

The State of **IMPACT**

A 10-Year Initiative with the Anti-Trafficking
Nonprofit Sector in the United States: 2024-2034

2024

presented by: **Impact** Rising

Introduction

Dear Social Impact Funders,

In recent years, the nonprofit sector has placed increasing importance on measuring impact, reflecting a growing interest among funders—whether individuals, foundations, or government entities—in understanding how nonprofits are learning from data and feedback from those they serve, and how these insights inform changes to their services. This focus also encompasses the desire to see how investments lead to meaningful and measurable outcomes.

Impact, as we define it, is the lasting change that happens for individuals, communities, and systems, driven by a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. This concept lies at the heart of the work explored in this report and underscores the ambitions of both the anti-trafficking sector and its partners.

Alongside these priorities is a broader ambition to foster greater collaboration and drive system-wide improvements. The anti-trafficking community in the United States plays a crucial role in this evolving landscape, addressing the complex challenges of human trafficking through direct services, prevention initiatives, and policy advocacy.

This report explores the significant work being done within the anti-trafficking sector, offering an in-depth look at current impact evaluation practices. We connected with over 90 nonprofit organizations—nearly one-third of U.S. NGOs dedicated to addressing human trafficking—to gain insights into their successes and identify opportunities for growth.

Our study focuses on the sector's present approaches to impact evaluation as part of a broader 10-year initiative running from 2024 to 2034. This initiative will include ongoing data collection to track progress and support the sector's evolution as it increasingly adopts an impact-driven approach.

Through this report, we invite funders to engage with the sector from a collective orientation. As sectors increasingly seek common agendas and shared language, impact evaluation emerges as a key area for support and alignment.

Our vision is to foster a unified community of funders dedicated to supporting impact-driven organizations and initiatives, essential for achieving lasting change. We encourage funders to consider how their continued and future investments can contribute to this collective effort within the anti-trafficking sector in the United States over the next decade.

In Partnership,

The Impact Rising Team

im•pact [noun]

The lasting change that happens for individuals, communities, and systems, driven by a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

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This study is brought to you by Impact Rising, a firm specializing in impact capacity building, evaluation, and collective impact partnerships. Visit us at impactrising.com.

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Special thanks to our designer Brooke Hiemstra at Lumli Careers and brand partner Oak Theory | oaktheory.co. Interested in learning more? Contact hello@oaktheory.co.

As you read through this report, please note that our commitment is to present a comprehensive snapshot and analysis of the survey findings. The report is not intended as a critique nor should it be perceived as an endorsement by Impact Rising of any specific statements or viewpoints shared within.

If you have any questions about the data or analysis in this report, we'd be happy to hear from you at info@impactrising.com.

Key Learnings

Who was surveyed?

Ninety-four nonprofits with a mission statement specific to trafficking, representing approximately one-third of the sector and spanning 32 states in the United States, participated in The State of Impact 2024. These organizations range in size from \$6,500 to \$14.1 million, and one in eight is led by an individual with lived experience of trafficking.

What are the sector's strengths?

- ▶ **Impact Evaluation Highly Valued:** There is a high-rated importance of outcomes and impact evaluation for the sector (average rating = 8.05/10). 87% of organizations evaluated some part of their programs in the past year; quarterly evaluation is more frequently reported (43%), ahead of yearly (29%), monthly (18%) and biyearly (10%).
- ▶ **Peer-Recognized Leaders in Impact Evaluation:** When asked “where do you go to find promising practices in outcome evaluation in the anti-trafficking field,” 44% look to other organizations in the anti-trafficking sector. Twenty-two out of approximately 300 anti-trafficking nonprofits were identified by their peers as leaders in impact evaluation, or about 1 in 14 organizations. Polaris, Safe House Project, HEAL Trafficking, and Restore NYC together accounted for 32% of all organizations named.
- ▶ **Funders Driving Collaboration in Impact Evaluation:** Funders play a pivotal role in impact evaluation collaboration, accounting for 1 in 6 collaborators. The two highest-rated collaborators are funders: The Jensen Project and Safe House Project. Other leaders in collaboration emerge across key areas, including technology (e.g., Allies Against Slavery), research (e.g., RTI), and training (e.g., the Office for Victims of Crime).
- ▶ **A Growing Toolkit for Impact Evaluation:** A total of 24 tools were identified as being used in the sector for evaluation. These include the Outcomes for Human Trafficking Survivors (OHTS) tool (created by RTI International) and Freedom Lifemap (created by Everfree), among others. There is a strong desire for standards of care and shared measurement in impact evaluation.

What's happening in the impact area for the sector?

- ▶ **Opportunity for Growth in Impact Evaluation:** On average, organizations allocate 4% of their operating budgets to impact evaluation, compared to the recommended 5–10% (Charity Navigator and USAID).
- ▶ **Theories of Change and Logic Models are Gaining Ground:** Just under half of the organizations have a theory of change (45%) and/or a logic model (47%).
- ▶ **Strengthening Capacity with Researchers and Consultants:** 44% of organizations have previously worked with a researcher or evaluation consultant for an average of 2.5 years, funded primarily by grants (52%) and private funding (16%).
- ▶ **CRM Systems are Essential to Effective Data Management:** Satisfaction with CRM systems for program/strategy data storage, analysis, and reporting varies, with Apricot and Salesforce—used by 38% of organizations—receiving higher satisfaction scores (7.7 out of 10) compared to other systems (6.2 out of 10). In total, 48 different CRM platforms are mentioned by organizations.
- ▶ **New Tools and Systems Driving Sector-Wide Collaboration:** Significant progress has been made in data systems (e.g., Lighthouse powered by Allies Against Slavery) and tools (e.g., Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations by the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC)) to advance data collection and impact evaluation. These innovations are fostering collaboration across the sector, though important work remains.

Key Learnings *continued*

Where are the gaps?

- ▶ **Staffing and Technology Gaps are Key Barriers to Advancing Impact Evaluation:** Staffing capacity and access to advanced technology for impact evaluation remain significant barriers, particularly for smaller organizations. For example, 70% of organizations with budgets over \$5M have a full-time staff member dedicated solely to impact evaluation, while less than 5% of organizations with budgets under \$2.5M have the same resource.
- ▶ **Lack of Shared Language and Definitions Impede Alignment:** There is a lack of shared language and understanding of various data- and impact-related terms within the sector (e.g., varying definitions of impact). Establishing common definitions and “shifting from output-focused measurement to outcomes-based measurement” could enhance alignment and strengthen collective efforts to drive long-term change. See page 12 for a short glossary of impact-related terminology.
- ▶ **Sector Fragmentation and Silos Limit Collective Impact:** Silos (e.g., “duplicative and uncoordinated efforts”) and fragmentation (e.g., “sometimes collaboration efforts are not well-run/well-facilitated and then it feels like a waste of valuable time”) within the sector is reported as the greatest challenge to collective impact.
- ▶ **Limited Visibility of Impact Leadership:** Although many organizations are engaged in impact evaluation efforts, nearly half of the NGO respondents (45%) were unable to identify a clear leader in this area. Increasing visibility, along with providing training, capacity-building, and opportunities for knowledge-sharing, is essential to strengthening coordinated impact efforts across the sector.

Note: The phrases in parentheses are direct quotes from respondents.

Creating solutions through partnership: Addressing sector gaps

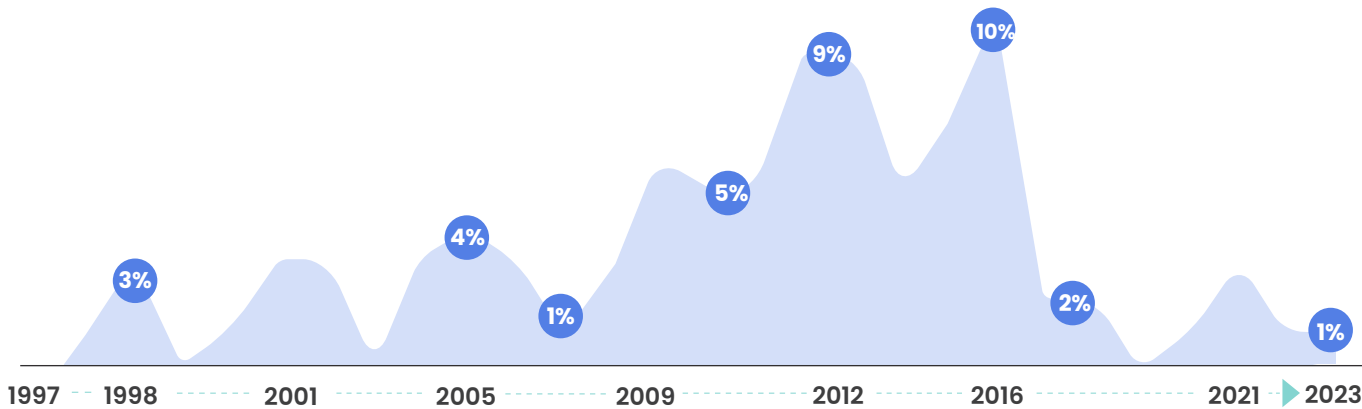
- ▶ **Leveraging Sector Expertise for Capacity Building:** The most effective training and capacity-building efforts often come from within the nonprofit sector, with 12 NGO respondents including HEAL Trafficking and Restore NYC self-identifying their organizations as trainers in this area. Funders can support initiatives that position nonprofit leaders to drive capacity-building efforts across the sector. By investing in these sector-led initiatives, funders can help establish sustainable, earned revenue models. These models will allow nonprofits to lead and expand capacity-building efforts, ensuring long-term growth and impact within the anti-trafficking community.
- ▶ **Unlocking Potential: Addressing Staffing and Technology Gaps with Innovative Funding:** Provide multi-year, unrestricted funding, pooled resources, and capacity-building grants to support NGOs in staffing and technology, ensuring they have the infrastructure needed to drive impact. This is also an opportunity to partner with researchers and external evaluators to strengthen data collection, analysis, and learning processes. Funding that supports ongoing learning, improvement, and capacity-building based on evaluation findings will be key to fostering continuous growth and adaptation across the sector.
- ▶ **Unifying Efforts for Greater Impact and Progress:** Invest in Collective Impact models by fostering cross-sector partnerships that bring together nonprofits, funders, government, researchers, and other partners to address complex challenges collaboratively. By promoting shared measurement tools and standardized data collection practices, funders can help create a unified approach to evaluating and communicating progress across the sector. This approach not only aligns efforts toward common goals but also enhances the ability to track long-term, sustainable change. Collaborative funding models where multiple funders come together to pool their resources for shared initiatives will further strengthen this unified approach and accelerate sector-wide progress.

Who are the Nonprofits in the Anti-Trafficking Sector?

In 2024, we received survey responses from 94 U.S.-based 501(c)(3) organizations, including both independent nonprofits and those fiscally sponsored, with mission statements specific to human trafficking. These anti-trafficking organizations work to address trafficking through a combination of prevention initiatives, direct services for survivors, and policy advocacy efforts. Their activities address both labor and sex trafficking, emphasizing approaches that aim to create lasting systemic change. This survey sample represents approximately one-third of all nonprofit organizations in the United States with missions specifically dedicated to addressing human trafficking.

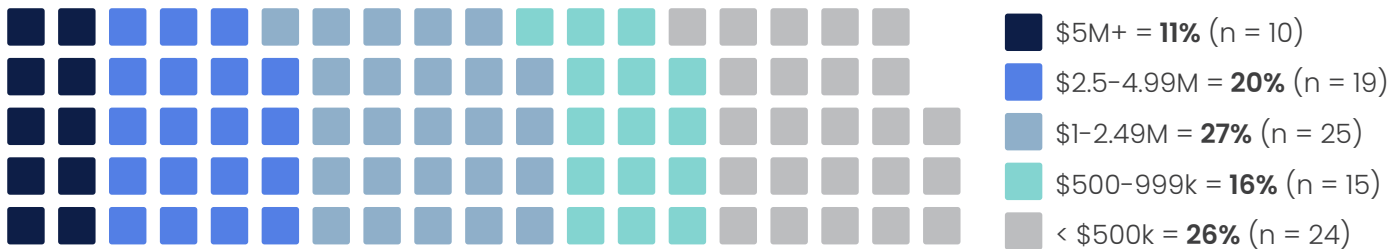
Organizations Founded by Year

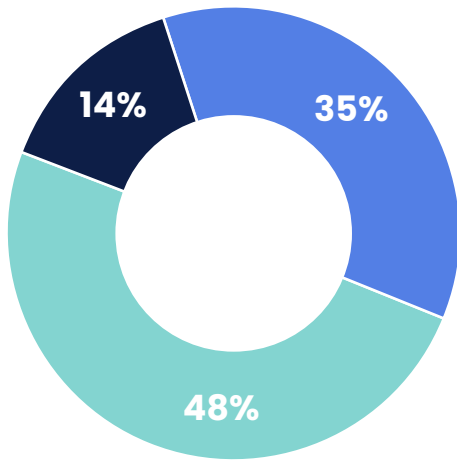
The average age of nonprofit organizations is 13.54 years, ranging from 1 to 45.



Annual Operating Budget

Organizations (N = 93) ranged in size from \$6,500 to \$14,052,719. The average operating budget was \$2.03M, while the median was \$1.28M. The total across all organizations equaled \$187,117,961.





Employees

Employee headcount for organizations (N = 92) ranged from 0 – 321. The average number of employees was 28.79, and the median was 15.00. The total number of employees across all organizations equaled 2,704.

Employee Numbers Range = **0–321**

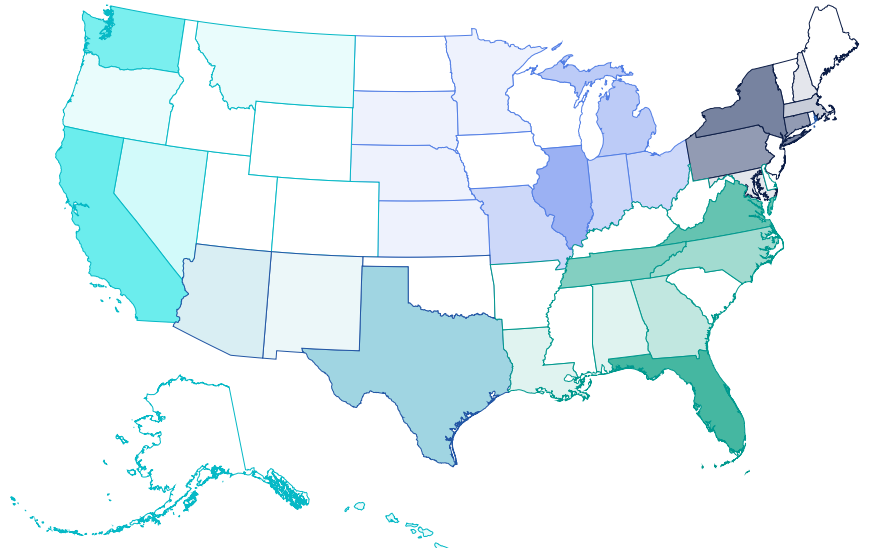
- 1-10 = **35%** (n = 33)
- 11-50 = **48%** (n = 46)
- 51-500 = **14%** (n = 13)

Location

The organizations (N = 94) represented 32 states across five regions.

Region Breakdown

- West = **22%** (n = 21)
- Southwest = **13%** (n = 12)
- Southeast = **28%** (n = 26)
- Midwest = **21%** (n = 20)
- Northeast = **16%** (n = 15)



Leadership Lived Experience

When asked, “**How does your organizational leader identify in terms of “individual with lived experience,”**



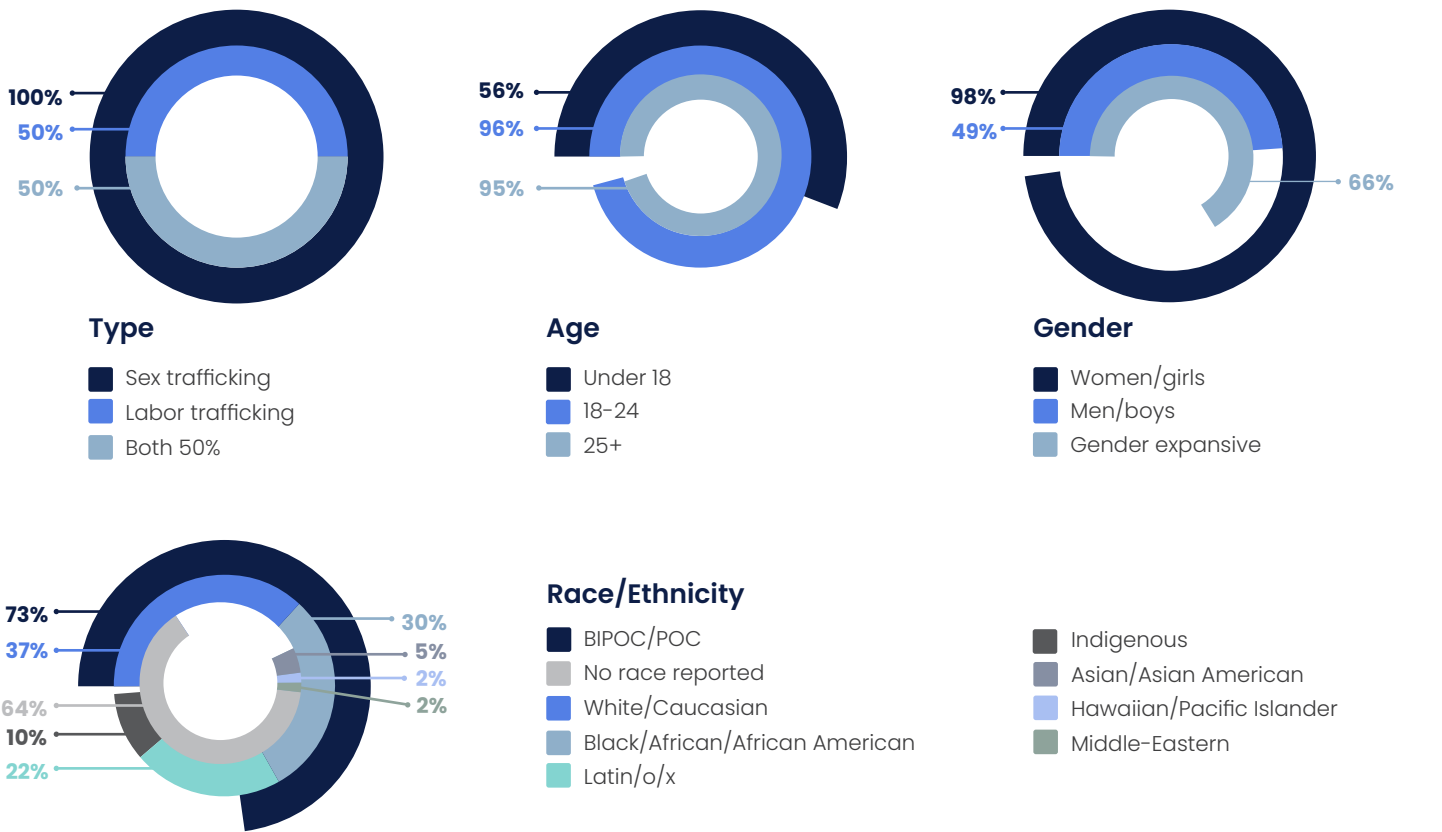
1 in 8 leaders (i.e., Executive Director, Chief Executive Officer) identify as an individual with lived experience of trafficking



1 in 5 leaders identify as an individual with lived experience of gender-based violence

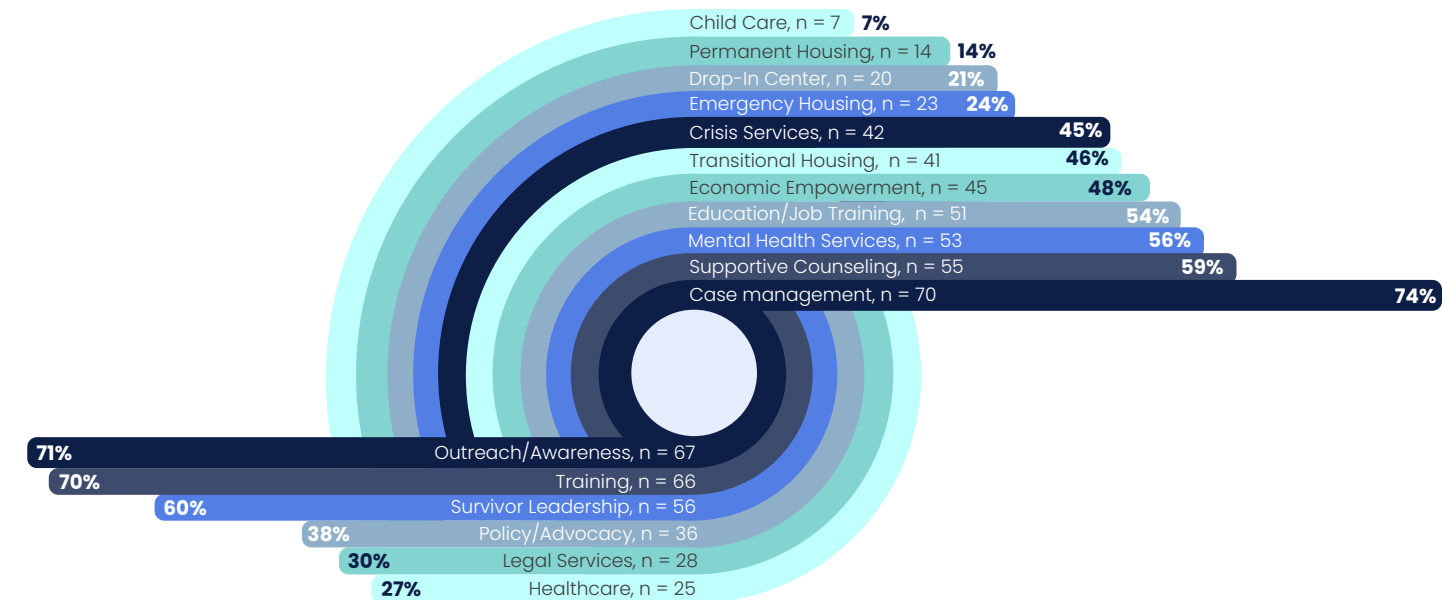
Population Served

Organizations reported type of trafficking (N = 65; 70%), age (N = 86; 91%), gender (N = 69; 73%), and race/ethnicity (N = 59; 63%) with corresponding percentages:



Services Provided

Organizations (N = 94) were encouraged to select all that apply:



How Does the Sector Define and Prioritize Impact?

What is Impact?

Organizations were asked, “How do you define impact?” and the following themes emerged (N = 67):

<p>Growth/changes observed within survivors (65%; n = 59)</p> <p>“ Empowering participants to meet their goals or get on/stay on a path toward their goals. SL</p> <p>...the positive changes in the lives of the survivors who receive the services. It could be measured in terms of improved mental and physical health, increased self-esteem, acquisition of new skills, employment, and overall improvement in quality of life.</p> <p>Every minute of everyday impact is made in some way. Something as simple as going to the grocery store and not having a panic attack can be impact depending on the trauma that was inflicted when the survivor is trafficked. With sex trafficking there can be impact in almost everything.</p>	<p>The term outcomes used or examples provided (44%; n = 40)</p> <p>“ As a survivor-led anti-trafficking nonprofit organization, we have a 95% success rate of helping people exit the life of human trafficking and stay out... SL</p> <p>Tangible outcomes based on set goals related to our vision and mission.</p> <p>Staff members that worked closely with the client use an assessment tool that compares a client’s resilience before and after they began working with our organization.</p>
<p>The term outputs used or examples provided (48%; n = 44)</p> <p>“ Any victim/survivor we shared resources with, case managed, served with transitional housing... SL</p> <p>...media placements, trainings provided, people trained, webinars provided</p> <p>We define impact primarily as activities (e.g. services provided to employers) and outputs. We seek ways to measure outcomes whenever possible.</p>	<p>Effect is noted and it’s due to the organization and/or its services (32%; n = 29)</p> <p>“ ... defines “impact” as the measurable change or outcome that can be directly attributed to our interventions.</p> <p>Impact is the measure of change or difference brought about by specific actions or events, highlighting the significance and scope of their effects.</p> <p>“Changes in individuals, communities, or systems, that happen due to circumstances in the world that are influenced by our work and the work of the partners we activate (though not usually solely due to our work).</p>
<p>Growth/changes observed in the community (24%; n = 22)</p> <p>“ The outcomes experienced by our community because of our work.</p> <p>...the overall change to community wellbeing that programs and policies contribute to, i.e. reduction in human trafficking</p>	<p>Growth/changes observed within the organization/programs (9%; n = 8)</p> <p>“ ...refers to the growth and development of our organization. It could be measured in terms of expanded services, increased funding, partnerships, and recognition.</p>
<p>Time as a factor is highlighted, for instance, long-term, pre-post (16%; n = 15)</p> <p>“ ...Things that can be accumulated into moving forward in the work to end the sex trade. SL</p>	<p>Qualitative vs. quantitative explicitly noted in the definition (5%; n = 5)</p> <p>“ Qualitative and quantitatively assessments and data measures that correspond to project goals, outputs, and outcomes</p>

SL This designation indicates the response is from a Survivor-Led Organization.

Frequency of Evaluation

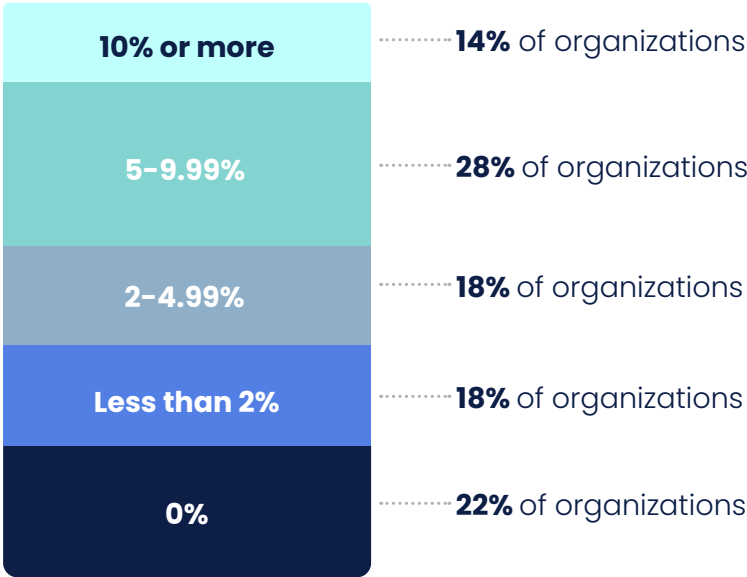
87% of organizations have evaluated some part of their programs in the past year (N = 91)

Organizations (N = 79) vary in how often they evaluate their work, with quarterly (n = 34) followed by annually (n = 23) being the most frequently reported.



Percentage of Annual Budget Dedicated to Impact Evaluation

The average percentage of the annual budget dedicated to impact evaluation was 4.35%. This is compared to the recommended 5-10% according to Charity Navigator and USAID. Of 75 organizations responding, there were eight outliers (i.e., responses greater than 20%), and when retained the average percentage was 10.53%. For those who did not report (n = 18), the most common reason cited was it is unknown or they do not calculate.

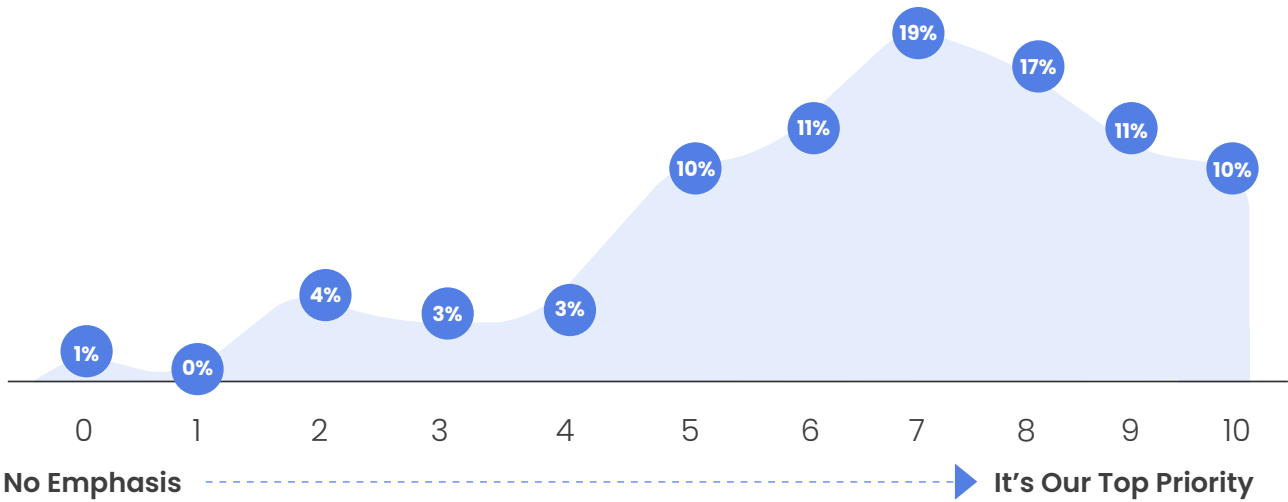


Organizations with impact budgets at 5% or higher are more likely to have a survivor advisory board (p < .05).

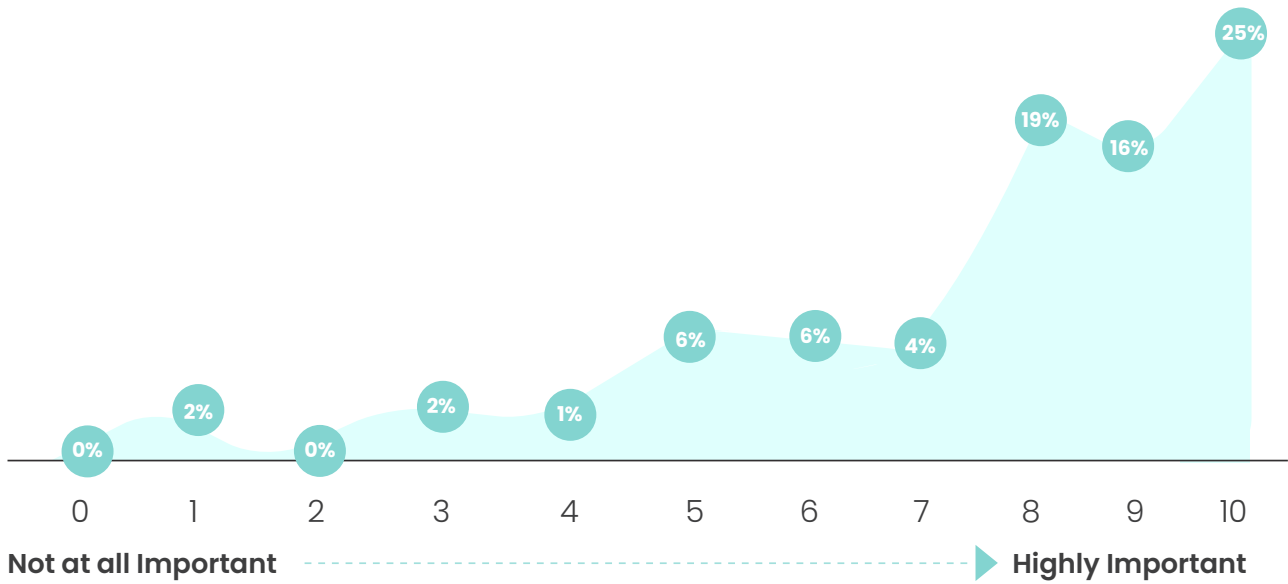
Impact Evaluation as an Organizational and Sector Priority

The importance for outcomes and impact evaluation for the sector exceeded prioritization of evaluation for organizations, yet both ranked high.

Organizations were asked, **"How much priority does your organization place on evaluation?"** The average response from 89 participants was 6.89.



Organizations were asked, **"How important to your organization is the anti-trafficking field's emphasis on outcomes and impact evaluation?"** The average response from 80 participants was 8.05.



Theory of Change

For 89 organizations who responded:

- 45%** ▶ of organizations reported having a theory of change
- 76%** ▶ of these organizations are actively using their theory of change
- 38%** ▶ percent had a strategy consultant or external evaluator lead the process, and 59% did so independently as a team
- 68%** ▶ of organizations who have had a researcher or evaluation consultant as a partner also have a theory of change
- 85%** ▶ of organizations who have a theory of change created or revised the theory of change within the past three years; 56% created or revised within the past year

Logic Model

For 88 organizations who responded:

- 47%** ▶ of organizations reported having a logic model
- 65%** ▶ of these organizations are actively using their logic model(s)
- 87%** ▶ of organizations who have a logic model created or revised their logic model(s) within the past three years; 65% created or revised within the past year

Glossary of Impact-Related Terms

Theory of Change

A conceptual guide outlining how and why an organization's compilation of programs and projects are designed to achieve its desired 10-year impact. It integrates the problem definition, contextual analysis, risks and assumptions, key drivers of change, and strategies into a cohesive framework.

Logic Model

A roadmap visually representing the flow from inputs and activities to outputs, outcomes, and impact, providing a structured tool to guide program or project implementation and evaluation.

Activities

Action steps involved in delivering the program or project.

Outputs

Initial results of the activities, measuring what was delivered.

Outcomes

Short and medium term effects of the program or project.

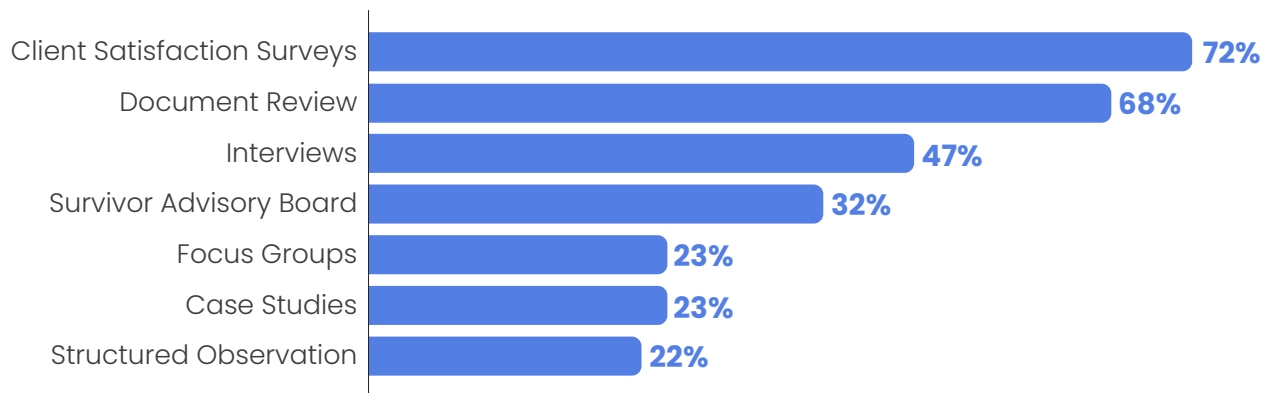
Impact

The lasting change that happens for individuals, communities, and systems, driven by a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

Organizations Track



Organizations Implement



Client satisfaction surveys had more significant relationships ($p < .05$) with other variables in the survey than any other item within this category. For instance, **organizations who implemented client satisfaction surveys were more likely to adapt and modify their services as a result of their evaluation findings compared to their peers who do not implement client satisfaction surveys (84% vs. 42%)** and were also more likely to rate higher their eagerness to invest greater resources in impact tracking and to prioritize outcomes and impact evaluations for their organizations compared to their peers: $M = 7.2$ vs. 5.7 and $M = 8.4$ vs. 6.8 , respectively.

There is a significant relationship ($p < .05$) between focus groups and organizations delivering policy/advocacy as well as survivor advisory board, with policy/advocacy organizations ($n = 36$) being more likely to deliver focus groups (59%) compared to their peers who do not provide policy/advocacy (32%). Organizations with a survivor advisory board ($n = 30$) were more likely to deliver focus groups (40%) compared to their peers who do not have a survivor advisory board (16%).

How Organizations Use Evaluation Findings

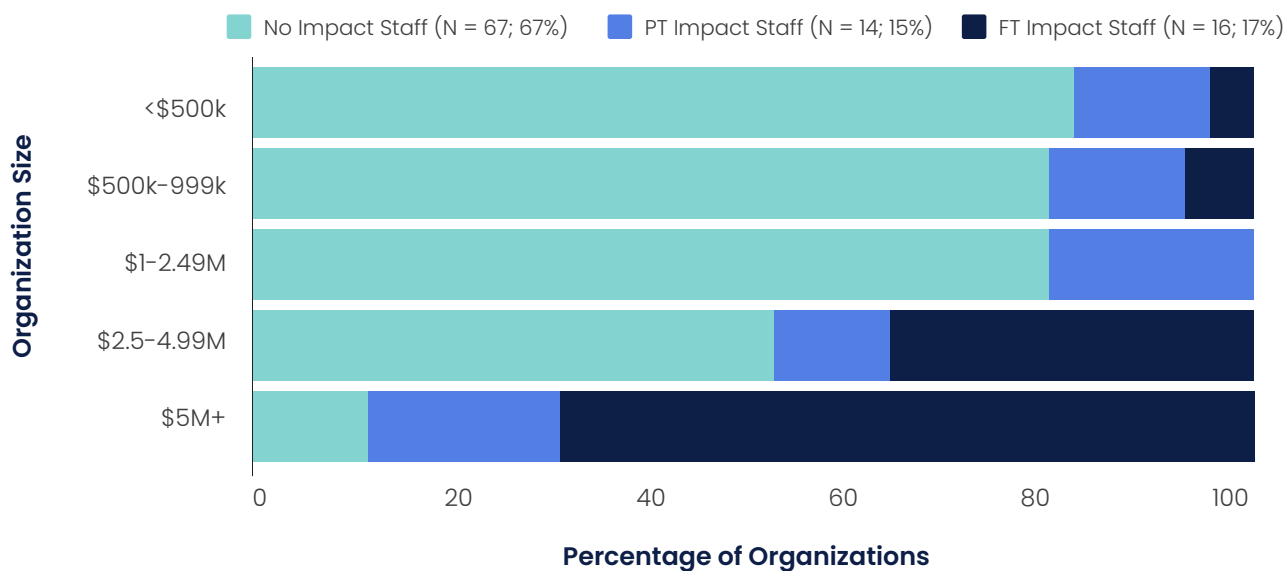
- 91% ▶ To report to funders
- 86% ▶ In proposals to funders
- 85% ▶ To adapt/modify programming
- 71% ▶ To communicate with the community
- 65% ▶ In communication with partners
- 58% ▶ To make resource allocation decisions
- 49% ▶ To present in articles or reports, including at conferences or convenings
- 41% ▶ To advocate for policy changes
- 39% ▶ To share with program participants

Organizations led by individuals with lived experience reported adapting/modifying programming and sharing with program participants at a notably higher rate compared to the total sample (100% vs. 83% and 77% vs. 34%, respectively).

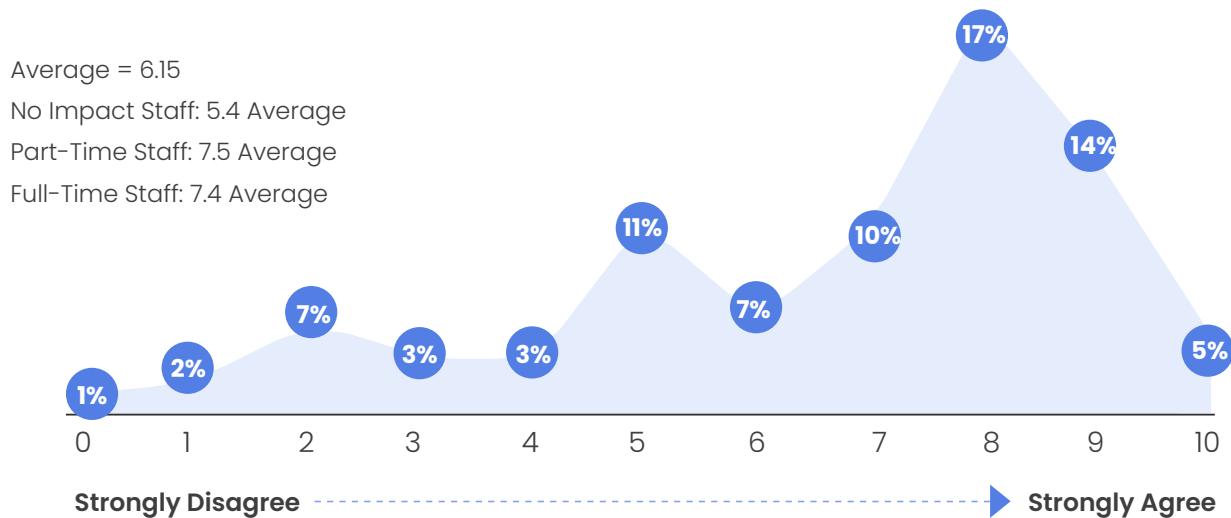
What is the Sector’s Capacity for Impact Evaluation?

Team Members Dedicated to Tracking Impact

One-third (32%) of organizations (N = 92) have a team member dedicated solely to tracking outcomes and impact: 17% have a full-time staff member, and 15% have a part-time staff member. Notably, organizations with budgets between \$1-2.49M predominantly rely on either no dedicated impact staff or part-time staff, while those in the \$2.5-4.99M range more frequently employ full-time impact staff than part-time staff.



Organizations were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: **“We have the staffing talent to grow and sustain our impact tracking”** (N = 80):



Evaluation Consultant Partnering with Nonprofits

Forty-four percent of organizations (N = 94) have worked previously with a researcher or evaluation consultant. This work was funded primarily by grants (52% with 28% from private and 24% from government) and private funding (16%); the remainder was designated from “general operating.”

- 4.7 Years Ago** ▶ The average start date to the relationship (range = 0-13)
- 2.5 Years in Length** ▶ The average length of engagement (range = 1-9)
- 1.2 Engagements** ▶ There are an average of 1.2 engagements with the researcher/evaluation consultant (range = 0-4)
- 39% Active** ▶ Percent actively engaging with a researcher/evaluation consultant

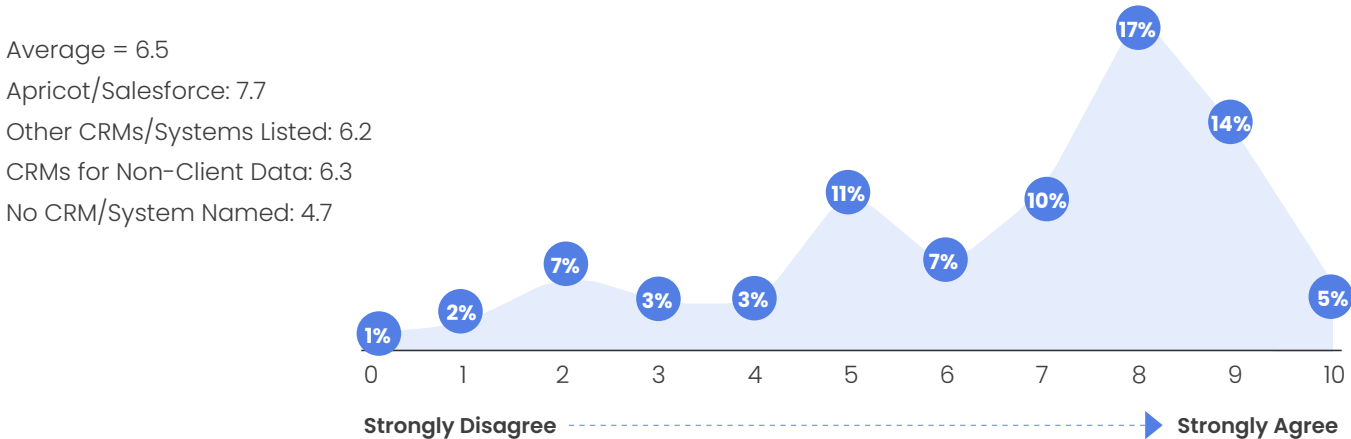
There is a significant positive relationship between operating budget and having worked with an outside researcher/evaluation consultant. 80% of \$5M+ budget organizations (representing 11% of all nonprofits surveyed) report having worked with an outside researcher/evaluation consultant; 58% of \$2.5-4.99M (representing 20%); 44% of \$1-2.49M (representing 27%); 47% of \$500-999k (representing 16%); and only 9% of <\$500k budget organizations (representing 26% of all nonprofits) report the same.

Systems to Support Impact Evaluation

Ninety-two percent of the total organizations (N = 88) report using a database or system to store client data. **Thirty-eight percent use Apricot (n = 17) or Salesforce (n = 14) as their primary CRM.** Systems reported more than once include CaseBook (n = 3) and EmpowerDB (n = 2). Additional named include AppSheet, CAC Carenet, Caseworthy, Clio, Hive, HoneyBook, MDSuite, MentorCore, NewOrg, Palantir, PlanStreet, Quickbase, SecurManage, Social Work Portal, Sumac, TherapyNotes, Titanium Schedule, and VSTracking, Google docs, Google sheets, and Excel.

When asked, “**What barriers does your organization face when collecting and reporting on outcomes data?**” one respondent said, “Identifying a tracking system that actually effectively tracks and evaluates data... we have been in 7 since 2020 and none of them have proven worthy...”

Organizations were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: “**Our systems allow for a streamlined collection, entry, and analyses.**” (N = 80):



There is a positive correlation between streamlined data systems and impact budget ($r = .17$), suggesting that organizations with more efficient data collection, entry, and analysis processes may also allocate more resources to their impact initiatives.

Barriers for Organizations Collecting and Reporting on Outcomes Data

Eighty-two organizations (87%) responded to the question, “What barriers does your organization face when collecting and reporting on outcomes data?” The following themes emerged:

<p>Team member capacity concerns (72%)</p> <p>“ As other service providers close or have turnover, it affects our team’s capacity to rebuild relationships and collect their feedback</p> <p>Time and resources – just how much funders make us run around for other things that take time away from our MEL [monitoring, evaluation and learning] staff being able to focus on their job</p> <p>Very few, mostly it is internal capacity.</p>	<p>Funding Limitations (63%)</p> <p>“ Potential reduced funding, unable to hire more personnel which affect staff capacity</p> <p>Funding as a whole, funding restricted to certain activities, trust (or lack there of) from survivors or partners, the changing whims of individual donors who often provide our unrestricted funds, the lack of evaluation in the field in general</p> <p>We spend a lot of time maneuvering our outcomes into funding reports – they’re not always the best fit</p>
<p>Sensitivity of program participants’ responses (39%)</p> <p>“ As trauma therapists, our first ethical concern is that of the clients we serve, not just the collection of data. Given the level of sensitivity in navigating client cases, validated instruments can be intrusive, lack cultural application, and result in other barriers. SL</p> <p>complexity of life experiences of our participants makes evaluation complicated as well</p> <p>Collecting longitudinal data is not possible with former participants who no longer engage with our services; sometimes difficult to know if a participant is accessing duplicative services elsewhere and if progress toward goals is related to our services, third party’s or a combination of the two</p>	<p>Lack of collaboration from outside agencies (12%)</p> <p>“ People who do not have the same impact that we as survivors do become jealous and try to discredit the work that we do and our ... findings. SL</p> <p>cooperation/reporting of other agencies</p> <p>Not everyone [is] willing to talk about real numbers in the anti-trafficking space.</p> <p>Lack of response from outside agencies</p>
<p>Data security and compliance (9%)</p> <p>“ Legal and Regulatory Changes: Changes in data protection laws and regulations can impact how we collect, store, and share data. We must always ensure compliance with these laws.</p> <p>...participant confidentiality</p> <p>Concerns with data security.</p>	<p>Lack of standardized evaluation and evaluation tools (9%)</p> <p>“ ...limited validated evaluation tools for community & residential work with youth who have been [trafficked] SL</p> <p>Our community seems to place a greater emphasis on the NUMBER of individuals served rather than the degree of impact on each individual’s life, which has caused confusion and frustration for funders</p> <p>Staff do not follow data entry protocol. There seems to be a sector-wide lack of efficiency and a lack of understanding of what data is revealing about the organization.</p>
<p>Technology challenges (8%)</p> <p>“ A software failure or data breach of Salesforce where this information will be stored (we will begin using SF in Sept 2024)</p> <p>...Technological Challenges: Issues such as software glitches, data breaches, or lack of technical expertise can hinder data collection and reporting.</p> <p>...quality/ease of use/user experience of the technology used to collect, store and report on outcomes data</p>	

SL This designation indicates the response is from a Survivor-Led Organization.

How Can We Accelerate Impact in the Sector?

Leadership Within the Anti-Trafficking Sector

Organizations were asked, “What anti-trafficking organizations do you see as leaders in impact evaluation?” Fifty-five percent (55%) of seventy-nine organizations identified at least one peer, 41% stated they were unable to identify a leader, and 4% identified themselves as a leader.

A total of 48 unique organizations were identified by their peers as leaders in impact evaluation.

The organizations most frequently named by their peers in order of listing, representing the top 10% of responses, include:

- Polaris
Safe House Project
- HEAL Trafficking
Restore NYC*

These organizations represented 32% of all organization named. Noteworthy is that only 5% of respondents named more than one of these organizations together in their response.

The additional organizations in the top-third of listing by their peers who were also identified by more than one peer include, in order of listing:

- CAST LA
Freedom Network
International Justice Mission
Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
The Institute for Shelter Care
Thistle Farms
- A21
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
The National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE)
Atlas Free-National Trafficking Sheltered Alliance
REST

Additional nonprofits listed include:

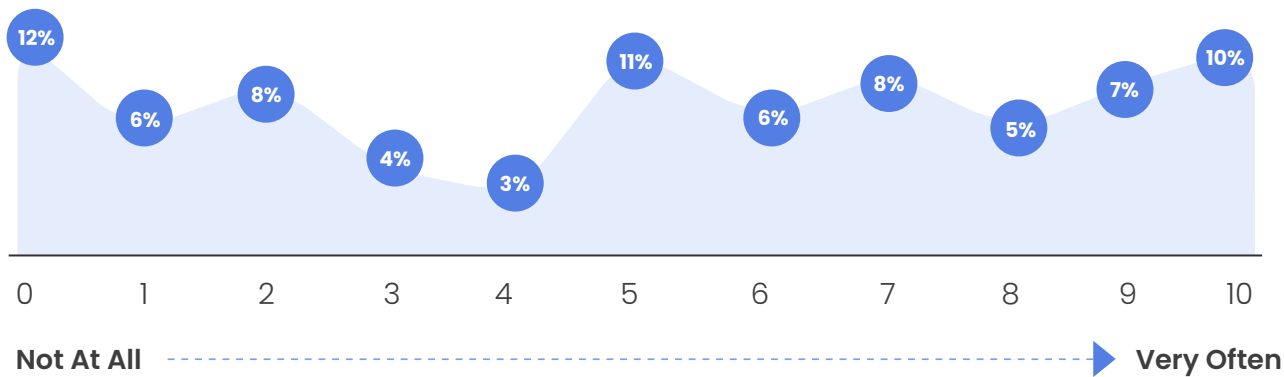
- 3Strands Global Foundation
Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)
Chab Dai Coalition (Cambodia)
Demand Reduction Task Force NC
Everfree
Freedom Fund
Human Trafficking Collective
Human Trafficking Initiative
International Shelter Institute
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Love 146
McCain Institute
My Life My Choice
National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC)
- National Institute of Justice
Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)
Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP)
Rescue America
Rights4Girls
Safe Horizon
Selah Freedom
St. Thomas University School of Law
Thorn
Unicef
Urban Institute
World Vision
Worthwhile Wear

Twelve organizations self-reported providing formal training on impact evaluation, three of which are in the top-third of listing: HEAL Trafficking, Restore NYC, and Freedom Network.

**Disclaimer: We want to acknowledge that Impact Rising’s two partners on The State of Impact, HEAL Trafficking and Restore NYC, were listed by their peers in the top tier of responses. They supported recruitment efforts for the survey, and this may have led to a higher response rate for their leadership expertise. Nonetheless, they partnered on the report because of their leadership in impact evaluation and expertise on advising the project.*

Collaboration Within the Anti-Trafficking Sector

Organizations were asked, “How often does your organization collaborate with other organizations within the anti-trafficking sector on outcome evaluation?” The average response from 80 participants was 4.95 on a scale of 0 = not at all to 10 = very often.



The collaboration rating was significantly related ($p < .05$) to impact budget, staffing talent, and streamlined data collection, with organizations who rated higher collaboration also having a higher impact budget, higher belief they have the staffing talent to grow and sustain impact tracking, and higher agreement that their systems allow for a streamlined collection, entry, and analysis of data.

Who Do Organizations Collaborate With?

Fifty-six organizations responded to the question, “Who do you collaborate with?” They identified a total of 42 unique organizations as collaborating in impact evaluation efforts.

Those listed more than once are named here in order of listing: The Jensen Project, Safe House Project, The Institute for Shelter Care, Allies Against Slavery, HEAL Trafficking, and International Justice Mission. Seven funders (17% or 1 in 6) were listed as collaborators.

Additional entities named as collaborators include: Amirah, Atlas Free, Freedom Business Alliance, Freedom Fund, National Survivor Law Collective, Rainbow Research, REST, Ready.Inspire.Act (RIA), RTI, Selah Freedom, Southern Methodist University, Traffick911, and WorldWE.

Respondents shared the following:

- “ We work with state and local entities who use data from Lighthouse to report on their actions and outcomes.
- “ We collaborate with OVC [Office for Victims of Crime], VOCA [Victims of Crime Act], the governors office, the attorney generals office, key stakeholders in the anti-trafficking work, however we are all still learning collectively. SL

- “ We collaborate with other organizations in providing them training and technical assistance, however, we have not collaborated in collecting and compiling the same outcomes evaluation/impact assessment data.
- “ We are actively looking for collaborators.

Evaluation Practices

Organizations were asked, **“What are examples of best-in-class evaluation practices that you’ve observed from these organizations?”** Fifty-six organizations responded, and thirty-six (64%) identified the following seven themes; 36% (n = 20) reported being unable to provide an example.

Research rigor in design, method and tools (56%) <p>“ Monitoring and Evaluation at the Planning Stage: Terre des Hommes, in its 2007 Handbook on Planning Projects to Prevent Child Trafficking, Survivor-Informed Approach: The Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) has developed a Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations.</p>	Tools including handbook, reports, publications, and/or toolkit (28%) <p>“ The state of Texas is the only state thus far who has been able to put out accurate numbers to identify 300,000 trafficking survivors within the state. This report came about through a collaboration with Allies Against Slavery in Austin, Texas. SL</p>
Survivor and employee input (19%) <p>“ Identifying what impact truly means in this line of work, sharing data that is clear and accurate, having anonymous feedback opportunities for clients, and changing policies/procedures based on feedback</p>	Trusted partnership that includes both advocacy and consistency (19%) <p>“ Moving from pilot to rigorous outcome evaluations, sharing findings with the field, pushing others and funders (including OVC) to prioritize evaluation.</p>
Collaboration with other organizations (17%) <p>“ Small foundations are usually headed by owners who are intelligent and have earned the money they are giving away. They are usually [very] numerate and can analyze data. They care as the money they are giving is their own. Because of this, they have the [incentive] to demand impact and they find the orgs who can deliver impact.</p>	Impact-driven programming (11%) <p>“ Development of Logic Models and outcome metrics/measures, incorporating feedback from survivors and clients, dissemination of lessons learned to the field more broadly, utilizing findings to modify programs and services” (put a highlight over bold) SL</p>
Trauma-informed and client-centered impact evaluation (8%) <p>“ Institute for Shelter Care has been in this space or years and has real-time observations on therapy, policy, and trauma informed care and best practices. They offer training that is top notch.</p>	

SL This designation indicates the response is from a Survivor-Led Organization.

Tools and Measures Used for Evaluation

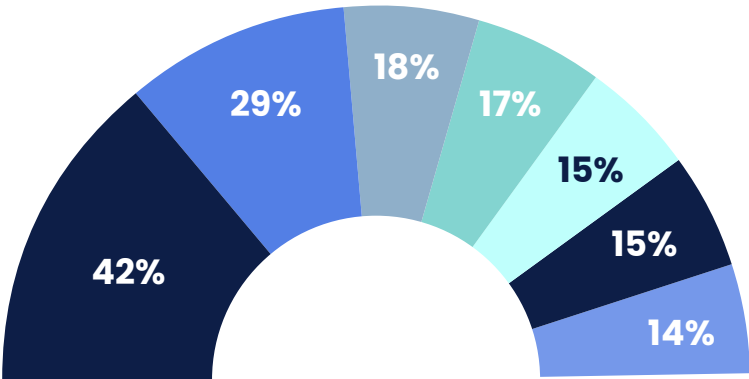
The following were identified by respondents as utilized in their service provision:

ACE Questionnaire
 Arizona Self-Sufficiency Matrix
 Assessment of Survivor Outcomes (ASO)
 Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)
 Beck Depression Inventory II (BDI-II)
 Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Financial Well-Being Scale
 COPE Inventory (COPE)
 Freedom Lifemap
 Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7)
 Herth Hope Index (HHI)
 HTRISK Assessment Tool
 Self-Sufficiency Matrix

Measures for Providers Responding to Victimization Experiences (iMPROVE)
 Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) & Session Rating Scales (SRS)
 Outcomes for Human Trafficking Survivors (OHTS)
 PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5)
 Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)
 Posttraumatic Growth Inventory
 Risk and Protective Factors Checklist
 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale
 General Self Efficacy Scale (GSE)
 Short Form Survey 12-Item (SF-12)
 UCLA Loneliness Scale
 UCLA PTSD Reaction Index

Promising Practices in Outcome Evaluation in the Sector

Organizations were asked, “If you have an interest to learn about promising practices in outcome evaluation in the anti-trafficking field, where do you go to find this information?” Fifty-six organizations responded, and 36 (64%) identified the following seven themes; 36% (n = 20) reported being unable to provide an example.

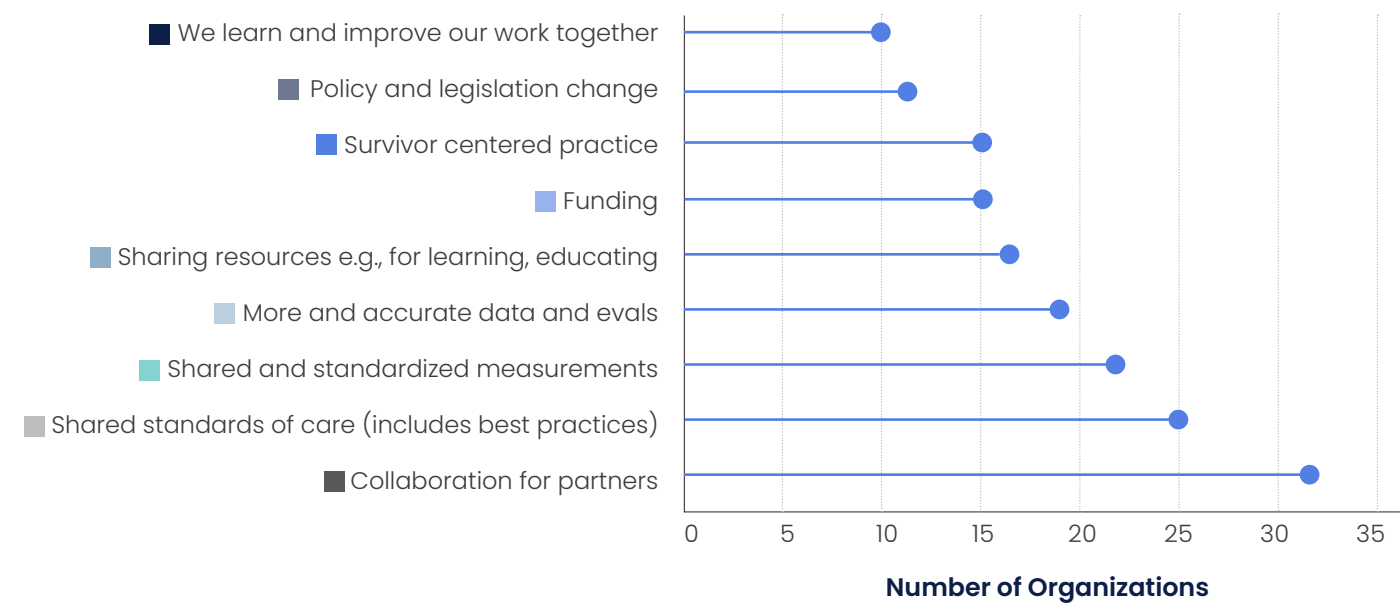


To other organizations in the anti-trafficking sector (42%) “ Polaris, Traffick911, Unbound, North Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking, Texas Health and Human Services Human Trafficking Resource Center, My Life My Choice, Human trafficking Advisory Group	General partners with expertise (29%) “ Reports, articles, literature review, other program outcome evaluations, clinical publications, community-based leaders SL
Government agencies with trafficking expertise (18%) “ AGs Data and Research Subcommittee, International Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institutes annual conference, OVC web site, HEAL website, National Human Trafficking Hotline, Office of Victims of Crime, Department of Health and Human Services, Child Advocacy Center Data, Eyes Up Appalachia data, Child Welfare Data, Department of Justice Data, Shared Hope International, lots of places that are not integrated :) SL	Convenings or places where expertise is captured/recorded (17%) “ Webinars offered by national trafficking alliances and government funders (OVC, VOCA) SL
Research agency/coalition (15%) “ Webinars by federal agencies, best practices used by other organizations, Center for Victim Research, our prior evaluators	Google (15%) “ Google search/academic articles, consult with OVC TTAC, RTI, university partners, peer organizations with well developed impact functions such as CAST LA
Funder (14%) “ Peer-reviewed journals, accredited associations, funder that specifically funds evaluation and research	

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Collective Impact in the Anti-Trafficking Sector

Fifty-nine organizations responded to the question, “What are the greatest opportunities to collective impact in the anti-trafficking sector?”



Note: Each box corresponds to a theme outlined above. Many responses reflect intersections across multiple themes.

“It helps improve client services and allows us to clearly communicate to other providers what works. Having clear outcome data also is a great “selling” tool for funders to show how their investments are moving the needle for the survivors enrolled in a program.”

“enhanced partnerships, standardization of practices and metrics, and leveraging technology, policy change” SL

“Working together. The unity among organizations in our area makes a massive difference.”

“Together educating the public, funders and [decision-makers] of the actual extent, complexity and intersectionality of human trafficking with other issues.”

“Resisting and changing the siloing of agencies and funding”

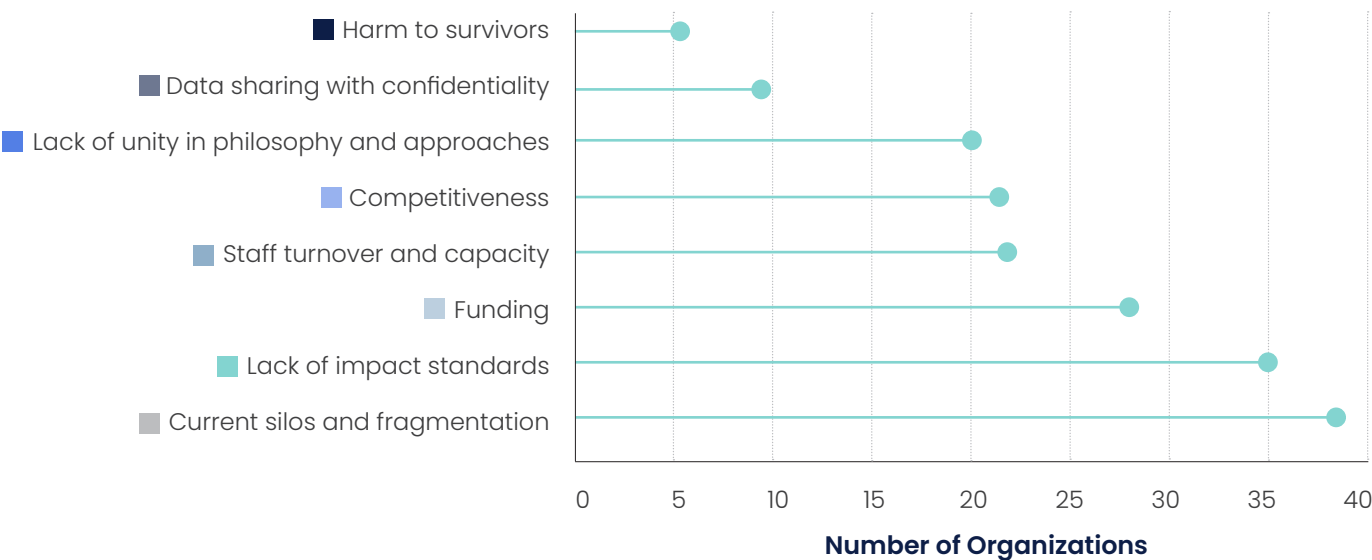
“Establishing integrated service delivery models that provide holistic support to survivors. Involving survivors in program design and implementation to ensure that services are survivor-centered and address needs and experiences. Pooling resources, such as funding, expertise, and technology, can enhance the capacity of organizations to address trafficking more effectively.”

“it helps the entire movement as a whole bring solutions and impact faster” SL

Collective Impact is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions who advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems level change. – Collective Impact Forum

SL This designation indicates the response is from a Survivor-Led Organization.

Sixty-five organizations responded to the question, “What are the greatest challenges to collective impact in the anti-trafficking sector?”



Note: Each box corresponds to a theme outlined above. Many responses reflect intersections across multiple themes.

■ ■

“Silos, lack of willingness to share data, duplicative or uncoordinated efforts, fragmentation”

■ ■ ■

“Time, inability to be able to fund a role to focus on this. Most of us are wearing a lot of hats and the daily urgent can often put collaboration on the back burner – not because we don’t believe it’s important, we just don’t have the time. Also, sometimes collaboration efforts are not well-run/well-facilitated and then it feels like a waste of valuable time.” SL

■ ■ ■

“in-fighting, a lack of understanding of impact tracking, political will, some partners not interested in innovation or exposing their impact (or lack [thereof]), racism, anti-poverty bias, other biases, focus on “perfect victim”

■ ■ ■ ■

“Ensuring organizations know how to handle the privacy and security of sensitive information about program participants. Organizations often work in isolation, leading to fragmented efforts and duplication of services. Insufficient funding that restricts the ability of organizations to scale their programs and collaborate effectively.”

■ ■ ■

“We’re diluted in our efforts to showcase impact. Competitive funding. Not asking the right questions when collecting data. Ignoring collective data/impact because of politics.”

■ ■ ■

“There is so much bad data in the anti-trafficking sector – inaccurate data, poorly collected data, a sheer lack of data, and un-cited data are all major challenges. This commonly leads to confusion and disagreement among approaches, as well as a perception of having a general lack of knowledge in service provision. Lack of reconciling data with other adjacent sectors, such as housing insecurity and substance use, also presents challenges to understanding data in context.” SL

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Resource Investments in the Anti-Trafficking Sector

Organizations were asked the question, **“If there were resources available to financially assist your organization with evaluation, how would this influence your organization’s evaluation process?”** Of the 72 organizations that responded, the greatest interest is in implementing more sophisticated evaluation and increasing staffing dedicated to impact.



More rigorous, elevated, and refined evaluation (53%) <p>“ We would implement a robust data tracking & aggregation system, we would hire a dedicated data/outcomes person and expand our quality assurance team, we would generate an impact report every year, we would provide outcomes data to stakeholders – specifically youth & families we serve. We would provide outcomes data in our progress monitoring process which would inform decision making in the treatment process, etc.</p> <p>improved data collection, enhanced capacity and collaboration SL</p>	Increase impact staff headcount (49%) <p>“ If we could hire a contractor or part-time employee to focus on evaluation, that would be hugely helpful. SL</p> <p>We would expand our development team to include a dedicated impact, research, and analysis role.</p>
Better reporting and sharing of data externally (13%) <p>“ We would dedicate a full-time staff member to evaluation, research, and partnerships with peer organizations on data sharing and collective analysis/impact. SL</p>	Further org strategic development and programming (13%) <p>“ With more funding, we would have dedicated staffing to analyze service provision data and produce learning to improve services internally and share externally.</p>
Free up direct service staff capacity (11%) <p>“ We would be in a position to hire an additional team member(s) or make role shifts to focus on impact and evaluation. The investment and commitment would also influence strategic planning, 3 year plan, and 10 year plan.</p>	Implement better systems, technology, tools (11%) <p>“ Invest in Technology: We could invest in more advanced data collection and analysis tools, which would allow us to gather more detailed and accurate data.</p> <p>More money spent on consultants, upgrade to better software for collecting, analyzing and reporting data</p>
New or continued partnership with external evaluators (10%) <p>“ ...It would also help us engage consultants such as RTI for specific projects, for example when we were exploring several strategic options for geographic expansion, and the launch of an impact institute. Also, it would help us engage other key players in collecting the same data so we can fund the development of predictive models...</p>	

SL This designation indicates the response is from a Survivor-Led Organization.

Where Do We Go From Here?

To advance the U.S. anti-trafficking sector, funders can take decisive action to foster an impact-driven approach. By sustaining capacity-building, centering community voices, and partnering for change, funders will drive the sector toward meaningful, measurable impact.

The six steps below outline how funders can play a pivotal role in shaping a unified, collaborative, and effective response to human trafficking, positioning the sector for sustained success over the next decade.



Strengthen Organizational Capacity for Impact Evaluation

- ▶ **Elevate Leaders Driving Impact:** Support NGOs that demonstrate a strong commitment to impact evaluation, particularly those led by individuals with lived experience. By investing in these leaders, funders ensure that the expertise and perspectives of affected communities inform organizational practices and sector-wide impact strategies.
- ▶ **Fund Impact Talent Development and Capacity Building:** Direct funding to leading NGOs to develop expertise in impact evaluation and provide technical assistance in data collection, analysis, and reporting. Funders should prioritize small to mid-size organizations needing support while also investing in sector-led initiatives, such as partnerships between Impact Rising and training-focused NGOs. Supporting readiness assessments ensures tailored capacity-building efforts, while sustainable revenue models empower nonprofits to expand training, strengthen staff, and drive long-term sector impact.



Provide Flexible, Long-Term Funding to Drive Impact

- ▶ **Offer Multi-Year, Unrestricted Funding:** Many NGOs reported that funding constraints hinder their ability to prioritize impact evaluation. To address this, funders should commit to multi-year, unrestricted funding models that provide the stability and flexibility necessary for organizations to innovate and adapt to changing conditions while investing in impact-driven initiatives.
- ▶ **Co-Invest with Other Funders:** Partnering with fellow funders can amplify the reach and sustainability of initiatives. Collaborative funding enhances the sector's ability to pool resources and drive significant, collective impact.



Leverage Data to Drive Advocacy and Policy Change

- ▶ **Fund Data-Driven Advocacy Initiatives:** Support advocacy projects that leverage data to amplify historically excluded voices and drive systemic reforms. Ensure data systems prioritize benefiting the community by preventing harm and focusing on strengths.
- ▶ **Back Research and Data Collection Efforts:** Fund research led by the community to gather and analyze data on trafficking trends. Community-driven data informs ethical policies and ensures that funding strategies align with lived experiences and community strengths.

Where Do We Go From Here? *continued*



Foster a Culture of Learning and Adaptation

- ▶ **Support Feedback Mechanisms for Grantees:** Fund opportunities for grantees, particularly smaller organizations, to gather feedback through tools like surveys and participatory evaluations. Strengthened feedback mechanisms enable nonprofits to adapt and improve services based on real-world insights, fostering continuous learning and improvement.
- ▶ **Encourage Innovation Through Learning Grants:** Provide grants for pilot initiatives that test new ideas and approaches. These grants could fund exploratory efforts, such as testing new service delivery models, conducting surveys, or implementing outcome evaluations, with a focus on documenting lessons learned. Over time, this fosters more rigorous, elevated, and refined evaluation practices, enhancing the sector's overall impact.



Invest in Collective Impact Models

- ▶ **Support Cross-Sector Partnerships:** Fund initiatives that bring together NGOs, private sector organizations, and government agencies to align efforts. Grants can foster collaboration and build a shared understanding of “impact,” uniting stakeholders around common goals and driving collective progress.
- ▶ **Champion Shared Measurement Tools:** Invest in standardized impact metrics and sector-wide tools that enable grantees to streamline reporting, foster shared learning, and enhance collaboration. These tools create a unified approach to evaluating and communicating progress across organizations.



Commit to Long-Term Monitoring and Sector-Wide Impact

- ▶ **Support a Decade-Long Monitoring Initiative:** Fund continuous impact measurement efforts including an impact tool to monitor change for individual nonprofits within the sector, with the goal of positioning the anti-trafficking sector as a recognized leader in impact-driven work by 2034. Support recurring data collection to track progress and capture trends.
- ▶ **Champion the Vision of an Impact-Driven Sector:** Encourage funders to collaborate on a shared goal of transforming the sector into one that is universally recognized for its commitment to measurable impact. By prioritizing funding for NGOs long-term capacity building and knowledge-sharing, funders can help build a cohesive, data-driven narrative that showcases the sector's evolution and achievements in measurable impact.

Closing Reflections

With Gratitude to Social Impact Funders,

The insights shared in *The State of Impact* underscore the immense potential for funders to catalyze measurable, sustainable change within the U.S. anti-trafficking sector. These insights reflect the sector's ongoing progress and its readiness for a collective, impact-driven future. As the sector continues to evolve, the data and experiences shared by the participating organizations will serve as critical building blocks for its development over the next decade.

This report is not only a snapshot of the current state but also a pivotal moment in a 10-year journey. From 2024 to 2034, Impact Rising will continue to track progress, deepen understanding, and align efforts toward lasting systemic change. Through this longitudinal study, we are committed to supporting continuous learning, collaboration, and shared growth across the sector.

The contributions from the over 90 U.S.-based organizations that participated in this study have provided invaluable perspectives. Their openness in sharing both successes and challenges enables a clearer understanding of where the sector stands today and where it can go in the future. These insights are foundational to shaping an impact-driven approach and advancing the anti-trafficking sector in meaningful ways.

We extend our gratitude to all the organizations that have contributed to this initiative. Their ongoing work and shared wisdom will remain at the heart of this impact-driven journey. As Impact Rising continues to support the sector through this 10-year study, we invite funders to consider how their investments can drive lasting change for individuals, communities, and systems within the U.S. anti-trafficking sector and beyond.

In Partnership,

The Impact Rising Team

Note: Funders, if you are interested in receiving a list of the organizations who participated in *The State of Impact*, please reach out to us at tsoi@impactrising.com.

Impact Rising

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