

2023 IMPACT REPORT

Stronger Survivors. Stronger Community.

ALIGHT
ALLIANCE TO LEAD IMPACT IN
GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING

2023



ABOUT ALIGHT

Founded in 2015, ALIGHT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that leverages technology and legal networks to help human trafficking survivors, not just one at a time, but at scale. **Our mission** is to empower human trafficking survivors on their journey to true freedom and holistic healing.

To help survivors finally escape the all too common cycle of violence and exploitation, ALIGHT connects survivors to specialized pro bono attorneys who fight for their rights. With critical legal services, victims who have escaped trafficking can overcome legal problems that are insurmountable alone, enabling them to successfully gain independence and rebuild their lives.

The [2021 Legal Deserts Report](#) identified a concerning lack of trauma-informed legal services focused on human trafficking survivors' unique needs. ALIGHT is one of only 16 organizations confirmed in the U.S. that provides comprehensive, specialized and free legal services to survivors of all forms of trafficking, regardless of gender identity, race, age or any other protected class.

Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.

LEGAL
DESERTS
REPORT

PUBLISHED BY

THE AVERY CENTER

NATIONAL SURVIVOR LAW COLLECTIVE

OUR TECH-BASED MODEL

ALIGHT has pioneered the use of real-time matching technology (think: Lyft for pro bono legal services) to connect survivors' very specific legal needs to a mobilized army of attorneys with 20+ areas of legal expertise. In this way, ALIGHT bridges the worlds of human trafficking survivors and attorneys who want to help. The ALIGHT National Attorney Network includes attorneys in leading national law firms and solo practices across the country, providing real and measurable assistance to survivors and their families.

In 2020, the American Bar Association, which is an association of lawyers and law students that is the national voice of the legal profession, recognized the importance of the ALIGHT model.

In 2021, the Freedom Collaborative, which is the largest online community platform for service providers and activists working to end human trafficking, forced labor and exploitation with stakeholders across 100 countries, acknowledged that ALIGHT's model is "unique in the world."



Innovative,
Next-Generation
Solutions



Free Legal
Advocacy, Counsel
& Representation



Survivor-Centric and
Trauma-Informed
Services

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Working on some of the most complex and heartbreaking problems of humanity takes community. On behalf of ALIGHT, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, our community of attorneys, partner agencies, supporters, staff, volunteers, board members - and especially the survivors. Thank you for believing in change and continuing to participate in making a difference.



With this year's letter, I want to take a peek behind the curtain to share with you the unique challenges of serving human trafficking survivors in their time of need in this moment for our field.

Working to disrupt cycles of abuse and exploitation requires managing trauma-related risks on three different levels:

1

Survivors' traumas during legal representation. Human trafficking survivors commonly experience post-traumatic stress disorder and barriers to justice. In order to protect survivors during legal representation, attorneys in ALIGHT's network are vetted and provided with trauma-informed training. Unlike traditional pro bono engagement methods such as listservs, clearinghouses and portals, ALIGHT is actively involved in monitoring all legal cases and incorporating survivor and partner feedback into program refinements. ALIGHT also develops specialized materials for survivors, such as the "self-empowerment during the legal journey" tool co-developed with a survivor-led organization and a mental health professional.

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2

Secondary trauma of attorneys and the ALIGHT team working directly with survivors. Working closely with individuals in crisis can lead to burnout and attrition. ALIGHT trains attorneys on mitigating compassion fatigue and secondary trauma. ALIGHT also provides ongoing technical support on their cases with these aspects. Organizationally, our program team supports our intake advocate with challenging areas during survivor intake and support during weekly meetings.

3

Organizational-level trauma of nonprofits and service providers experiencing instability and under-funding. The anti-trafficking field can reflect the trauma and instability of the very population it is intended to serve. Unstable funding results in unstable services. According to research, appropriate and trauma-informed legal services for survivors are chronically underfunded. Last year, The Avery Center and The Charleston Center, both survivor-led partner agencies, closed their doors. National Survivor Law Collective meetings revealed that several legal providers have also scaled back their family law services. Finally, several Survivor Leaders have privately expressed feeling re-traumatized by the experience of continuing to work professionally in this field. To alleviate some of these dynamics, the ALIGHT model relies on technology to help support survivor resilience with comprehensive legal services for the duration of their journey to freedom. In 2023, we built on our work in Colorado and Utah to address needs in Los Angeles, another area with high demand and few resources. While ALIGHT seeks to fill the gaps and be a source of strength during instability with a scalable model, we can not do it alone. Resources and solutions that strengthen the entire ecosystem of support are critical.

For us to make this transformational work sustainable and healing, we need to come together. Community is key. Knowing these challenges, we hope that you will be emboldened to join us in the fight to make a difference. ALIGHT's tech-based and growth mindset approach is guided - and motivated - by these stark realities.

Thank you for helping to make Survivors stronger, and our Community stronger.

Sincerely,

Marianna Kosharovsky

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02	About ALIGHT
03	Our Tech-based Model
04	Letter from Our Executive Director
07	2023 Impact at a Glance
08	Board of Directors, Team & Advisors
09	Our History
11	Our Programs: Mobilizing Justice, Trainings & National Survivor Law Collective
14	Who We Serve
17	Legal Services Provided
18	Spotlight: Credit Repair for Survivors
19	Spotlight: Work with Extreme Polygamous Groups
20	Mel: In Her Own Words
21	How Survivors Found Us
22	National Attorney Network
24	2024 Plans: Expanding Infrastructure
26	Get in Touch

2023 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

132 Survivors provided with direct legal services



273 Legal cases placed



Grew the National Attorney Network from **250 to 823 pro bono attorneys**, with the addition of key partnerships with leading national law firms

**Sherman
& Howard**

**WheelerTrigg
O'Donnell LLP**
TRIALS. LITIGATION. APPEALS.



2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS, TEAM & ADVISORS

Board of Directors

Monica Trosclair, Chair

Robert Lantz, Treasurer

Katherine Matheson, Secretary

Margaret Fraser, Member

Rachel Niemiec, Member

William Healy, Member

Team

Marianna Kosharovsky, Founder & Executive Director

Neysa Nankervis, Pro Bono Network Manager

Clara Meyers, Intake Advocate

Cassidy Beauver, Intake Advocate

Anne Dunlop, Volunteer Development Associate

Megan Sakas, Volunteer Digital Marketing Associate

Talie Watzman, Volunteer Intake Advisor

Amy Conley, Volunteer Program Advisor

Csaba Magyar, Volunteer Data Strategist

Wim De Pril, Volunteer Data Analyst

Mark Welch, Volunteer Videographer

Advisors

George Sparks, Strategic Advisor

Nadav Cohen, Technology Advisor

Skip Thurman, Communications Advisor

Survivor Advisory Council

Grace Irene Tang

Megan Lundstrom

Rachel Niemiec

Legal Advisory Council

Bob Connelly

Edward Ramey

Michael Cheroutes, Sr.

Stephen Jewett

OUR HISTORY

See how far we've come together.



MAR 2015

ALIGHT incorporates as a nonprofit to serve human trafficking survivors



FEB 2017

ALIGHT launches Mobilizing Justice as a pilot in Denver, CO



FEB 2020

American Bar Association recognizes ALIGHT's tech-based model for pro bono in Resolution 113



APR 2020

ALIGHT founds the National Survivor Law Collective, along with leaders from Moore & Van Allen, Paul Hastings, Justice Restoration Center, Free to Thrive and Trafficking Law Center



OCT 2020

ALIGHT reaches milestone of serving 100 unique human trafficking survivors

OUR HISTORY

See how far we've come together.



JUL 2021

ALIGHT contributes to the first labor trafficking conviction in Denver by assisting a survivor for 3+ years (the perpetrator receives a historic 14-year sentence)



DEC 2022

ALIGHT assists 200+ survivors



DEC 2023

ALIGHT Legal Network grows to 823 pro bono attorneys



OUR PROGRAMS

Mobilizing Justice

The ALIGHT Mobilizing Justice Program connects individuals who have survived human trafficking to free legal help at a critical point in their recovery.

To help survivors finally escape the exploitation cycle, ALIGHT matches them to the right attorney at the right time from the ALIGHT mobilized army of pro bono attorneys. With legal services and a survivor-centric approach, survivors can overcome legal problems that are insurmountable alone, enabling them to successfully gain independence and rebuild their lives in our community.

Our Approach

ALIGHT empowers survivors - at scale - by deploying a technology platform that bridges the worlds of human trafficking survivors and the legal community to match survivor requests for legal help (posted by their advocates) to specialized legal expertise.



OUR PROGRAMS

278

**ATTORNEYS TRAINED
ON TRAUMA-
INFORMED LEGAL
SERVICES AND/OR
COMPASSION
FATIGUE**

30

**SOCIAL WORKERS
TRAINED ON
TRAUMA-INFORMED
LEGAL SERVICES**

50

**SERVICE PROVIDERS
AND MEMBERS OF
THE PUBLIC TRAINED
ON HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
SURVIVORS' LEGAL
NEEDS, WITH
DISTRIBUTION TO
OVER 1,000**

Trainings

Since our inception, ALIGHT has focused on bringing new resources and advocates into the anti-trafficking movement. To this end, ALIGHT conducts training for attorneys, professionals and the general public on trauma-informed practices, spotting potential legal needs and remedies for trafficking survivors and other specialized areas of human trafficking. ALIGHT worked with Sherman & Howard, Shared Hope International, the Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program, the Colorado Women's Bar Association and the Colorado Trial Lawyers Association to deliver trainings on trauma-informed lawyering and/or compassion fatigue to attorneys. ALIGHT also worked with the Denver League of Voters and TASC to deliver general awareness trainings.

In addition, ALIGHT has created practical resource materials for those attorneys who want to assist trafficking survivors. We also provide assistance to service providers who may be interacting with human trafficking survivors but are not yet screening, identifying and connecting them with trafficking-specific resources.



OUR PROGRAMS

National Survivor Law Collective



The Founding Members are:

- ALIGHT, CO & national
- Free to Thrive, CA
- Justice Restoration Center, FL & TN
- Trafficking Law Center, OR
- Moore & Van Allen PLLC, NC
- Paul Hastings LLP, NY & national

Founded in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Survivor Law Collective (NSL Collective) is a collaboration of private legal services organizations that have been individually providing pro bono legal services to trafficking survivors.

Following on the pivotal research in the 2021 Legal Deserts Report, ALIGHT and the NSL Collective continued our work by diving deeper into the issues uncovered in this research. In response to the findings, in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, we convened a diverse cohort of over 50 stakeholders from the anti-trafficking movement in three sessions. The NSL Collective led a discussion on the current obstacles to comprehensive legal services for survivors of all forms of human trafficking and the root causes of the challenges that survivors face, along with solutions and opportunities to overcome these challenges.

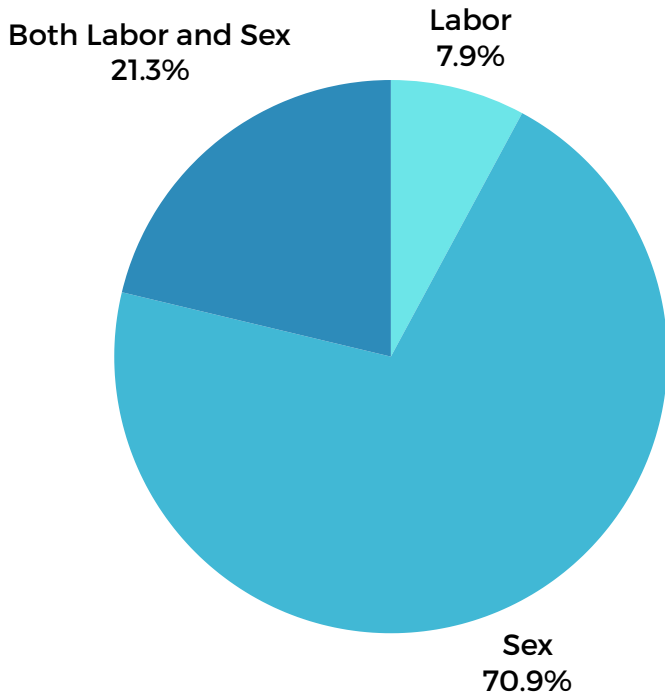
Based on these meetings, we co-published The Legal Deserts Report 2.0, which laid out a set of recommendations for practitioners, funders and members of the public to better understand and mitigate the obstacles that exist for survivors seeking legal services. One key recommendation was the investment in technology solutions - with ALIGHT specifically highlighted:

“

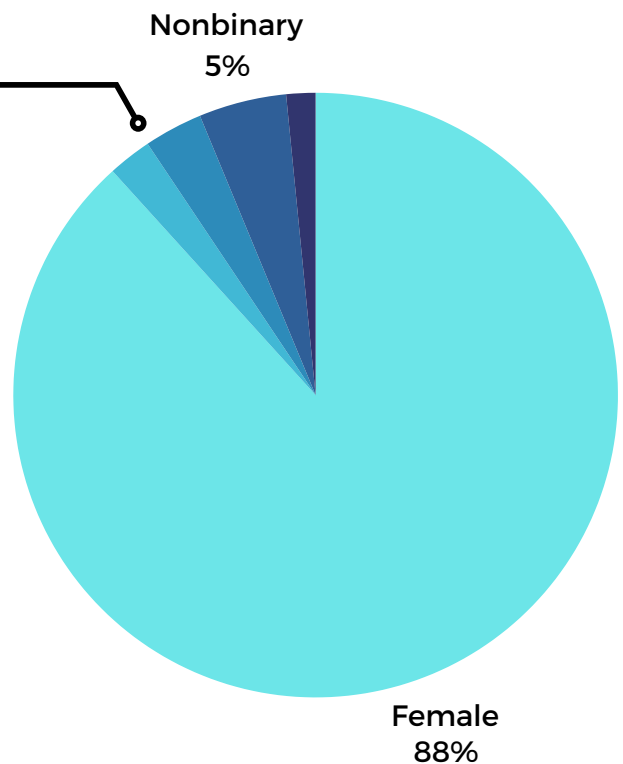
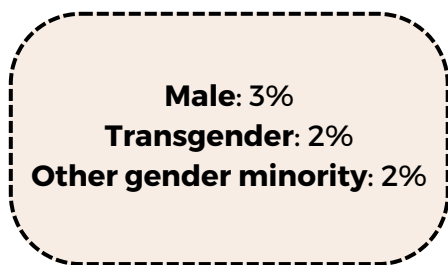
The development and leverage of technology has mostly focused on better detecting human trafficking rather than direct services. Advancements of technological tools that directly support survivors' recovery needs are still desperately needed ... Current initiatives that are successful in filling legal deserts should be scaled to cover other jurisdictions and, indeed, the entire country. For example, one program operated by ALIGHT ... is already in place in Colorado. ALIGHT has used needs-matching app functionality similar to Lyft to connect over 200 survivors to vetted, specialized pro bono attorneys.”

WHO WE SERVE

Based on the responses from survivors who agreed to disclose their demographic information, below is a picture of who ALIGHT served in 2023. This information is based on what is known to ALIGHT at the time of issuing this report, and may be amended in future reporting as more information comes in.



The majority of survivors experienced **sex trafficking**, with 29% identifying experiencing labor trafficking of some form.

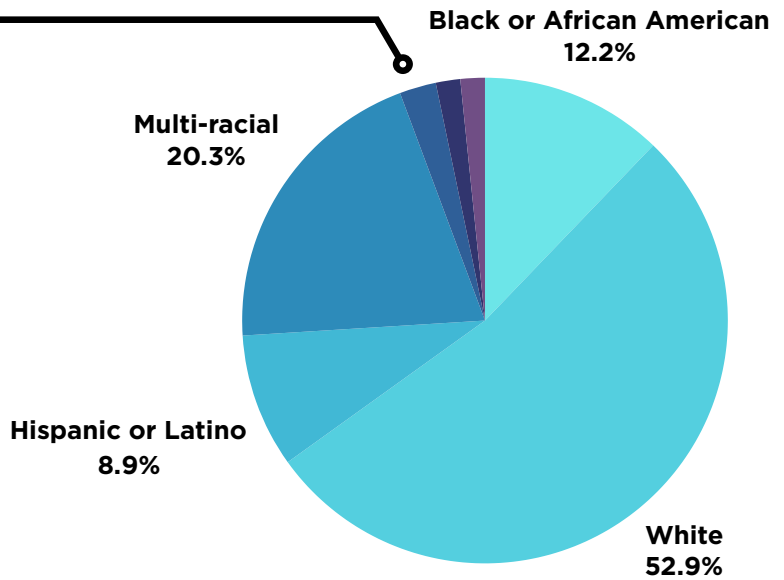


The vast majority of survivors identified as female, with 12% identifying as male/gender minority.

Some percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

WHO WE SERVE

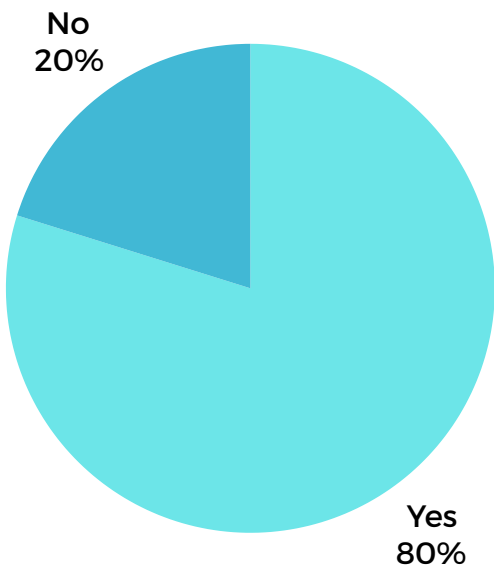
American Indian or Alaska Native: 2.4%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 1.6%
Asian: 1.6%



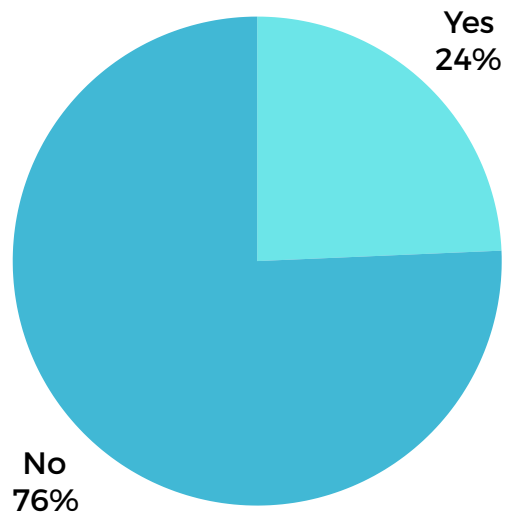
47%
of survivors identified as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and/or a person of color).

Survivors reported significant overlap with other at-risk groups, with **80%** having experienced homelessness and **24%** having experienced the foster care system.

Homelessness

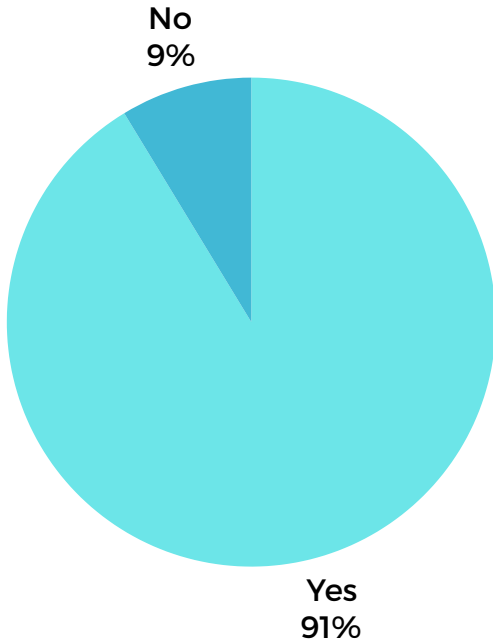


Foster Care



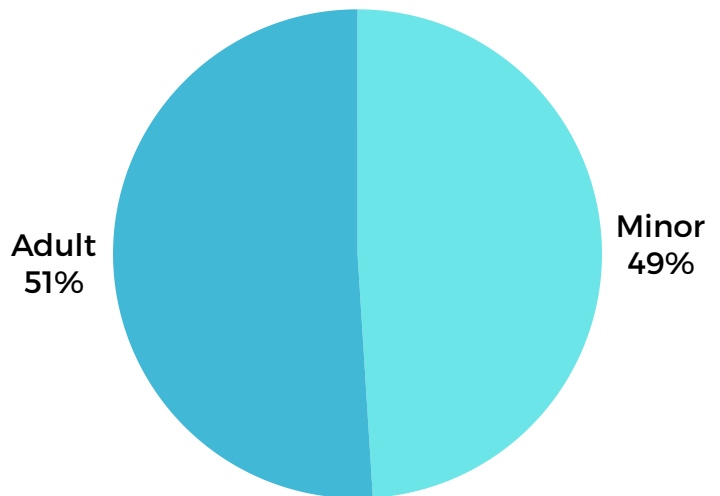
WHO WE SERVE

Domestic Violence



91%
of survivors served have experienced domestic violence

Age When First Trafficked



49% of survivors were first trafficked as minors.

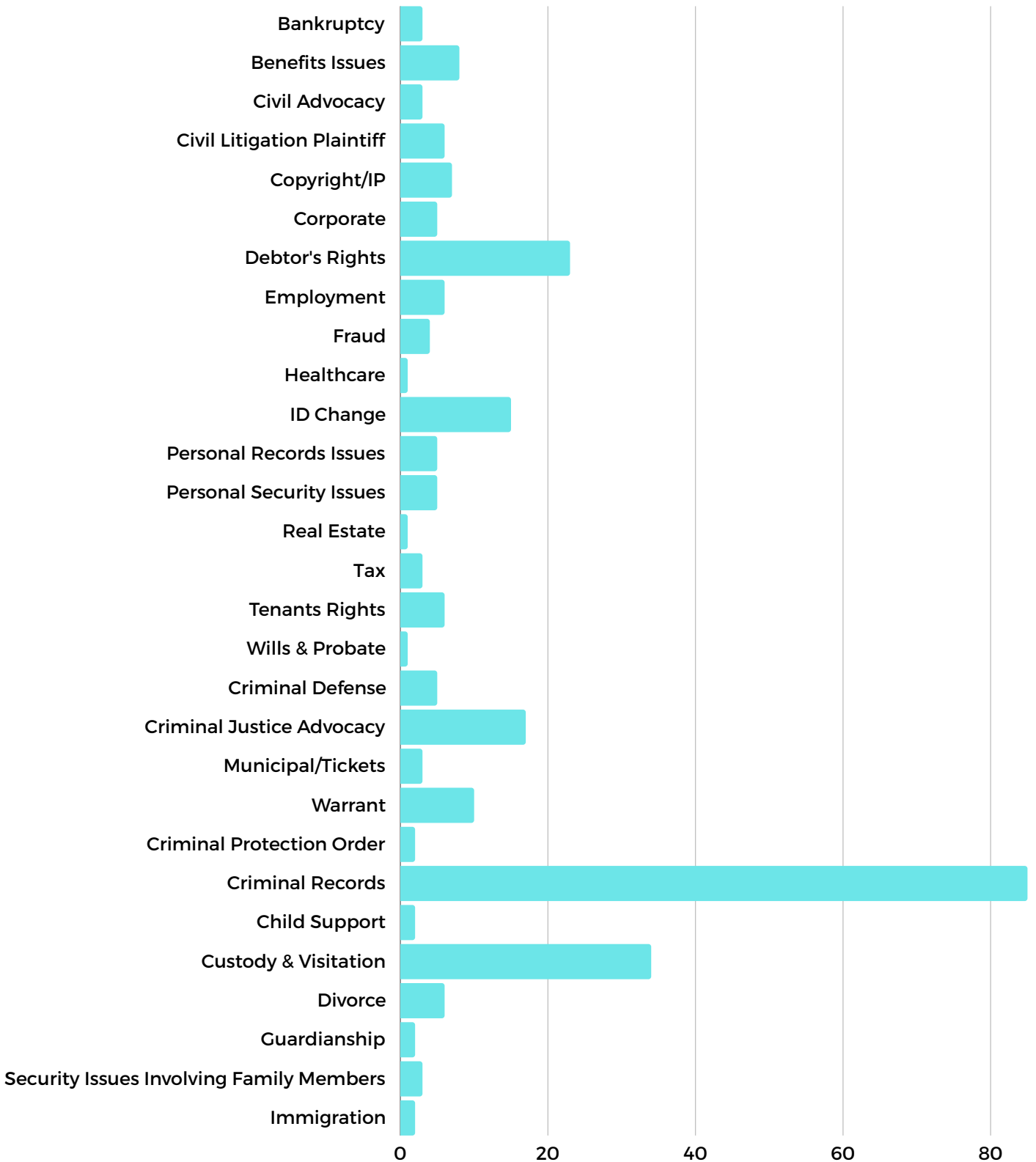
273
ALIGHT supported survivors on 273 legal cases in 2023



As seen in the following chart, the number one legal need of survivors in 2022 was **Criminal Records**, followed by **Custody and Visitation**. The high number of debtor's rights legal services was a new development, which relates to ALIGHT's growing work under the Debt Bondage Repair Act.

LEGAL SERVICES PROVIDED

Number of Legal Matters



SPOTLIGHT: CREDIT REPAIR FOR SURVIVORS



In June 2023, ALIGHT worked closely with the Orange County Human Trafficking Project and the law firm Rutan & Tucker to provide 27 of our survivors with an opportunity to repair their credit histories. This new legal avenue for human trafficking survivors has been made possible by the Debt Bondage Repair Act, effective July 2022.

Why do survivors often have bad credit?

Many survivors have significant debt and financial insecurity at their time of exit. According to Polaris' [Debt Trap: Dealing with Debt After Trafficking](#) (a summary of findings from the 2022 National Survivor Survey) revealed that - at the time of exit - 44% of survivors had debt they were unable to pay off at that time, and 95% of survivors carried debt (mortgages excluded). Nearly half (47%) of survivors had over \$25,000 in debt at the time of the survey, and the primary sources of debt included credit cards (59%), medical debt and student loans (each 50%), car loans (41%) and debts in collections (34%). It concluded that "support in reducing debt was the second most reported need" for survivors who participated in the survey. This debt can be crushing and has the potential to send survivors back into the cycle of abuse in an attempt to escape the pressure.

What does credit repair mean for survivors?

Helping survivors take advantage of this important remedy enables them to undo the damages to their credit history from coerced debt and to move forward with their lives by:

- Blocking prior evictions, late rental payments, credit card or loan defaults, account openings and closings and unpaid bills that went to a collection agency from credit reports
- Improving credit score
- Strengthening relationships with creditors, employers, landlords

SPOTLIGHT: WORK WITH EXTREME POLYGAMOUS GROUPS

Right now, young girls and boys are being trafficked by extremist polygamous groups in the US. This dark reality is taking place in multiple states, including Utah, Colorado, Missouri and Nebraska. Living in a community of extreme religious indoctrination, young girls are forced to marry older men and young boys are forced to work long hours, instead of going to school. There are few options for these children and no way out. Our work with our partners is covered in the popular [Hulu series Impact x Nightline Vanished: Children of the Prophet](#) (season 1 episode 32).

We are proud to work with organizations like [Holding Out HELP](#), a nonprofit in Utah that helps current and former polygamists exit an exploitative environment and develop self-sufficiency skills. While some mothers have escaped these groups, many of their children are still trapped. We are working together with our attorneys in the national network who can act quickly to enforce these mothers' rights to their children and remove them from harm.

These groups value children and women less than men, and teach that disobedience has costly consequences: eternal damnation and shunning from the community. As a result, this is a very complicated area of human trafficking. ALIGHT created a resource with our partner Holding Out Help intended to provide specialized training to attorneys to work with survivors of extreme polygamous groups.

Read: [Working with Survivors of Extreme Polygamous Groups](#)



IN A SURVIVOR'S OWN WORDS



[Watch Mel's interview on RMPBS](#)



Human trafficking is as simple as going out on a date with someone who you are not very familiar with. Hopefully, my story can save others."

- Mel, survivor

Mel is a mother of three and a doting grandmother to a six-year old girl and a one-year old boy. She is also a survivor of human trafficking who has been dealing with the legal effects of her initial exploitation for over 25 years. After being taken from Colorado to New York City as a young woman, she was trafficked by an older man.

He had groomed Mel, making her believe that he cared for her and was her boyfriend. ALIGHT has since helped her with a 20+ year-old warrant, harassment by creditors and other legal issues.

In 2023, Mel and ALIGHT Executive Director Marianna Kosharovsky sat down with Rocky Mountain PBS so that Mel could share her story.



HOW SURVIVORS FOUND US



- Survivor-led organizations like The Avery Center
- Los Angeles-area organizations through the Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force
- Survivors we have already helped
- Victim services organizations like the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance
- Organizations supporting survivors exiting polygamous cultures like Holding Out HELP and Short Creek Dream Center
- Civil rights organizations like Towards Justice
- Partners in The National Survivor Law Collective
- Directories like the National Human Trafficking Hotline, the National Domestic Violence Hotline
- Sex trafficking-specific services organizations like Reclaim Hope, Generate Hope and Covered Colorado
- Members of the ALIGHT Survivor Advisory Council
- District Attorney's offices

NATIONAL ATTORNEY NETWORK

We are grateful for attorneys at these firms and organizations for being part of our National Attorney Network in 2023! Additional attorneys, law firms and legal organizations also generously collaborated with ALIGHT on specific cases.

This is the ALIGHT Army of Lawyers!

Advocates for Survivors of Abuse

Antommara & Associates, LLC

Appeal to Justice

Arnold & Porter LLP

Bowlin & Schall LLC

Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner

Castle Lantz Miracle, LLC

Chamberlain Hrdlicka

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton

Coan, Payton & Payne, LLC

Dentons Durham Jones Pinegar

Denver Trial Lawyers

Drexler Law Group, LLC

Elie Zwiebel, LLC

Foulston Siefkin LLP

Gardner Smith & Hill

Gebhardt Emerson Moodie Bonanno LLC

Gordon & Rees Scully Mansukkhani LLP

Griffiths Law PC

Halligan LLC

Hawkes Quam, LLC

Holland & Hart

Kontnik Cohen

Kutner Brinen, P.C.

Lantz Law Group

Law Office of Cassandra M. Kirsch, LLC

Law Office of Jessica Eve Jones, LLC

Levin Sitcoff PC

Lexington Law Firm

Livelihood Law



ADVOCATES FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE
Seeking and Securing Justice for Survivors



Bowlin & Schall



LANTZ
LAW GROUP



Castle
Lantz
Maricle LLC



LEVIN | SITCOFF



NATIONAL ATTORNEY NETWORK

Lowrey Parady Lebsack LLC
 Mastro, Barnes & Stazzone
 MiCreate
 Miller Shah
 Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky & Popeo PC
 Moye White LLP
 Patricia Martin Law PLLC
 Peak Legal Services, LLC
 Pesch Law Office PC
 Phelan Tucker Law LLP
 Primera Law Group
 Proff Law, LLC
 Recht Kornfeld, P.C.
 Riley Law LLC

Rutan & Tucker LLP
 Segers Law
 Sherman & Howard LLC
 Snell & Wilmer
 Strindberg & Scholnick
 Tierney Lawrence LLC
 Towards Justice
 Varner Faddis Elite Legal
 Vedra Law LLC
 Viner Disability Law
 Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell LLP
 Wilhite Law Firm
 WZW Family Law LLC



2024 PLANS: EXPANDING INFRASTRUCTURE

As we see the growing need for our services year-over year, with 2024 ALIGHT turns to building out our organization infrastructure so that we can serve more survivors. We have some exciting initiatives in this regard.

Tech improvement

ALIGHT will be working with our technology partner Caravan Studios, a division of Techsoup Global, over the next number of years to institute feature improvements. The goal of these improvements will be to make it easier for attorneys to sign up for pro bono opportunities and for ALIGHT to manage more legal partnerships. This initiative is coming at a key time when ALIGHT's legal partnerships are rapidly expanding.



Growing legal network

ALIGHT entered into some exciting new law firm partnerships that significantly grew our pro bono network from 243 in 2022 to 823 in 2023. Our focus now turns to supporting these important relationships on their cases and engaging law firm pro bono programs so that survivors receive comprehensive and multi-jurisdictional support across the firm's national offices. In particular, ALIGHT looks forward to fueling our expansion into Utah and the Los Angeles area with these critical legal networks.



2024 PLANS: EXPANDING INFRASTRUCTURE

Diversifying Legal Advisory Council

To support more national and complex work, ALIGHT's focus will be on recruiting and engaging more legal experts into the Legal Advisory Council. These advisors will provide critical review and input on our programs and provide guidance on maintaining quality services as we scale.



Working closely with Survivor Advisory Council

Key to continuing to provide quality service to human trafficking survivors is working closely with the Survivor Leaders in the Survivor Advisory Council. These advisers provide unparalleled advice and insight due to their respective expertise and lived experiences.

Growing team and base of support

To support these initiatives, ALIGHT will also be growing our team and base of support. While ALIGHT has been able to achieve a great deal with a lean team and bootstrapped operations, the next phase of growth will require additional programmatic, operational and development expertise that will make us more effective and sustainable. Parallel to these changes, ALIGHT will also be offering new ways for our community to learn more about our work and get engaged. We are currently planning introductory virtual events and a Mountain Bike Race fundraiser on June 1st at Castle Rock, CO.

GET IN TOUCH



alightnet.org



connect@alightnet.org



Survivor Intake Line - **720.314.8445** (M-F, 9-5pm MST)



[@ALIGHTAlliancetoLead](https://www.facebook.com/ALIGHTAlliancetoLead)



[@ALIGHTnet](https://twitter.com/ALIGHTnet)



[@ALIGHTonIG](https://www.instagram.com/ALIGHTonIG)



[@ALIGHTtoEmpowerSurvivors](https://www.youtube.com/ALIGHTtoEmpowerSurvivors)



[@AlliancetoLeadImpactinGlobalHumanTrafficking](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AlliancetoLeadImpactinGlobalHumanTrafficking)

Seasonal Newsletter Signup

bit.ly/35ISGXX

Join ALIGHT National Attorney Network

bit.ly/4ahMvTx

Donate

bit.ly/3ORnVOT



THANK YOU!

ALIGHT
ALLIANCE TO LEAD IMPACT IN
GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING