

Anti-Human Sex Trafficking

Addressing Funding Gaps & Enhancing Ontario's Response

Policy Opportunities

To address the growing rates of human sex trafficking in Peel and Ontario, the Ontario Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy: 2020-2025 should be reaffirmed and expanded, including increased funding to address disparities in Peel, enhanced emergency/first stage housing options and services, and comprehensive education in schools to raise awareness and increase prevention.

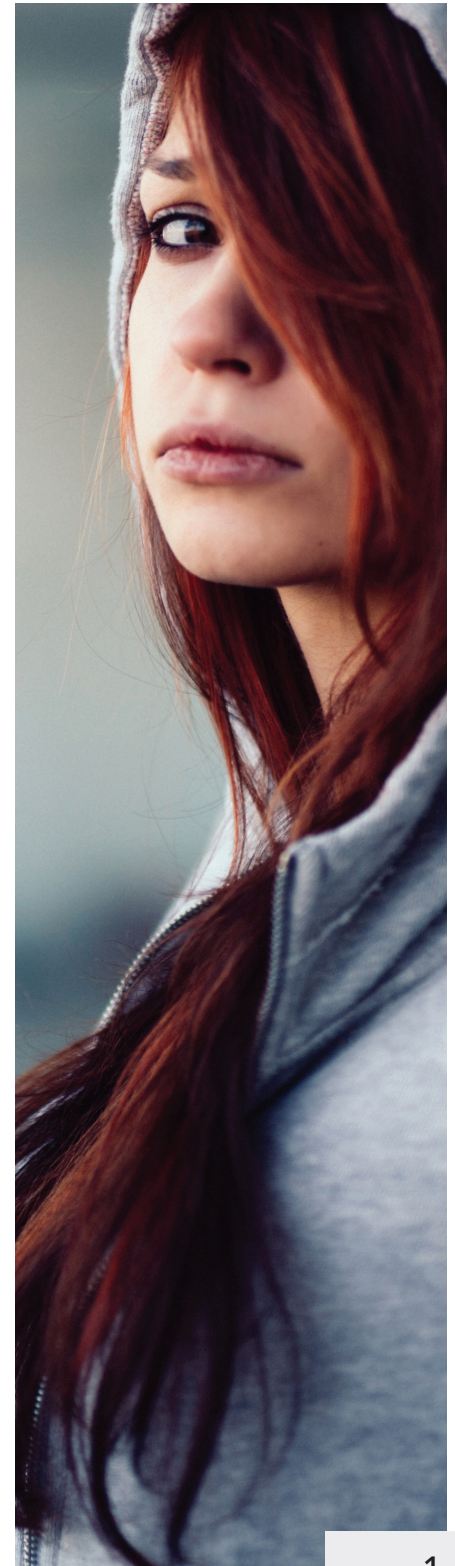
Funding Solutions

- Increased provincial funding is needed to support Peel's anti-human trafficking services, including housing, prevention, and intervention initiatives, to meet rising demand and complex needs.
- Specific grants should be allocated to consistently deliver human trafficking education and awareness programs in schools, focusing on student engagement.
- Capital and operational funding are required for infrastructure improvements and to expand emergency/first-stage housing for victims and survivors in Peel.

Background

Since 2022, the Peel Anti-Human Sex Trafficking (AHST) Strategy has been implementing initiatives based on three pillars:

- **Prevention:** Increasing awareness of human sex trafficking in Peel through coordinated prevention and education programming.
- **Intervention:** Improving access to dedicated and reliable services for victims, survivors, and those at risk through wrap-around services at the integrated services hub, nCourage.
- **Exits/Housing:** Providing dedicated safe and supportive housing for victims and survivors through the Bonnie McPhee Safe House and the Peel Transition House.



System Gaps and Opportunities

Peel's shelter system operates at 162% capacity, leaving victims without immediate access to emergency shelters and forcing many to stay with their traffickers. Despite progress, the AHST Program, now in its fourth year, faces increased demand and more complex cases, highlighting gaps and areas for improvement in service delivery.

- **Integrated Services Hub:** A 116% increase in clients served year-over-year, with a significant portion of clients identifying as female and from racialized communities. Key services accessed include client navigation/outreach, case management, and counselling.
- **Bonnie McPhee Safe House:** A 73% increase in housed victims and survivors, with a focus on life skills, safety planning, and housing supports.
- **Peel Transition House:** A 33% increase in service plans completed, highlighting the acute needs of clients.

Funding Disparities

Peel has independently funded housing services for trafficking victims and survivors. To expand dedicated emergency shelter spaces, provincial funding for the Exits/Housing pillar would enhance support, consistent with the funding already provided to the City of Toronto.

In addition, provincial support is required for:

- **Emergency/First-Stage Housing:** Fund renovations and operations for four beds at Embrave and one bed at Our Place Peel (OPP) Youth Shelter to provide safe housing for trafficking survivors, including trans-females, mothers with children, individuals over 25, and youth aged 16-24.
- **Prevention Initiatives:** Allocate funding for awareness and training, modeled after Toronto's successful programs.
- **Human Trafficking Education:** Ensure consistent anti-trafficking education across all school boards to protect vulnerable youth.
- **Lived Experience Remuneration Framework:** Adopt the Peel AHST Program's framework for ethical and equitable engagement with individuals with lived experience, ensuring fair compensation and reducing stigma.

The Peel AHST Strategy requires provincial support to effectively address the increasing demand for services and the complex needs of human trafficking victims and survivors. Funding for emergency housing, prevention, education, and support services is essential for improving outcomes and providing necessary care.

Provincial support required:

- **\$70,000** for renovations (Embrave) and **\$80,000** for shelter worker salaries, benefits, supplies, and safe bed programming.
- **\$1 million** to support community capacity building and an annual social marketing campaign.
- **\$200,000** for staff support to facilitate prevention education in schools.
- Projected **\$20,000 per year** for remuneration of survivor members and additional consultations.

