



United Way
British Columbia

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

NEWS RELEASE
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Task Force presents roadmap to end period poverty in BC *Final report offers solutions for government, businesses and organizations*



Central Office, Burnaby, BC – The Period Poverty Task Force is pleased to share the final report delivered to the province to propose sustainable approaches to ending period poverty in BC.

“Menstrual health and access to necessities such as menstrual supplies are grounded in fundamental human rights principles including equality, dignity and health,” said Nikki Hill, chair, Period Poverty Task Force. “I’m excited that we can share the report from the Period Poverty Task Force and on behalf of the task force, we’re grateful for lived experience, expertise and research shared by the many contributors to our process.”

Funded by the Government of BC and supported by United Way British Columbia, the task force formed in November 2022. Its members met regularly over 18 months to research academic literature and global policy, hear from community members and experts, and use that knowledge to write the recommendations for long term, systemic policy change to end period poverty. As a jurisdiction and with the support of municipalities, unions, businesses, students and advocates, people in BC have made our province a leader in addressing period poverty through policy change at multiple levels.

[It is reported that 51% of people who menstruate in BC struggle to purchase menstrual supplies and 26% have no access to menstrual supplies when needed.](#) With the rising cost of living, some people are having to make the difficult choice between buying menstrual supplies and other essentials. Very often that means that students are having to miss school and people are having to miss work when they are menstruating.

Global studies and the BC grant program findings show that increasing access to menstrual supplies decreases the likelihood of using limited food budgets or risking physical health impacts. Addressing period poverty is a critical component of the measures being taken by the province to address household and personal affordability issues.

“People who menstruate should not have to choose between buying period supplies instead of other essentials such as food, or housing,” said Kelli Paddon, Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity. “Our government is taking action to end period poverty and the stigma often associated with menstruation. We’re grateful to the Period Poverty Task Force for exploring various factors that contribute to period poverty and making recommendations that can benefit British Columbians, including the continued delivery of free period supplies to people who need them most.”

Truly eradicating period poverty in the province requires a multi-faceted approach aligned with poverty reduction. The Task Force report outlines comprehensive recommendations across the areas of legislation and ministerial Reviews, distribution of menstrual supplies, menstrual education and menstrual healthcare. In addition, they emphasized three priority recommendations which would advance the goals of this report in the shorter-term.

- Legislative reviews to ensure that all washrooms are required to provide menstrual supplies and appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) provisions.
- Menstrual supply provision in public washrooms and washrooms under Government of BC jurisdiction, with a priority for those that are accessible by people experiencing period poverty.
- Changing the medical categorization of menstrual supplies to ensure coverage under both government and private benefits and assistance programs

The report is a roadmap for continued leadership on long term solutions to eradicate period poverty not just for government to follow - but for businesses, organizations and beyond our borders.

“United Way British Columbia works passionately to identify and bridge gaps in our social systems, and we know period poverty is one that needs amplifying,” said Michael McKnight, President and CEO of United Way British Columbia. “We are grateful to the Government of BC, who has acknowledged this need and funded the Period Poverty Task Force to cultivate sustainable solutions to period poverty in our province.”

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> **READ THE REPORT:** <https://shorturl.at/f5Rsd>

> **MORE INFORMATION:** uwbc.ca/program/period-promise/#period-poverty-task-force

> **ADDITIONAL QUOTES:**

“I am happy to see that the task force recommendations include my work to see changes to the B.C. Building Code as passed by the Port Coquitlam City Council. I appreciate the task force inclusion – along with the ongoing support for these issues from the Port Coquitlam Mayor and council.”

- Nancy McCurrach, Councillor, City of Port Coquitlam

“Vancity has shown that a financial institution can do things differently to help people, including addressing the stigma and financial barriers of menstruation. We are supporters of the Period Poverty Task Force and encourage businesses and organizations to follow the lead of the task force’s recommendations. Of all the recurring monthly financial pressures, periods should not be one of them.”

- Andrea Harris, Vice President of Impact Strategy, Vancity

“Ensuring that people can access basic necessities in their workplace is critical to ensuring equity. This includes WASH provisions and providing menstrual supplies just as with soap and toilet paper for workers.”

- Sussanne Skidmore, President, BC Federation of Labour

“This year Social Justice 12 students at Dr Charles Best Secondary School researched ways in which period poverty and lack of menstrual education leads to gender inequality in Canada. Students wanted to be part of the change they want to see in the world and so they wrote letters outlining their experiences. Being able to lend their perspectives to such an important project has been an empowering experience.”

- Megan Leslie, teacher, Dr Charles Best Secondary School

"The task force report and process are a landmark moment for the Canadian menstrual equity movement and reflect the incredible labour and investment of advocates in British Columbia to address period poverty as a systemic issue. The original Period Promise research report continues to be an important source of data, and I am so excited about the possibilities for the task force report to offer an expanded roadmap for policy change and research, as well as inspiring a new generation of advocates in British Columbia."

- Dr. Lisa Smith, Menstrual Cycle Research Group, Douglas College

"The BC task force report will be helpful for all menstrual equity charities & grassroots organizations to move forward with policy changes across the country. Together we can make a powerful change in menstrual equity."

- Jana Girdauskas, Founder, The Period Purse

"joni was pleased to participate in the business reference group to provide input to the task force and we're excited about the release of this roadmap for policy change."

- Jayesh Vekariya, Co-Founder and CEO, joni

"The work of the Period Poverty Task Force has been a key component in our decision to create the docu-series 'Flow of Change.' We look forward to the release of the report."

- Tricia Stevens, Strategic Partnerships, Kahani Pictures

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

Interviews are available with Nikki Hill, chair, Period Poverty Task Force.

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