



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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\*\*\*\*\*PUBLICATION ADVISORY\*\*\*\*\*

### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE RESEARCH SHOWS CURRENT DATA UNDERESTIMATES HUMAN TRAFFICKING CRIMES

WASHINGTON – The Office of Justice Programs’ National Institute of Justice today released an article focusing on recent NIJ-supported research that shows that current labor and sex trafficking data may undercount human trafficking crimes and victims in the United States. Available data derive from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, which is based exclusively on human trafficking incidents reported by law enforcement agencies. Cases not reported to or identified by law enforcement, often because victims are reluctant to come forward, are not captured in the UCR figures.

The article details the findings of a study that examined how accurately the reporting of human trafficking crimes reflects the true incidence of crime in a community. The article further explores the causes for lack of data, specifically those regarding victim and crime incidence reporting, and potential solutions.

“Human trafficking does untold harm to countless victims, yet we still do not fully grasp how widely and extensively it reaches into our society,” said NIJ Director David Muhlhausen. “This report sheds light on a stubborn and glaring deficiency of knowledge and will help lead us to a better understanding of a major public safety and human rights issue.”

Research shows that no single method will accurately estimate both sex and labor trafficking. In his January 31 [Executive Order](#) on Combating Human Trafficking and Online Exploitation in the United States, President Trump directed the Attorney General and other cabinet heads to work toward improving the measurement of human trafficking prevalence. Through its research funding, NIJ is making substantial investments in understanding the prevalence of human trafficking, funding several targeted studies.

Last year, NIJ awarded more than \$2 million to five research organizations under the Research and Evaluation on Trafficking in Persons Program, which funds research and evaluation projects that help federal, state, local and tribal criminal justice agencies and victim service providers respond to the challenges posed by human trafficking in their jurisdictions.

**TITLE:** *“Gaps in Reporting Human Trafficking Incidents Result in Significant Undercounting”*

**AUTHORS:** National Institute of Justice

**WHERE:** <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/gaps-reporting-human-trafficking-incidents-result-significant-undercounting>

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The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants, training and technical assistance and other resources to improve the nation’s capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at [www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years](http://www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years).

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