



Period Poverty Task Force

Pilot Project Fund

Request for Proposals

On behalf of the BC Government and its Period Poverty Task Force, United Way British Columbia (BC) is excited to offer funding to short-term, impact-focused pilot projects testing out models for increasing access to free menstrual products in BC. The funded pilot projects will provide data and insights to the Task Force so that they can make informed recommendations to the government in March 2024. Interested parties from across the province, including community-based organizations and independent community-based researchers, are encouraged to submit proposals. Particular consideration will be offered to proposals developed by, for, and with Indigenous-led and equity deserving communities.

Context:

In May 2022, the Government of BC provided \$750,000 in grant funding to United Way BC to support the establishment of a multi-sector Period Poverty Task Force. The United Way will provide secretariat support, recognizing the key leadership role they have played on this issue. The task force members start convening in Fall 2022 to discuss and outline their recommendations for the Government of BC to consider as possible solutions to the issue of period poverty in BC, due in March 2024 at the latest.

A portion of that funding supports trialing of innovative pilot projects for the distribution of free menstrual products into community. These funded models are to act as research into public policy approaches that could be adopted by the Government of BC, partners, and other sectors to support people living in BC with limited access to menstrual products. Members of the Task Force will review applications and final reports from the pilots will inform their recommendations to Government.

The total investment into research pilots will be no less than \$220,000. Applications can range in budget from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Request for Proposals:

United Way British Columbia is requesting proposals for community-based pilot projects that will provide greater insight into what works (and what doesn't) when building policy and solutions to limited access to menstrual products in British Columbia. A particular focus will be placed on supporting communities with high levels of vulnerability, including (but not limited to) those identified in the Period Promise Research Project Final Report (see link below). Applications from all regions of the province are welcome.

Funded pilot projects will focus on:

- Testing methods of getting menstrual products (and other materials supporting people who menstruate) into the hands of people who need them
- Reducing stigma around menstruation in a manner that is culturally relevant



- Increasing awareness of how to make the best and healthiest use of menstrual products
- Building impactful solutions through an intersectional lens

Funded research projects will have a pre-determined timeframe to complete their work. Funding will be distributed in November 2022, and data-based reports outlining impact and findings will be due in August 2023. To help ensure their success, United Way BC will offer support to help with the launch and completion of each funded project. Some flexibility around completion dates can be requested if funded projects would benefit from longer timelines for inquiry.

Applications can have a budget of \$10,000 to \$25,000. See below for an outline of what budget requests are asked to include.

Eligibility:

This invitation for submissions is broadly accessible to organizations, charities, non-profits and independent researchers in British Columbia. The Government of BC and United Way British Columbia understand that there are many useful solutions and approaches to the issue of period poverty in BC, and we view this pilot project research fund as an exciting opportunity to test a broad range of approaches. Creative, innovative, and thoughtful submissions that are actionable are warmly welcomed.

In line with the Government of BC's commitment to reconciliation and equity, and in line with practices at United Way British Columbia and the results of United Way's Period Promise Research Project, particular consideration will be given to:

- Community organizations, Nations, Tribal Councils or researchers with programming developed by, for, and with Indigenous communities in BC, including First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous communities.
- Community organizations or researchers working by, with, or for people living with disabilities.
- Community organizations or researchers working by, with, or for migrant, immigrant, or refugee populations.

Submissions that meet the above principles are asked to clearly indicate as such in their submissions.

Organizations applying for funding must be a registered not-for-profit society or registered charity operating in B.C. They must have operations in British Columbia. 100% of the funding must be spent supporting operations and programming in British Columbia. In addition to these conditions, the following must also be met:

- Have been operating in BC since January 1, 2020 and have (or will have) society incorporation or charitable registration by November 30, 2022.
 - Organizations that had to close temporarily or cyclically during the pandemic are also eligible to apply.
 - Non-profits incorporated as 'Member-funded' Societies are not eligible to receive funding. This designation is recorded in the incorporation record that you can look up at [here](#).
 - For more information on not-for-profit organizations, please click here.



- Extra-provincial non-share corporations must be in good standing with [B.C. Registries and Online Services](#).
- Provides charitable benefit in one or more of BC's eight economic development regions
 - Regardless of whether the organization is a charity or a non-profit society, its purpose must benefit the community-at-large.
 - To see a list of charitable purposes and their descriptions, please see [here](#).

Indigenous-led or run organizations must be registered not-for-profit societies, registered charities operating in BC, and primarily serving Indigenous populations. They may also be not-for-profit organizations or like-bodies coming under the authority of a BC First Nation, Tribal Council, or an Indigenous organization that is a qualified donee listed by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Individual researchers with an interest in supporting the goals of the fund through a community-based approach to pilot projects must reside and conduct their research in BC. 100% of the funding must be spent supporting operations and programming in BC. In addition to these conditions, the following must also be considered:

- Must be legally permitted to work in Canada
- Must have demonstrated knowledge and experience in intersectional, community-based research.
 - Knowledge and experience that is academic, community-based, or originates from lived-experience is welcome
- Experience running pilot projects is an asset.
- Experience developing evidence-based public policy recommendations is an asset.

Researchers connected to academic institutions are encouraged to apply. Given the short duration of the research projects, ethics approval from academic institutions will not be required or expected. Recommendations and practices for ensuring the research is being conducted in an ethical manner will be provided as part of the supports offered below.

Support for successful applicants:

Applicants who receive funding will be provided with a short orientation manual to ensure practices align with best practices in community-based research and the needs of this project.

United Way BC will help successful applicants with launching their project in a timely manner. Depending on the project, this could include (but is not limited to):

- Introductions to community-based organizations
- Sourcing of menstrual products to support their research
- Building research plans that will ensure meaningful learnings can be taken from the results

In addition to the above supports, successful applicants will be expected to:

- Attend a research training session. This will help level-set skills and offer applicants an opportunity to ask questions around data collection and reporting back to United Way.



- Participate in two research mentorship sessions that will give the applicants an opportunity to dive deeper into their project, access guidance or bounce ideas around on how they are planning or understanding their work, and ask experts with deep knowledge of period poverty or menstrual inequity how they could best understand the impact of their pilot project and research.
 - Session 1 will be completed as part of the onboarding process, in November or December 2022
 - Session 2 will be completed halfway through the project report timeline, in the spring of 2023

Both the training session and mentorship opportunities will be run in partnership with Lisa Smith. Lisa is the Coordinator of the [Menstrual Cycle Research Group at Douglas College](#), where she offers guidance and mentorship to researchers exploring questions related to period poverty and menstrual equity. She brings extensive knowledge of work being done in Canada and around the world to address menstrual inequity. She is the co-editor of the forthcoming volume *Northern Blood: The Politics of Menstruation in Canada*.

Key features of a successful applicant:

While preparing a proposal some specific items will help us better understand the impact, importance, and viability of your research. Moreover, the following will help us better understand how our team will be able to support your work through consultation, staff time, and financial support from the fund.

Introducing yourself

- Who are you, and what is your past work in the period poverty and menstrual equity space?
 - We want to know a bit about your background in providing support around access to menstrual products in community, your knowledge and understanding of how limited access to menstrual products has a substantive impact in community, or your knowledge of how to test out public policy models with real-time exercises. Your knowledge can be informed by academic learning, community-based shared knowledge, or lived experience. If you're applying as a community organization, please outline your work in supplying menstrual products to community. If you're an independent researcher, please outline your experience as a researcher as it relates to menstrual equity, public policy, or testing pilot initiatives. Feel free to attach a mission statement, brochure, or CV outlining your background at no expense to your page limit.

Outlining your research

- What is the core research question that is shaping your pilot project? And what research methodology will you use to help explore it? Do you have a "working title" for your work?
 - We want to know what you want to understand through the research that you will be funded to conduct. We're also interested in your method of gathering evidence from your pilot project, and how this addresses the research question. Oftentimes, a thoughtfully crafted working title can help communicate the intention and focus of your



work as well. This is an important part of your proposal because it offers us clarity on what your project is attempting to understand.

- In what way does your proposed pilot project fill a knowledge gap? You could also consider what about your research is exciting, unique, or innovative.
 - Efforts to understand and build solutions period poverty and menstrual inequity is a rapidly growing field of exploration, but there are few examined pilot projects that are exploring ways to increase access to free products. This is particularly true of research based in Canada, and even moreso among equity-deserving populations. More people than ever recognize that limited access to menstrual products has an impact on our community. That means there is a lot of space for research to be done and many approaches to be assessed for impact. We want to know what makes your pilot project one that that should be supported. Moreover, if you can situate your project's importance inside literature or community-held knowledge about limited access to menstrual products that may help us understand how it will contribute to the conversations being had by the Period Poverty Task Force.
- How will your project have a beneficial impact in increasing community access to menstrual products?
 - We want to know what your impact plan looks like, including an outline of what type of product you would be looking to distribute, how you want to get it out into community, and what additional kinds of supports or services you would combine with it (or integrate it into). This is an important part of your proposal because it offers us clarity on how your pilot project will operate.
- How will your project support long-term directions or solutions to increasing community access to menstrual products?
 - We want to know how your project may inform long-term directions, including opportunities for scalability. How might your project support sustainable approaches to addressing period poverty? Do you think that it has the potential to be expanded beyond your particular study and applied to support a broader number of people?

Ensuring beneficial community impact

- What population(s) will you be working with, and how do you plan on working with them?
 - We know that not all groups of people experience limited access to menstrual products in the same way. Differences in race, income, language, religion, gender, family structure, legal status, location, and much more means that different solutions work well for some groups but not for others. We would like to know something of the populations that you are wanting to test this initiative with, with some consideration to their demographics, location, and any appropriate cultural considerations. Moreover, we want to know what approach you may take in working with them in a manner that is appropriate to their needs, interests, and strengths.
- Does your proposed research involve First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, as an identified population and/or the organization or groups you are part of or wish to partner with for your pilot project? If the answer is yes, be sure to consider and make clear in your proposal:



- how the values of collaboration, respect and mutual learning are part of your project design, from start to finish
- any preliminary work and/or engagement you have undertaken or existing relationships that would support the carrying out of your pilot project; if no such work has taken place, be sure to specify how you would approach this as part of your overall project
- consider ways that the knowledge you generate through your research can be shared with the population/community you have identified, if this is desirable and appropriate.
- What key relationships will you need to make your project work well? What role would they play? Are those relationships ready to be active on this project with you? What role could United Way BC play in helping strengthen or build that relationship?
 - Community-based research can't happen in a vacuum; this is true for both non-profits and charities offering frontline services and independent researchers. Given the short timeframe of this fund, projects are most likely to succeed when they are able to leverage existing relationships. Clarity around those that you have and which can be quickly activated for your pilot project will give the reviewing committee greater confidence in the viability of your project.

Planning your project

- Are there additional forms of support you might need in order for your project to succeed?
 - United Way British Columbia is committed to growing the capacity of our community through meaningful support, mentorship, and collaboration. We believe that this is how we can have the biggest impact and broadest learnings about our community. We know that nobody comes into community work fully formed. We are curious what ways you anticipate needing support so that we can ensure that we can offer it to you if your project is funded.
- What is your proposed timeline for completing your project?
 - Project funds are expected to be fully used by the end of August 2023, at which point a final report must be submitted to the Period Poverty Task Force for consideration. We would like to see a high level project plan that outlines how your project will go from launching to completion in a very short span of time.
- What is your budget request?
 - We want to know how much money you are requesting to make your project plan a reality. Please provide us with a high-level budget outline using the template and categories below:

Budget Item	Budgeted Amount	Budget Note
Purchasing product Note: The purchasing of product should account for the largest portion of submitted budgets.	\$	The proposal should clearly indicate the type of product being purchased, and the amount that can be purchased.



Distribution of product or other materials	\$	Distribution accounts for mailing products or materials, and/or travel to account for distribution of product
Communications materials, including development and printing	\$	Please outline what type of communications materials you might need to create.
Wages or contract labour costs for the researcher(s)	\$	Please include an estimate number of hours needed to complete this research project
Research costs	\$	This would include the use of special software, providing honorariums to research participants (depending on the methodology of your research), printing materials or information, etc.
Report preparation and submission	\$	This is to cover labour costs, data review costs, or any other expenses related to preparing your report for submission to the Task Force.
Other expenses	\$	Please outline what types of expenses are captured in this line.
Administrative/Management costs for community-based organizations Note: For non-profits and charities the budget can include a maximum administrative expense of 10% of the total budget. For Indigenous-led organizations, including charities, non-profit societies, BC First Nations and Tribal Councils this expense limit is lifted to 20%.	\$	

Note that submissions will be reviewed by the committee as a point of departure for inquiry and readiness for a rapid launch. Even the strongest applications will be viewed with the perspective that, through collaboration with our team and the above mentioned supports, they can become stronger. To that end, we will not be reviewing for perfect submissions, but for well-considered and thoughtful proposals that supports the overarching goals of the fund.

Formatting your submission:

Submissions will be accepted in a wide variety of formats but should be clear enough in their communication and presentation that a review committee can consider them. Depending on format, below are some limitations.

- Written submissions will be limited to 8 pages single-spaced in length, not including a researcher CV or organizational pamphlet
- Recorded presentations or oral submissions will be limited to 18 minutes in length



- Slide-decks will be limited to 30 slides
- Concept boards must be self-explanatory for clarity in their formatting and presentation

If you would like to make a submission in a format other than written, please connect with us at PeriodPovertyTaskForce@uwbc.ca so that we can discuss the format with you and offer any guidance that may help ensure your chosen format allows you to clearly communicate with the review committee.

Written submissions, slide decks, and concept boards should be submitted in PDF format to PeriodPovertyTaskForce@uwbc.ca. Due to file size limitations, submissions in recorded formats will need to be submitted in an otherwise agreed upon manner. Upon submission of a proposal applicants will receive an e-mail confirming that it has been received by United Way BC.

Available support and additional documentation:

To support the development of appropriate proposals, all interested in applying will be provided with support documentation and an example of a strong application. Click below to access these resources.

- a. [United Way's Period Promise Research Project Final Report](#)
- b. Model example of a strong submission can be found on our [Pilot Project Fund page](#)

In addition to this, an information session will be provided to interested applicants on October 17, 2022. To attend, [register here](#). The session will be led by Diana More, United Way's Community Task Force Manager for the Period Poverty Task Force, with Dr. Lisa Smith of the Douglas College Menstrual Cycle Research Group offering support.

The session will be recorded. If you're interested in seeing the recording after October 17th, please reach out to Diana More at PeriodPovertyTaskForce@uwbc.ca.

Submission timeline and process of selection:

This request for proposals will remain active until November 7, 2022. All submissions should be submitted by 11:59 PM PST on November 7, 2022. Please use the subject line *Pilot Project Fund Submission*.

A small team of reviewers will consider each of the applications through a score-carding process followed by a thorough discussion. Applications will be considered based on the viability of the project, existing partnerships or access to people who will participate, appropriateness of the submitted budget, and the impact innovation of the project idea. To support the selection of the successful applications and ensure a fair and equitable consideration of projects, the names of applying individuals and organizations will be replaced with profile IDs while they are being reviewed.

Successful applicants will be notified via e-mail of their funding status on the week of November 14, 2022. The review committee reserves the right to provide conditional approval of funding or ask follow-up questions of project submissions to ensure alignment with the goals of the fund.

The structure of the funding:



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in BC's
Interior, Lower Mainland, Central
& Northern Vancouver Island

The Pilot Project Fund is being structured as contracts that will be held between United Way BC and the successful applicant. Funding will be provided upon the signing of a Purchase Service Agreement. It will be distributed through agreed-upon funding gates progressively opening up full access to the approved funding amount as the project progresses.

Questions? Comments? Curiosities?

Please direct any questions, comments, or curiosities about this fund to Diana More, Community Task Force Manager for the Period Poverty Task Force, at United Way BC. She can be reached at PeriodPovertyTaskForce@uwbc.ca.

