

WINS launches ‘Poverty Costs More Than Money’ awareness campaign to highlight the realities of poverty in Calgary

Autumn campaign calls on Calgarians to look beyond income and support pathways to stability for women and their families

CALGARY, September 21 & 22, 2026 – Poverty is about more than what appears in a bank account.

This autumn, Women in Need Society (WINS) is launching its **‘Poverty Costs More Than Money’** awareness campaign, encouraging Calgarians to look beyond the financial measures commonly associated with poverty and recognize the many ways economic vulnerability can affect a person’s choices, opportunities, relationships, and ability to participate fully in their community.

For many Calgary households, financial pressure means making difficult choices between necessities that are all high priority. Rent, groceries, transportation, childcare, clothing, and other basic expenses compete for limited household resources, often leaving little room to respond when something unexpected happens.

More than 211,000 Calgarians are estimated to be living on low incomes, but income alone does not capture the full picture. Among female-headed lone-parent families in Canada, 47.4 per cent experience food insecurity, including many families whose incomes place them above the official poverty line.

“Poverty can affect every part of a person’s life. It can limit the choices available to a family today, but it can also make it much harder to build stability for tomorrow. At WINS, the goal is not simply to respond to one immediate need. It is to work alongside women and their families, understand what they need at that moment, and help create pathways toward greater stability, opportunity, and connection.”

Derek Cook, Director, Canadian Poverty Institute, Ambrose University

For more than three decades, WINS has worked alongside Calgary women and their families, responding to immediate needs while helping to create pathways for greater

financial stability. Support can include food, clothing, furniture and household essentials, but it can also mean help navigating community resources, preparing for employment, developing new skills, accessing programs for children and youth, or simply having someone help determine what comes next. By relieving some of the immediate pressure, WINS helps create the breathing room women and their families need to focus on their next step.

Calgary's support can make a difference

As the cost of living continues to put pressure on Calgary households, WINS is asking the community to consider what financial stability really means.

Moving above a poverty line does not necessarily mean a household has achieved financial security. For families with little or no financial cushion, a missed pay cheque, rising rent, an unexpected bill, or another change in circumstances can quickly create a crisis.

“Poverty is more than the balance in a bank account, and a donation to WINS can mean much more than meeting one immediate need,” said **Karen Ramchuk, President and CEO, Women in Need Society**. “It can mean groceries on the table, clothing for a child, help navigating community resources, support preparing for employment, or access to programs that help women and their families move toward greater stability. This Thanksgiving, we are asking Calgarians who are able to give to consider making a donation to WINS. Every contribution helps create greater stability, choice, and opportunity for women and their families.”

Donations to WINS this fall help provide basic-needs assistance, individualized connections to community resources, educational and social programming, supports for children and youth, and employment preparation and training. Together these supports help women and their families address immediate challenges while building greater long-term stability.

This Thanksgiving, WINS is asking Calgarians to remember:

Poverty costs more than money. And your donation can mean more than meeting an immediate need.

To learn more about the ‘Poverty Costs More Than Money’ campaign or to donate, visit <https://www.winsyyc.ca/eradication-poverty>

About Women in Need Society (WINS)

Women in Need Society (WINS) is one of Calgary's largest women-serving charities and has been supporting women and their families for more than 30 years. WINS provides a range of free programs and services that respond to immediate needs while helping women build greater stability over time. These include essential goods and food support, community resource navigation, employment and employment training, educational and social programming, and supports for children and youth.

WINS also operates a retail-based social enterprise, with seven stores and the More Store, generating revenue that is reinvested into programs and services for the community. Together with the generosity of donors, partners and Calgarians, this model helps WINS support women and families at many different points in their journey.

Together, everyone WINS.

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