



Out of Poverty

Annual Donor Report on Economic Development

How You Have Supported Women and Gender-Diverse People in Economic Security and Independence Since January 2023





A Message of Gratitude for You

To build better futures for women and gender-diverse people, we need to break the cycle of gendered poverty and build economic security. We are so grateful that you are our allies in this work.

According to the World Health Organization, poverty is the single largest determinant of health. A lack of resources can lead to housing and food insecurity, barriers to accessing needed services, and gender-based violence. These risks are all too real for more than 2.4 million women and girls living on a low income in Canada. The situation is even more dire for Indigenous women, racialized women, women with disabilities, trans people, and newcomers, who are all likelier to live in poverty. For single mothers, the challenges are stark.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, women experienced more significant job losses than men in what became known as the 'she-cession.' For some, their jobs disappeared. For others, school and daycare closures forced them to give up their livelihoods to look after their children. Now they struggle with the soaring cost of housing and food.

Economic stability is important to the health, safety, quality of life, and human rights of all women and gender-diverse people and their dependants. Thank you for recognizing this vital need by supporting the Canadian Women's Foundation Economic Development Grants Program.

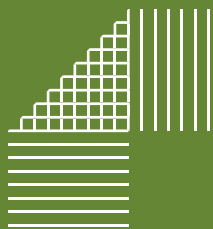
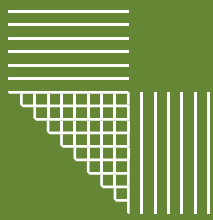
We award four-year Economic Development Grants to grassroots organizations working to reduce gendered poverty and build economic resilience with local programming for women-centred and gender-diverse people. We carefully select organizations that provide wraparound supports, including childcare, transportation, course materials, and meaningful employment.

Building economic stability is a process, and gendered poverty is about more than money. Participants in these Economic Development programs may struggle with safety, a lack of information, and isolation. Many need to retrain or upgrade their skills. They do this against a backdrop of personal and economic uncertainty. It takes great courage.

That's why your support of this critical work is so vital. Because of you, thousands of women and gender-diverse people have been given the training, education, counselling, mentorship, vital resources, and time they need to build sustainable livelihoods. Our partner organizations have introduced them to careers in skilled trades and technology, equipped them with entrepreneurial skills, and provided them with coaching to increase their confidence.

The return on your investment is enormous. When women and gender-diverse people have access to employment and safe housing, it creates a positive ripple effect. It builds stronger families and brighter communities. Thank you for striving for gender equity in Canada.

Suzanne Duncan
Acting President & CEO and Vice President,
Philanthropy
Canadian Women's Foundation



Thank you for Investing in Women's Futures

The Economic Development Grants Program is a multi-year funding initiative to help women and gender-diverse people move out of poverty.

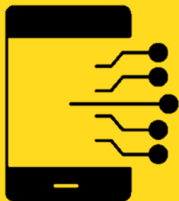
Your support enabled the Canadian Women's Foundation to fund 11 organizations throughout Canada, each offering vital programming to support diverse women and Two Spirit, trans, and non-binary people in the areas of:



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT, helping participants learn to develop viable business concepts, create business plans, and build business networks. Programs cover topics like product development, funding, sales, web skills, financial literacy, and marketing, as well as essential life skills that enable business success. These programs offer participants diverse support options such as mentorship and assistance with applying for loan funds to launch their businesses.



WORKPLACE NAVIGATION AND INCLUSION FOR UNDERSERVED WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE, helping participants build transferrable skills and gain work experience to enter the workforce and maintain employment. In the Social Enterprise programs fuelled by Economic Development Grants, women receive on-the-job training and coaching to develop a strong career foundation in social enterprise environments. For those who may have been out of the workforce or who are new to Canada, these programs help build their experience and confidence to succeed for the long term.



TECHNOLOGY AND TRADES, building participants' job readiness with training, placements, and apprenticeships. These programs help participants break into fields where women and gender-diverse people are underrepresented. Participants learn skilled trades such as construction, carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and auto mechanics, and they build skills and competencies for work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Why women and gender-diverse people need your support

- Women experienced historic job losses in 2020. Even before the pandemic, women were more likely to live in poverty: more than 2.4 million women and girls live on a low income in Canada today.
- The pandemic's impact has been called the *she*-cession. Job losses have disproportionately harmed women. As of February 2021, 10 times more women than men have fallen out of the labour force since 2020 (*RBC Economics, 2021*).
- Since early pandemic layoffs in 2020, men have regained triple the lost jobs that women have. The workforce hasn't been this one-sided in gender in almost a century.
- Women are more likely to live in low-income households than men, especially single mothers (*Fox and Moyser, Statistics Canada, 2018*).
- Those who face many barriers, such as Indigenous women, racialized women, women with disabilities, and gender-diverse people, are even more likely to live in low-income households and face higher risk of poverty.

The Canadian Women's Foundation is the trusted voice in gender equality.



Investing in women changes the world and builds better, fairer communities.

With the action of invested supporters and volunteers like you, we raise and grant funds to grassroots organizations that deliver the support their unique communities need. These organizations offer programs developed by and for the community they serve, and typically have operating budgets of less than \$1 million. Our rigorous, volunteer led granting program ensures that the most responsive and innovative organizations are funded.

These organizations are funded to deliver:

- Rebuilding of lives after gender-based violence, intimate partner violence and sexual assaults.
- Violence prevention through healthy relationship training for young people
- Economic Development education, apprenticeships, and internships to help women train, retrain, or launch their own businesses
- Programs that boost girls' empowerment and resiliency

We bring the organizations we fund together so they can learn from each other and teach us about the barriers to change they face. This enables us to implement relevant, responsive granting and systemic change work.

When you partner with the Canadian Women's Foundation, you are partnering with hundreds of grassroots organizations, delivering critical services to women, girls, and gender diverse people in their communities.



687

Gender Justice Programs funded all over Canada



3,246,681

Lives impacted



511

Programs serving First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities



141

Programs serving rural, remote and Northern communities



557

Programs serving people under 30



503

Programs serving Black women and girls



543

Programs serving 2SLGBTQI+ people



539

Programs serving racialized people



543

Programs serving newcomers to Canada



510

Programs serving people living with disabilities



472

Programs serving people over 65

How your gift was used

2023-2024 Forecast (Unaudited)

Revenue

Gifts from individuals, groups, foundations, and corporate partners to support Economic Development grants and programs	\$987,625
Support from the Department of Women and Gender Equality	\$177,000
Total Support	\$1,164,625

Expenses

Grants to grassroots organizations that deliver economic development programs	\$759,162
Evaluation, translation, grant management and the Community of Practice	\$253,555
Core operation and administration costs	\$151,908
Total invested in economic development	\$1,164,625

Thank you to our generous supporters who made a gift last year

\$100,000+

Canadian Western Bank
Capital One Canada
RBC Foundation
Ricki's
Scotiabank
TD Bank Group

\$10,000-\$99,999

Citi Canada
Fairstone Financial Inc.
Holt Renfrew
Lancôme
MERIX Financial
M&M's

\$1,000-\$9,999

Equinix Foundation



“*[Dream Cuisines]* is the start of a whole new beautiful beginning that you never thought was possible. You start to really understand what it takes to build a business. It helps you connect with the feeling of *I can do it!* I feel proud.”

Viviana, owner of Colombian Antojitos and graduate of *Dream Cuisines*, an Economic Development Grant-funded program. (See **Flavours of Hope**)

Overcoming Barriers to Success

Just as participants of Economic Development programs can face unexpected hurdles in their lives, so do our grantee partners in delivering programs.

For all our partners, Year One (the first year) of our multi-year grants comes with inherent challenges: building something new, sharing opportunities out to the community and recruiting participants, orienting program teams, and more.

Year One was particularly challenging for this cohort: 2022/2023 was a hard year economically for targeted communities and the beginnings of an economic downturn throughout Canada.

Grantees were caught in the middle of higher community needs, higher costs and operational challenges, and declining philanthropic revenues to fuel their operations. They dealt with:

- Increases in operational costs: employee wages, cost of food and transportation for participant wraparound support, “costs of doing business”
- Rent spikes resulting in unexpected programming space relocations
- Fallout of climate crises, such as wildfires
- Employee turnover in times of economic pressure and costs and time of recruitment, orienting, and training replacements
- Increased participant support and service needs
- and community tragedies.

In the face of growing socioeconomic and environmental uncertainty, the Canadian Women’s Foundation is committed to helping our partners identify emerging challenges and support them in developing strategies to respond to those challenges.

We will encourage our partner organizations to discuss challenges along with their successes at our monthly Communities of Practice group meetings for Economic Development grantees.

We are proud of our grantees and the work they have accomplished with your support; despite the challenges they face.

**Thank you to the eleven grantee organizations for their incredible work!
During turbulent times, they helped ensure economic security for women and
gender-diverse people throughout Canada.**

Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

FLAVOURS OF HOPE

Vancouver, BC

Aimed to serve 6 participants

Served 5 participants

Received \$66,000

Flavours of Hope helps newcomer immigrant and refugee women thrive through entrepreneurship and cooking, storytelling, and community-building. In the past year, your generosity supported their Dream Cuisines program that helps newcomer women launch their own food businesses.

Last year's participants received literacy and business training, start-up funding, marketing and branding support, and access to commercial kitchen spaces and sales opportunities at local farmers markets. Participants received interpretation services and transportation to workshops and gatherings. Programming schedules were flexible and family members were welcome to come, which reduce barriers for participants with young children. The success of graduates were highlighted in a 2023 CBC documentary and radio and news programs.



Flavours of Hope participants at the Vancouver Farmers Market



Rana's Story

"I feel stronger, and I can contribute more to the community. I know how to interact with different cultures and religions. I feel more independent, and also had the opportunity to improve my English. I have connected with more diverse people, and I have had a new perspective of Canada through the relationships I have built through the program."

Rana, owner of Damaskino Pastry and Dream Cuisines graduate

Flavours of Hope in the news. Click the [<<links>>](#) to learn more:

[<<Global News highlighted two businesses incubated at Flavours of Hope >>](#)

[<<CBC Vancouver released a short documentary highlighting Flavours of Hope >>](#)

[<<Presented with the Elevate Award for Gender Equity at the Yes Chef event organized by WORTH Association >>](#)

[<<Presented with the Emerging Leader Award from the Downtown Vancouver BIA >>](#)

[<<West Coast Food Article highlighted their work >>](#)

Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

PACE SOCIETY

Vancouver, BC

Aimed to serve: 40 participants

Served: 11 participants

Received: \$65,936

PACE supports women in sex work in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside by providing one-on-one support and counselling through street outreach and mentorship. It facilitates strong, lifesaving relationships between women and gender-diverse people, program facilitators, and the broader community, as well as pathways to explore other employment options.

With your support, PACE launched Street Degree, a workplace navigation and inclusion program addressing sex workers' health, safety, and economic development. PACE outreach workers grounded their efforts in the social determinants of health and understanding how marginalization and systemic inequities impact vulnerable people. They run the Street Degree program in collaboration with a local community group, Coalition of Peers Dismantling the Drug War.

Due to unexpected changes in leadership and staffing shortages, PACE had to reduce the number served, but we are working with them to get back on track for this current year.



Pace Society's outreach location in Downtown Vancouver



Photography credit: Erin Fleming

Some members of Pace Society

Building project management skills

Participants in the Street Degree program took ownership of organizing a program event, creatively finding an alternative to the normal indoor meetings. The event was held in a community garden with a view on the mountains called Two Sisters, or Ch'ich'iyúy Elxwíkn in Squamish. It involved significant planning, and the participants took care of every aspect.

Together, they booked the venue, ensured the safety and accessibility of all concerned and partnered with local organizations to provide food or access to cooking as well as access to fresh water, shade and furnishings.

Pace Society in the news. Click the [links](#) to learn more:

[CBC reported on the a significant research project that was partnered with PACE.>>](#)

[CTV also reported on the same survey>>](#)

Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

BLACKFOOT FAMILY LODGE SOCIETY

Lethbridge, AB

Aimed to serve 32 participants

Served 32 participants

Received \$66,000

Blackfoot Family Lodge Society supports Indigenous women through transitional housing and tailored programs and services. Thanks to your support of our Economic Development Grants program, the organization has launched a culturally-led entrepreneurial and employment training program called *Building a Sustainable Future for Indigenous Women*.

The lodge provides participants with childcare, stable housing, and counselling while they focus on employment goals. Saamis Employment Services and Red Crow Community College provide the training. In the first year of their grant, the organization focused on logistics of program delivery in the first half of the year, introducing participants to the program in the second half and then stabilizing their housing in the final quarter.



Photography credit: Glenn Berry

Members of the Blackfoot Family Lodge Society participate in a community event



A family supported by Blackfoot Family Lodge Society

Multigenerational support

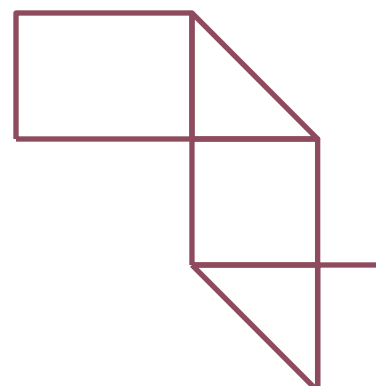
Thanks to the daycare provided by the Blackfoot Family Lodge Society's *Building a Sustainable Future for Indigenous Women* program, a young woman with two pre-schoolers was able to complete employment training through Saamis Employment Services.

But when she sought jobs, she found it difficult to arrange childcare for shift work. Her mother moved in with her and they are pleased to have a multigenerational home.

Now she has a secure job in a local homeless shelter.

The Blackfoot Family Lodge Society in the news.
Click the [<<links>>](#) to learn more:

[<<Global News profiled the new housing unit for Indigenous women and their children relocating into Lethbridge as part of The Blackfoot Family Lodge Society's Soaring Hearts Project>>](#)



Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

MAKEWAY FOUNDATION / WESTERN ARCTIC YOUTH COLLECTIVE (WAYC)

Inuvik, NT

Aimed to serve 10 participants

Served: TBC due to program postponement

Received \$66,000

Inuvialuit and Gwich'in youth launched the Western Arctic Youth Collective (WAYC)—an official project of the Makeway Foundation—to support young people living in remote communities in the Western Arctic regions of the Northwest and Yukon Territories. Their *Meeting Youth Where They Are* initiative was designed to promote self-employment. They developed entrepreneurial training in consultation with a youth advisory group and a team with curriculum development, business, and trauma-informed education experience.

Meeting Youth Where They Are was postponed due a lack of staffing capacity and unexpected losses following emergency fire evacuations. The program will resume this spring with a virtual event, to be followed by in-person, hands-on training linked to a popular Western Arctic regional summer craft fair. We will be able to confirm program participation at that time.



**Amplifying
Northern voices**

Bobbi Rose Koe is WAYC's program facilitator and owner of Dinnjii Zhuh Adventures, which offers on-the-land experiences for youth in the Arctic. She joined the Canadian Women's Foundation at the Status of Women 67th conference in New York City in 2023 at our hosted event *Rural, Remote, Northern: Gender Justice and Opportunities in Canada*.

Koe spoke on the panel *Fast-Tracking Economic Justice: Feminist Economic Development and Financing*, highlighting her group's efforts in the Yukon to help women and gender-diverse peoples achieve economic independence and security for women & gender diverse peoples. Your support is helping amplify the voices of women like Bobbi Rose Koe.

Montreal Lake Cree Nation

Montreal Lake, SK

Aimed to serve 200 participants

Served: 57

Received \$66,000

Montreal Lake Cree Nation's project helps women and gender-diverse community members move from envisioning their business dreams to owning and operating their own enterprises. Grounded in Woodland Cree cultures and values, the initiative builds on participants' strengths.

Participants receive one-on-one support and mentorship as well as 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.

Sadly, deaths in this small community in late 2023 have postponed the program reporting process. We will provide updates as they become available.

Montreal Lake Cree Nation in the news. Click the <<links>> to learn more:

[<<CTV celebrated the grand opening of four new facilities for families in the community>>](#)

[<< Joyce McLeod \(first woman Chief of the Nation\) elected for a second term as Chief at Montreal Lake Cree Nation >>](#)

[<<https://sasknow.com/2024/01/09/montreal-lake-cree-nation-mourns-loss-of-respected-leader/](https://sasknow.com/2024/01/09/montreal-lake-cree-nation-mourns-loss-of-respected-leader/)

Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

COOK-UP

Windsor, ON

Aimed to serve 16 participants

Served 21 participants

Received \$66,000

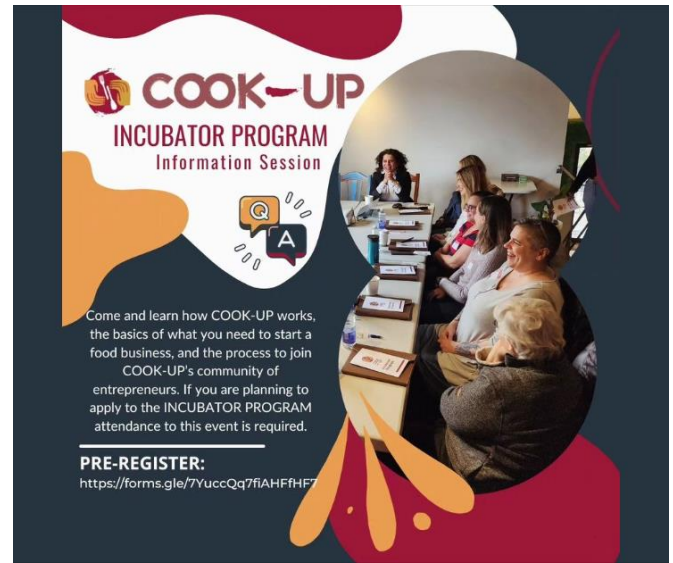
COOK-UP is a food business incubator cultivating equity in business ownership for women from underserved and racialized communities. The goal of its *Launch* program is to help participants launch their own food businesses that have a transformative impact on their communities.

COOK-UP trains participants in the technical aspects of launching a business and gives them opportunities to build relationships with industry professionals and local businesses at bi-monthly community events, food showcases, and graduation events held in collaboration with community partner Artcite Inc. The organization also assists participants with developing business plans. To broaden accessibility, COOK-UP welcomes participants with young children to sessions and accommodates diverse learning styles with varied instructional methods including lectures, group work, and one-on-one sessions.

With your support, in 2023, two cohorts undertook the program—one from January to April, and another from August to November. The program anticipated ongoing coaching for participants' businesses, but COOK-UP underestimated just how much support would be required; the team faced challenges providing this to all the first-cohort participants while welcoming a new, second cohort. The organization is looking strategically at how to rework aspects of the program and how best to support women and gender-diverse people through this process and beyond.



COOK-UP participants preparing food to sell at the Shop COOK-UP Residency Program



Recruitment material for COOK-UP

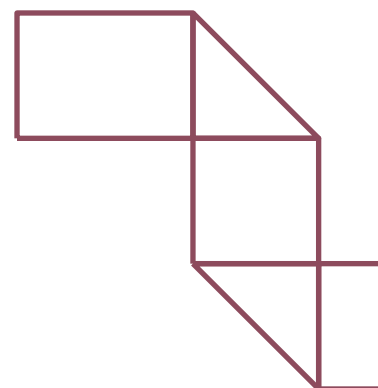
Feeding a sense of community

One *Launch* participant shared that while she had wanted to start a food business for some time, her discomfort speaking English prevented her from participating in many social activities, holding her back from growing her business and contributing to her feeling isolated from the wider community.

When COOK-UP staff noticed early on that she was hesitant to contribute, they paired her with another participant who also speaks her first language.

After eight weeks of programming, this woman's engagement has increased dramatically.

She has expressed that she is happy to be a part of the COOK-UP group; it has provided her with a chance to practise her English as well as a feeling that she can contribute to not only her own career growth but that of her peers.



Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

SOFIFRAN (Solidarité des femmes immigrantes francophones du Niagara)

Welland, ON

Aimed to serve 100 participants

Served 60 participants

Received \$66,000

SOFIFRAN serves the needs of women in Niagara Region's immigrant francophone community with culturally informed projects and programming. Thanks to you, the organization was able to launch a new *Entrepreneurship for Immigrant Women* program offering learning sessions for French-speaking, racialized, and immigrant women who want to offer their own home daycare services. With your support, SOFIFRAN hired a coordinator to run the program and enlisted a consultancy firm to develop a performance framework and communications and promotional plan to recruit participants and obtain commitments for key partners. SOFIFRAN also hired a graphic designer to produce the promotional materials. SOFIFRAN collaborated with local community organizations that work with newcomer and refugee communities to engage in direct outreach.

SOFIFRAN experienced lower numbers of participants than aimed for in 2023; this is in part due to this being new programming in the region. Still, strides were made in community outreach to establish credibility and spread word about the program for more engagement. Since participation in workshops depends on participant availability, some women have postponed enrollment until fall 2024. Now, with a multi-year agreement secured with Niagara Region, and a collaboration with Venture Niagara to develop a loan program tailored for the participants' home childcare businesses, SOFIFRAN does not expect many further delays to meet the projected goal of 100 participants.

SOFIFRAN made the program as accessible as possible by providing flexible times for workshops and offering French language and interpretation services. The organization partnered with Niagara Region Child Care Services, which provided participants with information on the necessary skills and licensing requirements to operate your own daycare.



Members of SOFIFRAN celebrate Mother's Day

Bringing opportunity closer to home

One participant who has children under the age of four says the *Entrepreneurship for Immigrant Women* program will allow her to earn additional income while maintaining family obligations.

She says current living costs are a great challenge and setting up a family daycare would allow her to work flexible hours and without having to sacrifice spending time with family.

"This project gives me hope," she says

SOFIFRAN in the news. Click the [links](#) to learn more:

[<<Niagara This Week profiled SOFIFRAN>>](#)

[<< Brock University partnered with SOFIFRAN on a exhibition of Rwandan artifacts >>](#)

Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

NIPCA IMMIGRANT CENTRE

Toronto, ON

Aimed to serve 30 participants

Served 45 participants

Received \$63,500

With your support, NIPCA Immigrant Centre launched the *Leveraging Cloud for Economic Sustainability Project* to empower and train Black and racialized low-income women to pivot into the high-paying and high-demand cloud computing domain. In its first year, the initiative successfully delivered fundamental and advanced cloud computing training to 30 women. Participants also received mentorship and job coaching sessions. Your support fuelled NIPCA to partner with BlackTECH Hub, Careeredge, and Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre, giving participants access to tailored mentorship and networking opportunities.

NIPCA Immigrant Centre's partnership with Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre was in part a result of the two organizations connecting in Winnipeg at our Economic Development in-person grantee meeting and through our monthly Economic Development community of practice meetings, in which all grantees are invited to participate. We are proud that the Economic Development program is spurring feminist knowledge development and exchange.



NIPCA participants at EVOLVE Tech Summit

Silver lining in every cloud

Project organizers point to Oyinkansola, one of the first 30 women to take part in the *Leveraging Cloud for Economic Sustainability Project*, as an inspiring example of the power of the Economic Development grants.

She honed her skills and boosted her confidence, preparing her for success in the competitive job market. Through networking events and strategic partnerships with industry leaders, she connected with potential employers to showcase her talents. It paid off. She accepted a job offer in her desired tech field. She is thriving in her new role.

NIPCA in the news. Click the [<<links>>](#) to learn more:

[<<NIPCA Founder, Wendy Nwajiufor, won an Innovation Award from the Pan-African Arts Culture and Trade Institute>>](#)

Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

WOMEN'S MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE AND COUNSELLING CENTRE OF DURHAM (WMRCC)

Pickering, ON

Aimed to serve 100 participants

Served 64 participants

Received \$65,500

Last year, with your support, WMRCC launched the *Worker Cooperative Development Project* to support immigrant and racialized women in Durham Region launch cooperative businesses together. The program offers flexible training with accessible venues, hybrid workshops, and language supports to reduce barriers to participation. Your funding helped pay for startup costs, including promotional materials (e.g. flyers, postcards and banners) and community outreach activities. Your generosity also supported the training, including one-on-one and group guidance on how to develop a cooperative and attendance in cooperative events and conferences across Ontario.

These opportunities expanded participants' social networks and enhanced self-advocacy and negotiation skills. Employee turnover in the program meant the WMRCC had to prioritize rehiring for program roles, delaying participant recruitment and programming. Nonetheless, participants in the first cohort were able to present their business plans at the WMRCC's Worker Cooperative Development Conference in December 2023 and are now mentoring second year's participants.

Women's Multicultural Resource & Counselling Centre

FREEDOM DREAMS

WMRCC PROGRAM INFORMATION SESSION

WOMEN'S WORKER COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

WORKER'S COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Worker cooperatives are businesses that are owned and democratically controlled and led by its members. The members combine their skills, interests, and experiences to create worker cooperative. The primary goal is to provide employment to coop members as the owners of the worker cooperative. This prevents private companies from profiting off their workers labour.

Recruitment material for the *Worker Cooperative Development Project*



Staff and volunteers of WMRCC meet with local government leaders

Cooperative spirit drives success

Violet, one of the first participants in the Worker Cooperative Development Project, says the program has been a game changer for her.

"I'm passionate about starting a cleaning business, and the first session got my brain buzzing with excitement," she says, adding that the financial and business training have been invaluable. "I have the confidence to take on this new adventure to co-start a business."

Reta, a Nigerian Immigrant, says she joined "this amazing project" in the hopes of starting a cooperative for Personal Support Workers (PSWs).

"The training sessions and introduction to Cooperative Business Development let me see that this co-op is the right fit for me," she says.

WMRCC in the news. Click the [links](#) to learn more:

[Coverage of WMRCC expanding the Women's Futures program to the Durham Region through the Ontario government >>](#)

Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia

Dartmouth, NS

Aimed to serve 350 participants

Served 54 participants

Received \$66,000

Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia helps break cycles that lead to criminalization, supporting women and gender-diverse people with transitional housing, legal navigation, and life skills. In the past year, your support helped expand the organization's *Abundance* program, which enhances clients' employment readiness by providing work placements through the society's Abundance Store, a second-hand boutique.

The society hired a co-ordinator who united the program with ElevateHer Mental Health Support Service's *EmployHER*, initiative, a program that offers participants work placements in the community. The new employment co-ordinator ensured that there were childcare options and flexible schedules for participants, enhancing their ability to participate in the program.

The program faced financial challenges over the course of the year, including the increase of the provincial minimum wage from \$13.60 per hour to \$15.20 per hour. Total work placements offered to participants were reduced as a result. A rent hike forced the Abundance Store to relocate, costing time and money.

A labour of love and a second chance

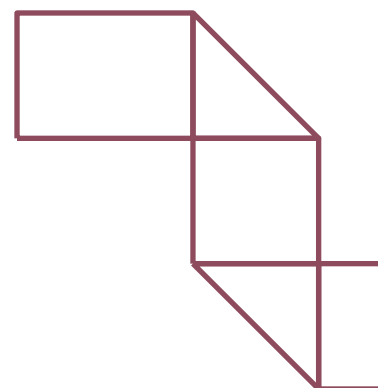
Theresa, an *Abundance* participant, started volunteering at the Abundance Store in July 2022. Soon after, she was hired for a paid, part-time position. The employment and education coordinator talked to her about her personal and career goals and how to achieve them.

In May 2023, a position for an Indigenous Program Coordinator opened at the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia—and Theresa got the job. She reports that for the first time in her life, she is financially stable and that she loves her job. She adds that having lived experience and helping other Indigenous women gives her a purpose and a greater role in community.

"It's funding for these career positions, mine included, that are integral to supporting clients," she says. "To me, the *Abundance Program* is a labour of love—it's community support and a second chance."

Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia in the news. Click the [links](#) to learn more:

[The Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia received the group/organization award for its work to prevent the criminalization of women, girls and gender-diverse individuals.](#)



Economic Development Grants Year One Program Updates

Centre d'action SIDA /AIDS Action Centre Mount Royal, QC

Aimed to serve: 20 participants

Served: 20 Participants

Received: \$66,000

Centre d'action SIDA Montreal (CASM)'s "Vers des Finances Durables" program supports women and gender-diverse people living with HIV/AIDS in the search for better employment and financial stability. An employment counsellor helps participants identify their strengths, goals, and interests and connects them to suitable workshops, training, and job placements that match their unique needs. In addition, one-on-one counselling and monthly activities allow participants to network and establish crucial community ties that can last beyond the program's life.

In 2023, the centre experienced an unexpected, but very welcomed, physical relocation. With the funding provided, CASM was able to occupy a new building to house the families and clients who require their services. This new space enhanced support for those living with HIV/AIDS with fully onsite housing for the first time. With this shift to a new location, the program reporting process is being postponed to take this change into consideration. Additional information and updates from this grantee to come.



Annual Community Needs Grants focused on Economic Development

The Canadian Women's Foundation also supports Community Needs annual grants for organizations who identify priority issues for Economic Development and other key areas?

Please see below, updates from our 2022-2023 annual grant recipients who run economic development programs that needed support for their priority programing.

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology

Whitehorse, Yukon Territory

Aimed to serve 250 participants

Served 15 participants

Received \$20,000

Yukon Women in Trades and Technology utilized your support to build organizational capacity, provide increased community support and consultation with workplaces that want to become safer, more inclusive and equitable.

As a result, YWTT was able to initiate discussions with four major companies (in construction, technology, mining, and energy respectively) about gender equity and retention strategies.

iSisters Technology Mentoring

Ottawa, ON

Aimed to serve 200 participants

Served 57 participants

Received \$20,000

iSisters works to increase economic earning potential, career competency, and independence for marginalized women who primarily rely on government programs for their basic needs.

The organization used its grant to expand its Career Connections Program, which includes technology and digital literacy training, including computer work and training in social media as it pertains to business, support with resumés, job applications and preparing for interviews. The organization has partnered with three local organizations to expand the program.

Women's Economic Council

St. John's, NL

Aimed to serve 200 participants

Served 90 participants

Received \$20,000

The Women's Economic Council, with your support, was able to provide free employment and business-development services to women and non-binary people from underrepresented groups. The council partnered with organizations to provide participants with free transportation to events and workshops, provided accommodation for bringing children along and the services of an interpreter if required.

Participants accessed industry- and career-specific information for their employment goals. Several participants in the immigrant support program got jobs and remain employed in meaningful work today.

Women's Legal Education and Action Fund

Toronto, ON

Aimed to serve 35 Organizations

Served 35

Received \$20,000

This project recognizes that more work must be done to meaningfully include trans women and gender-diverse people in feminist advocacy. Attendees for this training program were from 14 gender-equity seeking organizations.

Your support created the opportunity for feminist and gender equity organizations to gather, learn, and build relationships to ultimately serve and advocate for trans and gender diverse people more effectively.

Leadership update: President and CEO Paulette Senior appointed to the Senate of Canada

A lifelong champion of social justice and equity, Paulette Senior has demonstrated outstanding leadership as President and CEO of the Canadian Women's Foundation since joining the organization in 2016.

For decades, she has been an outspoken advocate for an inclusive Canada, one that builds up women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals.

Now she will bring her passions to the national level. She has been appointed to the Senate of Canada, in no small part in recognition of her thought-leadership on and voice for gender equality.

We wish Senator Senior the best in her new role and deeply appreciate her changemaking influence during her time leading the Canadian Women's Foundation

"I've seen a groundswell of public interest in gender equality that I've never seen before," she notes. "There's a greater recognition that we all need to be changemakers and do our part to further the goal of a gender equal Canada in our own spheres of influence."

We are so grateful to have worked with Senator Senior and know she will continue to inspire positive change.



Senator Paulette Senior, centre, poses outside the Red Chamber with senators Marc Gold and Rosemary Moodie ahead of Senator Senior's swearing-in ceremony on February 6, 2024

Thank you for helping women find a path out of poverty and into independence

Thank you for supporting *lasting change*.

A baseline level of economic stability is critical for women and gender-diverse people to dream, achieve, and succeed. The programs you help fund focus on the whole person, offering wraparound supports.

Dedicated program workers help participants source childcare, juggle multiple priorities, acquire course materials, and secure safe housing so they can move forward and thrive. They provide participants with additional supports—including mentorship and counselling.

When you commit to breaking gendered cycles of poverty, you commit to enhancing confidence and possibilities for women. You commit to building up caring communities. Thank you for recognizing the urgent need for economic development for those who need it most, and for stepping up for women's futures.

Your actions have helped women find education, training, community, and personal confidence as they initiate businesses, switch careers, gain experience, start over, or adjust to a new life in Canada. When women have economic assurances, they have more of the safety and security everyone deserves.

Gendered poverty is visible. Women remain at a disadvantage, facing more barriers and fewer resources for spiking costs of living in a volatile economy. You understand achieving gender justice and economic justice is not a short-term fix. By supporting grassroots organizations with strong outcomes, you are contributing to lifechanging results for program participants, who will in turn bolster their communities.

With your contributions, we've supported organizations that directly address the needs of underserved women and gender-diverse people, and their families and communities. You are helping reverse the trajectories for those facing the most challenges, and you are turning their lives around.

We can do more. Together, we can work on nationwide solutions to ensure women and gender-diverse people, anywhere, can achieve their goals and find economic security. Together, we will build gender justice.

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