

Compounding Institutional Exclusion and Harm: A Case Study of Federally Funded Alaska Service Providers



Introductions

- Tatiana Rothchild
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- Ajela Banks
- COYOTE RI

Content Warning: descriptions of violence and abuse

Ajela's Story

Federal Funds and Service Providers

- This presentation:
 - Briefly reviews findings from the data analysis of federal funds for anti-human trafficking service providers
 - Explains details of Alaska's case study
 - Situates research within survivor experiences through feminist methodological approaches
 - Considers future research opportunities

US DOJ Office for Victims of Crime Data

- United States Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime - federal funds distributed for human trafficking grants
- Collated database created from publicly available data on federal fund distribution
- Data sources: [OVC-Funded Human Trafficking Services Grantees and Task Forces](#) and [Population Data](#)
- Qualitative review: descriptive analysis and case study selection
- Feminist methodology: grounded in survivor experiences, layered methods
- Limitations

Findings from Federal Data Review

- 123 anti-human trafficking grant solicitations between 2004 and 2023
 - 1,069 grant awards between 2004 and 2023
 - 14 grant solicitation categories, amended into 12 categories for this research
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- State and population distribution
 - Grant type distribution and changes over time
 - Recipient types

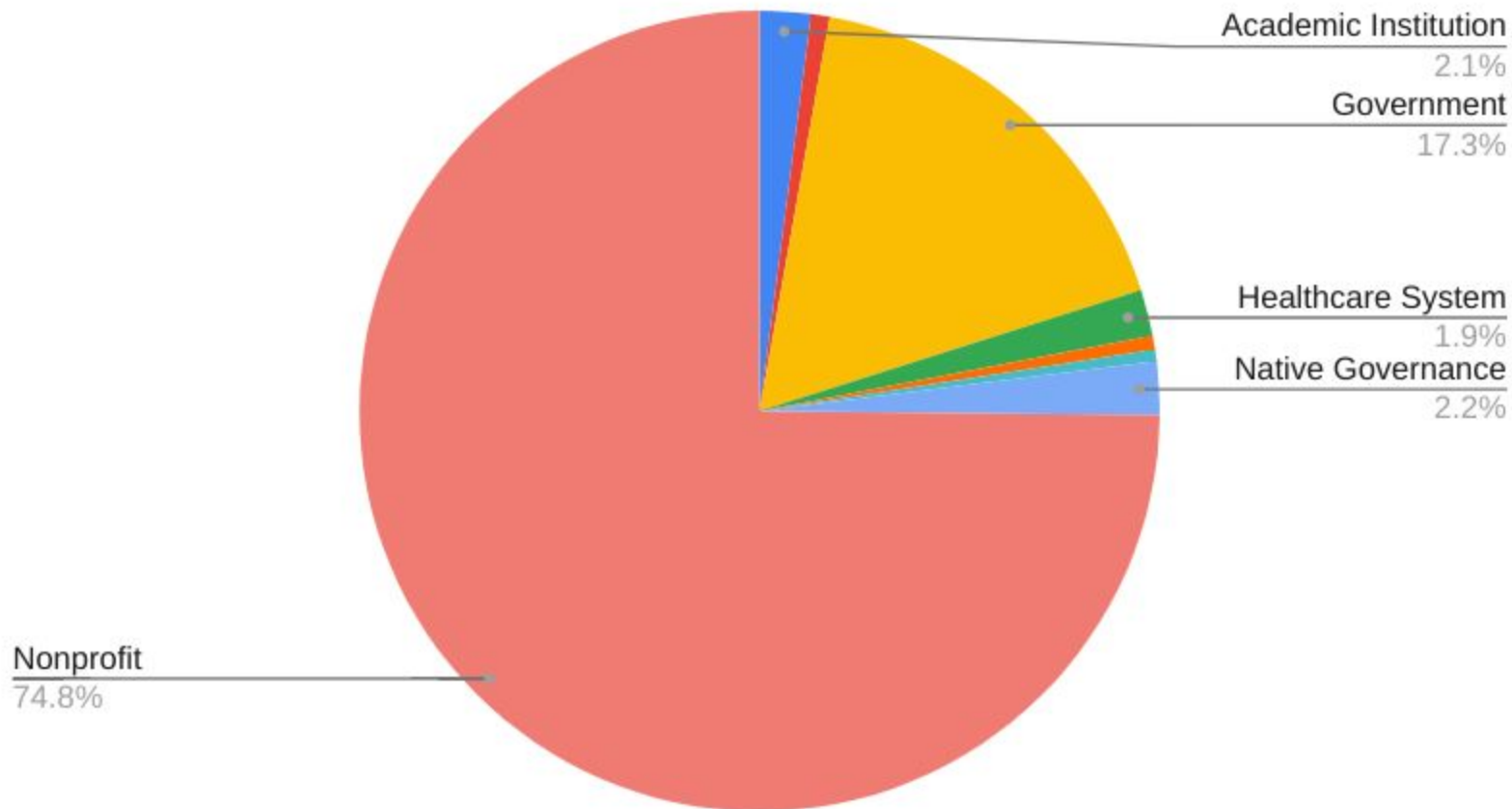
State and Population Data

- US territories (namely Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands) receive more funds per capita than other areas of the United States.
- Delaware, Washington D.C., and Alaska are the only other areas to receive more than USD 1 per capita (\$1.45, \$1.37, and \$1.03 respectively).
- High percentage of Black populations correlates with lower per capita funding.
 - Washington D.C. (45% Black) was the only area with a high percentage of Black population to receive more than \$1 per capita in funds.
 - The other states with over 25% of their population described as Black were Mississippi (38%), Georgia (32%), Louisiana (32%), Maryland (30%), Alabama (27%), and South Carolina (27%) which received between \$0.06 and \$0.24 per capita.

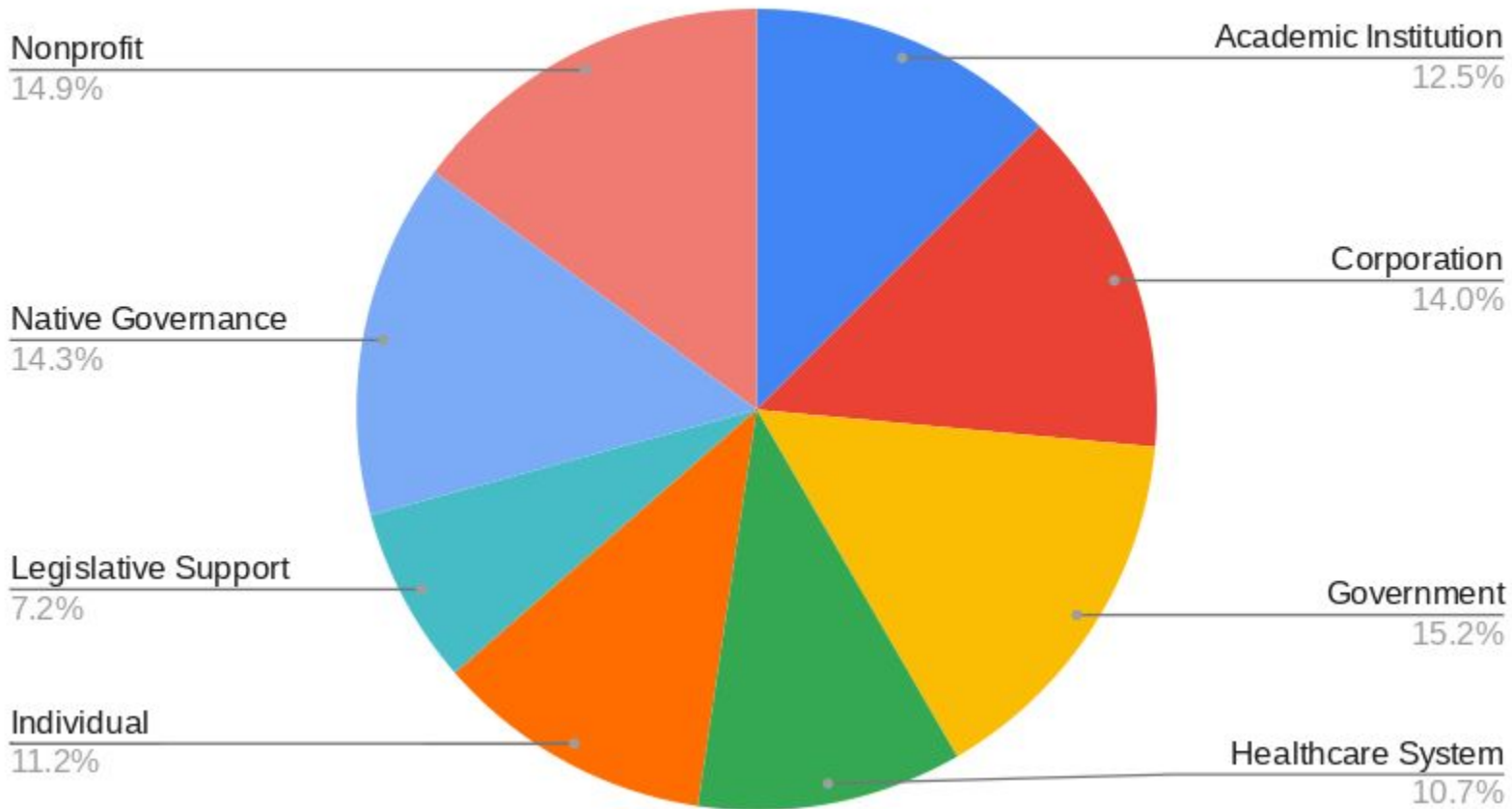
OVC Funding Distribution by Grant Type

Distribution of Funds	2005 - 2015	2016 - 2023	Increase
Discretionary	\$6,205,109	\$47,849,999	671%
Fellowships	\$447,056	\$960,272	115%
General Services	\$35,811,297	\$264,135,423	638%
Hotlines	--	\$15,999,966	--
Housing	--	\$34,920,001	--
Legal Services	\$5,290,398	\$16,967,740	221%
LE Victim Specialist	--	\$21,831,779	--
Prevention	--	\$11,084,103	--
Specialized Services	\$8,432,381	\$400,628,554	4651%
Task Force	--	\$126,267,175	--
Technology	--	\$7,989,675	--
Training and Technical Assistance	\$999,982	\$22,136,451	2114%
Other	--	\$7,998,328	--

Type of Grantee by Number of Awarded Grants



Type of Grantee by Amount Awarded



Discussing Organization Harm Constructively

Alaska Housing Finance Corp	\$1,300,00	2022	\$800,000
		2020	\$500,000
Alaska Institute for Justice	\$2,849,928	2022	\$800,000
		2019	\$650,000
		2016	\$600,000
		2013	\$400,000
		2012	\$399,928
Alaska Native Justice Center, Inc.	\$4,578,987	2023	\$950,000
		2021	\$750,000
		2020	\$2,428,987
		2019	\$450,000
Alaska Native Womens Resource Center	\$800,000	2019	\$800,000
Anchorage Municipality	\$749,755	2021	\$749,755
Covenant House of Alaska	\$1,750,000	2020	\$750,000
		2020	\$500,000
		2019	\$500,000

Situating Alaska

- Of the 50 states, Alaska receives the third highest per capita rate of OVC anti-trafficking funding, at \$1.03 per capita.
- Six Alaskan organizations have received over 10 million dollars in OVC anti-trafficking funds over the last several years.
- Since 2019, the Alaska Department of Public Safety report receiving 6 **reports** of sex trafficking that meet the legal definition of sex trafficking.
- Federally there have been no charges of sex trafficking that involve an actual, non-fictitious victim in the sex industry since 2019, nor have there been any state sex trafficking charges during that time, despite full time investigation by the Anchorage Police Department/FBI Task Force and the Special Crimes Investigative Unit at the Alaska State Troopers.

What do these six organizations have in common?

- All of these organizations have focuses other than trafficking, and started to incorporate trafficking in their rhetoric around the time they first received OVC anti-trafficking funds.
- All of these organizations use expansive definitions of “sex trafficking,” creating large numbers of sex trafficking survivors served. It’s unclear whether any of these organizations have experience serving people who have been victimized in the sex industry.

What does a survivor of trafficking in the sex industry, like Ajela, need from Alaskan anti-trafficking organizations?

- Legal help filing a petition to hide her address from the sex offender registry.
- Safe housing and transportation.
- Employment training.
- Mentorship.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation	\$1,300,000	2022	\$800,000	Alaska Survivors Assistance for Escaping Trafficking (SAFE-T) Assistance Network
		2020	\$500,000	Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Housing Assistance Grants for Victims of Human Trafficking Response

SAFE-T

Through SAFE-T, AHFC administers grant funds to Alaska nonprofits to provide emergency housing and supportive services to survivors of human trafficking. Currently SAFE-T has two pilot programs operated by subgrantees: The Interior Alaska Center for Nonviolent Living in Fairbanks and My House in Mat-Su.

Ajela's experience with Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

- Before being shot by her trafficker and charged with conspiring to sex trafficking in 2019, Ms Banks was in contact with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and was on track to receive a housing voucher from them.
- After she was shot by her trafficker and charged with conspiracy to sex traffick, she was told that she was no longer eligible for housing through AHFC because of her new sex offender status.
- In every single Alaskan sex trafficking case involving both minor and adult victims since 2009, the adult has been charged with conspiracy to commit sex trafficking. Thus, a significant percentage of Alaskan survivors of the crime of sex trafficking in the sex industry may be ineligible to benefit from the USD 1.3 million in anti-trafficking funds that the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation received.

Alaska Institute for Justice

Alaska Institute for Justice	\$2,849,928	2022	\$800,000	Promoting Racial Equity through Specialized Legal Services for Underserved Alaska Victims of Human Trafficking
		2019	\$650,000	Specialized Legal Services to Support Victims of Human Trafficking in Rural Alaska Communities
		2016	\$600,000	Specialized Legal Services and Language Access Services for Unserved and Limited English Proficient Labor Trafficking Victims in Anchorage, Alaska
		2013	\$400,000	Statewide Comprehensive Services for All Adult and Minor Victims of Human (Sex and Labor) Trafficking in Alaska
		2012	\$399,928	Alaska Victim Legal Assistance Network of Ten Partner Agencies to Develop Comprehensive, Collaborative Model for Delivering Wraparound Legal Assistance to Crime Victims

In 2022, this grant provided 47% of AIJ's revenue.

AIJ has a trafficking caseworker and attorney, and they seem to mainly provide services to migrant workers. A large percentage of the people they serve have been victims of labor trafficking.

Ajela's experience with Alaska Institute for Justice

- Ajela contacted the Alaska Institute for Justice in June 2023. She talked to a caseworker who said they would be able to help her with things like a security camera. However, none of the help materialised and she was not able to get back in touch with the caseworker.
- Later, she spoke with an attorney at the organisation, who told her their legal services were only for immigrants and advised her to call the Alaska Native Justice Center.

Alaska Native Justice Center

Alaska Native Justice Center, Inc.	\$4,578,987	2023	\$950,000	Dezhuni eł Survivor Services
		2021	\$750,000	Strengthening Services Through Action
		2020	\$2,428,987	ANJC 2020 Tribal Victim Services
		2019	\$450,000	Mat-Su Trafficking Victim Services (<u>MSTVS</u>)

In 2020 these funds were 69% of ANJC's total revenue. In 2023 their award specifically noted that they would prioritize Indigenous and Black sex trafficking survivors, like Ajela.

Ajela's experience with Alaska Native Justice Center

- Ajela called ANJC in June 2023 and was told that their services were only for Native individuals.
- On follow up, Tara learned that while most of ANJC's services are only for Native individuals, their trafficking services are intended to be available to all trafficking victims. The person we spoke with explained that the receptionist who answered the phone may not have been aware of this.
- Upon further emailing, Tara was told that grant limitations may have prevented Ajela from receiving services, but that because she had left Alaska she would not be eligible for services now.

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

Alaska Native Women's Resource Center	\$800,000	2019	\$800,000	Alaska Native Tribes' Victims of Crimes Specific TA, Training and Outreach
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In 2019 this was 56% of ANWRC's total revenue.

In 2023, AWRC was providing a caseworker to sex trafficking survivors who were clients of Covenant House.

Ajela's experience with Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

- Ajela spoke with ANWRC's caseworker in 2023.
- She explained that she could only offer “a safe person to talk to about these things.”
- She said she would look for legal resources for Ajela “because they don't exist here in Alaska.”

Anchorage Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking

Anchorage Municipality	\$749,755	2021	\$749,755	Strengthening Services through Action; Anchorage Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking
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This grant describes a collaboration between the Alaska Native Justice Center and the Anchorage Police Department to create a human trafficking task force. This is separate from the other funds given to ANJC and separate from the APD/FBI trafficking task force.

Ajela's experience with the Task Force

- One member of this task force (APD) did not arrest Ajela's sex trafficker when she called several times begging for help. Later an APD officer took the lead in arresting Ajela for her to be charged federally with conspiracy to sex traffick, just days after she was shot by her sex trafficker.
- The other member of this task force (ANJC) denied Ajela services because she is Black and not Indigenous.

Covenant House

Covenant House of Alaska	\$1,750,000	2020	\$750,000	Covenant House Alaska Services for Victims of Human Trafficking: Enhancing Scope of Service
		2020	\$500,000	Covenant House Alaska's Housing Assistance Grant for Victims of Human Trafficking
		2019	\$500,000	Anchorage Minor Victims of Human Trafficking Service Coordination Project

- Covenant House's largest award in 2020 was only 10% of their revenue that year.
- Covenant House provides real services, but survivors report that their increased focus on sex trafficking has resulted in policies that often exclude sex trafficking survivors from shelter.

Ajela's experience with Covenant House

- Covenant House provided housing after Ajela got out of jail.
- Covenant House provided a supportive case worker and some help with toiletries and household goods.

Conclusions

- Incentives for programs / restrictions that create institutional harm (ex., exclusive eligibility requirements, deference to law enforcement, or engagement in task forces)
- Problematic behaviors reinforced at the federal level become organizational norms and patterns (ex., insufficient but constant referrals and case management, pressure to cooperate with law enforcement, etc.)
- Role of anti-trafficking “task forces”

Policy and Organizational Recommendations

- Service providers should never work with police to criminalize sex trafficking survivors or exclude them from services.
- No more “caseworkers.”
- How we would use 10 million dollars in anti-trafficking funds in Alaska: housing, financial stability, and transportation. This money could have purchased a duplex and a new car for every documented survivor of the crime of sex trafficking in Alaska’s sex industry over the last several years **and** provided a caseworker.

Research - Next Steps

- Creation and publication of full dataset, along with state profiles
 - Ex: California State Profile
- Abandoned research areas
 - Compare against identified cases
 - Impact of gubernatorial political party
- Future research areas
 - Exploring recipients by type: corporations, academic institutions, governments
 - Other interesting case studies and state level analysis

Reach Out to Us

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Further Information

Look for our publication on this topic:

“Compounding Institutional Exclusion and Harm: A Case Study of Federally Funded Alaska Service Providers” *Anti-Trafficking Review*, Fall 2024

Check out the full OVC dataset:

Published this fall: subscribe at <https://coyoteri.substack.com/> to be notified

Read COYOTE’s new book, Sex Work Policy: Participatory Action Research by and for Sex Workers and Sex Trafficking Survivors: Available on Amazon after September 15th

Check out more of COYOTE’s research: <https://coyoteri.org/>

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