

Submission to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the 2026 Provincial Budget

BC-based [Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women \(GAATW\) Canada](#) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the 2026 provincial budget process and share insights informed by our work with communities affected by human trafficking and related systemic inequities.

GAATW Canada champions human and labour rights to build a fairer, more caring society free from exploitation. We convene research, advocacy, and community voices, including Indigenous peoples, migrant workers, sex workers, and other impacted communities, to address the root causes of human trafficking. Amplifying community-driven strategies, our evidence-based approach moves beyond rescue and awareness raising to create lasting change where everyone can thrive free from exploitation.

Recommendation #1: Ensure public funding for anti-trafficking initiatives is grounded in evidence and accountability.

We recommend that the Province fund only anti-trafficking initiatives based on credible data regarding the nature, scope, and prevalence of trafficking in BC. In the absence of a provincial anti-trafficking strategy, we advise against allocating public funds to initiatives that depend on sensational or fear-based narratives about trafficking, as they may lack transparency, evidence, or measurable outcomes. While these initiatives may seem urgent or dire, they can inadvertently redirect resources away from existing services that are fundamentally preventative and vital for reducing systemic risk. Many of the 2024-25 CFO-funded projects already support this work (see recommendations 2 and 3 where CFO funding falls short). BC must avoid the anti-trafficking funding patterns observed in other parts of Canada, as described by the Canadian Women's Foundation in its 2023 submission to the federal government's Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) for its study on the Human Trafficking of Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People.

“Anti-trafficking initiatives focus attention on one form of gender-based violence to the detriment of survivors of other forms of gender-based violence. Resources are diverted from critical programs serving survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, and violence prevention programs for youth that focus on healthy relationships, consent, and sexual education, and reallocated through mass investments into anti-trafficking programs focused on disempowering rescue narratives and the policing and incarceration of members of criminalized communities.”

We encourage the Province to stay the course by investing in community-based, evidence-informed, and rights-affirming approaches that address the root causes of exploitation, strengthen existing support systems, and uphold the safety and dignity of all individuals, even if these services are not labelled “anti-trafficking.”

Recommendation #2: Fund sex worker support programs as a critical component of human trafficking prevention.

Sex work support programs address root causes of human trafficking, such as criminalization, isolation, and stigma, while enhancing safety, agency, and power for individuals at systemic risk of exploitation.

In 2025, we observed a concerning reduction in CFO-funded sex work support services. At a minimum, we urge the Province to restore and sustain funding at pre-2025 levels.

Furthermore, all anti-trafficking funding should include due diligence to ensure that recipient organizations do not oppose sex work, just as they are expected to align with gender and racial equity commitments.

Finally, any provincially funded anti-trafficking initiatives should align with the goals of the [BC Bad Date Reporting System](#)—a peer-led, province-wide initiative operating outside the criminal justice system to effectively address all forms of violence against individuals in the sex trade. We also recommend sustainable, ongoing operational funding for this system as a leading example of a peer-led safety strategy.

Recommendation #3: Invest in Grassroots Migrant Worker Organizations as a Key Strategy in Preventing Exploitation and Addressing Human Trafficking

We urge the government to fund grassroots migrant rights organizations that work tirelessly on the front lines, often operating underfunded despite carrying large and critical mandates. Frequently led by peers, these organizations are trusted within their communities and often serve as the first point of contact for migrant workers facing or fleeing exploitation or trafficking-related harms. Funding should not depend on serving only those with immigration or work status to ensure that services reach the most marginalized individuals, who are at heightened systemic risk of exploitation.

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