

NEWS RELEASE
April 25, 2024

Amidst the rising cost of living, choosing between menstrual products or food is a tough reality for many people in BC
United Way BC's Period Promise campaign aims to combat period poverty for those faced with financial pressures.



Burnaby, BC – United Way British Columbia (United Way BC) – working with communities in BC's North, Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Northern Vancouver Island, wants to make it easier for people who menstruate to get through their periods with dignity.

United Way BC's 2024 Period Promise campaign, presented by Pacific Blue Cross in partnership with CUPE Local 1816, gives everyone an opportunity to help tackle period poverty. From May 1 to 31, you can help by:

- Organizing a Period Promise campaign to collect menstrual products in your community, school, workplace, or union.
- Participating in your organization's Period Promise campaign.
- Donating online at uwbc.ca/periodpromise.

Access to period products has become more challenging for everyone, especially students, workers, and single parents, due to rising costs from inflation. Many people struggle to afford both period products and food, and menstrual stigma makes it difficult for people to ask for help.

According to a recent report by UNICEF, 44 per cent of Canadian single parents eat less so their kids can eat. They are already faced with tough choices and if the household has one or more people who menstruate, expenses to cover their basic needs increase substantially. The cost of personal care supplies such as tampons and pads has increased by 6.3 per cent according to the Consumer Price Index released by BC Stats in March.

United Way's research as part of the [Period Promise Final Report](#) revealed:

- More than half of people who menstruate in BC have struggled to buy products for themselves.
- A third of people say they haven't known where to buy menstrual products they could afford.
- The cost of menstrual products is so prohibitive, many people opt to stay home without products when they have their period so they can buy more food for themselves or their families instead.

Lack of access to period products means a higher rate of people will miss school, work, community, or social events. This translates to missed opportunities to learn, earn an income, contribute to their community, or enjoy a healthy social life for no reason other than an uncontrollable function of their body. Indigenous Peoples and people living with disabilities experience these negative impacts more than other groups.

Together with British Columbians, United Way BC will improve access, and ultimately quality of life, for people who menstruate that face tough choices due to rising costs.

The 2024 campaign aims collect up to 500,000 menstrual products through financial and product donations.

Learn more: www.uwbc.ca/periodpromise

Organizations and community members interested in starting a Period Promise campaign can access the toolkit here: <https://uwbc.ca/program/period-promise/#toolkit>

Quotes:

"The United Way Period Promise campaign empowers everyone to contribute to the solution," says Rob Chiarello, SVP, People & Culture at Pacific Blue Cross. "We recognize that access to menstrual products improves health, restores dignity and fosters community engagement. The impact of period poverty on British Columbians motivated our support for this initiative from its inception. Seven years on, we continue to proudly endorse this effort addressing a critical health issue for many in BC. Our support echoes our commitment to building healthy communities and improving health and wellbeing for all British Columbians."

"Period poverty is widespread across our country, compounded by rising inflation costs, but we have an opportunity to change the landscape here in BC," says Beth Miller, President, CUPE 1816. "The United Way Period Promise campaign not only raises awareness about this issue but also contributes to menstrual equity by providing free products for those in need. Every contribution, regardless of size, directly helps someone who may otherwise lack access. Together, we're bridging gaps and ensuring no one has to be without the products they need."

Interviews are available with Kim Winchell, Provincial Director of Community Impact & Investment at United Way British Columbia.

About United Way British Columbia – working with communities in BC’s North, Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Northern Vancouver Island

United Way supports healthy, caring and inclusive communities by strengthening vital connections that support people in need. Representing the five regions of Central and Northern Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, Southern Interior, Thompson Nicola Cariboo, and Northern BC, our organization serves a population of more than 4.5 million people, with a focus on urgent response, kids and youth, seniors, poverty, mental health and food security. www.uwbc.ca

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