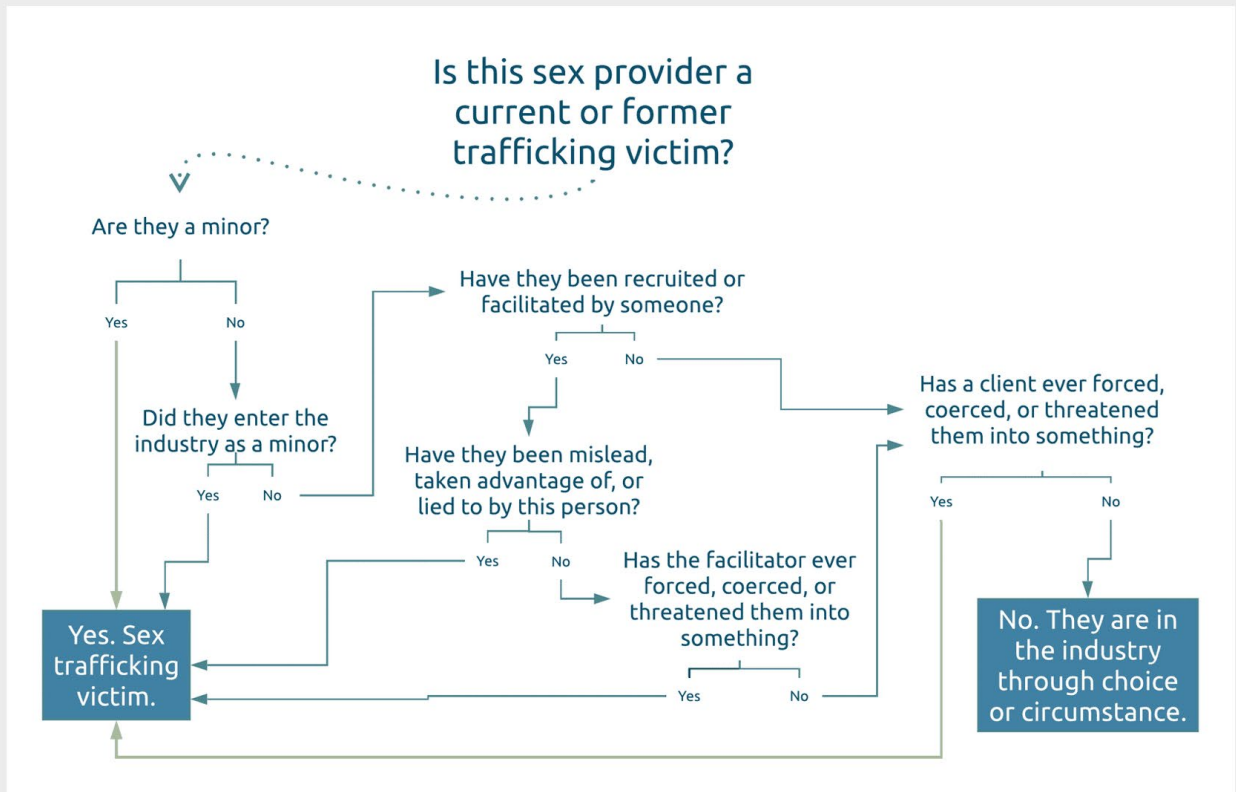
"She was a bit shy at first, as others have mentioned, but that played right into the girl next door fantasy I was going for."

"On the phone Jane seemed sleepy or slower... she got here into the room and I could tell something had her nervous."

"She is a little shy and nervous but starts to warm up as time goes on."

Multiple red flags:

- **An abusive partner**
- **Commercial sex website listings**
- **Reports that she is low functioning**
- **Reports of domestic violence taking place at various hotels**



A snapshot of time does not tell the whole story.

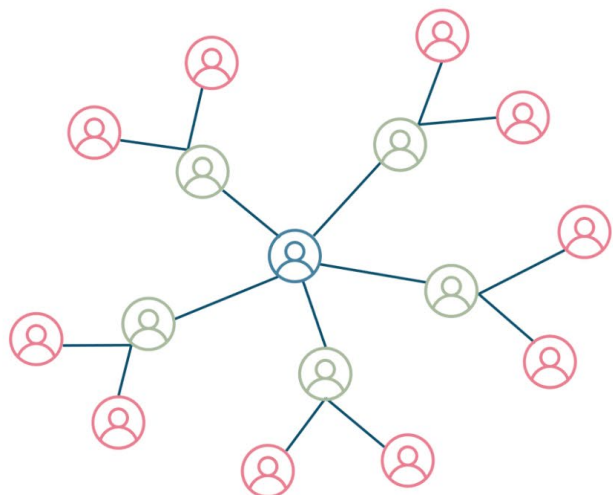
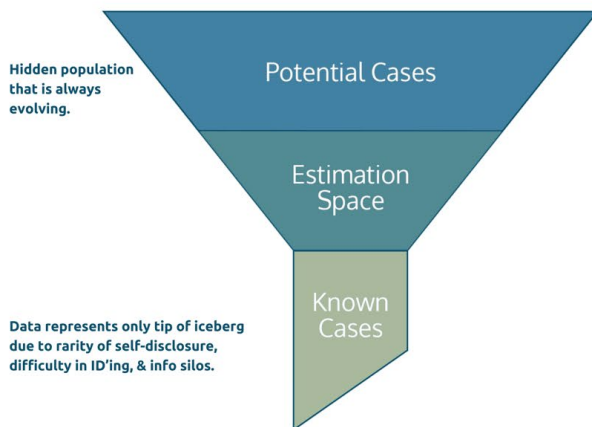
Separate entry vs. current circumstances

- A person can enter or remain in the industry for the following reasons: trafficked, survival sex, or voluntary.
- A person who started as a minor was trafficked into the industry, whether or not their circumstances for remaining are different.

Crucial to identify and track traffickers over time

- If a person was a trafficker in one situation, then other people connected to them at any time are at higher risk.

Our Strategy



# Segments of the Commercial Sex Industry

Our strategy is informed by the fact that trafficking looks different in each segment of the commercial sex market.

## Typologies / Segments

### Commercial Sex Industry Segments

We have defined these segments based on the perspective of the sex buyer and how sexual services are packaged and delivered for them.

- 1 Call Girl / Escort Services
- 2 Outdoor Solicitation
- 3 Picture & Video Services (Cam Services)
- 4 Illicit Massages / Spa Services
- 5 Brothels / Residences
- 6 Strip Clubs, Bars, & Casinos



## Call Girl / Escort Services

<b>Solicitation</b>	Buyers solicit an escort advertised online or elsewhere. While the provider is generally the point of contact for buyers, logistics may be coordinated via an agency or 3rd party call center.
<b>Venue</b>	Incall or outcall to a hotel or private residence
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<b>The largest segment of commercial sex activity in the US;</b> known for online advertising website.
<b>In Our Data</b>	<b>88% of Illinois-based ads</b> in our data are for escort services. (ex: Backpage, Listcrawler, Skipthegames)

**i** **100% of respondents** to our Illinois escorts survey stated that they advertise primarily online. When asked if they write their own ads, responses varied; many identified third-party services, managers, pimps, and boyfriends as the person who wrote their ads.

### *Trafficking in this segment*

**Trafficking can range from a single trafficker (often an intimate partner) to coordinated networks of traffickers affiliated with organized crime.**

Trafficking Case Example: 20-174-USA v. Brewer et al

With our data, we helped uncover & investigate a large-scale trafficking network operating in the heart of Omaha.

"From January 2016 through January 2019, Besta and Brewer recruited, transported, and enticed 4 minor females under the age of 18 to engage in commercial sex. Brewer often referred to the minors as 'the Bunny Gang.'

He and Besta would instruct the minors how to advertise, solicit, and charge for sex ads. They obtained customers for the minors by posting advertisements on backpage.com, and drove the minors to various hotels, motels, and other locations for commercial sex acts, including in Nebraska, Iowa, and Texas. The payments received for commercial sex acts went to Brewer and Besta."

(<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ne/pr/omaha-man-sentenced-role-sex-trafficking-minor>)

## Outdoor Solicitation

<b>Solicitation</b>	Sex buyers go to a public outdoor space to solicit sex.
<b>Venue</b>	Street contact, cars, truck stops
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	Often associated with a higher risk of violence and exploitation; known for survival sex; high level of pimping
<b>In Our Data</b>	<b>Less than 2% of Illinois-based online ads</b> reference outdoor work - with black and older sex providers being overrepresented relative to other industry segments.

## 🚚 Marion Area 🚚 truckers 🚦 - 21

◦ Hot days like today 🌞 Everyone deserves some cooling 🧊 off. I'm a 100% real, New in town from Ohio, barely legal Chocolate Goddess. 🍫 Come enjoy our time together. I come highly recommended 😊 I'm THE ONE AND ONLY. Nobody does it better than Imani 😊 I'm just waitin on you to call me so I can give action 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷 P.S. 100% FUN

"Barely legal" provider from Ohio

### Trafficking in this segment

Traffickers often exploit vulnerabilities by providing drugs, housing, or safety as a way to coerce providers to work involuntarily. These traffickers tend to operate more independently rather than in networks with other traffickers.

## San Diego Police Department cracks down on prostitution off Main Street near Navy base

— Vice Lieutenant says officers recently rescued a teen victim of sex trafficking in the area.

3

### Picture & Video Sales (Cam Services)

<b>Solicitation</b>	Solicitation and delivery of services do not involve in-person interactions. They are purely online or remote. <i>(Includes live webcam shows &amp; pornographic images / videos)</i>
<b>Venue</b>	Any remote location, usually homes. In some cases, an agency of "cam girls" will all work out of the same location.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	Often an additional service to escorting in order to bring in customers. Serves as the "easy" way to enter the industry in times of financial trouble.
<b>In Our Data</b>	<b>4.5% of Illinois-based ads</b> offer picture & video sales, often leveraging OnlyFans, FaceTime dates, or SnapChat. Roughly 4 in 5 of these ads also offer in-person services. Trans providers are comparatively most represented in this segment, and this segment tends to skew young.

 Chicago's  Hottest  Sugarbabies   
Companions  Webcam  &  Premium  Models Avail  773-932-7674


..... Chicago's hottest Sugarbabies Escort Companions Premium Snap and Webcam Models....

Look no further we have the sugar sweet treats just what every Sugar Daddy Generous Gentlemen or Distinguish Businessman is looking for.

#### Cam Services + Escort Services Business

*PlayfulKayla* 

*Lights camera action* 

*CAM2CAM video chat sessions available*  -\$50

*Videos \$25 - \$50*

*PICTURE AND VIDEO PACKAGES AVAILABLE*

#### Individual Provider Offering Remote Services

#### *Trafficking in this segment*

Trafficking can involve the selling of pictures or videos without the consent of the person being depicted. Additionally, traffickers often target young individuals who enter into this segment, leading to exploitation & third-party control.

#### **OnlyFans used by sex traffickers to lure victims and buyers**

Allison Franklin, who is a former trafficking victim, turned trafficker, turned victims' advocate said internet sites that draw in young girls are very dangerous playgrounds.

"I can go on OnlyFans and see that's gonna be a victim," Franklin said. "That's gonna be someone who will be targeted, because I was groomed by my trafficker to look for that."

**The last three segments all have  
brick-and-mortar locations.**



<b>Solicitation</b>	Sex buyers can walk in or call in advance to set up an appointment.
<b>Venue</b>	Brick and mortar locations, generally under the facade of a legal business
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	<p>Prominent proportion of the market overall; managers are often called "madams," who tend to be females who were previously providers in the industry.</p> <p><i>"There are roughly 2,869 customers per day at illicit massage business in Houston, yielding \$107 million per year." (Bouche &amp; Crotty, 2017. Estimating demand for illicit massage businesses in Houston, Texas)</i></p>
<b>In Our Data</b>	~8% of Illinois-based ads (CityxGuide, RubMaps). Disproportionally Asian sex providers — 85% of massage parlors are advertising Asian providers. Lowest price per hour of all industry segments. Nearly 700 different spa names advertised in IL since 2016.

♥♥~~~ **New Line Up! New Attactive**  
 ← **Massage~~~♥♥ - 21**  
 555 S Schuyler Ave #195. Kankakee IL (Hwy57, exit 308 or 312)

Kankakee, Illinois Massage Parlor

\*\*\* Beautiful Asian staffs !!!  
 \*\*\* Table Shower  
 \*\*\* Only 5 Min away from Harrah's Casino / Truck Parking Available

Metropolis, Illinois Massage Parlor

🎀 **THREE ASIAN GIRLS** 🎀  
 🍷 **Girls Change Every Week** 🍷

*Trafficking in this segment*

Often connected to larger operators recruiting women in their home country or women who are searching for work in the US as immigrants with limited English.

## Couple arrested for running human trafficking ring at massage parlors in Hillsborough, Pinellas counties

“To increase profits in many cases, these madams and the women involved would sleep at the parlors to maximize their availability,” said Sheriff Chronister.

5

### Brothels / Residences

<b>Solicitation</b>	Sex buyers go to a known brothel or residence to solicit sex.
<b>Venue</b>	Residential venues (e.g. a house or apartment) where commercial sex is known to buyers as being provided on a regular basis.
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	Represents a relatively small proportion of the market overall. Advertising tends to occur through word of mouth. Typically involves sex providers from the same ethnic/language group, often catering to sex buyers from the same minority population.
<b>In Our Data</b>	Less than 2% of Illinois-based ads.

*Trafficking in this segment*

In more formalized brothels, traffickers may be part of larger, coordinated networks. Informal residential brothels often involve inter-familial or intimate partner trafficking of minors.

“From the time I was 6 years old until I was about 16, I was trafficked by a neighbor and then by different people throughout the city. By the time it was over, I couldn’t care less if I lived or died.”  
Nebraska Survivor-Leader

## Six rescued, two arrested in human trafficking investigation that involves man with Palo Alto ties

South bay brothels were part of national network

by Bay City News Service






Uploaded: Thu, Jun 10, 2021, 11:56 am

41

The couple's satellite of brothels trafficked women from China, South Korea and eastern Europe, the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office said Friday in a [press release](#). Over 100 sex workers circulated through "non-descript apartments" in the county before they were taken to other U.S. cities to continue the illegal work.

## Strip Clubs, Bars, & Casinos

<b>Solicitation</b>	Sex buyers go to a legal business where they know they can meet providers to solicit sex.
<b>Venue</b>	Behind the scenes at strip clubs, cantina bars, or casinos (or elsewhere after contact at such a location).
<b>Key Characteristics</b>	Relatively smaller portion of the industry overall, with some overlap between the escort segment more broadly.
<b>In Our Data</b>	Representing < 2% of the Illinois-based ads, this segment advertises the youngest providers (with a median age of 22) at a higher price per hour.

 Sexy Dancing and Drinks VIP experience come enjoy youre  
 OR we could bring party to you  
 Js Sport Bar  
 2101 Manheim Rd north lake

Sports Bar in Northlake, Illinois Offering "VIP Experience"

**Full Friction, Full Contact Lap  
 Dances with Full Liquor - 21**

Strip Club in Hammond, Indiana

 **hottest strippers**  **you didn't see  
 ever**  **so get fast** 

 WE HAVE PARTIES AND EVENTS ACROSS CANADA/ USA 

Strip Club Posting an Ad in Decatur, Illinois



Hit me up  Pay For Play Also,

Private Dances

Private parties

Privates Sessions

Stripper Posting an Ad "Pay for Play"

*Trafficking in this segment*

**Business venue is commonly used for solicitation and recruitment. (Ex: Pimps are known to recruit out of strip clubs.)**

## Scores strip club sued for allowing sex trafficking of disabled teen

By [Gabrielle Fonrouge](#)

January 29, 2020 | 7:05am | Updated

The victim, identified in court papers as Jane Doe, was developmentally 13 years old when her trafficker brought her to the chain's Tampa location, according to the lawsuit, filed in the Circuit Court of the 13th Judicial Circuit in Hillsborough County, Florida, and Doe's lawyer, Michael Dolce of the Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll law firm.

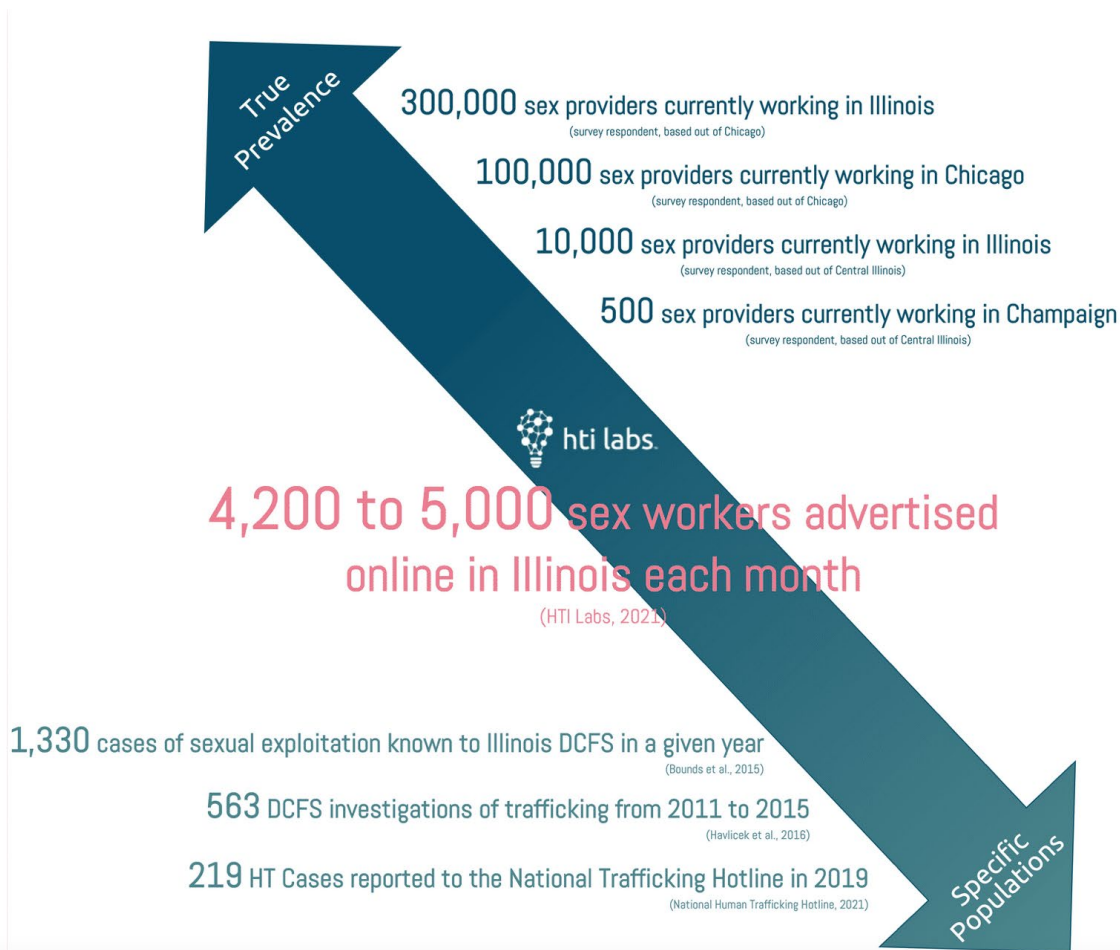
Soon, another dancer "induced" Doe to go to a nearby hotel with customers from the club to "engage in prostitution." It was there Doe was raped by the men, the lawsuit states.

# The Illinois Escort Services Market

## The Numbers

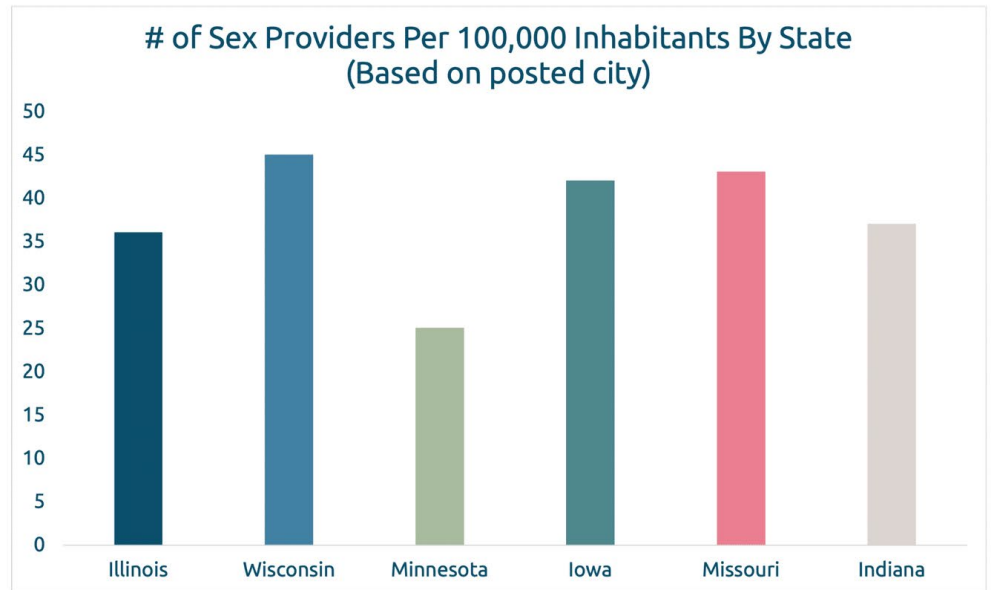
### Prevalence

Range of existing estimates & insights from our survey response



## Illinois by the numbers & in context of comparable states

**An estimated 4,200 to 5,000 individuals are sold for sex in a given month in Illinois.**

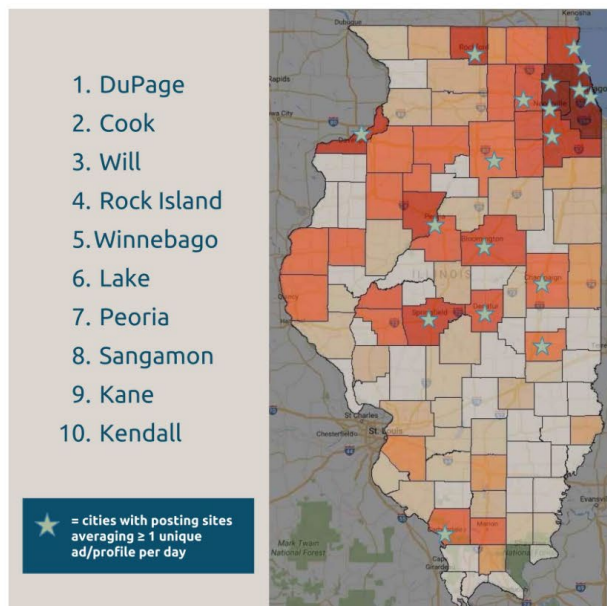


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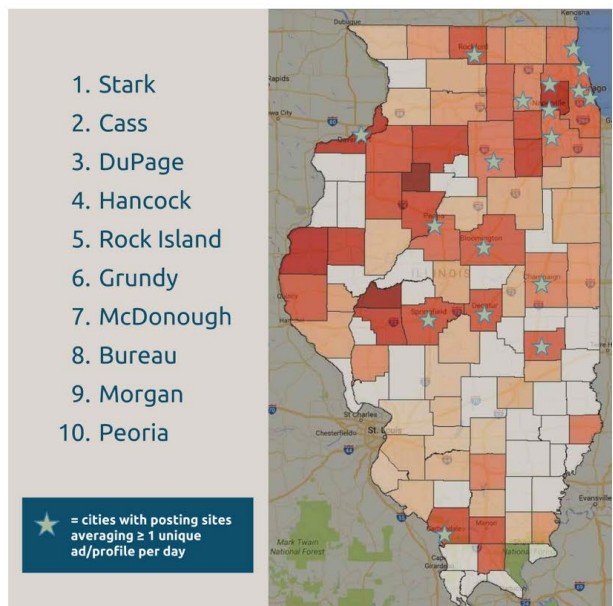
## The Places

### A Statewide Issue

#### The Illinois Escort Market by County



Total Number of Escorts by County

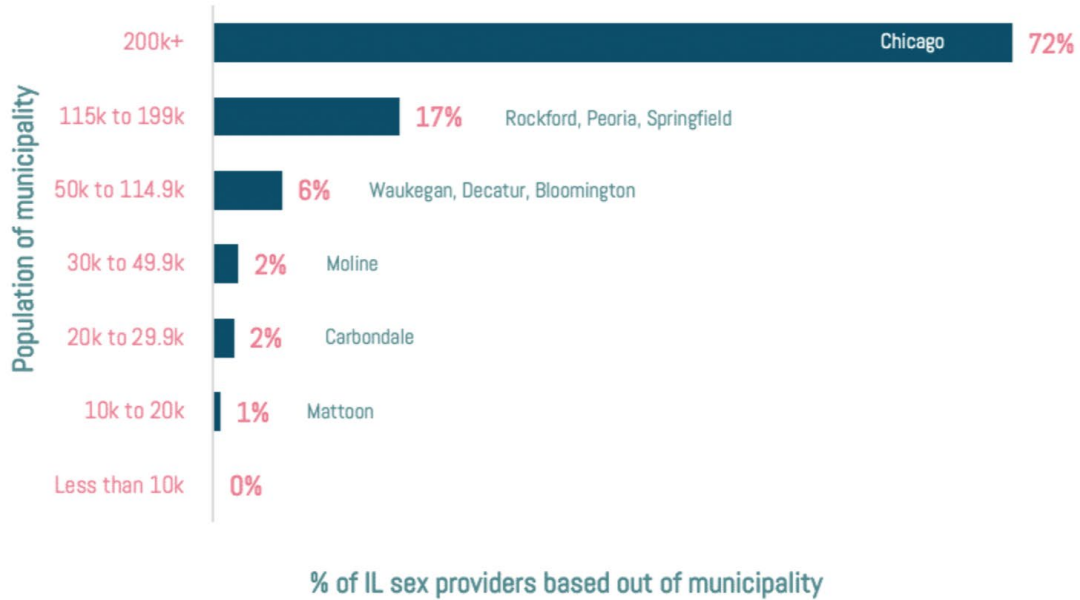


Adjusted for County Population

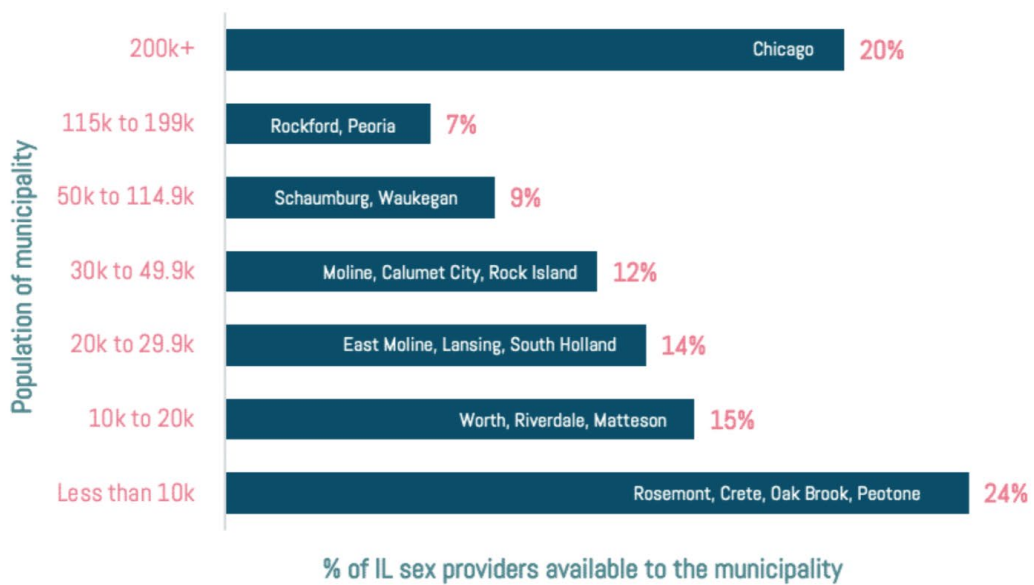


## Dispersion of Illinois Sex Providers Across Population Groupings

### What size towns are IL escorts based out of?



### What size towns are IL escort advertising to?



54% cross state lines in order to be sold for sex.

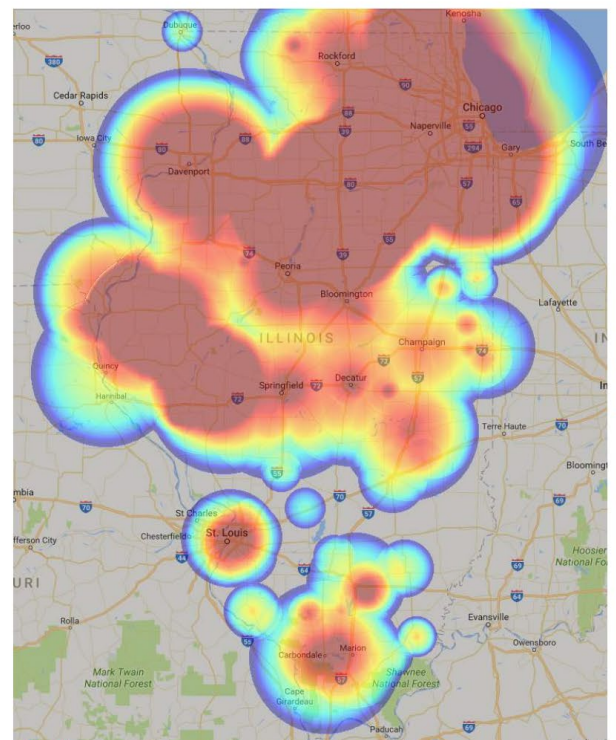
Top States



Regions of the State

To provide more detail on the geographic distribution, we broke the state down into four major regions:

1. Northeast
2. North-Central
3. Central
4. Southern



## Northeast Region

**Most Common:** Chicago, Lansing, Schaumburg, Worth, Rosemont, Waukegan, Naperville, South Holland, Dolton, Calumet City, Oak Brook

**Highest concentration (per capita):** Kaneville, Burlington, Rosemont, Thornton, Big Rock, Maple Park, Ringwood, Peotone, Willowbrook, Beecher, Oak Brook

### Travel Across Jurisdictions:

**54%** cross state lines

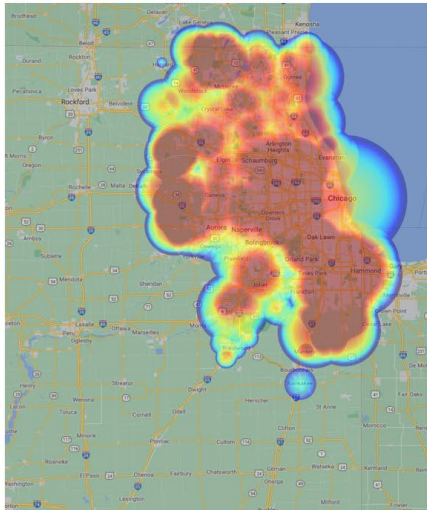
**47%** based out of states

In a given 3-month period, this region's sex providers are also sold for sex in markets spanning all 50 states + DC.

### Top Places Traveled:

- Milwaukee, WI
- Indianapolis, IN
- Houston, TX
- Minneapolis, MN
- Dallas, TX

### Hot Spots in Region:



## North-Central Region

**Most Common:** Moline, Rock Island, Rockford, East Moline, Peoria, Bloomington, Channahon, Aurora, Washington, East Peoria, Joliet, Macomb, Galesburg

**Highest concentration (per capita):** Tonica, Leland, North Utica, Earlville, Sheridan, Hebron, Hinckley



**Travel Across Jurisdictions:**

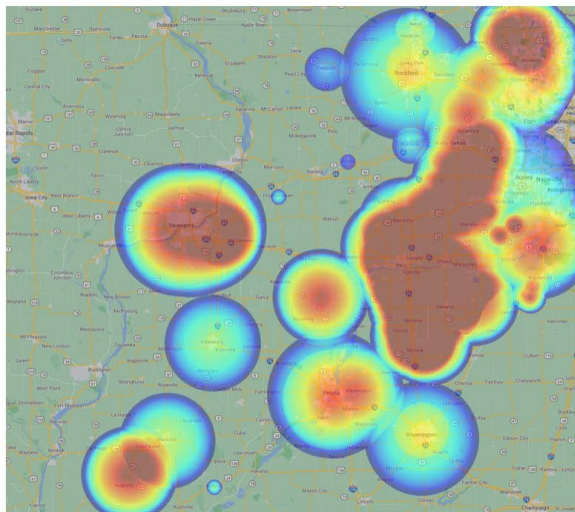
**55%** cross state lines  
**38%** based out of states

In a given 3-month period, sex providers based in **44** different states will work multiple times out of this region.

**Top Places Traveled:**

- **Northeast Region of IL** (Chicago, Lansing, Worth, Matteson)
- **WI** (Madison, Milwaukee, Janesville, Racine, Green Bay)
- **IN** (Indianapolis, Fort Wayne)
- **IA** (Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Des Moines)
- Atlanta, **GA**

**Hot Spots in Region:**



**Central Region**

**Most Common:** Springfield, Decatur, Jacksonville, Quincy, Champaign, Mattoon, Ashland, Urbana, Danville, Charleston

**Highest concentration (per capita):** Arenzville, Plymouth, Nauvoo, Ashland, Bridgeport, Jacksonville, Mattoon

**Travel Across Jurisdictions:**

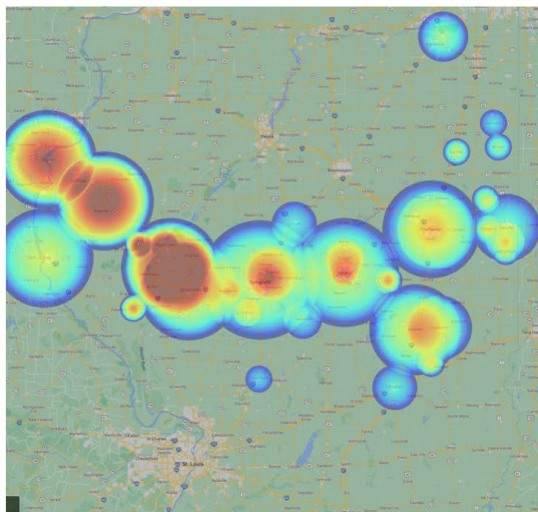
In a given 3-month period, sex providers based in **37** different states will work multiple times out of Central Illinois.

**40%** cross state lines  
**35%** based out of states

### Top Places Traveled:

- **Northern IL** (Chicago, Bloomington, Peoria, Rockford, Highland Park, Waukegan, La Salle County)
- **IN** (Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Lafayette, Bloomington, Evansville, Terre Haute)
- **WI** (Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay)
- Quad Cities, **IA & IL**
- St. Louis, **MO**
- Phoenix, **AZ**
- Carbondale, **IL**
- Nashville, **TN**

### Hot Spots in Region:



### Southern Region

**Most Common:** Carbondale, Marion, Mount Vernon, Brooklyn, Murphysboro

**Highest concentration (per capita):** Brooklyn, Opdyke, Woodlawn, Carbondale

### Travel Across Jurisdictions:

**64%** cross state lines

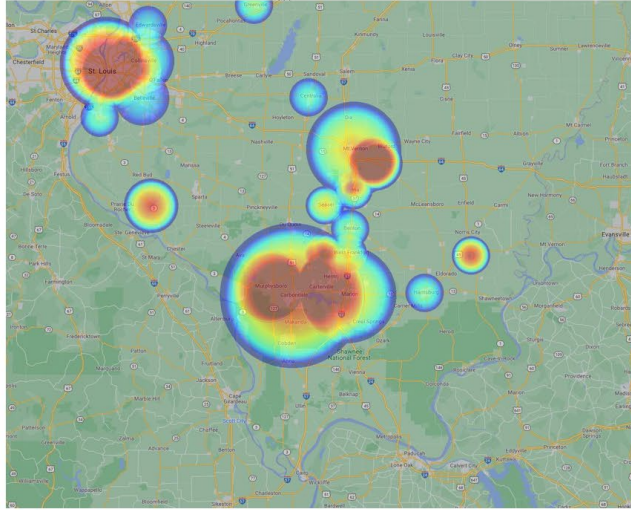
**40%** based out of states

### Top Places Traveled:

- **IL** (Chicago, Bloomington, Springfield, Moline, Decatur, Rockford, Highland Park)
- **MO** (St. Louis, Cape Girardeau)
- **IN** (Evansville, Bloomington, Indianapolis, Lafayette)
- **WI** (Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay)
- **IA** (Quad Cities, Dubuque)
- Jackson, **MS**

- Savannah, **GA**
- Advance, **MO**
- Clarksville, **TN**
- Billings, **MT**

**Hot Spots in Region:**



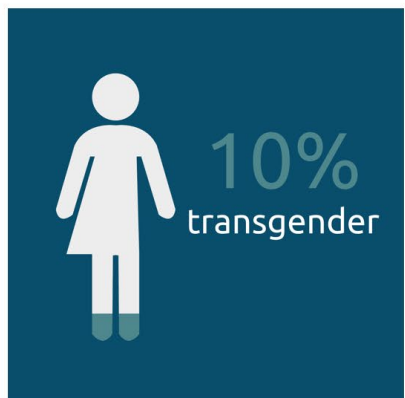
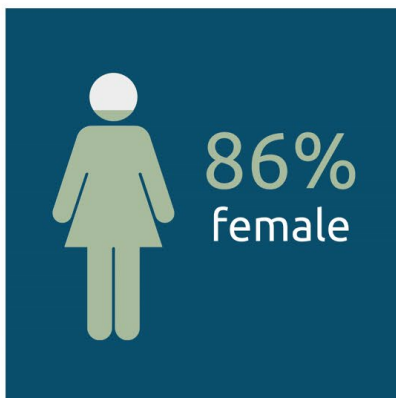
3

## The Context

### Socioeconomic Factors & Work Environment

#### Demographics

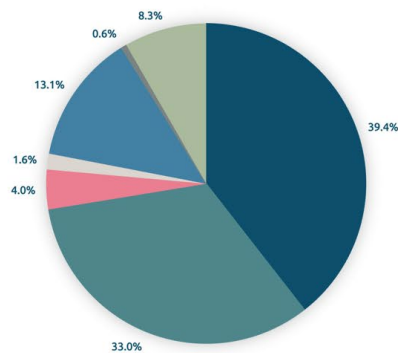
##### Gender



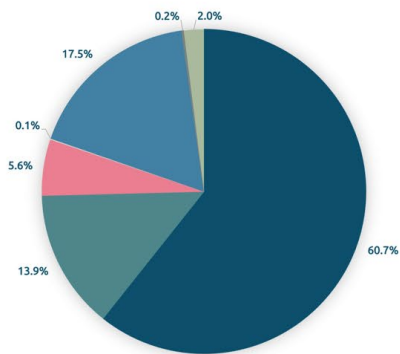
**Sex Providers in the CS Industry are overwhelmingly female**

*\*This should not be interpreted as the true proportion of these genders in the online commercial sex market since there are most certainly popular male- or transgender-specific sites that we don't scrape.*

## Race & Ethnicity



Breakdown in Our Data



Illinois 2019 Census Results

**12% of Illinois sex providers are advertised as potential foreign nationals**

✳️❤️ JUST ARRIVED ✳️❤️ ,From over the seas,here to provide you with the best❤️ ,young and sexy body,so dont miss out,come and see me❤️ !!!,NO

👩🏻 we are gorgeous sexy and young Asian girls new to America👩🏻

👩🏻 Very open minded and like to leave you happy so you will come again👩🏻

👩🏻 Girls Change Every Week👩🏻

ven a pasar un rato divertido conmigo  
no ingles

**Foreign exchange student 29 years old**

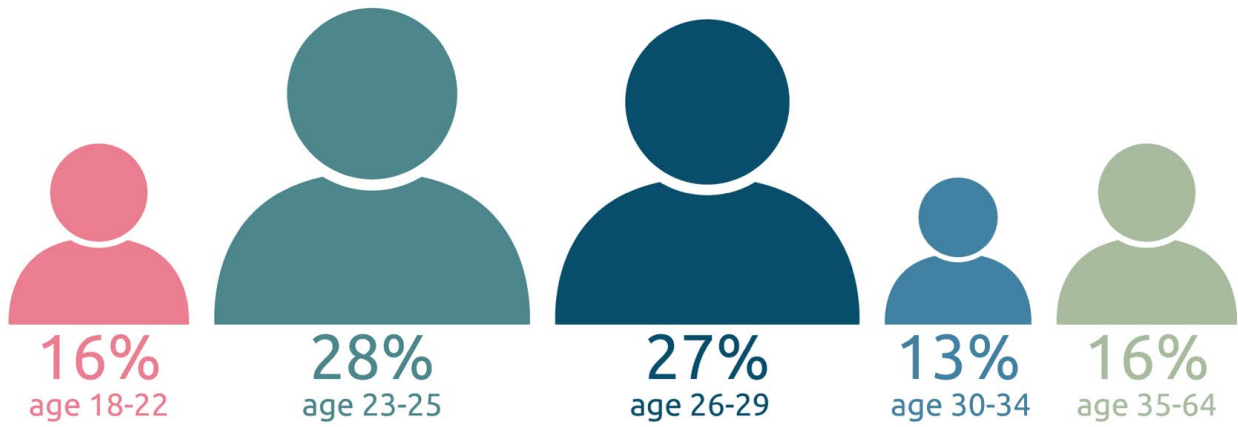
## Age

### Minimum Age Requirements by Website

- Sipsap: 18
- Skipthegames: 19
- Listcrawler: 21
- Adultsearch: 21

**6% of Illinois sex providers** have ads listed at the website's minimum age.





Posted Age Distribution of Illinois Sex Providers

👩‍🦰 newly 18!!! barely legal blonde amateur 🥰 - 21

💜💜💜 I love being Daddy's little girl 🌟🌟🌟 I'm the youngest biggest 🍆🍆🍆 freak you'll ever meet🍆

💙💙💙 but why have me tell you 🍆🍆🍆 when I can show you🍆🍆🍆

Hi my name Paris I'm 18 ..mix with Korean n black.. new at this but love sex 🍆

Indian Chocolate Doll 🍆🍆🍆 Barely Legal Nympho 🍆

**11% of Illinois sex providers are advertised using phrases emphasizing their youth.**

**i** 40% of respondents to our Illinois Sex Provider Questionnaire were either currently or formerly in the in the industry as a minor (current minors were disqualified from completing the rest of the survey since we were targeting adults). Additionally, multiple respondents estimated that as many as 20% of sex providers they know are currently under 18.

## Work Environment

**An individual's work conditions are also a key predictor of vulnerability.**

Working frequently  
(multiple buyers per day)  
at low hourly rates

...to meet basic needs.

(Survival Sex)

...to meet a quota.

(Trafficking)

- **Dangerous Services:** 11% of sex providers offer dangerous services such as services without protection or offering to do anything the client wants
- **Exploitative work schedule:** 34% of sex providers indicate that they are always available or "open 24/7"
- **Substance Use:** 27% of sex providers mention that they're open to substance use in their ads
- **Survival Sex:** We also see evidence of individuals who have clear survival indicators in their ads; these are individuals with no other viable options for meeting their survival needs, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation

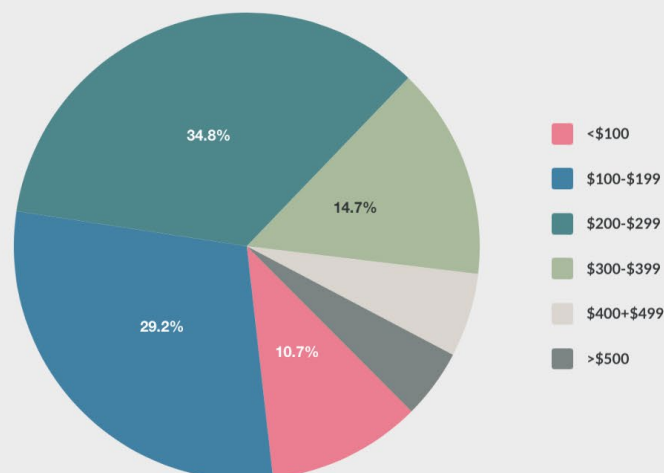
💕💕💕 **in serious need of financial help** 💕💕💕 **31 years old**

Please help me out and come see me so i don't have to live in my car again - 42

## Price

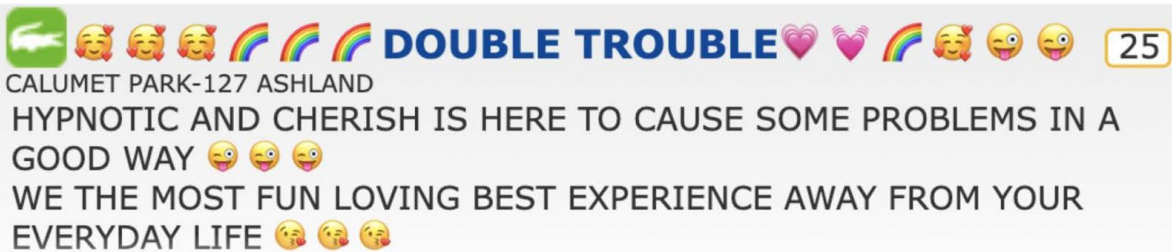
Median Hourly Rate: **\$200 per hour**














Hourly rates (for the 40% of sex providers listing prices in ads)









In our Illinois data, **more than 15%** of sex providers are connected in a network with other sex providers. And **nearly 8%** of sex providers who *aren't* in a network advertise "multiple girl specials", so this number could be even higher than what we're seeing.

## TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE 27 years old




       **DOUBLE TROUBLE**       25

CALUMET PARK-127 ASHLAND  
HYPNOTIC AND CHERISH IS HERE TO CAUSE SOME PROBLEMS IN A GOOD WAY     
WE THE MOST FUN LOVING BEST EXPERIENCE AWAY FROM YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE   

Example Ads with Multiple Girl Specials

**This can indicate the presence of a facilitator and can sometimes signal that a new recruit is being introduced / "broken in" to the industry.**

 A third of respondents to our Illinois Commercial Sex Provider Questionnaire indicated that someone else advertised on their behalf, including managers, pimps, or boyfriends. Multiple respondents estimated that as many as 50% of commercial sex providers they know are involved in the industry involuntarily (i.e. trafficked).

## 2 PEAS IN A POD College DROPOUTS

### A Little More

Hey guys, my name is Rose. I'm a bartender/waitress but I've been doing this on the side for some extra \$\$ . I was feeling kinda hopeless until my girlfriend pointed me in the direction of this site. I'm super new to this, but it's been nice meeting people and having fun so far ;) .. I'm here seeking nice POLITE gentlemen, please PLEASE no ghetto guys or jerks. I'm super sweet and don't deserve to be treated that way. My availability is totally flexible, and I'd I'm super openminded. I like what YOU like

**Hey everyone... i'm new in town buuut here to stay. i'll tell you a little about myself real quick.. i love meeting new people and enjoying life to it's fullest. i believe being in a good mood is contagious:))**

### Example Chicago-Based Network in Our Data

- 9+ young females operating out of Chicago, all advertised between the ages of 21 and 24
- Advertised as "college dropouts", "super new to this", and "new in town"
- Share phone numbers, ad syntax, and profile accounts

*Evidence of a large Central Illinois network from survey response:*

**One respondent based in Central Illinois, who began working as a sex provider at the age of 18, indicated that she has worked with ~20-25 other individuals. This respondent also noted that a pimp always writes her ads, so this is a clear example of a network with a facilitator.**



# Discussion, Findings, & Recommendations

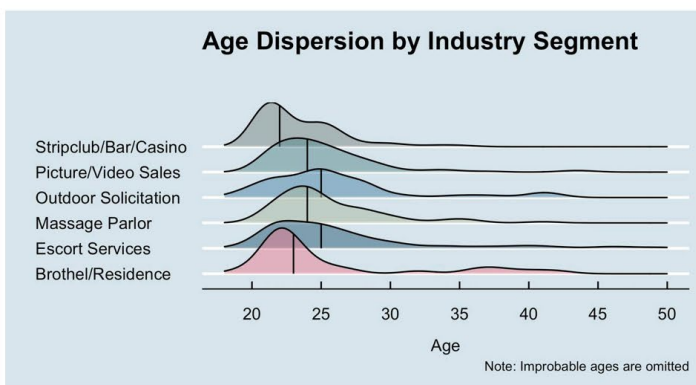
1

## Age, Entry, & Prevention

Sex buyer preferences create a market for trafficking.

- Premiums for youth & "fresh faces" create incentive for traffickers to recruit **new, younger** girls.
- The demand for "fresh faces" also causes individuals to be sold for sex in many different locales by incentivizing them to **travel for higher profits**.

Age dispersion by industry segment can help us consider early intervention strategies.



- **Across all industry segments, the market skews young, with most sex providers in the range of 18 to mid-20's**
- **Strip club/bar/casino segment has the youngest median age, followed by brothel/residences**

2

## Dynamics of a Market in Constant Evolution

The Industry is in constant flux.

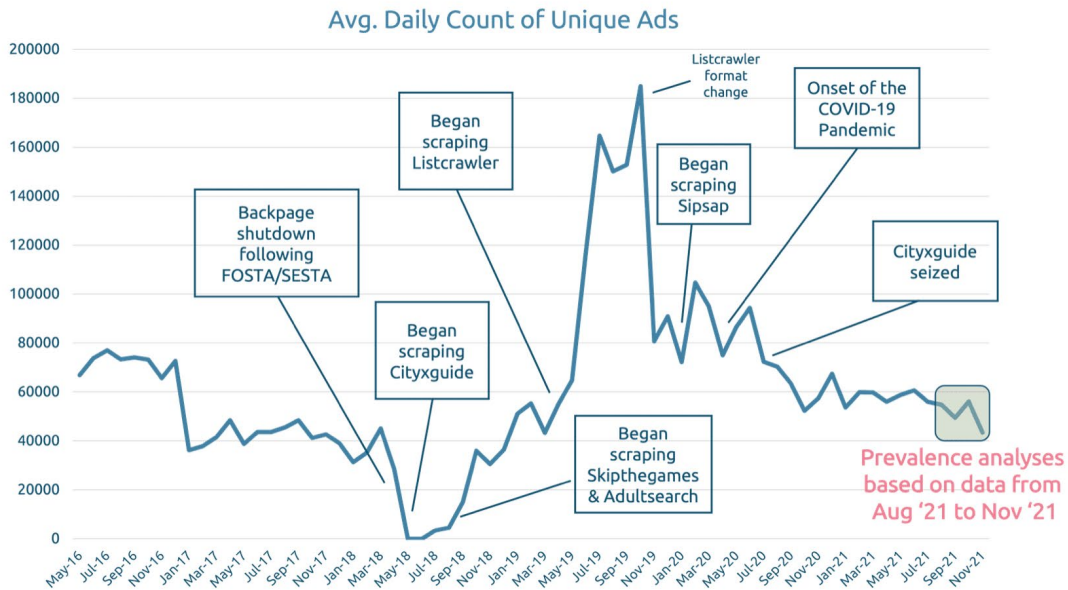
2010: Craigslist ⇨ Backpage

2015: Credit cards ⇨ Bitcoin & cash

2017: Backpage adult section ⇨ Backpage dating section

2018: Backpage ⇨ Dozens of sites overseas

2020: Massage Parlors & Hotels ⇨ Web cam picture / video sales



### Effects of COVID-19

- Decrease in demand due to financial troubles, safety concerns, or decreased business travel
- New individuals entering the industry for the first time via web cam work or picture/video sales
- Sex providers having to work more frequently to make the same amount of money due to this oversaturation of supply

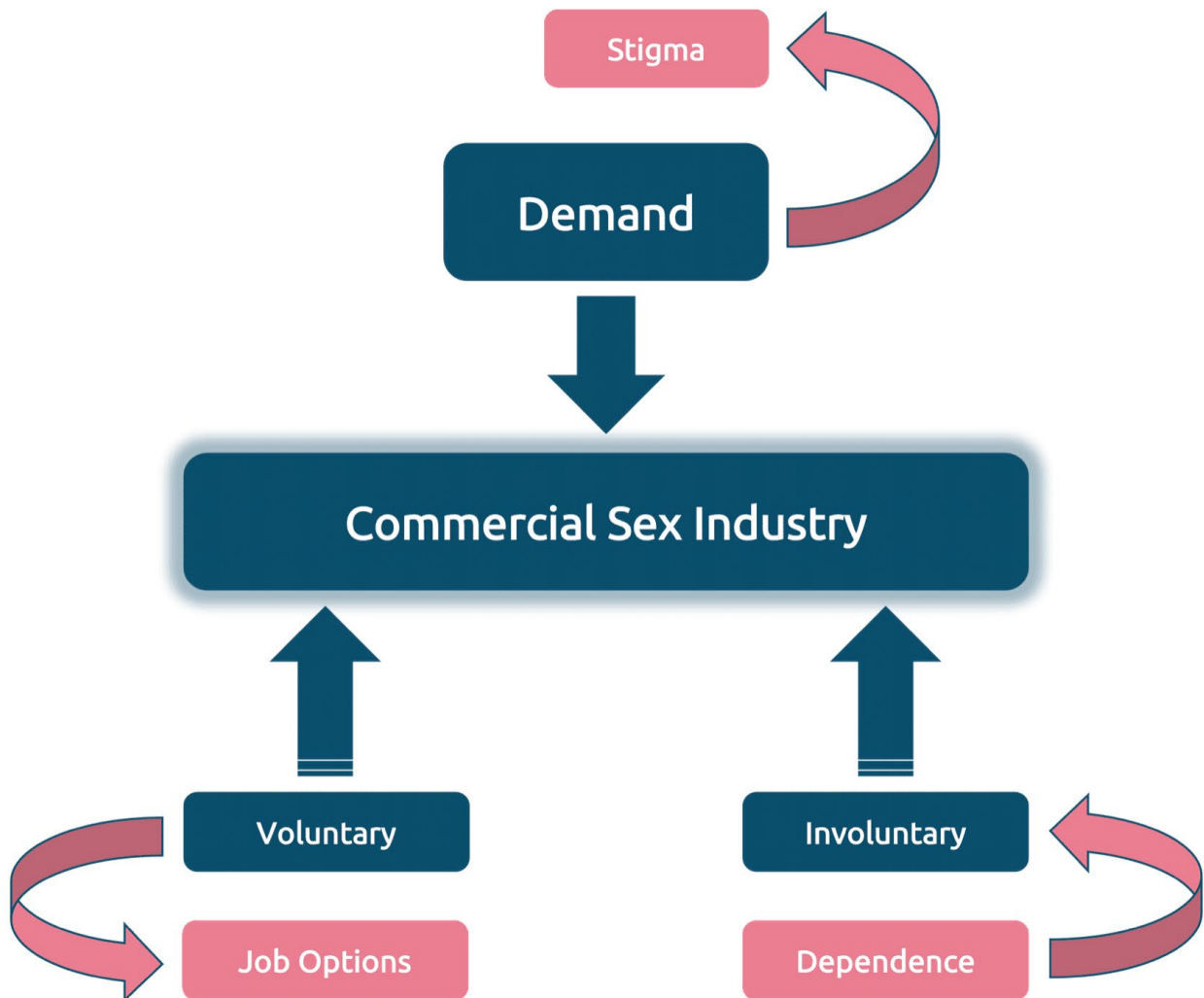
Stuck inside thanks to the Coronavirus? No worries you can still have a good time and practice social distancing with my pictures and videos! 🥰

\*\*Side note, I work in a restaurant that is currently closed due to this craziness so please help a girl out!!

Coronavirus is killing me needing to make a little money soooo I have pictures and vids for sale, hit me up for prices also I promise you like them 🥰🥰🥰 I'm a local that moved off but I'm back till the world goes back to normal,

### How the industry works

- **Demand for commercial sex:** influenced by stigma and legal penalties
- **Supply of voluntary commercial sex:** influenced by income from sex work outweighing the risks in the absence of better job opportunities
- **Supply of involuntary commercial sex:** influenced by the level of voluntary supply relative to demand



All of these areas of the market need to be addressed together to prevent unintended consequences.

## What This Means for Anti-Trafficking Efforts

### The Futility of Venue Targeting

**Targeting specific venues addresses only one element of the market, and often leads to displacement, chaos, and more concealed activity rather than decreased prevalence.**

#### Examples:

- FOSTA/SESTA bill Backpage targeting online venues: Shutting down websites scatters the online market and leads traffickers to adopt more creative methods, making sex trafficking even less identifiable.
- Targeting hotels and other public spaces can cause CSA to move to private, indoor locations.

**☆ HOTELS & OUTCALLS have too many problems right now!! ☆ I am all set up in this safe spot!**  
**☆ MADISON - 20**

### The Importance of Services

#### The importance of substance abuse & mental health resources

Even if trafficking survivors have access to economic opportunities, challenges with mental health and substance use could leave them at continued risk of exploitation.



### Advertising across multiple domains

- 13% of Illinois sex providers in a given month are advertised on more than one domain.
- Popular domains in Illinois, all with servers based in the Netherlands:
  - Skipthegames (45% of our data)
  - Listcrawler / megapersonals (39% of our data)
  - Adultsearch (10% of our data)
- Respondents to our Illinois Sex Provider Questionnaire mentioned the following websites that they've advertised on: *Skipthegames, Adultsearch, Backpage, Onlyfans, USA Sex Guide, Tryst, Tinder, Grindr, and Craigslist*

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### Virtual services as a side gig

For example, Onlyfans, a content subscription service based in London, continues to grow in popularity. Around 5% of Illinois ads now include an Onlyfans link.

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### Communication & Vetting

- Trend toward use of burner phones; rising popularity of *TextNow* app to cycle through numbers
- Increasing technology to mask and decentralize CS activity
  - For example: *Skipthegames* has real phone numbers hidden behind a Captcha.
- Increasing use of apps like *Facetime* or *Snapchat* for verification/vetting processes
  - For example: More than 5% of ads provide a *Snapchat* handle.

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### Payment Methods

In our data, 39% of Illinois ads mention **CashApp** and 21% mention **Venmo or PayPal**.

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**Collaboration and information sharing with other states and across jurisdictions is critical, especially between:**

- **Regional hubs**
- **Private and public agencies**

## Closing the Identification Gap

### What's Needed

- 1 **System of consistent intelligence gathering & source development for labor & sex trafficking.** (Leads, tips, & reports can & should come from data, the community, those in the industry, investigators, etc., but this is a system that needs tending to.)
- 2 **Ongoing triage of high-risk situations** for investigative focus & determining what we don't yet know.
- 3 **Long-term investigations seeking to refine our understanding of the network** without relying on victim cooperation.
- 4 **Connecting potential victims to services** where services come first without expectation of disclosure.

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**It takes a community working together.**

"The likelihood of... [survivors] being able to come forward...it's a lot more removed when they know across the board that they're not going to be held legally responsible for that...because that's one of the threats that we hear all the time, 'well, you're prostituting yourself, so you're going to go to jail' and...[survivors] see it happen, and we see it happen a lot."

NE Survivor