

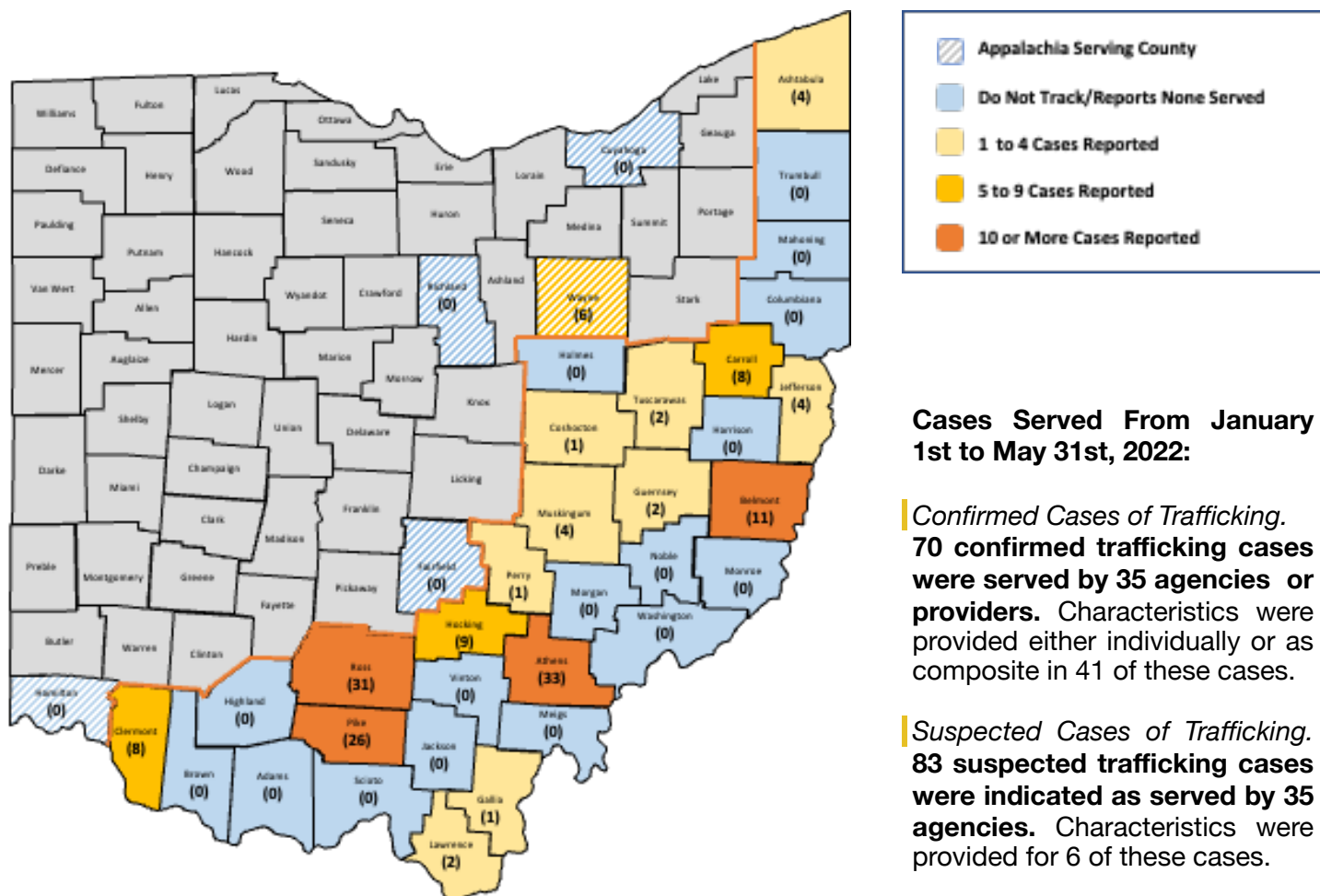
First Interim Report of Findings from the Appalachian Ohio Human Trafficking Prevalence Study

Thank you to all! As the Foundation's for Appalachian Ohio's inaugural Pillar Fellow, Christi Scott Bartman has partnered with the Ohio Network of Children's Advocacy Centers (ONCAC) to establish baseline data on how many young people are either trafficked or at high risk of being trafficked in Appalachian Ohio. This data will provide a rough baseline of trafficking cases to identify potential missing populations, begin to measure prevalence of familial trafficking, assess the role drug use plays in trafficking, construct case profiles to facilitate identification of future cases, and examine what response strategies may be most effective based upon a regional needs assessment. This work will have a profound impact on how we move forward to serve this population in the future.

This initial report captured data from 35 providers and agencies across Appalachian Ohio. Based on these responses, the majority provide or state that they could provide services to survivors of human trafficking (83%). Around 17% of responding agencies/providers reported that they do not track these cases (n=6) or are uncertain if they have served any individuals who have been trafficked (n=7). In this report the services provided by this network of providers is compiled and summarized.

A total of 153 cases were reported from January 1st to May 31st, 2022. In-depth profiles were provided on 47 cases with some profiles representing a composite of more than one case.

Map 1: Q1-Total Reported Suspected and Confirmed Human Trafficking Cases



Appalachian Ohio: Survivor Case Profiles and Summary

Survivor Case Demographics: Figure 1: Type of Exploitation: (n=47)

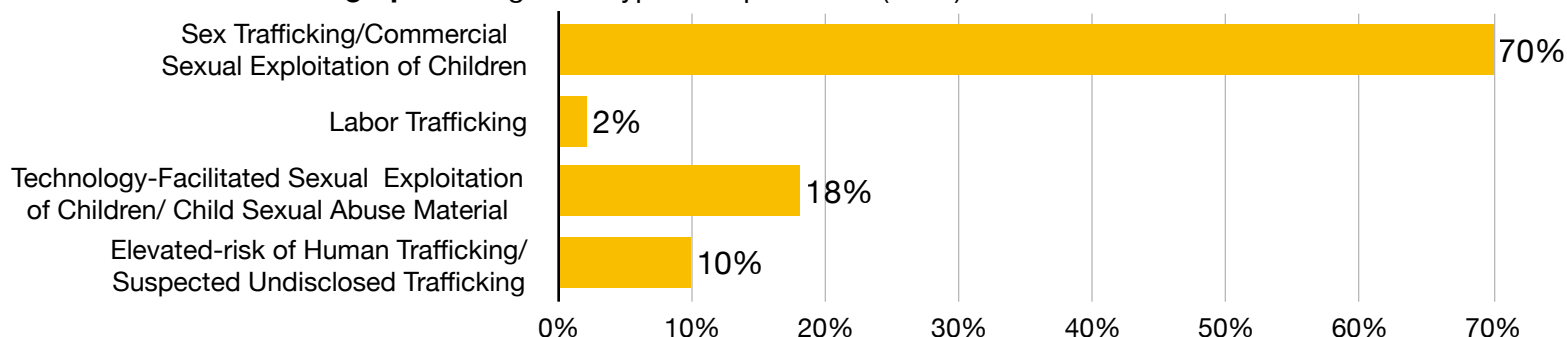


Figure 2: Age of Individual (n=41)

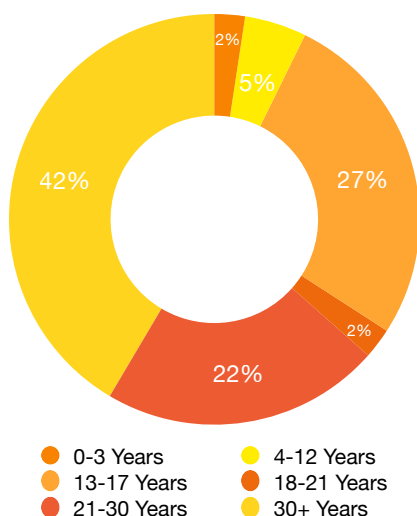
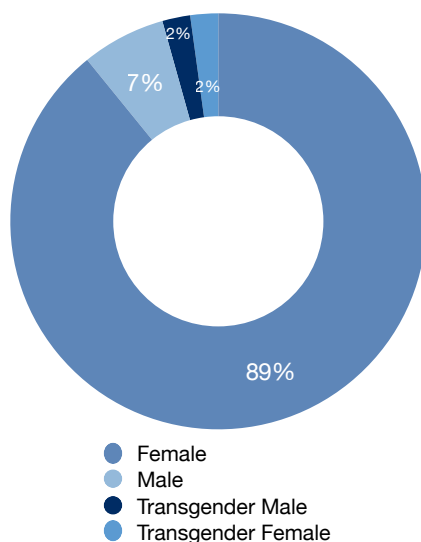


Figure 3: Gender of Individual (n=46)



Training to Identify Trafficking. Among the types of exploitation most commonly suspected or identified (see Figure 1), sex trafficking and commercial exploitation of children remain the most common accounting for 70% of all cases. This may be due to increased general awareness of this trafficking type. Similarly systems of intervention throughout Ohio were largely developed initially with a focus on sex trafficking as it has only been in recent years that child trafficking, labor trafficking, and the increased use of technology based exploitation have gained more attention.

In 18% of all cases responding agencies reported the often concurrent use of technologies (social media, cam sites, etc.) as a key component in confirmed sex trafficking cases. This may be common in these cases however, following the peak of the pandemic increased emphasis has been placed on the possible use of online technology to groom and exploit individuals. Further feedback is needed as to whether training is available throughout the Appalachian area.

Only 10% of cases where profiles were provided consisted of suspected cases. There are two possible explanations for the lower reported rate of suspected cases. First, and ideally, it is possible there is sufficient training that most potential trafficking cases seen by providers eventually find sufficient evidence to confirm trafficking is occurring. Alternatively, it is possible that only cases with clear evidence and disclosures are flagged as confirmed trafficking cases. In such cases further training may be recommended to help respondent set a common threshold for confirmation and develop skills to identify less overt but significant indicators of elevated risk or undisclosed trafficking. Labor trafficking continues to be under identified and low representation of these cases are consistent with other statewide statistics (Governor's Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force Report - November 2021).

Identifying Under-Represented Populations. Overall, trends on age (see Figure 2) demonstrate a higher rate of identification and intervention as age increases. However, studies find that most grooming and initial exploitation occurs prior to the age of 18 with most adult survivors reporting being trafficked prior to the age of 16 (Roe-Sepowitz et.al, 2019). Greater resources are needed to identify victims at an earlier age.

Appalachian Ohio: Case and Risk Summary

Identifying Under-Represented Populations (cont.) Earlier identification can also be facilitated by the implementation or increase in age-appropriate education of youth on how to identify manipulative practices and grooming.

Regarding gender characteristics females are disproportionately targeted compared to males across all age groups. This is similar to national findings especially in sex trafficking cases and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Transgender populations are identified as victims of trafficking in around 4% of all cases. Notably, transgender populations have been found to be significantly more likely to be targeted by traffickers. This factor can be compounded by a lack of support networks and a higher likelihood of homelessness and systemic marginalization (Tomasiewicz, 2018, USDOS, 2022).

Figure 4: Race/Ethnicity of Individual (n=43)

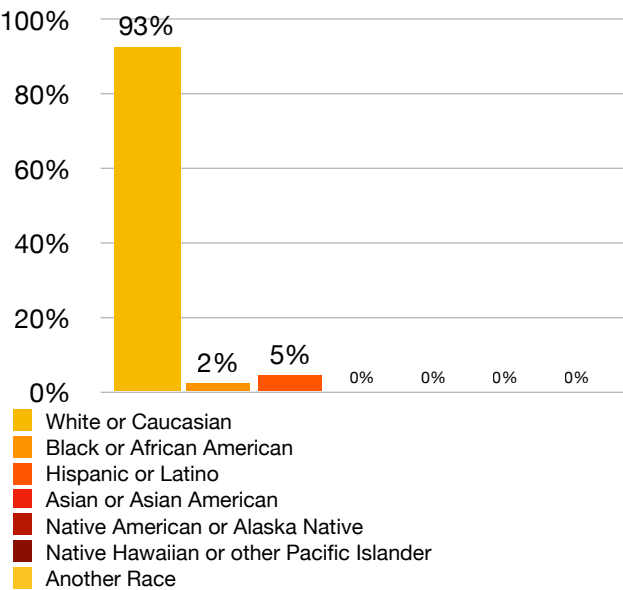
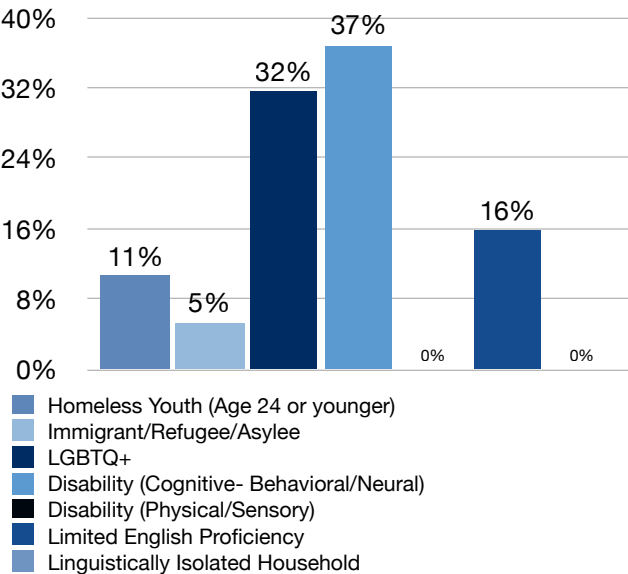


Figure 5: Special Class (n=19)



Racial profiles of victims are consistent with demographics across the region, with 30 out of 37 counties reporting over 90% white, non-hispanic in the 2022 Census Data. That being said, it is critical with such population homogeneity that focus is given to connect minority populations with services as access disparities may be higher when prevalence of a given population is low. Additionally, under-identified populations may be targeted by traffickers as they are less likely to be identified by our networks.

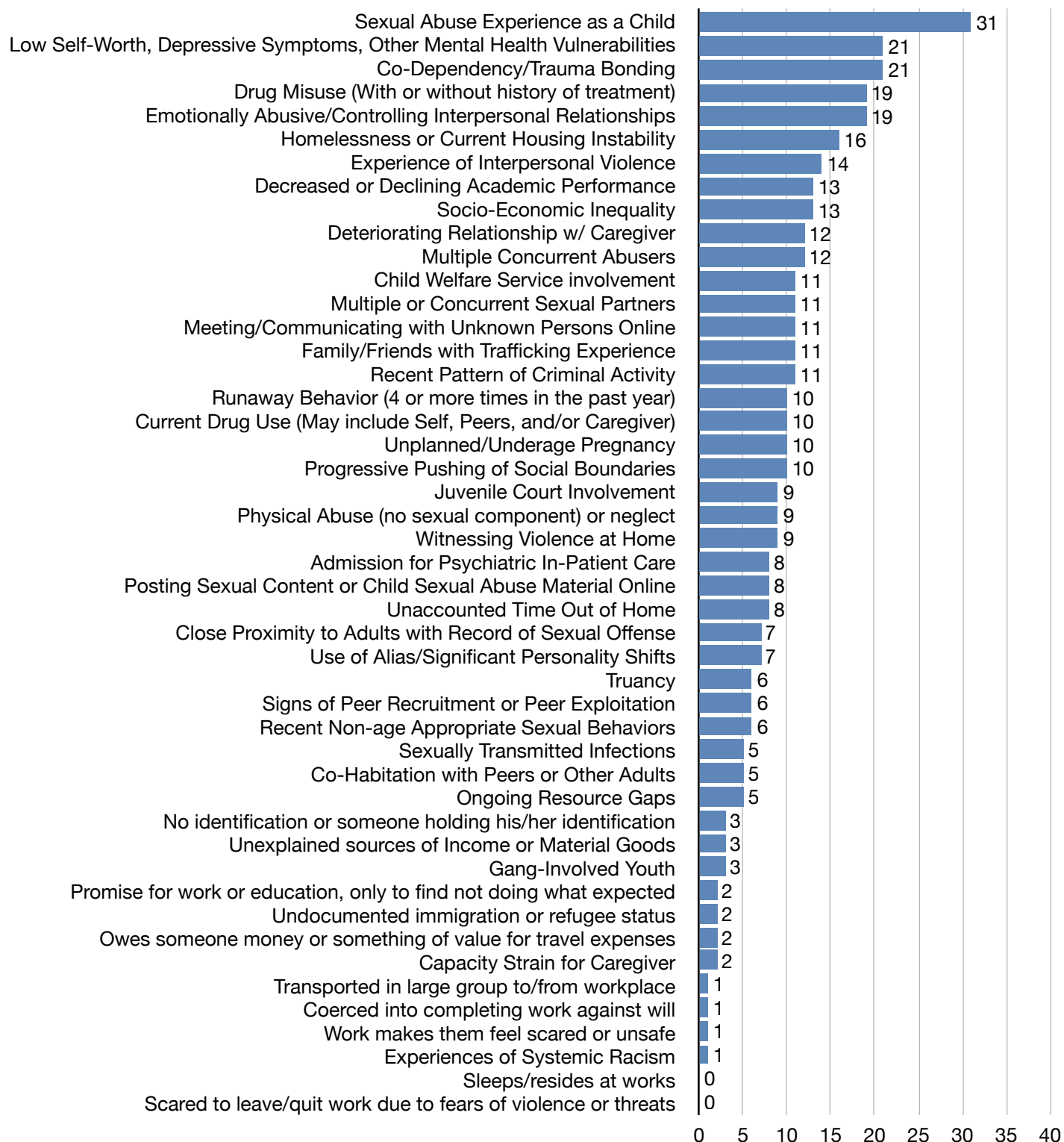
In 19 cases at least, 37% presented with a cognitive-behavioral or neural disability. 32% of cases involved an individual who identified as LGBTQ+. These findings are consistent with anecdotal information traffickers may specifically seek to exploit individuals with cognitive-behavioral or neural disabilities.

Furthermore, LGBTQ+ individuals may face systemic obstacles and supports that increase the likelihood of targeting by traffickers. This may be especially prevalent among LGBTQ+ youth who may face housing instability, financial insecurity ostracization by protective adults. The high number of cases identified in this data indicate that respondents are effectively integrating identification of these populations into their screening approaches.

Still access barriers may remain as homeless youth, immigrant/refugee/asylee, and those with limited English proficiency make up 16% or less of these 19 cases. Additionally, populations with physical disabilities were not found in any of the 153 total cases from this interim period. A deeper understanding of these populations and the barriers they face is key to expanded access.

Appalachian Ohio: Case and Risk Summary

Figure 6: Risk-Factor Prevalence (n=41) *Note: Reporting of cases by composites in some cases means that profiles by case type are not possible in the current data set. Individual reporting of profile by case in the next data collection period will allow for greater detail.*



Appalachian Ohio: Case and Risk Summary

Indicators of Potential Grooming or Undisclosed Trafficking. Based on the frequency of the risk-factors in reported cases (Figure 6) one can develop a hierarchal approach to determining an individual's level of risk for grooming. As one identifies risk factors at each level one can arrive at an increasing likelihood that undisclosed trafficking may be occurring. These preliminary categories will likely be more refined as we unpack composite cases and associate risk groupings with either suspected or confirmed cases. It is important to consider all factors listed below, however by prioritizing risk factors that are most common (Principle Risk-Profile) resources and time can be given to explore the presence of risk factors that are less common but, in combination, potentially clearer indicators of potential ongoing trafficking. Not all factors in a given category below must be present but as more factors in each grouping are identified confidence that the case involves grooming or trafficking increases. Figure 7 can guide current intake processes, strategic prevention efforts, and advanced identification training for participants regarding proximal and underutilized risk indicators.

Figure 7: Risk-Factor Categories. (n=41)

Principle risk-profile: Highly Prevalent Factors across Most Cases. (46-77%)

- History of Sexual abuse as a Child
- Co-occurring Low Self-Worth/Depressive Symptoms
- Substance Misuse (Escalated indication of Trafficking/Risk of Exploitation if Co-occurring w/ Prevalent Factors)
- Indicators of Emotionally Abusive or Controlling Interpersonal Relationships, Co-Dependency or Trauma Bonding



Secondary indicators of elevated risk. Indicators of Violence and Risk Escalation (29-32%)

- Experiences of Interpersonal Violence
- Multiple Concurrent Abusers.
- Declining Academic Performance
- Deteriorating Relationships with Caregivers
- Homelessness or Housing Instability
- Socio-economic Inequality



Tertiary considerations. Grouping A

Significant Behavioral Changes and ACES

- Meeting Unknown Persons Online,
- Recent Patterns of Criminal Activity
- Friend/Family w/ Trafficking Victim History
- Frequent Runaway Behavior, w
- Witnessing Violence at Home
- Physical Abuse/Neglect
- Current Drug Use or Proximity to Drug Use
- Progressive pushing of Social Boundaries
- Multiple Concurrent Sexual Partners,
- Unplanned Underage Pregnancy

Tertiary Consideration. Grouping B

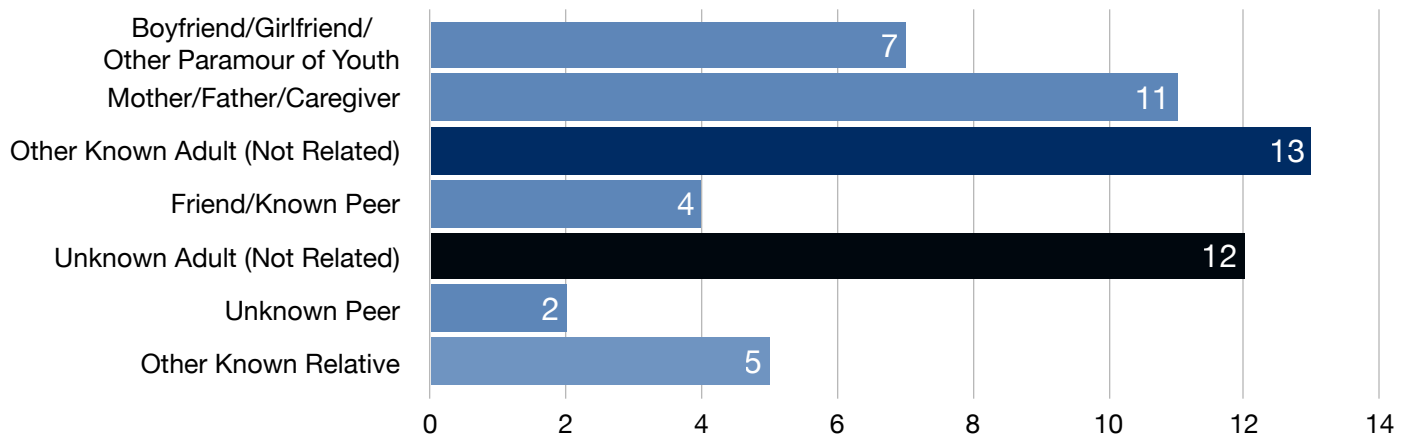
Indicators of Grooming/ Trafficking

- Unaccounted Time Out-of-Home
- Truancy
- Close Proximity to Adult Sexual Offenders
- Use of an Alias
- Significant Personality Shifts
- Psychiatric In-patient
- Posting of Sexual Content/CSAM Online
- Signs of Peer Recruitment
- Non-age Appropriate Sexual Behaviors
- STIs
- Co-habitation with Peers or Other Adults

Appalachian Ohio: Offender Case Profiles

Offender Case Demographics: (Total Offenders n=54, 31 Cases reported multiple alleged offenders)

Figure 9: Offender Relation to Individual



In cases involving adult survivors of trafficking, non-related adults and unknown adults comprised the majority of offender types. Meanwhile, in cases involving children under the age of 17, the offender was most often a parent or caregiver with the second most common offender group consisting of perceived paramours of the youth (Figure 9). This is consistent with the elevated risk of grooming based on access to youth and perceived trust. It indicates an increased need to investigate familial trafficking and add related questions to youth screening tools. As task forces and law enforcement studies have shown (Governor's Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force Report - November 2021) most alleged offenders are white males (96%) between the ages of 30 to 39 years old (Figures 10, 11, and 12) Prosecution data shows that in most cases charges had not been filed at time of reporting. However, in two cases where referrals we made by task forces federal charges had been pressed.

Further data is needed as to how a particular offender population exploits vulnerabilities and how to engage protective factors to reduce risk. Emerging intervention tools such as early identification screenings, psycho-educational programs like End the Game, and mentor/support programs like Elevate Academy can reduce risk of exploitation and help those most commonly impacted recognize the signs of grooming. Further data is needed to determine if survivor/victim profiles and offender profiles align with vulnerable population statistics in Appalachia or if identification processes need to be optimized to find under-identified groups such as labor trafficking, those with cognitive disabilities, LGBTQ+ and linguistically isolated individuals.

Figure 10: Offender Age (n=26)

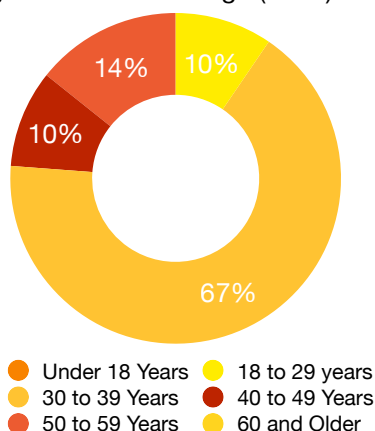


Figure 11: Offender Gender (n=26)

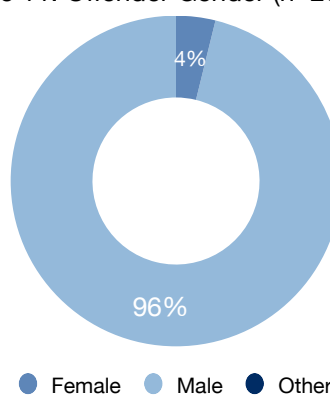
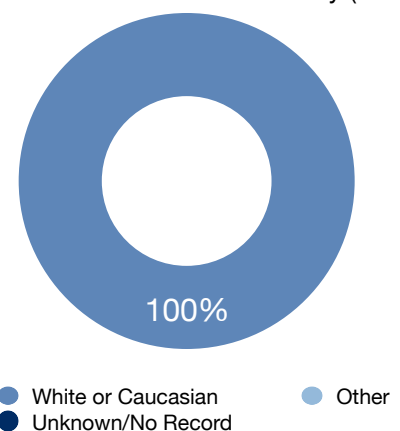


Figure 12: Offender Race/Ethnicity (n=18)



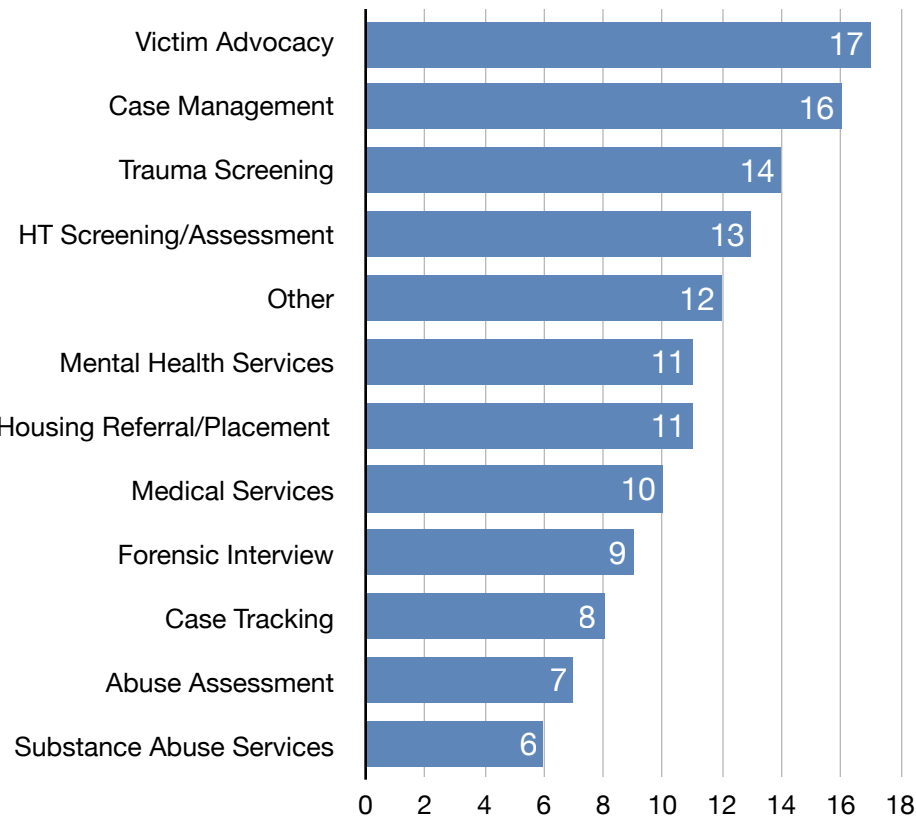
Appalachian Ohio: Services and Additional Findings

Screening and Identification:

Looking at how service networks across Appalachian Ohio screen or identify potential trafficking victims or survivors responses were coded into 4 categories.

Based on 35 responses, the majority of agencies (n=10) reported that cases are identified via structures or semi-structured verbal interview with professionally trained staff. The second most common (n=6) approach involves the use of screening tools. Given the lack of development and consensus around verified trafficking-specific screening tools, many of these screenings are composites of the current best options available. Among the screening instruments that have been combined include questions from Child Sex Trafficking Forensic Interview Trainings, resources from Shared Hope International, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Trafficking in Persons screening tool, the Department of Homeland Security’s Blue Campaign tool, and other government agencies. A few agencies receive referrals from outside sources that screen and identify trafficking victims prior to their intake.

Figure 13: Agency Count by Services Provided



Services response: (n=31)

Figure 13 illustrates the number of agencies throughout Appalachian Ohio that provide various services. Victim and family advocacy, case coordination and management, and trauma screenings are among the most commonly available. However, vital services such as ongoing medical care, forensic interviewing, abuse assessments, and substance abuse and misuse services remain underrepresented.

13 centers listed ‘other’ services available. These include outside referrals for the services listed, vulnerable population education, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, transportation assistance, legal services and advocacy, job training/ vocational assistance emergency shelter access and crisis services.

Limitations and Improvements to Second Survey Data Collection:

Responding agencies and providers report 70 confirmed cases of trafficking and 83 cases of suspected trafficking during this first period. In-depth detail was provided on on at least 46 cases however some detailed profiles were submitted as a single composite of several cases. This limitation reduces the level of granular analysis possible for this quarter however emerging baseline characteristics still provide critical initial insight into these case. Future refinement to the collection process and ongoing data collection will increase the accuracy and analytical power of these findings as this initiative continues. Additionally, for counties with low identification rates the next survey will seek input from additional prospective providers and seek to identify what barriers may limit identification of suspected cases and the confirmation of cases. Refinements to the survey will include the addition of a multi-racial category under demographic items and the inclusion literacy based barriers under our special populations question.



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