



# Human Trafficking in Alberta

Edmonton Police Commission  
July 2015

# About ACT Alberta

ACT Alberta works collaboratively with law enforcement, government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to identify and respond to human trafficking in our province.

- ACT Chapters in Red Deer, Calgary, Edmonton
- Coordination of services (local, interprovincial and international)
- Training and education
- Create and maintain protocols and networks
- Undertake research

We receive funding through the Government of Alberta (Solicitor General and Public Security; Human Services) and the Government of Canada (Justice Canada; Status of Women Canada)

# What is Human Trafficking?

Traffickers undertake ACTION using MEANS for the PURPOSE of exploiting people.

transfer  
recruitment receipt  
**ACTION**  
transportation  
harbouring



abduction force  
threat/coercion  
**MEANS**  
abuse of power  
fraud/deception



servitude forced labour  
sexual exploitation  
**PURPOSE**  
removal of organs  
slavery/similar practices



# Canada's Response to Human Trafficking

## ***Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (2001)***

**(Section 118)** “No person shall knowingly organize the coming into Canada of one or more persons by means of abduction, fraud, deception or use or threat of force or coercion.”

## ***Criminal Code (2006)***

**(Section 279)** 4 prohibitions related to trafficking in persons

- 279.01 Trafficking
- 279.011 Trafficking of a minor
- 279.02 Material benefit
- 279.03 Withholding or destroying documents

## **Public Safety Canada - National Action Plan (2012)**

# Human Trafficking Trends in Alberta

- Labour and/or sex trafficking
- Legal and illegal establishments
- Canadian citizens/permanent residents, visitors, TFWs, students
- Internal and international
- Women and girls disproportionately affected, but men also trafficked
- Victims often in relationship with trafficker (business or personal)
- Victims often have minimal access to community supports
- 2006-2014: 15 charges of HT in Alberta (RCMP HTNCC)

# Barriers to assisting - victim

- Difficulties trusting. Fear of authorities
- May not speak English
- Cultural barriers and pressures
- Intense feelings of shame and self-blame
- Unable or unwilling to identify as being trafficked or victimized. May not want to stop working.
- May take months for whole story to be unveiled; distrust and trauma
- Unaware of their rights under the law

# Barriers to assisting – community

- Lack of awareness and accurate identification
- Lack of services, esp. affordable housing, accessible mental health services, addiction support
- Lack of documents (CIC and foreign gov'ts)
- Length of time needed for services
- Limited resources
- Gaps in coordination, communication and collaboration
- Lack of sensitivity; compassion fatigue + burnout

# Barriers – Criminal Justice System

- High evidentiary thresholds
- Lack of case law
- Lack of training and resources
- Cases often dependent on victim's testimony
  - Victim blaming
  - Addictions
  - Fear
  - Emotional or familial attachment to trafficker



# Community Action Plan

- Funding from Status of Women Canada
- Collaborative project with 10 other organizations
- Needs assessment including interviews and focus groups, consultations with stakeholders, and workshops
- Objective: Practical solutions to prevent and reduce sex trafficking in the community

# Research Findings

Research and consultations identified:

- Demographic context
- Structural and systemic causes of trafficking
- Risk factors
- Recruitment processes and mechanisms of control
- Effects of trafficking on the lives of victims
- Strengths and gaps in our response

# Community Action Plan

## Priorities

- Education, awareness and training
- Focus on children and youth
- Collaboration and engagement to improve services
- Address structural and systemic inequality

# Next Steps

- Implementation of action plan
  - Developing protocols
  - Education and training
  - Streamlining services
  - Ongoing consultations
- ACT networks
- Pending funding proposals

# Thank you

[www.actalberta.org](http://www.actalberta.org)

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