HER FUTURE DEPENDS ON YOU!

Helping women thrive in work and life

In the National Capital Region, recent immigrants to Canada, women with children, or visible minorities will face multiple barriers to enter (or re-enter) the workforce. But they are not alone.

As the only agency of its kind in Ottawa, Dress for Success provides professional attire – “suits” – alongside a network of programming for women transitioning into, or back into, the workplace. Dress for Success bridges the gap to independence. We help women transition out of the cycle of poverty because when a woman is employed, she can change her own path for the better.

You can help. Her future depends on you.

Women and poverty

In the National Capital Region, 35% of all low-income families are female single parent families¹. Women experience poverty more often than men. For women, having a job is not a guarantee of rising out of poverty. In a world where part-time work is increasing, and job growth remains in the low-paying service industry, the challenges for women trying to “work themselves out of poverty” are growing.

Women are referred to Dress for Success Ottawa from 50 partner agencies in the region. A typical Dress for Success client is between the ages of 40-50, is a new Canadian and a parent of one or more children. The lives of these children depend heavily on the livelihoods of their mothers.

Every single woman who comes to Dress for Success Ottawa wants to secure a job.

They are employment-ready and want to work. Sometimes all it takes is a new outfit, a big boost of confidence, and a network of caring people who are able to look them in the eye and say “You can do it!”

Your financial support can give these women the boost that they so desperately want in order to become contributing members of our community.

¹ Social Planning Council of Ottawa Poverty Profile of the City of Ottawa, Based on the 2006 Census -published June 2010
Dress for Success Ottawa –
the new reality

Since opening its doors in 2010, Dress for Success Ottawa has been overwhelmed with community support through donations of “interview-appropriate” clothing. But while clothing can only be used for one purpose, financial donations can be put towards areas of greatest need.

If there was a $50 donation attached to every Dress for Success clothing donation, the organization could suit 10 times the number of women it currently helps.

Dress for Success is so much more than just a suit. The organization supports its clients long-term, helping them build skills in the areas of financial empowerment, healthy living, workplace rights and responsibilities and professional networking. Dress for Success’ lone staff member coordinates a roster of volunteers who are directly involved in teaching women how to “network their way to their next job.”

These cornerstone programs help women transition up and out of poverty.

Without an increase in cash donations to support these programs, our clients run the risk of falling back into the cycle of poverty.

The Group of Seven’s philosophy

In 2009, seven passionate ladies got together to change the lives of women living at the poverty line in Ottawa. They identified a gap in the employment services currently available to women in the National Capital Region. The goal was to change the status quo - women’s inability to break the cycle of “get-a-job, lose-a-job” - by providing women with the appropriate tools and supports they needed in order to succeed in the workforce.

The group of seven built Dress for Success Ottawa around three core beliefs:

- Respect for clients and fellow volunteers
- Client service excellence, and
- Compassion for every client and volunteer.

Named “Rookie of the Year” in 2011 by Dress for Success Worldwide (the international governing body of Dress for Success affiliates) the organization has consistently increased the number of women it serves each year through its suiting and professional development programs. As the organization has grown, so has the client list. Women find out about Dress for Success Ottawa through the suiting programs, but they stay for the workshops, the professional networking, and the mock interview opportunities.

“I noticed right away when Karen and Susie came to our program they had confidence and were very happy with their new clothes...I am so grateful we were able to offer [Dress for Success] to them!”

— Kim Brown, Tungasuvving Inuit, Women’s Makeover Program
In four short years, Dress for Success Ottawa has:

- Suited almost 1000 women from our community;
- Increased its roster of community referral agencies to over 50 agencies (e.g. City of Ottawa Employment Services, YMCA, Catholic Immigration Centre);
- Significantly increased participation (85% increase) in its Professional Women’s Group program.

Our mission: to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support & the career development tools to help women thrive in work & in life.

Why our mission matters today
Dress for Success Ottawa’s vision is a world where all women - regardless of social and economic background - are self-sufficient members of the community: they tell their own story.

We support these women for as long as they need our services. We meet them when they need a suit for an interview, and we build that relationship through our Professional Women’s Group – a place where they learn how to network their way to their next promotion, manage their finances, and understand the importance of making a good first impression.

We rely heavily on the support of our 140 volunteers: they work in the Boutique, sit on numerous committees, support our clients through our programs and with the help of our Board, plan our annual ‘Stepping Out’ fundraiser. On a limited annual operating budget of $150,000 Dress for Success Ottawa:

- Runs three streams of programming,
- Employs one full time staff person,
- Operates a 1000 square foot boutique in the west end of Ottawa.

Your support makes a huge difference
While clothing donations can only be used for one purpose, financial donations can be invested into the areas of greatest need. This ensures that our clients are supported throughout their journey with Dress for Success.

Your support will let these women know that their self-worth didn’t end with their last job or their ex-husband, and that they are an important, valuable member of our community who has a lot to offer potential employers. Your support will allow our clients to tell their own stories.

“There is no other program in Ottawa that satisfies this need. It’s not just the physical piece of clothing, but the building of the women’s self-esteem. This program gives hope to these women.”

- Mary Harris, City of Ottawa Employment Specialist
Our client’s stories

Pat Adams walked through Dress for Success Ottawa’s doors because at age 61 she had been unemployed for 18 months and was running out of options. Her experience with the suiting program not only gave her two interview-ready suits, it helped her regain her confidence to believe that she COULD land a job. And she did! “I truly believe that if I had gone in without going to Dress for Success, I would not have given the impression that I did. I don’t know if I would have looked as confident. I don’t think I would have gotten that job,” explains Pat.

Fiona McBean is a ‘creative type.’ She made an appointment with Dress for Success after moving back to Ottawa to take care of her mother. Fiona is still waiting for the professional career that she has spent so many years studying for to begin. She is a graphic designer. “I just feel that one of these days I am going to luck out and it’s going to happen for me. I just hope it happens before I turn 60,” she says. In the meantime, Fiona participates in the Dress for Success Ottawa programming that helps her with her networking skills, her financial literacy and health and wellness.

Fanny Satraz came to Canada from Bogota, Columbia to complete her Masters degree in Mathematics (Categorical Logic) at the University of Ottawa. Dress for Success helped her to find some interview-appropriate clothes to boost her confidence while applying for a bank position as a financial planner. “The company scheduled 7 interviews with me,” explains Fanny “and I was feeling so intimidated because I knew I was smart, but I didn’t have any money to buy clothes.” Fanny is in the final stages of transitioning her career from academia to banking.

“There is no other program in Ottawa that satisfies this need. It’s not just the physical piece of clothing, but the building of the women’s self-esteem. This program gives hope to these women.”

– Mary Harris, City of Ottawa Employment Specialist
How your support helps women like Pat, Fiona and Fanny

**Signature - Dress for Success Ottawa Boutique Signature ($5,000 per year)**

Our charitable organization essentially runs a small business – a Boutique – in the west end of Ottawa. There are fixed costs associated with keeping this space open for our clients: rent, electricity, and general maintenance. A Boutique Sponsor would help our organization focus on our clients, rather than worrying about keeping the space open month-to-month. We welcome the opportunity to create a personalized recognition package.

**Sponsor – Professional Women’s Group ($2,500)**

Dress for Success’ programming is focused on employment retention: empowering women with the tools to take charge of their professional careers. An investment of $2,500 will support one group of women through one stream of programming: Financial Empowerment, Mentoring Program, Healthy Living, Personal Style, Workplace Rights and Responsibilities, or Career Networking.

**Supporter – Dress Rehearsal Program ($1,000)**

The Dress Rehearsal Program provides opportunities for women to do mock interviews with Dress for Success volunteers. Our volunteers provide valuable feedback to our clients about not only on job interview skills, but also on cultural and corporate best practices. The Dress Rehearsal supporter will support 12 women through the program.

**Sustainer – One Woman’s Journey ($500)**

Women come to Dress for Success through the suiting program and continue their journey with the organization through the networking and programming opportunities. Your support will help one woman through one complete year of Dress for Success programming.

**Our vision**

With your help we can continue to reach women in our community who are ready and willing to work. Your help will provide them with the clothes, the skills and the confidence to join the workforce. Your support will help:

- a new Canadian land her first job in Canada;
- a woman become self-sufficient by landing a job in her chosen field.
- a divorced mother of three get back into the workforce and put her Bachelor’s degree to use;

Please give generously.
**Her future depends on YOU.**
WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT US

“Nobody has pampered me in a long time. The clothes are so nice, but it’s not just the clothes, it’s the whole service provided. Thank you.” 2013 client.

“I feel I am so lucky to meet [Helen her mentor] in my life. I could not believe my eyes and ears that Helen is like a wise friend whom I have known for a long time. I appreciate that you introduced me to Helen.” Jinyu Chi.

“I didn’t expect Dress for Success to be so much. I thought basically it was going to be the suit, and that was it. It’s much more than that!” Fiona McBean, Curves Customer Service Representative.

“I wish to thank all the people involved in the detailed Diva workshop. It was most interesting and well conducted. The host made us feel like princess and once again I can say how thankful I am.” PWG member Mireille, June 2014

Please give generously.
Her future depends on YOU.