



United Way
For a Better Winnipeg

MOVING FORWARD

A better Winnipeg together

2016-2019 Strategic Plan





United Way
For a Better Winnipeg

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES



United Way was founded in 1965 on the belief that by working together we could strengthen Winnipeg's heart and soul with a sense of pride, hope, and generosity. This belief still rings true and resonates today.

Last year, United Way marked its 50th anniversary by engaging with Winnipeggers to celebrate our great city. We listened to Winnipeggers to learn more about what mattered most to them, and what role they thought United Way could play in addressing their greatest concerns. This dialogue, together with research and lived experience, led to this three-year community plan.



Winnipeggers were thoughtful and their advice was instructive, aligning with two themes that are very familiar to us in how we understand United Way.

First, when people from across our community come together through United Way they create an unparalleled opportunity to ensure critical, front-line support to thousands of Winnipeggers every day. Today, the sustained funding and partnerships at the heart of United Way's work provides a critical base of stability in our community. It is also the foundation upon which we innovate and together tackle some of our most pressing issues. Winnipeggers were clear in their message that we must protect and nurture this important work.

The second theme we heard is that together we need to do even more. We heard Winnipeggers' concern in particular about the growing challenges facing kids and their families. Winnipeggers want more young people to have the support they need to achieve their goals and for their families to be self-sufficient. Over and above current efforts, the community identified 4 priorities for new investment and activity.

With this plan, United Way Winnipeg recognizes that our community is evolving — and that to meet our community's goals, United Way must continue to evolve as well, as it has for the past 50 years.

Among other things, this plan challenges us to be more flexible in all that we do, to work with renewed energy to understand the interests of donors and potential donors — including new generations and diverse communities. This plan challenges us to redouble United Way's key role in working closely with partners across all sectors to tackle some of our most pressing social issues head on. And this plan challenges us to work more innovatively with agency partners to ensure the effectiveness and accessibility of programs and services.

Inspired by Winnipeggers, this plan reflects our community's vision for a better Winnipeg. And it reflects United Way's firm commitment to do all we can to inspire our community's sense of pride, hope, and generosity.



Herb Peters,
Chair, Board of Trustees
United Way Winnipeg



Marilyn McLaren,
Incoming Chair, Board of Trustees
United Way Winnipeg

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO



New to the role of President and CEO, this past year has been a remarkable one — one of listening and learning. It's also been a time to be reminded of what may be most important.

Some years back at an afterschool program, I had a conversation with a young girl. She was about 12 years old and as she and I prepared a snack, I asked her, "If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?" I remember watching her think for a little while before a smile came across her face. With bright eyes she said, "Portage Place." I had not expected to

hear of a dream a mere handful of blocks away.

To this day, that little girl remains on my mind — along with the question she raised for me. How do we ensure all children in our city have the opportunity to dream? To dream big.

There are families in our city who can think of little else right now than how they will get through the week. Families for whom life is far harder than it should be, day in and day out. And because of that, there is little room for anyone to dream. Let alone little ones.

I am passionate about our city and about the years ahead because we are a community both large enough and small enough to change this. We know each other. We have history and experience together. We have learned. We have ideas. We have both common ground — and wonderful differences. We are good people who care. And as will be clear in the pages ahead, we know the kind of city we want to be.

At its core, United Way is about connecting people from all walks of life, all ages and all cultures, around a single, simple goal — to make a better community for all of us.

As donors, volunteers, and partners, creating a city where everyone can dream is some of the most important work we will ever do together.

On behalf of the entire staff team at United Way, we look forward to serving you and, together, creating a better Winnipeg.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Connie Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Connie Walker

President & CEO

United Way Winnipeg

TOGETHER

This is the Winnipeg we want



People in Winnipeg have a vision for their city, where:

- All children begin their first day of school ready to learn and succeed.
- Youth are inspired and supported to finish school, excited about their many talents and bright futures.
- All families have the strength and stability necessary to raise their children and achieve their hopes and dreams.
- There is no one who is homeless, hungry, or alone and we all can enjoy the choices a prosperous city has to offer.
- We all have a voice, and we all feel included, welcome, and safe in our neighbourhood.

YOUR UNITED WAY

We're better together



When we come together to share our knowledge, experience, passion, and resources, we make the kind of difference in the lives of Winnipeggers and our community that we never could on our own.

This idea is reflected through our mission, our vision, and our values.

Our mission is to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action.

Our vision is of a thriving community where everyone can realize their potential.

Our values, which guide our work, are connectedness, conviction, courage, credibility, and compassion.

LISTENING & LEARNING

United Way has always been a community organization — listening, learning from, and led by those who live here. This plan is a reflection of conversations and feedback over the last year from approximately 1,800 people across our community, backed by research and our experience and knowledge.

Together, they inform our plan — our commitment — to Winnipeg for the next three years.

This is what we heard

▶ **We must respond to our most pressing social issues**

Winnipeggers believe that United Way has an important role to play in doing more to respond to our community's toughest social issues.

In particular, people are concerned about increasing inequity and poverty, especially children living in poverty. They are troubled by the number of children in care and that so many children are not ready for school.

Winnipeggers highlighted the importance of our city's diversity and creating a welcoming community, recognizing the growing Indigenous, newcomer, and refugee populations.

They identified mental health as a growing issue across Winnipeg, and feel strongly about addressing homelessness, creating safe neighbourhoods, and helping youth graduate.

United Way-funded agencies shared that, in addition to increasing diversity, they are responding to a greater complexity of problems. They are seeing more families in crisis and more youth struggling with mental health issues than ever before.

Without exception, United Way-funded and other non-profit agencies identified sustained funding as critical to their ability to meet the needs of their clients.

▶ **More people need to be involved in the work of United Way**

Winnipeggers see the United Way annual campaign as one of its greatest strengths, and believe that people trust United Way to invest their donation wisely.

At the same time, they see that the fundraising environment is changing, with new donor groups, more defined donor preferences, and increasing charitable options. This makes it important to adapt and bolster United Way's partnership with workplaces and broader fundraising models.



People suggest increasing our ability to respond to younger donors who look for causes they identify with, and who want more choice in how they get involved. United Way has a role to play in providing inspiration and a direct connection to the difference they make.

▶ **We need to broaden and deepen understanding of all that United Way does**

Winnipeggers tell us that United Way's long history in the community has earned it a reputation of being effective, trusted, and responsive. This has positioned United Way well for leveraging partnerships, connecting to key stakeholders, and influencing public policy.

However, as United Way's work has become more complex, we see that fewer people understand well all that United Way does and the opportunities we have to work together.

Because of this, Winnipeggers tell us that it is important to find more ways to deepen the public's understanding of United Way's work and role in the community.

▶ **Our contributions extend beyond funding and fundraising**

Winnipeggers recognize that one of United Way's most unique and valuable assets is our ability to work collaboratively across sectors. They believe we should continue to create bridges between organizations and groups in order to achieve our common goal of a better Winnipeg.

People asked United Way to strengthen and expand the number of ways they can engage with United Way to learn more about our community and to share their knowledge and talents to make a difference.

Additionally, Winnipeggers appreciated the strong knowledge and insight that United Way brings both to decision making and to increasing public awareness.

KEEPING THE FOUNDATION STRONG

Over the next three years, United Way will continue to work with Winnipeggers to build a better and stronger city. We will continue to provide sustained funding to a network of services all around our city that individuals and their families rely on when they need help. And we will continue to complement the work of community agencies through partnerships that are making a difference on our city's most pressing issues.

Our work revolves around three inter-related focus areas which together form the basis for a better life — and better community.



This is our core work

Helping kids be all they can be

Children and youth are our future. Together, we help kids succeed from their earliest years, laying the groundwork for them to begin school ready to learn, and provide help to ensure they finish school prepared to take on the world.

United Way's investment in a network of services supports mentoring, counselling and crisis intervention, and out-of-school programming.

Beyond this, United Way makes a difference through activities and programs such as the Youth United Council, our partnership in early childhood development, and social innovation initiatives like the Winnipeg Boldness Project and the Koats for Kids program.

Moving people from poverty to possibility

A thriving community is one where everyone has an opportunity to earn a living, support their family, and live with a sense of dignity and achievement. Together we help provide Winnipeggers with the knowledge and tools for the road to lifelong financial stability.

United Way's investment in a network of services provides Winnipeggers with programs related to employment and life skills, financial literacy, social enterprise, and ending homelessness.

Beyond this, United Way will continue to make a difference through the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (WPRC) — a multi-sectoral table that aims to address policy and system-level changes to address the underlying causes of poverty. Additionally, we increase understanding of poverty's impacts through poverty simulation experiences and reporting on how Winnipeg is doing on poverty and equity measures.

Building strong communities and healthy families

Strong, lasting health in a community begins with personal well-being. Together we help people identify and share their knowledge, skill, and resilience with each other to strengthen their own lives while creating neighbourhoods that are vibrant, inclusive, and safe.

United Way's investment in a network of services supports counselling, parenting skills training, community development, neighbourhood safety, leadership development, and life skills.

Beyond this, United Way makes a difference through initiatives such as the Council for Indigenous Relations, the GenNext Council, Peg (Winnipeg's community indicator system), and training and learning opportunities in United Way's Learning and Innovation Centres.

MAKING AN EVEN BIGGER DIFFERENCE

Together, there is more we need to do...

United Way is committed to supporting an essential network of services and to working with partners for greater social change. While keeping this core work strong, over the next three years Winnipeggers have asked us to increase our focus in four priority areas in order to make an even bigger difference over the coming years.

As we address the priorities identified on the following pages, we will give particular attention to:

- Children and families who live in low-income and marginalized situations.
- Indigenous peoples and Indigenous-led organizations.
- New immigrants and refugees.

UNITED WAY'S CORE WORK
+ 3 YEARS
+ 4 PRIORITIES

= A BETTER WINNIPEG

For our kids...

Every kid deserves a chance to succeed in school, and every opportunity to succeed in life. That's why we'll focus on:

1

MORE MENTORS

Too many of our kids are failing to complete their education or develop positive life skills, leaving them fewer options to be able to lead a full and productive life.

What we know:

- Almost 20% of our kids are not graduating high school. In our poorest neighbourhoods this number soars to 40%.
- Adults who were mentored as children are 75% more likely to receive a university degree.

▶ **To make a difference, we will prioritize mentoring programs that assist kids to build strong relationships, make better choices, and do better in school.**



2

MORE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental health issues amongst kids are on the rise, disrupting their development and leading to long-term difficulties if not addressed.

What we know:

- 1 in 4 Winnipeggers age 10 and older has a diagnosed mood or anxiety disorder, and less than 1 in 4 of those who need support actually receive it.
- 80% of people with diagnosed depression who get help are able to return successfully to regular activities.

▶ **To make a difference, we will prioritize supports and counselling for children, youth, and their families to help them manage better at home, school, work, and in the community. This includes culturally-centred approaches that boost mental wellness for kids and their families.**



... and for their families

Because we all know how important families are to kids, families need to be stable, healthy, and self-sufficient. That's why we'll focus on:

3

MORE JOB SKILLS AND MONEY MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Poverty is a root cause of many issues, including school dropout rates, poor physical and mental health, joblessness, homelessness, and neighbourhood safety and decline.

What we know:

- 1 in 10 Winnipeggers live in poverty, including 1 in 4 children.
- Pre-employment programming has been shown to increase the number of people securing first-time employment by 34% and increase six-month employment retention by 48%.
- Financial literacy training improves housing stability for vulnerable households, increases savings behaviours, reduces stress, and enhances self-sufficiency.

To make a difference, we will prioritize:

Pre-employment training and employment programs and initiatives that assist individuals who are marginalized to obtain and retain employment.

Money management training that helps families learn to budget, access benefits, and make the most of the income they have.



4

MORE NEIGHBOURHOOD-BASED SUPPORT

Many families in Winnipeg are under significant stress, and it is showing. Most concerning is the number of our kids that have been placed in care, setting up a lifetime of challenges for children and parents alike.

What we know:

- In 2014, there were 10,000 Manitoban children in care, and in our poorest neighbourhoods only 50% of kids are entering school ready to learn.
- Winnipeg research shows that neighbourhood family centres make a big difference for families and communities, including meeting basic needs, increasing self-confidence, and improving parenting and communication skills.

▶ To make a difference, we will prioritize:

Neighbourhood family centres, which are proven effective in providing supports and services for vulnerable families — and in keeping families together.

Launching 211 Manitoba, a service that has proved to be invaluable to parents and families across Canada for finding and connecting to help.



OUR COMMITMENT TO WINNIPEG

Our commitment to keep the core work of United Way strong while increasing our focus on four key priority areas for Winnipeg kids and families will be guided by the following five strategies:

1. Tackle long-term social issues head-on

Winnipeggers believe that while it is critical that we continue to support those who face challenging circumstances day to day, it is also important we commit to addressing the root causes of our most pressing issues, preventing these issues from occurring in the first place. We do so knowing that no one organization or level of government can successfully address these issues on their own.

- ▶ **That's why United Way will lead more cross-sectoral community efforts, including partnerships that leverage research and community wisdom to create informed, innovative, and measurable approaches to these tough issues. We passionately believe all of us have something to offer in creating a better Winnipeg and that, together, we will.**

2. Advance excellence in community services

Many thousands of Winnipeggers rely on the life-changing services provided by community-based, non-profit organizations each and every day. These organizations and their staff are deeply knowledgeable and deeply committed to the people and communities they serve, while managing increasing demands and funding instability.

- ▶ **That's why United Way will work with our non-profit colleagues to continuously elevate the effectiveness of Winnipeg's community services sector. We will protect and promote sustained funding, support collaborative networks and leverage United Way investments for maximum impact and efficiency. We will provide quality capacity-building opportunities to ensure community organizations are well-equipped to deliver effective programs.**

3. Actively promote and practice inclusion

Winnipeg is a richly diverse city. Each of Winnipeg's many populations offers unique insights and wisdom that we can all learn and benefit from. The issues we face as a community touch all of us, and can only be solved when all parts of our community feel welcomed, have a voice, and can contribute.

- ▶ **That's why United Way will create more engagements to increase trust, understanding, respect, and collaboration with and between diverse populations throughout our city. United Way will also actively learn and participate in our community's process of reconciliation. In order to perform at our very best for our city, we will work to actively engage diverse populations in all we do.**

4. Earn the honour of working with our donors, while inspiring more people to give

Our donors choose to give to United Way's community fund because it means, together, they can help thousands of Winnipeggers every day by providing stable funding to an essential network of programs. A strong community fund is critical in our city and provides the foundation upon which we can tackle even greater social change. We value our donors and want to deepen our partnership with them.

At the same time, we know our community faces significant challenges and to address them will require more of us to contribute time and dollars. We know there are people in our city who are interested in making a difference but are not yet connected to United Way. We also know that, increasingly, Winnipeggers want more choice in how they get involved and a clear line of sight to the difference they are making.

- ▶ **That's why United Way will listen and work hard to understand the interests of current and potential donors. We will create flexible and tailored giving and engagement opportunities for workplaces, individual donors, and philanthropists. We will provide opportunities that better meet the interests of all generations, Indigenous and other diverse communities, and the labour community. We will inspire each other and, together, make a big difference for people in our city.**

5. Continuously enhance effectiveness and efficiency in our work

Winnipeggers trust United Way to bring the community together to address the social issues most important to them while ensuring all investments make the biggest difference possible. We honor this trust by continually improving to ensure United Way remains a high-performing organization.

- ▶ **That's why United Way will strengthen our unique volunteer-staff partnership, tapping the talents and community commitment of thousands of volunteers and our staff. We will create the space for passion, creativity, and innovation, and provide the resources, training, and technology to do our work well and efficiently.**



United Way
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UNITED WAY'S CORE WORK

+ 3 YEARS

+ 4 PRIORITIES

= A BETTER WINNIPEG

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