

# Dominica

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica, in 2024, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The government continued social programs to provide water to vulnerable communities and education to children. However, Dominica’s existing laws do not determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children and allow children to be employed in hazardous work beginning at age 14. The law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation because the use of children in prostitution is not criminally prohibited; additionally, the use, procuring, or offering children in pornography or pornographic performances is only criminally prohibited as a result of international trafficking in persons. Further, the law criminalizing the use of children as carriers for drug trafficking is insufficient because it does not cover the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs.

## PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica.

## SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Dominica’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Area	Suggested Action
Legal Framework	Raise the minimum age for hazardous work from 14 to 18.
	Determine and codify the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.
	Criminally prohibit forms of child trafficking, including both domestic and international.
	Enact legislation to specifically prohibit using a child for prostitution and using, procuring, or offering of a child for the production of pornography, and pornographic performances.
	Prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.
	Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Dominica, including non-citizens.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Dominica’s minimum age for hazardous work of 14 does not meet international standards nor does it have national laws or regulations that comprehensively define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	16	✓	Sections 2 and 46 of the Education Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	14	X	Sections 2 and 4-9 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		X	Sections 2, 4, 5, and 7 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		X	Section 4 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		X	Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		X	Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act; Section 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		X	Section 16(5) of the Drugs (Prevention of Misuse) Act
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		X	
Compulsory Education Age	16	✓	Sections 2, 27, and 45 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		X	Sections 15 and 16 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

Pursuant to Section 7 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, children under age 18 are generally prohibited from working at night. However, the law does not otherwise prohibit the employment of children in work that is likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. Specifically, Dominica does not have national laws or regulations that comprehensively define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. In addition, Dominica's minimum age for hazardous work of 14 does not meet international standards. Also, laws related to child trafficking are not sufficient because they are limited to international human trafficking. The law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation because the use of children in prostitution is not criminally prohibited, and the use, offering, or procuring of children for pornography, and pornographic performances is only criminalized as part of the international trafficking of persons. Further, the law criminalizing the use of children as carriers for drug trafficking is insufficient because it does not cover the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs. Laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they permit schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Dominica but are not citizens.

## ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Dominica has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement
<b>Labor Division, Ministry of National Security and Legal Affairs:</b> Documents and investigates cases involving child labor and refers violations to the Dominica Police Force and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Refers cases to the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Community Development, which have limited social welfare and outreach programs.
<b>Police Force:</b> Enforces criminal laws, including those related to child labor.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts	
Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes
Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2024, **3** labor inspectors conducted **100** labor inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government conducted **0** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **0** prosecutions, and convicted **0** perpetrators.

### COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, Dominica funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor
<p><b>Basic Needs Trust Fund:</b> Caribbean Development Bank-implemented program supervised by Dominica's government that aims to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services. Activities are undertaken to implement the Basic Needs Trust Fund to prevent child labor and make information about implementation measures publicly available on an annual basis. In 2024, the Basic Needs Trust Fund partnered with the Dominica Water and Sewerage Company Limited to undertake the <i>Paix-Bouche</i> Water Enhancement Project. A 60,000-gallon storage tank will be constructed in Moore Park to improve the efficiency of the <i>Paix-Bouche</i> Water System and increase its level of water storage, thus allowing communities to have a higher capacity of water storage in case of emergencies and reduce the length of water service interruptions.</p>
<p><b>Education Trust Fund:</b>† Funded partially by the government and by donations from the private sector, local, regional or international associations, and fundraising. The program is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training, and National Excellence to provide financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, registration, and exam fees to students in secondary school who would otherwise be unable to complete their education. In addition, the Ministry of Education implements a Uniform and Textbook Assistance program to provide support to parents of primary and secondary school children across the island. Under this program, school shoes, uniforms, and textbooks are provided, benefitting vulnerable students in all communities. Programs were operational in 2024.</p>
<p><b>School Feeding Program:</b>‡ Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Planning, Vocational Training, and National Excellence to provide lunch to primary school students in targeted areas. The Ministry of Education also provided funding to each Early Childhood Development Center on the island during the reporting period.</p>

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

For references, please visit [dol.gov/ChildLaborReports](https://dol.gov/ChildLaborReports)