



**U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Uniform Crime Reporting Program**

Human Trafficking and Drug Offenses 2013-2022

Executive Summary:

- The South region has the highest number of reported human trafficking incidents.
- The South region has the highest number of reported drug offenses involved in human trafficking incidents as well as the highest rate of drug offenses per 100 human trafficking incidents.
- Marijuana, amphetamines/methamphetamines, and cocaine were the top 3 reported drug types seized during human trafficking incidents.
- An increase of reported drug offenses involved in human trafficking incidents is associated to increased reporting of human trafficking incidents.

Introduction

Human trafficking is a concern, not only nationally but internationally. Traffickers are not always physically violent; they may use psychological means to force or coerce victims into human trafficking. Manipulation, such as false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships, is used to exploit victims' vulnerabilities, such as substance abuse, as a tactic into trafficking. An article from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) states human traffickers often use drugs as "bait" to recruit victims who have substance abuse disorders.¹ Substance abuse is considered a vulnerability for human trafficking because it can be used to subdue, coerce, and control victims. According to the Department of State, "The United States has prosecuted multiple sex trafficking cases in which the perpetrator used addiction as a tool of coercion."² In addition, victims of human trafficking may use substance abuse as a method of coping during and after captivity. As substance abuse continues to be a problem in the United States, vulnerable populations will continue to be at an increased risk of human trafficking.

Using drugs and narcotics in human trafficking could lead to drug trafficking; doing both can increase profits for offenders. According to the DEA, trafficking humans and illegal drugs often

¹ Information from DEA article, "Violent drug organizations use human trafficking to expand profits."
<https://www.dea.gov/stories/2021/01/2021-01-28/violent-drug-organizations-use-human-trafficking-expand-profits>

² Information from Department of State article, "The Intersection of Human Trafficking and Addiction."
https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/TIP_Factsheet-The-Intersection-of-Human-Trafficking-and-Addiction-1-508.pdf

happen together.³ As such, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program hypothesizes human trafficking is associated with drug/narcotic violations.

As a result of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Authorization Act of 2008, the UCR Program started collecting data on human trafficking in January 2013. The data are collected through the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and the Summary Reporting System (SRS). Participation in the FBI's UCR Program is voluntary for state, county, city, territorial, university/college, and tribal law enforcement agencies, but federal law enforcement agencies are mandated to participate. From 2013 to 2022, an average of 86 percent of agencies participated in the UCR Program, and the average population covered by the UCR Program was 94 percent.

Because of the hierarchy reporting method used in SRS, only NIBRS data were used in this analysis.⁴ NIBRS allows additional offenses to be reported that are connected to an incident, creating more detail-rich data. An important note is that an incident may have more than one associated offense, offender, and victim.

From 2013 to 2022, the average population covered by NIBRS was about 43 percent with agency participation at an average of about 45 percent, as shown in Figure 1. Agency participation and percent of population covered has significantly increased since 2013, and both are expected to rise as more agencies transition from SRS to NIBRS. For example, from 2018 to 2022, the average population covered rose to 55 percent with an average of 54 percent agency participation.

³ Information from DEA article, "Violent drug organizations use human trafficking to expand profits." <https://www.dea.gov/stories/2021/2021-01/2021-01-28/violent-drug-organizations-use-human-trafficking-expand-profits>

⁴ Refer to <https://le.fbi.gov/file-repository/summary-reporting-system-user-manual.pdf/view> for SRS methodology.

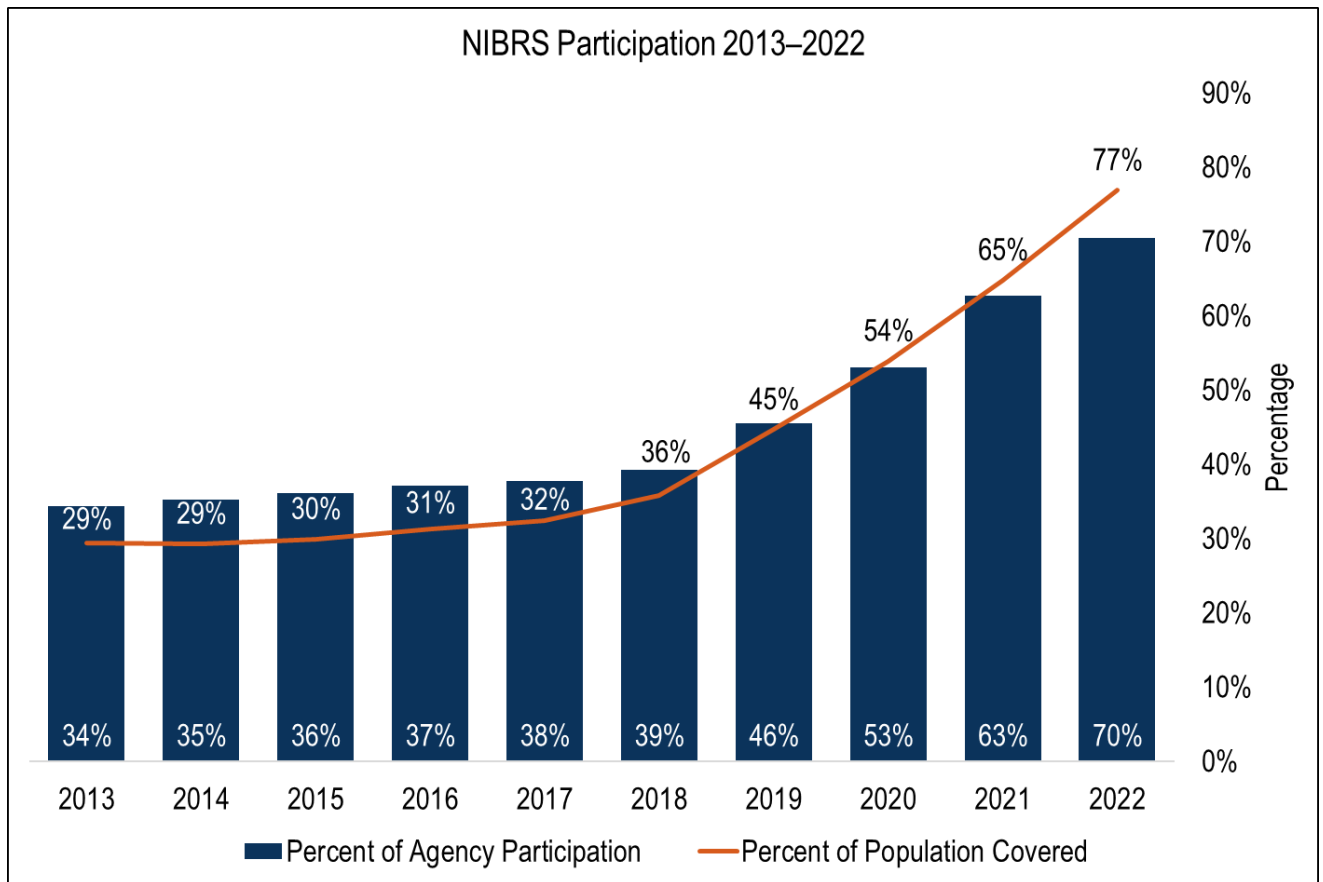


Figure 1: NIBRS participation 2013–2022

Incidents

From 2013 to 2022, more than 8,700 reported incidents involved human trafficking. Since the FBI started collecting data on human trafficking in 2013, the number of reported human trafficking incidents, offenses, and victims has increased. The number of incidents is nearly a linear increase each year, as shown in Figure 2, which is expected as participation in NIBRS increases.

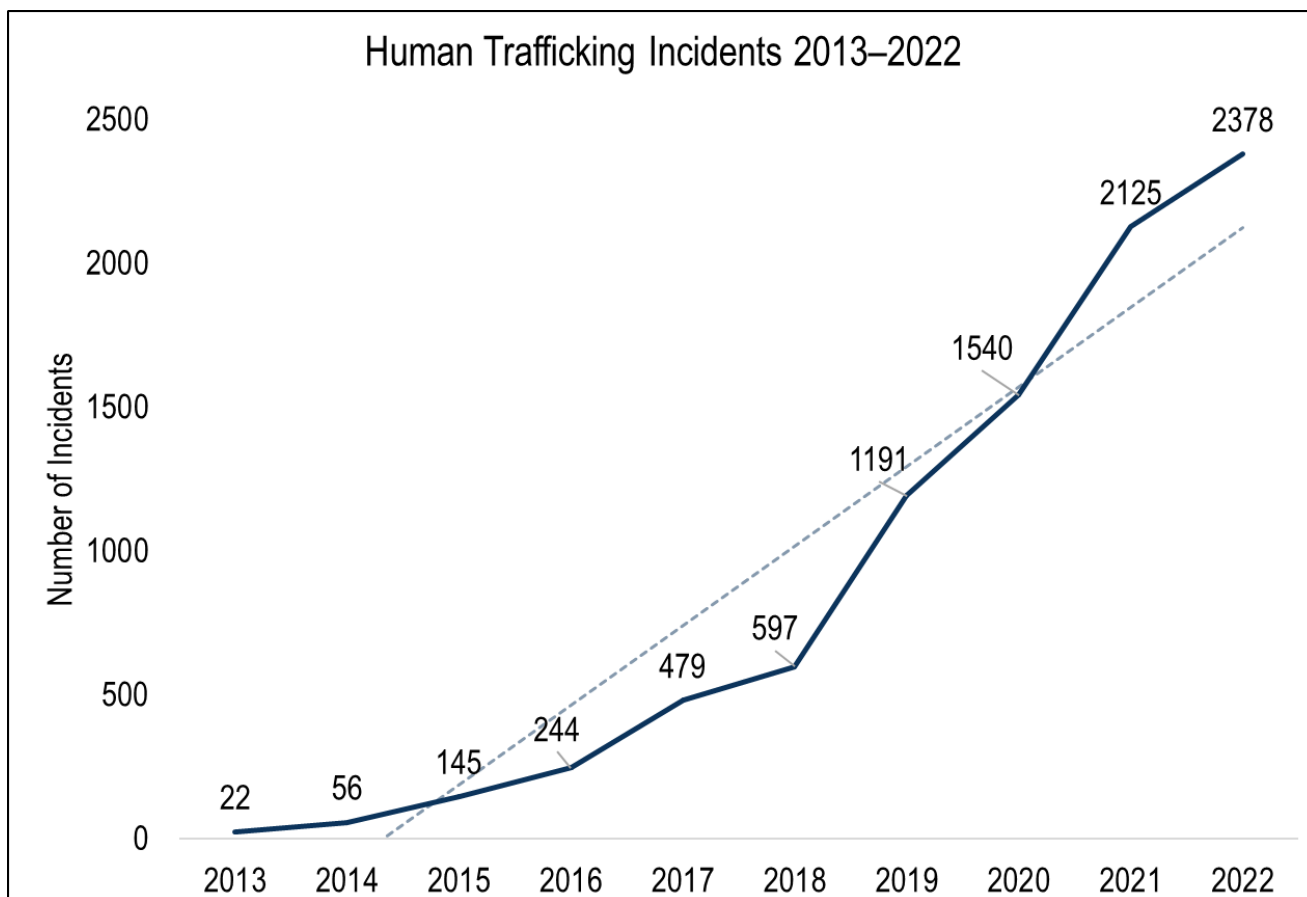


Figure 2: Human trafficking incidents 2013–2022

By region, from 2013 to 2022, over half (51.5 percent) of human trafficking incidents were reported by agencies in the South. The West had the second most reported incidents, with more than 20 percent. U.S. territories were excluded from Figure 3 due to having only one reported human trafficking incident.

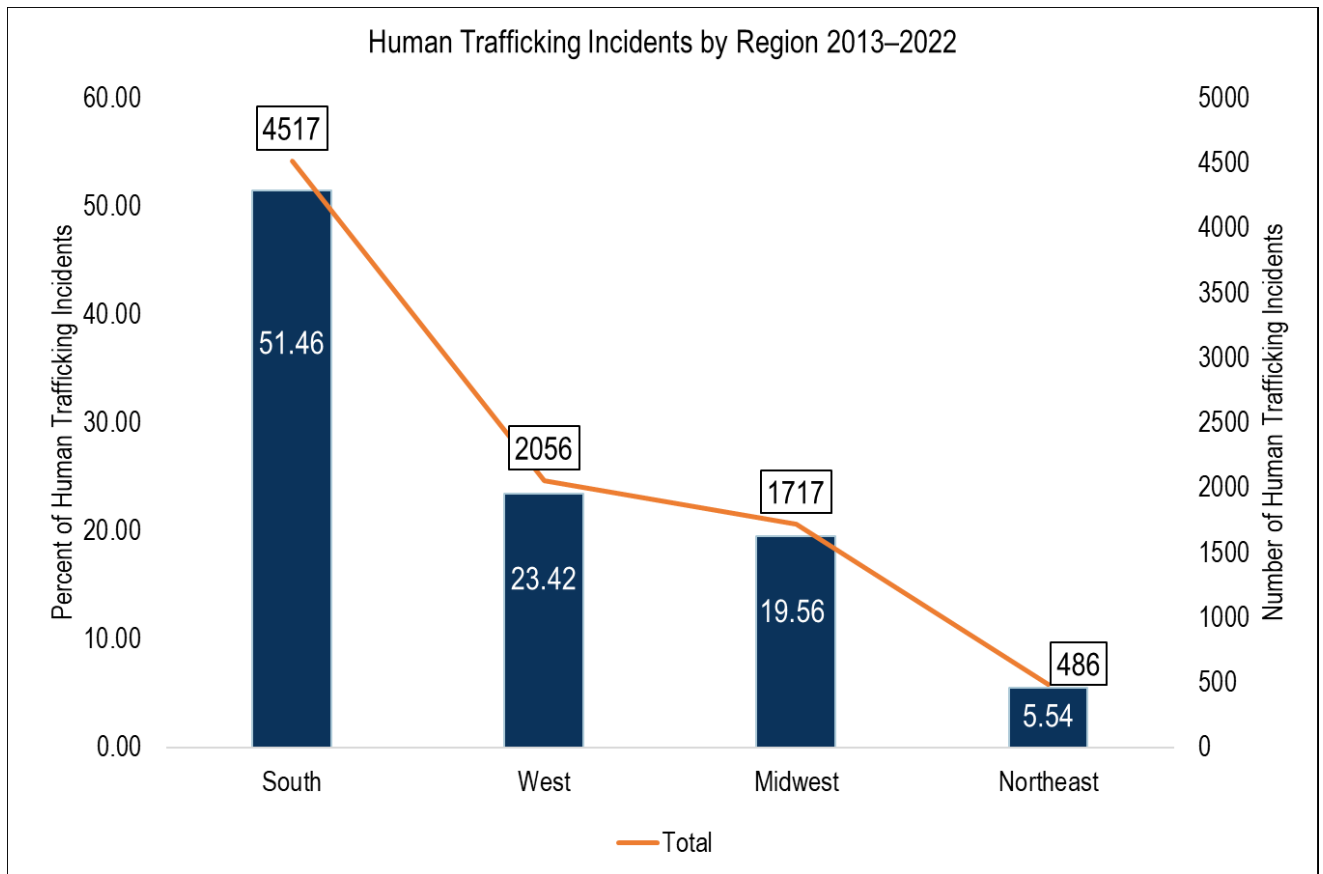


Figure 3: Human trafficking incidents by region 2013–2022

Offenses

More than 8,800 human trafficking offenses, which include commercial sex acts⁵ and involuntary servitude,⁶ were associated with incidents reported to the FBI's UCR Program. The reported data indicate most human trafficking offenses (84 percent) per year were comprised of commercial sex acts. Figure 4 depicts the number of commercial sex acts and involuntary servitude offenses with the total number of reported human trafficking offenses from 2013 to 2022. As shown, reports of human trafficking offenses increased each year.

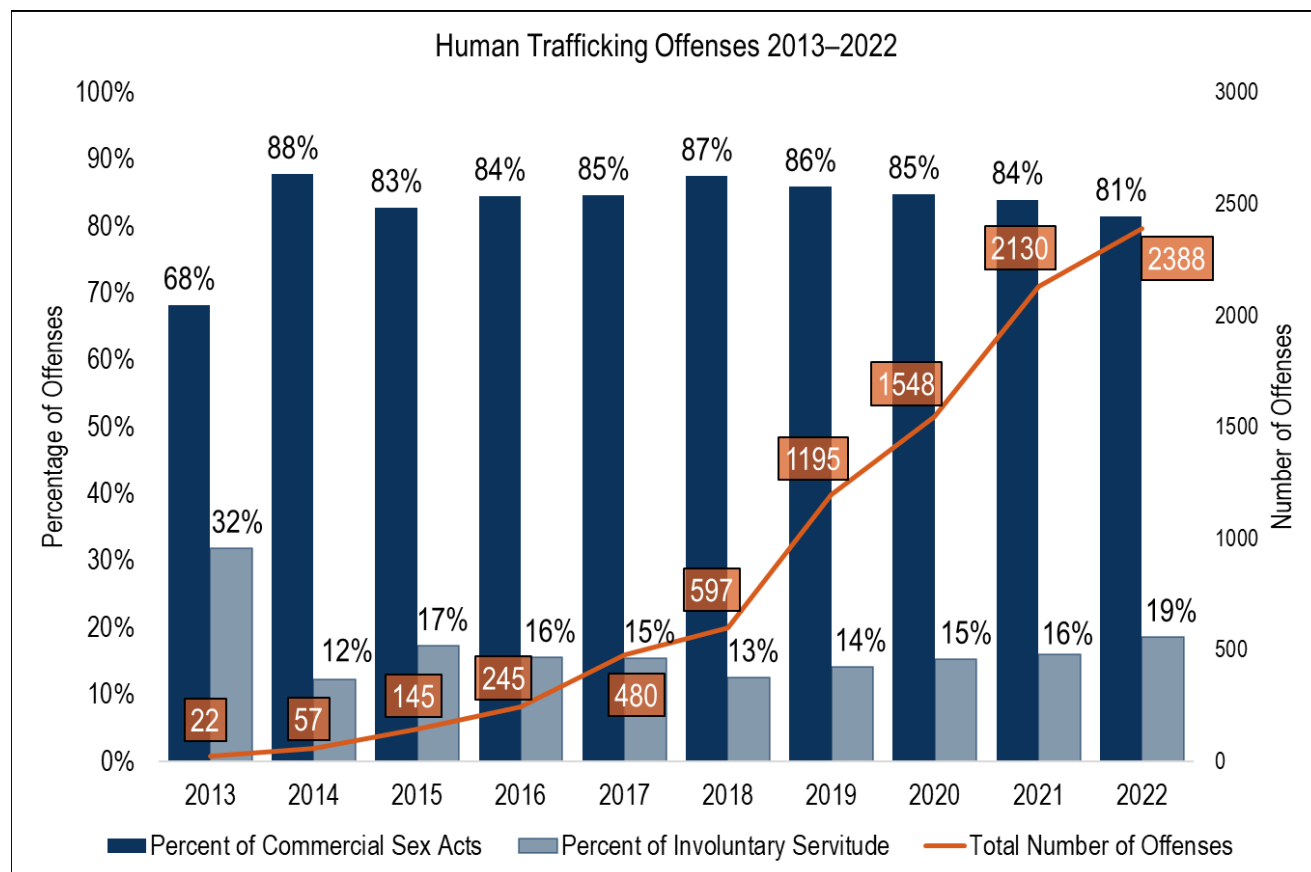


Figure 4: Human trafficking offenses 2013–2022

Aside from commercial sex acts and involuntary servitude, more than 4,000 additional offenses were connected to human trafficking offenses. The additional offenses include, but are not limited to, drug violations and violent crimes. Figure 5 shows the top 10 additional offenses associated with human trafficking incidents from 2013 to 2022. The top 4 offenses are:

⁵ **Commercial sex acts:** Inducing a person by force, fraud, or coercion to participate in commercial sex acts, or in which the person induced to perform such act(s) has not attained 18 years of age.

⁶ **Involuntary servitude:** Obtaining of a person(s) through recruitment, harboring, transportation, or provision, and subjecting such persons by force, fraud, or coercion into involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (not to include commercial sex acts).

Assisting/promoting prostitution, rape, pornography/obscene material,⁷ and drug/narcotic offenses.

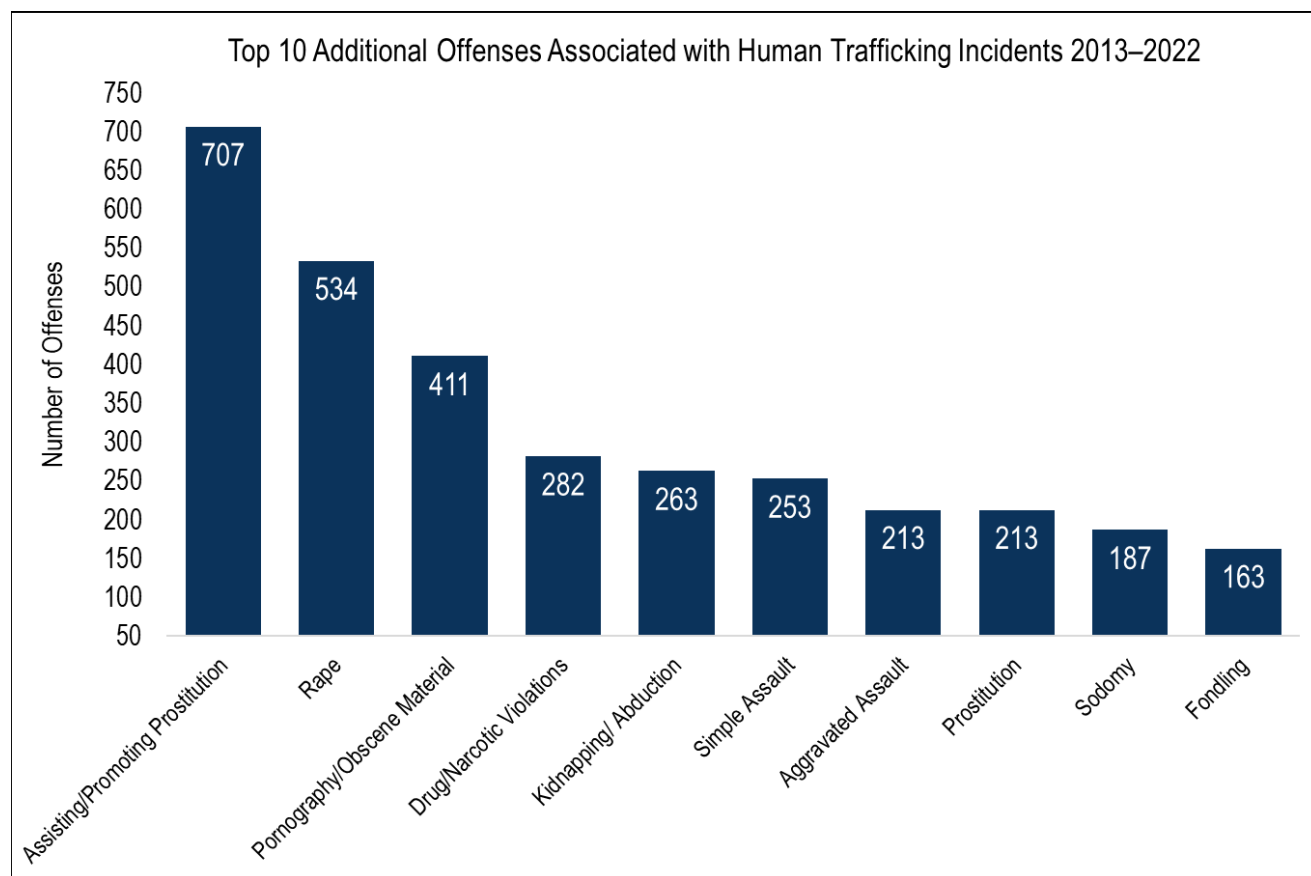


Figure 5: Top 10 additional offenses associated with human trafficking incidents 2013–2022

Offenses can be broken down further into criminal activity, which indicate offenders’ criminal activity/gang involvement. When agencies report 1 of 18 offense codes (e.g., pornography/obscene material and drug/narcotic violations) to the UCR Program, the related criminal activity must also be provided. Figure 6 shows the eight most common criminal activities associated with pornography/obscene material offenses during human trafficking incidents; the two most common are exploiting children and possessing/concealing. For human trafficking incidents connected with drug/narcotic violations, the two most associated criminal activities are possessing/concealing and distribution/selling, as shown in Figure 7.

⁷ The violation of laws or ordinances prohibiting the manufacture, publishing (publication), distributing (distribution), sale, purchase, or possession of sexually explicit material deemed legally obscene. Pornography/obscene material does not only refer to child pornography.

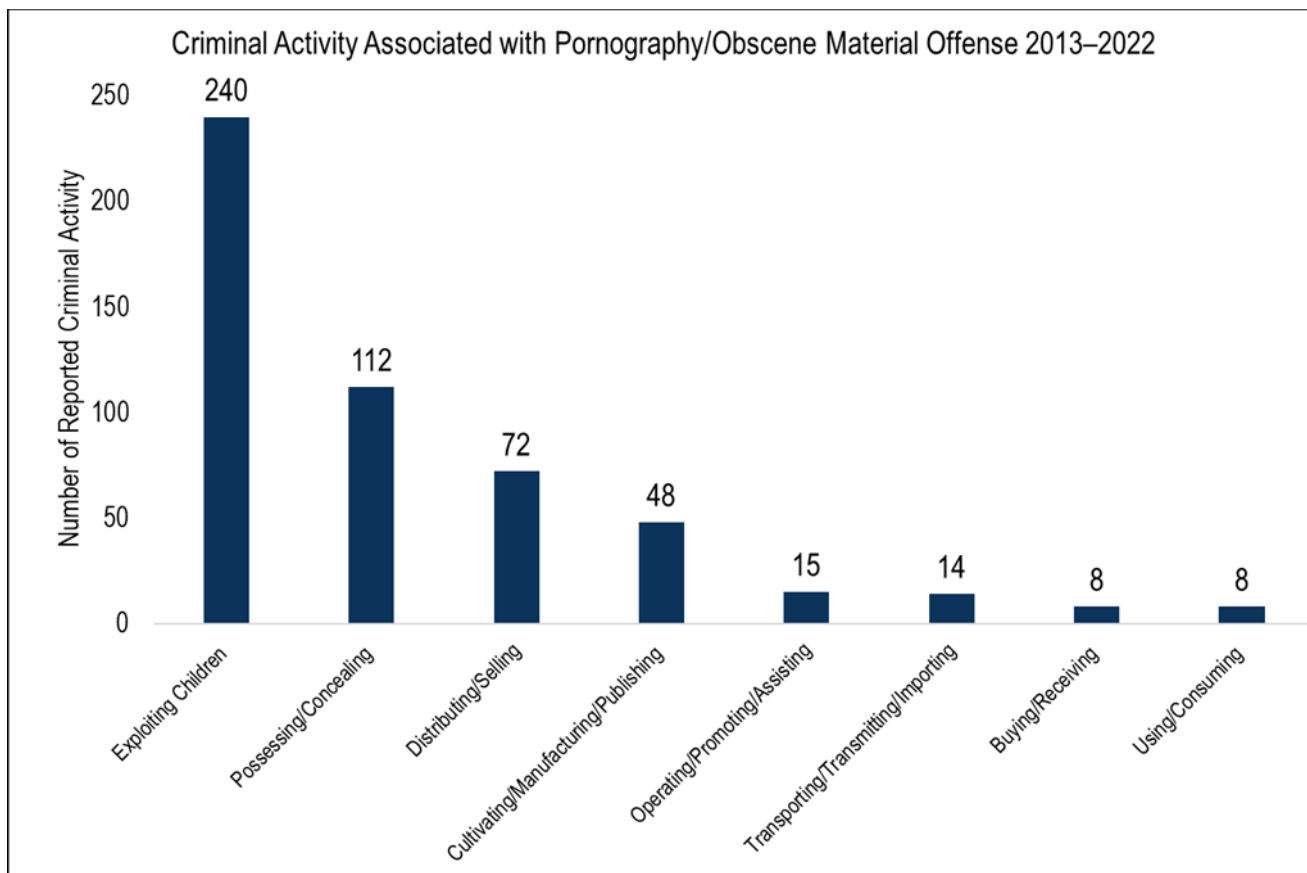


Figure 6: Criminal activity associated with pornography/obscene material offense 2013–2022

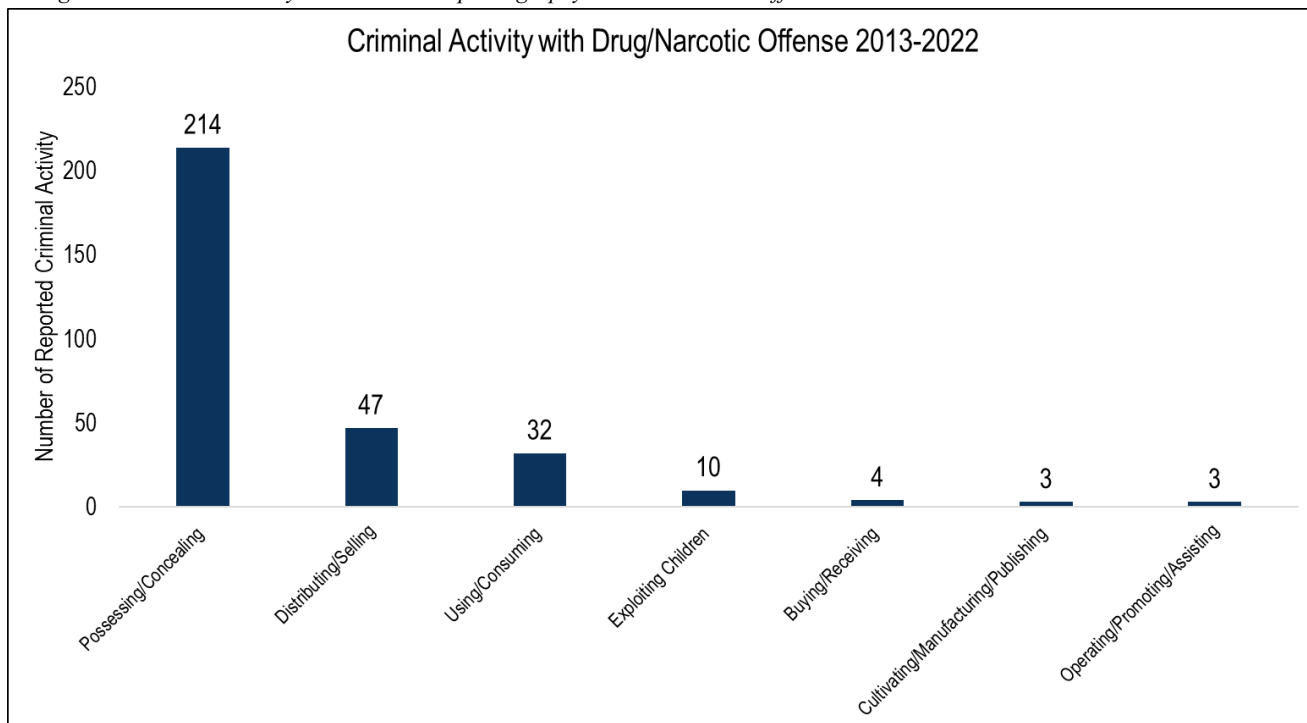


Figure 7: Criminal activity associated with drug/narcotic offense 2013–2022

Victims⁸

From 2013 to 2022, more than 10,000 victims of human trafficking were reported to the FBI's UCR Program. Figure 8 shows the number of reported victims by year.



Figure 8: Human trafficking victims per year 2013–2022

The most common age ranges of victims were 13-16 and 17-19 years old. As depicted in Table 1, the top 3 age ranges for victims of both commercial sex acts and involuntary servitude were 13-16, 17-19, and 20-24 years old.⁹ Ages were unknown for more than 850 reported victims.

⁸ For further victim analysis, refer to the [Bureau of Justice Statistics Human Trafficking Incidents Reported by Law Enforcement, 2022](#) released later this year.

⁹ Because they were victims of both commercial sex acts and involuntary servitude, 38 victims were counted twice in Table 1.

Age Range	Commercial Sex Acts	Involuntary Servitude	Total
13 to 16	2,908	370	3,278
17 to 19	1,399	262	1,661
20 to 24	911	312	1,223
Unknown	708	151	859

Table 1: Top age ranges of human trafficking victims with type of human trafficking offense 2013-2022

Figure 9 shows approximately 80 percent of reported human trafficking victims were female. Nearly 58 percent of reported victims were White, and about 25 percent of victims were Black or African American, as depicted in Figure 10.

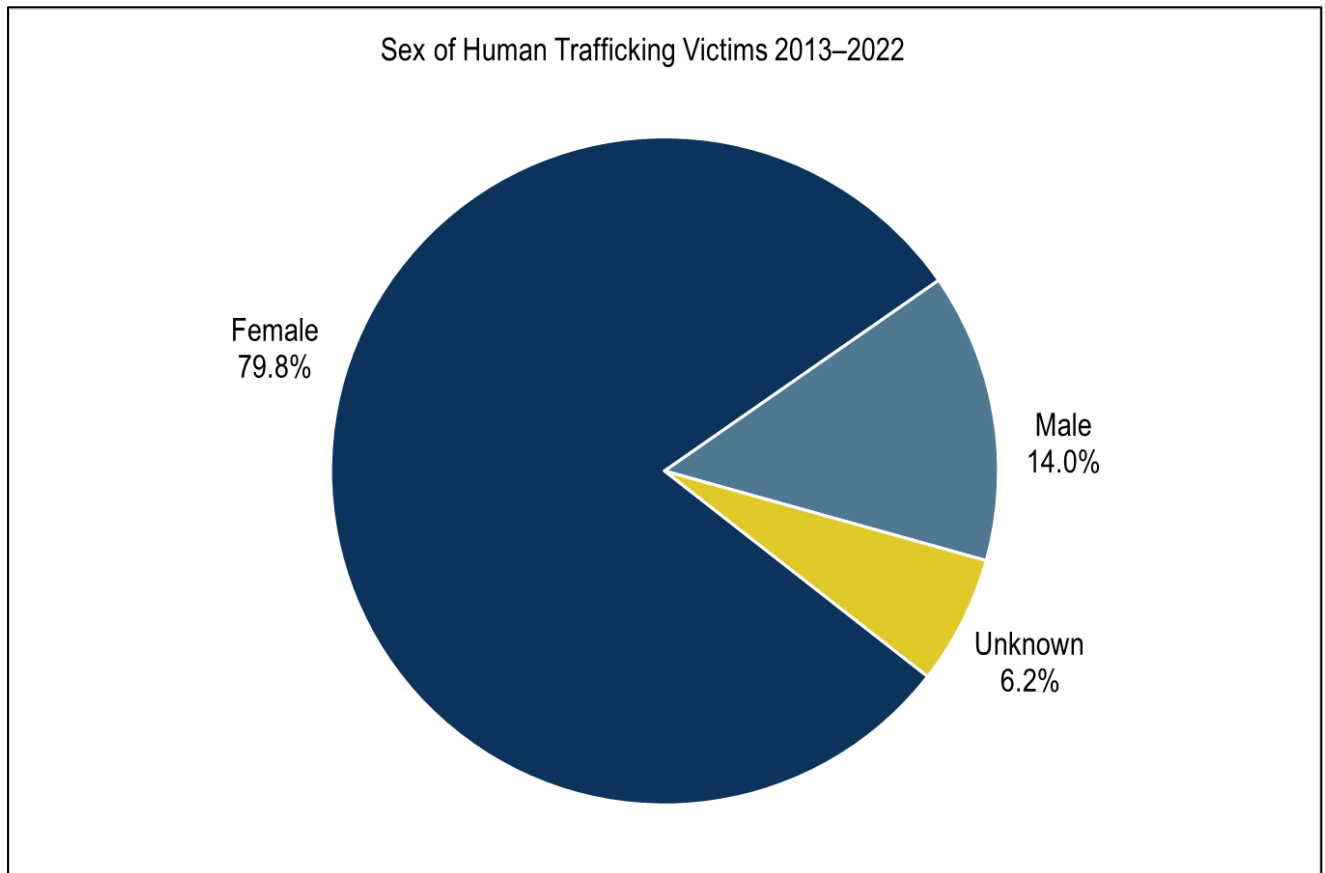


Figure 9: Sex of human trafficking victims 2013-2022

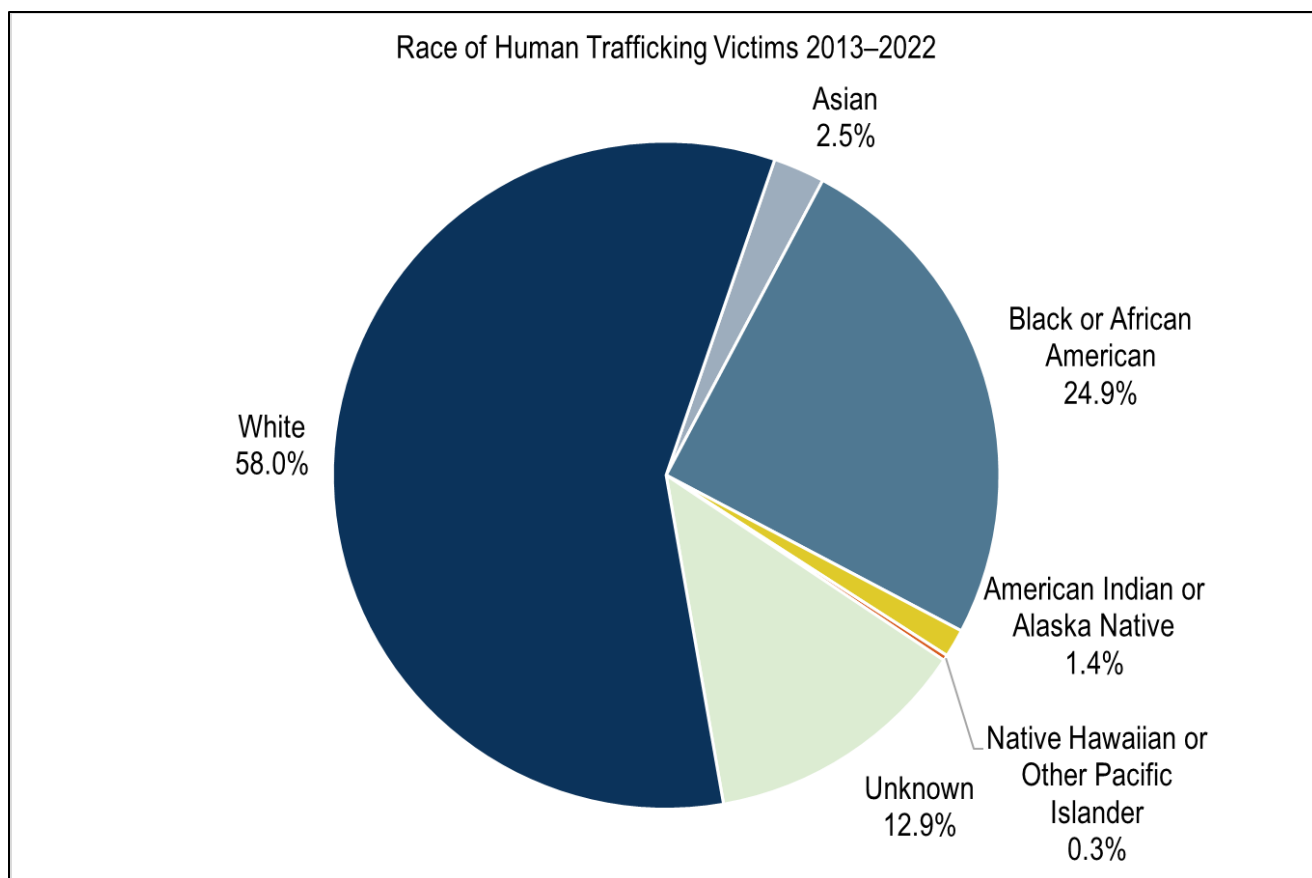


Figure 10: Race of human trafficking victims 2013-2022

Human Trafficking and Drug Offenses

From 2013 to 2022, over 400 property items (drug/narcotics and drug/narcotic equipment) were seized in 8,777 reported human trafficking incidents. One reported incident could have multiple types of property and drugs seized. During the same time period, over 300 seizures of various drug types occurred during human trafficking incidents. Table 2 shows the top 5 drug types seized; marijuana, amphetamines/methamphetamines, and cocaine were the most common types.

Drug Type	Count of Drug Type Seized
Marijuana	145
Amphetamines/Methamphetamines (includes Methcathinone)	66
Cocaine (all forms except Crack)	38
Heroin	19
Other Drugs: Antidepressants (Elavil, Triavil, Tofranil, etc.); Aromatic Hydrocarbons; Tranquilizers (Chlordiazepoxide or Librium, Diazepam or Valium, etc.); Steroids; etc.	21

Table 2: Top 5 drug types seized during human trafficking incidents 2013-2022

As shown in Figure 11, the South region had the highest total number of drug offenses with over 200 and the highest rate of nearly 58 per 100 human trafficking incidents. The Northeast region had the lowest rate of about 2 drug offenses per 100 human trafficking incidents.

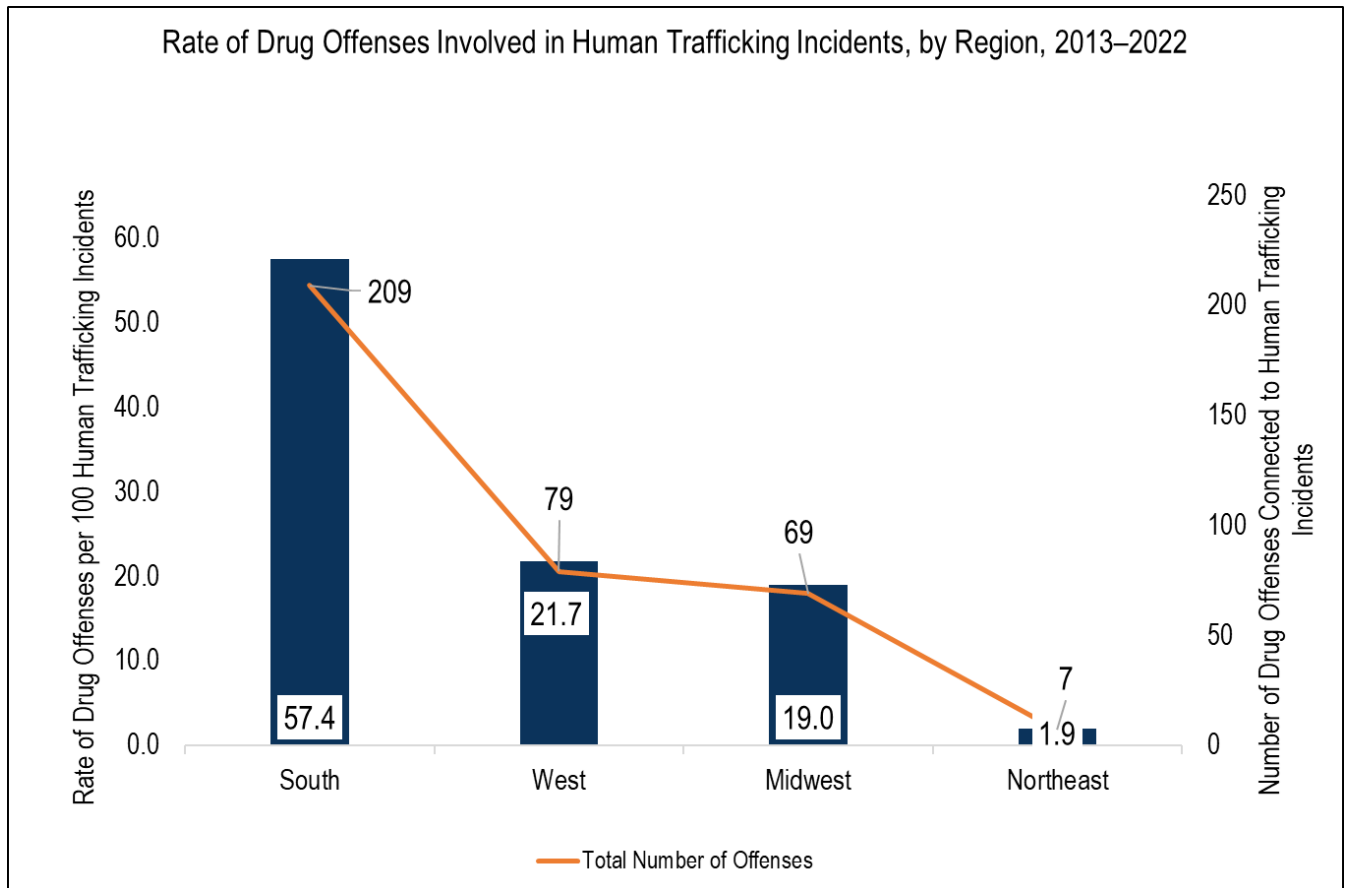


Figure 11: Rate of drug offenses involved in human trafficking incidents by region 2013-2022

Figure 12 shows a positive relation of human trafficking incidents and drug offenses involved in human trafficking incidents. As reports of human trafficking increased each year, the number of related drug offenses involved in those human trafficking incidents have increased. This increase can also be related to the increase in NIBRS participation.

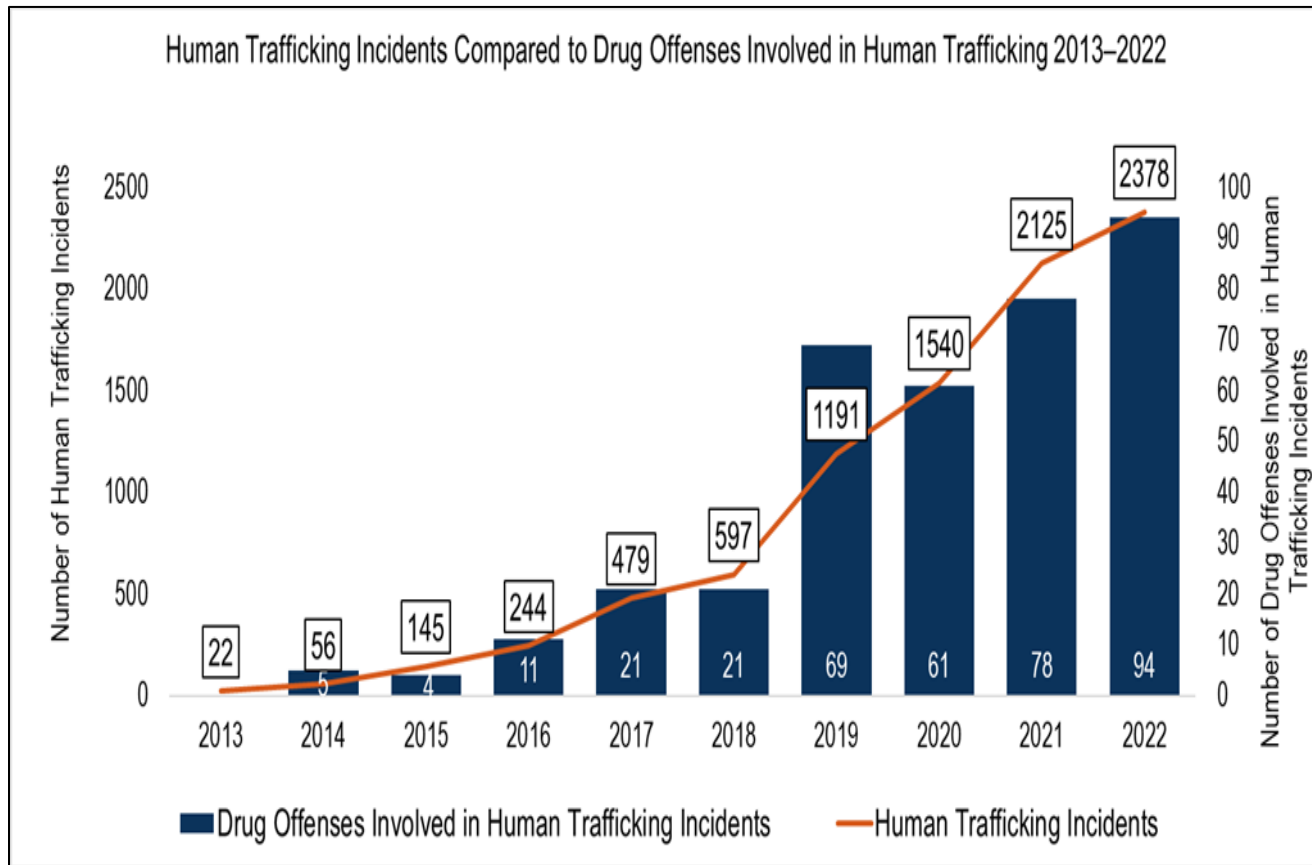


Figure 12: Human trafficking incidents compared to drug offenses involved in human trafficking 2013-2022

Conclusion

As reports of human trafficking to the FBI's UCR Program increase, an increase in the reporting of drug violations remains a concern. A common tactic for offenders of human trafficking is to use drugs/narcotics to coerce and subdue their victims, which could lead to drug trafficking. Although the FBI does not have a specific drug trafficking offense, it does have offenses for drug abuse violations.¹⁰ These violations are covered under Drug/Narcotic Violations (35A)¹¹ and Drug Equipment Violations (35B).¹² Therefore, drug offenses in connection to human trafficking incidents were compared to the number of human trafficking incidents per year. This comparison revealed the South region had a rate of over 57 drug offenses per 100 human trafficking incidents, which was the highest rate of the four regions. It should be noted that the South region is also the largest region in both agency count and population. The West region had a rate of nearly 22 drug offenses per 100 human trafficking incidents, which was the second highest rate.

The data also revealed drug/narcotic violations ranked fourth in additional offenses associated with human trafficking. The top 3 additional offenses—promoting/assisting prostitution, rape, and pornography/obscene material—were expected as 84 percent of human trafficking incidents were reported as commercial sex acts.

In addition, the property and drug types seized during an incident do not tell the “story” of the incident. Property seized does not necessarily mean a drug offense was tied to the seizure of drugs. For example, if marijuana was present during the seizure in a state where marijuana has been legalized, it is unlikely a drug offense was tied to the incident. Regarding the seizure of drugs, it is unknown if the drugs were used to control victims, in recreation, or for drug trafficking.

The data cannot determine if drug trafficking often occurs in conjunction with human trafficking, nor can it be determined that human trafficking is the cause of drug trafficking or vice versa. However, it can be determined that as reports of human trafficking increase, reported victims, offenders, and drug offenses also increase.

¹⁰ The violation of laws prohibiting the production, distribution, and/or use of certain controlled substances. The unlawful cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, use, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled drug or narcotic substance. Arrests for violations of state and local laws, specifically those relating to the unlawful possession, sale, use, growing, manufacturing, and making of narcotic drugs. The following drug categories are specified: opium or cocaine and their derivatives (morphine, heroin, codeine); marijuana; synthetic narcotics—manufactured narcotics that can cause true addiction (Demerol, methadone); and dangerous nonnarcotic drugs (barbiturates, Benzedrine).

¹¹ The unlawful cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, purchase, use, possession, transportation, or importation of any controlled substance.

¹² The unlawful manufacture, sale, purchase, possession, or transportation of equipment or devices utilized in preparing and/or using drugs or narcotics.