



**Canadian Centre to
End Human Trafficking**

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The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance and National Revenue
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Re: 2027 Pre-Budget Consultation – Leveraging federal influence to create a truly pan-Canadian approach to ending human trafficking

Dear Minister Champagne,

The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking (the Centre) welcomes the opportunity to provide recommendations for the Government of Canada's upcoming federal budget.

The Centre is a national charity, established in 2016, dedicated to ending all types of human trafficking in Canada. We bring together partners across sectors and people with lived experience of human trafficking to align efforts, build capacity and strengthen the national response to human trafficking.

The Centre launched the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline in May 2019. This confidential, multilingual and trauma-informed service operates 24/7/365 to connect people being trafficked and trafficking survivors with local supports, services and law enforcement, if they choose. Trafficking happens in every region of Canada. It takes place in communities large and small across our country. The national hotline ensures that no matter where victims and survivors are in Canada, they have somewhere to turn for help.

Human trafficking is a national issue that requires a national response. While the provinces and territories have responsibility for many of the services that survivors require—such as housing, income assistance, addiction support, counselling, and child welfare—funding for these supports varies widely across the country. Further, labour trafficking survivors – including migrant workers, international students, refugees and people living without status – are often ineligible for services and can be fearful to report their abuse due to their immigration status. In response to these complex issues, provinces and territories have

taken uneven approaches to addressing trafficking and embedding trauma-informed practices across systems and services. This inconsistency creates significant barriers to the critical services that survivors require to recovery and rebuild their lives.

Canada's patchwork of services means that survivors' ability to access support can depend heavily on where they live. The federal government must bridge this gap.

The Centre recommends that the Government of Canada establish a federal-provincial-territorial funding and accountability framework to harmonize anti-human trafficking efforts and improve access to services across the country. More specifically, we are calling on the federal government to work with every province and territory to develop dedicated anti-human trafficking strategies, establish common principles and objectives, and negotiate bilateral funding agreements to support their implementation. This framework should be funded through Budget 2027 and in perpetuity. It should also form the foundation of the forthcoming—and much-delayed—renewed National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking.

To operationalize this framework, we recommend four complementary measures that would establish a more consistent, well-resourced, and accountable approach to addressing human trafficking across Canada.

1. Develop a national framework and universal principles for provincial and territorial anti-human trafficking strategies.

Today, only two Canadian jurisdictions—Ontario and Alberta—have active, dedicated anti-human trafficking strategies. Others either rely on policies that have not been updated in years or have incorporated human trafficking into broader gender-based violence (GBV) approaches. While the Centre applauds efforts to strengthen GBV strategies, they do not address the full scope of human trafficking or the unique needs of survivors. More specifically:

1. GBV strategies do not explicitly address labour trafficking or the needs of those who experience it, which often includes men and boys; and
2. Human trafficking survivors face distinct dynamics, risks, and service needs that are not adequately accounted for in policies and programs designed to address GBV.

The lack of dedicated anti-human trafficking strategies means that provinces and territories often create ad hoc measures that are not aligned along a common set of objectives. This scattered approach means that coordination becomes difficult, initiatives are inadequately funded, and effort and resources are wasted on ad hoc measures that don't address the complexity of the challenge.

The Government of Canada should therefore establish a national framework that provinces and territories can use to develop holistic, trauma-informed and dedicated anti-human trafficking strategies. The national framework should establish a common set of principles and core components while allowing jurisdictions to adapt their strategies to their specific regional circumstances and needs.

Universal principles

The national framework should stipulate that all provincial and territorial strategies be guided by a set of universal principles:

- **Survivor-centred:** Government should place the needs and perspectives of survivors at the centre of all legislation, regulation, policies, and programs.
- **Trauma-informed:** Services and systems should recognize the impacts of trauma and prioritize safety, dignity, choice, and autonomy;
- **Universal access:** Survivors should be able to access appropriate supports regardless of where they live, their status or their circumstances;
- **Culturally appropriate services:** Human trafficking impacts people of all demographic groups. Services should accommodate cultural needs and perspectives, where possible.
- **Low-barrier:** Services should minimize eligibility requirements and other barriers that may prevent survivors from accessing timely support; and
- **Lived-experience informed:** People with lived experience should have meaningful and ongoing opportunities to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, and services.

Similar to the approach the federal government took with gender-based violence, healthcare and childcare, establishing a set of universal standards or principles ensures uniformity across the country while preserving flexibility for jurisdictions to respond to their unique regional needs.

Core components

In addition to establishing universal principles, the federal government should encourage provinces and territories to incorporate the following core components into their strategies:

- Developing a dedicated anti-human trafficking strategy that addresses the issue from a holistic perspective;
- Creating a lived experience advisory table to inform government decision-making on legislation, policies, programs and regulation;
- Embedding a centralized anti-trafficking office within government to coordinate the government's response across ministries and departments;
- Creating and funding trauma-informed services that support survivors at every stage of their recovery;
- Embedding lived experience within government decision-making processes;
- Investing in proactive prevention initiatives to address the root causes of vulnerability that make trafficking possible;
- Expanding funding for human trafficking training for front-line service providers, healthcare providers, teachers, immigration officials, settlement workers, and others who may interact with survivors;
- Opening services and programs to migrant workers, international students and others with precarious immigration systems;
- Including specialized resources, policies and programs to address labour trafficking, and;
- Establishing dedicated anti-human trafficking police units and Crown prosecution teams with specialized knowledge of the unique dynamics of human trafficking and the capacity to support survivors through a person-centred, trauma-informed approach.

Using the universal principles and core components as a national framework, the federal government should work with each province and territory to establish bilateral agreements that commit them to implementing the framework. These bilateral agreements should include dedicated federal funding to incentivize adoption and provide the resources necessary for effective implementation.

2. Establish a Baseline Fund to support the implementation of provincial and territorial anti-human trafficking strategies

The Government of Canada should establish a federal transfer mechanism to support provinces and territories in developing and implementing their anti-human trafficking strategies.

Federal transfers will help to close service gaps by ensuring that provinces and territories have access to a baseline level of funding to develop and implement comprehensive strategies. The objective should be to ensure that a person experiencing human trafficking does not receive substantially less access to support simply because their provincial or territorial government has made a lower investment in addressing the issue.

To ensure consistency across Canada, the federal government should establish and help fund a minimum investment benchmark for provincial and territorial anti-human trafficking efforts.

We believe Ontario's per capita investment should be considered as this minimum benchmark. Ontario has committed more than \$345 million over five years through its *2025–2030 Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy*, representing the largest per capita investment of its kind in Canada. Based on Ontario's population, this represents approximately \$4.29 per resident annually.

The Centre is not recommending that the federal government cover the full cost between current provincial spending and the proposed benchmark. Instead, the Government of Canada could create a cost-sharing model whereby the federal government would be expected to contribute approximately 60% of funding (\$2.57 per resident per year), with the provinces and territories contributing the remaining 40%, or approximately \$1.72 per resident per year.

Using Ontario's benchmark of approximately \$4.29 per resident annually, achieving an equivalent level of investment for all provinces and territories would require 177.62 million per year. Under the proposed 60/40 cost-sharing model, the federal government would contribute \$106.58 million of this amount, with the provinces and territories contributing the remaining \$71.04 million. The following table outlines the amount each level of government would need to contribute to meet the proposed annual investment benchmark. It's important to note that these numbers do not account for existing spending; jurisdictions that have already allocated dedicated funding to combat human trafficking

(e.g., specialized victim services, dedicated law enforcement units and prosecution teams, etc.) would have those expenditures credited directly against their annual contribution. In Ontario, federal funding would be used to offset some existing spending, ensuring that province is not unintentionally penalized for its current and proactive investments.

Province / Territory	Population (Q2 2026)	Annual investment benchmark	Annual Provincial/ Territorial Contribution	Annual Federal Contribution
Alberta	5,057,077	\$21.7M	\$8.68M	\$13.02M
British Columbia	5,646,420	\$24.22M	\$9.69M	\$14.53M
Manitoba	1,503,865	\$6.46M	\$2.58M	\$3.88M
New Brunswick	866,497	\$3.72M	\$1.49M	\$2.23M
Newfoundland & Labrador	547,910	\$2.36M	\$0.94M	\$1.42M
Northwest Territories	45,808	\$0.2M	\$0.08M	\$0.12M
Nova Scotia	1,090,852	\$4.68M	\$1.87M	\$2.81M
Nunavut	42,215	\$0.18M	\$0.07M	\$0.11M
Ontario	16,103,890	\$69M	\$27.6M	\$41.4M
Prince Edward Island	181,715	\$0.78M	\$0.31M	\$0.47M
Quebec	9,016,222	\$38.68M	\$15.47M	\$23.21M
Saskatchewan	1,266,092	\$5.44M	\$2.18M	\$3.26M
Yukon	48,493	\$0.2M	\$0.08M	\$0.12M
TOTAL	41,417,056	\$177.62M	\$71.04M	\$106.58M

Source: Statistics Canada. (2026). *Population estimates, quarterly*. Government of Canada.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1710000901>

Using Ontario's per capita investment as a benchmark does not suggest that its' current level of investment is sufficient to meet the scale or complexity of human trafficking across Canada. Rather, it provides a practical starting point for establishing a minimum level of public investment. Without a national funding floor, the availability of survivor supports and other anti-human trafficking measures will continue to vary significantly depending on where a person lives.

This cost-sharing approach would address significant policy and program gaps by ensuring that provinces and territories have the foundational resources needed to implement dedicated anti-human trafficking strategies. However, providing base funding alone will not be sufficient to respond to human trafficking or support the innovative policy, research, evaluation, and practice the sector has been calling on for years.

A second funding stream—focused on broad priorities, including innovative policy development, evaluation, research, data, and new approaches to prevention and service delivery—should therefore be made available to provinces and territories once they have dedicated and active strategies in place. Ontario and Alberta would therefore be eligible for this funding immediately.

3. Establish a Capacity Building and Innovation Fund

The federal government should establish a Capacity Building and Innovation Fund to support the design and implementation of policies and programs that address national challenges while meeting local needs. This fund should complement, not replace, the baseline provincial and territorial investment established through the funding mechanism described above.

Eligible investments could include:

- Primary research into the unique nuances of human trafficking in Canada;
- Creating and funding Indigenous-led and driven programs;
- Services that address the transportation gap in rural communities that make it hard for survivors to access services;
- Enhanced mixed method data collection, including documenting survivor perspectives;

- Opportunities to incorporate people with lived experience into **paid** anti-human trafficking decision-making roles;
- New initiatives aimed at preventing human trafficking;
- Programs to support migrant workers, international students, refugees and others with precarious immigration status who do not have access to social services;
- Resources to support capacity-building and better understand how human trafficking is perpetrated, discussed and addressed in historically marginalized populations;
- Evaluation and outcomes measurement to determine which interventions are effective and support the scaling of promising practices, and;
- Other initiatives identified through engagement with survivors and the social services sector.

This second funding stream would provide those jurisdictions with existing investments—currently Ontario and Alberta—with additional funding to support their work and to fill remaining gaps not addressed through their current strategies.

4. Establish accountability, measurement and renewal cycles

A national approach, supported with funding from the federal government, needs to do more than increase resources. It must create a mechanism for governments to measure, compare and improve Canada's collective response.

Accordingly, the bilateral agreements should create a common set of evaluation metrics, while recognizing regional differences in service delivery.

Having a more robust, and ethical evaluation process would address a longstanding challenge in Canada's response to human trafficking: governments and organizations often lack comparable information about how much is being invested, where resources are going, and whether those investments are improving outcomes.

Finally, the bilateral agreements should require that the provincial and territorial governments renew their anti-human trafficking strategies every five years and report annually on their progress.

A Call to Action: Use federal influence to build a pan-Canadian response

Canada's response to human trafficking remains fragmented. The availability, quality and scale of services vary significantly between jurisdictions, leaving survivors with unequal access to support depending on where they live. This not a provincial or territorial problem. It is a national one.

The federal government is uniquely positioned to address this disparity. While provinces and territories are responsible for many of the services survivors rely on, the Government of Canada has the fiscal capacity, convening power, and national perspective to establish common expectations and strengthen coordination across jurisdictions.

The Centre therefore urges the Government of Canada to:

1. Develop a national framework and set of universal principles to guide provinces and territories in developing dedicated anti-human trafficking strategies;
2. Negotiate bilateral agreements with each province and territory that provides baseline funding to implement this national framework;
3. Create a Capacity Building and Innovation Fund to help support emerging needs, innovative policy, research and program evaluation across the country; and
4. Establish transparent renewal, reporting, accountability and outcome measurement requirements.

Every person in Canada deserves access to meaningful protection and support regardless of where they live. A pan-Canadian approach, supported through shared federal, provincial and territorial funding, would be an important step toward making that principle a reality.

Thank you for considering the recommendations in this submission. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposed framework and its implementation with you and your colleagues in further detail.

Yours sincerely,



Julia Drydyk
Executive Director
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking