



Canadian Centre to
End Human Trafficking

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The Honourable Craig Pardy, E.C.N.L.
Minister of Finance
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Main Floor, Confederation Building
St. John's NL
A1B 4J6

Re: 2026 Pre-Budget Consultation Submission

Dear Minister Pardy,

Human trafficking is not well understood in Canada. Contrary to what is depicted in the media, human trafficking is often more subtle and usually perpetrated by someone the victim/survivor already knows. While anyone can be a target of trafficking, individuals experiencing poverty, housing instability, homelessness, precarious immigration status and other social challenges are at a higher risk. We urge policymakers to develop a holistic anti-human trafficking strategy that prevents individuals from being exploited and addresses gaps that make it difficult for victims/survivors to leave their trafficking situation.

Many Canadians are unaware that human trafficking is occurring in their own communities; however, data from Statistics Canada (Sutton-Preddie, 2025) and the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline (CCTEHT, 2025, p. 16) show that this issue impacts every region across Canada, including small and rural municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We know that your government has taken some steps to address human trafficking, including the establishment of the NL Coalition Against Human Trafficking comprised of both government and community stakeholder members. Funding has also been provided for programs, such as Community Action on Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CASEY).

While these are important first steps, far more work is needed if we are to end human trafficking in our time. The 2026 provincial budget provides an important opportunity to build on current initiatives and to address ongoing gaps.

Human trafficking spans many policy areas and cannot be addressed by a single ministry or government. Victims/survivors often depend on a range of public services, such as housing, healthcare, education, mental health and addiction support, legal aid, and employment services. The most requested referrals on the hotline between 2019 and 2024 were housing and shelter for victims/survivors of sex trafficking and legal services for labour trafficking victims/survivors (CCTEHT, 2025, p. 16).

A comprehensive and whole-of-government strategy is, therefore, desperately needed. Such an approach would prevent trafficking by addressing root causes, applying a trauma-informed lens, and incorporating insights from individuals with lived experience. At the heart of this approach is the creation of provincial coordinating bodies – a Newfoundland and Labrador Office to Combat Human Trafficking, and a Survivors' Advisory Committee – to oversee and lead strategy implementation.

Fortunately, you do not need to create this approach from scratch: Ontario and Alberta have developed their own dedicated strategies that can be replicated and adapted by Newfoundland and Labrador. Similarly, the province of Nova Scotia, while lacking a public-facing strategy, has also made significant strides in coordinating efforts to end human trafficking. here are critical promising practices that can be adapted from these jurisdictions.

Through our work, one thing has become very clear: provinces that have dedicated strategies are better positioned to lead prevention efforts and support victims/survivors. Therefore, we believe that prioritizing the development of an anti-human trafficking strategy in the 2026 budget is critical.

Thank you for considering this submission. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can support you in furthering anti-trafficking work in the province.

Sincerely,



Julia Drydyk
Executive Director
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

Reference list

Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. (2025). *Human trafficking trends in Canada, 2019–2024*.

<https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/human-trafficking-trends-in-canada-2019-2024/>

Sutton-Preddie, D. (2025). *Trafficking in persons in Canada, 2024*. Statistics Canada.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2025001/article/00008-eng.htm>

About The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

Founded in 2016, [The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking](https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca) (The Centre) is a national charity dedicated to ending all types of human trafficking in Canada. We work to mobilize system change by collaborating and working with various stakeholders, including survivors, all levels of government, frontline service providers, and private sector businesses to advance best practices. The Centre supports the anti-human trafficking movement through education and awareness, policy development and advocacy, research and data collection, convening and knowledge transfer.

In May 2019, The Centre launched the [Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline](https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/human-trafficking-hotline) (the Hotline), providing a confidential, multilingual service, operating 24/7 to connect victims and survivors with immediate and localized support, including social services and/or law enforcement if they so choose, as well as receive third-party tips from the public.