



United Way
British Columbia

MEDIA RELEASE
April 29, 2026

United Way BC Launches Period Promise Campaign May 1 as Demand for Period Products Soars

*Over 2.3 Million Period Products Requested as Cost-of-Living Pressures Deepen
Period Poverty in BC*

Central Office, Burnaby, BC - United Way BC's annual Period Promise campaign, presented by Pacific Blue Cross in partnership with CUPE Local 1816, returns **May 1 - May 30**, with **Pacific Blue Cross matching all cash donations** dollar-for-dollar up to \$25,000, amid growing demand for menstrual products by British Columbians who are least able to afford them.

To better understand the scale of need and the realities facing frontline service providers, United Way BC initiated a broad sectoral survey of community organizations across the province. Requests totalling **over 2.3 million period products** came from more than **120 frontline organizations**, including food banks, schools, shelters, libraries, youth centres, and health clinics, serving communities from large urban centres to remote and rural regions. Partners report that rising costs for essentials continue to put basic menstrual care out of reach for many people who menstruate.

"Period Promise launches every year to address ongoing gaps in access to menstrual products," said Lori Mayhew, Senior Director, Labour Participation, United Way BC. "The volume of requests we're seeing, more than two million products in a single year, highlights how critical this support remains, particularly as costs for everyday essentials continue to rise."

A hidden affordability crisis

Menstrual supplies can cost \$80 to \$100 per month, forcing many households to cut period products when budgets are strained. Frontline organizations report students missing school, people turning to unsafe alternatives, and caregivers going without essentials, impacts felt most acutely by Indigenous communities, newcomers and refugees, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, and those in rural or isolated areas.

Through Period Promise, United Way BC works with community partners to provide free, barrier-free access to menstrual products, often by placing supplies directly in washrooms and community spaces.

How people can help

United Way BC's 2026 Period Promise campaign gives everyone an opportunity to help tackle period poverty. British Columbians can help by:

- Participating in their organization's Period Promise campaign.
- Make a [monetary donation](#).
- Organizing a Period Promise campaign to collect menstrual products in your community, school, workplace, or union. Email periodpromise@uwbc.ca to learn more.

To learn more or to support Period Promise, visit: uwbc.ca/periodpromise

-30-

> **PHOTO AND VIDEO:** assets found [here](#).

> **QUOTES:**

"Access to period products isn't a luxury - it's a health necessity," says Sarah Hoffman, President and CEO of Pacific Blue Cross. "Period poverty quietly sidelines students, workers, and families across BC every single day, and that reality is unacceptable. The United Way BC Period Promise campaign is changing that. After nine years and millions of products distributed province-wide, we've seen the difference this campaign makes: it removes a barrier that keeps people from fully participating in school, at work, and in their communities. Pacific Blue Cross is proud to stand behind this initiative, because advancing health means tackling the inequities that too often go unseen."

- Sarah Hoffman, President and CEO, Pacific Blue Cross

"As a union, we stand for the wellbeing of all workers - and period poverty in BC is something that we cannot overlook," says Beth Miller, President of CUPE 1816. "With the rising cost of living affecting families across our province, many people are feeling increased pressure to make trade-offs around everyday essentials. The Period Promise campaign meets that reality head-on, offering practical relief and a powerful message of solidarity. CUPE 1816 is immensely proud to support this work."

- Beth Miller, President, CUPE 1816

About United Way British Columbia

United Way BC helps build healthy, caring, and inclusive communities across our province. We strengthen vital connections that support people in need with a focus on emergency response, kids and youth, seniors, mental health, and food security.

uwbc.ca

Interviews are available. Please contact:

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