



Always responding. Always evolving.

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



Victim
Services
Toronto

Always responding. Always evolving.

Tragedy, crisis, and crime shatter lives every day. First responders — police, firefighters, and paramedics — are visible when they arrive to investigate crimes and rescue victims. But what happens after the sirens fade? Who helps survivors face the shock, make sense of the chaos, and begin to pick up the pieces?

Victim Services Toronto (VST) ensures that no victim of crime or sudden tragedy faces the impacts alone.

Responding to survivors' physical, emotional, social, legal, and financial needs requires a team with deep and diverse expertise. From Frontline Crisis Responders to Human Trafficking Support Specialists, from Neighbourhood Advocates to Court Support Advocates, 74% of our staff bring lived experience to their work.

But it's not enough. Every situation is different. Truly supporting survivors means continually evolving — building new programs, practices, and systems to meet today's and tomorrow's needs.


In this report, you'll see how in 2024 we strengthened our expertise, expanded our reach, and built the infrastructure needed to ensure no victim faces the road ahead alone.

STRATEGIES:

- 2. [CRISIS INTERVENTION](#)
- 6. [CASE SUPPORT](#)
- 10. [EDUCATION + TRAINING](#)
- 14. [ADVOCACY](#)

ORGANIZATIONS:

- 19. [YEAR IN NUMBERS](#)
- 21. [FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT](#)
- 23. [SUPPORTERS](#)



Crime scenes. Emergency rooms. Family homes. Our front door.

When trauma strikes, Victim Services Toronto is there. Our Crisis Intervention Specialists respond 24/7 — at crime scenes, in hospitals, and in homes, with expertise, empathy, and sound judgment. Every story is different. What stays the same is our belief in survivors' ability to rebuild.

We offer emotional support, immediate safety planning, and practical help grounded in trauma-informed care.

In 2024, we strengthened that foundation with new training to:

- Respond to human trafficking
- Support children through trauma
- Intervene in suicide risk
- Address anti-Black racism
- Apply Indigenous justice principles

Wherever victims need us, our team is ready — with the knowledge and care survivors need most.

PROGRAMS

Victim Crisis Response

When a crisis hits — anytime, anywhere — we're the only team in Toronto that shows up with trained, trauma-informed support. We deliver immediate assistance after a crime or sudden tragedy.

Victim Quick Response

Fast, practical, and financial help for people at high risk of violence or facing significant barriers to care.



Sophie's Path

A police officer called Victim Services Toronto after several residents violently attacked a woman in their building.

Sophie had arrived at the hospital — her eye bulging, raw, visibly damaged — but she left before being examined. No one knew where she was.

Our crisis team contacted one of the only people still in her life: her mother.

She didn't welcome the call.

She'd been through this before — strangers offering help, making promises they couldn't keep. But she agreed to talk.

That's when we began to piece things together.

Sophie didn't have a phone. She didn't have a home. She was running scared.

She told her mother her attackers would kill her if she went back to the hospital. She was using drugs and couldn't face withdrawal alone in an emergency ward. Her eye was infected, and she was in pain.

We explained that Sophie didn't have to press charges to access our support. We told her mother that our crisis specialists had the skills and compassion to help Sophie get the urgent care she needed and the practical supports to get through.

A few days later, Sophie called.

We didn't offer promises.

We showed up.

We listened. And we stayed — with her, and for her.

A VST Case Worker accompanied Sophie to the hospital, bringing food, clean clothes, and a phone. Her Case Worker advocated for withdrawal management so Sophie could undergo surgery without also going through painful withdrawal symptoms.

Sophie lost her eye. When she woke up, the pain and fear made her want to run. We understood the impulse. But we stayed, and so did she.


We secured trauma-informed counselling. We found emergency housing, far from her attackers. We helped Sophie access immediate financial support for medication and food.

Sophie's circumstances are still complex. Her future remains uncertain.

But now she has a tether — someone to call, someone who always shows up.

And that makes all the difference.





Healing after a crime or sudden loss takes time.

Victim Services Toronto (VST) Case Workers provide steady, compassionate care, helping survivors navigate systems that can overwhelm even the strongest among us.

This work takes skill. Case Workers move fluidly through hospitals, shelters, police stations, immigration offices, courts, and schools — because no survivor faces just one system.

They meet people where they are, emotionally and physically, and stay involved, offering consistency through setbacks and support for the long, nonlinear work of rebuilding.

Case Management

VST's Case Managers deliver personalized, longer-term support to individuals recovering from crime or traumatic events.

Every survivor's path is different. VST builds a circle of care around each person, drawing on a strong and growing network of community agencies, healthcare providers, and social services.

For survivors of human trafficking, we offer specialized case management that reflects the heightened risks and complex realities of their experiences.

This support is comprehensive, trauma-informed, culturally relevant and survivor-centred, providing safety, stability, and next steps at each survivor's pace.

Trauma Dog

No words. No judgment. Just a singular, steady presence.

Penny, VST's trained red fox Labrador, helps survivors find the strength and safety to speak, to emerge from the chaos of trauma, and to feel comfort when hope feels out of reach.

In court, one young survivor of sexual assault dropped to the floor beside the witness stand to stroke Penny before stepping onto the podium to face her assailant and deliver her victim impact statement — a moment she later said she couldn't have faced without Penny's grounding presence.

In the hospital, a man recovering from a coma sat up and fed Penny treats — the first time he'd been responsive since being beaten in a violent attack.

Penny doesn't just offer comfort — she reaches survivors in ways no other form of care can.



Exit Route

9 SPECIALIZED UNITS AND POLICE DIVISIONS VST NEIGHBOURHOOD ADVOCATES ARE EMBEDDED IN

Exit Route embeds VST Social Work Professionals, called Neighbourhood Advocates, directly into the police divisions and units where exploitation and violence are most likely to occur. It's a decentralized support model where Neighbourhood Advocates can connect directly with victims, right in their communities.

Neighbourhood Advocates work alongside police to support the immediate emotional and practical needs of victims—needs that fall outside the scope of law enforcement.

In 2024, Neighbourhood Advocates were embedded in five local police divisions and four specialized units: Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence, Internet Child Exploitation, Emergency Task Force and Homicide/Missing Persons.



Someone to Call

Elijah was scammed out of \$80,000. A retired senior living alone in Toronto, he had been targeted by fraudsters promising financial opportunity, only to lose a chunk of his savings and a great deal of trust in others.

The bank couldn't help. The police took a report, but the money was gone. Elijah was ashamed, isolated, and traumatized.

The local fraud investigator shared Elijah's story with Exit Route's embedded Social Work professional.

Elijah didn't trust anyone on the phone. So he walked into his local police station and met Solomon face to face.

Through tears, Elijah explained that while the financial loss was substantial, the humiliation hurt more.

He shared that he was a newcomer to Canada, estranged from his only living brother, and had no friends.

The loneliness, he realized, had made him vulnerable.

Solomon listened. Then he helped.

He connected Elijah to a trauma counsellor and a local health centre, which invited him to join a walking group for newcomer seniors. For the first time since arriving in Canada, Elijah began to feel a sense of connection.

Solomon also helped Elijah apply for — and receive — government financial support.

In those fragile first weeks, the scammers came back.

But this time, because Elijah had a trusting relationship with Solomon, he walked straight into the police division. Solomon acted quickly, alerting the fraud unit and contacting the bank, stopping another \$12,000 transfer.

Because of Exit Route, Elijah had a trusted person to turn to.

Someone right in his community who cared, stayed connected, understood his needs and intervened, without judgment.





Prevention is powerful.

VST's education and training programs help prevent abuse and exploitation before it happens and create safer ways for victims to come forward when it does.

Our programming focuses on two key audiences:

- Youth in grades 5–12, with a focus on those at higher risk of abuse or exploitation
- Public-facing businesses and institutions, where trained staff may be the first to respond to disclosures of violence

PROGRAMS

Youth Symposium

24,951 STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

100% OF STUDENTS WOULD LIKE FUTURE SYMPOSIUMS WITH INFORMATION ON CONSENT, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

95% OF STUDENTS FOUND THE SYMPOSIUM CONTENT RELEVANT TO THEMSELVES AND THEIR CLASSMATES.

2/3rds+ OF STUDENTS FEEL MORE EMPOWERED TO TALK ABOUT THESE ISSUES WITH OTHERS

100% OF EDUCATORS FELT THEIR STUDENTS LEARNED NEW INFORMATION AND VALUABLE SKILLS TO SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING AND HELP KEEP THEM SAFE

Young people are navigating a world shaped by social media, shifting norms, and emerging risks — but most school curricula haven't kept up.

With the right tools, youth can learn to recognize red flags, understand consent and build healthy relationships.

In partnership with the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Police Service, VST's annual Youth Symposium reaches more than 24,000 students through an accessible, online program delivered in classrooms.

It gives students what school often doesn't: clear, practical tools to recognize abuse, set boundaries, and protect themselves and their peers from danger.

In 2024, we expanded the Symposium's reach with bilingual content, new lesson plans, and educator & parent facilitation guides, marking the program's first fully bilingual year.

This year's [videos](#) tackled urgent topics head-on, including pressure to send nudes, sex trafficking tactics, harmful ideas about masculinity, and the risks of meeting strangers online.

Each topic is approached with direct, age-appropriate language to give youth the confidence and vocabulary to stay safe and speak up.

T.E.A.R.TM Program

4,484 T.E.A.R. WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

T.E.A.R. gives youth the knowledge and confidence to recognize gender-based violence, understand its dynamics, and share what they've learned with peers.

In 2024, T.E.A.R. reached more than 10,000 students—providing vital education still missing from most classrooms.

And when a young person is already in harm's way, T.E.A.R. staff offer practical help, supporting them through complex, sometimes dangerous situations.

This year, in partnership with the Toronto District School Board's Social Work Department, we launched the

Mobile T.E.A.R. Program in six high-priority schools.

By working directly with students in higher-risk communities, we're meeting youth where they are — and helping change lives early.

Ask for Angela

Adapted from a UK campaign first launched in pubs, Ask for Angela uses the discreet question "Is Angela here?" to prompt trained hospitality staff to quietly intervene on behalf of someone experiencing domestic violence.

To bring the campaign to Canada, VST consulted with survivors and asked: Where would you feel safest asking for help?

The answer was simple but powerful: "While doing something ordinary, like shopping at the grocery, or pharmacy."

Today, thousands of staff at Loblaws and Shoppers Drug Mart across Toronto are trained to respond when someone asks, "Is Angela here?"

Posters in every store explain the campaign, and a discreet QR code connects those in need to private support and resources. In 2024, more than 400 people scanned the QR code and took a first, crucial step toward safety.



That Happened to Me

Every day, I meet young people who think being constantly messaged means someone really cares. Who believe jealousy is just part of love. Who aren't sure if they've crossed a line—or if someone else has.

Some are in relationships where they don't feel safe saying no. Others have started to question their instincts, wondering if they're overreacting. What starts out feeling like affection slowly turns into pressure. Into control. Into silence. And sometimes, it becomes something much worse.

It's not that these young people are careless or naïve. It's that no one's ever explicitly shown them how power can hide inside what looks like love.

At Victim Services Toronto, we don't just respond to harm—we work to prevent it. T.E.A.R.—Teens Ending Abusive Relationships—was once offered at police headquarters. But we started to see that the students who needed it most often weren't in those rooms.

So in 2024, we redesigned the program with the Toronto District School Board's Social Work Department. We embedded our counsellors in six high-priority schools —classrooms where students were already experiencing violence, coercion, and trafficking. Some are 15. Others are 21, still in high

school because of intellectual or developmental disabilities, which makes them much more vulnerable to violence or exploitation.

For some, this was the last safe space to learn what consent really means—or that love doesn't mean control.

We don't lecture. We talk about what's happening in their lives: the older boyfriend who messages all day. The pressure to meet in secret. The fear of speaking up.

Over four weeks, the silence breaks. One student says, "That's happening to my friend." Another says, "That happened to me."

That moment—that break in the silence—shows us that the Mobile T.E.A.R. is breaking through.





Turning survivor experience into action

VST works across multiple systems and sectors to repair broken policies and practices that trap or retraumatize survivors. When policies fail or inadvertently cause harm, we amplify survivors' voices to build momentum for policies that make survivor's lives better.

PROGRAMS

Reclaim

\$2.3M+ TOTAL COERCIVE DEBT IDENTIFIED IN CREDIT REPORTS OF RECLAIM SURVIVOR PARTICIPANTS

8 AVERAGE # OF UNPAID FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS PER SURVIVOR

21 RECLAIM ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Acquired by VST in 2022, Reclaim helps survivors of human trafficking by removing coerced debt from their names and credit records.

We've streamlined the process to protect survivors from having to retell their stories while advocating directly with banks and creditors.

With strong partnerships, coerced debt is no longer a lifelong barrier, but something survivors can finally leave behind.

Protecting Children in Care: Bill 188, The Supporting Children's Futures Act.

In 2023/24, VST made recommendations to Ontario's Standing Committee on Social Policy for proposed Bill 188, The Supporting Children's Futures Act.

If passed, the Act will help safeguard vulnerable young people in Foster Care from exploitation.

Towards National Standards to Eliminate Coerced Debt

In 2023, VST partnered with survivors and stakeholders, including the Canadian Bankers Association (CBA), to generate support for Ontario's Bill 41: Protection from Coerced Debts Incurred in Relation to Human Trafficking Act (Bill 41). The bill was passed in record time with rare cross-party consensus.

This legislation compels financial institutions and collection agencies to forgive coerced debts and remove them from survivors' credit reports — a major shift in how financial harm is understood and addressed.

VST and the Canadian Bankers Association (CBA) are working to build political and public momentum for similar laws across Canada, continuing to advance national protections grounded in the lived experiences of survivors.

AI Harassment Legislation

Also in 2024, VST addressed the Ontario legislature to spotlight the growing threat of AI-generated deepfake harassment and sextortion, particularly targeting youth.

We shared frontline insight into how emerging technology is being used to harm students — and urged lawmakers to develop urgent, youth-focused policy responses.

This work shapes how governments respond to the next frontier of digital violence.

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FOR RENT

\$5249.56



85896

37241

\$\$\$



61450

\$6403.90

\$2518.43



ERROR



Reclaiming power

SURVIVORS ARE RESHAPING CANADA'S FINANCIAL SYSTEM

For survivors of human trafficking, the exploitation is ongoing, even after they exit the unimaginable.

Many are left with fraudulent loans, credit cards, and accounts opened by their traffickers—coerced debt that destroys credit, limits access to housing and employment, and continues to cause harm long after the trafficking ends.

In 2024, VST launched the Reclaim Roundtable—an unprecedented forum that brought survivors' lived experience directly to banks, creditors, and credit bureaus.

The Roundtable helped bank and credit bureaus recognize and address the ongoing financial harms that systems inadvertently create.

40 leaders across banking, government, law enforcement, and social services stepped up to work with survivors to understand and begin dismantling systems perpetuating survivors' financial exclusion.

Together, they identified:

- New survivor-centred services that eliminate coerced debt without re-traumatizing survivors.
- Tools and training for banks, governments, and frontline workers.
- Provincial legislation — modelled on Ontario's Bill 41 — to protect survivors nationwide.

The Reclaim Roundtable sparked real momentum within the financial sector. Participants heard directly from survivors how existing systems were failing—and they're stepping up.

Shortly after the Roundtable, TD's Ready Commitment made a three-year investment to help expand Reclaim across Canada, recognizing the urgent need for survivor-centred, trauma-informed solutions to eliminate coerced debt.

Reclaim shows what's possible when advocacy, policy, and survivor leadership align.





ORGANIZATION

Overview

17,551

VICTIMS SERVED

4,036

23% OF VICTIMS SERVED WERE YOUTH/CHILDREN

9

SPECIALIZED UNITS AND POLICE DIVISIONS VST
NEIGHBOURHOOD ADVOCATES ARE EMBEDDED IN

Youth Symposium

24,951

STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

100%

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HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.

95%

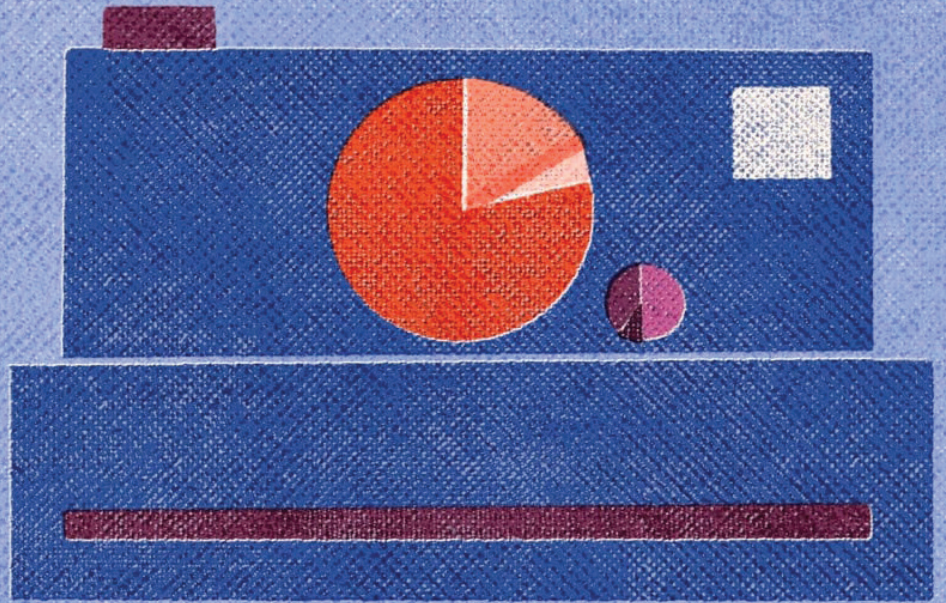
OF STUDENTS FOUND THE SYMPOSIUM CONTENT
RELEVANT TO THEMSELVES AND THEIR CLASSMATES.

2/3rds +

OF STUDENTS FEEL MORE EMPOWERED TO TALK ABOUT
THESE ISSUES WITH OTHER PEOPLE AS A RESULT OF THE
SYMPOSIUM

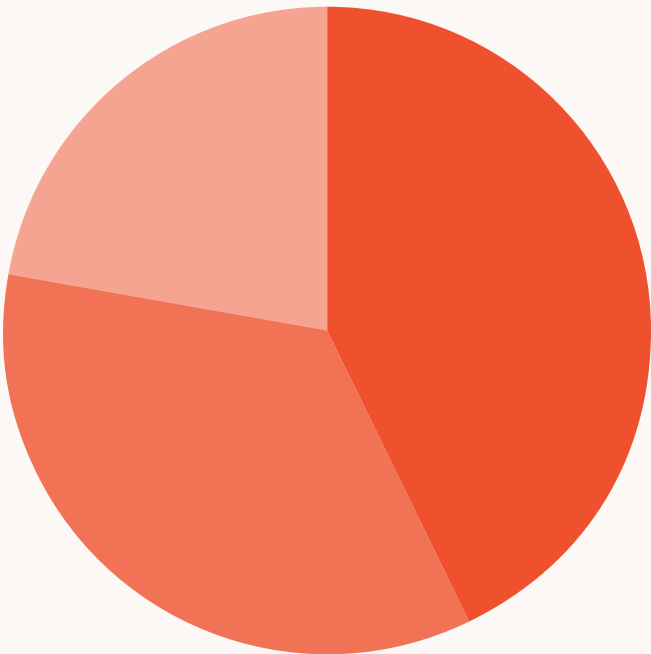
100%

OF EDUCATORS FELT THEIR STUDENTS LEARNED NEW
INFORMATION AND VALUABLE SKILLS TO SUPPORT THEIR
WELL-BEING AND HELP KEEP THEM SAFE.



Revenue

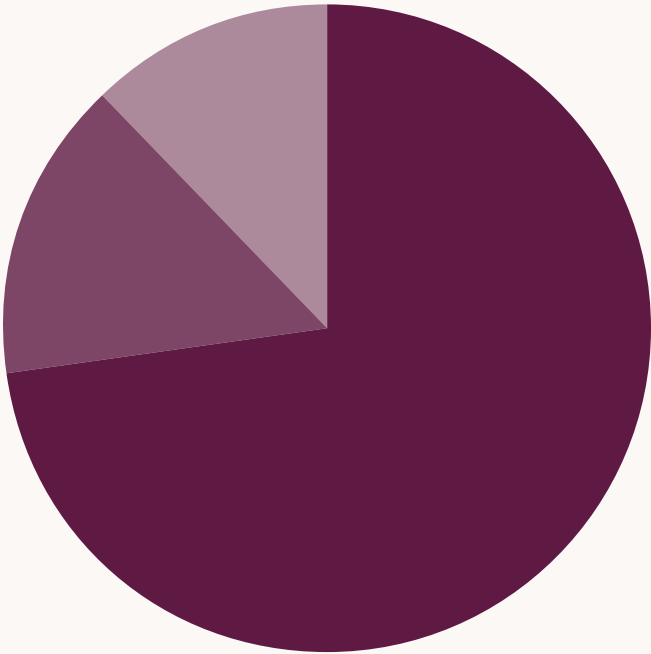
GRANTS - GOVERNMENT	\$3,075,351
GRANTS - OTHER	\$1,402,199
FUNDRAISING EVENTS, DONATIONS AND OTHER	\$2,480,406
INTEREST	\$187,541
	\$7,145,497



Expenses

CHARITABLE PROGRAMS	\$4,726,073
FUNDRAISING	\$773,362
ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT	\$968,971
	\$6,468,406

EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES: \$677,091



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gracias

SUPPORTERS 2024-25

Thank you to every funder, partner, volunteer, and ally for helping to build a safer, more resilient Toronto.

Your generosity fuels a future where every survivor feels heard, cared for, and empowered to move forward.

Government Funders

- DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CANADA
- PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA
- WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY CANADA

- ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
- ONTARIO MINISTRY OF CHILDREN, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

- CITY OF TORONTO

Private + Corporate Supporters

Gifts of \$20,000+ in fiscal year 2024–2025

- ALGONQUIN CAPITAL
- ANONYMOUS
- HARRY LEBOVIC
- HORWOOD-LABBAD FUND
- JANIS ROTMAN
- KRAWCZYK FAMILY FOUNDATION
- LOBLAW COMPANIES LIMITED
- ONX CANADA
- ROB MCEWAN
- SAM AJMERA
- SCOTIABANK
- TAMARA FOUNDATION
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- TIPPET FOUNDATION
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