

Homelessness

A Cause and Consequence of Human Trafficking¹

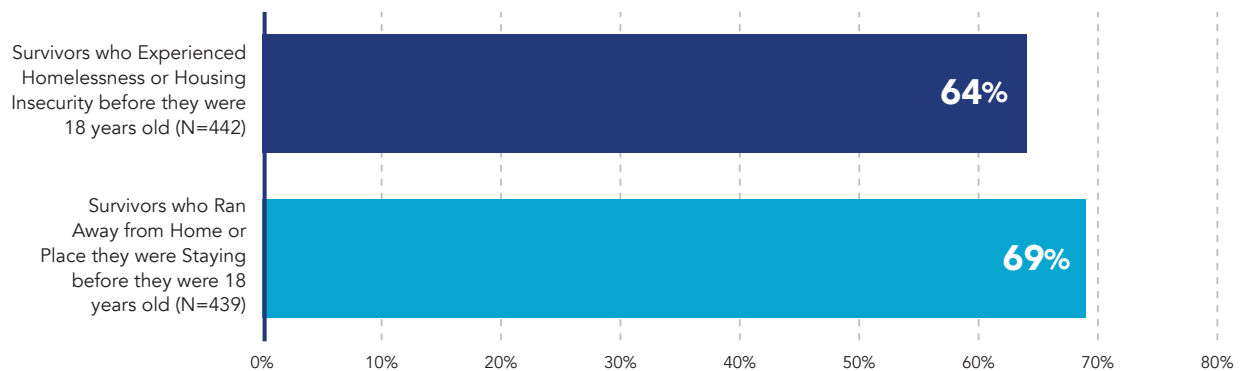


The National Survivor Study (NSS)², a recent research study from Polaris, surveyed 457 sex and labor trafficking survivors in the United States on their experiences before and after trafficking. The study found that **homelessness and housing insecurity were both a vulnerability to and consequence of human trafficking**. Policymakers can use this data to improve housing policies and programs.

Homelessness and Housing Insecurity Can Lead to Trafficking:

- A majority of survivor respondents in the NSS reported facing homelessness, houselessness or housing insecurity (64%), or running away from home or the place they were living in (69%) before they were 18 years of age.
- Traffickers exploit individuals' vulnerabilities, including homelessness or housing instability, often offering a potential victim a place to stay as a means of building trust and reliance. **Homelessness and housing instability can be presumed to increase a person's risk of being trafficked.**

"While I have a job and a car, I am still technically homeless. I don't have a bed, or furniture, or any necessities to furnish a healthy life--- towels, vacuum cleaner, kitchen utensils....anything."



¹ This research brief may be cited as "Polaris (2023). Homelessness as a Cause and Consequence of Human Trafficking".

² Polaris (2023). In harm's way: How systems fail human trafficking survivors. Retrieved from <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/In-Harms-Way-How-Systems-Fail-Human-Trafficking-Survivors-by-Polaris.pdf>.



Human Trafficking Can Lead to Homelessness and Housing Insecurity:

- 70% of survivor respondents reported that one of their top needs when they left trafficking was finding a safe place to stay.
- Other top needs included a stable living wage job (69%) and help establishing or repairing credit (31%). A lack of any of these can lead to housing instability for trafficking survivors.
- 42% of survivor respondents reported having a criminal record. Of those with a criminal record, a majority (59%) reported having issues getting housing due to their criminal record.
- Stable housing is necessary for essential recovery and reintegration steps, such as finding a job. For survivors looking to rebuild, the **inability to maintain safe and secure housing can prevent them from recovering.**

“I am stressed all the time. My housing is unstable and I don’t really have enough for stable housing - this is the question you are missing. Housing is so important and so expensive.”

Needs survivors reported when exiting trafficking (N=457)

