

The 2026 Illicit Massage Industry Measurement Report

The Network identified **11,042 illicit massage businesses** across the United States, based on public online evidence from the preceding 12 months. These businesses span all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

11,042

ILLCIT MESSAGE BUSINESSES IDENTIFIED NATIONALLY

01 NATIONAL FINDING

The Network identified 11,042 illicit massage businesses across the United States based on public online evidence from the preceding 12 months. These businesses span all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

Illicit massage businesses sell commercial sexual services under the appearance of legitimate massage establishments. That veneer of legitimacy allows them to operate in ordinary neighborhoods while concealing exploitation and, in many cases, human trafficking. Identifying the industry's footprint helps law enforcement and communities respond to these harms.

This report counts businesses identified through customer reviews and advertisements on the online sources The Network monitors. It establishes a documented baseline for annual reporting.

02 HOW WE IDENTIFY AND COUNT BUSINESSES

Illicit massage businesses depend on attracting customers. Although much of their operation is concealed, their online marketing and customer reviews provide public evidence of the exploitative services they sell. Advertisements describe what a business offers; reviews describe customers' reported experiences.

The Network collects public data from more than a dozen sources, including known sex-buyer websites, advertising channels, and consumer forums. Of approximately 19,000 businesses appearing in these sources, **11,042 had a qualifying customer review or advertisement within the past 12 months** and were classified as illicit massage businesses for this report.

THE COUNT USES THE FOLLOWING RULES

REPORTING PERIOD	Data suggesting illicit activity must be current within the past year.
QUALIFYING EVIDENCE	A customer review that alludes to sexual acts performed during a visit to the massage business, or an advertisement on sex-buyer sites.
DUPLICATE AND CHANGED LISTINGS	We often encounter the same businesses on multiple online sources, sometimes with conflicting data. We employ a robust deduplication pipeline and resolve conflicts based on a weighted decision rubric. Any remaining corner cases are scrutinized by our researchers and only added to the overall count if the data is coherent.
VALIDATION	Our data is validated using both manual and automated practices. The Network has leveraged its substantial human-classified dataset as training data for machine learning algorithms and AI systems. These systems have demonstrated over 95% accuracy when classifying customer reviews as erotic or neutral. Any ambiguous data is flagged for human review.

THE NETWORK'S ACCUMULATED HISTORIC DATA HOLDINGS

800,000+ CUST OMER REVIEWS **100,000+** ADVERTISEMENTS **50,000+** ADDRESSES **60,000+** PHONE NUMBERS

03 WHY THIS DIFFERS FROM PREVIOUS ESTIMATES

The Network previously estimated that more than 16,000 illicit massage businesses operated nationwide. That estimate combined observed data with assumptions and extrapolations to account for gaps in data coverage.

The 2026 report uses a different approach. It counts only businesses identified through qualifying online evidence during a defined 12-month period, without estimating how many additional businesses may operate outside that coverage. The report draws on more sources and a larger volume of data than previous estimates.

The two figures are therefore not directly comparable. The difference should not be interpreted as evidence that the industry has declined.

Beginning with this report, The Network is focusing its annual measurement on directly observed evidence. A consistent evidence standard and reporting period will provide the foundation for comparisons over time. Changes in source coverage must also be accounted for: an increase in the number identified can reflect improved detection capabilities as well as changes in the industry itself.

04 STATE BREAKDOWN

The table below shows the state-by-state distribution of the 11,042 identified illicit massage businesses. Five states — California, Texas, Florida, New York and Washington — account for **54%** of the national count.

STATE	IMBS	STATE	IMBS	STATE	IMBS
1 California	2,738	18 Michigan	143	35 Arkansas	40
2 Texas	1,104	19 Georgia	141	36 Alaska	31
3 Florida	786	20 Connecticut	127	37 Nebraska	30
4 New York	746	21 Ohio	116	38 Idaho	28
5 Washington	575	22 New Mexico	112	39 New Hampshire	24
6 Illinois	471	23 North Carolina	110	40 Minnesota	22
7 Virginia	384	24 South Carolina	97	41 Delaware	22
8 Pennsylvania	366	25 Utah	93	42 Maine	22
9 New Jersey	328	26 Louisiana	93	43 Vermont	16
10 Arizona	286	27 Kansas	82	44 West Virginia	12
11 Massachusetts	251	28 Iowa	79	45 Montana	9
12 Colorado	242	29 Missouri	74	46 Rhode Island	8
13 Oregon	219	30 Tennessee	72	47 Wyoming	5
14 Indiana	202	31 Maryland	68	48 Washington, D.C.	4
15 Oklahoma	173	32 Kentucky	61	49 South Dakota	4
16 Nevada	168	33 Alabama	55	50 Mississippi	4
17 Wisconsin	153	34 Hawaii	45	51 North Dakota	1

Table 1. Identified illicit massage businesses by state, ranked. Bars are scaled to California (2,738). Source: The Network, data collected through October 1, 2026.

05 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The finding is a count of illicit massage businesses identified under The Network's research methodology. **It is not a determination of criminal liability** or a finding that human trafficking has occurred at every identified business. Public online evidence provides a basis for further investigation; law enforcement can gather additional evidence about a business's operations and the circumstances of the women there.

The count is also bounded by the sources monitored. Local law enforcement partners have on occasion identified businesses that do not appear in our data. The Network has prioritized online sources with the largest overall traffic and will continue to add smaller, region-specific sources for future annual reports.

The Network uses automated systems for collection, categorization, analysis, and reporting, supported by validation routines that continue to be refined.

06 ABOUT THE NETWORK

The Network is a nonprofit dedicated to dismantling the illicit massage industry in the United States and stopping the exploitation of women trafficked into these businesses. We partner with federal, state, and local law enforcement, as well as financial institutions.

Our Data Platform organizes more than 10 million records to surface the industry's footprint and support analysis by jurisdiction. Law enforcement agencies seeking jurisdiction-specific data or organizations interested in partnership can contact info@thenetworkteam.org.

THE NETWORK

WE DEFEAT TRAFFICKING NETWORKS.

For jurisdiction-specific data, a briefing for your agency, or to discuss partnership, write to info@thenetworkteam.org.