

OUR **WAY** FORWARD

2018-2022 Strategic Plan



United Way
Calgary and Area



Improving lives through the **power of communities**

Photo Credit: Philip David, Urban Exposure Project 2017

OUR **STORY**

United Way of Calgary and Area brings together local agencies, corporations, donors, volunteers, and government to create lasting social change in our city. Born as part of a worldwide movement more than a century ago, United Way's unwavering focus continues to be improving lives through the power of communities.

As a social change organization, we strategically invest in, partner with, and mobilize local community agencies to solve complex social issues. Our work and our investments stay in Calgary and the surrounding area, supporting thousands of people every year.

VISION

A resilient and caring community
where everyone thrives.

MISSION

To mobilize communities
for lasting social change.

WHAT SETS US APART

We are local experts

We bring people together

We solve complex issues

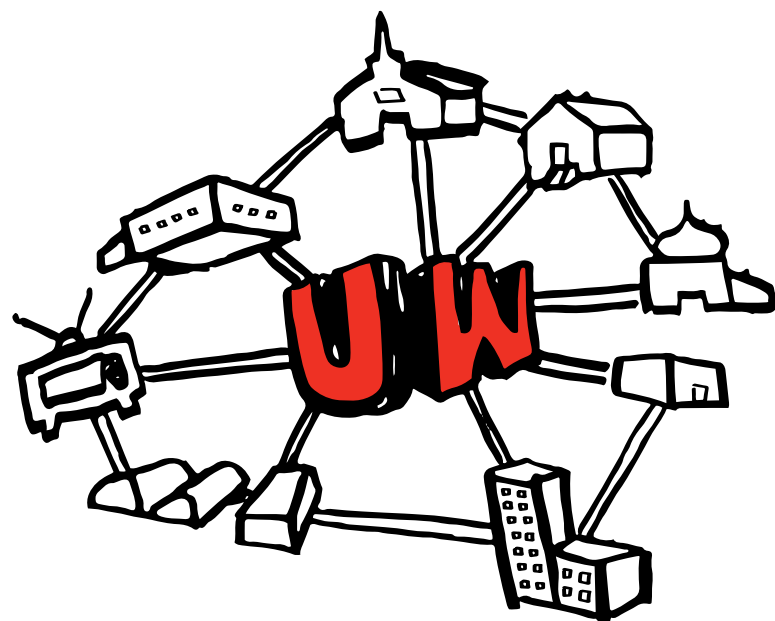
We improve lives

We generate high return
on community investment
and measure impact

OUR **WORK**

The Issue:

Every day, people across our community struggle to build better lives for themselves and their families. These challenges are fuelled by serious social and economic barriers which make getting ahead difficult and threaten the strong social fabric that is vital to individual, family, and community well-being.



Our response:

Working within a strong network of social services, United Way digs deep into the underlying causes that hold people back from realizing their full potential. With the caring support of Calgarians, we are building a connected system of community supports so everyone has access to social supports when they need them most. Our collective impact is demonstrated through supporting people to overcome poverty, helping kids succeed, and building strong communities.

OVERCOMING **POVERTY**

Complex challenges like job loss, illness, and the mounting cost of living preclude many Calgarians from building a successful life. For many in our city, poverty is a daily struggle.

United Way works with partner agencies to ensure Calgarians are provided the foundational building blocks like food, employment training, and financial counselling.

Together, we're giving everyone the opportunity to build a better future.

SUCCESSFUL **KIDS**

Poverty, food insecurity, mental illness, domestic violence, and lack of early-year foundational supports have life-long effects on children. As they enter adolescence and young adulthood, they often struggle to make connections, finish high school, and find meaningful jobs.

United Way works with partner agencies to provide kids with the support they need to succeed: early learning programs, mentoring, tutoring, and family counselling and support.

Together, we're setting our youth up for success and economic security.

STRONG **COMMUNITIES**

In many neighbourhoods, residents find it difficult to access the essential supports and services they need to succeed. The challenge is amplified for vulnerable individuals such as seniors, people living with disabilities, or newcomers, which often lead to social isolation and mental health issues.

United Way works with partner agencies to help communities thrive through various programs, services, engagement opportunities, counselling, and community social networks.

Together, we're strengthening and uniting neighbourhoods to be more connected, inclusive, and vibrant.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small green seedling with soil. The hands are cupped around the base of the plant, which has two large green leaves and a thin stem. The background is blurred, showing more of the person's hands and the plant.

OUTCOMES OF OUR WORK

The outcomes of our work demonstrate how we're making real and tangible differences in people's lives.

OVERCOMING **POVERTY**

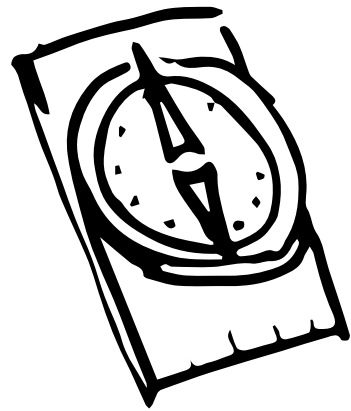
- Basic needs are met (food, shelter, clothing)
- People have opportunities to achieve financial stability and an enabling income
- People have opportunities to achieve employment

SUCCESSFUL **KIDS**

- Kids (ages 0-6) are achieving developmental milestones
- Kids develop a strong sense of self, are empowered, and make positive decisions
- Youth successfully transition to adulthood

STRONG **COMMUNITIES**

- People are able to fully participate in their communities
- Mental health and well-being is enhanced
- The well-being of Indigenous people is enhanced through healing from intergenerational trauma
- People are free from domestic violence



OUR **WAY** FORWARD

Directing our efforts and collective resources to achieve the greatest possible impact, we will deliberately repurpose our work to be more integrated and cause-driven. Intentionally intersecting our work allows us to address causes simultaneously in all three of our focus areas.

Our Way Forward is inclusive, thoughtful, and purposeful. It confronts the realities of a rapidly changing world, sets the trajectory for United Way in moving forward, and builds on our strengths to ensure we deepen community impact by expanding our reach, inspiring relevance and commitment, and growing revenue.

This strategic plan is the result of a year-long planning process that included rigorous research, community consultations, and 35 stakeholder engagements, resulting in more than 615 dynamic contributions. The goals outlined in this plan are designed to support the outcomes of our work, and to help us make a real and tangible difference in the communities we serve.

THREE FOUNDATIONAL GOALS

As a social impact organization, everything we do is driven by our desire to create lasting social change. To achieve this, we set three foundational goals that will advance our strategic direction over the next five years. Interdependent, all three support and build on one another.



GOAL 1

DEEPEN COMMUNITY IMPACT

OUTCOME:

LEADING COMMUNITY IMPACT THROUGH CONVENING THE SOCIAL SECTOR TO IDENTIFY AND SOLVE COMPLEX SOCIAL ISSUES.

Photo Credit: Jennifer Galda, Urban Exposure Project 2016

Partnerships, relationships, and collaborations are key to creating lasting social change in the community. A strengthened and more coordinated system working together toward common outcomes has tremendous power in influencing public attitudes, advocating for policy and system change, and moving the needle on complex issues in measurable ways.

TO REALIZE OUR POTENTIAL, WE WILL:



Work better together as a social services sector



Forge partnerships and collaborations with common outcomes



Expand our work with Indigenous members of our community and in the areas of diversity and inclusion

GOAL 2

INSPIRE RELATIONSHIPS AND GENERATE RESOURCES

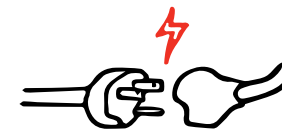
OUTCOME:

THE PARTNER OF CHOICE
OFFERING PERSONALIZED,
ENGAGING EXPERIENCES
THAT GENERATE
COMMITMENT, PARTICIPATION,
AND REVENUE.

Photo Credit: Amy Guthrie, Urban Exposure Project 2013

United Way has built strong relationships with donors, corporate partners, volunteers, and the community by consistently demonstrating our impact as trusted stewards of their investments. Strengthening our relationships by providing highly personalized and engaging individual experiences will enable us to deepen community impact as the partner of choice.

TO REALIZE OUR POTENTIAL, WE WILL:



Implement a new digital platform that will offer unparalleled United Way experiences



Provide transformational giving options



Invigorate workplace campaigns that bring value to corporations



Pioneer, test, and scale initiatives to diversify revenue streams

GOAL 3

DEMONSTRATE
EXCELLENCE AS
A TRUSTED,
HIGH-PERFORMING
ORGANIZATION

OUTCOME:

A HIGH-PERFORMING
ORGANIZATION COMMITTED
TO LIVING OUR VALUES AND
FULFILLING OUR BRAND
PROMISE AS DEMONSTRATED BY
THE OUTCOMES OF OUR WORK.

Photo Credit: Michelle Seto, Urban Exposure Project 2017

Maintaining public trust and confidence is critical to deepening community impact. As part of our commitment to being a responsive, data-driven organization, we will use rigorous measures to monitor progress, communicate the results of our work to the community, and drive evidence-based decision making.

TO REALIZE OUR POTENTIAL, WE WILL:



Articulate our work with unwavering focus



Press forward with digital and technological transformation



Organize our systems to be more nimble and responsive



We are proud to be part of a strong community of people whose compassion, leadership, and undeniable community spirit creates positive change.

Together, we are improving lives through the power of communities.


Karen Young
President & CEO

Photo Credit: Jessica Gergely



Illustration Credit: Aaron Russell

Part of the **GEN NEXT INITIATIVE, URBAN EXPOSURE PROJECT** is an annual photography program that offers participants the opportunity to learn about social issues, capture them through their camera lens, and exhibit and showcase their respective projects.



United Way
Calgary and Area