

# 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**

A United Way campaign.  
Taking action, providing product.

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 the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. 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 of the Lower Mainland 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 collect at any event or march, in a way that is easily accessible, diverse\* menstrual products and give them to:

- Women's Centres*
- Shelters*
- United Way*
- Sexual Health Clinics*

The undersigned party agrees to provide free menstrual products at any events or marches that they organize, by placing them in washrooms that are provided by organizers to attendees, including, but not limited to:

- Portable washrooms contracted to support the event*
- Washrooms at rented facilities*
- Washrooms officially loaned by event neighbours to support events*

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

## Purpose





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Social responsibility is important to us at **March On Vancouver** 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.”<sup>1</sup>

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 of the Lower Mainland. A representative from the United Way of the Lower Mainland 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 of the Lower Mainland 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 organizers 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.

### IF YOU ARE HOLDING AN EVENT INSIDE:

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.

### IF YOU ARE HOLDING A MARCH, RALLY, or CONFERENCE:

- Create a box with a label large enough for people to see and have it on a table near the centre of your activity.
- Leading up to your event, promote the collection of menstrual products to support vulnerable members of the community on your pages and social media accounts. Remind people to bring the products with them.
- Make announcements about the collection throughout your event.

**Period Promise Policy Agreement**

BETWEEN:

United Way of the Lower Mainland  
4543 Canada Way  
Burnaby BC, V5G 4T4



AND:

MARCH ON VANCOUVER

THIS AGREEMENT IS A DECLARATION THAT:

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

The parties have signed this agreement this 5 day of APRIL in the year 2019. Follow-up reporting and a recommitment to the Period Promise Policy Agreement will be explored in the year \_\_\_\_\_.

A blue ink signature of Samantha Monckton.

Samantha Monckton  
Co-Founder  
March On Vancouver

A blue ink signature of Jodie Ortega.



Jodie Ortega  
Co-Founder  
March On Vancouver

A blue ink signature of Neal Adolph.

Neal Adolph  
Director, CLC Labour Participation  
United Way of the Lower Mainland

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



**United Way**  
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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 of the Lower Mainland.

### **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 hours<sup>1</sup>, so we'll use 6 hours as an average.

Assuming there are 13 periods in a year<sup>2</sup>, with each lasting 5 days then:

4 tampons x 5 days = 20

20 tampons x 13 cycles = 260 tampons per year

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.