



VICTIM
SERVICES OF PEEL
Help. Healing. Hope.

EMBRAVE
AGENCY TO END VIOLENCE

This Way Out → and Footpath to Freedom Project Evaluation

Key Findings

June 2026

PREPARED BY
**Collective
Results**





Table of Contents

Page

3	Executive Summary
7	Background
8	Program Model
11	Evaluation Framework
12	Methods
13	TWO-FTF Clients
14	Key Findings - Section 1 - Promising Practices
28	Key Findings - Section 2 - Outcomes
39	Unanticipated Outcomes
40	Evaluation Limitations
41	Conclusions
42	Recommendations
44	References

Executive Summary

In November 2023, Victim Services of Peel (VSOP) launched a collaborative service delivery model that provides immediate response to victims/survivors of human trafficking called This Way Out → (TWO). TWO embeds VSOP's Anti-Human Trafficking (AHT) Case Managers with the Vice Unit (Human Trafficking Unit) of Peel Regional Police to improve survivor access to emergency and community services. In April 2025, VSOP partnered with Embrace to expand survivor services to include emergency housing and other supports with a project called, Trafficked Persons Footpath to Freedom (FTF). The following is the final report of the key evaluation findings for TWO and an interim report for FTF. The focus of the evaluation is on **1) the implementation of TWO-FTF and its alignment with promising practices** and **2) the extent to which TWO-FTF has achieved the outcomes anticipated**. Data was collected through client administrative data; promising practice self-assessment tool; interviews with VSOP, police, and agency partners; and a client survey.

Alignment with Promising Practices

Promising Practice	Achievements	Challenges & Opportunities	Alignment Rating
1 - Involvement of survivors in direct response and program development	- Meaningful involvement of survivors in direct response (i.e., one Case Manager with survivor experience) and in the development of program (e.g., procedures and practices) - All Case Managers received specialized training for their role - Increased racial diversity of staff	None identified	High
2 - Single point of contact and warm transfers	- Client's point of contact with Case Manager was clear & consistent - At least 36 warm transfers & 220 accompaniments (e.g., court, appointments) were completed	Case Managers not always available after hours or on weekend	High
3 - Co-location	- VSOP & police are co-located on separate floors within same building - Easy access for warm transfers, discuss/problem-solve, & face-to-face interpersonal interactions	None identified	High
4 - Client-centred and trauma-informed services	- Accessible, low-barrier service - Safe environment - Culturally responsive to identified needs	- High caseloads and limits to capacity - Connecting to services that may not be as client-centred/trauma-informed	High

Alignment with Promising Practices (continued)

Promising Practice	Achievements	Challenges & Opportunities	Alignment Rating
5 - Meeting essential needs of survivors	Most successful at meeting needs quickly for transportation, safety devices, food/basic necessities, emergency shelter, treatment services, & medical care	More difficult to meet needs quickly for safe housing, and financial assistance	High
6 - Referral network and community asset mapping	- Clear strengthening of referral partnerships - Referrals into TWO-FTF are low-barrier & seamless - Made 948 referrals out to over 49 organizations	- Barriers to referrals out: extensive intake, not responsive, lack of space or capacity - Transitioning clients out of VSOP's care	High
7 - Formalized structure and direct channels of communication	- Clear roles/responsibilities and communication - Case Managers are responsive	Unbalanced workloads due to preferences for certain Case Managers or police officers	High
8 - Specialized Training	Adequate training to handle crisis situations, use client-centred trauma-informed approach, and be culturally responsive	Training opportunities identified: cultural practices, developmental disabilities, safety protocols, & administrative	High
9 - Proactive approach to identify survivors	- Successful for de-escalation and building trust with survivors - Roles were clear and counsellors were considered an asset	- Difficulty planning and coordinating - Access to vehicle for counsellors	Medium to high
10 - Coordinating body/advisory board	- Advisory group of key partners created and met on a regular basis during 2023-2025 - Facilitated connections, multiple perspectives, project promotion, and strategic direction	- Less frequent meetings for 2025-2026 - More opportunities to problem-solve & develop advocacy strategies	Medium to high
Cultural responsiveness	Overall TWO has been culturally responsive when interacting with & connecting clients to supports	- Requests for additional training - Continued efforts to recruit and retain racially diverse staff & collaborate with ethno-specific organizations	High

Achievement of Outcomes

Outcome	Achievements	Challenges & Opportunities	Status
1 - Increased knowledge & skills of partners	Provided a variety of education & training sessions for police, community agency partners, & public	None identified	
2 - Improved collaboration among partners	- Development of many new collaborations and strengthening of existing collaborations - Refer to Promising Practice 6	Additional collaborations with organizations to meet needs of underserved populations	
3 - Improved timely systems	- Crisis intervention was responsive, quick and seamless - Connection to supports were timely 95% of clients who needed emergency support received it within 3 hours	- Case Managers not always available after hours - Accessibility barriers to external services	
4 - Increased sense of safety & trust	90% of clients accepted the support being provided 23% of clients were willing to speak to police 32% of clients were self-referrals	None identified	
5 - Increased engagement in support services	Number of human trafficking clients has more than tripled and the amount of VQRP+ funds used has increased more than 500% compared to the year prior to TWO	None identified	
6 - Increased knowledge of ways to exit	87% of clients made a safety plan 80% of clients made at least one attempt to exit	None identified	
7 - Have resources & capacity to live independently (new outcome)	13% of clients discharged from Embrace successfully transitioned into safe housing - Clients mention increase in capacity to live independently	More time/data needed to fully understand impact	
8-9 - Follow through with safety plans & exit	53% entered safe housing (e.g., shelter, treatment) 97% of clients made at least one attempt to exit 19% of clients make more than one attempt	None identified	

Conclusions

TWO and FTF projects have delivered a collaborative service delivery model that aligns strongly with all ten promising practices and has achieved the system-organizational and individual-level outcomes set out in the program logic model. At the same time, the evaluation identified consistent challenges that should be addressed if the model is to be sustained.

Recommendations

- 1 Secure sustained, permanent funding for TWO-FTF and expand staffing capacity.**
- 2 Strengthen after-hours and weekend coverage for AHT Case Managers.**
- 3 Ongoing training for frontline staff.**
- 4 Continue to strengthen cultural responsiveness & inclusiveness.**
- 5 Ensure balanced caseload distribution among AHT Case Managers and police.**
- 6 Streamline the Embrace referral and intake process and clarify roles.**
- 7 Develop targeted referral pathways for underserved populations.**
- 8 Reactivate and broaden the advisory group.**
- 9 Build a formal transition pathway for long-term clients.**
- 10 Strengthen client-level data collection to support future evaluation.**



Background

Police-reported incidents of human trafficking have been increasing since 2013 with rates in Ontario, particularly large urban centres, being higher than the national average. The vast majority of these police-reported survivors are women and girls (93%) and of these women and girls, most are aged 24 years and younger (68%) (Statistics Canada, 2023). Others who are at-risk include Indigenous women and girls, new immigrants, 2SLGBTQI+ persons, and those who are socially or economically disadvantaged (Public Safety Canada, 2024).

The demographic profile, size and location of the Region of Peel makes it particularly susceptible to incidents of human trafficking. Peel has a population of 1.5 million people and the highest percentage of racialized people in the Greater Toronto Area with 69% of its population identifying with a racialized group. It also has the highest proportion of immigrants in Ontario with over half of their population being born outside Canada and 14% of the immigrant population being newcomers (arrived in Canada within the past five years) (Peel Region, 2021). Peel Region is located along the Highway 401 corridor between the City of Toronto, Niagara Falls and Pearson Airport making it accessible to human traffickers for receiving, transporting, or harbouring individuals for exploitation.

In June 2023, Victim Services of Peel (VSOP) received a grant from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to implement a collaborative service delivery model that provides immediate crisis response to victims/survivors of human trafficking called This Way Out → (TWO). This model aims to increase survivor access to supports in the Region of Peel by embedding VSOP's Anti-Human Trafficking (AHT) Case Managers with the Vice Unit (Human Trafficking Unit) of Peel Regional Police.

In April 2025, VSOP and Embrace received a grant from Ontario STANDS (Standing Together Against gender-based violence Now through Decisive actions, prevention, empowerment and Supports) to expand survivor services to include emergency housing and other supports. The project is called Trafficked Persons Footpath to Freedom (FTF).

From November 2023 to March 2026, Collective Results led the development and implementation of an evaluation of TWO and FTF (April 2025 to March 2026). The following is the final report of the key evaluation findings for TWO and an interim report for FTF. The focus of the evaluation is on the implementation of TWO-FTF including its alignment with promising practices and the extent to which the project has achieved its organizational/system-level and individual-level outcomes.

Program Model

TWO is a collaborative service delivery model that provides immediate crisis response to victims/survivors of human trafficking by embedding VSOP's AHT Case Managers within the Peel Regional Police Vice Unit (Human Trafficking Unit). The FTF project further expands and complements the TWO model by increasing VSOP Case Manager support and adding nine emergency shelter beds, along with service navigation and counselling supports provided by Embrace.

The overall goal of these projects is to improve access to emergency and community support services for survivors of human trafficking. Through this model of service delivery, VSOP aims to deliver survivor-centred, trauma-informed crisis services for human trafficking victims/survivors; improve access and reduce response time to urgent and necessary support services; increase capacity for 24/7 emergency support services for victims/survivors of human trafficking; ensure human trafficking victims/survivors are quickly identified and provided with appropriate supports; and ensure a continuum of service through inter-organizational collaboration.



Activities

TWO and FTF provide support to any individual in the Region of Peel who is currently in or has recently exited a human trafficking situation. In November 2023, VSOP hired two AHT Case Managers with funding from WAGE (TWO project). Due to unexpected demand, a third Case Manager was added from January 2024 to March 2025. To deal with ongoing capacity issues and fill service gaps, VSOP obtained additional funding from Ontario STANDS in April of 2025 and hired two additional Case Managers (FTF project).

The AHT Case Managers work collaboratively with four Human Trafficking Vice Unit teams (16 police officers) at Peel Regional Police. The Vice Unit identifies human trafficking survivors through their general investigations and provides referrals directly to the Case Managers. The Case Managers provide immediate crisis intervention counselling for survivors and connect them to community and emergency support services as needed. The Case Managers will also connect human trafficking survivors that they have identified (through other referral sources) to the Vice Unit as appropriate. The Vice Unit also collaborates with Case Managers to go on in-person investigations of suspicious activities in the community (called probe investigations) that may lead to identifying a human trafficking situation.

Clients who need emergency housing are referred to one of the nine dedicated shelter beds at Embrace (as long as space is available). Clients staying at the Embrace shelter are provided mental health counselling and service navigation support as needed.

Outcomes

The overall impact statement for TWO and FTF is that victims/survivors of human trafficking live their lives free from violence, exploitation, and fear. TWO and FTF aim to achieve impact through both organizational/system-level and individual-level outcomes recognizing that these two levels are strongly interconnected.

Organizational & Systems-Level

The long-term outcome is to have an integrated, client-centred social service system for human trafficking survivors. TWO-FTF aim to contribute to this long-term outcome by increasing the knowledge and skills of project partners to engage in trauma-informed and client-centred care and improve collaboration among police and social service partners leading to improved timely systems and service delivery pathways.

Individual-Level

The long-term outcome is to improve the safety and well-being for survivors of human trafficking. TWO-FTF aim to contribute to this long-term outcome by increasing the sense of safety and trust between survivors, AHT Case Managers, and police; and increasing survivor's knowledge and awareness of ways to exit. These short-term outcomes will precipitate survivors' connection to community and emergency support services and increase the likelihood that survivors will follow through with safety plans, have the resources and capacity to live independently and leave their trafficking situation.

Refer to **Figure 1** for a full description of TWO-FTF's program logic model.

Figure 1: TWO-FTF Logic Model

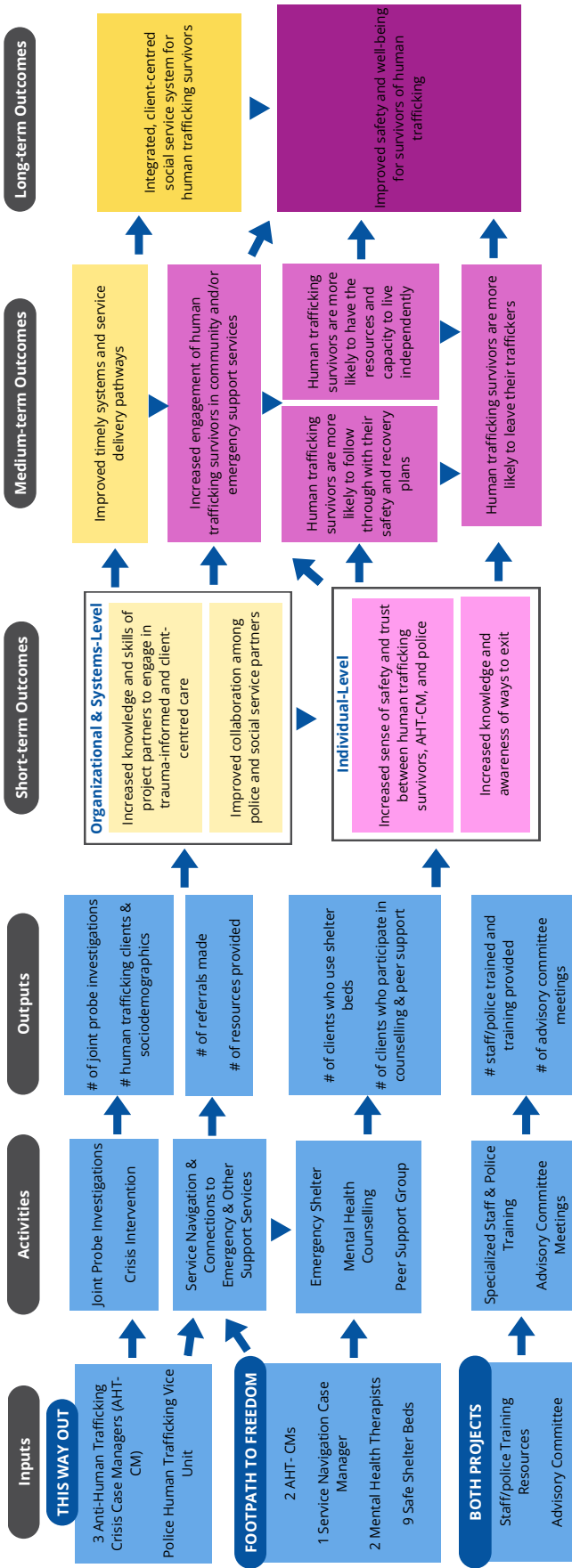


THIS WAY OUT → / FOOTPATH TO FREEDOM LOGIC MODEL

Impact Statement: Survivors of human trafficking live their lives free from violence, exploitation, and fear

Target Population: Victims/survivors of human trafficking in the Region of Peel

Guiding Principles: Survivor and trauma-informed, relational and client-centred, anti-oppression/anti-colonial framework, harm reduction & holistic health lens, sex and gender based analysis



Assumptions: VSOP/Police collaboration is an effective way to identify survivors and help them access the supports they need; there is sufficient staff time to engage in activities; sufficient supports are available that align with survivors' needs

Challenges: Staff safety during probe investigations and justice system processes; staff burnout or vicarious trauma; lack of sufficient emergency supports available; ethical dilemmas and legal limits of confidentiality; mistaking sex work for human trafficking and vice versa; mistaking human trafficking for intimate partner violence

Assumptions: Survivors with appropriate supports will work towards living independently; systems and service delivery pathways are clear; survivors feel comfortable disclosing information about their trauma and related needs; AHT-CMs are better equipped to offer appropriate support to survivors when working in partnership with police and other community partners

Challenges: Survivors are re-traumatized due to the limitations in services and justice system processes; social determinants of health/life circumstances impact survivors' ability to engage in services; survivors develop unhealthy dependency on service providers; complexity of trauma impacts survivor's ability to reintegrate into the community; increased demand on social services and the justice system due to increased uptake in services

Sept 2025

Evaluation Framework

To develop an evaluation framework, Collective Results engaged with VSOP and Embrave project leads, AHT Case Managers and the TWO advisory group made up of agency partners including Peel Regional Police, referral partners, and an Indigenous elder to develop a program logic model (**Figure 1**). The first iteration of the model was developed in November 2023 to represent the TWO project. It was revised in September 2025 incorporating the FTF project.

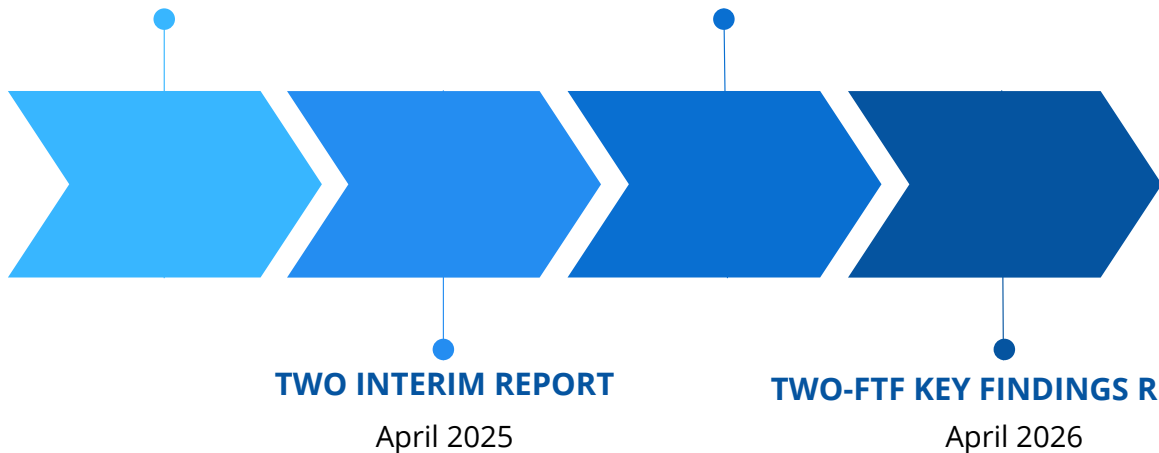
The purpose of the logic model was to clarify the key components of the program and how they connected to the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes of the program. It also highlighted some of the assumptions and challenges related to the program. Following the development of the program logic model, Collective Results worked with VSOP/Embrave project leads and AHT Case Managers to develop the evaluation questions, indicators, methodology and data collection tools.

TWO PROGRAM MODEL & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Nov 2023

TWO-FTF PROGRAM MODEL & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Sept 2025



Evaluation Questions

The focus of this evaluation was answering the following questions:

1

How well is the project being implemented based on promising practices? How culturally responsive is the project?

2

To what extent are the outcomes being achieved?

- Organizational and systems-level outcomes
- Individual-level outcomes

Methods

The evaluation used a mixed methods design collecting both quantitative and qualitative data using four tools: 1) Client administrative data; 2) Promising Practices Assessment Tool; 3) key informant interviews with VSOP, police, and partner agencies; and 4) client survey.

Data Collection Tools

Client Administrative Data

Frontline staff from VSOP and Embrace tracked and recorded client data including referral sources, external referrals, safety planning, attempts to exit, demographic information, length of stay, and resources used.

Promising Practices Assessment Tool

The promising practice assessment was a survey tool that assessed the extent to which TWO-FTF was aligned with the promising practices for collaborative service delivery to survivors of human trafficking. It contained questions that refer to each of the 10 promising practices that were identified in the literature review, *Exploring Promising Practice for Collaborative Service Delivery to Survivors of Human Trafficking* (Collective Results, 2024). Each member of VSOP's project team was asked to complete the assessment tool at two time periods: January 2025 and February 2026.

Key Informant Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with **17** participants in January 2025 and **21** participants in February to April 2026. Interviewees included VSOP and Embrace's project team (i.e., frontline staff, managers, executive directors), police from Peel

Regional Police's Human Trafficking Vice Unit, and nine referral partner agencies. The interview questions were tailored to each person's role in the project but included questions about the project's alignment with promising practices; cultural responsiveness; achievement of organizational/systems-level outcomes; project strengths; and project challenges/areas of improvement.

Client Survey

The client survey had three sections. The first section asks about client's experiences receiving support from VSOP/Embrace. The second section asks about the client's current human trafficking status. The third section asks some demographic questions. A total of **seven** clients completed the client survey

Data Analyses

Descriptive analyses were performed with the client administrative data, assessment tool, and client survey data. Missing or unknown data was removed from analyses. Thematic analysis was performed with the interview data.

TWO-FTF Clients

VSOP Human Trafficking Clients

From November 2023 to April 2026, VSOP opened **657** human trafficking client files (primary clients) with **246 secondary clients** (e.g., family members) for a total of **903** clients (**Table 1**). The introduction of TWO led to a significant increase in the number of human trafficking clients seeking support from VSOP (refer to *Individual Outcome 5: Increased Engagement in Support Services*).

Table 1: Total Number of Human Trafficking Clients

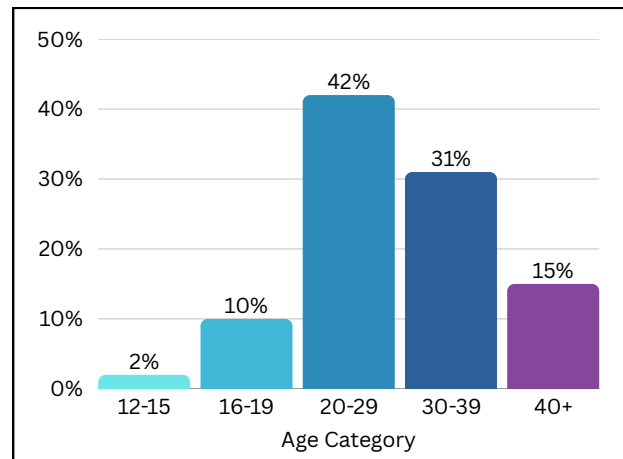
Timeframe	Primary Clients	Secondary Clients	Total
Nov 2023-Mar 2024	55	6	61
Apr 2024-Mar 2025	274	109	383
Apr 2025-Apr 2026*	328	131	459
Total	657	246	903

*Data collected up to April 13, 2026

Client Demographics

The vast majority of clients identified as **female** (97%); 3% identified as male; and less than 1% identified as non-binary or transgender. 25% of clients identified as 2SLGBTQ+. The age category with the largest number of clients was **20 to 29 years old** (42%) followed by **30 to 39 years old** (31%; **Figure 2**).

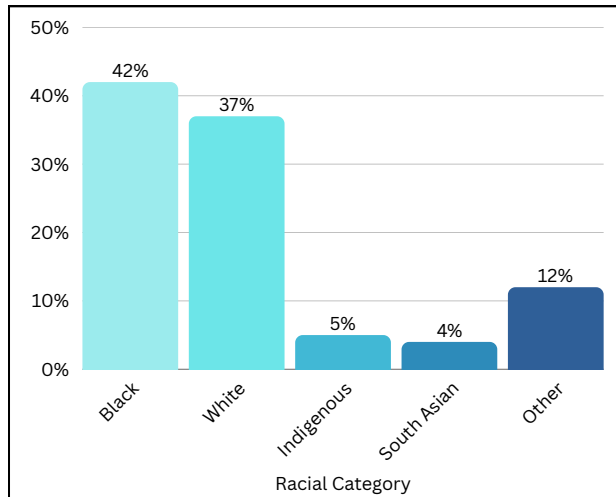
Figure 2: Age of Clients



Note: Missing or unknown data was removed.

Racial Identity

For those clients whose racial identity was known, the largest group identified as **Black** (e.g., African, African Canadian, Afro-Caribbean) at 42%, followed by **White** (e.g., English, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovakian; **Figure 3**). An additional 5% identified as **Indigenous**. Both Black and Indigenous populations are significantly overrepresented in the client population compared to the Region of Peel, where approximately 10% of residents identify as Black and 0.5% as Indigenous. Notably, only 4% of clients identified as **South Asian**, representing a significant underrepresentation compared to the Region of Peel, where this group is approximately 37% of the population.

Figure 3: Racial Identity of Clients

Note: Missing or unknown data was removed.

Embrace Emergency Shelter Clients

From July to March 2026 a total of **29** human trafficking clients stayed at Embrace's emergency shelter; **two of the 29 clients** stayed at the shelter twice.



KEY FINDINGS – SECTION 1

Promising Practices

Summary

From January to March 2024, Collective Results conducted a literature review that described ten promising practices for collaborative service delivery to survivors of human trafficking entitled, *Exploring Promising Practices for Collaborative Service Delivery to Survivors of Human Trafficking*. These promising practices were used as a basis to evaluate the implementation of TWO-FTF. Overall, TWO-FTF had a strong alignment with all ten promising practices. **Table 2** lists each promising practice and the degree to which TWO-FTF was aligned with the practice (low, medium, or high) based on the findings in this report. The following sections review the key findings for each promising practice

Table 2: Overall Alignment with Each Promising Practice

Promising Practice	Alignment Rating
1 - Involvement of survivors in direct response & program development	High
2 - Single point of contact and warm transfers	High
3 - Co-location	High
4 - Client-centred and trauma-informed services	High
5 - Meeting essential needs of survivors	High
6 - Referral network and community asset mapping	High
7 - Formalized structure and direct channels of communication	High
8 - Specialized Training	High
9 - Proactive approach to identify survivors	Medium to high
10 - Coordinating body/advisory board	Medium to high
Cultural responsiveness*	High

*Considered in the context of the relevant promising practices listed.



Promising Practice 1:

Involvement of Survivors in Direct Response & Program Development

Alignment: High

Brief Description

The meaningful involvement of human trafficking survivors in direct response (e.g., as Case Managers) and in the ongoing development and implementation of the collaborative service delivery model is considered important for building trust with survivors and delivering a trauma-informed and client-centred practice. If direct survivor involvement is not possible, it is important that team members receive specialized human trafficking training (review *Promising Practice 8: Specialized Training*).

Achievements

The VSOP project team reported that TWO-FTF has meaningfully involved human trafficking survivors in direct response (e.g., as Case Managers) and in developing the project (e.g., procedures, practices). One AHT Case Manager self-identifies as having lived experience of human trafficking and all Case Managers have completed specialized training relevant to their roles (see *Promising Practice 8: Specialized Training*). Additionally, the expansion of the frontline staff team through FTF funding allowed an opportunity to increase the racial diversity of staff.





Promising Practice 2: Single Point of Contact & Warm Transfers

Alignment: High

Brief Description

Having a consistent single support person for the human trafficking survivor allows the collaborative team to build trust and a seamless continuum of support. Warm transfers also support survivors by guiding them directly to service providers rather than expecting them to seek support on their own.

Achievements

The VSOP project team, Vice Unit, and agency partners felt that the client's point of contact with the AHT Case Manager was clear and consistent. In addition, it was noted that the Case Managers take a team approach to finding supports for clients, are aware of the circumstances for each other's clients, and are able to maintain continuity of care even when the assigned case manager is unavailable. Overall, the Case Managers reported providing at least **36 warm transfers/referrals** and over **220 accompaniments** to appointments, court appearances, etc. The number of warm referrals and accompaniments reported are likely an underrepresentation of the true numbers due to the difficulty of tracking these activities reliably. Agency partners also reported warm transfers and accompaniments as a vital aspect for the success of the project:

Even though we've accepted them, it's not like here you go, I'm done, but definitely staying on.

It's not just someone behind a desk sort of navigating and arranging transportation but having those boots on the ground workers available.

[VSOP] is really a template for other [Victim Services] to follow. Peel operates differently where they want updates and reports.

Challenges & Opportunities

The primary challenge associated with having a single point of contact identified was the limited availability of AHT Case Managers during nights and weekends. Although the VSOP crisis line was available at all times and urgent issues were addressed, Case Managers were not consistently available during these periods. As one interviewee noted:

When they build a relationship with somebody from This Way Out and they're in crisis after hours, the crisis line does kind of support them, but...the survivors get so attached to [the Case Managers] that I find that it's a very hard time for them.



Promising Practice 3: Co-location

Alignment: High

Brief Description

Co-location of the collaborative team members (police and victim services) has been shown to facilitate collaboration and cooperation, promote relationship-building, allow timely resolution of problems, and support investigations and prosecutions.

Achievements

VSOP and Peel Regional Police offices are located on separate floors within the same building. The VSOP project team and police have consistently described this as an asset to their collaboration and partnership. It provided easy access for warm transfers with clients, to discuss or problem-solve cases, and engage in face-to-face interpersonal interactions.

We can go down to their office whenever we need them. Go pop our heads in, have a chat, try and figure out a solution.

We can gel with them a lot more being here in this building.





Promising Practice 4: Trauma-Informed & Client-Centred Services

Alignment: High

Brief Description

Providing client-centred care and trauma-informed services is considered essential to the success of the collaborative service delivery model. Principles of client-centred and trauma-informed care include non-judgment, informed consent, empowerment, safety, transparency, confidentiality, and cultural responsiveness.

Achievements

Applying a client-centred and trauma-informed approach was identified as a particular strength of TWO-FTF by the VSOP project team, police, and partner agencies. It was discussed in the context of providing an accessible, low barrier service that does not place any burden on the client to provide extensive information or meet certain criteria to receive services. In addition, there was an intentional effort to create a safe environment for survivors that minimized the risk of re-traumatization and ensured that all interactions with clients provided choice about the services and support they would like to receive. Interviewees stated:

All of the trauma-informed principles [are being used] in every interaction. Providing choice, empowerment, creating a safe environment for them.

The care that they take to walk alongside the victims and survivors. So they're always providing choice. They're very mindful to move at the pace of the survivor

It's trauma informed, it's person-centered. I will say they're very good at that-treating everyone like an individual.

I'm here to help the survivor in the way that they need help, whatever that may look like to them.

Almost all of the clients who responded to the survey felt that they were able to make their own decisions about their care when interacting with the Case Manager. Comments by clients also reflected the client-centred approach to their care. For example, when asked how their Case Manager helped them responses included:

Being there for me when needed, whether emotionally or physically and situationally

By listening, encouraging, supporting, counselling, financially supporting me in while in crisis and helping me solve my problems whether it was finding a program or finding a lawyer, etc.

Cultural Responsiveness

TWO-FTF has been intentional about providing and continuing to strengthen its cultural responsiveness to survivors.

Examples include:

- Staff received specialized training in anti-oppressive practice and supporting Indigenous clients.
- TWO-FTF established referral pathways to Indigenous-specific services and supports.
- Intentional hiring of individuals who were representative of the populations being served.
- Embrace shelter provides considerations for different cultural practices (e.g., food preferences, religious observances, safe spaces).

Furthermore, interviewees also reported that TWO-FTF staff provided a culturally responsive approach to clients ensuring that their unique needs were considered and they were connected to culturally appropriate services.

They're very respectful to anyone's needs. They're very inclusive. They make everyone feel that they're important.

I think that they are very culturally aware and sensitive and responsive to the needs [of survivors].

Challenges & Opportunities

Even though TWO-FTF is known for its trauma-informed and client-centred approach, staff have noted that their high caseloads and limited capacity threaten to undermine their ability to be as responsive as they would like.

Furthermore, while TWO-FTF has made significant progress in strengthening cultural responsiveness, several areas for continued improvement remain, particularly in advancing cultural inclusion. Areas for improvement include enhancing training on Indigenous perspectives and developing a more practical understanding of diverse cultural and religious practices to better inform service delivery. Continued efforts to recruit and retain staff who reflect the populations served in Peel, including South Asian communities, have also been identified as a priority. Finally, expanding outreach to South Asian communities and other ethno-specific or faith-based organizations may further support engagement with and access for racialized populations.

Although TWO-FTF is committed to trauma-informed, client-centred, and culturally responsive practice, it operates within a broader system of programs and services that do not consistently reflect these principles. Staff have identified challenges when connecting survivors to external services that are less client-centred or trauma-informed, such as lengthy intake processes, requirements to repeatedly disclose traumatic experiences, or the absence of culturally specific supports. These gaps underscore the ongoing need for system-level advocacy to improve access to appropriate, responsive services for human trafficking survivors. As one interviewee stated:

I think it can be a little bit tricky when you're working with a system that isn't necessarily culturally responsive. So they do their best, I think, to bridge the gap.



Promising Practice 5: Meeting Essential Needs of Survivors

Alignment: High

Brief Description

Meeting the essential needs of survivors quickly including shelter and food, financial assistance, medical care, and substance use treatment is critical for survivors to successfully exit their trafficking situation.

Achievements

Overall, the project staff, police and agency partners indicated that TWO-FTF is highly successful at meeting the essential, urgent needs of survivors within a short time frame. TWO-FTF is particularly successful at meeting the needs in the following areas: transportation, safety devices (e.g., phone), food/basic necessities, emergency shelter, treatment services, and medical care. For example, one agency partner recalled a time when they reached out to VSOP for immediate shelter support for a client:

There is always someone and you know that the problem will be resolved... Victim Services did everything in their capacity for the client to have the hotel that night.

Furthermore, all clients who responded to the survey strongly agreed that they were connected to all the services they needed.

In 2024-2025 The establishment of a referral pathway to three Canadian Addiction Treatment Centres (CATC) locations has

increased access to substance use treatment and the collaboration with Embrace (FTF project) has increased survivor access to emergency shelter. More information on referral pathways are described in the following section (*Promising Practice 6: Referral Network & Community Asset Mapping*).

Challenges & Opportunities

While TWO-FTF has strengthened their ability to meet essential needs of survivors over time, there still remains many challenges for survivor access to basic services. Notably, access to shelters and safe housing options continue to be a challenge. The barriers to shelters include limited space available; lack of capacity to handle the complexity of needs for human trafficking survivors; other accessibility problems (e.g., extensive intake process); or the client is not ready to accept these services. Access to financial assistance has also become increasingly difficult due to staff restructuring in Ontario Works and the loss of their direct referral pathway. While some of these challenges implicate larger systemic issues, like the lack of shelter space, the VSOP project team recognized the importance of continuing to build strong referral partnerships in these areas and undertaking advocacy efforts to reduce systemic barriers for survivors.



Promising Practice 6: Referral Network & Community Asset Mapping

Alignment: High

Brief Description

The development of vetted referral networks and community asset mapping are important for delivering a seamless continuum of care to survivors of human trafficking.

Achievements

TWO-FTF has established a broad network of over **49** referral partners across Ontario and Canada that span treatment centres, police services, health care services, shelters, and community organizations. The most frequently used referral partners are listed in **Table 3**. The highest number of referrals has been to the Victim Quick Response Program Plus (VQRP+) followed by the Transitional and Housing Support Program and Shelters/Residential Support.

Partner agencies reported a clear strengthening of their referral partnership with VSOP as a direct result of TWO-FTF and a feeling of “working together” to help survivors get the supports they need. Agencies report that referrals to them from VSOP have been appropriate with a smooth transition. As mentioned in *Promising Practice 3: Single Point of Contact & Warm Transfers*, some interviewees noted the value of warm transfers and accompaniments being provided by the AHT Case Managers.

Furthermore, referrals from partner agencies to VSOP have been described as low barrier and seamless:

We do have such a great working relationship and there's built-in trust.

They are so accessible and so low barrier. I think they're one of our easiest community partners to get in touch and get help from.

We've built that rapport with their team at Victim Services. So it's very easy to give them a call and let them know what's kind of going on. And same goes, they can give us a call and make those referrals

In addition to these observations, several interviewees noted the AHT Case Managers “resourcefulness” and ability to “think outside the box” to find supports and services for the survivors. As evidence of this resourcefulness, the VSOP project team have made referral connections beyond social service agencies to other needed services such as a tattoo removal clinic, dental clinic, tax clinic, medical clinic, and a bank (to support debt removal).

Table 3: Number of Referrals and Referral Partners by Organization

Organization Name or Type	# of referrals	# of orgs
Victim Quick Response Program Plus (VQRP+)*	438	1
Transitional & Housing Support Program	129	1
Shelter / Residential Support (other than Embrace or EFry)	80	14+
nCourage	56	1
Ontario Works (OW)	40	1
Embrace Emergency Shelter	39	1
Other Victim Services	34	8+
EFry (including Bonnie McPhee House)	27	1
Police	24	1
Other Community Supports (e.g., residential treatment, counselling, medical care, tattoo removal, etc.)	81	20+
TOTAL	948	49

*Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services' program that provides survivors with funding for immediate emergency expenses (e.g., food, transportation, accommodation, emergency devices)

Challenges & Opportunities

The VSOP project team noted that some agencies have barriers that often make it difficult for survivors to access their services, including an extensive intake process, lack of responsiveness (especially outside regular business hours), lack of space, and lack of capacity or the necessary flexibility to take on the complex needs of a human trafficking survivor. Recent structural changes in previously established referral pathways (i.e., Ontario Works, nCourage) have also created some uncertainty. Interviewees also noted a gap in services for survivors who are 25 years of age and older, male survivors, newcomers without immigrant status, and those seeking culturally-specific services.

The VSOP project team and partner agencies also discussed the difficulty fully transitioning clients from VSOP's care to other agencies partly due to accessibility but also due to gaps in services and clients' reluctance to end the support they have been receiving from the Case Managers. There was general concern from respondents about the implications for the staff in terms of managing large caseloads. Suggestions for successfully transitioning clients along the continuum of care included, clearly articulating the care pathway for clients and the criteria for transition; communicate the care pathway to clients to increase their understanding and acceptance of moving on; and continue to build strong partnership with referral agencies to increase confidence in the care pathway.



Promising Practice 7: Formalized Structure & Direct Channels of Communication

Alignment: High

Brief Description

A collaborative service delivery model should have a formal team structure, clear roles and responsibilities, and consistent communication channels to discuss clients.

Achievements

Overall, both police and the VSOP project team felt that their respective roles and responsibilities were clear and there was easy, clear and consistent communication between police and VSOP. The police noted that the AHT Case Managers were highly responsive to their calls/texts and quick to connect with survivors. While not formalized yet, VSOP and Peel Regional Police are also developing a Memorandum of Understanding for communication and conflict resolution.

They respond to the victim right away and then they let us know that they've reached out to the victim. So as far as communications, I never have to guess.

It's very clear, when you break it down to what our job is and what victim services can provide.

We have open dialogue of communication.

I think everybody for the most part stays in their own lane.

Challenges & Opportunities

Early in the TWO project implementation, misunderstandings arose between police and AHT Case Managers about the limits of client confidentiality. Police sometimes requested information that Case Managers could not share, viewing it as relevant to officer safety and investigations, or out of concern for survivors. VSOP staff emphasized confidentiality as essential for building trust, preventing re-traumatization, protecting survivor privacy, and maintaining professional standards. These issues were largely resolved over time through ongoing communication between VSOP and the Vice Unit.

Interviewees also noted an unintended consequence of the strong working relationships that developed between individual police officers and Case Managers. Officers tended to refer cases to specific Case Managers with whom they were familiar, and Case Managers similarly gravitated toward particular officers. While these relationships supported collaboration, they also highlighted the need to actively manage referrals to ensure a balanced caseload across both police officers and Case Managers.



Promising Practice 8: Specialized Training

Alignment: High

Brief Description

The collaborative crisis intervention team should have human trafficking specific training and an understanding of best practices for interagency collaboration.

They've also helped out with a lot of outreach, which I didn't expect with regards to a lot of the presentations. And they've been really helpful with regards to training other members of the organization.

Achievements

Overall, the VSOP project team reported that the AHT Case Managers received a wide breadth of training to prepare them to handle most human trafficking crisis situations; to implement a trauma-informed and client-centred approach to their work; and to be culturally responsive to individual needs. Some training gaps identified in the first year of the project were fulfilled such as mental health and substance use (including harm reduction) and working with Indigenous groups.

VSOP has also provided a variety of education and training sessions for Peel Regional Police including the Vice Unit and other police. The Vice Unit also mentioned the value of the training they received from VSOP. In particular, some Vice Unit members thought that the collaboration between VSOP and the Vice Unit to provide probe investigation training to the police college was particularly effective:

Challenges & Opportunities

While the training received had equipped the team to implement TWO-FTF, as the project progressed, training needs continued to emerge as the team gained experience working with human trafficking survivors.

Table 4 provides a summary of the training completed by the team and outlines the training needs that were identified.



Table 4: Training Completed & Training Needs

Training/Learning Completed	Training/Learning Needs Identified
AHT Case Managers	
• Training provided through previous social work education and roles • Cultural responsiveness (e.g., anti-oppressive practice, working with Indigenous groups) • Crisis prevention and response training (e.g., Crisis Prevention Institute, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) • Trauma-informed practice • Mental health and substance use including harm reduction • Human trafficking specific training • Lived experience (one Case Manager)	• Newcomers and settlement • More on Indigenous perspectives • Cultural and religious practices • Understanding different types of human trafficking (e.g., familial, labour) • Identifying and handling strangulation cases • Understanding developmental disabilities • Safety protocols and procedures • Administrative training (e.g., case management for human trafficking clients, case noting and maintaining database)
AHT Counsellors with Police Vice Unit	
• Human trafficking conferences • Vicarious trauma • Teaching probe investigations at police college • Understanding the boundaries of confidentiality in the social services sector	• Ongoing trauma-informed practice training for new recruits
Police Vice Unit/Other Police Units	
• Trauma-informed practice for Vice Unit and other related units (e.g., Special Victims Unit, Intimate Partner Violence)	• Ongoing trauma-informed practice training for new recruits



Promising Practice 9: Proactive Approach to Identify Survivors

Alignment: Medium to High

Brief Description

Taking a proactive approach to identifying survivors was identified as an important component of a comprehensive collaborative human trafficking response model. A proactive approach, known as probe investigations, involves both police and AHT Case Managers entering a place where suspected human trafficking is taking place to offer support to victims.

Achievements

From November 2023 to March 2026, **six** probe investigations were conducted collaboratively with police and AHT Case Managers. Both police and case managers felt that the probe investigations were highly successful for de-escalation and building trust between victims/survivors and both VSOP and police. Overall, both Case Managers and police felt that their roles and responsibilities were clear and police felt that the counsellors were an asset to the investigation:

We are better at it with them [the counsellors] than we are without them.

It's really beneficial to have someone there right then to talk to that person...and then they can build their relationship and trust and hopefully, eventually, tell their story.

When we initially made contact with her, she didn't love that we were there, the police, but then victim services came in. They helped out a lot with just talking to her and explaining her everything. And it worked out well...that calmed her right down that she knew that she'd have a safe way to get back home

Challenges & Opportunities

The main barrier to conducting more collaborative probe investigations was the coordination, planning, and scheduling required to have both counsellors and police conduct the probes. It was also noted that access to a vehicle for the counsellors would likely facilitate the investigations allowing greater flexibility and a more clear delineation between counsellors and police from a survivor perspective. For those collaborative probe investigations that did occur, individuals tended to decline services. However, as mentioned, probe investigations were still considered valuable for de-escalation and building trust.

It is important to note that, given ongoing capacity challenges and rising client demand, proactive investigations will likely remain a lower priority compared to responding to clients in immediate crisis.



Promising Practice 10: Coordinating Body/Advisory Board

Alignment: Medium to High

Brief Description

A coordinating body or advisory group is important for ensuring that there is an effective intersectoral and interagency collaboration when responding to human trafficking.

Achievements

TWO had an advisory group composed of the VSOP project team, representatives from three agency partners, one police representative, an Indigenous Elder consultant, and the evaluator. The advisory group met on a monthly or bimonthly basis for the first two years of the project (2023-2025). Overall, members of the advisory group felt that the group was effective for facilitating connections and relationships between agencies, bringing multiple perspectives together, successfully promoting the project, and providing strategic direction for the project:

Shows that it is a collaboration.

I think the breadth of who's around the table was well thought out and beneficial

It was really important in building relationships and rapport and trust because, in human trafficking, it's all about trust, even amongst service providers

Challenges & Opportunities

During the last year of the project (2025-2026), the advisory group did not meet as frequently due to competing demands. Some interviewees felt that there could be more opportunities for the advisory group to problem-solve together and develop advocacy strategies. Interviewees also discussed potential opportunities to expand the group to more partners including organizations that focus on particular racial groups.



KEY FINDINGS – SECTION 2

Outcomes

Summary

Based on the findings gathered for this report, TWO-FTF achieved the short- and medium-term outcomes proposed. **Table 5** lists each outcome and the status of each of the outcomes. The key findings for each of the outcomes are described in the sections below.

Table 5: Achievement Status for TWO-FTF Outcomes

Outcome	Status
Organizational-system level outcome 1: Increased knowledge and skills of project partners to engage in trauma-informed and client-centred care.	
Organizational-system level outcome 2: Improved collaboration among police & social service partners	
Organizational-system level outcome 3: Improved timely systems & service delivery pathways	
Individual-level outcome 4: Increased sense of safety & trust between human trafficking survivors, AHT counsellors, and police	
Individual-level outcome 5: Increased engagement of HT survivors in community and/or emergency support services	
Individual-level outcome 6: Increased knowledge and awareness of ways to exit	
Individual-level outcome 7 (new for 2025-2026) : HT survivors are more likely to have the resources and capacity to live independently .	 more data needed
Individual-level outcome 8-9: follow through with their safety and recovery plans and leave their traffickers .	



Organizational-System Outcome 1: Increased Knowledge & Skills of Partners

Training & Education

VSOP has provided a variety of education and training sessions for police (review *Promising Practice 8: Specialized Training*), community agency partners, and the general public. These sessions have been received well by attendees. Notably, in February 2026, VSOP and Peel Regional Police hosted a province-wide human trafficking symposium that was attended by almost 400 police and social service providers. Approximately 90% of attendees at this event felt that the event shared knowledge about human trafficking initiatives and increased their understanding of collaborative best and promising practices. **Table 6** is a summary of the education and training sessions VSOP provided in 2024-2026.

Table 6: Education & Training Sessions for 2024-2026

Audience	Type of Session	# of Sessions	# of Attendees
Police, Crown Attorneys, Victim Services, Social Service Providers	Conference presentations of TWO/evaluation - International Human Trafficking Conference Investigators - International Summit on Gender-Based Violence - Provincial Human Trafficking Symposium	4	940
Police	Probe investigation simulations	3	60
Peel Regional Police Recruitment	VSOP and TWO	1	20
Post-secondary Students	Human trafficking, VSOP and TWO	4	230
Community Agency Partners	Human trafficking, VSOP and TWO	8	220
General Public	Human trafficking and TWO	4	170
TOTAL		24	1650



Organizational- System Outcome 2: Improved Collaboration

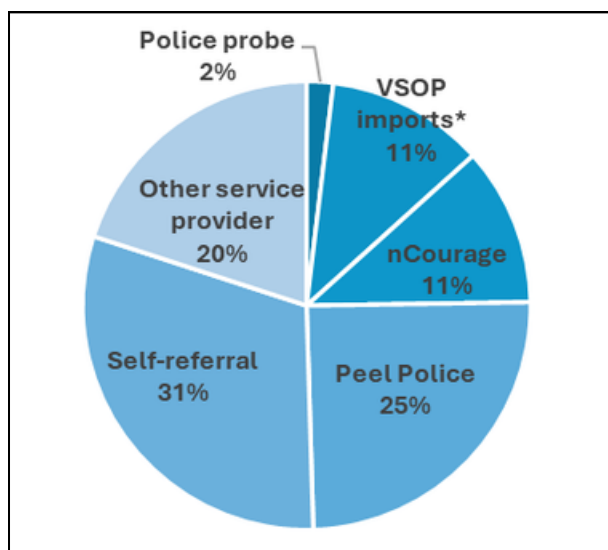
Overall

The VSOP project team, police, and partner agency interviewees all reported that the TWO-FTF initiative led to the development of new collaborations and the strengthening of existing partnerships. The projects have catalyzed the development of a broad network of services across Ontario and Canada. Interviewees described a shared sense of being “*in it together*,” with agencies collaboratively supporting clients while each fulfilled a distinct role. Both police and partner agency participants noted that AHT Case Managers helped alleviate some of the burden they previously faced in supporting survivors of human trafficking. Interviewees also emphasized that the TWO-FTF project

team fostered an environment that enabled open dialogue, including the ability to engage in difficult conversations.

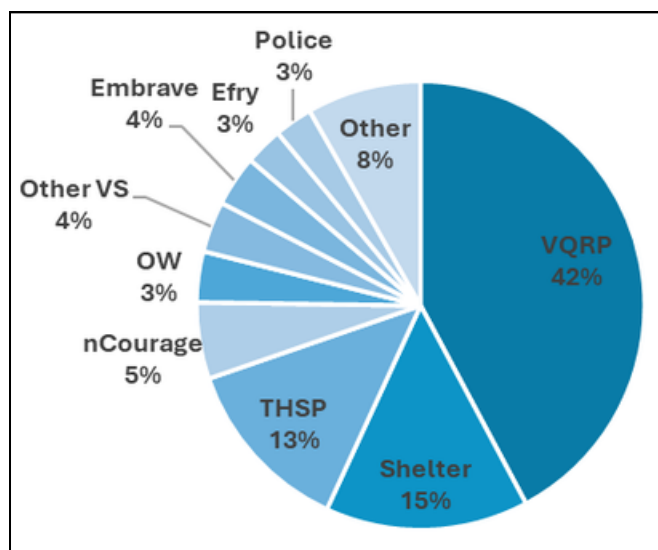
As demonstration of the collaborations formed as a result of TWO-FTF, **Figure 4** presents the sources of referrals to TWO-FTF as a percentage of clients. **Figure 5** illustrates referrals from VSOP to external services by percentage. Overall, TWO-FTF made **948 referrals** to more than **49 organizations** (refer to **Table 3**). **Table 5** provides examples of collaborations that were developed as a result of the TWO-FTF project.

Figure 4: Referral Source Into TWO-FTF



*Includes those identified through police occurrences, intimate partner violence & sexual assaults.

Figure 5: Referrals Out From TWO-FTF



Collaboration with Police

The police in the Vice Unit and the VSOP project team described the development of a strong partnership and collaboration over the span of the project. Interviewees described the relationship as characterized by mutual respect, an understanding of each other's limitations, and a willingness to work through challenges together. Furthermore, officers described how the Case Managers have become integral to filling the gaps in supporting survivors and freeing them up to be being able to perform their investigative work as police officers. Leadership on both sides was credited with maintaining and modelling this collaborative dynamic. Comments from interviewees included:

There's only so much we can do as police officers when we're working with survivors... we can't offer the type of supports that victim services can offer.

They try to take on as much on the victim side so we can concentrate on what we have to do.

[Peel Regional Police] has really embraced the HT VSOP team as a fellow equal team member

Collaboration with Social Service Partners

All partner agencies who were interviewed felt that their agency's collaboration with VSOP had been strengthened as a result of TWO-FTF. Service partners described the partnership as effective and mutually beneficial. Similar to the police, some partner agencies felt that the VSOP project team had

alleviated some of the burden they were feeling when supporting human trafficking survivors. Service partners noted:

We've worked hand in hand as partners with them to support multiple clients.

It's brought us closer together, to be honest, because I think it's a mutual need, especially for such a unique population.

There's more brains to put together for the supports and challenges that individuals face. HT survivors have very complex needs and there's a lot going on. So it's very helpful to have [our] teams collaborate.

Collaboration with Embrace

As a result of the FTF project, a new formal partnership between VSOP and Embrace was formed in April 2025. Although this partnership was relatively new at the time of this evaluation, it was described as strong and collaborative, particularly at the leadership-level, with growing effectiveness at the frontline. Leadership recognized early-on, the need to have regular joint check-ins to work through challenges.

I believe that the partnership is working well. I know that we've established a routine where we do try to check in often.

it's very easy for us to go to the leadership and to change and amend and work through it.

Table 5: Examples of Collaborations from TWO-FTF

Organization	Description of Collaboration
Peel Regional Police (PRP)	Formal partnership for police to connect all human trafficking clients who are seeking support to VSOP; have initiated a similar collaboration for sexual assault survivors.
Embrace	Formal partnership through FTF project to provide dedicated emergency beds, counselling, & service navigation for human trafficking survivors
EFry	Referral pathway to Female Mobile Support and safe housing (Bonnie McPhee House)
Trafalgar Addiction Treatment Centres	Referral pathway for residential treatment for human trafficking survivors at a cost that can be covered by VQRP funding.
nCourage	Referral pathway to ongoing supports and services for human trafficking survivors.
Children's Aid Society	Access to a point person that can provide specialized support to children/youth human trafficking survivors.
VQRP+*	Ongoing collaboration with VQRP+ to ensure legitimate expenses related to human trafficking cases are accepted (e.g., branding removal).
Chantal's Place	Referral pathway for urgent medical treatment for human trafficking survivors.
CarePoint	Referral pathway to provide medical care for human trafficking survivors.
Other	Dental clinic to provide low cost dental treatment. Bank to provide debt removal support. Tattoo removal clinic to provide low cost removal of branding tattoos.

*Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services' program that provides survivors with funding for immediate emergency expenses (e.g., food, transportation, accommodation, emergency devices)

Challenges & Opportunities

Collaboration with Police

As mentioned in the previous section, *Promising Practice 7: Formalized Structure & Direct Channels of Communication*, the strong relationship between certain VSOP workers and police officers have inadvertently created uneven caseload distribution. While these relationships support collaboration, it is important to ensure a balanced caseload across officers and Case Managers to avoid burnout.

Collaboration with Social Service Partners

Interviewees consistently identified capacity constraints as a primary challenge to effective collaboration. They note that both VSOP and their own agencies are operating under high referral volumes that have grown substantially in recent years. Some partner agencies also discussed the benefits of ensuring that there is clarity on VSOP's and other agencies' roles and responsibilities in order to set expectations for clients and prevent duplication of services. In addition, as highlighted in

Promising Practice 6: Referral Network and Community Asset Mapping, there is a need to address service gaps for specific populations (e.g., individuals over 25, boys and men, and immigrant or racialized groups). This may require expanding partnerships and engaging additional social service agencies to better meet these needs.

Collaboration with Embrave

VSOP and Embrave staff identified two key areas for improvement: Embrave's intake processes and procedures, and clearer definitions of roles and responsibilities. First, interviewees noted the need for a more streamlined intake process that requires less client information and can be completed after hours. Second, they highlighted the importance of clarifying staff roles and responsibilities to support smoother day-to-day operations. Interviewees noted that these challenges had already been recognized by leadership and regular team meetings with staff were occurring to support resolution.





Organizational-System Outcome 3: Improved Timely Systems

Crisis Intervention

The VSOP project team, police, and partner agencies described TWO-FTF as responsive, quick, and providing a seamless connection for survivors to immediate crisis intervention:

We have their numbers and can text them right away instead of having to call into the victim service number and talk to a random person.

There is always someone and you know that the problem will be resolved.

They're very quick. As soon as we get a hold of them, they're on it. And I mean, on it.

Emergency & Other Support Services

As discussed in the previous section, *Promising Practice 5: Meeting Essential Needs of Survivors*, AHT Case Managers were highly successful at connecting survivors to essential supports within a short time frame. Client data showed that **95%** of clients who needed emergency support received it within 3 hours of referral.

Client Perspective

All of the clients who responded to the survey strongly agreed that they were quickly connected to services, they were connected to all the services they needed, and the services they connected to met their needs.



Challenges & Opportunities

As mentioned in *Promising Practice 2: Single Point of Contact & Warm Transfers*, there were some times after hours or on weekends where the AHT Case Managers were not available. While all urgent matters were responded to by VSOP, there may have been some delay in response from the Case Managers during these times. As mentioned in *Promising Practice 5 and 6*, there are also many barriers to receiving immediate emergency support including limited space available; lack of capacity to handle the complexity of needs of a survivor; other accessibility problems (e.g., extensive intake process); or the client is not ready to accept these services.



Individual Outcome 4: Increased Sense of Safety & Trust

Readiness to Accept Support

To assess whether clients felt a sense of safety and trust in the AHT Case Managers and police, data was gathered on whether clients accepted the support being provided and if they were willing to speak to police. The vast majority of clients accepted the support and almost a quarter of clients were willing to speak to police.

90%

accept support being provided

23%

willing to speak to police



Self-referrals & Returning Clients

Other indicators that clients had trust in the human trafficking support being provided by VSOP were the number of self-referrals and the number of clients who returned to VSOP after their files were initially closed. Overall, almost a third of clients were self-referrals (32%) and returned to VSOP at least once (29%).

32%

self-referrals

29%

returning clients

Client Perspective

All of the clients who responded to the survey strongly agreed that they were treated with respect and felt supported by their Case Manager and felt satisfied with the help they received from their worker(s). Comments from clients further reinforce their positive experience:

Made me feel safe and secure.

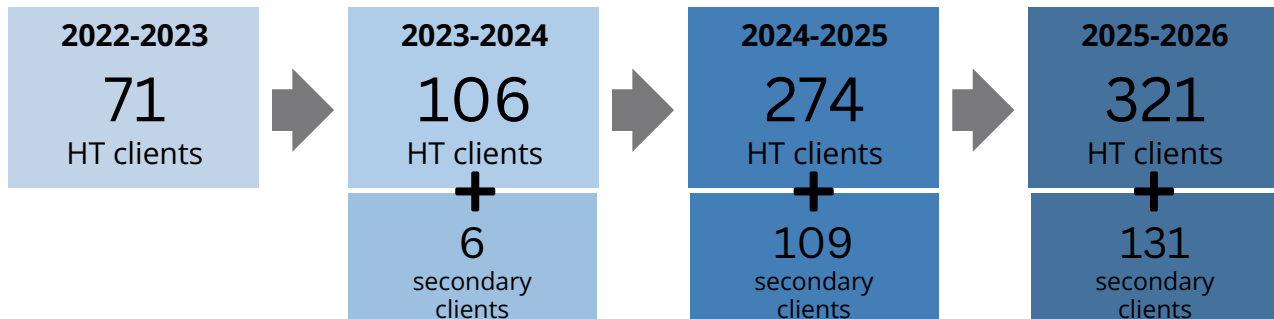
My support team in Peel is phenomenal in exceeding any of my expectations when asking for help. They answered my calls, my texts and understood where my mind was while dealing with my mental health.



Individual Outcome 5: Increased Engagement in Support Services

Clients Seeking Support

The number of human trafficking clients that have been engaged by VSOP has increased dramatically as a result of TWO. In the 2022-2023 fiscal year (April to March), prior to the implementation of TWO, VSOP had 71 human trafficking clients. In 2023-2024, the year TWO was launched (November 2023), human trafficking clients increased by almost 50%. In 2024-2025, clients more than doubled from the year before and more than tripled from 2022-2023. Finally, from 2024-2025 to 2025-2026, the year that FTF was launched, clients increased a further 17%. Overall, the **number of human trafficking clients more than tripled since before TWO was launched**. In total, TWO-FTF supported **903 primary and secondary (e.g., family members) clients**. Furthermore, the **majority of clients (70%) worked with an AHT Case Manager for more than 2 months**. A total of 229 human trafficking client files have been closed since TWO project was launched and 79 (35%) of these files were closed because the client had been connected to ongoing supports



Use of VQRP+ Funding

Additionally there was a substantial increase in the use of VQRP+ funding as a result of TWO-FTF. In the 2024-2025, there was more than 2.5 times the amount spent in VQRP+ funding than 2022-2023, the year before TWO was implemented. In 2025-2026, the amount of funding more than doubled from the year before and represents a 525% increase compared to 2022-2023. The amount of VQRP+ funding used in 2025-2026 amounts to an average of \$43,000 per week.



Police Engagement

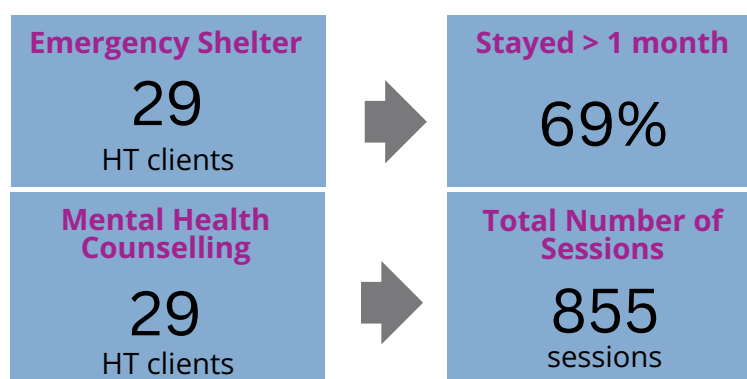
From 2024 to 2025, the Peel Regional Police Human Trafficking Vice Unit has seen a significant increase in the number of investigations, number of charged parties, number of human trafficking charges laid, and the number of victims (Table 6). It is plausible to assume that TWO-FTF projects contributed to this increase by building trusting relationships with survivors who are then more inclined to support police investigations (refer to *Outcome 3: Increased Safety & Trust*).

Table 6: Peel Regional Police Vice Unit Statistics

Timeframe	Total Investigations	# of Charged Parties	# of HT Charges Laid	# of Victims
2022	228	33	127	33
2023	127	44	153	38
2024	148	38	143	30
2025	177	53	227	42

Use of Embrace Emergency Shelter & Services (July 2025-Mar 2026)

Since the Embrace emergency shelter beds opened for human trafficking clients in July 2025, there have been **29** survivors who have stayed there; two of these survivors stayed twice for a total of **31** shelter stays. Out of these clients, **20 (69%)** have stayed in the shelter for more than one month. The average stay at Embrace including intake and discharge days was **91 days**. Furthermore, **100%** of these clients received mental health counselling and each client received an average of **30** counselling sessions while at Embrace.



Peer Support Groups (Sept 2025-Mar 2026)

Since the launch of the peer support group in September 2025, there have been **8 peer support groups** held. Each peer support group consisted of one to five human trafficking survivors.



Individual Outcomes 6-9: Knowing How to Exit, Living Independently, & Exiting

Knowing How to Exit

The vast majority of clients made a safety plan (87%) and 31% of clients were provided with a safety device (e.g., cell phone). Most of clients who responded to the survey had made a safety plan and felt that the safety plan was useful.

87%
made a safety plan

Living Independently (new outcome for 2025-2026)

Out of the 29 human trafficking clients who entered into the Embrace shelter in 2025-2026, 23 clients were discharged, and **3 of the discharged clients (13%)** were known to have successfully transitioned out of the shelter into safe housing. More time/data is needed to understand the impact of Embrace shelter on clients' capacity to live independently. When clients were asked about the impact that seeking services from VSOP and Embrace, they frequently mentioned that it gave them the ability to live independently:

They've completely changed my life and have done things I never imagined. Like getting my housing and just being there for me.

I was able to escape many dangerous situations and got help getting my own apartment after being homeless.

Even though I'm still struggling at least when I need support or help I know I'm able to receive help as long as I reach out and ask

Exiting

Over half of clients entered safe housing (e.g., shelter, residential treatment) at least once. In addition, the majority of clients attempted to exit their trafficking situation at least once and about 2 out of 10 clients who exited made more than one attempt. Five of the seven clients (71%) who responded to the survey saw themselves as having exited a trafficking situation (two clients were unsure).

53%
entered safe housing

97%
attempted to exit

19%
made more than one attempt to exit

Unanticipated Outcomes

Demand for Services & Capacity

The scale of demand for services for human trafficking survivors exceeded initial expectations. TWO was launched in November 2023 with two Case Managers; however, due to growing demand, more funding was sought and the team expanded to four. Despite this increase, caseloads remain high. As noted, the number of survivors identified by VSOP has more than tripled compared to the year prior to TWO's implementation. While 35% of cases have since been closed, approximately 430 clients remain active, resulting in an average caseload of about 108 clients per Case Manager.

There was general concern expressed across the interviews (VSOP project team, police, and partner agencies) about the capacity of the Case Managers to manage the large workload and avoid burnout. Suggested solutions to this challenge included increasing the number of Case Managers, finding ways to transition clients out of VSOP's care to another agency, and ensuring Case Managers have the appropriate supports in place to avoid burnout. In the words of one interviewee:

I don't ever want to see their staff burn out. I want to make sure that they are taken care of as well and that they've got the wraparound services that they need to continue to do the awesome work that they do.

Building Survivor Trust

Another unintended outcomes of the projects has been the increase in survivors directly reaching out to VSOP for assistance, with self-referrals now accounting for 32% of total referrals. For a social service agency to see this growth likely driven by word of mouth is a clear signal that VSOP has built trust and a positive reputation within the survivor community.



Leaders in the Field

As a result of their work in human trafficking, VSOP have become leaders in the field and an example for other Victim Services for what is possible in supporting human trafficking survivors. VSOP's reputation in human trafficking response was further reinforced when they hosted a highly successful provincial symposium in February 2026 that brought together 389 service providers and police from across the province. One interviewee stated:

It has sort of impacted our expectations for the other VS offices, because this is the level of interaction and working together that we get from Peel.

Training & Education Hub

As a result of TWO-FTF, VSOP has become recognized across the province for their expertise on human trafficking crisis intervention. The VSOP team have provided training and education for police, post-secondary institutions, and community agencies both locally and beyond. Examples include providing training on trauma-informed practice for different police units, training on how to conduct trauma-informed probe investigations at a police college, and hosting a two-day provincial human trafficking symposium for service providers and police (see Table 6).





Evaluation Limitations

Low Response to Client Survey

Client perspectives reported should be interpreted with caution due to the low response rate to the client survey. It is recommended that VSOP and Embrace continue to collect client responses to further validate the findings.

Interviewee Selection Bias

Interviewees were selected based on their strong connection to the project and their willingness to participate. These individuals may have more positive views of the project than those who had weaker connection to the project or were not selected to participate.

Missing Client Data

Some client administrative data were missing or recorded as unknown. This likely reflects challenges in collecting personal information (e.g., demographic details), documenting information while responding to crises, and limited staff capacity due to heavy caseloads. While a certain level of missing data is expected, gaps in the data may affect the accuracy and completeness of the findings.



Conclusions

TWO and FTF projects have delivered a collaborative service delivery model that aligns strongly with all ten promising practices and has achieved the system-organizational and individual-level outcomes set out in the program logic model. The scale of impact is significant. The number of human trafficking clients engaged by VSOP more than tripled from 2022–2023 (pre-TWO) to 2025–2026, and VQRP+ funding use grew by 525% over the same period. Nine out of ten clients accepted the support offered, almost all attempted to exit, and more than half entered safe housing at least once.

The model's core design elements—collaboration with police, AHT Case Managers, dedicated emergency shelter beds through Embrace, and a broad referral

network of more than 49 organizations—are working as intended. Partner agencies, police, and clients independently described the VSOP team as responsive, resourceful, trauma-informed, and client-centred. At the same time, the evaluation identified consistent challenges that must be addressed if the model is to be sustained. Demand has outpaced capacity, prompting concerns about burnout among VSOP staff, police, and partner agencies alike. Service gaps remain for survivors particularly in access to safe housing and for certain populations (e.g., male-identified survivors and adults over 25). Finally, the model's reliance on time-limited project funding creates instability for survivors who have come to depend on VSOP as a stable, ongoing resource.

Recommendations

1. Secure sustained, permanent funding for TWO-FTF and expand staffing capacity.

The large and increasing caseloads and consistent concern across all interview groups about staff burnout point to a service operating beyond sustainable capacity. VSOP and Embrave should pursue permanent funding commitments from provincial and federal partners and, in parallel, add additional AHT Case Managers and administrative support to reduce caseload pressure and protect the comprehensive case management model.

2. Strengthen after-hours and weekend coverage for AHT Case Managers. This was identified as a consistent challenge identified by police, partner agencies, and frontline VSOP staff. Options include a formal on-call rotation for AHT Case Managers, cross-training additional VSOP crisis line staff in HT-specific response, and clearer escalation protocols so that police and partners can reach the right contact quickly outside business hours.

3. Ongoing training for frontline staff. Continue to identify training needs (Table 4) and offer ongoing training for frontline staff. These should be built into an annual training plan with protected staff time.

4. Continue to strengthen cultural responsiveness & inclusiveness. Continue to recruit and retain staff who reflect the populations being served in Peel. Continue to offer training and education to support cultural responsiveness (e.g., Indigenous

perspectives, cultural/religious practices). Provide outreach and education to South Asian communities and other ethno-specific or faith-based organizations to further support engagement with and access for racialized populations.

5. Ensure balanced caseload distribution among AHT Case Managers and police. It was noted that strong working relationships can unintentionally channel more referrals to specific officers and Case Managers. Adopting a referral-distribution protocol (e.g., supervisor-level notification of new referrals) would help prevent uneven workloads.

6. Streamline the Embrave referral and intake process and clarify roles. VSOP and Embrave identified the lengthy referral form, after-hours manager-approval requirement, and unclear roles and responsibilities as areas for improvement. The regular inter-agency consultations already underway should be used to produce a streamlined crisis-appropriate intake form and an after-hours on-call protocol.

7. Develop targeted referral pathways for underserved populations. The evaluation identified some service gaps for certain populations (e.g., males; over 25 years old). VSOP and Embrave should map current gaps, prioritize the development of new partnerships in these areas, and use the advisory group to coordinate advocacy on the systemic issues underlying these gaps.

8. Reactivate and broaden the advisory group.

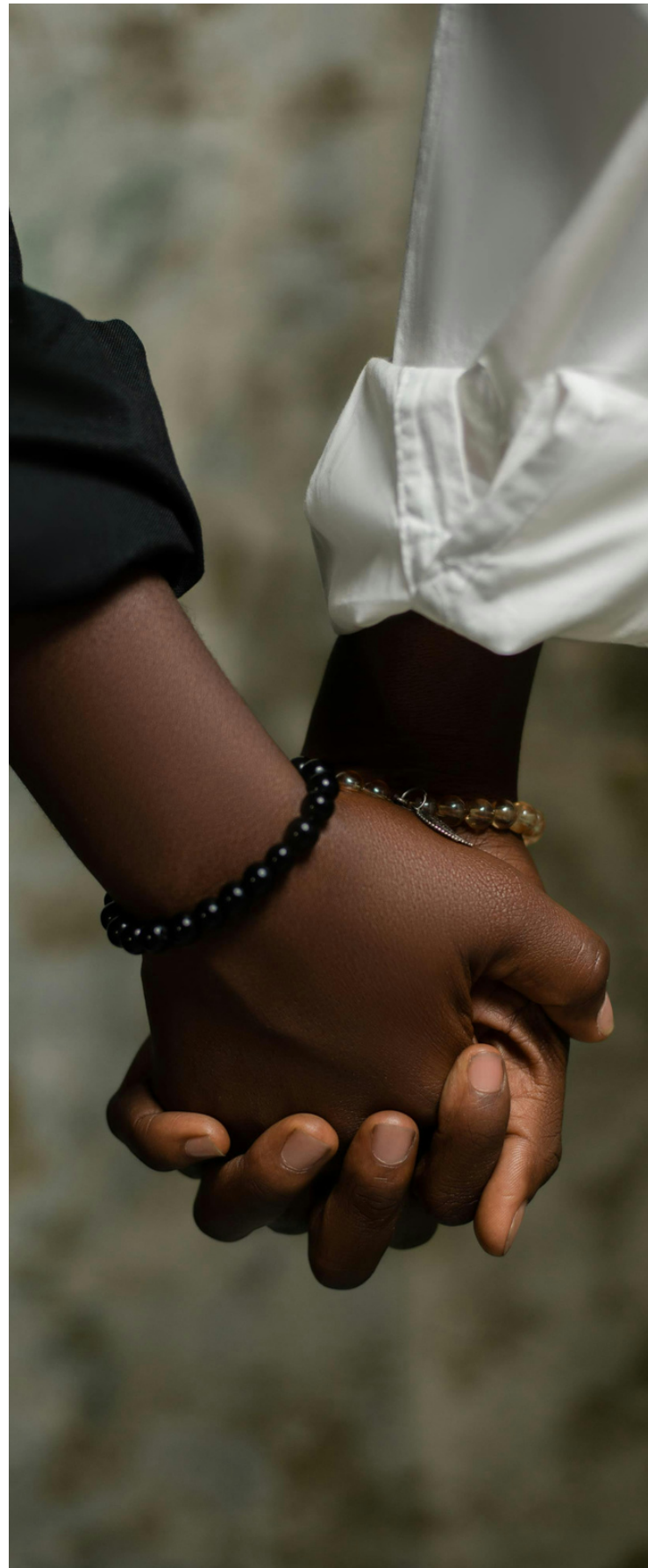
Restoring a regular schedule, expanding membership to include organizations focused on Black, South Asian, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and giving the group a clearer mandate for joint problem-solving and advocacy strategy would strengthen the projects going forward.

9. Build a formal transition pathway for long-term clients.

Both VSOP and partner agencies described difficulty fully transitioning clients out of VSOP's care, contributing to growing caseloads. VSOP should articulate a care pathway with transition criteria, communicate this to clients early in the relationship, and continue strengthening partnerships with longer-term service providers so that clients and Case Managers alike have confidence in the continuum of care.

10. Strengthen client-level data collection to support future evaluation.

The low client survey response rate and missing client administrative data were the primary limitations of this evaluation. Embedding client feedback opportunities into the service journey, and tightening administrative data capture, will strengthen future reporting and support the case for sustained funding.



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