



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Justice Announces Compensation Process for Victims Trafficked Through Backpage.com

Thursday, July 31, 2025

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Today, the Department of Justice announced the launch of the Backpage remission process to compensate victims whose trafficking was facilitated through the Backpage.com website. This marks the largest remission process to date to compensate victims of human trafficking.

“Backpage.com facilitated the exploitation of women and children as one of the largest online advertisers for commercial sex and sex trafficking over its 14-year existence,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew R. Galeotti of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “Backpage and its executives made millions off the trafficking of victims. Today’s announcement underscores the Department’s unwavering commitment to use forfeiture to take the profit out of crime and to compensate victims.”

“Backpage used its position as the leading commercial sex advertisement website to make millions of dollars through their corrupt and heinous peddling of people,” said U.S. Attorney Timothy Courchaine for the District of Arizona. “The District of Arizona was proud to hold its executives accountable through criminal convictions and is proud to continue our efforts by forfeiting those ill-gotten gains to compensate real victims.”

“Today’s announcement shows the FBI’s commitment to ensuring that those who profit from human trafficking face the consequences of their actions,” said Assistant Director Jose A. Perez

of the FBI Criminal Investigative Division. “We will continue to work alongside partners to thwart this industry by decimating its capacity for monetary gain while seeking safeguards for its victims.”

“Sex trafficking is one of the most horrific crimes we confront as a society,” said Chief Guy Ficco of IRS Criminal Investigation. “While traffickers try to operate in the shadows, the money always leaves a trail — and that’s where we come in. IRS-CI is committed to following that financial trail to expose criminal networks and help bring justice to survivors. We’re proud to work with our federal partners to dismantle those who profit from exploitation. Victims in this case should file their petitions by Feb. 2, 2026, to access the compensation they rightfully deserve.”

From 2004 to April 2018, criminals used Backpage.com as an online platform to facilitate commercial sex and sex trafficking, including trafficking of minors. In April 2018, the government seized Backpage.com. To date, Backpage.com, its owners, and key executives and businesses related to the platform have been found guilty of criminal offenses, including conspiring to facilitate unlawful commercial sex using a facility in interstate or foreign commerce and money laundering, and have been sentenced to federal terms of imprisonment.

In December 2024, the Department of Justice forfeited over \$200 million in assets traceable to Backpage’s profits. These funds are now available to compensate victims for eligible losses. The Department of Justice has retained Epiq Global Inc. (Epiq) to serve as the Remission Administrator for this matter.

Victims whose sex trafficking was facilitated through advertisements posted on Backpage.com between Jan. 1, 2004, and April 6, 2018, and who incurred financial losses related to their trafficking may be eligible for remission. Individuals, their representatives, or estates of deceased victims may file a petition online or may obtain a Petition Form online at <https://www.backpageremission.com/>. Victims may also call, email, or write to the Remission Administrator to request that a Petition Form be sent to them.

The deadline to file a petition for remission is Feb. 2, 2026. For more information about the remission process – including eligibility requirements, updates, and frequently asked questions – please visit the official website at <https://www.backpageremission.com/> or contact Epiq at 1-888-859-9206 toll-free, or 1-971-316-5053 for international calls, charges may apply. The Remission Administrator and the Justice Department will not ask for any payment to participate in this remission process.

The United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), the FBI, and IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) investigated this matter.

Senior Trial Attorney Austin Berry of the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) and Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Rapp with assistance on forfeiture from Joseph Bozdech of the District of Arizona are prosecuting the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney

Jonathan S. Galatzan, Chief of the Central District of California's Asset Forfeiture and Recovery Section, handled the asset forfeiture aspects of the related civil cases. Special Agent Richard Robinson of IRS-CI, Special Agent Desirae Tolhurst of the FBI, USPIIS Inspectors Lyndon Versoza and Quoc Thai, and Analyst Jane Chung with the Joint Regional Intelligence Center, spearheaded the investigation.

The Department of Justice, through the Asset Forfeiture Program, works diligently to compensate victims of crime. Since 2000, the Criminal Division's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section (MLARS), which oversees the Asset Forfeiture Program's victim compensation program, has successfully used its specialized expertise to return more than \$12 billion in forfeited assets to victims of crime. MLARS Senior Attorney Advisor Jane K. Lee and Attorney Advisor Brittany R. Van Camp with the section's Program Management and Training Unit are leading the remission process.

Updated July 31, 2025

Topics

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Press Release Number: 25-802



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U.S. Department of Justice