

# Road to Recovery

Nine anti-trafficking organizations share pivots and emerging best practices in response to COVID-19 disruption

# About Restore

Restore exists to make freedom real for survivors of trafficking in the United States. Since 2009, Restore has pioneered innovative housing, economic-empowerment, and wellbeing solutions that provide survivors of trafficking opportunities for safe, affordable housing, economic opportunities, and trauma-specific counseling and case management.

Based in New York City, **Restore promotes empowerment-based initiatives and cross-sector collaboration to promote impact-driven solutions.** Examples include the social enterprise Restore incubated in 2016 with 30+ business partners and 60+ owners who are survivors of trafficking. Restore's partners for economic empowerment include Workshop in Business Opportunities (WIBO) for its entrepreneurship training and the Survivor Inclusion Initiative in partnership with the Liechtenstein Initiative for financial and banking services.

Restore's mission also includes training and resourcing agencies across the country. As a leader in the anti-trafficking space, Restore aims to influence the strategies, reduce systemic barriers, and improve tracking of impact in the field. When working with agencies, Restore runs pilots, measures impact, and iterates to generate successful outcomes.

**For more information, please visit [www.restorenyc.org](http://www.restorenyc.org)**



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# Outline

- I. Executive Summary
- II. The Amplified Impact of COVID-19 on Survivors of Human Trafficking
- III. Actionable Pivots & Programs for Service Delivery
- IV. Cultivating Organizational Resilience: Laying the Groundwork for Future Business Continuity and Sustainability
- V. Takeaways for the Times Ahead
- VI. Meet the Leaders
- VII. Appendix

# Executive Summary

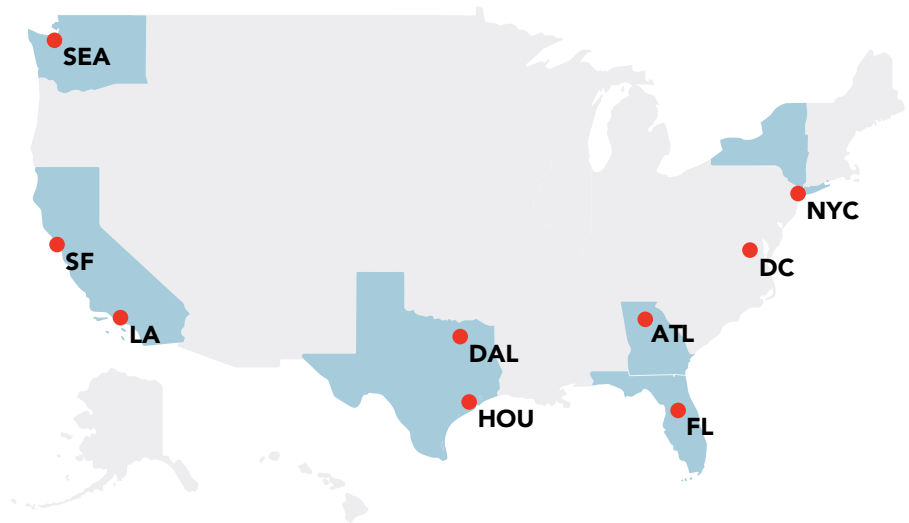
Crisis doesn't make an appointment. The crisis of a global pandemic was no exception to the rule. Anti-trafficking organizations across the world have been forced to innovate and adapt both during COVID-19 and in post-crisis. Now is the time, more than ever, to share the field's inventive and iterative approach to recovery.

Although a number of early surveys and reports have been published to document the effects of COVID-19 on various populations, including individuals who have been trafficked, few have shared what service providers are doing in response. This report outlines actionable pivots and emerging best practices from nine leading anti-trafficking service providers across urban settings in the United States where trafficking is prevalent – Atlanta, Central Florida, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington DC. **The purpose of this report is to share the ways in which service delivery and organizational strategy are being adapted in the anti-trafficking field to respond to COVID-19.**

One reason for the urgency of this report is that human trafficking is highly correlated to times of crisis. In these moments, populations without employment, housing, or other forms of financial security are most at risk. COVID-19 has had broad-reaching implications across the globe, but for victims and survivors of human trafficking, it has increased vulnerabilities for exploitation and the resurfacing of past trauma.

The Executive Directors we interviewed and the organizations they lead have responded to the crisis in differing ways depending on their programs and populations. However, there are a number of emergent themes that have evolved in the areas of pivots and programs, organizational resilience, and takeaways for the times ahead that are shared with detail and illustration in this report.

Like the road to any recovery, at the individual or societal level, the best solutions to new challenges come from sharing diverse perspectives and collaborating. In doing so, a prudent optimism about the new world emerges ahead.



# Highlights from the Report

## Actionable Pivots & Programs

- 8 out of 9 anti-trafficking organizations launched a COVID-19 fund to provide emergency, unrestricted cash assistance
- All organizations moved to virtual services (utilizing Zoom, Apricot Connect, Infobip) with 80-95% retention
- Organizations deprioritized non-core initiatives (e.g., expansion projects) and stepped into growth (e.g., economic empowerment models such as entrepreneurship)

## Cultivating Organizational Resilience

- Benchmark themes included savings funds averaging 3-5 months, 40-90% funding from grants, and 40% referral increase
- Leaders established scenario-planning and had three best practices for building resiliency: think ahead (e.g., risk management), engage (e.g., educating communities on the racial and economic injustices tied to trafficking), and get creative (e.g., new engagement models like digital open houses)
- Team members were prioritized - focus was paid to wellbeing, healthy boundaries, and flex time

## Takeaways for the Times Ahead

- As the job market continues to be greatly affected for survivors of trafficking, unrestricted cash assistance is critical and includes flexible funding for rental assistance
- Invest in technology access and supportive services
- Lean into economic empowerment such as diversifying employment opportunities, implementing job readiness services, and investing in entrepreneurship
- Continue community collaboration (e.g., formal coalitions with survivor leadership) and advocacy for government agencies to fund anti-trafficking efforts across the United States



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# The Amplified Impact of COVID-19 on Survivors of Human Trafficking

**Individuals who experience trafficking are not by default vulnerable but are instead impacted by the intersectional effect of multiple socioeconomic and structural marginalization, including economic inequality, systemic racism, and precarious migration status. These structurally embedded vulnerabilities can lead to great challenges obtaining safety and security across many of the domains heavily hit by COVID-19, such as employment, housing, and healthcare.**

To understand the impact of COVID-19 on survivors, it is important to understand the widespread identities of the individuals affected by trafficking. There is no nationally representative data on the demographics of survivors of trafficking, although the known data documented by the US National Human Trafficking Hotline suggest that reported cases often involved survivors who are women, adults, foreign nationals, and experienced sex trafficking.<sup>[1]</sup> However, for the majority of cases, survivors' socio-demographics remain unknown.

The organizations themselves represent individuals with diverse social identities, such as ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, and immigration status. Many of the leaders interviewed for this report observed both a growing and

shifting demographic of survivors during COVID-19. Most reported supporting a growing number of survivors who were younger (20 years old and under), male, and in minority communities – with a heavy skew to Blacks/African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos.

Despite our limited knowledge of overall survivor socio-demographics, the reported racial, gender- and age-based disparities in employment loss during COVID-19 suggest a much needed greater attention to not only trafficking survivors' needs during COVID-19 in general but also survivors who fall in the hard-hit groups.

Individuals who experience trafficking are not by default vulnerable, but instead, impacted by the intersectional effect of multiple socioeconomic and structural marginalization including economic inequality, systemic racism, and precarious migration status, to name a few. These structurally-embedded vulnerabilities can lead to great challenges obtaining safety and security across many of the domains heavily hit by COVID-19, such as employment, housing and healthcare.

Economic inequality was exacerbated by the widespread unemployment that began in March. According to the Bureau

of Labor Statistics, in March the US experienced the largest over-the month increase in unemployment rate since January 1975<sup>[2]</sup> from 3.5% in February to 4.4% in March. This included a decrease in almost 500,000 jobs, the majority in industries such as hospitality, food services, and leisure.

To our knowledge, no data has been collected nationwide about the main industries where survivors are employed after exiting trafficking and their employment changes since and during the pandemic. Data collected by Restore's Economic Empowerment team, however, indicate that although survivors work in a wide range of diverse sectors, most survivors lost jobs in three sectors: food industry (30%), personal care and service (25%), and cleaning (19%). Other organizations shared that a significant majority, if not all, of their clients lost their employment for at least part of the crisis.

The accompanying loss of income can often quickly compromise survivors' housing security and other domains of life stability, such as food security. Increased exposure to homelessness will unfortunately heighten the risks of COVID-19 infection and other health conditions.<sup>[3,4]</sup>

Although the longer-term effects of COVID-19 on the economy and employment are yet to be seen, there are dominant trends pointing to the service needs of trafficking survivors around the deeply systemic factors that make them more susceptible to losing access to basic needs during times of crisis.

What follows is a summary of the emerging best practices and programs adopted by 10 service providers that work with diverse groups of trafficking survivors. As we continue to learn to better do this work, we would like to draw on our current service experience to offer key guidelines for the future as we enter the year ahead.

## Most survivors lost jobs in three sectors:

**30%**  
food industry

**25%**  
personal care and service

**19%**  
cleaning

*\*According to Restore's data collected by their Economic Empowerment team*





# Actionable Pivots & Programs for Service Delivery

The rapidly changing needs and landscape caused by COVID-19 demanded that anti-trafficking service providers adapt their plans and strategies. There were a number of common areas where the teams made the strategic decision to pivot, deprioritize, or grow their support programs.



# Pivots

## 1. Ready for Urgent Needs

**8 out of 9 organizations provided financial assistance delivered through cash, direct deposits, and gift cards**

Caseworkers often reported that clients were deeply impacted by the loss of jobs and financial resources, which enabled organizations across the country to pivot quickly to fulfill immediate financial needs. Although the government offered stimulus relief money, many clients were ineligible due to undocumented status or work in the informal economy. For those who were eligible, the financial relief was insignificant compared to the actual need. This led to organizations pivoting quickly to help clients get financial resources.

**The most common vehicle to support this pivot in responding to urgent needs was the launch of a COVID-19 fund to support clients in paying rent or other primary needs when unemployed or underemployed. This included a specific shift in financial resources to unrestricted cash assistance to support survivors in maintaining safe housing, including the cost of utilities, food, and other household items.**

## A list of common urgent needs include:

- *Rent*
- *Utilities expenses*
- *Food*
- *Medicine*
- *Payment for phone bill*
- *Household items*
- *Cleaning supplies*
- *Social support*

Funds were deployed through gift cards, cash, and direct deposits. Many organizations surveyed individuals to understand their needs and preferred method to receive funds.

One service provider pivoted to reorient one-quarter of their expenses for the fiscal year to cash assistance to clients. It also was augmented by an increased focus on connecting clients to other local, state, and national cash

assistance or microgrant resources like FreeFrom's Safety Fund.

In the future, maintaining a cash-assistance emergency fund has become a top priority for organizational leaders. This includes setting up a separate savings account and educating funding partners on the important learnings from the recent pandemic.

**This COVID-19-specific cash assistance ranged  
from total cash disbursement in 2020 of:**

**\$87**

**at minimum at the individual level**

**\$400,000**

**or more for all clients**

## 2. Accelerating the Move to Digital

### Everyone moved to HIPAA-compliant video conferencing for counseling and programming with 80 - 95% retention

From distributing cash to counseling and service curriculum – 2020 was the year that everything went online. Although many of the organizations had already planned for a move to digital with attention to safety, security, and confidentiality for clients, the timeline was greatly accelerated, including the use of online portals and video conferencing.

Service providers were challenged to ensure clients had equal access to technology, including phones, laptops, and internet, as well as training resources to use these tools effectively. Organizations often accessed local government resources as well as funding from partners (e.g., foundations, individuals) to support this focus. This was done with recognition that some of these tools might have been used in some trafficking situations, and therefore attention was paid to trauma-sensitive education and safety planning.

**One of the biggest insights from the move to digital was the ability for many service providers to still maintain effectiveness in programming. One service provider reported that client satisfaction scores remain high. However, many clients reported still preferring in-person services, especially for counseling and group-level services like economic empowerment.**

Many providers recognized the opportunity to maintain a hybrid model going forward into 2021. Some of the strategic questions that remain outstanding include an assessment of which services are best suited to remain digital first (e.g., educational resources, cash assistance), programmatic effectiveness, and preference tracking for survivors over time.

## Tools to go digital



HIPAA-compliant video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom



Secure online communication tools, such as Apricot Connect and Infobip, to message (via text and email) clients including for surveys like strengths and needs assessments, as well as to ask about interest in returning to in-person services, and satisfaction questionnaires



New innovation in Virtual Reality (VR) to encourage anonymity and reduce bias as seen in MoreTooLife's VR/EVAL project

# De-prioritize

## 1. Focusing on the Core

### Organizations deepened the roster of partners for non-core services

Most providers made the strategic decisions to deprioritize any program or service that wasn't core to the top-requested services of the people they serve or that other organizations could do better. This pushed the need to source more partner resources, especially around shelter with hotel partnerships, where there was significant shortage.

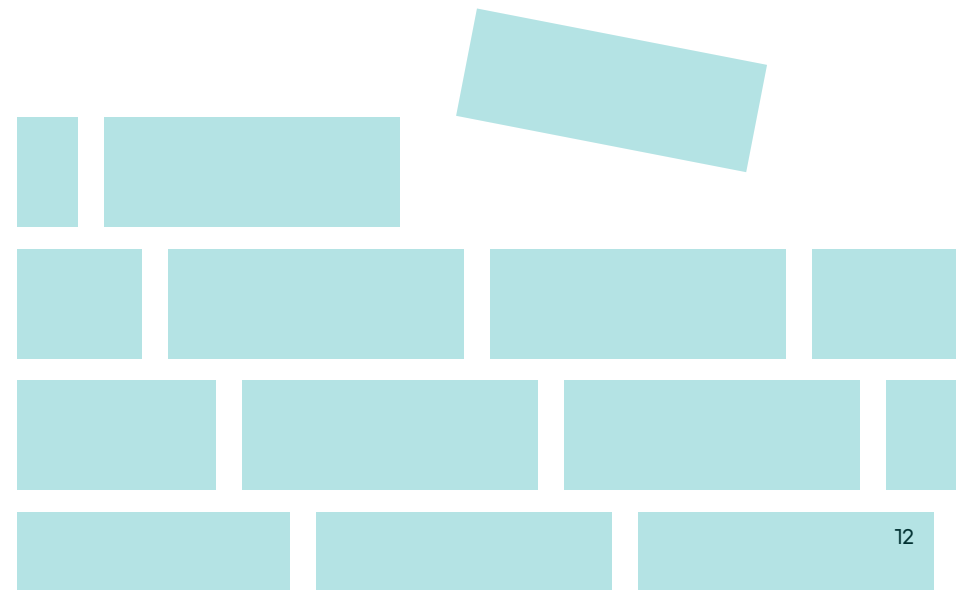
**One service provider recognized its expertise was not in counseling and deprioritized resources to this area within the organization, choosing to focus instead on formal partnerships with trauma-sensitive counseling experts in the community.**

Another service provider deprioritized its ESL classes and financially invested in a survivor-led partner organization to lead English education curriculum moving forward. This de-prioritization of non-core services also meant the need for increased collaboration and alliances through weekly calls with other agency partners in the community. Task forces and governmental agencies were typically the conveners of these cross-program touch points.

## 2. Setting aside strategic plans and expansion to meet immediate needs

### Almost all large capital programs or footprint expansion projects were put on pause

This included one provider's delay in moving into a new transitional home and another provider pausing on footprint expansion including expanding to a new city to reallocate resources to directly support the immediate needs for assistance.



# Grow

## 1. Investing in Economic-Empowerment Initiatives

### Organizations expanded and diversified income opportunities for survivors of trafficking

Given financial insecurity being a significant driver of exploitation, there is an increased emphasis on economic solutions for clients seeking employment during COVID-19. During the pandemic, almost all agencies that had strong partnerships with business opportunities or apprenticeships saw those relationships disappear. Many business partners had to reorganize or lay off employees. In one example, an organization whose main pillar is economic empowerment lost 90% of its partnerships, going from 30 to 3.

Many of the new jobs survivors obtained came through their own connections, which also emphasizes the power of and reliance on their networks. It is also important to note that many survivors did not want to find jobs right away, as they needed to prioritize health and families early in the pandemic.

There were four main strategies to curtail the disappearance of business partnerships and invest in economic opportunities:

1

Hiring staff to focus solely on securing new business partnerships. Others worked with job placement partners like First Step.

2

Moving longer-term apprenticeships to immediate opportunity roles like e-commerce, retail, and technology.

3

Investing in microgrants and entrepreneurship programs to promote survivor-led businesses and educational pursuits.

4

Mapping and monitoring the macro employment environment to better track job opportunities available.

## 2. Leaning In

### Organizations increased connection points with survivors by 2-4X

A number of the service providers sent surveys to better understand how they could support clients specifically during COVID-19. A common theme from the clients served included a desire for increased connection in the midst of isolation during the pandemic.

One service provider's survey findings revealed that in addition to increased requests for service offerings (e.g., case management, housing, economic empowerment), clients requested that staff do the following with greater frequency: a) check in by phone or texting to ask how they are doing, b) have more communication and reach out more often, and c) be responsive to client needs for services and emotional support.

**All of the service providers we interviewed met the request for increased connection and community by increasing their investment in interaction points. This included phone/video calls using safe platforms and texts with increased frequency when requested by clients. Many case managers moved from one to two calls per week to assess needs and provide increased support.**

Communication going forward will likely include a combination of increased interaction through safe digital and social channels while case management services and some programming move back to a steady-state cadence.





# Cultivating Organizational Resilience

## **Laying the Groundwork for Future Business Continuity and Sustainability**

While supporting the resilience of survivors, it is equally important for anti-trafficking service providers to be resilient themselves. COVID-19 challenged leaders in new ways that required learning on the fly and moving fast. In order for the programs and decisions made around service delivery - pivots, de-prioritization, and growth - to be successful, each organization needed to ensure continuity and sustainability for long-term impact. There were a number of learnings, tools, and standards that emerged across the organizations to address the demands brought on by uncertainty and crisis management.

# Common themes emerged across the organizations that were positioned to address the demands and uncertainty of the pandemic:

## Benchmarks

### 3-5 months

*Savings (separate budget line item) ranged from 0 - 17 months, and averaged 3 - 5 months*

### 3-10% savings fund

*Savings rates (when planning or receiving contributions) ranged from 0 - 16% of cash set aside on unrestricted private donations, with a target of 3 - 10% for savings fund*

### 40-90% grants

*Funding came primarily through grants (mostly private) 40 - 90%, followed by events 0 - 40% and then individual donations 10 - 100%*

### 40% referral increase

*All organizations saw an increase in referrals, some more than 40% from previous years, without sufficient capacity to serve a growing waitlist*

### 6+ months

*Most organizations that had 6 months or more savings fund had a grant writer on staff*

# Ready for Anything – Anticipating Future Scenarios

*Organizations that were best positioned to respond to crisis had maintained a detailed emergency plan and consistently revisited their scenarios as information changed. For those who had not done so previously, these were the initial steps for many leaders - establish scenario-planning which includes the following consistent four behaviors:*



## Save

**Maintain 3 – 6 months of cash in a savings fund** for times of crisis that does not go into programming but provides a pool for things like cash assistance. Organizations elected a finance committee on the board that set guidelines for minimum cash on hand and then kept a separate line item (in savings) not included in the budget.



## Diversify

**Reduce dependency on events.** Most organizations had 40% or more of contributions coming from in-person events. Many organizations expanded outreach and prioritized grant writing. Others began to experiment with in-house economic-empowerment initiatives which included for-profit business opportunities that support the operations of the non-profit organization, similar to AnnieCannons' model which trains survivors as software engineers and runs a for-profit technical product development shop.



## Track

**Detail a monthly review of funding sources** based on what donors or grantors are saying or what the organization is projecting with fundraising events or initiatives. Organizations used a strategy management tool like a balanced scorecard and outcomes monitoring of services to help direct resources to the most critical service areas – especially when tradeoffs needed to be made or when there was tension in the team on priorities.



## Plan

**Develop a crisis plan** and revisit it as things change. Don't just put it on paper and leave it in the cloud. One service provider uses Deloitte's tool,<sup>[5]</sup> a helpful guided exercise for mapping out various possibilities and projecting what it would mean for expenses, staffing, and services offered. The use of these tools helped the provider make quick decisions when there were many unknowns.

# Building Resilient Support Networks

*There is an increased need to build resiliency and connection within networks, specifically community and financial partners, to maintain the longevity of the organization and services to survivors of trafficking. The executive directors shared three best practices for building resiliency:*

## 1. Think Ahead

The pandemic draws our immediate focus to the present crisis at hand, but leaders were also challenged to simultaneously think ahead and plan for the future. How will clients' needs evolve over the next 1-3-5 years?

**What does an evolved service model look like post-COVID-19? Where will our field evolve and what resources will be available to address the ever-changing landscape of anti-trafficking service provision?**

Optimal planning takes place alongside clients via leadership initiatives, advisory boards comprised of members with lived experience, focus groups, and surveys.

In financial planning for sustainability, there is an understanding that COVID-19 grants or COVID-19-specific

funding is anticipated to be one-time (e.g., Robin Hood Foundation, United Way). Organizations asked questions about which funding streams would be most at risk, with government funding at the state and local level rising to the top.

In one example, the largest state government funder froze funds to the organization for nine months in 2020, and local government funding is at risk as well. Leaders are incorporating these risks into 2021 scenario planning and future strategic initiatives to both continue advocacy for and diversify funding.



## 2. Engage

This has been a time to lean into systemic changes in attitudes, laws, and policies.

**A theme noted for these service providers is providing more education to their communities on the racial and economic injustices tied to trafficking, the harm in criminalizing individuals in the sex trade, especially for black and brown communities, and the public health challenges for survivors of trauma that continue to marginalize Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who have experienced trafficking.**

Even more so during COVID-19, anti-trafficking service providers are well positioned to connect with larger networks for partnership in service delivery to survivors of trafficking. This includes networks prioritizing survivor leadership and racial and economic justice initiatives, such as Cast's Resilient Voices and National Survivor Network (NSN), Freedom Network USA, World Without Exploitation, and HEAL Trafficking.

According to these leaders, there is also an increased need to build resiliency and connection within financial partner networks to maintain the longevity of the organization, particularly post-crisis. Themes that emerged included co-creating the future and inspiring calls to action.

Organizations hosted roundtables and town halls to provide an insider glance into the updates, impacts, and vision for the future. This was described as being both a motivator for the team and a way to deepen critical relationships.

## 3. Get Creative

When the pandemic hit, these service providers worked outside of their traditional ways of operating and engaged in creative initiatives with sustainability in mind -- e.g., new engagement models with community members ranging from content creation through virtual theatre productions to virtual tours of all programs including staff stories. This also included digital open houses and membership models for partners to engage in the systems, programs, and stories that are core to each organization.

# Team

*Each leader emphasized the great priority of their team during the pandemic. The role of a strong team during times of collective trauma, grief, and uncertainty could not be emphasized enough. Many teams were navigating significant organizational-wide challenges including maintaining safety for frontline workers and burn out for some team members. Leaders placed increased emphasis on the health and support of their teams via the following:*

## Connect

**Leaders sought to create new ways for employees to connect**, especially for colleagues who no longer work in the same space. This included instituting more frequent meetings for both their core team as well as across the entire team. They also carved out more time outside of everyday tasks to see how people were doing, what could be celebrated, and what people needed. Checking in emotionally and having leadership share transparently with the team were significant in setting the cultural norms. A number of service providers started to regularly provide updates and encouragement videos from Executive Directors, board tribute videos, videos or letters from community leaders or supporters with great success.

## Recognize

**Resources were provided for staff** including a special fund for home-office equipment and hazard pay for people doing extra in-person work compared to their colleagues, depending on their role. Recognition included bonuses, gift cards, and awards.

## Take Breaks

**Teams implemented greater boundaries in their work schedules** including clocking in/out to make sure lunch breaks and rest were happening. Staff who were historically providing in-person services but reported discomfort with doing so due to health concerns were now providing remote services. Other steps were put in place. For instance, if you work more than your shift you are expected to take off time within the next two weeks. Many service providers expanded their leave policy, added mental-well-being days, provided additional flex time, and role modeled vacation time.

## Prioritize Health

**Free counseling was almost universal across organizations for all staff members.** Many also established collaborations in the wellness space such as tapping, yoga, breath work, stress management courses, coaching, and trauma-resilience workshops.



A silhouette of a person with long, curly hair, seen from behind, with their right arm raised and fist clenched. The background is a solid, vibrant orange-red color.

# Takeaways for the Times Ahead

The factors that enable and sustain human trafficking are complex and require solutions that address injustices at the intersection of sexism, racism, and classism (to name a few), in addition to quality service provision. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is more urgent than ever to focus on these systemic socio-economic issues. This process was and continues to be an iterative process of learning and adapting. The three headline recommendations given the above-mentioned themes for the year ahead in providing services to survivors of trafficking are shared here.

## Cash Assistance and Flexible Funding



As the job market continues to be greatly affected particularly for survivors of historically disenfranchised groups, **unrestricted cash assistance** is critical.



Ensure rental and housing assistance by broadening access especially for foreign-national populations; if not eligible now, **offer flexible funding for rental assistance** in the short term.

## Invest in Technology Access and Fluency Supportive Services



Establish an industry standard or guidelines for support through telehealth and other digital platforms.



Partner with organizations that provide access and training and provide technology tools like laptops.



Invest in tools that support outreach and remote connection.

# Lean into Economic Empowerment Initiatives



Implement a job-readiness service for **training, upskilling, reskilling, and retooling** during this season.



Invest in **entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship initiatives**. We recommend reallocating resources to direct finances toward economic-justice initiatives through and beyond the pandemic. One example is launching a social-enterprise fund and microgrants to support survivor-led business ventures and educational initiatives.



**Diversify employment opportunities** by tracking sectors to anticipate demand, establishing business service lines like AnnieCannons, and encouraging the resilient networks of survivors.

# Community Collaboration and Advocacy in Continued Recovery Work



**Establish formal coalitions with key social services and healthcare providers** with survivor leadership to meet the specific needs of the community during COVID-19, spearheaded or supported by the mayors' offices in urban areas.



**National alignment on how to implement vaccine and mask protocols** while maintaining survivor agency, especially for group housing services.



**Anti-trafficking service providers need budgets approved** by the federal, state, and local governments for FY21 that continue financial support services and incorporate ways to maintain some of the programs initiated by the field's early COVID-19 response. One standout example of this was the initiative by the Department of Health and Human Services' Trafficking Victim Assistance Program (TVAP) that provided additional emergency funds to survivors of trafficking where needed during COVID-19.



Of these recommendations for the industry, the most important takeaway is **collaboration**.

Through deep alliances with organizations across the country with similar orientations to impact-driven services, quick response and ingenuity can come forward. Innovation and ingenuity come from the diversity in backgrounds, programs, services, and populations served.

There will be other crises in the future, but **in action and community the anti-trafficking mission will continue to survive and thrive.**

# Meet the Leaders



**Brook Parker-Bello PH.D**  
Founder and CEO  
More Too Life (Florida)

More Too Life Foundation is an award winning, survivor-led, anti-human trafficking, sexual violence prevention agency that provides direct victim services, training, education, awareness events and prevention with court-appointed services to buyers and human traffickers post incarceration in three Florida counties and with a new online learning management system for use by other organizations for other buyers nationwide, as well as critical intervention services to several communities and victim. It is also a provider for Open Doors Network. More Too Life Foundation is also the creator of the new Coming Home System and Mobile App for survivors access globally.

<https://moretoolife.org/>



*Most survivors have lived in a bubble and have been locked out psychologically and emotionally to their own desires. Our services help support the hierarchy of needs – food, housing, clothing – so there can be that sense of safety which allows an individual to find the break that allows them to discover who they are for a minute, and breathe. From there, helping survivors find a job or get a GED isn't enough anymore. Maybe the individual wants to go to graduate school, or not go into school at all and instead get into coding, or own the rights of their IP for their books. The future is seeing the positive uses of technology, tech for good."*



**Kay Buck**  
CEO  
Cast (Los Angeles)

Cast is the nation's largest provider of comprehensive, life-changing services to survivors and an advocate for groundbreaking policies and legislation. For two decades, Cast has supported thousands of labor and sex trafficking survivors on their journey to freedom, from counseling and mentorship, to legal resources and housing, to education and leadership training. Cast continues to make a global impact and is the first organization to receive the Presidential Award to Combat Slavery and Trafficking in 2014.

<https://www.castla.org/>



*"We don't claim to do anything alone; that's why we are a coalition. As our National Survivor Leadership Program pivoted to supporting survivors directly, it meant focusing our advocacy and policy work in California. We came together like small towns do in crisis. The partnerships we invested in since inception helped us pivot and support the emergency response program. We are still in the response phase of COVID-19, rather than the recovery phase, and although it makes it hard to have a solid vision for what 2021 is going to bring, we will remain resilient, focus on taking care of our staff who then take care of our members even better, and continue at our goals with humility and grace."*





**Dr. Amanda Eckhardt**  
Executive Director  
Restore NYC (New York City)

Restore exists to make freedom real for survivors of trafficking in the United States. Since 2009, Restore has pioneered innovative housing, economic empowerment, and wellbeing solutions that provide survivors of trafficking opportunities for safe, affordable housing, economic opportunities, and trauma-specific counseling and case management.

<https://restorenyc.org/>

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*We've been tracking impact for many years but this past year developed a Balance Scorecard and Freedom Index tool for programs. It helped us assess where we were having the best outcomes and direct resources there, even when there was tension on the board and team about where funds should be directed. It's helped us make data-driven pivots to best support impact.”*



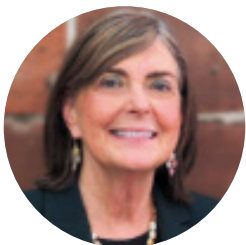
**Tina Frundt**  
Executive Director  
Courtney's House (Washington DC)

Founded in 2008, Courtney's House fearlessly searches for children who are being forced into prostitution on the streets, in brothels, strip clubs, and private homes and hotels. Survivors are embraced and brought into a safe environment where they and their families can heal, recover, and develop hopeful and influential lives. Courtney's House also trains community officials and creates awareness of the reality of sex trafficking in neighborhoods across America to help stop the crimes from happening.

<http://www.courtneyshouse.org/>

“

*As a survivor, my whole life I have had to manage 580 things. COVID-19 was another one of those things. At Courtney's House we call it your “Positive Hustle Plan” -- how you take a learned negative behavior and use it as a positive. We were getting so many referrals and we couldn't have anticipated how many people were being newly trafficked and going to hotspots like Baltimore. The number of cases, and none of them put in jail -- let go because of COVID-19. It has been a battle to keep up with the growing need, the lack of justice and the fight for funding. But I trust God has my back.”*



**Mary Frances Bowley**  
Executive Director  
Wellspring Living (Atlanta)

Founded in 2001, Wellspring Living provides domestic sex-trafficking victims and those at risk with specialized recovery services through residential and community-based programs. The programs provide transformative care through therapeutic services, education, life skills, and personal and professional development.

<https://wellspringliving.org/>



*Everyone was trained on how to work on the floor – the development team, the admin team – everyone was taking shifts when they were needed. It made it real for all of us and brought us closer together as a team. We are constantly learning. We started with a 10-page COVID-19 protocol, and now it is 100 pages. At the same time, we opened the first receiving center for youth in Georgia in March that can't keep up with the demand. It seems like the numbers of trafficked youth and the violence is getting harsher...there is a huge need."*



**Amanda Hightower**  
Executive Director  
REST (Seattle)

REST provides pathways to freedom, safety, and hope for victims of sex trafficking and people exploited in the sex trade. In all programs, from crisis intervention through long-term housing, REST works with survivors to increase their safety and move toward healing, stability, and economic independence.

<https://iwantrest.com/>



*One big takeaway on managing a nonprofit organization is to not minimize the impact your voice has as a leader. COVID-19 presented an opportunity to share reflections, bring connection to one other and grieve together in a way that let us move towards change. It was also so important to lead by example. To make sure no one feels bad for needing to take some time off to manage how their life has been disrupted due to COVID-19. We need to make sure the team is still here and well rested after the pandemic. That they know they are cared for, that they have permission to tap out and to ask for help and support."*



**Jessica Hubley**  
Cofounder and CEO  
AnnieCannons (San Francisco)

AnnieCannons transforms survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence into software engineers and entrepreneurs based on the belief that economic opportunity is key to breaking cycles of abuse and exploitation. The agency then sources and manages paying client projects for graduates to earn income and build a portfolio. Graduates secure sustainable, high-income earning opportunities while diversifying the technology industry.

<https://anniecannons.org/>



*We always had a vision that the agency business revenue would cover the operating expenses. With tech growing and relatively recession proof, we've come close to that goal. We want our members to earn a living with us for the rest of their lives. When we went completely virtual with COVID-19 we had a lot of pressure to expand to more people but the reality was if we scale too quickly we could harm people. We are trying to do permanent and deep transformational change, which means we have to work with people from where they are coming from. Instead we innovated to create positions of teaching engineers or staff developers which allowed us to flex with demand and adapt for changing circumstances while still focusing on what we do best – training talented software engineers.”*



**Bianca Jackson**  
Executive Director  
New Friends New Life (Dallas)

New Friends New Life restores and empowers formerly trafficked girls and sexually exploited women and children. By providing access to education, job training, interim financial assistance, mental health, and spiritual support, New Friends New Life helps women and children overcome backgrounds of abuse, addiction, poverty, and limited opportunities.

<https://www.newfriendsnewlife.org/>



*The move away from events takes so much pressure on the development team and focuses us on things we can control. We can't control the pandemic, but we can control our message and how we share it. It forces us to go back to who we are. Why did we start? Why do we exist? Then find people who connect to that.”*



**Kathy McGibbon**  
Founder  
Twelve 11 Partners (Houston)

Twelve 11 Partners' mission is to provide sustainable resources and a community of support to foster personal development for those overcoming sex trafficking and exploitation as they transition from surviving to thriving.

<https://www.twelve11.org/>



*Everyone joined arms very quickly. The organizations across the community created communication networks to better understand what everyone was doing and how we could quickly close the gaps. For us this meant learning the details around housing support even though we don't focus on that specifically within our organization. During the crisis it wasn't enough to refer someone. We also needed to know the process and be able to help navigate the process. We have a responsibility as a first point of contact when someone asks for help. If we don't provide that service, we help them find it."*



# Appendix

## Definitions

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), as amended (22 U.S.C. § 7102), defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

**Sex trafficking:** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; (and)

**Labor trafficking:** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

**Survivors of human trafficking:** someone who has experienced trafficking and is in the process of recovery. Although we used the term “survivor” in this report, we do recognize that individuals with trafficking experience(s) may prefer the term “victim” or not being labeled as a “survivor.”

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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states>

<sup>[2]</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit\\_04032020.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_04032020.pdf)

<sup>[3]</sup> [https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Racism-Homelessness-and-COVID-19-Fact-Sheet\\_Final\\_2.pdf](https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Racism-Homelessness-and-COVID-19-Fact-Sheet_Final_2.pdf)

<sup>[4]</sup> Karaye, I. M., & Horney, J. A. (2020). The Impact of Social Vulnerability on COVID-19 in the U.S.: An Analysis of Spatially Varying Relationships. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 59(3), 317-325. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2020.06.006>

<sup>[5]</sup> The Scenario Planning Tool can be found here:

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-deloitte-monitor-institute-scenarios-for-the-social-sector.pdf>