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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN COLORADO: 2025 UPDATE

AUTHORS: MITCH MORRISSEY & DJ SUMMERS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Mitch Morrissey – CSI Owens Early Criminal Justice Fellow

Mitch Morrissey was the elected District Attorney for the 2nd Judicial District (JD), from 2005 to 2017. Prior to 2005, Mitch was a trial lawyer in the Denver District Attorney's office beginning in 1983. Mitch is internationally recognized for his expertise in DNA technology, applying that technology in criminal prosecutions, and working to ensure that DNA science is admissible in court. He has trained law enforcement officers and prosecutors throughout the United States, in the Middle East, in Central America, and Canada. A veteran prosecutor, Mitch introduced the first DNA evidence used in a criminal trial in Denver. The DNA Resource Section at the Denver DA's website became a resource for people interested in forensic DNA throughout the world.

After leaving the Denver D.A.'s office in 2017, Mitch co-founded United Data Connect, which has become a leader in solving cold case murders and rapes using investigative genetic genealogy. Through a unique partnership with law enforcement agencies across the country, United Data Connect has solved cold case murders and rapes, and has identified the remains of unidentified individuals. United Data Connect has also become a leader in training genealogists to conduct investigative genetic genealogy efficiently and effectively.



DJ Summers – Director of Policy and Research

DJ Summers is Common Sense Institute's Director of Policy and Research. He oversees the stages of CSI's fellows and research staff, coordinates with partners, iterates and analyzes projects, and breaks down findings for the public, legislators, and commercial leaders.

ABOUT COMMON SENSE INSTITUTE

Common Sense Institute is a non-partisan research organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of Colorado's economy. CSI is at the forefront of important discussions concerning the future of free enterprise and aims to have an impact on the issues that matter most to Coloradans. CSI's mission is to examine the fiscal impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI employs rigorous research techniques and dynamic modeling to evaluate the potential impact of these measures on the economy and individual opportunity.

TEAMS & FELLOWS STATEMENT

CSI is committed to independent, in-depth research that examines the impacts of policies, initiatives, and proposed laws so that Coloradans are educated and informed on issues impacting their lives. CSI's commitment to institutional independence is rooted in the individual independence of our researchers, economists, and fellows. At the core of CSI's mission is a belief in the power of the free enterprise system. Our work explores ideas that protect and promote jobs and the economy, and the CSI team and fellows take part in this pursuit with academic freedom. Our team's work is informed by data-driven research and evidence. The views and opinions of fellows do not reflect the institutional views of CSI. CSI operates independently of any political party and does not take positions.

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INTRODUCTION

Colorado's human trafficking has not improved since 2023, when it tracked its highest-ever year for statewide human trafficking cases. According to national and state data, Colorado remains at peak levels of the crime category, and may exceed them in 2025 as new data becomes available.

Colorado continues to rank among the states with the highest numbers of human trafficking reports and rates of human trafficking reports.

This report takes information from two sources. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has complete data through 2024. CSI used this data to make state-to-state comparisons about annual human trafficking counts and rates.

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has data through 2025, but this is currently an undercount. The data for this website is current through the last full month, plus a 30-day data-entry lag. Some human trafficking crimes may not have found their way into the database yet. This data, however, is a valuable source regarding age, demographics, and locality of Colorado's human trafficking crimes. This data should be viewed as a credible estimate for 2025-specific findings.

The total count of human trafficking offenses in Colorado varies slightly (usually between 1-5 cases) between FBI and CBI datasets.

KEY FINDINGS

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation:

- In 2024, Colorado had the nation's 13th highest number of human trafficking offenses, 88 in total.
- That total corresponded to the nation's 15th highest per-capita rate, 1.48 offenses per 100,000 residents.
- The 88 counts of trafficking in 2024 was the second-highest year on record for Colorado, only behind the 107 of 2023.

According to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation

- Commercial sex trafficking is the majority of human trafficking in Colorado.
- In 2025, 79% of Colorado human trafficking crimes were for the purposes of commercial sex.
- On average, 64% of Colorado's human trafficking victims are minors in any given year between 2008 and 2025.
- 2025 could be another record year for human trafficking offenses in Colorado. CBI preliminary data currently shows 110 trafficking counts, down from 117 in 2023.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN COLORADO

In 2024, Colorado’s human trafficking was the second-highest on record, according to FBI data.¹ According to preliminary Colorado Bureau of Investigation data, 2025 may have met or exceeded the previous record year of 2023. Figures from the Federal Bureau of Investigation show the number of human trafficking offenses, while victim-specific figures from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation show the number of persons trafficked.

Colorado reached a record number of human trafficking in 2023, with 107 reported incidents. In 2024, that decreased to 88 – the second highest year on FBI record.

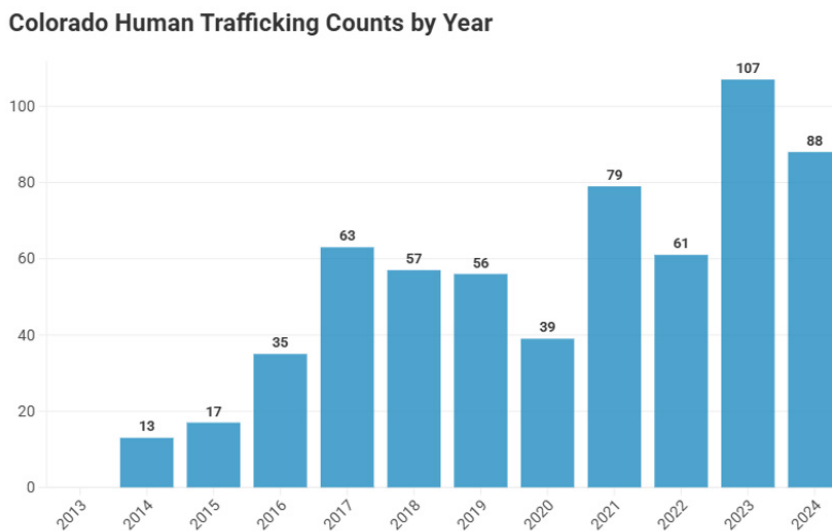
The new decade has seen more human trafficking in Colorado than the 2010s or 2000s. On average, there have been 84 counts of human trafficking in Colorado between 2021 and 2024. Between 2016 and 2020, there were an average of 50 per year.

Colorado is not alone in its sharp increase in human trafficking, but it does have one of the nation’s highest numbers of reported trafficking and one of the highest rates. Virtually every U.S. state saw human trafficking reports spike in 2021 and thereafter. All but 11 states saw human trafficking increase from 2020 to 2021.

In 2024, Colorado had the nation’s 13th highest number of human trafficking reports, behind Texas, California, Georgia, Nevada, Florida, Arizona, Michigan, Alabama, Minnesota, Indiana, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

Colorado also had 2024’s 15th highest rate of human trafficking reports per 100,000.

FIGURE 1 - COLORADO HUMAN TRAFFICKING COUNTS BY YEAR



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation
*2025 may be incomplete



COLORADO HUMAN TRAFFICKING BY AGE RANGE

Colorado’s human trafficking victims fall into all age ranges, but the number of minors has grown in the 2020s alongside the climbing number of trafficking crimes overall. There were 48 human trafficking victims in 2025 under the age of 18.

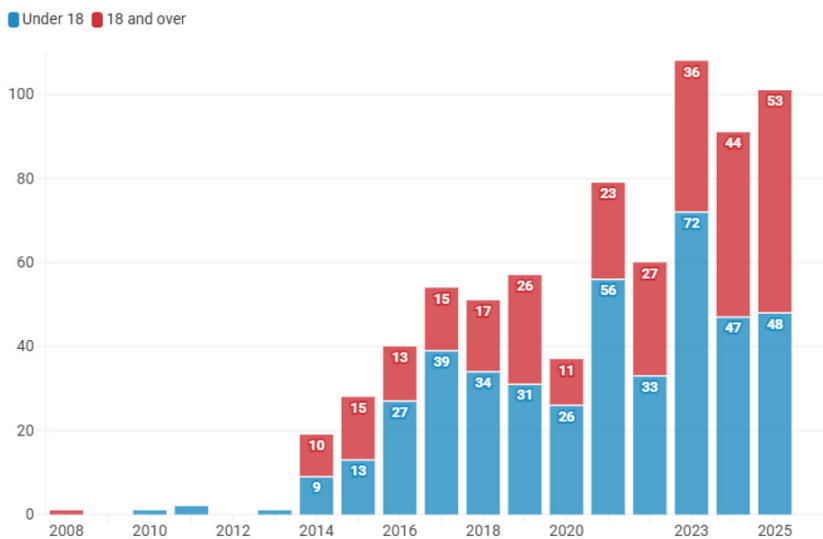
Between 2016 and 2020, there were an average of 31 human trafficking victims per year, according to CBI data. Between 2021 and 2025, there have been an average of 51 per year, a 63% increase.

On an annual basis, the majority of Colorado’s human trafficking victims are under the age of 18, though the share varies substantially from year to year.

CBI’s records go back to 2008. Between 2008 and 2025, 60% of Colorado’s human trafficking victims have been under 18 and 40% have been over the age of 18. On average, 64% of Colorado’s human trafficking victims are under 18 each year.

FIGURE 2 - COLORADO HUMAN TRAFFICKING CRIMES BY AGE RANGE

Colorado Human Trafficking by Age Range

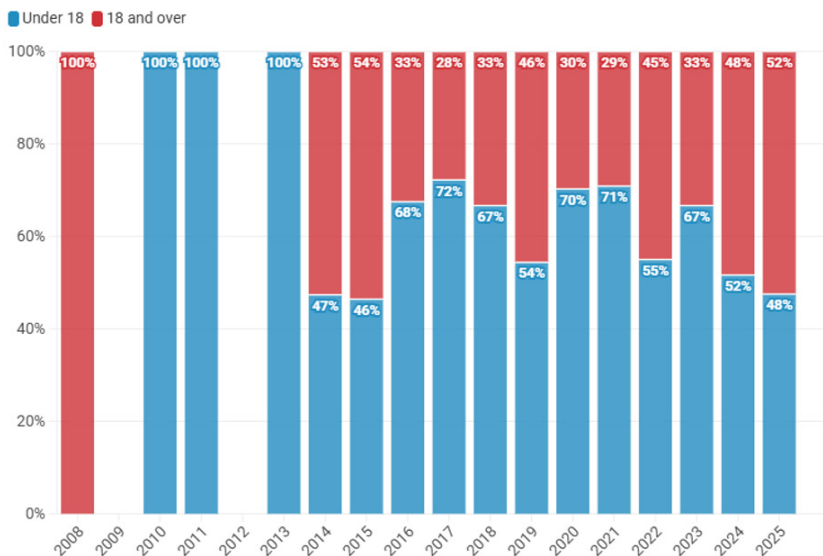


Source: Colorado Bureau of Investigation
2025 data may be incomplete*



FIGURE 3 - SHARE OF COLORADO HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS BY AGE RANGE

Share of Colorado Human Trafficking Victims by Age Range



Source: Colorado Bureau of Investigation
2025 data may be incomplete*



CONCENTRATIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN COLORADO

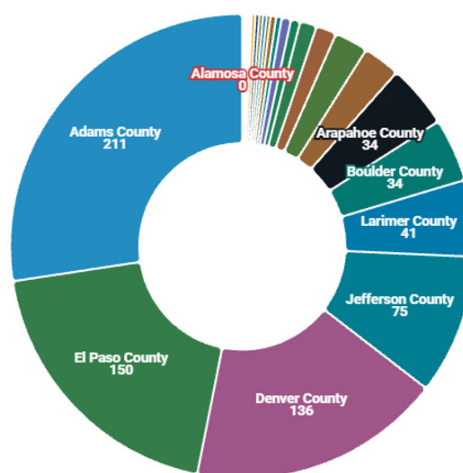
In Colorado, these offenses take place all over the state but are most heavily concentrated in a few counties.

Between 2008 and 2025, Adams County has the highest number of human trafficking offenses, with 211 total victims or 27%. Second highest is El Paso County with 150 or 19% followed by Denver County with 136 or 18%.

In 2025, Adams County led the state in human trafficking crimes, with 37 total, or 34% of the annual statewide count. El Paso and Denver counties followed with 16% of the total statewide count each.

FIGURE 4 - COLORADO HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS, 2008-2025

Colorado Human Trafficking Crimes by County, 2008-2025

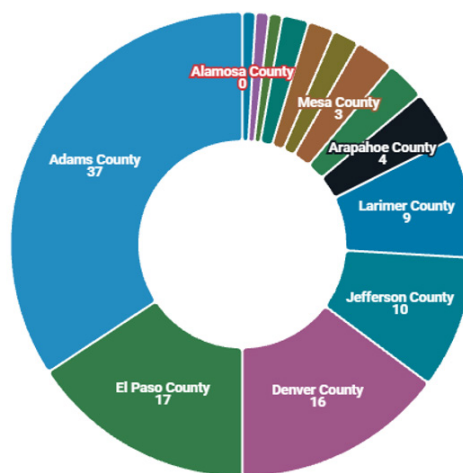


Source: Colorado Bureau of Investigation
2025 data may be incomplete*



FIGURE 5 - COLORADO HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS, 2025

Colorado Human Trafficking Crimes by County, 2025



Source: Colorado Bureau of Investigation
2025 data may be incomplete*



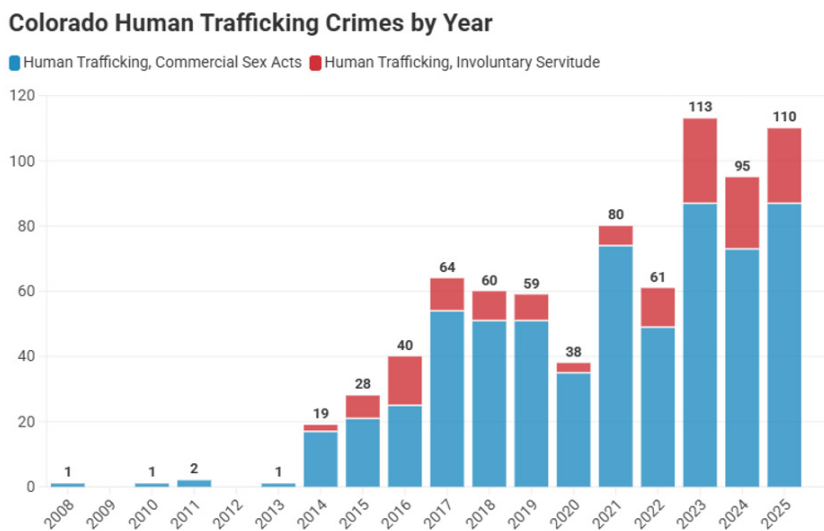
2025 MAY BE ANOTHER RECORD YEAR

The FBI’s data from 2024 establish that 2024 was the second-highest year on record for Colorado human trafficking. Colorado Bureau of Investigation data indicates 2025 is near or at record levels.ⁱⁱ

In 2025, CBI tracked 110 human trafficking crimes – 87 for commercial sex purposes and 23 for involuntary labor purposes. This closely matches the distribution of human trafficking crimes from 2023, in which there were 87 commercial sex trafficking crimes and 26 involuntary labor trafficking crimes.

CBI’s data for 2025, however, is incomplete, as there is a 30-day data entry lag for previous months. As figures are finalized, the 2025 count may remain at 110 or climb higher.

FIGURE 6 - COLORADO HUMAN TRAFFICKING CRIMES BY YEAR



Source: Colorado Bureau of Investigation
 *2025 may be incomplete





BOTTOM LINE

According to federal data, Colorado's human trafficking reached its second-highest levels in 2024, ranking 13th among U.S. states for the total number of counts and 15th for its rate of human trafficking. According to Colorado Bureau of Investigation data, the number of human trafficking crimes in 2025 is near the level of 2023, and data entry lag may make that count climb. A majority of Colorado's human trafficking victims are minors, with roughly two-thirds of the statewide victims since 2008 being under the age of 18.

SOURCES

- i. Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Data Explorer, <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>
- ii. Colorado Bureau of Investigation, <https://cbi.colorado.gov/sections/criminal-justice-information-services-unit/uniform-crime-reporting-ucr-and-colorado-crime>