

Support & Resources for All

By Maja Hasic, Anti-Human Trafficking Program Director



Maja Hasic serves as the Anti-Human Trafficking Program Director with Tapestri Inc., a non-profit social service agency that works with survivors of violence from the immigrant and refugee community. Ms. Hasic designs and provides trainings and outreach to mainstream service providers, law enforcement, and community organizations on human trafficking on a local, state-wide, and national basis. Currently, Ms. Hasic works to establish collaborative relationships with other nonprofit organizations and law enforcement around the issue of human trafficking. Ms. Hasic serves as the Office for Victims of Crime, Training and Technical Assistance consultant and National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center consultant. Ms. Hasic holds a Master's degree in International Relations and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Georgia State University.

The OVC Faces of Human Trafficking (FOHT) videos were the first of its kind. They offered information and insight into all forms of trafficking, not only from the view of social service providers, medical providers, law enforcement, but also survivors. The field has grown and evolved since the release of FOHT. No longer is the survivor inclusion a reference to an individual sharing a painful memory but an empowering statement symbolizing that an agency has taken the right steps to hire survivors, work with subject matter experts and at a minimum seek feedback from individuals receiving services.

Since the release of the videos, I have also witnessed a change and a shift in the field's overall response to all forms of human trafficking. There has been a growing recognition of labor trafficking and an urgency for service providers to learn how to recognize and respond to labor trafficking.

My hope moving forward is equal access to services for all survivors. This can only be achieved if we work together towards a common goal.

Despite the many wins and successes, the field is still struggling with accessing resources for male victims of trafficking and victims of labor trafficking. For many years we have heavily relied on Domestic Violence shelters to provide emergency housing to female victims of sex trafficking who have also experienced other forms of victimization. Our male survivors still struggle to access emergency and long-term housing often leading to use of hotels for emergency stay.

Foreign nationals face yet another layer of barriers when attempting to access services. An especially vulnerable population is unaccompanied minors fleeing violence in their home country only to accumulate large amounts of debt for their journey to the U.S. Foreign national minors struggle with the difficult decision of whether to work and pay off a debt or assimilate into the U.S culture. A decision that no child should have to make. Long waitlist for legal services and even longer visa processing times add to the uncertainty and instability in these children's lives.

We must continue to evolve and adapt our approaches to ensure that all survivors, regardless of their background or circumstances, receive the support and resources they need.