



SASKATOON _____
POLICE SERVICE

TO: Shirley Greyeyes, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Dave Haye
Office of the Chief

DATE: 2024 April 05

SUBJECT: Federally Funded Saskatoon Police Service Human Trafficking
Response Team

FILE #: 2,007-1

ISSUE:

The Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) has been selected to receive grant funding from the Government of Canada to address human trafficking. The project is entitled *Saskatoon Police Service Human Trafficking Response Team*.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Board of Police Commissioners receive this report for information.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

SPS Strategic Plan 2020-2024 Theme Crime and Safety:

Goal 1- Implement effective strategies to combat crime and protect the public.

- Strategy 1.1 - Improve public safety through partnerships with municipal, provincial, and national stakeholders.
 - Activity 1.1.3 – In partnership with the federal Department of Justice, develop and implement the Victim Services Human Trafficking Response Team Project.

DISCUSSION:

The SPS’s Victim Services Unit is a police-based joint initiative program between the Province of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Police Service designed to provide support, information, and referrals to victims of crime and traumatic events.

In January of 2023, SPS Victim Services Supervisor, Sheri Watkins became aware of a federal program accepting applications under the *Victims Fund Services and Supports for Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking*.

Given Mrs. Watkins’ in-depth knowledge of the obstacles surrounding support and services for victims of human trafficking in our community, and inspired by the success of a pilot project in 2022 where a member of Victim Services intermittently integrated with the SPS Vice Unit to offer frontline assistance, she was determined to pursue this funding opportunity.

Supported by SPS leadership, Mrs. Watkins completed an application to the federal government on January 19, 2023, with the overall objective of integrating two full-time employees into the Victim Services Unit to provide trauma-informed services and training, specific to Human Trafficking, including a plan to enhance community supports throughout our province.

The federal funding request outlined the following positions:

1. The Victim Service Human Trafficking (VSHT) Responder will work alongside the SPS Vice Unit investigators to provide immediate and specialized support to victims and survivors of Human Trafficking as well as assisting victims navigating and understanding the justice system.

Aside from the immediate and direct trauma-informed crisis support provided to Victims of Human Trafficking during operations, this VSHT Responder will provide:

- Culturally appropriate follow-up care and ongoing support.
 - Assist with physical well-being; accessing medical care and addressing basic needs of safety, food, and shelter.
 - Community referrals and connections to build social well-being, in partnership with Indigenous Resource Officers when deemed appropriate.
 - Create and maintain community partnerships.
 - Provide survivor support throughout the judicial system; from offender charges to convictions, focused support to improve the likelihood of conviction and disrupting Human Trafficking activity.
 - Act as a liaison between police, crown prosecutors, community-based organizations, Indigenous organizations, and survivors.
2. The Victim Services Human Trafficking (VSHT) Liaison will work in partnership with our Indigenous Resource Officers, and other identified community partners to develop and deliver trauma-informed training for prosecutors and first responders to enhance the

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

detection, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking incidents in Saskatoon and throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

The existing SPS Victim Services Unit is currently connected to many experts in the field of human trafficking victimization and support locally and across the country. With a specialized trained employee, these connections will be utilized, partnerships created, and professional relationships fostered to develop training, and materials (Tool Kit) based on best practices informed by survivors and field experts which will then be offered and delivered to crown prosecutors, police officers, immigration officers, and medical professionals to enhance the detection, investigation and prosecution of human trafficking incidents.

This VSHT Liaison will network and develop training and materials (Tool Kit) based on:

- How to identify victims of human trafficking - actionable indicators for first responders.
- How to intervene when human trafficking indicators are present - successful best practices from police agencies that can be applied for successful outcomes.
- How to support victims of human trafficking - informed by survivors with successful outcomes.
- Human Trafficking and the Criminal Code - Criminal Code charges and how they can be applied to human trafficking organizers.
- The Protection from Human Trafficking Act.
- Support the justice system with the prosecution of human traffickers.

Once the information and best practices are compiled, organized, and ready to disseminate, the VSHT Liaison will offer the training in various formats (conferences, WebEx, in-person seminars/workshops, lectures, etc.) and to stakeholders, prioritizing prosecutors and first responders (police, victim services, immigration officers, paramedics).

Training materials and approaches will be updated and enhanced to ensure comprehensive educational material and methods reach a broader audience effectively.

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

On October 24, SPS received notification that the *Saskatoon Police Service Human Trafficking Response Team* project was approved for the federal funding grant. The financial breakdown chart below was provided by SPS’s Finance and Asset Management Division:

SPS Human Trafficking Response Team			
October 23, 2023 to March 31, 2026			
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Positions Funded (Salaries & Benefits)			
Human Trafficking Responder	\$ 25,948	\$ 70,500	\$ 70,500
Human Trafficking Liaison	\$ 25,948	\$ 70,500	\$ 70,500
Total	\$ 51,896	\$ 141,000	\$ 141,000
Operating Expenditures			
Travel-Project Related	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Program Delivery Costs	\$ 28,604	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Total	\$ 31,604	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
Total Funding	\$ 83,500	\$ 150,000	\$ 150,000

Notes

1) Program Delivery Costs: computer, printer, scanner, mobile phones, office furniture/supplies, promotion, and public awareness.

2) \$22,604 of salary funding from the 2023-24 period was reallocated to program delivery costs as positions were not yet hired during this period and additional funding for workspace costs was needed. The Federal Government approved this reallocation in march 2024.

As of mid-March 2024, and based at the SPS Headquarters, the two staffed full-time positions of VSHT Responder and VSHT Liaison began their work. The positions are strategically aligned to complement each other's efforts. Together, their mission is to effect real change by disrupting human trafficking incidents and offering vital support to victims and survivors.

An SPS federal reporting requirement is stipulated in the Program Funding Agreement to submit annual project progress reports, including a final project summary report on or before June 30, 2026, which summarizes activities undertaken and outlines the results of the project activities completed by Victim Services.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the establishment of the *Saskatoon Police Service Human Trafficking Response Team* marks a significant step forward in fulfilling the strategic priority of enhancing public safety through collaborative efforts. By leveraging federal funding and building upon existing initiatives within the Victim Services program, SPS is in a position support to victims and survivors of human trafficking in our community. Through the deployment of dedicated

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

professionals in roles focused on crisis intervention, support navigation, and training development, the project aims not only to address immediate needs but also to enhance the detection, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking incidents.

Written by: James Oliver, Inspector Investigative Support
Reviewed by: Blair Pellerin, Superintendent, Criminal Investigations
Cameron McBride, Deputy Chief, Operations
Approved by: Dave Haye, Chief of Police