

## **In advance of International Women's Day, Calgary's Women In Need Society and Vibrant Communities Calgary Forge Partnership to Help End Poverty in our city**

*A challenging economy and the pandemic have disproportionately affected women and their families, but there's hope for a better future*

CALGARY (March 2, 2021) - Calgary's [Women In Need Society \(WINS\)](#) and [Vibrant Communities Calgary \(VCC\)](#) are pleased to share that they have partnered together to help end poverty in Calgary.

WINS is the latest *Enough for All* Champion, which is part of a broader network of program champions, collaboratives, community organizations, businesses, charities and governments to spotlight initiatives and advance policy changes to address the root causes of poverty.

[Enough for All](#) is working to make poverty history in Calgary. It aims to ensure that Calgary is a strong, supportive and inclusive community, where everyone has sufficient income and assets to thrive, and where all Indigenous people are equal participants in Calgary's future.

A current look at the poverty crisis in Calgary shows that:

- There are more than 189,000 Calgarians living in poverty
- One in 12 women ages 18-64 experience poverty, and single women are three times more likely to experience poverty
- One in five women in Calgary earn minimum wage, and one-third earn less than a living wage

Says Meaghan Reid, Executive Director of VCC, "WINS is a high impact Champion in our network because they address all the levers of change that reduce poverty in our city. Their expertise, programming, and commitment to dignity for all makes a difference to thousands of Calgarians. They show us how social enterprise can tackle the biggest of social problems in society."

The ten levers of change include: Adult Literacy and Foundational Learning, Early Learning and Care, Employment, Financial Empowerment, Food Security, Housing, Income Support, Justice, Physical and Mental Health and Transportation.

Says Karen Ramchuk, CEO and President of WINS, "Our programs and services help support more than 7,000 women in Calgary each year. Whether they are experiencing hunger, need clothing and furniture for their home, or are looking for resources and skills development opportunities, we walk with them on their journey towards self-sufficiency. We are so pleased to formally become a champion as we work to continue to address and end poverty."

The impact of COVID-19 in our city has created a deeper divide and vulnerability for women living in poverty. In March 2020, Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey showed that among those in the core 25 to 54 age demographic, women represented 70 per cent of all job losses, despite representing just under half of all workers.

While the percentage of job losses evened out between men and women across Canada in April 2020, this was not the case in Calgary. In Calgary, 3.5 times as many women lost their jobs compared to men.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://behindthenumbers.ca/2020/04/10/women-bearing-the-brunt-of-economic-losses-one-in-five-has-been-laid-off-or-had-hours-cut/>



*WINS and VCC are working together to help end poverty in Calgary. (Photo: M. Shannon)*

Further, recent polling from Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies suggests some Canadians feel their mental health has declined as the pandemic has rolled on, with the effects potentially striking women, single parents, the unemployed, relatively recent immigrants and racialized people more than others<sup>2</sup>.

In honour of International Women's Day (IWD) on Monday, March 8, Calgarians can visit any of the WINS Thrift Stores to make a donation and add their name to the fight against poverty and inequality.

Donations support WINS' programs that help clients in need, including House to Home by WINS, which provides basic need items and furniture to transform houses into a place where families can thrive. Donations can also be made online at any time by visiting [winsyyc.ca/donate-funds](https://winsyyc.ca/donate-funds). WINS also accepts donations of gently-used clothing, household items and furniture. Please visit the [website](#) for donations guidelines, locations and hours.

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### **About WINS**

Women In Need Society (WINS) is a Calgary-based charity helping women in need and their families. WINS provides women with the resources, knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve self-sufficiency. WINS operates five Community Resource Hubs, the House to Home Program, Retail Ready Employment Services, Recycling Program and WINS thrift social enterprises, including five family thrift stores, the More Store and Twice New thrift box. For more information please visit [www.winsyyc.ca](https://www.winsyyc.ca).

### **About VCC**

VCC is a non-profit organization that works collaboratively with stakeholders and partners to engage and serve Calgarians and to advocate for long-term strategies that address the root causes of poverty in Calgary. Supported and funded by the United Way of Calgary and Area, The City of Calgary, and Momentum, VCC engages the community using a collective impact approach to poverty reduction and is the steward of the Enough for All 2.0 Poverty Reduction Strategy. For more information, visit [enoughforall.ca](https://enoughforall.ca) or follow us on twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://acs-aec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Legers-North-American-Tracker-February-15th-2021.pdf>

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