

# Free Legal Support for Survivors of Human Trafficking

Ministry of the Attorney General

Human trafficking is a crime. A restraining order can be an important legal tool in protecting survivors and individuals at-risk of being trafficked from the threat of exploitation and violence. Learn about what human trafficking is, what you can do to stop it and what help is available at [ontario.ca/HumanTrafficking](http://ontario.ca/HumanTrafficking).

## Pilot program

Ontario is piloting a new program to help survivors and those at-risk of being trafficked to get restraining orders against their traffickers.

The service is available provincewide, by phone or in person.

## How the program works

A team of specialized lawyers will help survivors and potential victims get a restraining order by providing legal support, including:

- free, confidential legal advice
- help completing a restraining order application
- representation at application hearings in any Ontario Court of Justice

Parents and guardians of a child survivor or a child at-risk of being trafficked will also be eligible for free legal support.

A restraining order can be filed any time after a survivor has been trafficked, regardless of how much time has passed.

## Eligibility

Survivors of all ages can access this service, and the trafficking does not need to have happened in Ontario to be eligible. The program is available to all women, men, trans and gender-diverse people. This restraining order would only apply to a trafficker who is an Ontario resident.

## Contact

To access services, call the toll-free **human trafficking helpline** at **1-833-999-9211**.

TTY – **1-888-340-1001**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a restraining order?

This is a court order used to keep a person away from another person. Violating a restraining order is a criminal offence and if convicted, the person may be sent to jail for a term of up to two years.

### How long is the restraining order effective?

Restraining orders can be in place for up to three years and renewed if necessary.

These orders are entered into a national computer registry and enforced by police.

### Why do I need legal support?

A lawyer can provide information on the legal process to obtain a restraining order, including filling out the application, submitting it to the courthouse and representing you in court if needed.

If you are concerned about your safety or the safety of those around you, a lawyer can provide confidential advice and guidance.

### Do I need to report my trafficker to the police before I can talk to a lawyer?

No, your trafficker or potential trafficker does not need to be convicted or charged with human trafficking in order for you to file a restraining order.

## Victims Services Supports

### Victim Support Line

The toll-free multilingual Victim Support Line provides information and referrals to services across Ontario. To speak with an information and referral counsellor, call 1-888-579-2888, or 416-314-2447 in the Greater Toronto Area.

### Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario

Available across the province, this program provides immediate, on-site services to victims of crime 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1-866-376-9852.

## Knowing the signs of human trafficking

A number of signs may point to human trafficking:

- The person is not allowed to speak for themselves and their activities are controlled by someone else.
- The person is under 18 and involved in prostitution or sex work.
- The person is unpaid or paid very little to work, and seems to be treated poorly (long or unusual hours, not allowed breaks, forced to live in poor conditions, etc.).
- The person is repaying a large debt through labour or sex.
- The person seems fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid. They may avoid eye contact, seem fearful around police, etc.