



TI ALLURIARNIQ PROGRAM RECEIVES \$3.3 MILLION TO SUPPORT ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING

December 14, 2020

OTTAWA, ON - Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) is pleased to announce that we are the recipient of funding in the amount of \$3,326,400 from the Ontario anti-human trafficking strategy. Ontario is investing \$46 million dollars to support young victims and survivors of human trafficking through the Community Supports Fund and Indigenous-led Initiatives Fund. The investment is being provided to 27 new projects throughout the province and TI is one of only two Ottawa based recipients.

Early intervention and prevention efforts are crucial to effectively combat human trafficking. Ontario's anti-human trafficking strategy prioritizes initiatives targeted to child and youth prevention and intervention, as well as supports for child victims.

The investment will provide much needed supports for the TI Alluriarniq Program. Alluriarniq means, "Stepping Forward" and the program provides support for Inuit aged 16 and older living in Canada that are currently, or have in the past, engaged in sex work or are looking to exit the sex trade and victims/survivors of human trafficking. The program also provides support to victims of sexual violence and abuse.

Alluriarniq Program Manager, Jennisha Wilson stated, "For individuals working through the violence and experience of being trafficked, healing takes time, and trauma-work often out-lives project funding. This investment provides significant support for Inuit survivors of human trafficking who have trusted Tungasuvvingat Inuit to help them on their healing journey from sexual exploitation. The Alluriarniq program team has worked diligently over the last 4-years to carve out safe, trauma-informed, low-barrier services and partnerships for Inuit at risk of being targeted for human trafficking and survivors of sexual exploitation." Since 2017, Alluriarniq has supported more than 75 Inuit exiting sexual exploitation and work with the individuals towards their aspirations for well-being while also providing essential resources and information to over 2000 street-involved Inuit through mobile outreach.

Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes worldwide. In Ontario, the majority of reported cases involve sexual exploitation, which may also be referred to as sex trafficking. Young Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQ+ are particularly at high risk. Wilson adds, "There is still a lot of work required to combat human trafficking, especially in Ontario, which has some of the highest rates of human trafficking incidents in Canada. This new funding will afford the Alluriarniq program an additional 5-years to focus on supporting Inuit exiting human

trafficking situations. In 2019, the Alluriarniq Program launched its graduated-phase program, which focused on teaching transferable-life skills to Inuit survivors interested in taking on more leadership capacity. There is a growing list of candidates ready to work in the area of anti-human trafficking and our plan in the first year is to hire, mentor, and train 2-full-time Inuit workers passionate about supporting survivors of Human Trafficking. The new funds will also allow us to support more Inuit survivors meaningfully contribute to anti-human trafficking work. TI is also excited to share that we have a new program advisory committee coming in 2021 that will create further employment and support our efforts further.

TI and the Alluriarniq program are grateful and will continue to provide on-the-ground immediate support to Inuit being recruited and groomed for sexual exploitation. This work is essential and timely; human trafficking continues to disproportionately impact Indigenous communities. As TI, as an organization provides supports to urban Inuit, it should be noted that urban environments add a level of complexity to this issue as some Inuit are dealing with racism, discrimination, and socioeconomic disparities.

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Tungasuvvingat Inuit is the only Inuit-specific service organization of its kind in Canada offering 20+ highly integrated, front-line programs and services to urban Inuit in Ontario. Tungasuvvingat Inuit is a one-stop resource centre to meet the rapidly growing, complex and evolving needs of Inuit in Ontario and is recognized as a leading advocate for urban Inuit and is prominent within the framework of national Inuit organizations