



# OUT OF POVERTY

The Canadian Women's Foundation invests in Economic Development programs to reduce gendered poverty and build economic security for those who need it most. These programs support diverse women and Two Spirit, trans, and non-binary people in the areas of:

- **Entrepreneurship and self-employment**, helping participants create business plans, build skills, share knowledge, increase financial literacy, and launch new businesses.
- **Workplace navigation and inclusion**, helping participants build transferrable skills to enter the workforce and maintain employment.
- **Trades and technology**, building participants' job readiness with training, placements, and apprenticeships.

**Excellence beyond the local program:** We also support regional and national service providers that share promising practices and training opportunities, undertake research on new approaches, and make change in the areas of decent work and workplace rights and protection for women and gender-diverse people.

Programs are supported for a four or five-year grant cycle.



# In Participants' Words



*"It was my dream to have my own business and with this program I have been able to figure out my way."*



*"If you don't think you can succeed because you're starting off with nothing, think again. Start your dream and the rest will come. Be resilient and don't give up."*



# Grantee Partners

Across regions and communities, the Economic Development programs empowered by our generous donors and supporters make a reverberating impact in the lives of women and gender-diverse people. They put participants first, build on their strengths, and respond to their unique needs and experiences. Scope and specifics vary, but the change they spark is deep, long-lasting, and transformative. They grow gender equality and justice in Canada, from the grassroots up.

## BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR INDIGENOUS WOMEN

### Blackfoot Family Lodge Society | Lethbridge, Alberta

This culturally-grounded entrepreneurial and employment program reduces barriers that prevent many Indigenous women from achieving their goals. Through it, residents at Blackfoot Family Lodge Shelter for women and children facing abuse, as well as those on reserve and in the surrounding community, get access to individual support to develop their business ideas. They receive mentorship and coaching from program staff, Elders, business advisors, and more. Through business trainings led with partners like Saamis Employment Services, Red Crow College, and Lethbridge College, participants learn key skills such as finance and bookkeeping, marketing, and inventory management. Through peer-to-peer collaboration, participants get the help they need to troubleshoot and resolve difficulties in the learning process.

Blackfoot Family Lodge Society hosts monthly get-togethers for participants to discuss their progress and seek advice from business advisors. Participants also get the chance to sell their offerings as vendors at Blackfoot Family Lodge Society's Blackfoot Art Gallery exhibit and gift shop.

*Focus communities: Indigenous women, women with low incomes*

*Annual program participants: 30*

## STREET DEGREE FOR SEX WORKERS IN VANCOUVER'S DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

PACE Society | Vancouver, British Columbia

This program supports sex workers living in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and addresses the significant barriers to economic security, health, and safety they experience. It provides one-on-one support and counselling through street outreach and mentorship support. It helps participants take the lead in identifying their unique needs and aims to build their skills and peer networks. For participants who want to pursue employment options outside of sex work, the program helps them find pathways forward. A key aspect is the relationships this program creates space for between women and gender-diverse people, program facilitators, and the broader community. They can be lifesaving for people living and working on the street and facing the marginalization and isolation that can come with it. Even after the program is over, these sustaining relationships continue on.

*Focus communities: street-involved women and gender-diverse people, sex workers, women with low incomes*

*Annual program participants: 30*

## DREAM CUISINES: A NEWCOMER WOMEN'S FOOD BUSINESS PROGRAM

Flavours of Hope | Vancouver, British Columbia

Flavours of Hope is a social enterprise that works to build a society where newcomer, immigrant, and refugee women can thrive. The social enterprise collaborated with partners to launch Dream Cuisines, a program that offers intensive mentorship, coaching, training, access to kitchen space and equipment, and peer support to help newcomer women propel their food businesses into the mainstream. It empowers them to become successful entrepreneurs and community leaders with incomes that can support themselves and their families. Participants connect with local entrepreneurs as diverse as they are who can offer advice based on their experiences in the food industry. Participants learn core skills like budgeting, banking, bookkeeping, and operations scaling. Participants get a chance to sell their culinary creations at farmers' markets. And they get to pay it forward, too: participants become mentors, passing their wisdom onto future participants in a mentorship networking circle.

*Focus communities: newcomer, immigrant, and refugee women*

*Annual program participants: 16*



## ENTREPRENARIAT POUR LES FEMMES IMMIGRANTES DU NIAGARA

Solidarité des femmes et familles interconnectées francophones du Niagara  
(SOFIFRAN) | Niagara, Ontario

This program enables women who are Black, immigrant, and Francophone build their knowledge how to set up a family daycare business and develop business plans. Skills participants learn apply to those interested in starting their very own childcare centres and those seeking success by working within an existing centre. Expert advice of mentors guide them along the start-up process, and participant success is also bolstered by their engagement in a “Community of Practice for Entrepreneurs” group. At the end, participants earn a certificate of completion from Niagara’s regulatory authority for regional childcare centres.

*Focus communities: Black immigrant Francophone women*

*Annual program participants: 25*



## THE ABUNDANCE STORE

Elizabeth Fry Society Mainland Nova Scotia | Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

This thrift store program offers participants employment skills and essential work experience. A dedicated employment coordinator connects them with the mentorship and guidance they need, offering work placements, employment readiness training, career navigation and entrepreneurship support, mental health support services, and much more. The goal is economic wellness and a chance for women to overcome employment and educational challenges they face when they are criminalized. For those participants interested in entrepreneurship, they receive training on business and production matters. The program helps participants develop their confidence, skills, and community networks, all of which are fundamental to their financial security. When the program is over, participants stay connected to the organization and peers to continue networking and supportive relationships with each other in the long-term.

*Focus communities: criminalized women, young women*

*Annual program participants: 350*

## MEETING YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE: A NEW SELF-ACCELERATOR PROGRAM FOR REMOTE AND ISOLATED COMMUNITIES

Western Arctic Youth Collective of MakeWay Shared Platform

Vancouver, British Columbia

This program helps young women and Two Spirit, trans, and non-binary people in Western Arctic regions pursue self-employment and entrepreneurship, prioritizing those in remote and isolated communities in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. It offers participants grounding and holistic opportunities to explore their cultures, creative expressions, and identities while building knowledge, skills, and confidence that will help them take the next steps toward their business goals. They get trained on subjects related to self-employment and finances. Mentorship opportunities are baked into the whole experience – participants connect with younger and Elder mentors, allies, and experts all along the way. Beyond the completion of the program, participants access a collective network to keep the learning, mentorship, and peer connections going.

*Focus communities: young Indigenous women and gender-diverse people in the North*

*Annual program participants: 10*



## LEVERAGING CLOUD FOR ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

NIPCA Women in Tech Working Group | Milton, Ontario

Through this project, participants are empowered with training and guidance that helps them pivot into the high-paying, high-demand cloud computing field over a four-year journey. All along the way, participants get access to domain-specific mentorship support. Industry experts lead virtual classes to train participants in critical business and entrepreneurial competencies such as salary negotiation techniques. Through partnerships with likeminded organizations including Career Edge, participants gain paid internship and employment opportunities that enable them to hone their skills and learn from those who have been successful in this field of choice.

*Focus communities: Black and racialized women*

*Annual program participants: 30*

## « VERS DES FINANCES DURABLES »

Centre d'action SIDA Montréal (AIDS Action Centre) | Mont Royal, Québec

This program offers participants individual counselling and mentorship to assist them in the search for better employment and financial stability as they deal with the complicated realities of living with HIV/AIDS. An employment counsellor helps each participant identify their strengths and interests and connects them to the employment workshops, training, and placement opportunities most suitable for them. Participants receive peer coaching and close mentoring as they learn core skills like budgeting, expense tracking, and savings management. Monthly activities such as coffee meetups allow participants to network and establish crucial community ties that can last far beyond the life of the program.

*Focus communities: women living with HIV and their families*

*Annual program participants: 20*



## WORKER COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Women's Multicultural Resource & Counselling Centre of Durham  
Pickering, Ontario

This project establishes innovative cooperative groups for underserved and underemployed immigrant and racialized women working in childcare, sewing and design, personal support work, cleaning services, artistry, and hair dressing. These cooperatives enable participants to get active in their own business and entrepreneurship training, financial literacy skill-building, and hands-on opportunities that will help them overcome barriers to employment and grow their economic resilience. They receive mentorship, coaching, and networking opportunities from professionals and peers who have gone through the program in the past. During and after the program is complete, participants get a chance to engage in broader opportunities like attending cooperative conferences, networking with cooperative stakeholders and financial institutions, and accessing referrals to services and businesses.

*Focus communities: immigrant and racialized women*

*Annual program participants: 100*

## LAUNCH PROGRAM

COOK-UP | Windsor, Ontario

Run in partnership between food business incubator COOK-UP and community arts centre Artcite Inc., the LAUNCH program helps participants develop their businesses and social networks. It serves as an ecosystem to grow meaningful connections and access customized tools, training, services, and mentorship opportunities from leaders with lived experiences. Participants receive deeply individualized business coaching. Weekly training sessions help them learn the nuts and bolts of business operations, such as how to open a business bank account and apply to become a local market vendor. Participants also get access to shared working spaces and opportunities to network and establish fruitful business relationships at monthly “Community Connectors” meet-ups.

*Focus communities: newcomer, immigrant, and refugee women, Black and racialized women*

*Annual program participants: 16*



# MIYO PIMATISOWIN WOMEN'S PROSPERITY PROJECT

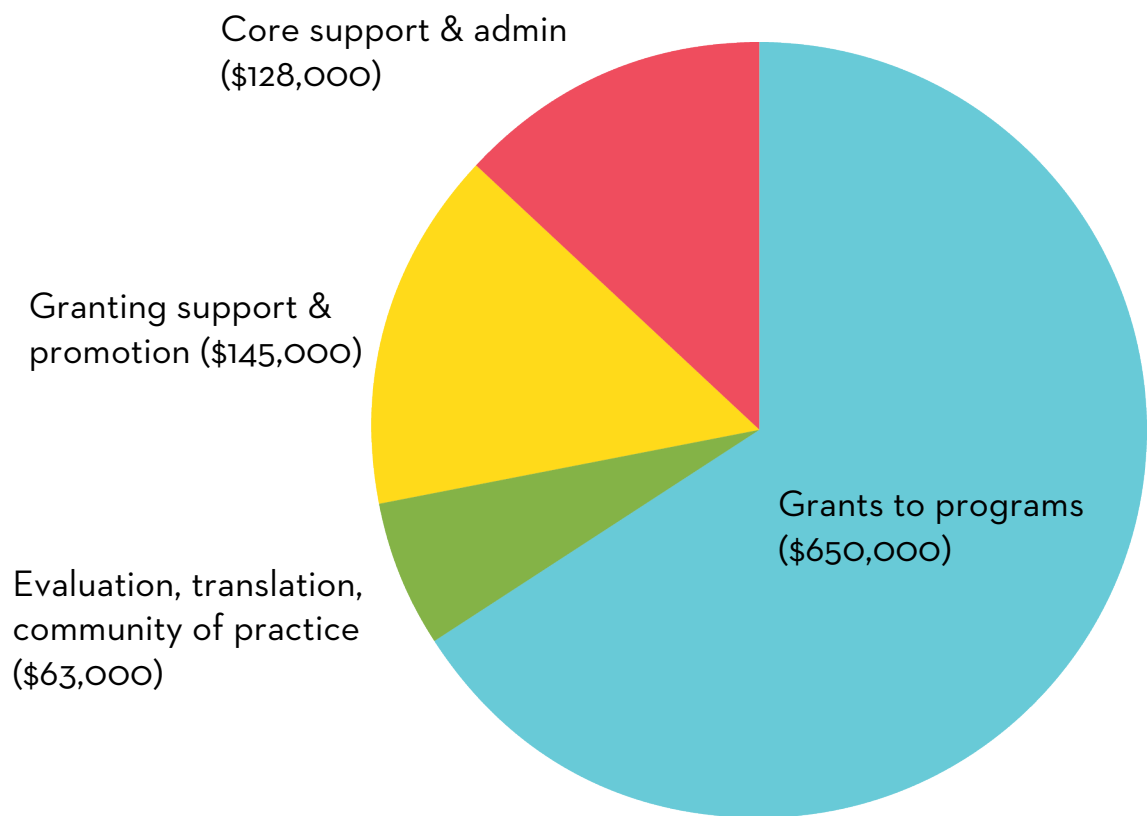
Montreal Lake Cree Nation | Montreal Lake, Saskatchewan


This project helps participants move from envisioning their business dreams to owning and operating their own enterprises. The goal is to give participants tools for sustainable livelihoods that will make things better for themselves and their children. Grounded in Woodland Cree cultures and values, this initiative builds on participants’ strengths. One-on-one collaboration enables them to be met at the business cycle stage where they are at. They receive skill-building opportunities in areas such as operational planning, market assessment, financial planning and banking, status reporting and taxes, legal and marketing matters, risk management, and more. A Women’s Action Advisory Group offers participants mentorship and networking support rooted in shared lived experiences. Current participants become mentors for future participants in an ongoing cycle of mentorship and networking.

*Focus communities: Indigenous women and 2SLGTQIA+ people*

*Annual program participants: 200*

## Impact of Your Support





The Canadian Women's Foundation is a national leader in the movement for gender equality in Canada. Through funding, research, advocacy, and knowledge sharing, we work to achieve systemic change.

We support women, girls, and gender-diverse people to move out of violence, out of poverty, and into confidence and leadership.

Since 1991, our generous donors and supporters have contributed more than \$185 million to fund over 3,000 life-transforming programs throughout Canada.



TOGETHER,  
WE WILL  
ACHIEVE  
GENDER JUSTICE.