



Alberta Centre
to **End Trafficking**
in Persons

2025

Impact Report

One year of building Alberta's united response to human trafficking — guided by the survivor's lens of the Reading Stone.





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Leadership Report

**The Reading Stone didn't just describe the problem.
It handed us a new way of seeing it.**

For years, Alberta's response to human trafficking was fragmented — good people doing good work, but too often in isolation. Services that didn't connect. Systems that missed survivors. A crisis hiding in plain sight.

In 2021, the Alberta Human Trafficking Task Force delivered *The Reading Stone: The Survivor's Lens to Human Trafficking*. It named the gaps. It laid out five clear recommendations. And it called for something Alberta had never had: a dedicated, province-wide body to coordinate efforts to address and suppress human trafficking, and to ensure prioritized access to services for victims and survivors.

The Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons was that answer.

In 2025, our first full year, we began turning those recommendations into reality. We held community engagement workshops across the province. We supported relationships across sectors where barriers existed. We embedded survivor voices at the heart of every decision we made. And we laid the foundation for a coordinated provincial response that Alberta has never had before.

None of this would be possible without the courage of survivors who shared their stories in the Reading Stone and continue to guide us today. Their lens remains our compass.

We still have work ahead, but the pieces are coming together.

Together, we are building a safer province, one relationship, one coordinated response, and one step closer to the vision laid out in the Reading Stone.

With gratitude and determination,

Paul Brandt

Chair, Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons Governing Board



The Human Trafficking Landscape in Alberta:

The Problem

You can't solve a problem you can't see.

Human trafficking is not what most people picture. It rarely involves strangers or chains. It begins with trust, a relationship, a promise, a moment of vulnerability.

In Alberta, the majority of victims are Canadian citizens, most are women and girls, and Indigenous people are disproportionately impacted. Labour trafficking is a growing problem that crosses borders, workplaces, and immigration systems. Canada is a demand country in relation to organ trafficking.

Human trafficking thrives in the darkness. It is survivors who shine the light. The voices of survivors are undeniable, their reality breaks through the hidden nature of this pervasive evil in our society. One of our primary goals at the Alberta Centre is to amplify the voice and truth of survivors until there is nowhere for the darkness of human trafficking to hide.

The Gaps Traffickers Exploit

Awareness gap

The public often can't properly recognize human trafficking.

Coordination gap

Agencies frequently lack access to shared training, data, and referral pathways.

Navigation gap

Survivors struggle to navigate the uncoordinated system of services.

Legal & judicial gap

Police, prosecutors, and courts lack the training and legislative tools to consistently identify, charge, and convict traffickers.



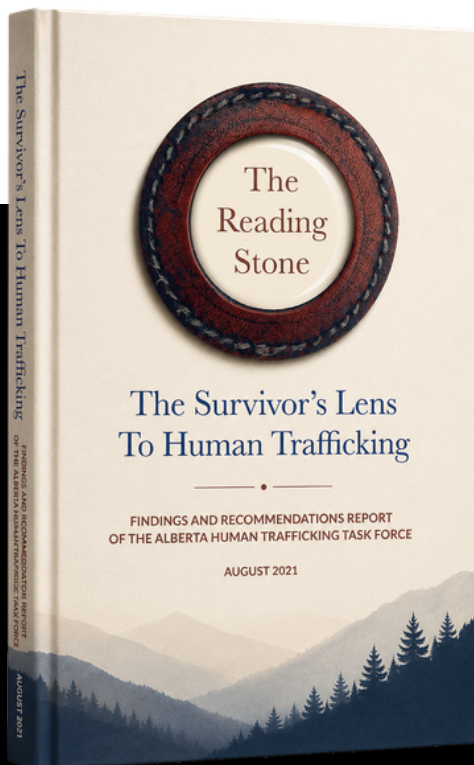


The Reading Stone: Our Foundation

In 2020, the Alberta Human Trafficking Task Force was formed to review Alberta's prevention and response efforts, and to make recommendations to address and suppress human trafficking in Alberta. Over nearly two years, they listened to more than 100 experts and survivors. What they produced wasn't just a report. It was a lens.

The Reading Stone – The Survivor's Lens to Human Trafficking was delivered in 2022. It named five recommendations and six guiding principles. The Government of Alberta committed \$22.8 million over four years to implement them.

A reading stone is a magnifying lens, it reveals what the naked eye misses. Applied to human trafficking, it means looking through the eyes of survivors. The Alberta Centre exists to make that lens standard practice across every community in Alberta.



**The Reading Stone
gave us the blueprint.
In 2025, we started
building.**



The Five Recommendations: Progress in Our First Year



Complete

1. Create a dedicated provincial coordinating body.

The Alberta Centre was established and became operational in 2025 as the dedicated province-wide body called for in the Reading Stone.



Underway

2. Prioritize and enhance access to services for victims, survivors, and those at risk

We supported the deployment of the \$5.5 million CTIP Grant to 19 community organizations. Four new Safety Network Coordinator positions were created within ALERT with sustained provincial funding. Nineteen new safe housing units/beds were added. We coordinated multi-sector responses in real cases, including helping a young woman escape forced marriage and supporting the investigation in Lethbridge that moved all youth survivors to safety within 24 hours.



Underway

3. Develop universally consistent awareness, education, and training programs

We completed five regional Community Engagement Workshops: In Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Calgary, and Edmonton, that brought together frontline providers, law enforcement, health, government, and Indigenous partners to map services and identify gaps. We supported survivor-centred training for law enforcement with the International Association of Human Trafficking Investigators across Alberta, which directly contributed to successful outcomes in major investigations.



Underway

4. Pursue human trafficking-specific legislative action and harmonization

The Centre has provided evidence-based counsel to the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada on key files, including municipally licensed body rub establishments, mandatory age verification for online pornography, the abuse of refugee status by convicted child exploiters, protection of frontline partners, the Senneville decision regarding mandatory minimums, and Bill C-14 bail and sentencing reform.



Underway

5. Establish enhanced, centralized data collection and research

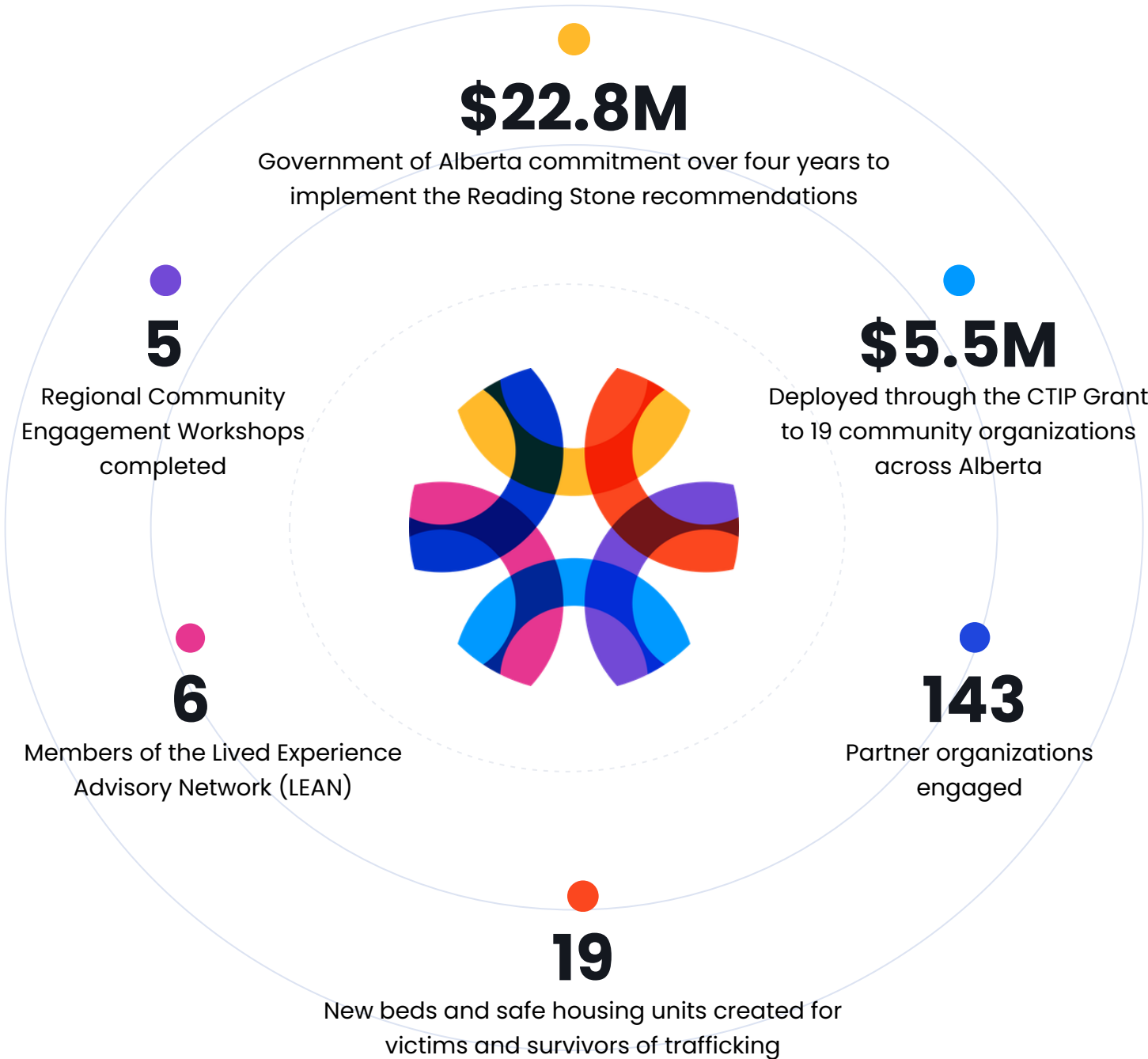
We completed the Organizational Logic Model, Evaluation Framework, and Core Services Framework, the shared measurement architecture that reduces reporting burden on partners and positions Alberta for province-wide data integration. A province-wide data tracker and began the process of developing the next level of tools that will empower anti-trafficking partners across the province.



2025 at a Glance

These numbers represent early proof of concept.

They show what becomes possible when coordination, survivor voice, and sustained investment come together.





Proof of Concept: Stories of Coordination and Impact

Coordination is an abstract idea until it closes the gap between a survivor and the help they need. These stories from 2025 show the difference a dedicated coordinating body can make — when the right people are in the room at the right time, with survivor-centred approaches guiding every step.

Rescued from Forced Marriage

In Alberta, a young woman was being forced by her parents into a marriage she did not want. When she said no, they threatened her. This was not a family arrangement; it was control through fear.

In Canada, forced marriage involving threats or coercion can constitute human trafficking, a serious crime. The young woman reached out for help. Trusted adults supported her and contacted the police. The Alberta Centre stepped in to help everyone work together, connecting school supports, police, and safe housing to facilitate the creation of a plan that put her safety first.

With the help of the Alberta Centre and other partner agencies, she was able to move safely to a supportive program in another province where she could live without fear and begin to rebuild her life.

Forced marriage is never just a family matter.

For this young woman, having the right organizations in the room at the right time, with a survivor-centred lens, made all the difference.

Photo (L-R): Paul Brandt, AC Board Chair, The Hon. Mike Ellis, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, and Alisha Richards-McManus, Survivor and member of the AC Lived Experience Advisory Network.





The Lethbridge Investigation

In December 2025, Constable Joel Chenard of the Lethbridge Police Service Sex Crimes Unit led a major human trafficking investigation. He had attended the International Association of Human Trafficking Investigators training facilitated by the Alberta Centre and funded by the CTIP Grant.

Within 24 hours of his initial involvement, all youth survivors were moved to safety. Rapport built through survivor-led strategies reached youth who had historically refused to cooperate with law enforcement. The offender was arrested and charged. The case made international news and sparked national conversations about human trafficking, bail reform, and the human rights of survivors.



I can say with certainty that I would not have had this level of success without the IAHTI training. The survivor-led presentations and the mock hotel room simulation provided the lens I needed to see the details that truly matter. The Alberta Centre made a difference in my life, which in turn, allowed LPS to make a difference in these survivors' lives.

Constable Joel Chenard, Sex Crimes Unit, Lethbridge Police Service



Tackling Labour Trafficking

Responding to labour trafficking requires many organizations working closely together: the RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Occupational Health and Safety, Crown prosecutors, health care providers, settlement agencies, and community organizations. No single agency can do this alone.

A powerful example in Canada of this in action is Project OHELIX: a major joint RCMP and CBSA investigation into labour trafficking involving over 100 officers from multiple agencies, nearly four years of investigation, two coordinated takedowns, more than 80 electronic devices, and dozens of translated victim statements. In February 2026, the Alberta Centre brought this case study to the Edmonton community consultations, helping frontline responders understand how labour trafficking operates in practice and what an effective, survivor-centred response looks like.

In Alberta, labour trafficking risks appear in industries that rely on seasonal, mobile, or newcomer workforces: agriculture, construction, food processing, and hospitality. Many employers genuinely want to do the right thing, but don't know the warning signs. Raising awareness and providing practical education is essential. Alberta primarily regulates employment agencies through the Fair Trading Act and its Employment Agency Business Licensing Regulation, alongside the Immigration Oversight Act (Bill 26). These laws prohibit agencies from charging workers placement fees, mandate strict licensing, and require detailed recordkeeping and written agreements. The addition of the Employment Agency Business Licensing Regulation is an important measure to protect workers and prevent labour trafficking. Over the last year, the Alberta Centre was able to facilitate the beginning of a coordinated effort to tackle this complex problem.

No single agency can do this alone.



L-R: Co-CEO Carlene Donnelly, Chair Paul Brandt, Co-CEO Bonnie Johnston.



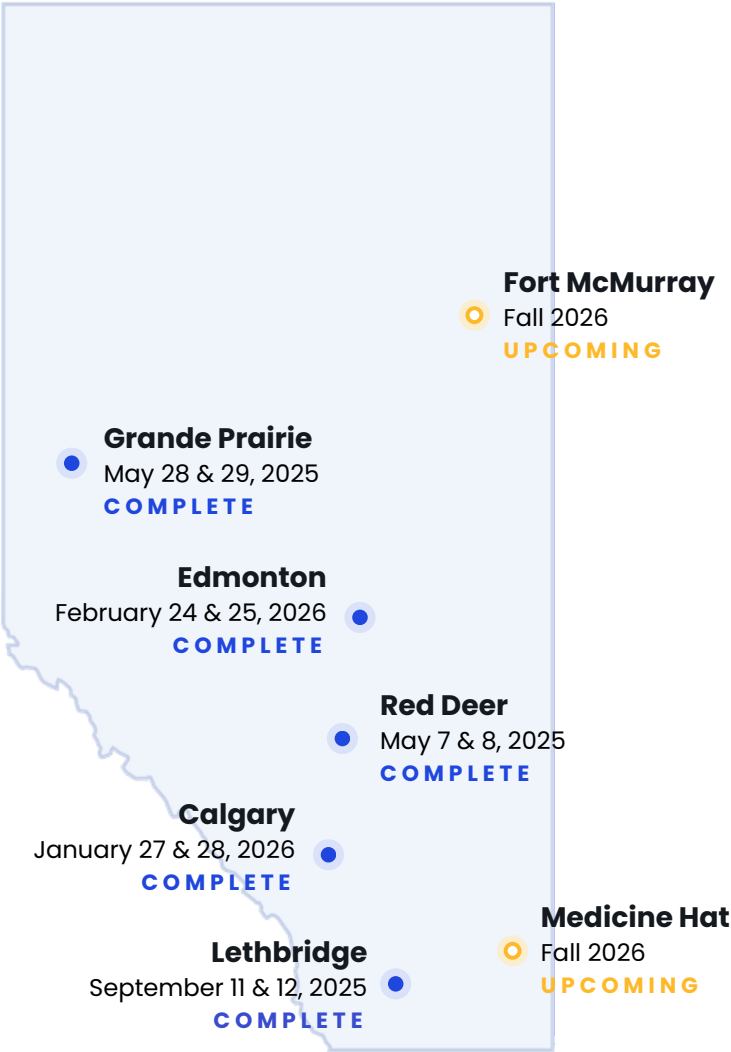
Building Stronger Systems Across Alberta

Alberta is a big province. The fight against trafficking must be just as big.

In 2025, the Alberta Centre launched a province-wide community engagement.

Two-day workshops in each region brought together frontline service providers, government agencies, law enforcement, Alberta Health Services, municipalities, and Indigenous partners to map the current service landscape and identify gaps and opportunities for a coordinated response.

-  Workshop complete
-  Workshop upcoming



What did we find? That the will to work together is there. What people needed was a place to do it — and a coordinating body to help make it happen.



Safety Network Coordinators: A Safer Way Out

When a survivor is identified, what happens next can determine everything. Safety Network Coordinators (SNCs) — civilian positions embedded within ALERT's Human Trafficking & Counter Exploitation Unit (HTCEU) — are the vital link that has historically been missing between law enforcement and community support services.

SNCs are dedicated to removing barriers to exiting exploitation, safety planning, facilitating access to community supports, victim advocacy through the criminal justice system, and connecting survivors to housing, identification, and financial supports. They work alongside survivors from the moment of first contact through to long-term stability — and if a survivor is re-trafficked, they maintain that connection and prepare for exit again.

Through the 2025 CTIP Grant — adjudicated with the Alberta Centre's support — four new Safety Network Coordinator positions were created within ALERT CEHT Units. What had been described as 'a bit tenuous and a compilation of several grants' now has sustained provincial funding.

The Alberta Centre also invested in the infrastructure to measure this program's impact at scale. Working with ALERT North and South and a credentialed evaluator, we were able to help develop measures, a data tracker, and a dashboard that will provide a province-wide process for Safety Network Coordinators to collect and analyze data on client demographics, trafficking metrics, and supports provided.

Coordinated Youth Response: The Community Response Model

In Calgary, the Alberta Centre is working in partnership with #NotInMyCity to support and strengthen the Community Response Model (CRM)—a coordinated wraparound approach for youth at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation. The model brings together Calgary Police Service, Children's Services, Alberta Health Services Mental Health and Addictions, Hull Services, McMan Youth Family & Community Services, the Calgary Catholic School District, the Luna Child and Youth Advocacy Centre and Trellis around a single purpose: no high-risk young person falls through the cracks.

The Alberta Centre is now working to develop a comparable model in Lethbridge, where a regional working group is mapping the service landscape and co-designing a pathway of care suited to the community. The more we bring people together, the more we learn and the more we can spread this model across the province.



Survivor Voice at the Centre: The Lived Experience Advisory Network (LEAN)

Coordination is an abstract idea until it closes the gap between a survivor and the help they need. These stories from 2025 show the difference a dedicated coordinating body can make — when the right people are in the room at the right time, with survivor-centred approaches guiding every step.

The Reading Stone is clear: survivor voices are not an add-on. They are the lens through which everything must be evaluated.

The Lived Experience Advisory Network (LEAN), the Alberta Centre's survivor advisory body, ensures people with lived experience shape our policies, programs, and direction. Not after the fact. From the start.

Its six members represent lived experience from across Canada. Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures were approved in January 2025. An in-person session in September 2025 aligned LEAN activities with the Centre's strategic priorities for the year ahead.



As a survivor of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, I can say that the work of this Centre has been nothing short of transformative.

They not only listen to survivors, but they deeply value and encourage our voices. They remind us that we are more than what has happened to us — we are capable, strong, and deserving of the full opportunity to rebuild and thrive.

**Alisha Richards-McManus,
Survivor and LEAN Member**





Partnerships That Strengthen Our Response

Working with Government

The Alberta Centre's relationship with the Government of Alberta has been foundational from the start. In Year 1, the Centre worked alongside the Ministry of Public Safety and Emergency Services to support the adjudication and allocation of the \$5.5 million Combatting Trafficking in Persons Grant — ensuring resources reached 19 frontline organizations across the province.

In its infancy, the Alberta Centre to End Trafficking in Persons has rapidly become a trusted source of evidence-based counsel for governments at every level, translating survivor experience into actionable policy. In a single year, the AC has briefed the Government of Alberta on the harms of municipally licensed body rub establishments, mandatory age verification for online pornography, the abuse of refugee status by convicted child exploiters, and the protection of frontline partners like HER Victory; briefed the Government of Canada on the Senneville decision, CSAEM mandatory minimums, and Bill C-14 bail and sentencing reform through Senate testimony; and stood before the Assembly of First Nations to address the disproportionate trafficking of Indigenous women and girls. The AC has also led the operational response and case-study development around the January 2026 Lethbridge trafficking case, at the direct invitation of law enforcement leadership.

Across every file, the AC has carried forward the principles and aims of The Reading Stone: a survivor-led lens, demand reduction grounded in the Nordic/Equality model, a unified and coordinated provincial response, and unwavering insistence that victims and survivors be supported to exit and build into the lives they were intended to live.

Government partners now turn to the AC because it consistently delivers what they need to legislate, enforce, and protect, the voice of those with lived experience, the data to back it, and a clear path to action.





What's Ahead: 2026 and Beyond

The foundation is built. Now we accelerate.

In 2026, we will:

- **Complete the community engagement process** — Fort McMurray and Medicine Hat will finish the province-wide consultation.
- **Move from consultation to co-creation** — reconnecting with regional working groups to build coordinated community response pathways.
- **Expand the Safety Network Coordinator model** — building on CTIP-funded positions and the province-wide data infrastructure now in place.
- **Launch a Labour Trafficking Specialist position** — a dedicated role to support partners, improve training and awareness, and connect the many pieces of Alberta's labour trafficking response.
- **Deepen Indigenous partnerships** — grounded in the recognition that Indigenous communities have been disproportionately impacted and must lead their own solutions.
- **Build the Centre of Excellence** — becoming a hub for research, innovation, and knowledge-sharing that elevates responses across Alberta and beyond.

The Reading Stone told us what Alberta needed. In 2025, we answered the call. In 2026, we build on what we started — together.



Acknowledgements

The Alberta Centre could not do this work without the courage of survivors who shared their stories and continue to guide us, the commitment of partner organizations across the province, and the support of the Government of Alberta.

Foundational work in Year 1 was made possible through the expertise of our consulting partners: Impact Rising and Impact for Good Institute (logic model and evaluation framework), Elevate Consulting (community engagement and Core Services Framework), ThreeHive Consulting (CTIP evaluation framework and SNC evaluation), KOAT Intelligence (human trafficking prevalence data), and STRUT (branding and website).

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Government of Canada

Addressing human trafficking in Alberta

Government of Alberta