



Polaris’s National Survivor Study Survey Components

What is the National Survivor Study (NSS)?

The National Survivor Study (NSS) aims to put survivor experience and expertise squarely at the center of our work building evidence-based strategies in the fight against human trafficking. The survey for survivors has been crafted from input from a variety of stakeholders and through various methods including a survey with anti-trafficking and survivor leaders as well as through interviews and focus groups with survivors and cognitive interviews with survivors. We utilized a mixed methods approach to develop the content of the survey and cognitive interviewing to test the accessibility, relevance, and validity of the questions included in the survey. The overall breakdown of the components of the final survey are discussed below.

Survey

The survey begins with a screener which assesses potential participants for their eligibility to participate in the study. The screener includes approximately 35-38 questions and is expected to take less than 10 minutes to complete. The survey tool for the NSS contains 10-11 sections with 68 questions, however, based on the experience of the participant, they may not receive all of the sections. The content of the questions were solicited from survivor participants during the formative phase of this study. The phrasing of the question was adjusted in conversation with survivor participants during a cognitive pre-test. The survey should take approximately 25 to 45 minutes to complete.

| Sections | Questions Include: | Number of Questions in Section |
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| Outreach and Contact Information for Participants | How respondents heard about the survey, interest in different areas of the study (survey, interviews, focus groups), and the best ways to be contacted. | 8 |
| Eligibility to Participate in Study including Trafficking Experience | Assessment of whether or not the respondent meets eligibility requirements such as being over the age of 18, being located in the United States, and having experienced labor and/or sex trafficking or exploitation. | 17 |
| Demographics | Characteristics of the respondent including country of origin, language most commonly spoken, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, marital status, current residence (state and type of area – rural or urban), disabilities, and immigration status. | 13 |
| Forced Labor or Sexual Exploitation Experiences | Descriptions of experiences with sex trafficking and labor trafficking/exploitation, and the timing of when the exploitation occurred. | 8 |
| Childhood Experiences | Largely adapted from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey and focuses on the participants' experiences prior to the age of 18. | 1 |

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| Needs, Challenges, and Strategies | The needs survivors had when they were leaving their trafficking situation, needs they still have now, some of the services they accessed after their trafficking situation and their experiences with those services, and their internal ability to cope and be resilient through their trauma. | 5 |
| Experiences with Child Welfare System | The participant's experience with the child welfare system as a minor and their experience with the child welfare system as a parent, as well as opinions and thoughts on the child welfare system. <i>(Optional section depending on participant's experience)</i> | 13 |
| Experiences with Law Enforcement | The participant's interaction with the law enforcement system or juvenile justice system – if they have a criminal record, their experiences and challenges having a criminal record, and their opinion on the systems. <i>(Optional section depending on participant's experience)</i> | 11 |
| Immigrant Worker Protections | When they came to the United States, the types of visas they had when they were exploited, and (for specific visa types) if they were given any types of worker protections. <i>(Optional section if participant is an immigrant)</i> | 7 |
| Financial Experiences | The participant's income, work situation, the stability or instability of their finances, the typical types of financial transactions they are conducting, and access to bank accounts. | 14 |
| Financial Control and Identity | The interactions the participant had with financial institutions/services during the time they were trafficked or exploited. | 6 |
| Current Policies | The participant's opinions of current controversial policies in terms of how helpful or harmful these would be to themselves as well as other survivors. | 3 |