

Vermont Crime Analysis Using
National Incident Based Reporting System
(NIBRS) Data on Human Trafficking, 2015-2019



Submitted to:
Department of Public Safety

Submitted by:
Megan Novak, M.A., Research Associate
Crime Research Group
P.O. Box 1433
Montpelier, VT 05601
802-230-4768
www.crgvt.org

September 2021

This project was funded by the Bureau of Justice Statistics Grant #2018-86-CX-K004. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors only and do not represent the Department of Justice.

Introduction

Vermont's victim service providers, law enforcement, and legislature have been interested in understanding state trends related to sex and labor trafficking. In this regard, Crime Research Group reviewed Vermont human trafficking data recorded in the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). NIBRS was created to capture details on specific crime incidents including information about victims, known offenders, victim-offender relationships, arrestees, and property involved. Since the 1990s, Vermont law enforcement have been NIBRS compliant meaning that information concerning certain crimes known to Vermont law enforcement are logged in NIBRS.

This report reviews available NIBRS data reported between 2015-2019. A preliminary review indicated that there were no labor or sex trafficking cases recorded in 2015. Furthermore, between 2016-2019, there were no recorded incidents involving labor trafficking offenses. Therefore, this report focuses on sex trafficking offenses that occurred between 2016-2019 in Vermont. Annual review of NIBRS sex trafficking data will help identify trends and monitor data quality. Trends to be monitored include, but are not limited to, total number of incidents and offenses, offense circumstances (e.g., substances involved, weapons used), as well as victim and offender demographics.

About NIBRS Data

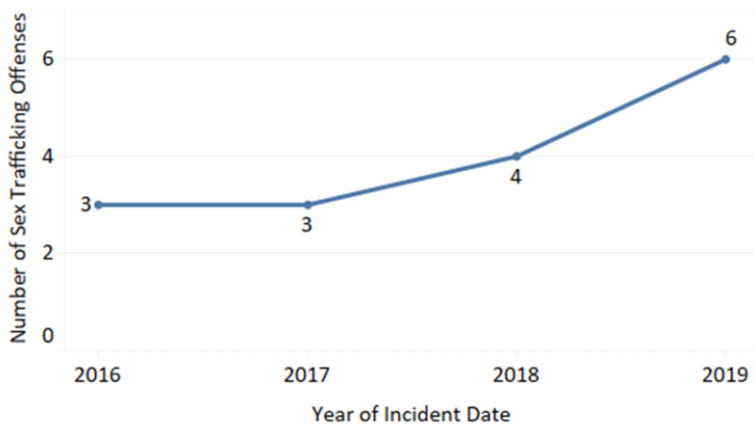
Approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies nation-wide report data on known and reported crimes. Law enforcement agencies record administrative, offense, property, victim, offender, and arrestee information about 28 offense categories that include 71 specific types of offenses (Group A offenses) as well as arrest data for 13 offenses categorized as "Group B." Some examples of Group A offenses include arson, bribery, drug/narcotics violations, fraud, homicide, assault, and prostitution. Examples of Group B offenses include disorderly conduct, failure to appear, drunkenness, perjury, and liquor law violations. The user manual offers more detail on the type of information that is recorded in NIBRS and how the information is coded.¹ It is important to remember that only crimes known to law enforcement are captured in NIBRS.

¹ [NIBRS User Manual](#)

Sex Trafficking Offenses

From 2016 - 2019, law enforcement recorded 16 sex trafficking offenses. Figure 1 illustrates that in 2016, there were 3 offenses; this number increases to 6 by 2019. In total, there have been 16 offenses.

Figure 1. Number of Sex Trafficking Offenses by Year



Of Vermont's 14 counties, 6 contain law enforcement agencies that reported sex trafficking offenses (see Figure 2). Most recorded offenses (10) occurred in Chittenden County. Many of these offenses (70%, 7) were referred to the Chittenden Special Investigations Unit. Next, there were 2 offenses in Rutland County. Then, Caledonia, Franklin, Washington, and Bennington counties each reported 1 offense.

Figure 2. Sex Trafficking Offenses by County

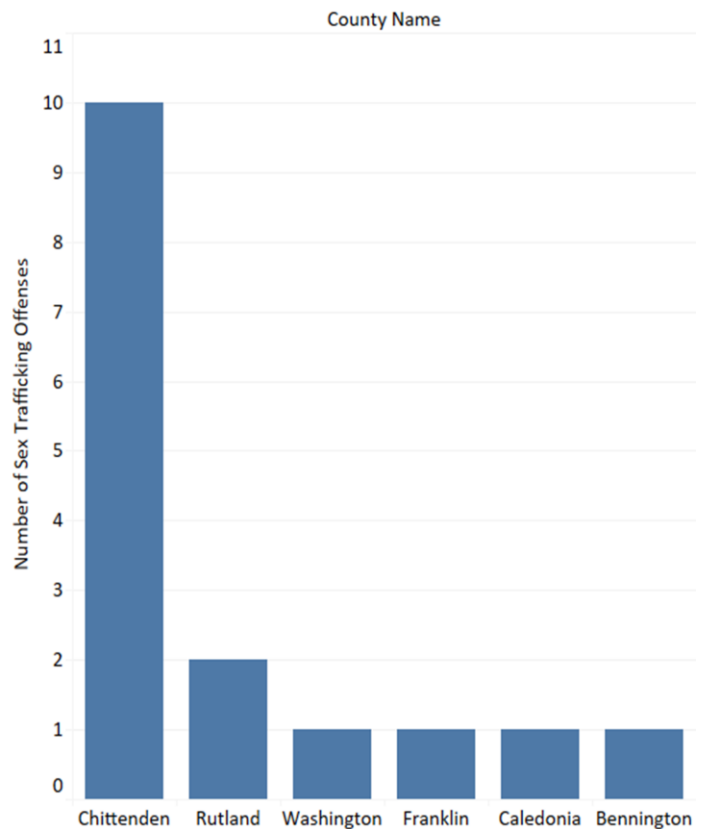


Table 1. Offenses Associated with Sex Trafficking

Incident Number	Offense Name	
Incident #1	Drug/Narcotic Violation	2
	Kidnapping/Abduction	1
	Rape (excludes Statutory)	1
	Sex Trafficking	1
Incident #2	Sex Trafficking	2
	Statutory Rape	2
Incident #3	Fondling	2
	Pornography	2
	Sex Trafficking	2
Incident #4	Prostitution	2
	Sex Trafficking	2

In most incidents, sex trafficking was the only offense recorded; however, four incidents included multiple offenses. Table 1 shows these four incidents and the number of different offenses associated with each. There appears to be few similarities concerning the types of offenses committed in conjunction with sex trafficking; however, more data is needed to detect trends. Continued review of these NIBRS data may reveal patterns. The data were also analyzed

for common drugs suspected of being used during sex trafficking incidents. Analysis revealed that in 2016 one incident (“Incident #1” depicted on Table 1 above) involved crack cocaine and “other narcotic(s).”

Additionally, weapons use during sex trafficking incidents is of interest. Analysis indicated that no weapons were used in 56.25% (9) of the 16 sex trafficking offenses and personal weapons (i.e., hands, arms, legs) were used in 5 (31.25%) (see Figure 3). It was unknown if weapons were used in 12.25% (2) of offenses.

Figure 3. Weapons Used During Sex Trafficking Offenses

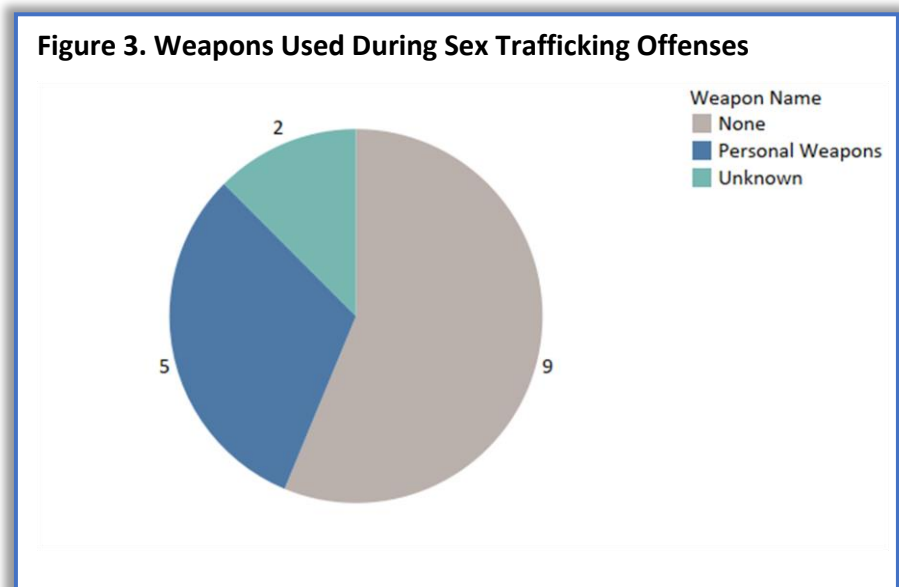
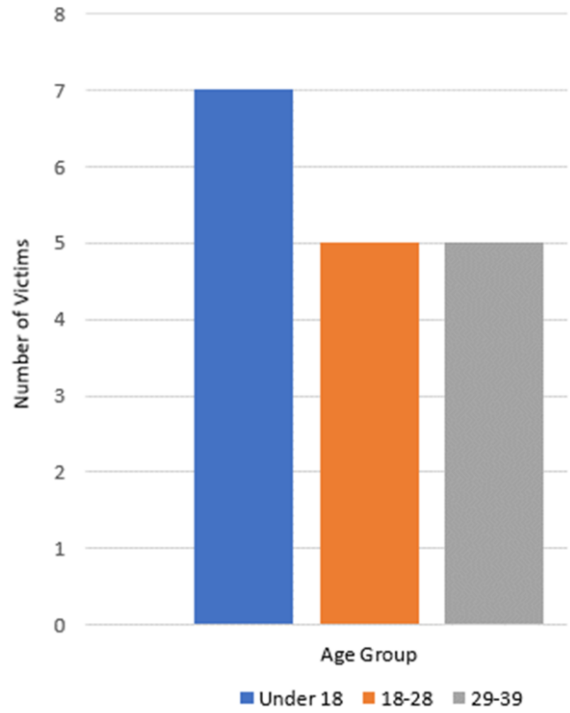


Figure 4. Common Locations of Victimization



A majority of all 26 victimizations occurred at a residence/home (61.54%, 16) (see Figure 4). Hotels /Motels were another common location (23.08%, 6) with the remaining (15.38%, 4) having occurred in locations either unknown to law enforcement or locations that did not fit into one of the 24 categories captured by NIBRS.

Figure 5. Sex Trafficking Victim's Age



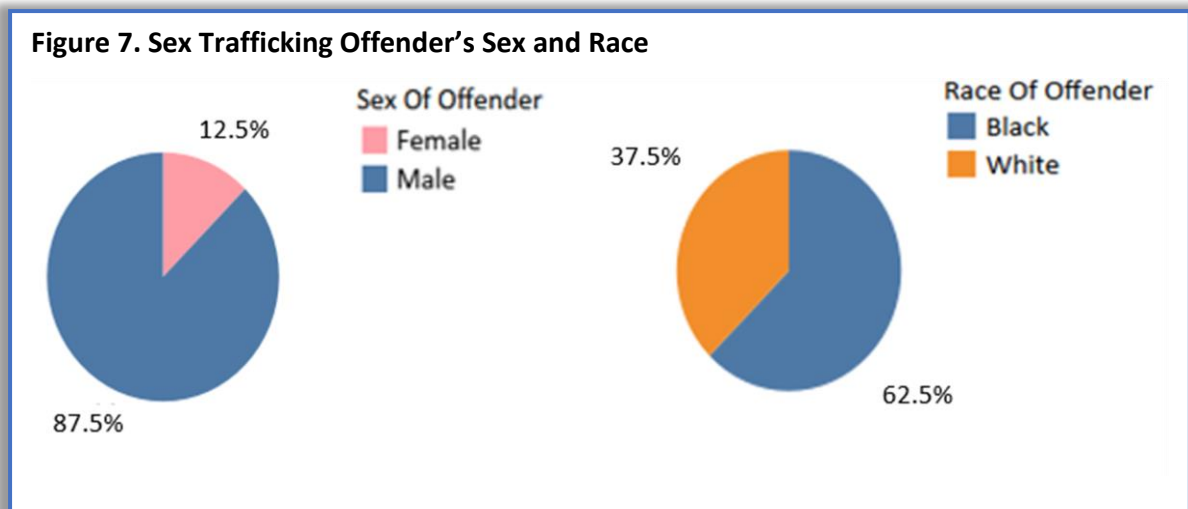
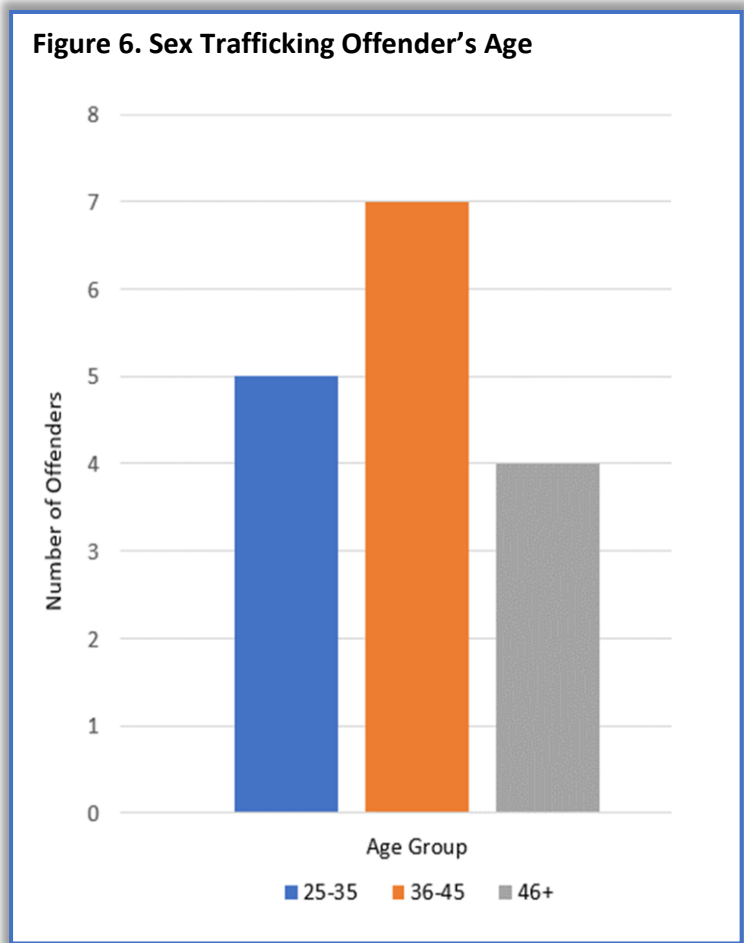
Victim Demographics

A total of 17 victims experiencing 23 victimizations were involved in the 16 sex trafficking offenses. The victims were all female and mostly White (93.75%, 15). Figure 5 illustrates the ages of sex trafficking victims. The average age of victims was 24.17 years. Notably, 41.18% of victims were under the age of 18.

Offender and Arrestee Demographics

Twenty offenders were involved in the 16 sex trafficking incidents between 2016 and 2019; however, there were 4 unknown offenders. Figure 6 (right) details demographic information for the 16 known offenders. Offenders ranged from age 25 to 60 with an average age of 40.31.

Below, Figure 7 shows that of the 16 offenders known to law enforcement, ten (62.5%) were Black and 6 (37.5%) were White. Figure 7 also illustrates that while most offenders were male, some were female.



Six of the 16 known offenders were arrested (37.5%). Forty percent of all recorded Black offenders and 33.33% of all recorded White offenders were arrested. Offenders arrested by law enforcement had an average age of 44.

Victim-Offender Demographic Intersections

The data were reviewed for demographic intersections of the victim and offender. Most incidents involved victims who were younger than their offenders; however, there were a few exceptions as a couple of incidents involved offenders who were the same age or younger than the victim. In most incidents involving Black offenders, victims were White (83.33%, 5). Conversely, only White victims were trafficked in all 5 incidents involving White offenders.

Conclusion

Between 2015 and 2019, there were 16 sex trafficking incidents recorded in NIBRS by law enforcement in Vermont. All of these incidents were reported between 2016 and 2019. Most offenses that involved sex trafficking occurred in Chittenden County. The 16 total incidents involved 16 sex trafficking offenses committed by 20 offenders against 17 victims. Given these small numbers, some information recorded in NIBRS was omitted in this report to avoid identifying individuals involved in the incidents. However, as law enforcement continues to record crime data, NIBRS will become a rich source of information about human trafficking in Vermont. Annual reports on human trafficking trends will help law enforcement and other stakeholders focus efforts and more efficiently use resources.