

Cast

COALITION TO
ABOLISH SLAVERY
& TRAFFICKING

IMPACT REPORT 2023

25 Years of Justice, Healing and Inclusion for Survivors of Human Trafficking

COALITION TO ABOLISH
SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING
CELEBRATING **25**
YEARS

From our CEO



For a quarter of a century, Cast has been ending human trafficking through education, advocacy, and empowering survivors. It's hard to believe that in 1998, there was no federal legislation protecting survivors or the targeted efforts we see today at local, state, and national levels. This is also my 20th anniversary at Cast. When I started, Cast was a small organization with a big vision and today we are a leader in service delivery and an advocate for groundbreaking policies and legislation.

Over the last year, Cast served 1,273 survivors and their families – a total of 10,237 hours. We took 1,751 hotline calls and trained 10,431 people on human trafficking. We convinced the state of California to increase its support for human trafficking service providers by \$7 million a year, and helped to pass bills that will protect survivors better, such as the right to an advocate. The way we focus on survivor healing and inclusion in the pursuit of justice makes Cast special. This Impact Report dives into what these mean to us.

I want to thank everyone who has brought us to this 25-year milestone: donors, supporters, policymakers; every person who attended a Cast training or who talked to others about what we do. I especially want to thank the thousands of survivors who trusted Cast when it may have been difficult to trust anyone.

We still face many obstacles like funding cuts and political uncertainty. We can be sure that for many years to come, organizations like Cast will be necessary to help survivors escape trafficking and heal. We are working to end human trafficking but as long as it is still happening, we will be here.

Kay Buck, CEO

1,273 Survivors and family members served

1,751 Hotline calls

100% Of Cast graduates have safe housing

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About Cast

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

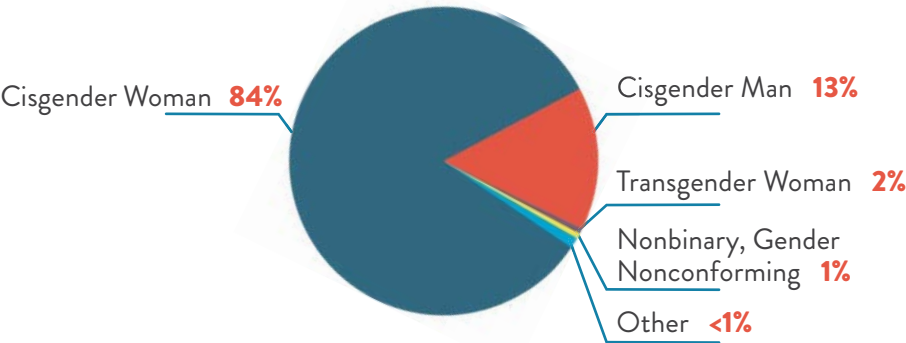
Human trafficking is the exploitation of human beings through force, fraud or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex or forced labor. Anyone under 18 who performs a commercial sex act is considered a victim of human trafficking.

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

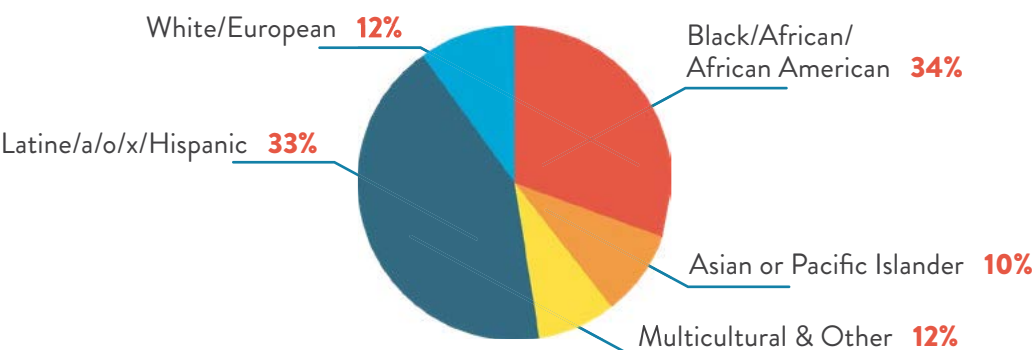
Who We Serve

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

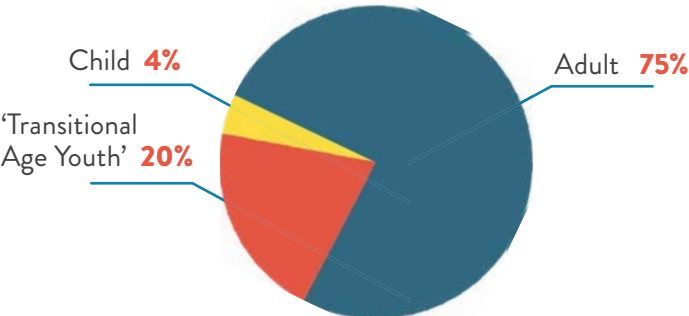
Gender



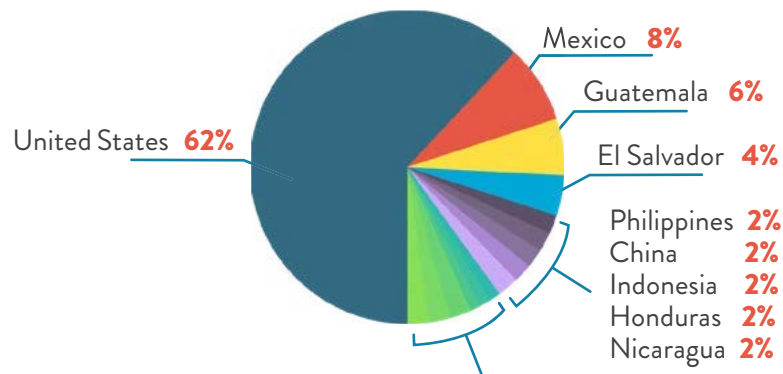
Race/Ethnicity



Age

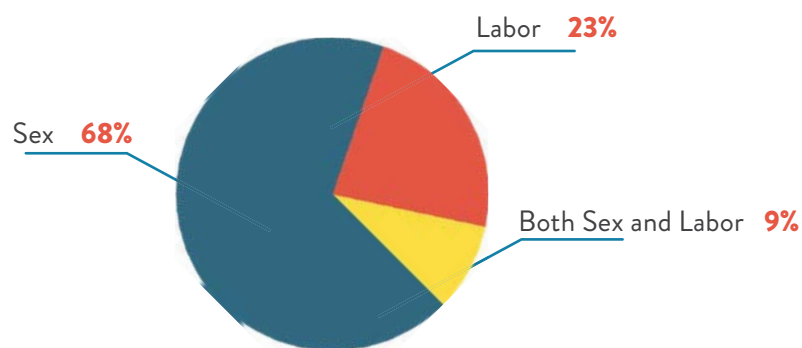


Nationality



Angola	<1%	Pakistan	<1%	Brazil	<1%	Ukraine	<1%
Bolivia	<1%	Sierra Leone	<1%	Chile	<1%	Venezuela	<1%
Cote d'Ivoire	<1%	South Africa	<1%	Colombia	<1%	Belize	1%
Egypt	<1%	Sri Lanka	<1%	Cuba	<1%	Cambodia	1%
Eritrea	<1%	Turks and Caicos		India	<1%	Ethiopia	1%
Finland	<1%	Islands	<1%	Italy	<1%	Russia	1%
Hungary	<1%	Uganda	<1%	Malaysia	<1%	Canada	1%
Latvia	<1%	United Kingdom	<1%	Peru	<1%		
Netherlands	<1%	United States Minor		Taiwan	<1%		
Nigeria	<1%	Outlying Islands	<1%	Thailand	<1%		

Sex or Labor Trafficking



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

What Justice Means to Us

“ There’s individual justice where people grieve what has happened to you, and steps are taken to make it right. However, there is also a collective justice beyond that. Even if I get what I feel is justice for my situation, that’s a very shallow justice. ”

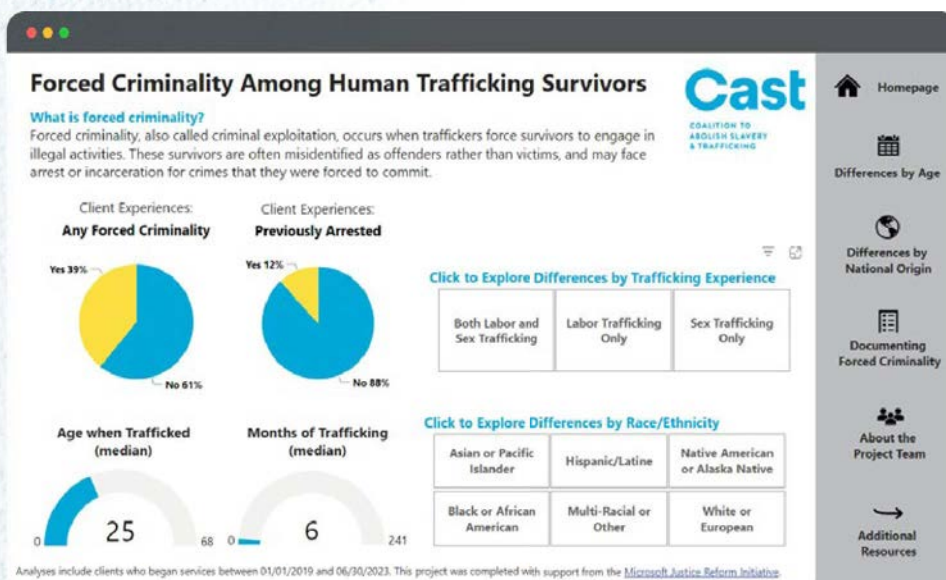
– **Chris Ash**, Cast Survivor Leadership Program Manager

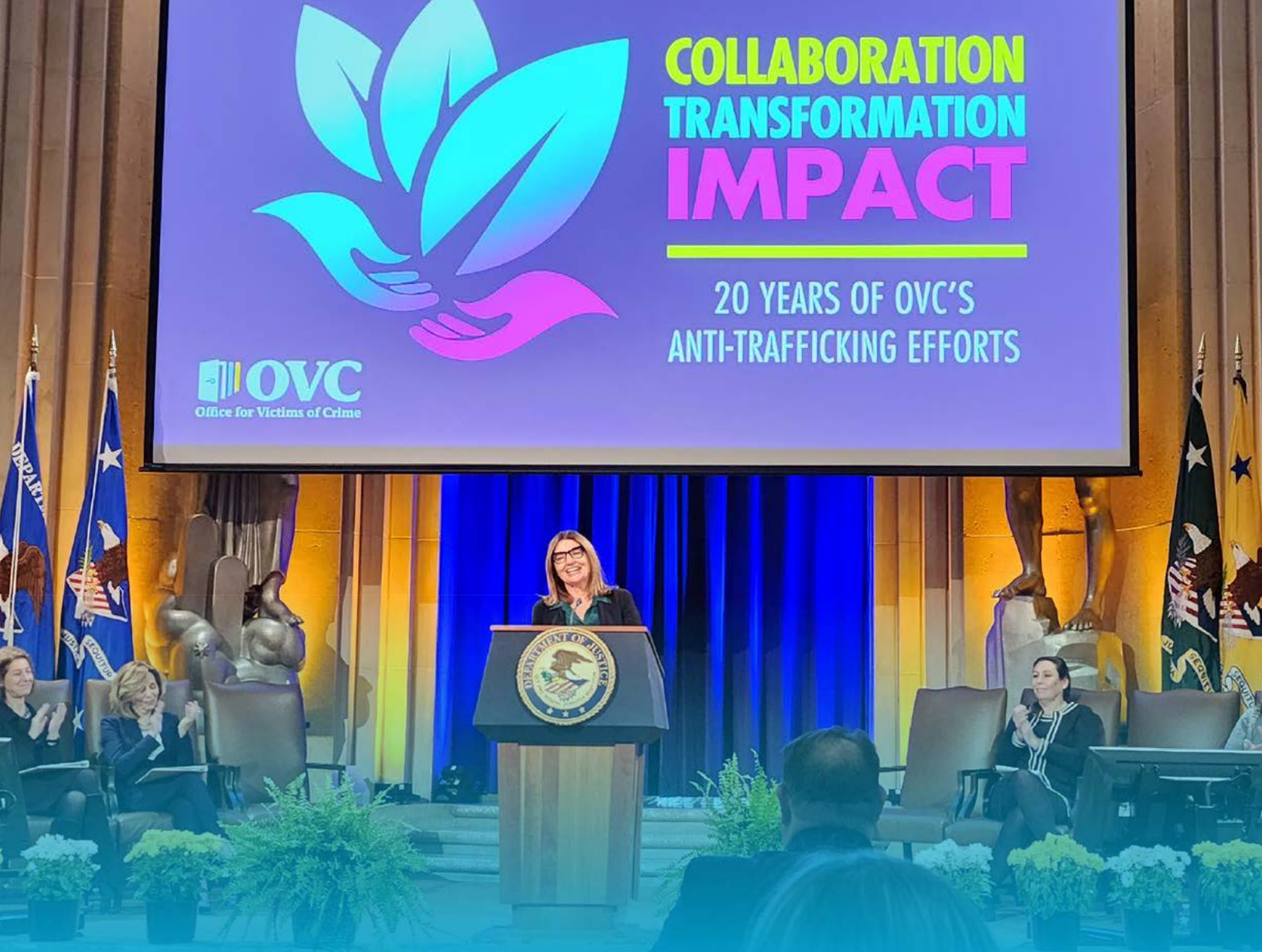
Our collective responses to human trafficking should also advance the end of human trafficking. The criminal legal system is often focused on punishing offenders such as traffickers. However, our clients have said they believe justice goes beyond just punishment: true justice is achieved by centering survivors in our services.

WHAT WE DID → Supported by the Urban Institute and Microsoft Justice Reform Initiative, Cast was one of 25 organizations from around the country chosen to leverage data and technology to advance racial equity in policing, prosecution, and prevention. Our project focused on ‘forced criminality’: when traffickers

force victims to commit crimes like theft, often leading to criminal records that jeopardize well-being. We created an [interactive dashboard](#) with analysis of our client data, guidelines for practitioners interested in collecting this data, and free resources.

Interactive dashboard on forced criminality, available at [castla.org](#).





Cast CEO Kay Buck speaks at the federal Office for Victims of Crime 20th anniversary celebration. Cast was invited to speak as one of the longest-standing agencies working on human trafficking in the country. Photo: Office for Victims of Crime

“ Justice for survivors is giving them the ability to take back their lives. We have goals for our clients - but it’s at their own pace, their choice, and at their discretion. ”

– Alexis Quintana, Cast Intensive Care Case Manager

WIN → The State of California approved an additional \$7 million per year for human trafficking service providers in California.

This request was authored by Assemblymember Miguel Santiago and sponsored by Cast.

Working to Prevent Human Trafficking

“ Preventing human trafficking is about addressing its root causes like systemic discrimination and poverty, lack of affordable housing, xenophobia, lack of access to education, job opportunities and income security; interpersonal and community violence, as well as mass displacement and incarceration. ”

– Nagwa Ibrahim, Cast Director of Legal Services

Even after victims escape, many are burdened with criminal records for crimes they were forced to commit. In addition, some do not have immigration status, which made them vulnerable to being re-trafficked or losing their immigration status after escaping. Cast’s legal services respond to these challenges, like clearing survivors’ wrongful criminal records and applying for immigration relief - which can help prevent survivors from being re-trafficked.

WHAT WE DID → Over the last year, we had a 100% success rate in T visa applications and requests to clear criminal records.

WHAT WE DID → In partnership with the LA County Department of Children and Family Services, Cast trained over 3,881 people (total attendance over 6,300) to recognize and respond to commercial sexual exploitation of children and labor trafficking of minors. By raising awareness of human trafficking, we are preventing it.

Cast’s Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) team lead our national efforts to train legal and social service providers who are working with survivors of human trafficking. With a focus on race

equity and trauma-informed advocacy and as leading experts in the field, the TTA team trained 6,550 attorneys and social service providers and provided technical assistance to 302 people in 36 states on anti-trafficking advocacy in legal areas like immigration, civil, criminal victim witness representation and criminal re-entry. To further ensure justice for survivors through centering advocacy based on prevention, healing and inclusion, the team also published advisories and guides on topics including cultural humility, empowered decision making for survivors, T visas, and the Debt Bondage Repair Act.

“ I just want to thank you profusely for this training. It’s the best I’ve seen, seven years into the practice. ”

– TTA training attendee

“Survivors often face an uphill battle, with systems that seem to be set up against them. This can be really discouraging. However, having strong advocates who have their own lived experiences can help them better empathize with their clients and go to bat for them.”

– **Lori Carpenter**, Cast Hummingbird Haven Emergency Shelter Program Manager

A new path to justice: Cast's Impact Litigation Unit

The number of civil cases being taken up against traffickers in the US is shockingly low. Survivors don't have the means and many litigators don't know about human trafficking. As a result, criminal cases are rare, companies traffic people with impunity, survivors are denied justice including monetary damages, and Americans remain unaware of how the products they buy – even their food – are a result of forced labor.

To tackle this, Cast has launched an Impact Litigation unit of attorneys and lived experience experts who will be filing first-of-their-kind lawsuits against companies in California accused of trafficking. We aim to be a national expert in civil litigation on human trafficking and to create legal precedents that will make companies think twice before exploiting workers.

In collaboration with civil rights firms like Hadsell Stormer Renick and Dai, we are working on three investigations into potential labor trafficking cases involving farmworkers, and also teachers working in public schools. To maximize our impact, we're also training civil litigators on human trafficking, since they may already be unknowingly working with trafficking victims.

Preventing human trafficking and seeking justice for it requires going after the systems that are perpetrating it – and shutting them down.

Inclusion: Our Doors Stay Open

Facing judgmental service providers can discourage survivors from seeking help, and survivors' trauma can make staying on track with services hard. Strict rules and lack of choice in services can replicate the conditions of trafficking, disrupting healing. Since marginalization and exclusion fuel human trafficking and hurt survivors who are ready to heal, inclusion is central to Cast's work:

- We are one of the only anti-trafficking organizations to offer emergency response, case management, shelter and legal services to survivors all 'under one roof'.
- Our services are open to survivors of all forms of human trafficking (sex and labor) and of all ages, ethnicities, genders and nationalities – tailoring services to survivors' individual needs and respecting their choices.
- We are informed by survivors' lived experience of trafficking and leadership.
- Our doors are always open for clients to return if they had to take a break from services. We will always answer their calls.

100%

of graduates have
safe housing

PASSED →

Right to an Advocate (SB 376) grants survivors in California the right to an advocate and a support person of their choosing to be present during the criminal legal process – just like victims of other crimes.

This bill was authored by Senator Susan Rubio and co-sponsored by Cast and Community Solutions.

LOCAL NEWS

Newsom signs law protecting undocumented crime victims from deportation

KTLA 5 News // October 10, 2023

PASSED →

Immigrant Rights Act (AB 1261) defines which victims are eligible for different visas, helping immigrant survivors of human trafficking avoid deportation and have access to the services they deserve.

This bill was authored by Assemblymember Miguel Santiago and co-sponsored by Cast, LA County District Attorney's Office, Public Counsel, Immigrant Legal Resource Center and LA Center For Law and Justice.



Cast hosted a [press conference](#) in Sacramento to announce our annual policy agenda, featuring lived experience activist and former Cast client, Lyresh (second from left). Photo: Cast

Cultivating Survivor Leadership and Survivor-Led Policy Advocacy

Cast supports survivors beyond our services, and many graduates return to work or contract for Cast across our work, including giving us feedback on our policies. Survivor leaders have first-hand experience of the trauma that potential clients have experienced, helping to build trust with potential and new clients.

“ I have become better at supporting other survivors like myself who come through our doors. I think that’s a very unique component to Cast. ”

– **Dunia Flores-Zelaya**, Cast Survivor Advocate

Cast’s Survivor Leadership Program includes the National Survivor Network (NSN) and Los

Angeles-based Resilient Voices. These networks allow survivors to connect and develop skills to inform the public about human trafficking and bring about change.

The NSN equips and empowers survivors to lead policy advocacy using public health and human rights approaches to human trafficking and supports them in practicing community-based organizing strategies. **WHAT WE DID →** In September 2023, the NSN organized and led a [congressional briefing](#) to combat misinformation about human trafficking and carceral responses from Congress - attendees remarked that it was impactful and novel to hear from survivors who are also policy experts. The NSN also successfully campaigned against a federal bill, ensuring the National Human Trafficking Hotline did not become a tip line for law enforcement.

What NSN members are saying

“ ... [it] feel[s] like a safe space to be yourself. In the short time being [an] NSN member, my confidence has increased and it's great to have their support, understanding, and advice. ”

“ Thank you for placing priority on centering marginalized identities and creating safety. I am so thankful for the NSN and all the positive changes over the last year! ”

“ It's already beautifully impacted my emotional well-being as a survivor of sex trafficking. ”

WHAT WE DID → In honor of NSN and Freedom Network USA member Deborah Pembroke, the NSN received the inaugural Pembroke Award for Survivor Inclusion in 2023.

Resilient Voices members have increased their financial literacy through new laptops and

classes, and held wellness and social events. They attended Cast's first Client Graduation since the COVID-19 pandemic, to celebrate survivors who have reached a level of stability to where they no longer need services.

Fantayjah

Cast Graduate and Youth Program Intern

What were your first impressions of Cast?

"I felt safe. I liked the fact that the office was confidential, so that settled some of my worries about receiving support. **I just remember Miriam, my case manager. She's my favorite person.** Miriam is amazing because she's consistent: she always shows up, she never gave up on me, she always believed in me. When I think of Cast, I think of Miriam. She helped me get my first apartment and enroll my daughter into childcare. She presented herself as a human and she treats the whole person. She's not judgmental. I was inconsistent a lot of the time about meeting with Miriam, but she was very consistent. She would always follow up with me and send me resources regardless of my interaction with her. **I think that is a reflection of Cast: being non-judgmental and providing consistency and follow-up is essential.**"

Tell us about Cast's Youth Program

"I like the fact that you're able to gain support from case management and a sense of community. You know you're not alone when you go to the youth activities. It's exposed me to things I haven't been able to do before. We've done everything - like pottery; we made pizza during the pandemic when we couldn't come together. The activities in the Youth Program help survivors gain different skills. I think that it's empowering, especially the hands-on things that

we do. They've exposed me to a lot of things. People were always asking me, 'What do you like to do?' and I was like, 'I don't know'. It took a lot of doing to figure out what I like and a lot of that doing came from Cast's youth activities.

I love that I've been able to go full circle by being an intern and providing the support that I received, and also to be a friendly, familiar face because I'm not too far out of the program."

What makes Cast special?

"You provide a safe space and nonjudgmental support to people in different stages and center case management and legal services. A lot of a lot of other places would just refer you to somewhere else. At Cast, you have a one-stop shop. You can talk to your lawyer and your case manager in the same place. Many organizations don't want to provide that extra support, like driving people to their appointments - they don't realize that a lot of people start out needing that additional support. You never know: the bus might be triggering for somebody. I can see how somebody fresh from their trauma can be triggered by just trying to do basic things. **I think it's lovely how you support people in whatever space they're in.**"

“ For the justice system to actually be just, it would mean investing in more rehabilitation services rather than just policing. Rehabilitation is a really big part of justice because if you can’t treat the whole person, they’re not going to be better. You can’t just throw somebody in a cell and treat them like an animal and think they’re going to be better. ”



How did Cast help you get to where you want to go?

“I was referred to Qualified, which is a career development program for women who have been trafficked or are at risk. As a result, I gained skills to enter the workforce. Then my mental health provider referred me for a role as an Executive Administrative Assistant.”

What are you doing now?

“I sit on a lived experience board of the Homeless Youth Forum of Los Angeles for the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. I am one of two representatives for District 15 on the Olivia E. Mitchell Los Angeles City Youth Council. But primarily I’m just being a mom right now. I’m gaining more stability living in my home and making my house a home. And I’m excited about the future.”

What are your hopes for the future?

“I plan to start a nonprofit called Enjoying Becoming because I hope everyone can enjoy becoming what they never knew they wanted to be. Because I never thought I’d be here today. I’m able to be my authentic self and be accepted. I want to do non-traditional intervention and prevention of human trafficking for youth at risk for trafficking, because I know how high that risk is.”

What does justice mean to you?

“I think justice is guaranteed income for victims and survivors.” A lot of people don’t know they are being labor trafficked because everybody around them works under the table. They don’t realize that they’re not making minimum wage.

For the justice system to actually be just, it would mean investing in more rehabilitative services rather than just policing. Rehabilitation is a really big part of justice because if you can’t treat the whole person, they’re not going to be better. You can’t just throw somebody in a cell and treat them like an animal and think they’re going to be better.”

The Path to Healing

Cast pursues justice beyond the confines of the criminal legal system. While prosecuting traffickers is part of the quest for justice, it does not help survivors regain their mental health or cope with the financial and legal burdens they face. Cast has a survivor-centered concept of justice, supporting clients to heal and rebuild their lives.

Our Services Improve Mental Health

Survivors of human trafficking suffer from serious physical and mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We regularly assess our clients' health needs throughout their time with us and track whether they are still experiencing PTSD, and connect them to therapists. **WHAT WE DID →** This year we analyzed five years of client data and published a [briefing note](#), showing that our services have a huge impact on survivors' wellbeing. **Between the time they started and finished Cast services, the number of clients who met the criteria for PTSD dropped by 47%.** We are sharing our findings with service partners and encouraging them to screen for PTSD at the start and end of services. Further, Cast is expanding our partnerships with therapists so we can expand mental health services for our clients.

PASSED → [Civil Actions](#) (SB727) provides a path to financial freedom for trafficking survivors who have endured financial abuse. Survivors now have better access to financial relief and can dispute their forced debt with credit reporting agencies. Through a similar bill, our clients have won nearly \$590,000 in compensation since 2020.

This bill was authored by Senator Monique Limon and co-sponsored by organizations including Cast, Western Center on Law and Poverty and LA Center for Law and Justice.



Liliana Galdamez, Cast Senior Case Manager, with a Cast graduate.



“I was in foster care and you would assume I had a safe home, but but for many years, I didn’t. I always ended up having to leave and go look for how I was going to eat and sleep.”

When Amber arrived in LA, she was trying to get as far as possible from an abusive husband and left her children with her mother.

“I was in my early twenties and I was from the South. I didn’t know that sex trafficking was really a thing. I thought it was only in the movies.”

“If I had my own money, I would probably never have ended up in that situation.”

– Amber

When I came out here, I didn’t have anywhere to go. I started looking up Craigslist ads for roommates. One didn’t last because I realized the roommate wanted something more, which was sex. So, I left. I had a rental car, no money and I was running out of gas.”

With nowhere to go or sleep, Amber walked into a wig store in Hollywood and struck up a conversation with a woman in there.

“She asked, ‘What’s wrong?’ She told me she had some friends who could help me, that they’re great people. She said they helped other girls get stabilized, go to school, and get their own places. I thought, no one is going to intentionally hurt me.”

Amber didn’t know the woman was acting as a scout. She introduced Amber to her friends. One of them was warm and welcoming to Amber, telling her the group was like a family. After her experiences with foster care and domestic violence, the idea of having a family unit with people to take care of her was almost too good to be true. “She said, ‘you’re with the safest people in LA.’”

But it was a lie. She tricked Amber into thinking they were driving to a club and took her phone and all her ID cards from her, saying she might lose them. It was only when Amber saw women in the area waving to cars and getting into them that Amber finally realized what was happening. “Everything clicked.”

The people exploiting Amber tried to get her to open a bank account, likely to commit financial fraud. Amber’s mother began calling constantly but Amber could only speak in code. Fed up with how little money she was making for them, the traffickers eventually told her to leave. “I just remember thinking I was going to get shot walking out the door, because a man was right there with his gun. But it didn’t happen.”

She sped in her car and found the police. “I was willing to tell them everything I knew, but one of them was aggressive to me. I got so scared. The first thing that went through my mind was ‘he knows these people and he’s going to tell them where I am.’”

Amber ended up between domestic violence shelters. At one point, she was hospitalized for

PTSD and lost custody of her children. When she realized she was close to where her traffickers were, someone told her to call Cast. **“Cast got me a taxi to the emergency shelter. I loved the house.” At the shelter, Amber received therapy. Her Cast case manager helped her with transportation to her security job, visitation with her children and advocated for her to be placed in family-based housing, where she ultimately gained permanent housing.**



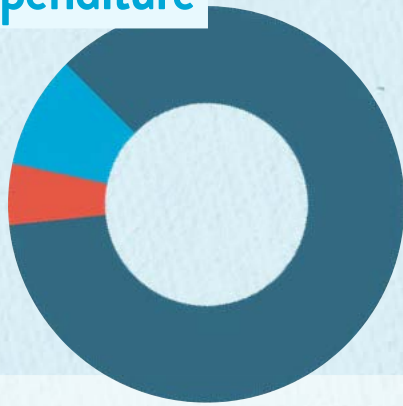
Amber; inset, with her fiancé, Ryan. Photo: Cast

“When I got out of my situation, I felt failed by the justice system. Laws have to change and victims are not the ones that need to be prosecuted.”

Today, Amber is happily engaged to her partner and is writing a book on human trafficking based on her life, with the message that survivors deserve love and are lovable. She is also creating a coloring book for women of color that she wants to be a resource for agencies serving survivors. “These kids need something that’s going to give them hope.”

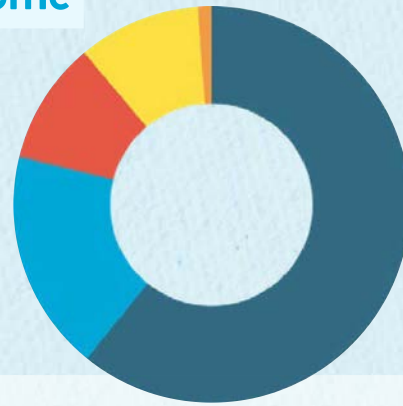
Governance

Expenditure



Programs	86%
Fundraising	5%
Administration	9%

Income



Government	61%
Foundations	10%
Individuals	10%
Other	1%
In-Kind	18%

* To be confirmed in our 2023 Financial Statement

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In memoriam: **Butch Schuman** and **Anna Innis**, board members who we will always remember.

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Platinum
Transparency
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Candid.

Front cover: Cast graduate
and Youth Intern, Fantayjah.
Photo: Cast/Katherine
Sheehan

Back cover: Cast staff and
survivors at the annual Walk
for Freedom in Hollywood.
Photos: Cast

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