



United Way
Elgin Middlesex

COMMUNITY IMPACT STRATEGY



Introduction

United Way Elgin Middlesex creates real, lasting change to improve the quality of life in our communities. United Way identifies and understands the root causes of social issues; brings together research, experts and resources; initiates and invests in effective programs and services; and builds capacity in the non-profit sector.

We believe the root of all action for change is the ability to see and feel ourselves in the situations of others. We believe all people and all communities have the potential to overcome challenges. We treat people with dignity, fairness and equality. We make decisions based on the needs and expectations of our community and we believe it is imperative to measure and communicate our impact.

Our community impact strategy is guided by our organization's vision, mission and values and has been developed with input from our community, funded agency partners, donors and volunteers. This strategy builds on previous community impact strategies including United London & Middlesex Community Impact Agenda (2011) and United Way Centraide Canada National Focus Area Frameworks (2014).

Impact measurement continues to be a priority for United Way Elgin Middlesex. An evaluation framework, which includes clear and measurable outcomes and indicators, for each impact priority will be implemented to ensure the measurement of progress.

OUR VISION

A community where everyone matters

All people are important and deserve a good quality of life. All people have the potential to need help and the potential to help. 'Success' and 'quality of life' mean different things to different people but we're driven by the ultimate goal to have our community made up of people enjoying a good life and helping others to achieve the same.

OUR MISSION

To improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action

The most important thing United Way can do for our community is to use our reputation, relationships and expertise to bring together our community's resources of people, time, talent, relationships, expertise, technology, money and more. By channeling our community's power behind solid strategies we can achieve lasting changes in the social conditions of individuals, families and our community.

OUR CORE VALUES

Empathy

We believe the root of all action for change is the ability to see and feel ourselves in the situations of others. We believe all people and all communities have the potential to overcome challenge. We treat people with dignity, fairness and equality. We understand and live the correlation between improving the life of one to improve the lives of all.

Inclusiveness

We believe in 'us' and 'us', not 'us' and 'them'. All people, groups and sectors are equal and deserving of the same respect and opportunities. We seek out and value diverse ideas, opinions and experiences. Our most effective, creative and innovative solutions come about when we join with others.

Shared leadership

We believe the work of change is a shared responsibility. We are a catalyst. We engage and empower all sectors of our community to come together to share their experiences, expertise and energy. The power of partnerships and collaborations multiplies our impact and leads us to find progressive and lasting solutions.

Integrity

We change lives. Therefore, we believe we must hold ourselves to the highest of standards. We embrace the responsibility that our donors, volunteers and partners have entrusted to us and we are accountable to them. We are honest and transparent in all that we do. We make decisions based on the needs and expectations of our community and we believe it is imperative to measure and communicate our impact.

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT STRATEGIES

Together with our partners, United Way Elgin Middlesex is committed to social change in our community by leading activities and initiatives that employ the following strategies:

Ignite

Ignite awareness and understanding of the root causes of our community's social challenges to inform social planning and collaboration through:

- Storytelling
- Data analysis
- Research
- Evaluation
- Outcome measurement

Inspire

Inspire contributions of dollars, influence, time and knowledge to social change in our community by:

- Individuals
- Donors
- Corporate partners
- Community organizations

Influence

Influence systems and policies through advocacy and by strengthening relationships with:

- Governments
- Corporate partners
- Community organizations
- Community networks

Invest

Invest resources, including dollars, time and knowledge, in programs, services and community convening to:

- Strengthen social service networks
- Increase community capacity

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT PRIORITIES

United Way Elgin Middlesex focuses on three impact areas that create opportunities for everyone in our communities to live a better life:

From poverty to possibility

Meet basic human needs and support people in moving out of poverty by prioritizing:

Basic needs

- Provide basic needs for all individuals and families including access to emergency food provisions, health needs, baby food and supplies, clothing and transportation.
- Includes, but is not limited to, emergency food provision, breakfast/snack programs, meal delivery, community meals, food collection programs, assistive devices and transportation. Emergency shelter, which provides emergency accommodation and basic needs for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness, may also be considered.

Housing stability

- Ensure people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find, obtain and maintain safe and attainable permanent housing using a Housing First approach.
- Includes, but is not limited to, affordable housing, permanent housing with the right level of support and house finding supports.

Income stability

- Enhance job readiness, support individuals to find and maintain employment and support individuals requiring social assistance.
- Includes, but is not limited to pre-job guidance services, mentoring, financial literacy and soft skills training and development programs.

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT PRIORITIES

All that kids can be

Help children and youth reach their full potential by prioritizing:

Success in education

- Promote the educational achievement of children and youth, as well as their transition to post secondary education, training or employment.
- Includes, but is not limited to services that support school readiness, homework completion, literacy and numeracy instruction, academic guidance and counselling and alternative educational options.

Community connection and emotional & physical wellbeing

- Provide opportunities for children and youth to develop positive social relationships with adults and peers, meaningfully participate in and contribute to our community and assist in the development of mental and physical health.
- Includes, but is not limited to, programs that address barriers to participation, mentoring programs and those that enable children and youth to participate in a wide range of recreational, cultural and social activities.

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT PRIORITIES

A strong community with resilient & healthy people

Support personal well-being and strengthen communities by prioritizing:

Community mental health supports & services

- Promote mental health and well-being, reduce stigma, and provide community-based mental health programs in a timely manner to individuals and their family members and caregivers.
- Includes but is not limited to subsidized counselling, internship training, peer support, supports for family members and caregivers and social connection opportunities.

Wellbeing & resilience for all

- Ensure everyone can access culturally safe programs and services, has the opportunity to actively participate in their community, and can reach their full potential despite the ongoing legacy of deeply embedded social and structural inequities and discrimination.
- Includes, but is not limited to, culturally competent programs and services for Indigenous people, supports for adults and children with disabilities, healthy and active living programs for seniors, programs that reduce social isolation and loneliness for residents of rural communities and integration programs and services for newcomers.

Addressing gender-based violence

- Assist individuals who have experienced sexual violence and/or abuse, as well as those who have experienced physical, and/or emotional abuse in domestic relationships.
- Includes, but not limited to, counselling and transitional services, parenting supports, violence prevention programs, support for child and youth witnesses and counselling and support for men.

Neighbourhood & community development

- Strengthen communities and neighbourhoods by engaging residents and community stakeholders to improve the quality of neighbourhood life and foster community connections; build and maintain an adequate network of individuals, organizations, supports and programs to ensure strong and vibrant communities.
- Includes, but is not limited to, resident engagement programs, skills training, advocacy, civic engagement and volunteer management.