



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** May 27, 2022
From: Elizabeth Ayers **File:** 11-7000-01/2022-Vol 01
Director, Recreation and Sport Services
Kim Somerville
Director, Community Social Development
Re: Menstrual Equity Initiative Update



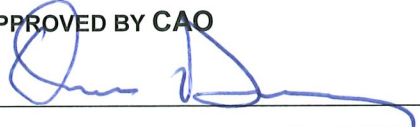
Staff Recommendation:

1. That the Menstrual Equity Initiative be continued as outlined in the staff report titled "Menstrual Equity Initiative Update" dated May 27, 2022, from the Director, Recreation and Sport Services and the Director, Community Social Development; and
2. That the City join the United Way's Period Promise Campaign by signing on to the Period Promise Policy Agreement.

Elizabeth Ayers
Director, Recreation and Sport Services
(604-247-4669)

Kim Somerville
Director, Community Social Development
(604-247-4671)

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
Routed To: Finance Department Arts, Culture & Heritage Library Services Facility Services	Concurrence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER 
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO 

Staff Report

Origin

At the January 18, 2021, General Purposes Committee meeting, staff received the following referral in relation to the United Way's Period Promise Campaign Update memo:

- (1) That the menstrual equity initiative be referred to staff to provide free menstrual products in most civic facilities, including an education plan, and report back with a budget; and*
- (2) That the proposed initiative be reviewed one year after implementation.*

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the one year operational review and budget update. This report also recommends that the City join the United Way's Period Promise Campaign by signing on to the Period Promise Policy Agreement.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018–2022 Strategy #4 An Active and Thriving Richmond:

An active and thriving community characterized by diverse social and wellness programs, services and spaces that foster health and well-being for all.

4.1 Robust, affordable, and accessible sport, recreation, wellness and social programs for people of all ages and abilities.

This report also supports the following focus area of the City of Richmond's Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023:

Foster healthy, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness.

This report also supports the City of Richmond's Social Development Strategy 2013–2022 Action 6:

Support and encourage community-based initiatives that promote independence and reduce the cost of living for low income households.

This report also supports the following focus area of the City of Richmond's Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019–2024:

Recreation and sport opportunities are accessible, inclusive and support the needs of a growing and diverse population in Richmond.

Background

Period poverty is defined as the lack of access to menstrual products due to financial limitations. The United Way conducted the Period Promise Research Project funded by the Provincial Government to study the impact of not having access to menstrual products and the benefits of being able to find free products in community organizations. The final report highlights how

common the lack of access to menstrual products is and helps identify the negative effects on people's participation in their community. Key findings from the report include:

- Half of the respondents indicated that they had struggled to purchase product for themselves.
- More than a quarter indicated they had gone through a period without having menstrual products available to them.
- Not having access to menstrual products is an isolating factor: 18 per cent missed school; 22 per cent missed work; 29 per cent missed community events; and 27 per cent missed social events when they did not have access.
- Nearly 75 per cent of respondents indicated that having access to products at community organizations allows them to be more engaged in their community.

On July 17, 2019, the United Way of the Lower Mainland sent a letter to Council requesting that the City of Richmond consider contributing to the Period Promise Campaign. This campaign seeks to eradicate period poverty by ensuring that low income women, girls, non-binary and transgender people have access to free menstrual products in public washrooms throughout our communities.

At the January 18, 2021, General Purposes meeting, Council directed staff to provide free menstrual products in most civic facilities in support of the United Way's Period Promise Campaign. Staff were also directed to include an education plan and to report back with a program review and budget after one year.

Implementation

The Menstrual Equity Initiative was launched in the fall of 2021, which coincided with the re-opening of most community service facilities in alignment with health orders related to the pandemic. Dispensers for free menstrual products were installed in 30 City of Richmond public washrooms to support low income girls, women, non-binary and transgender people to ensure access to free menstrual products in civic facilities.

Dispensers were installed at the Cultural Centre, arenas, aquatic centres, community centres, and libraries. Most dispensers were located in women's washrooms, gender neutral washrooms and at some sites in the men's washrooms to provide access to transgender individuals.

Education Plan

An education and communication plan to support this initiative was implemented and included the following:

- Press release;
- Education with staff and community partners;
- Internal promotion of product availability; and
- Information sharing with stakeholders, including Vancouver Coastal Health-Richmond and Richmond School District No. 38.

Program Review

Customer response received to date has been positive. One appreciative customer stated “Thank you for this! Someone finally understands the struggle.” This is supported by the findings from the Period Promise Research Project, which found that when people have access to the products they need, it improves their health and well-being and makes it easier for them to go to school or work, and maintain social connections. While the program is early in the implementation, based on usage and feedback from the public, staff recommend that the program be continued. Usage across sites varies considerably with the highest used dispensers found in the libraries and aquatic centres.

Period Promise Campaign

The City of Richmond is further able to demonstrate their commitment to menstrual equity by joining the United Way’s Period Promise campaign and signing on to the Period Promise Policy Agreement (Attachment 1). The campaign aims to engage organizations of all types to adopt a policy to provide free products for staff, clients, or others related to the work they each do. By signing the agreement, the City commits to “provide, free of charge, diverse menstrual products to their employees, clients and community members that is easily accessible.” In order to be a designated Period Promise employer, a commitment to continue to provide free, accessible and diverse menstrual products must be made on a bi-annual basis in partnership with the United Way. A representative from the United Way will contact the City every two years to get its confirmation of continued involvement and, if available, collect data and stories related to the implementation of the Period Promise policy. Staff recommend that in addition to providing dispensers for free menstrual products at the Community Services facilities that dispensers be installed at City Hall, City Hall Annex and Public Works.

As a result of signing on to the Period Promise policy, the City will be named on the United Way’s public list of signatories recognizing its leadership in helping to reduce the prevalence of period poverty and menstrual stigma in our community and have access to a toolkit of resources on policy implementation and communications. There are currently 40 organizations who have signed on to this agreement, including the City of North Vancouver and City of Victoria.

Next Steps

Should Council support the continuation of the Menstrual Equity Initiative program, staff will continue to monitor usage, review the program as needed, and provide ongoing education and communication regarding the program, including:

- Program education with incoming hires;
- Program updates and reminders to existing staff;
- Signage in facilities will be kept up-to-date and relative; and
- Annual communication to community partners.

In addition, should Council decide to move forward with joining the Period Promise Campaign, staff will inform United Way of the City’s intention to join the campaign.

Financial Impact

The cost to install the dispensers was approximately \$30,000, with the cost being accommodated within the Community Services 2021 operating budget, which had a one-time savings associated with reduced operations due to COVID-19.

In 2022, a one-time additional level funding request was approved for \$40,000 to support the purchase of products for the first full year of this initiative. This amount is anticipated to fund the program for the next six to 12 months. Any 2022 costs above the \$40,000 provided will be accommodated within existing operating budgets.

Should Council support the recommendation to move forward with joining the Period Promise Campaign and expand the program to include additional civic buildings the cost to purchase and install the dispensers is \$20,000.

The ongoing operational costs for the program are projected to be \$65,000 per year. A one time additional level of \$20,000 will be submitted for consideration to purchase and install the dispensers and an ongoing additional level of \$65,000 will be submitted for consideration to support the expanded program costs with the 2023 budget process.

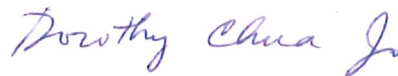
Conclusion

The Menstrual Equity Initiative has proven to be a successful program that removes barriers to participation in recreational activities, reduces menstrual stigma and promotes gender equity. Due to its success, staff recommend the continuation of the program which will be accommodated within existing budget allocations with an additional level being submitted for consideration within the 2023 budget process to support the existing and expanded program.

Staff also recommend that the City join the United Way's Period Promise Campaign and sign the Period Promise Policy Agreement. By signing on to the Period Promise Campaign, the City recognizes that it is contributing to the reduction of period poverty, further promoting inclusion, and investing in the overall health and well-being of our community.



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Att. 1: Period Promise Policy Agreement



United Way
British Columbia

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

Period Promise Policy Agreement

Preamble

Period Promise is a campaign designed to build on the successes of United Way's involvement with the Tampon Tuesday period product collection drive – an effort to bring attention to the need for making menstrual products more accessible to and affordable for those living in poverty or with other barriers.

Period Promise will continue to raise awareness for the issue of period poverty and menstrual equity. But it is going to do more to solve the problem by promoting the need for free and accessible products in the community. The campaign aims to engage organizations who are passionate about women's issues, transgender rights issues, and all those affected by poverty or stigma around menstruation to become more active in delivering community solutions.

The United Way's Period Promise campaign will continue to include asks for product and financial donations which are to be shared with vulnerable people in British Columbia. But, in an exciting new addition, it will be asking organizations of all types to adopt a policy to provide free products for staff, clientele, customers or others related to the work they each do.

This document is an agreement between the United Way British Columbia and the undersigned to join the Period Promise campaign by signing on to the policy below and committing to its implementation.

Policy Statement

The undersigned party agrees to provide, free of charge, diverse* menstrual products to their

- ☐ *Employees*
- ☐ *Clients*
- ☐ *Community members*

in a way that is easily accessible.

*An outline of potential distribution of diverse products is located in the "suggestions on policy implementation."

Purpose

Social responsibility is important to us at _____ and as such, we aim to positively impact our community through policies that build equity. By signing on to the Period Promise Campaign, we recognize we are contributing to the reduction of period poverty, de-stigmatizing menstruation, and working towards helping more people get access to the products they count on. We appreciate that providing free, accessible and diverse menstrual products will be an investment in the overall health and well-being of our community and will help de-stigmatize the need for others in our communities.



Definition

The Period Promise is the promise to provide free and diverse menstrual products in an accessible manner – in order to achieve menstrual equity, de-stigmatize menstruation and reduce period poverty. As menstrual blood cannot be held in and must be addressed immediately, the provision of period products to people is both a concern for human dignity and the realities of the human body. The Period Promise is an inherent recognition that period products are as essential to comfort as toilet paper, but that period products are less easily accessed.

Period poverty is defined as the lack of access to menstrual products due to financial limitations.

Menstrual equity means that all people who menstruate have access to menstrual products and recognizes that the “ability to access these items affects a person’s freedom to work, study, be healthy and participate in daily life with basic dignity. And if access is compromised – whether by poverty or stigma or lack of education and resources – it is in all of our interests to ensure those needs are met.”¹

The estimated cost of providing free, accessible menstrual products is approximately \$1.25/month per menstruating employee. The calculation of this cost is attached. This estimation is based on numerous assumptions which may not apply to your work space. Please note that, at this time, it is not possible to anticipate the cost for clients and community members without specific organizational information.

Detailed Conditions

Bi-Annual Recommitment

In order to be a designated Period Promise employer, a commitment to continue to provide free, accessible and diverse menstrual products must be made on a bi-annual basis.

This will be done in partnership with the United Way British Columbia. A representative from the United Way British Columbia will contact your organization every two-years to get your confirmation of continued involvement and, if available, collect data and stories related to the implementation of your Period Promise policy.

Benefits of Signing On To Period Promise

As a result of signing on to the Period Promise policy, your organization will:

1. Be named on our public list of signatories recognizing your leadership in helping us reduce the prevalence of period poverty and menstrual stigma in our community.
2. Be given the use of our Period Promise and United Way British Columbia logos to include in any media that you may create to highlight your involvement in the campaign.
3. Have access to a toolkit that will help explain to staff the reason for the policy shift and encourage them to become involved in the cause in the wider community.
4. A toolkit of posters and placards that will explain how properly use tampons and pads, how often to change them, how to properly dispose of them, and how to keep clean.



5. Be invited to be involved in policy consultation and discussion opportunities with other signatory partners and advocacy strategy meetings where signatories, activists, and local leaders can share ideas and discuss the next steps for policy implementation.
6. Be invited to public events highlighting the policy and Period Promise campaign.

Suggestions on policy implementation

There are many ways to provide free, accessible access to diverse menstrual products.

At a minimum, all female and gender-neutral washrooms should be supplied with free, accessible and diverse menstrual products. That said, we strongly encourage you to consider adding a small supply to the men's washrooms as well. This will ensure that, regardless of gender identity, anybody who menstruates or provides for people who menstruate can have access to products. For information on how transfolx experience menstruation differently than women and the importance of providing product for them in whichever washroom they use, please contact the United Way.

It should be assumed that any washroom with menstrual products in it will also have used product in it. Washrooms should have a hygienic and private means of disposing of used product. In many public washrooms this is done by placing a small garbage bin in a bathroom stall next to the toilet.

A diversity of products should be available for use, so that anybody who menstruates can have some choice in selecting which product works best for their needs. Examples of diverse products include but are not limited to: tampons, pads and panty liners.

Some other options on policy implementation include:

- Instead of in washrooms, have a designated, neutral location where anyone who needs menstrual products can obtain them. For example, accessible menstrual products in the office lounge. However, as menstruation can be a private experience for some in our community, this option is recommended only for spaces where providing product in washrooms is not deemed a realistic option.
- Provide access to diverse products that come in various sizes or absorption ratings for the varying levels of menstrual flow and body shapes.



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Period Promise Policy Agreement

BETWEEN:

United Way British Columbia
4543 Canada Way
Burnaby BC, V5G 4T4

AND:

(Insert Organization)



United Way
British Columbia

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

THIS AGREEMENT IS A DECLARATION THAT:

- A. _____ declares to fulfill their Period Promise as outlined in this Period Promise Policy Agreement.
- B. _____ agrees to the detailed conditions of the Period Promise Campaign.

The parties have signed this agreement this _____ day of _____ in the year _____. Follow-up reporting and a recommitment to the Period Promise Policy Agreement will be explored in the year _____.

(Insert Credentials from Representative from Signing Organization)

(Insert Credentials from United Way British Columbia Representative)



Thanks to Vancity for supporting the research and development of the Period Promise Policy.

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Appendix to Agreement

Calculator to Assist Estimating Cost of Providing Product

This calculator aims to show that providing free, accessible and diverse menstrual products is relatively affordable. It also serves as a template to estimate the cost of providing access to free and accessible products to employees at your organization.

This calculator does come with some notable limitations.

It does not calculate the cost of providing products to clients and community members, as the level of variance is too high. Additionally, it assumes that employers are providing 100% of the products that people who menstruate need while at work. It is likely that employees will not require a 100% provision rate and that the total cost of \$1.25/month/applicable employee may be lower.

For assistance in using this calculator, please contact United Way British Columbia.

Cost Analysis

In order to calculate the cost of supplying free menstrual products to menstruators at work, the following information needs to be understood:

1. Number of products used per year
2. Percentage of time menstruators spend at work
3. Number of products used at work
4. Cost of products annually

1. Calculating number of products used per year

This costs analysis will use tampons, however there are other products which could be used in this analysis. Kotex instructs on changing your tampon every 4 to 8 hours¹, so we'll use 6 hours as an average.

Assuming there are 13 periods in a year², with each lasting 5 days then:

4 tampons x 5 days = 20

20 tampons x 13 cycles = 260 tampons per year

¹ How will I know when to change my tampon or pad? Retrieved from Kotex: <https://www.ubykotex.com.au/questions-and-answers/how-will-i-know-when-to-change-my-tampon-or-pad>. n.d.

² Periods and fertility in the menstrual cycle. Retrieved from NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/fertility-in-the-menstrual-cycle/>. 2016.



2. Calculating hours at work

$(\text{Hours spent working per day})(\text{\# of days worked per year})/(\text{total hours per year}) = x\% \text{ of time at work}$

Ex. $(8 \text{ hrs working per day})(250^* \text{ days worked per year})/8760 \text{ hours per year} = 0.23$ or 23% of time spent at work.

*The number 250 was determined based on a 5-day work week with 10 vacation days.

3. Calculating number of products needed while at work

$x\% \text{ time at work}/100 = x \text{ number of products}/260$

Ex. $23/100 = x/260 = 59.8$ products needed at work

4. Calculating cost of products

$(X \text{ number of products needed at work})(\text{cost per product}) = \text{annual product cost}$

Ex. $(59.8)(0.25) = \$14.95$ year/menstruating employee OR 1.25 per month

Summary

If a menstruator uses an average of 260 products/year and spends 23% of their time at work, they will require a total of 59.8 products while working. The total cost of 59.8 products at \$0.25/product in one year is \$14.95 or \$1.25 per month.

Disclosure

This is a cost estimate and the actual cost of supplying free menstrual products will vary. It is impossible to determine an exact number of employees/clients/community members who have menstrual requirements without asking directly. More than 50% of your workforce may be women. You may also have fewer than 50%. We would recommend that you estimate based on your employment records and then 5% to reflect employees with an unknown gender identity or unknown menstrual needs.