

INTRODUCTION

Backpage.com is a classified advertising website which is frequently used by potential traffickers to post advertisements for commercial sex with potential victims of trafficking. The National Human Trafficking Hotline has received a number of reports of forced commercial sex where the advertisement of these services was facilitated on Backpage.com.

This is not a comprehensive report on the scale or scope of human trafficking related to Backpage.com. It represents only calls and cases made to the National Hotline from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016.

OVERVIEW OF INCOMING SIGNALS

The following information is based on incoming communication with the National Human Trafficking Hotline from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016 about potential sex trafficking or sex and labor trafficking cases referencing Backpage.com. Signals and cases involving only labor trafficking were not included as Backpage.com is primarily used for the advertisement of commercial sex.

From January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received a total of **4,004 phone calls, emails, or online tip reports** in connection to cases referencing Backpage.com.



3,145 Phone Calls



59 Emails



800 Online Tip Reports

SUBSTANTIVE CALL DATA

From January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2016, a total of **3,145 substantive phone calls** were made to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in connection Backpage.com. Substantive calls are signals where the caller intended to reach the hotline and where the conversation was extensive enough for the hotline to determine the caller's request. They do not include immediate hang-ups, wrong numbers, or declined calls. The following information is based on these 3,145 calls and does not include data from the 59 emails or 800 online tip reports.

CALLER TYPE	# OF CALLS	% OF CALLS
Self-Identified Victim of Trafficking	771	24.52%
Family of Trafficking Victim	760	24.17%
Community Member	496	15.77%
Friend of Trafficking Victim	211	6.71%
Law Enforcement	197	6.26%
NGO Representative	232	7.38%
Buyer of Commercial Sex	105	3.34%
Government Official	64	2.03%
Family or Friend of Trafficker	58	1.84%
Faith-Based Representative	31	0.99%
Victim of Other Crime	30	0.95%
Student	29	0.92%

Medical Professional	25	0.79%
Other	39	1.24%
Legal Professional	19	0.60%
Mental Health Professional	15	0.48%
Contact from Hotline Database	17	0.54%
Educator/School Personnel	5	0.16%
Business	4	0.13%
Trafficker	3	0.10%
Trucker	3	0.10%
Caller Types Referenced Fewer than Three Times ¹	1	0.03%
Unknown`	30	0.95%
TOTAL # OF CALLS	3,145	100.00%

¹To protect the identity of the people we serve, the National Human Trafficking Hotline does not disclose exact statistics related to caller information referenced fewer than three times.

HOW CALLER FOUND THE NATIONAL HOTLINE (WHERE KNOWN) ²	# OF CALLS	% OF CALLS
Referral	403	12.81%
Internet	210	6.68%
Awareness Campaign ³	145	4.61%
Television	54	1.72%
Training/Conference	35	1.11%
Print Media	16	0.51%
US Government Campaign	6	0.19%
Other National Hotline	5	0.16%
Billboard	4	0.13%
Radio	3	0.10%
Film	1	0.03%
TOTAL # OF CALLS	3,145	100.00%

² The National Human Trafficking Hotline prioritizes callers' safety and most pressing needs over gathering information regarding how they learned about the hotline. As a result, this information was only collected when more urgent needs were not prioritized or it was incidentally provided by the caller during the course of the call.

³ Due to changes in data structure, some specific campaigns which were previously tracked by the National Hotline are now reported as general awareness campaigns.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASE DATA

From the 4,004 calls, emails, and online tip reports received by the National Hotline from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016 referencing Backpage.com, the National Human Trafficking Hotline obtained information regarding 2,003 cases of potential sex trafficking or sex and labor trafficking. Each case represents a situation of trafficking which could include one or multiple potential victims. The following information is based only on sex trafficking and sex and labor trafficking cases which referenced Backpage.com. Labor trafficking cases were not included as Backpage.com is primarily used for the advertisement of commercial sex.

PRIMARY REASON FOR CONTACTING THE NATIONAL HOTLINE	# OF CASES	% OF CASES
Report a Trafficking Tip	1,728	86.27%
Access Service Referrals	162	8.09%
Request Crisis Assistance	98	4.89%
Request General Information ⁴	8	0.40%
Request T&TA ⁵	7	0.35%
TOTAL # OF CASES	2,003	100.00%

⁴Requests for general information are situations in which an individual who is aware of a specific situation of potential trafficking may contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline for general information about human trafficking or to learn more about services available to trafficking victims.

⁵Requests for T&TA (Training and Technical Assistance) are situations in which service providers or law enforcement working with a victim of trafficking contact the National Hotline for technical assistance.

VENUE OF POTENTIAL TRAFFICKING	# OF CASES	% OF CASES
Sex Trafficking	1,966	98.15%
Online Ad, Venue Unknown ⁶	734	36.65%
Hotel/Motel-Based	383	19.12%
Illicit Massage/Spa Business	293	14.63%
Escort/Delivery Service	207	10.33%
Residence-Based	91	4.54%
Street-Based	51	2.55%
Other	32	1.60%
Hostess/Strip Club-Based	16	0.80%
Pornography	13	0.65%
Bar/Club-Based	8	0.40%
Truck Stop-Based	3	0.15%
Venues Referenced Fewer than Three Times ⁷	2	0.10%
Venue Unknown	133	6.64%
Sex and Labor Trafficking	37	1.55%
TOTAL # OF POTENTIAL SEX & SEX AND LABOR TRAFFICKING CASES	2,003	100.00%

⁶Online Ad, Venue Unknown cases typically involve reports of sex trafficking in which an individual is advertised for commercial sex online but the venue of the sex act is unknown or not specified.

⁷To protect the identity of the people we serve, the National Human Trafficking Hotline does not disclose exact statistics related to venues or industries referenced fewer than three times.

The victim demographic information below indicates the number of cases involving potential victims of each demographic, not the number of potential victims. Cases can involve more than one potential victim, and in some situations, incomplete or no information about potential victims' age, gender identity, or immigration status is reported to the National Hotline. Consequently, the demographic data below is non-cumulative.

VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS (SEX TRAFFICKING CASES)	# OF CASES	% OF CASES
Adults	1152	58.60%
Minors	810	41.20%
Females	1847	93.95%
Males	64	3.26%
Transgender Females	14	0.71%
Transgender Males	4	0.20%
Gender Non-Conforming or Two-Spirit Individuals	Fewer than Three ⁸	N/A
US Citizens/Legal Permanent Residents	781	39.73%
Foreign Nationals ⁹	242	12.31%
NON-CUMULATIVE		

⁸To protect the identity of the people we serve, the National Human Trafficking Hotline does not disclose exact statistics related to venues, industries, victim information or caller information referenced fewer than three times.

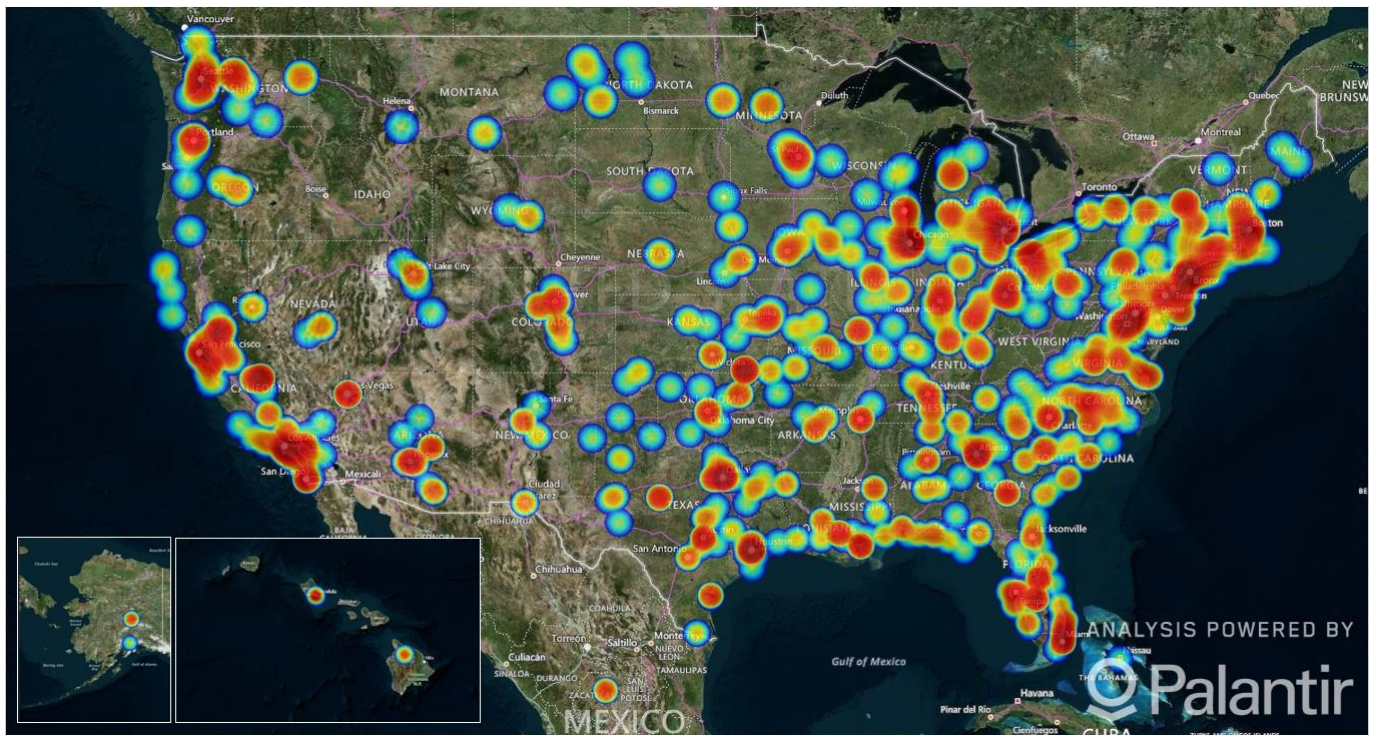
⁹A Foreign National in this data set is defined as any individual who is not currently a US Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident.

VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS (SEX AND LABOR TRAFFICKING CASES)	# OF CASES	% OF CASES
Adults	25	67.57%
Minors	9	24.32%
Females	34	91.89%
Males	Fewer than Three ¹⁰	N/A
Transgender Females	Fewer than Three ¹⁰	N/A
Transgender Males	Fewer than Three ¹⁰	N/A
Gender Non-Conforming or Two-Spirit Individuals	Fewer than Three ¹⁰	N/A
US Citizens/Legal Permanent Residents	17	45.95%
Foreign Nationals ¹¹	11	29.73%
NON-CUMULATIVE¹¹		

¹⁰To protect the identity of the people we serve, the National Human Trafficking Hotline does not disclose exact statistics related to venues, industries, victim information or caller information referenced fewer than three times.

¹¹A Foreign National in this data set is defined as any individual who is not currently a US Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident.

LOCATION OF POTENTIAL TRAFFICKING CASES IN THE UNITED STATES (WHERE KNOWN)¹⁴



¹⁴The image above is a heat map which reflects cases referencing Backpage.com reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016. Areas in which greater numbers of cases were reported contain more red shading. This map only reflects cases in which the location of the potential trafficking was known. Some cases may involve more than one location.

Important Notes:

The data displayed in this report was generated based on information communicated to the National Human Trafficking Hotline via phone, email, and online tip report. Each situation of trafficking reported to the National Hotline was assessed for indicators of human trafficking and was found to have at least moderate- or high-level indicators. Assessment are made based on the information reported to the hotline. The National Human Trafficking Hotline is not able to verify the accuracy of reported information.

These statistics are accurate as of September 1, 2017. Situations of trafficking may be ongoing or new information may be revealed to the National Hotline over time so statistics may be subject to change as new information emerges.