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Sent: August 2, 2025 9:29 AM

To: havbelmet@hbmtpw.ca; Carolyn Amyotte <mayor@northkawartha.ca>;
info@osmtownship.ca; clerk@trentlakes.ca

Subject: Victim Support Grant - Township letter of support requested

Good morning, all,

I am preparing an application for the 2025-2027 Victim Support Grant. I am requesting that all Townships and Municipalities, in the Peterborough County area, provide a letter of support, as I believe it would strengthen the application. Selwyn Township has been identified as the lead Township and will be submitting the application through TPON.

Overview of the grant:

The grant will focus on the growing issue of Human Trafficking (HT) in the Peterborough area, which has the third-highest HT rate in Canada. Despite this, many cases remain unreported due to fear and manipulation.

In response, the Peterborough/Northumberland Counties Human Trafficking Coalition (PNHTC) was formed, including key local organizations such as Victim Services of Peterborough and Northumberland (VSPN), local police, and a survivor advocate.

Since 2021, VSPN has supported over 110 survivors using a collaborative, trauma-informed approach, modeled after Durham Region's successful strategy. Aligned with the Peterborough and Northumberland Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plans, this grant will enhance the local response to HT through training, outreach, and direct support. VSPN will coordinate training for police, educators, and front-line staff to improve their ability to recognize and respond to trafficking. Outreach will focus on high-risk populations, such as youth in care, high school students, Indigenous communities, newcomers, and individuals experiencing poverty or homelessness. Workshops and awareness campaigns will aim to reduce stigma and encourage identification of HT risks. Survivors identified through various channels will receive tailored support, including shelter legal aid, trauma counseling, and referrals to local services.

This application is aligned with the goals of the Peterborough and Northumberland Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plans—particularly in addressing root causes such as gender-based violence, lack of stable housing, poverty, and systemic barriers to care.

This project will improve community safety and wellbeing as it enhances our local response to HT in three areas: training, outreach, and direct supports.

With 570 HT incidents reported to police in Peterborough in 2023 alone, outreach sessions will support much needed trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and anti-oppressive approaches, with special attention to building trust and minimizing harm.

Local statistics indicate that 93% of victims in this area were women and girls, with 23% being youth under the age of 18. Community outreach will target these, and other populations known to be at higher risk of trafficking including youth in care, Indigenous women and youth, newcomers, 2SLGBTQ+, and individuals experiencing poverty or homelessness. Workshops will be offered in schools, group homes, and Indigenous communities such as Curve Lake, Hiawatha, and Alderville First Nations.

Caregivers and child protection staff will receive parallel training to increase protective factors. Awareness campaigns will run on social media and in public spaces, such as posters on buses and in transit shelters, particularly around Human Trafficking Awareness Day. These efforts are designed to shift community perceptions, reduce stigma, and increase self-disclosure and peer-based identification of risk.

Victims identified through police, service providers, or self-referral will be connected to the only VSPN Human Trafficking Support Specialist in the area. Survivors will receive customized, barrier-free support regardless of their willingness to engage with police or leave a trafficking situation. Supports may include emergency shelter, transportation, basic needs, phones, trauma counseling, legal navigation, help obtaining ID or income supports, and warm referrals to local therapists and services through the Victim Quick Response Program. Intake is intentionally flexible and designed to meet survivors where they are, without requiring immediate disclosure or formal statements. Coalition members work collaboratively with local stakeholders to provide warm transfers and coordinated care to reduce re-traumatization and improve access across sectors.

This initiative builds on existing momentum and proven collaborative strategies to meet a growing and urgent need. It will strengthen safety, increase public awareness, and ensure that survivors—regardless of when or how they seek help—are met with compassion, support, and a path to stability. Human trafficking is largely hidden in plain sight. Through this project, we will illuminate it, intervene earlier, and support those most impacted in rebuilding their lives.

Grant funding will help raise awareness, increase early interventions, and provide survivors with the support they need to rebuild their lives.

Additionally, there is a need for additional funding, for victims of crime, as:

1. Population of Peterborough County increases during the summer months; and
2. Peterborough has recently received several hundred displaced people because of the wildfires in Northern Ontario.

Funding will assist with supporting these persons as well.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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