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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2023SDPR0001-000062  
Jan. 23, 2023

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

### **Grant recipients work to eliminate period poverty**

VICTORIA – People who have difficulty purchasing menstruation products in the Interior, Cranbrook, Hope, Kamloops, on the Lower Mainland and on southern Vancouver Island will soon have more options thanks to newly funded period poverty pilot projects created by local community organizations.

Through a provincial grant announced in May 2022, United Way BC has dispersed approximately \$220,000 for 10 pilot projects that work toward the elimination of period poverty.

“No one should have to choose between paying for food and menstrual products,” said Shelia Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. “Period products should be available to people who can’t afford them. That’s why we’re funding community projects to help people access the supplies they need.”

The projects will test innovative approaches and methods of distributing free menstrual products, conduct studies to examine the factors that contribute to period poverty and look for ways to reduce stigma around menstruation in culturally appropriate ways. Funded pilot projects must be completed by August 2023. Results from pilot projects will help the Period Poverty Task Force develop recommendations for a comprehensive and sustainable response to period poverty in B.C by March 2024.

For example, the First Nations Wellness Outreach Society in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside is receiving a \$25,000 grant for its project to offer cultural teachings about "moon time" by Elders and knowledge keepers. Moon time honours and celebrates a person’s menstrual cycle and is seen as a gift and a time to cleanse mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. The grant will also be used to distribute free menstrual products to meet the diverse needs of individuals in the community.

Since the start of its partnership with United Way BC in 2019, the Province has funded several period poverty initiatives, including the creation of the Period Poverty Task Force.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Kelli Paddon, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity –**

“People with lower incomes who menstruate can be caught without products and face stigma and social isolation. This can also impact people who work or attend school. That’s why we’re working with United Way BC to deliver regional grants so local community organizations are empowered to create projects that will eliminate period poverty.”

**Nikki Hill, chair, Period Poverty Task Force –**

"As the Period Poverty Task Force conducts the research and investigation into building a comprehensive, long-term response to period poverty in B.C., these pilots provide not only the products people need but also the data for long term recommendations for sustainable change. They are an important step to ensure people have increased access to menstrual products in our communities."

**Michael McKnight, CEO, United Way BC –**

"Eradicating period poverty requires a comprehensive understanding of the diverse challenges and stigmas experienced by all impacted community members. At United Way BC, we are proud to partner with the Government of B.C. in supporting these community-led projects and the development of innovative and culturally sensitive solutions to ending period poverty."

**Quick Facts:**

- In May 2022, \$750,000 was announced by government for period poverty grants and the establishment of a period poverty task force in October 2022.
- In 2020, the Province provided \$107,000 to United Way British Columbia to conduct the Period Promise Research Project.
- Students in B.C. have had access to free menstrual products in all public-school washrooms since 2019.

**Learn More:**

United Way's Period Promise Campaign: [www.periodpromise.ca](http://www.periodpromise.ca)

A backgrounder follows.

**Contact:**

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty  
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## BACKGROUND

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### **Period Poverty grant recipients**

#### **ᑭᐱᑭᐱᐱ – Cranbrook - \$25,000**

Survey to inform the development of subscription-based service and delivery of free menstrual products to people who menstruate on and off reserve.

#### **Cowichan Women's Health Collective – Duncan - \$25,000**

Development and distribution of online survey that examines how to increase access to free menstrual products for people with limited resources in the Cowichan Valley area.

#### **Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society – Vancouver - \$22,500**

Pilot project to understand the barriers and stigma around period poverty, including access and distribution of menstrual products for people living in social housing communities.

#### **The Family Education and Support Centre – Maple Ridge - \$17,500**

Research project examining menstrual product usage of newcomers, refugees, immigrants and youth and to provide free menstrual products that are culturally safe.

#### **First Nations Wellness Outreach Society – Vancouver - \$25,000**

Program of cultural teachings about access to menstrual products and "moon time," which honours and celebrates a person's menstrual cycle as well as provision of free products.

#### **Hope and Area Transition Society – Hope - \$15,000**

Research project with survey to inform the purchase and distribution of menstrual products and will also develop educational materials for products for rural youth.

#### **Pacific Immigrant Resources Society – Vancouver - \$25,000**

Survey and focus groups with low-literacy immigrant people who menstruate and refugees, examining participants' experience with environmentally sustainable (reusable) and culturally safe menstrual products.

#### **Support Network for Indigenous Women and Women of Colour – Victoria - \$25,000**

Engage a cohort of Black, Indigenous and Women of Colour, including transgender and two-spirit people, who use the hygiene-kit service to create understanding access to products and reusable menstrual products, and expand service to improve delivery time of kits.

#### **Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Community Services – Kamloops - \$25,000**

In collaboration with Tapestry Collective Co-op, a pilot project with Elders, knowledge keepers and youth examining Indigenous moon-time traditions as well as developing a short magazine aimed at youth.

#### **The Youth Alliance for Intersectional Justice – Burnaby - \$20,000**

Research project collecting data around the challenges that Black and racialized neurodiverse people who menstruate with or without intellectual disabilities face accessing menstrual products.

**Total: \$225,000**

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