

Together we are expanding pathways to freedom, safety, and hope in order to end sex trafficking.

Everyone deserves to be loved.

Everyone deserves a life free from exploitation.



Annual Impact Report

Fiscal Year 2022 | July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022



Message from Amanda

In 2009 I was one of a small group of women who had a reckoning that spoke to us deeply: Build relationships with people being trafficked on the streets of Seattle, listen to their needs, and find a way to help. Since then, thanks to the support of our donor community and the tenacity of an incredible team, we've built one of the largest continuum of services designed by and dedicated for victims and survivors of sex trafficking in the United States.

Over 600 individuals engage with REST each year, and more than 400 of them enroll in one or more of our services. I am so proud of what has been accomplished at REST and I hope, as you read this report, you are too.

Given our history of successful growth, it might surprise you then to know that over the last year we embarked on a strategic planning initiative to ask ourselves if we were doing the right things. We wanted to consider our way forward in light of a community-first approach to nonprofit leadership. We believe that a nonprofit exists to eradicate systems of harm, rather than merely treat symptoms of harmful systems. This is not a new approach for us, but it was helpful to step back and ask if we were still on the right path and operating with an obvious long-term objective for the organization. This led us to unanimously simplify and embolden our mission statement, which now reads:

REST exists to expand pathways to freedom, safety, and hope in order to end sex trafficking.

We also adopted a new 5-year strategic plan, looking to our future with determination and conviction to multiply impact across the country. Through this plan we intend to expand direct services with survivors as our core work, launch a training and

consultation division to support and strengthen the work of other direct service providers, and build strategic partnerships for high-impact projects that will help end sex trafficking.

As the strategic plan came into view and was adopted by our team and Board of Directors, I came to believe it was the right time for me to shift into a different seat with REST and open the door for a new Executive Director to lead us into steady, sustainable growth while I continue to help drive our national initiatives and high impact projects forward as a member of the Board of Directors. We will take the next fiscal year to recruit and welcome our next Executive Director to the team.

As we prepare for what's next, I invite you to read this report to see evidence of our work in action and imagine what's possible for the future. In these pages you will meet real people with real stories who have found their path to freedom, safety, and hope after overcoming overwhelming trauma and abuse. You will see numbers that highlight the impact of REST's work, and behind each number is a survivor who is worthy of love and a REST team who makes sure each survivor has the opportunity to live a life without exploitation.

It is an exciting time for REST. It is also the time for all of us to deepen our investment and lean in to propel the mission forward. Only together can we expand pathways to freedom, safety, and hope in order to end sex trafficking.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Hightower', written in a cursive style.

Amanda Hightower
Executive Director



A Note on Ethical Storytelling

At REST, we seek to honor survivor experiences and voices through the storytelling process. We are committed to telling survivors' stories in a way that is empowering to them, contributes to their healing journey, and avoids re-exploitation.

We partner with survivors from the start, offering them the opportunity to choose how they want to be represented in their stories. We invite them to consider their own safety, future, and personal preference as they make these decisions.

In this Annual Report, you'll be invited into the unique experiences of four different survivors who have decided to courageously share their stories with you. Each one made their own decisions as to how they wanted to be named and represented.

There is some content in this Annual Report that may be challenging to read, especially for individuals who have experienced sexual assault, physical abuse, addiction, or mental health issues. Please care for yourself while reading.

Principles of Care

Everyone is worthy of love.

We believe that every person is made in the image of a beautiful Creator, with inherent dignity and worth, and is undeniably deserving of love. Yet, harm meets all of us in different ways and plants seeds of shame that tell us we are unworthy. For exploited individuals, this shame often becomes paralyzing. However, when met with a non-judgmental, fully accepting and unconditionally caring love, the shame gets unraveled, hopes are restored, and dreams are reactivated. Effective services are essential, but a community that offers authentic, healing love makes all the difference.

Individualized

We understand that each person is different, with unique needs, strengths, and culture. We tailor our services and interactions to the individual so that they feel known and are more invested in the relationships, the programs, and their goals.

Relationship-Based

It is often a harmful relationship that leads to exploitation. Therefore, it often takes a trustworthy and consistent relationship to give someone the courage to walk away from their trafficker. Building trust, safety, belonging, and a supportive community are essential components to the programs within REST.

Strengths-Based

Survivors of sexual exploitation have consistently received the message that they have no value apart from selling their body. Yet, we see incredible strengths that have enabled survivors to endure the harshest of circumstances and navigate constant threats of danger. So rather than focusing on deficits, we celebrate and build off of their strengths, skills, hopes, and dreams.

Trauma-Informed

Survivors of trafficking have experienced many layers of trauma, so the way we interact and care for them must start with an understanding of the effects of trauma. We know that the brain holds trauma responses for a long time and therefore, we may see trauma responses even when someone is no longer in danger. Knowing this, we craft our services in a way that accommodates for trauma responses and provides an environment that is truly conducive to healing.

Self-Determination and Empowerment

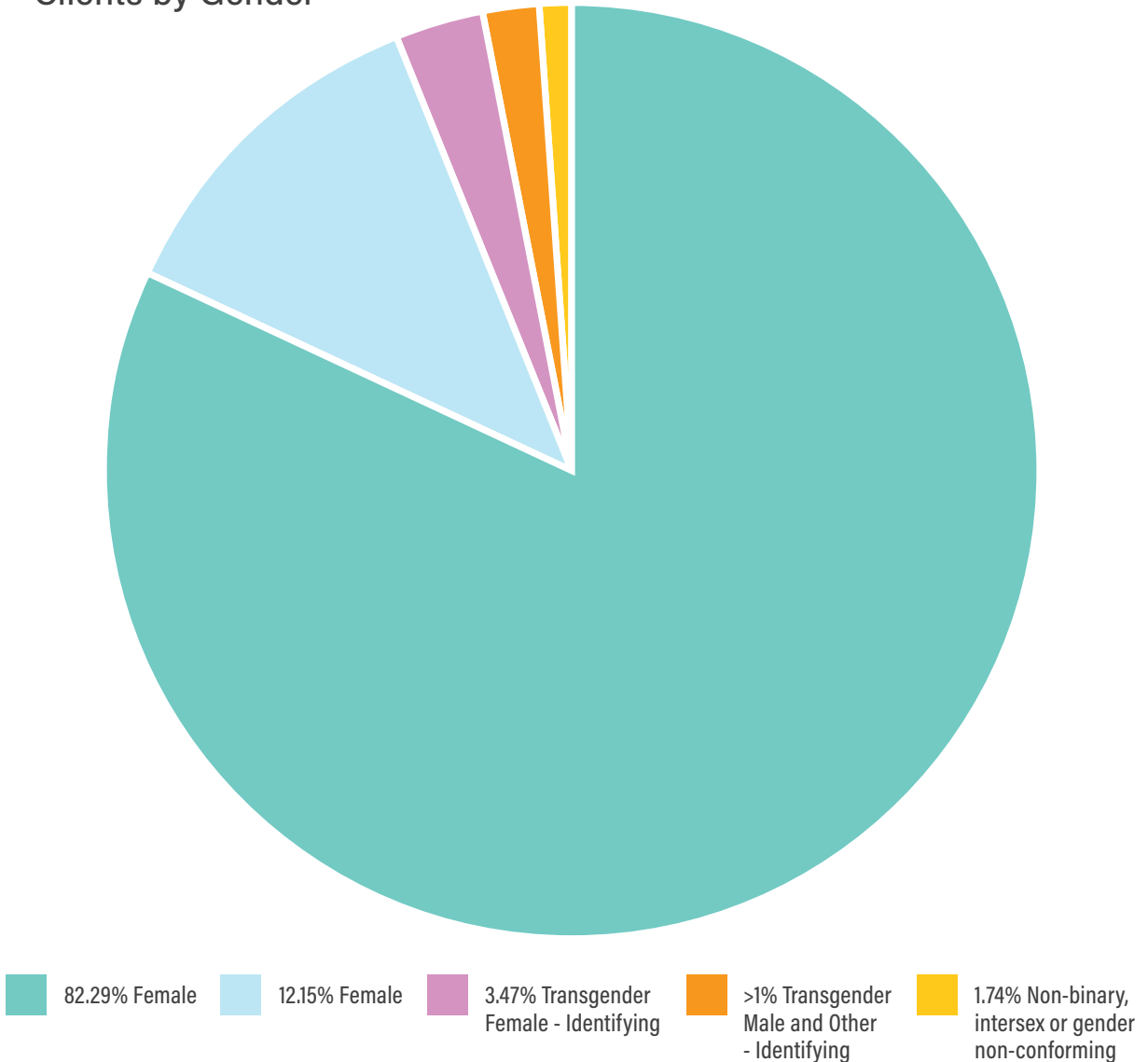
In the world of exploitation, choices are often taken away. We seek to restore choice and build self-efficacy. Rather than choosing for someone, we help uncover their goals and work together to develop a plan that matches their unique strengths and culture. We help survivors think through options, consider possible outcomes, and identify the choices most aligned with their goals. When they believe in their own ability to make positive changes in their lives, they are more equipped to face life's challenges in the future.

Faith Integration Option

We are a Christian organization that desires to offer respectful services to individuals of all faith backgrounds. Our faith shows most strongly in our values of providing unconditional care, focusing on relationships, recognizing strengths, minimizing barriers, and walking with our clients on their journey to freedom, rather than acting as "saviors," or attempting to proselytize. We don't require faith engagement at REST. Instead, we simply offer a healing environment where survivors are free to incorporate their own spiritual beliefs or exploration in whatever way is comfortable for them.

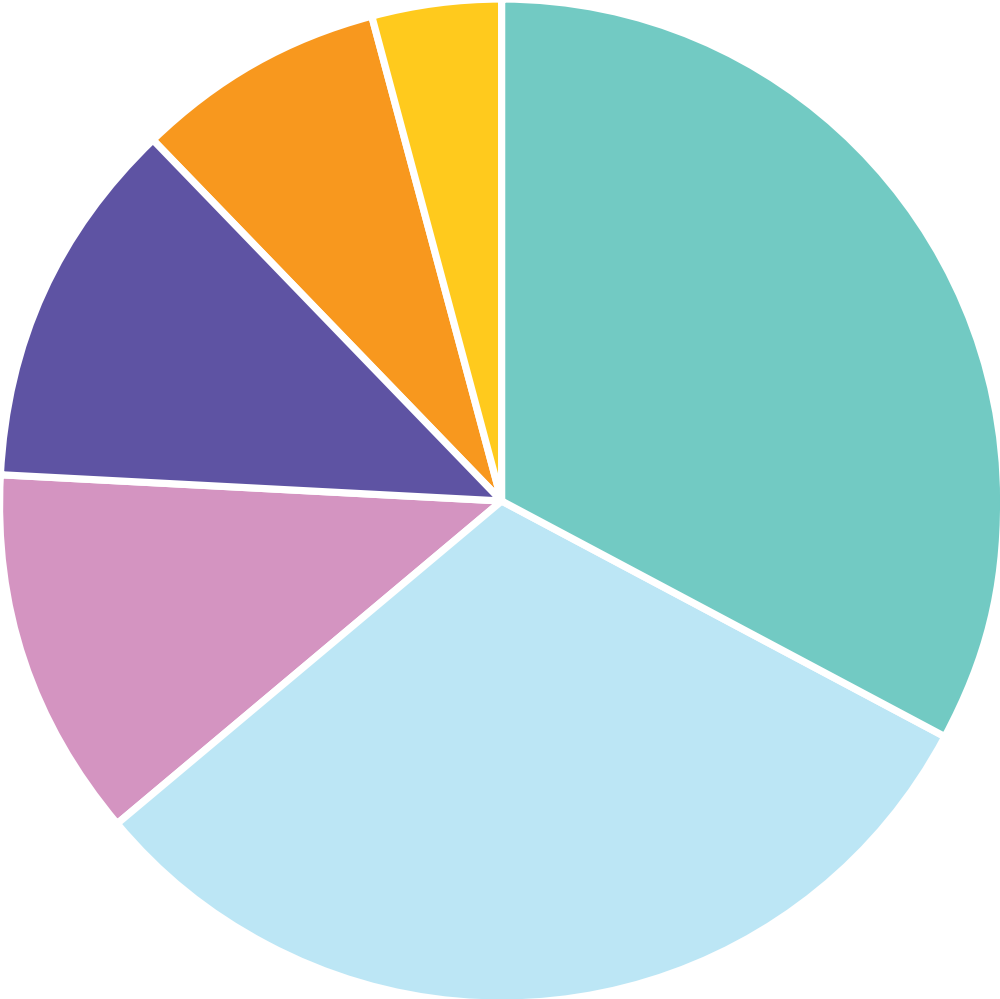
Who Does REST Serve?

Clients by Gender



Clients by Race*

*Chart based on voluntarily disclosed ethnicity information. 64% of all of those who disclosed identified as multiracial.



- 33% African American
- 31% White (Includes Arab or Middle eastern)
- 12% American Indian or Alaska Native**
- 12% Hispanic/Latinx
- 4% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 8% Unknown

**Last year this category was called Native American

Emergency Services

Outreach, Hotline, Shelter

4,250 Texts sent via outreach

210 Contacts through street outreach

Faced with uncertainty and a world of unknowns, the first step out of the sex trade or away from a trafficker is often the hardest. That's why we must be ready with tangible and relational support to make the journey easier.

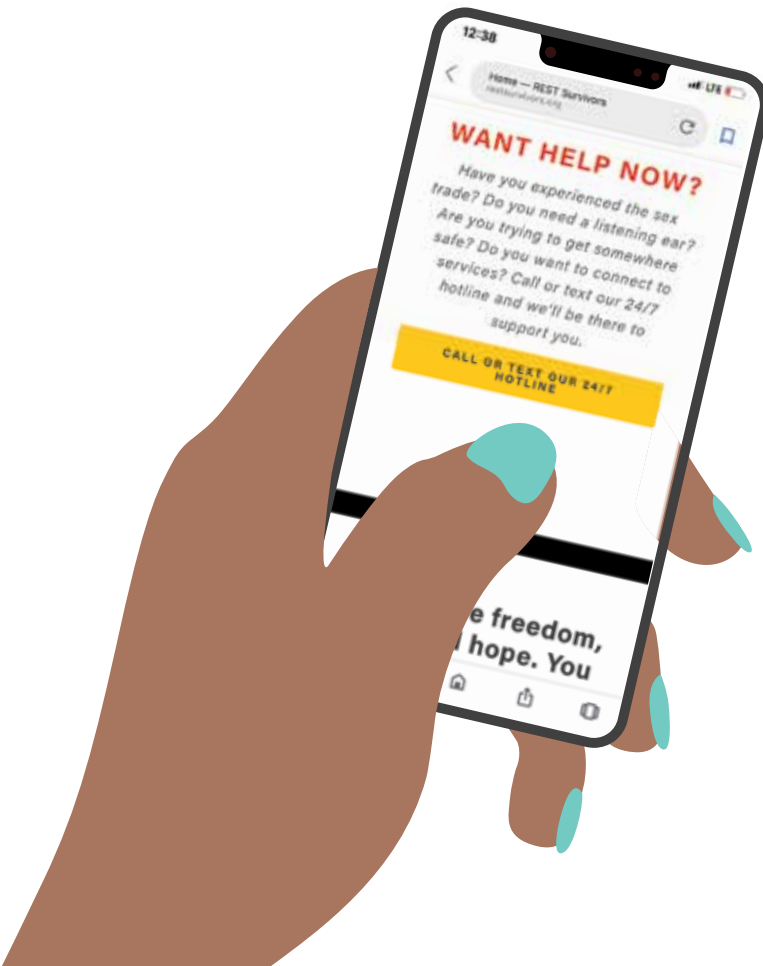
Alone, tired, hopeless, fearful, unworthy.

These are common words we hear in early conversations with survivors. When living in survival mode a person is unable to envision a future beyond tomorrow. Without a safe place to sleep or a safe person to confide in, there is no opportunity to let their guard down and consider what's possible. Through Emergency Services, we offer a safe place and safe relationships. We listen, we offer resources, and slowly we start to hear new words, like

Safe, ready, goals, dreams, community, survivor, worthy.

REST's Emergency services, which include direct outreach, 24/7 crisis intervention hotline, and the Emergency Receiving Center shelter, provide pathways to safety by meeting victims and survivors right where they are and offering them a way out. REST clients are greeted with unconditional positive regard and support. They are given the physical, mental, and emotional space to process without fear of judgment or being told what to do. We get to know what's most important to them and offer information and resources so they can make informed decisions about how to meet their needs. This is our opportunity to plant seeds of hope and become a consistent relationship, where survivors feel seen, heard, and worthy.

In our last fiscal year, the REST Shelter provided 2,289 bed nights to 66 unique guests.



Outreach:

210 Contacts through street outreach
4250 Texts sent

Hotline:

1672 Calls/text through the hotline
224 First time callers average
18.66 New callers each month

Shelter:

2289 Bed nights
66 Clients served

Wendy



Wendy's introduction to drug addiction and the sex trade happened when she was 13. It was her mother, who was also addicted and engaged in the sex trade, who introduced her.

"My life was centered around chasing my mom and making her happy—whatever that looked like. What man could I sleep with to get money for drugs to support her habit, support my own habit? I spent a lot of that time chasing her around from town to town, trying to find her, and making her happy with money. She sold me when she could as well."

"She had planted a seed and I didn't even realize it."

For more than 20 years, Wendy was trapped amidst a confluence of complicated and traumatic challenges—addiction, trafficking, domestic violence, poverty, guilt, and shame.

But in 2016, when Wendy's daughter was an infant, a seed was planted. She began receiving text messages through REST's outreach efforts from Audrey, a staff member at REST. She blew them off at first, but when she endured some particularly rough times, Wendy reached out.

"A lot of bad things were happening at that point in time. I was raped a few times. I was also in the middle of a domestic violence situation with my daughter's dad, who was also selling me for sex. And I wouldn't have normally reached out for help, 'cause a lot of bad things happen, as you can only imagine when you grow up in the life. But I think because I had a child at that point, it made things a lot more dramatic because I actually had something to lose.

Audrey texted, 'If you'd like to meet up, I'll buy you coffee.'—and when I met her, it was no judgment, and it was so much more. I was still in the life... I'm like, 'I need groceries. I need a ride. I need this. I need that.'—and Audrey used to drive us around and get groceries for us."

"I wanted to be a mom that was there every day. I wanted to be more than a transaction. I wanted to find my worth outside of that."

Wendy decided she wanted change, but the road was difficult and complicated. She needed to meet her and her daughter's basic physical needs—food, housing—but she also needed to undo a lifetime of shame.

"It brought a lot of guilt and shame, especially being a mom in the life. I had a lot to forgive myself for in order to love myself. When you grow up not loving yourself and not having any worth—having to start that at a later age is not easy."

Wendy's journey out of the sex trade was painful and arduous.

"It seemed like the harder I tried to get out, the worse things happened—a lot of rapes, a lot of bad things happened. I really wanted out because I wanted to be a good mom. But then I couldn't get out, because I needed that money and I need that stability for my daughter. And I didn't see myself in a real job in the square world. I didn't think I fit in that box because of how I was raised."

"I'm stronger than I ever thought I was."

Despite the challenges, Wendy got out in 2017. With support from REST, she left her abuser, moved to a different city, and began engaging in mental health, chemical dependency, and faith groups. Over the last several years, she has taken a deep dive into healing, growth, and becoming the best momma she can be.

In 2021, she returned to the Seattle area and was hired as Support Staff at the REST Emergency Shelter. By early 2022, she became REST's Housing Specialist—helping other REST clients connect to safe and stable living situations—much like the help she had received a few years earlier.

"I'm worth it. I know I said this in my last interview—I'm worthy of love, but like a million times more than I thought then, I think now. I've overcome so much. I'm resilient, and I'm strong, and I'm beautiful, even in all my flaws. I'm an amazing mom now. I like the human being I'm turning into. I like the woman that I'm becoming. And I don't know where it's gonna take me, but I'm excited."*

Life isn't perfect. Wendy still deals with the emotional and physical trauma from the more than two decades of abuse and exploitation she experienced —but she thrives with hope and purpose.

"I have this calling on my life. I don't know where it's going to take me—but everything I've been through is for a purpose: to help others. God keeps reminding me that I get to be a voice to people who have experienced similar things—and I get to continue to point those people back to the love of God."

Come to me, all you who are weary and
burdened, and I will give you REST.

Matthew 11:28

Pathways Services

Enrichment Services, REST Academy

To truly believe that you are worthy of love and belonging, you need a space where you are known, seen, accepted, and loved. A space where you can feel safe physically and emotionally. A space where you can discover your strengths and activate your dreams. The Pathways Services Center (PSC) is that space for hundreds of survivors every year.

According to one study, 89% of 854 people in prostitution from nine countries said they wanted to escape prostitution, but 75% needed a home or safe place, 76% needed job training, 61% needed health care, 56% needed individual counseling, 51% needed peer support, 51% needed legal assistance, and 47% needed drug/alcohol treatment.

The PSC provides pathways to hope through a healing community, trauma recovery, and the opportunity to build economic independence. PSC is the hub of two programs: Enrichment Services and the REST Economic and Leadership Empowerment Academy.

To feel like a person of value and embrace the idea of being worthy of love, you need a space where you are seen and where you can feel safe.

Enrichment Services is set up to meet the basic needs of survivors – snacks, a warm meal, personal items, and clothing - and build support through workshops, healing art, support groups, and more. This resource hub provides access to essential ongoing services inside and outside of REST.

Economic and Leadership Empowerment Academy was launched to equip survivors to obtain and confidently maintain employment.

The Academy is made up of three pillars:

6-Week Job Readiness Training

6-Week Paid Internship

Employment Placement and Retention Services

Enrichment Services

272 survivors accessed enrichment services

Enrichment services were accessed 1503 times

***“I started coming to the support group, and I just loved it.
When I walk through those doors, it feels like home.
REST is a special place.”***

Economic Empowerment

119 times we provided employment assistance in FY22

26% growth from last year in new job celebrations at REST

59 clients gained part-time jobs

34 clients gained full-time jobs

On their path to one year of maintaining employment:

42 clients celebrated three months at their job

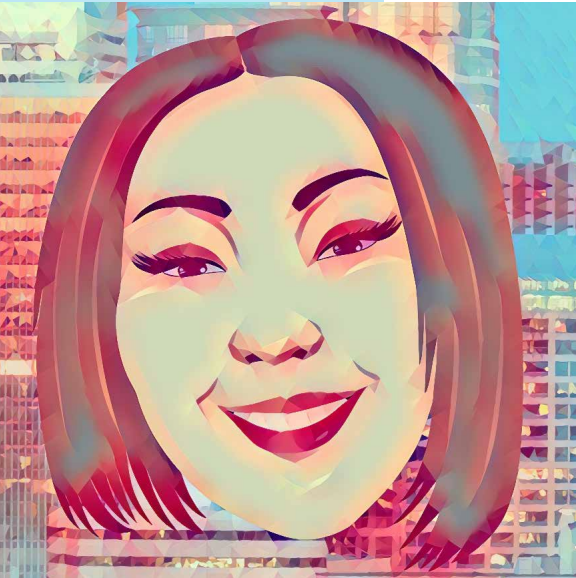
31 clients celebrated six months at their job at some point in the FY

15 clients celebrated nine months

12 clients celebrated one year

PSC programming integrates the inherent strengths of survivors and leads them back to the one thing they are always able to control, themselves.

Strength



“My story can be someone else’s survival guide.”

Strength shared with pride, as she bravely, vulnerably recounted her personal history. Strength’s story is a story of survival, resiliency, and determination. She grew up as the youngest of four children. Her mother struggled to make ends meet while also struggling with addiction. Moving from shelter to shelter and in and out of foster care are the earliest memories of her childhood.

At eleven years of age, Strength ran away from home after her mother’s boyfriend molested her.

“All my life my mother chose men over her children.”

On the street, she met a man much older than her who gave her a place to stay, food, and clothing. more importantly, he gave her the love that she so longed for.

“He made sure that I had everything that I needed, and I loved him. I was willing to do anything for him even if it meant selling my body”.

At fourteen years of age, Strength began life in prostitution and drugs. She endured countless abuse and several near-death situations. She did what she needed to do to survive. "It wasn't easy being a young person," Strength explained. After four years of being with this man she thought loved her, Strength came to the realization that she needed to leave.

"I said to myself, wake up. You deserve more than this."

At the age of 16, she met another man who took her under his wings. He told her that prostitution wasn't the only option and showed her other ways to make a living. She started her own cleaning business and began a culinary and barista program.

Strength has created a new life for herself, one that she is proud of. She teaches cooking classes at REST and is studying for her GED. And she is a proud mother of a boy who means the world to her. Her dream is to open a restaurant where families can come together for a meal.

"I am proud of myself. You know, I never thought I would live this long."

Hearing Strength, who is now 25 years old, say this, is a stark reminder that so many don't make it out. So many remain on the street without knowing that they are worthy of love.

Strength's story is a survival guide, not just for those on the street, but for the survival of our community, our humanity.

Community Services

Community Advocacy, Housing

No one you know just automatically wakes up one day knowing how to do everything. Some way, somehow we've been taught what we know, otherwise, we've done the work to find the answers and begin to become better as we build our skills.

Community services provide pathways to freedom by ensuring survivors have the long-term support they need to thrive. Through these services, a motto that is often used "do for, do with, cheer on" highlights the journey to independence. Not much unlike the process of personal development, REST offers the option to learn and build new skills that may feel unfamiliar at first, but soon are realized as strengths.

We find it extremely important to take a holistic view of our clients' lives, body, mind, and spirit. They are encouraged to explore what is most important to them. After the discovery process which includes highlighting their personal strengths, honoring their individual culture, identifying their unique needs, and learning what has and hasn't worked in the past, we are able to better find and provide the support essential to achieving their self-identified goals.

Unhealthy, toxic, and abusive relationships are often the precursor to being trafficked in the sex trade. Healthy, empowering, and honoring relationships are therefore the most important part of recovering from the sex trade and experiencing a life without exploitation. That's why, at REST, we prioritize relationship-building as the key to every intervention.

Community Advocacy:

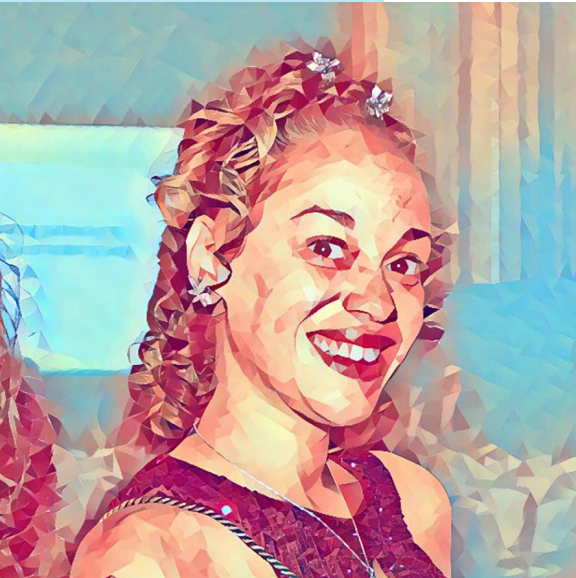
81 clients engaged with Community Advocacy
595 goals were achieved by all REST clients

Housing:

1956 of bed nights
14 of unique guests
41 clients receiving financial housing assistance 41
\$86,000 of housing assistance provided through REST
81 unique clients enrolled in housing advocacy



Jalisa



“My sister was my best friend.”

When Jalisa was 16, her big sister, a victim of sex trafficking, went missing. At the same time, her father was fighting stomach cancer, and her relationship with her mother was breaking down. Jalisa felt alone.

Manipulative men in her neighborhood promptly spotted her vulnerability and began to use her pain and isolation against her. They told her without their protection, she could wind up like her sister—missing. One of the men eventually told her she needed to sell sex and bring him the money, but she was scared and didn't want to.

“When I really understood what this guy wanted me to do, I was more anxious, nervous, and scared. For the first few days, I would just walk... and I was working at Wild Waves at the time, so I would go to work and go to the ATM 'cause I would hide my debit card and pull money out [to give to him] because I was too scared to get into the cars. But then he found out.”

When Jalisa was 18, her father died. Her sister was still missing, and she was trapped in a dangerous life that she didn't want.

“I’m walking down random streets trying to get into cars with guys that I don’t know to make some money that I’m not even gonna get.”

The fear that Jalisa experienced felt insurmountable. She started using ecstasy just to numb the emotions as she was exploited. At one point, after seeing a sex buyer, she nearly took her own life there in the hotel room—knowing this was not what she wanted for her life.

While she was walking the streets, getting in cars with strange men, and being sexually exploited, the thought in the back of her mind nagged:

“I’m gonna go next. Mom’s gonna have a heart attack. I’m gonna be the one to kill my mom because my sister’s already missing, and then I’m out here doing the same exact thing. And what if that happens to me?”

“This is my second chance at doing something better.”

The year after her dad died, Jalisa had her first son. She knew she wanted to provide a better life for him, and she knew her own father would’ve wanted a better life for her. She made changes, and tried to get out, but was still having a hard time finding stability and safety.

"I just still was in that life—I'm not worth it—my life is whatever at this point because of everything I have been through and what I did. But then I have this handsome boy that I wanna give the world. So I don't know what to do. So I kept trying to get jobs. My mom helped me with my resume. I had my second son when I was 21. And then I did stop for like a year. But I, I was homeless with two kids. So I went back to what I knew."

For the next decade, Jalisa tried to get out of the life but felt trapped by her situation. She wanted something else—something better—but survival needs kept driving her back to the sex trade to provide for her sons.

"REST supported me by not giving up on me, even though in the beginning it was really hard."

When a younger loved one entered the sex trade, Jalisa had a moment of reckoning. She wanted to set a better example for that loved one, and her own two young sons.

Then one night when she met a sex buyer at a hotel, she was caught in a sting operation. Rather than arresting her, law enforcement brought her to a safe room where there was an advocate who was also a survivor., Jalisa was able to develop a relationship with that advocate. Eventually, through that relationship, she was introduced to REST.

"[REST] helped me get all this stuff—like help through the state... I was able to apply for housing—and it started to work out—and eventually I just slowly took those extra steps. And even stopped [trading sex] on the weekends—it was just my regulars. And then that got cut off because I had a job—and I was like... I don't need this anymore. I'm doing pretty good."

REST was able to help Jalisa with housing, finances, and meeting basic needs like groceries and support during COVID. Through the relationships that were built at REST, Jalisa built a support network, giving her someone to talk to when times got tough again.

"They were able to help give me the reassurance and the real love and support that I needed."

About three and a half years ago, Jalisa traded sex for the last time.

Now she has a place to live, a steady job, custody of her boys, a solid faith community that accepts and encourages her, and plans for the future. She is currently going to school for business management, working on getting access to driver's education so she can get her license, and working on plans to one day have her own nonprofit for survivors.

"I had a really dark moment when I was in the hotel room after a client... so going from [suicidal] to all smiles all the time... I'm a great advocate for myself and my children. God's got your back. Everybody's got your back... I am a badass survivor who can do anything."

Gabby



“I sit with my clients. I let them know that they are worthy of love.”

Gabby has been a REST staff member for over two years, serving in multiple roles. But regardless of the titles that she has held, her passion and commitment to walking alongside victims and survivors have not changed..

“I never knew that organizations like this existed when I was in the life,” says Gabby. It has been six years since Gabby found the courage and strength to reimagine her life.

“This work is important because it plants a seed and lets survivors know that there is another way.” Gabby didn’t receive the types of services that REST provides, and at times finds herself wondering how her life would look today if she had.

Though everyone’s struggles and journeys are unique, Gabby explained, there are some common barriers that impact survivors’ decision to leave the sex trade. One is trauma bonding.

Trauma bonding is a type of attachment that one can feel toward someone who's causing them trauma when they also show care and affection. It brings with it not only feelings of sympathy, compassion, and love, but also confusion.

Domestic violence, criminal history, and bad or no credit history can also leave one feeling that there is no way out. Our clients are inundated with NOs. They can't get housing because of bad credit or no credit. They often feel backed into a corner and that selling sex is the only option, explains Gabby.

Gabby, along with other advocates at REST works with clients to meet their basic needs, advocating for them and with them with external providers. Sometimes it is assisting in stabilizing their situation and keeping them calm. "I remind them to sleep, eat and practice self-care," says Gabby.

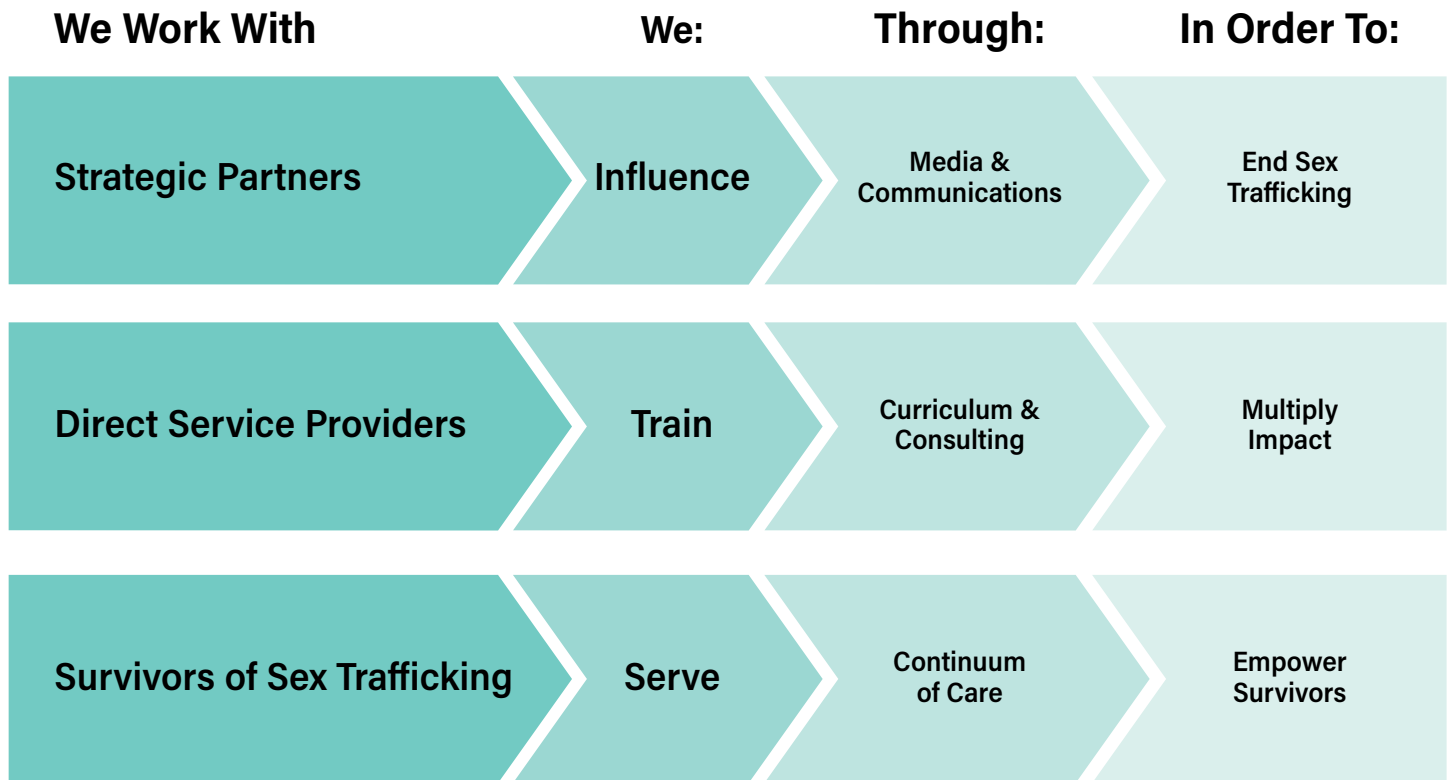
"And when they experience a small victory and hear a yes, that is when the magic happens. They start believing in themselves. They start believing in their worth."

"I had a client who is transgender and her birth/given name was a masculine name. It was very triggering for her to go to appointments and hear this name. I was in the courtroom when her name was legally changed," Gabby recalls proudly.

At REST we are committed to walking alongside victims and survivors of the sex trade until the "magic happens" for all of our clients.

Because everyone is worthy of love.

Expanding Pathways



Finding Rest

As survivors seek their paths to freedom, safety, and hope, they often start by experiencing “interruptions” (1-29 days out of the sex trade). Then, those interruptions last a little longer—and eventually, as they stabilize, they’re more empowered and equipped to maintain a life outside of the sex trade.





Business and Financials

In all that we do, REST seeks to steward the resources we're entrusted with well—maximizing the impact we're able to make for and with survivors of sexual exploitation.

Profit and Loss

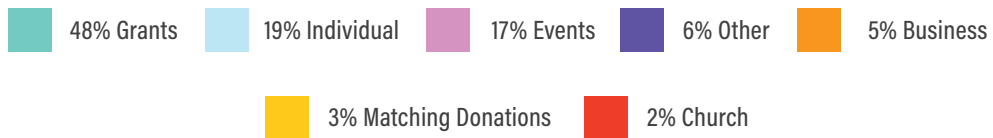
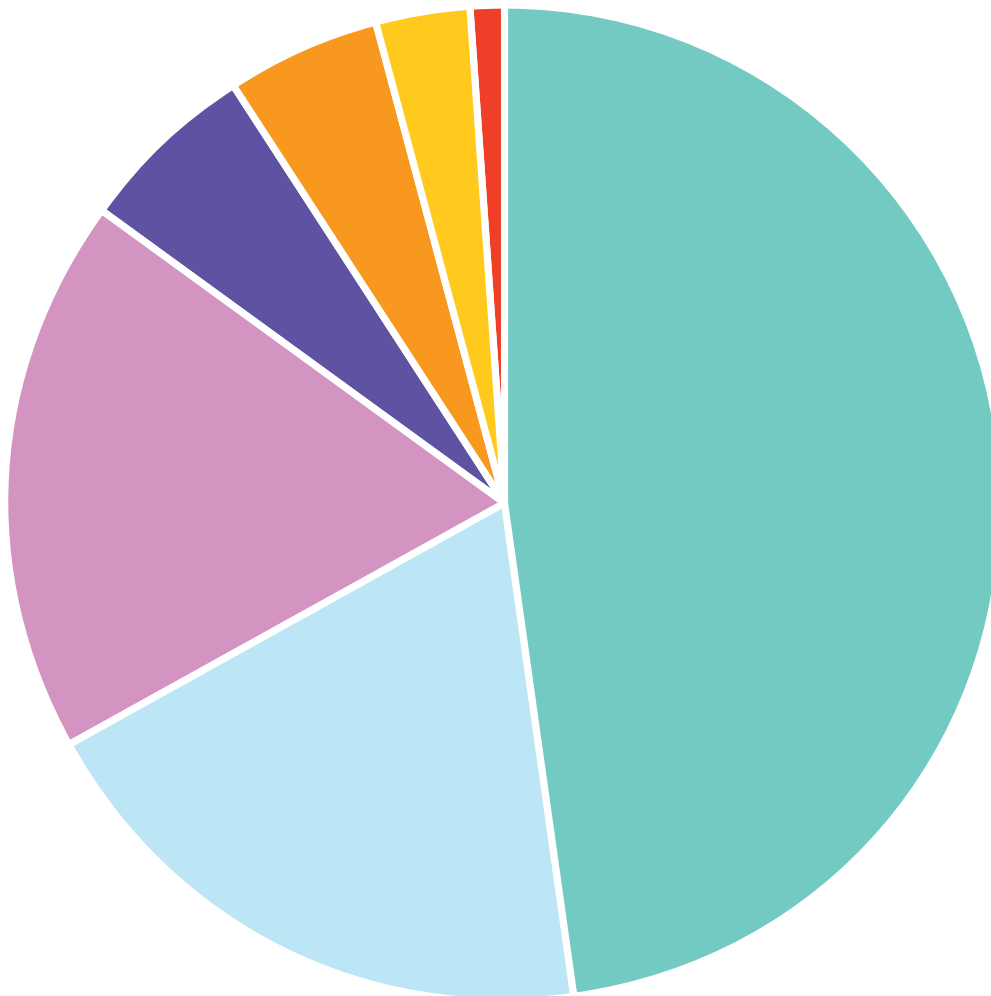
Revenue	
Donations	\$1,531,464
Events	\$553,469
Grants	\$1,062,907
Other	\$154,521
Total	\$3,302,361
Expenses	
Programs	\$2,602,682
Fundraising	\$649,840
Management	\$250,043
Total	\$3,502,565

Statement of Financial Position

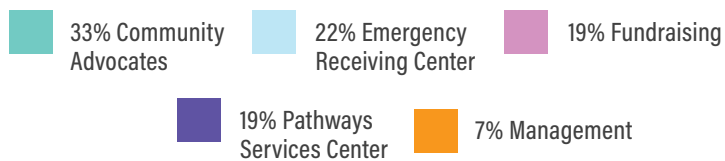
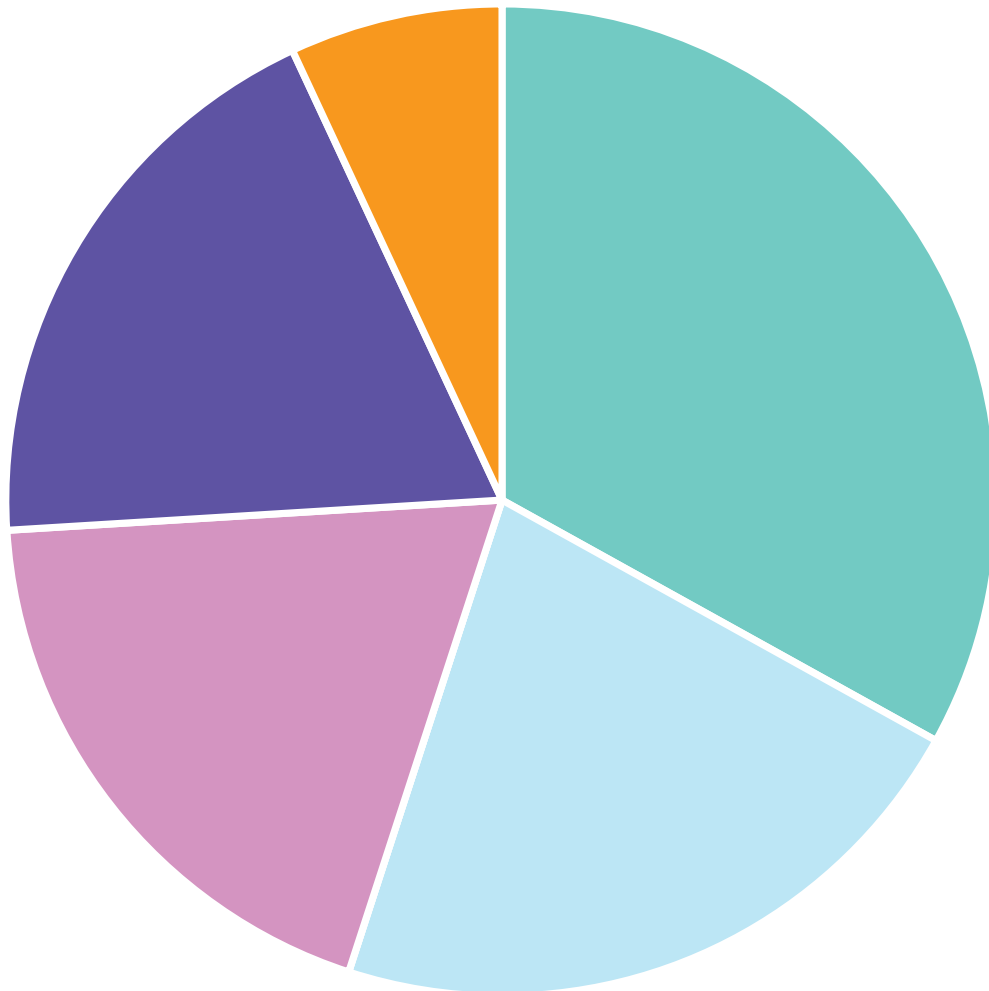
Assets	
Current Assets	\$376,152
Fixed Assets	\$69,678
Total	\$445,830
Liabilities & Net Assets	
Current Liabilities	\$157,908
Net Assets	\$287,922
Total	\$445,830

During FY21, REST received a large unrestricted grant, which was intended to cover FY22 expenses partially, but not reflected in FY22 revenue, therefore having a negative effect on the year's net revenue.

Funding Sources



Functional Expenses



Leadership Team

Amanda Hightower | Founder & Executive Director

Audrey Baedke | Co-Founder & Director of Programs

LK King | Director of Operations & Human Resources

Sophia Duus | Director of Finance



Board of Directors

Each of our board members are devoted to ending exploitation. We are grateful for their continued passion and expertise as they help us achieve our mission.

Brent Turner, Board Chairman / Chief Operating Officer, Rover.com

Jaqueline Finnan Hemmer, Board Vice-Chair / Vice President of Brand Business Development, IT Cosmetics

Meg McCann, Board Secretary / Court Administrator, Seattle Municipal Court (SMC)

Cambria Schmidt, Board Treasurer / Licensed CPA

Jesse Bryan, Board Member / CEO and Executive Creative Director, Belief Agency

Linaya Bunbury, Board Member / Associate Pastor, Calvary Christian Assembly

Candace Colman, Board Member / Director of Talent Development and Belonging, Adaptive Biotechnologies

Will Little, Board Member / Managing Director, Prota Ventures

Renée Wallace, Board Member / Community Health Worker Lead, YWCA, Survivor

Jevon Washington, Board Member / Director of Community Engagement & Partnerships, Mt. Baker Housing



You deserve to be loved.

2022 Impact Report

iwantrest.com
4215 Rainier Ave S., Suite B
Seattle, Washington 98118

