



GOOD TO BE GOOD Empowering Care Program

UPDATES - WINTER/SPRING 2025

www.goodtobegood.ca

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The **Empowering Care Program (ECP)**, designed to provide one-time emergency relief supports to BIPOC women and gender-diverse individuals from our priority communities experiencing challenges such as precarious housing, economic insecurity, and other social barriers. Supports can include essentials and basics such as groceries, baby products, phone data, gift cards, personal care necessities, and products related to their well-being and safety. Additionally, the program also offers support for essential costs related to leaving violence, obtaining permanent resident status or Canadian citizenship, reproductive or gender affirming health care services, and more. ECP is intended to be supplementary and wraparound supports that can help address urgent needs and income gaps —particularly for individuals facing emergencies or systemic barriers not adequately supported by institutions or existing safety nets.

We designed this unique program as a hand up, not a handout—delivered in a way that is community-centered, dignified, and rooted in mutual care and aid.

This quarterly report offers a snapshot of the work we've carried out through the **Empowering Care Program** from January to March 2025—a time shaped by continued resilience, care, and collective action. It reflects not only the service and support delivered, but the stories, needs, and voices of the community members who reached out for support and the ways we responded together.

Program Intake and Disbursement Update

As we welcome 2025, we continue to evolve our **Empowering Care Program** application process and enhance our support delivery. This year, we dedicated the first two months to revisiting our program processes, planning, and implementation to better meet the needs of our community, assess our available resources, and ensure a more efficient and streamlined approach to disbursements. This included:

- Revising the program policy, criteria, and process based on feedback and analysis to increase transparency and better support recipients' needs.
- Revising the application form to more effectively capture the diversity of lived experiences and the complex barriers faced by individuals.
- Collaborating and strengthening ties with a broad range of community organizations to enhance referrals, program awareness, and national reach.

As our program continues to grow alongside the increasing needs of our community, we are receiving a higher volume of applications from both direct applicants, word of mouth, and partner referrals. As part of the changes outlined above—and to better align with staff capacity while maintaining the delivery of meaningful, high-quality support—the ECP program will now accept applications on a quarterly basis. Each application will be thoughtfully reviewed, with consideration given to the urgency of the request and the resources available at the time.

Expanding Language Accessibility to Meet Women's Needs

As part of our annual program update, we are committed to supporting and making our services accessible to all women by offering support in multiple languages. Currently, our team can assist applicants in: *English, Cantonese, Spanish, Tagalog, Bisaya, Bicol, French, Gujarati, Urdu, and Hindi*. When internal language support is not available for specific applications, we will engage trusted volunteers, members of our community, referrals, or advisors to assist with translation—always prioritizing the confidentiality and privacy of the applicant throughout the process.

Women Who Accessed Support

Between January and March 2025, the women and gender-diverse people who participated in this program have/had experienced the following conditions:

- Unemployment/Underemployment
- Precariously Housed or unhoused
- Low-income, Living with a disability (Visible or Invisible)
- Disability, Living with Mental Health Conditions
- Person with Medical Conditions
- Survivor of Gender Violence and Sexual Exploitation
- Commercial Exploitation
- Barriers to social services such as healthcare and income support

Our applicants primarily ranged from 35-50 years old and many identified as White and South Asian from Durham Region, Ontario, and the City of Toronto. While we serve a broad community of women and gender-diverse individuals from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds—including Southeast Asian, Black, Indigenous, and White folks across Canada—we continue to witness shared challenges in meeting basic and urgent needs.

Through our work, we've heard from community members seeking urgent support through ECP: some requested financial assistance to cover emergency health expenses after years of being unable to access medical care due to economic hardship. Others have reached out for help with rent for their next home after transitioning from a shelter or precarious living condition, or inquired about donations supporting their everyday needs. Many connected with our program for referrals and resources to services that are low- or no-cost, including housing supports, telecommunications, and other essential resources.

Each request reflects the ongoing inequities faced by individuals navigating compounded barriers—and underscores the importance of collective care-based, community-led responses.



Meeting Needs Through ECP

The Empowering Care Program provides community members with essential supports to address basic needs, emergencies, safety concerns, and urgent vulnerabilities. To date, the program has delivered the following forms of care:

- **30%:** Financial assistance for rent or housing expenses or utilities, and emergency medical/healthcare expenses
- **25%:** Wellness care packages, offering a selection of toiletries and clothes designed to promote well-being.
- **25%:** Resource Support and Referrals to community agencies and programs, connecting program participants to further local services and support networks.
- **20%:** Invitation to Good To Be Good's Peer Support Services

Program and Outreach Improvements

We continue to meet and collaborate with partners to expand our outreach efforts. The **Empowering Care Program** continues to offer one-on-one information sessions as part of our outreach, where we discuss how each organization can support the communities we serve, whether through collaborations, referrals or volunteer opportunities. The program maintains connections with organizations in Ontario as well as Ottawa and Calgary. Although we remind partners/organizations to limit their referrals to two clients every intake phase, our program manager has noticed how these sessions have helped build trust and strengthen organizational relationships, which results in an increase in referrals.

Our New Team Member

Meet our new Manager of Support Services!

Aramí Galeano (she/her) is a dedicated mental health counsellor and registered psychologist in Paraguay, committed to fostering healing and empowerment in diverse communities. With extensive experience supporting immigrants, survivors of intimate partner violence, and marginalized populations, she is a strong advocate for restoring voice and agency to those she serves.

Rooted in a compassion-focused approach, Aramí helps individuals reconnect with their inner strength and embrace their most authentic selves. She believes in the transformative power of connection and creates safe spaces where healing unfolds naturally.

As the Manager of Support Services, Arami supported our community members specifically in providing one-on-one counseling, emotional support and collaborating with partners to connect them with the appropriate resources.

“I think ECP offers invaluable support not only financially, but also in terms of mental health and resources to our participants, whom show a lot of gratitude for this” -Arami



In Their Own Words:

"Hooray! Hurrah! May your munificence bounce back to you in a multitudinous way! I would forever be acknowledging and appreciating GTBG!" - ECP recipient

"Thanks so much for the care package. Everything in it was really helpful, especially for me as a woman and a mom." - ECP recipient

"It was so instrumental in helping me get to my medical appointments and to pay for some of my medical expenses." - ECP recipient

Ways To Support

Women and gender-diverse people are the backbone of our communities, and their ability to thrive directly affects the wellbeing of families and society as a whole. To support this, it's essential that women, particularly those from marginalized communities and groups, have consistent access to timely, appropriate resources that meet their basic needs—especially in times of crisis. Our Empowering Care Program exists to help fill those urgent gaps, but sustainable change requires more than community support alone.

We continue to rely on both monetary and in-kind donations to maintain this program and its services. At the same time, we encourage our supporters to advocate for stronger, equity-driven policies—especially those that address basic needs, close gendered wage disparities, and improve economic conditions for women and gender-diverse individuals. Your continued generosity and voice are critical in advancing both immediate care and long-term systemic change.

Please continue to promote this program and assist us in reaching our fundraising goals by visiting:

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/empoweringcareforwomenandgirls/>

Learn more about ECP and our programs:

<https://goodtobegood.ca/programsandresources/>





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