

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way East Ontario supports those struggling through COVID-19 with technology, mental health supports, multilingual social programs, basic needs and more

United Way continues to support the social services sector as many people are still at risk and in crisis

Friday, July 3, 2020; Ottawa — This week, United Way will strengthen the capacity of local frontline services to deliver vital programs during the COVID-19 pandemic with investments in 18 programs across Eastern Ontario.

These 18 programs will provide basic needs like food and personal protective equipment; wellness checks; summer cooling; social programming in a range of different languages; resources and technology to enhance connectedness and communication; mental health supports; and capacity building to encourage collaboration between agencies, reducing the chances that people fall through the cracks.

“Our clients feel an immense sense of relief at being able to access a free phone or video counselling session with the click of a button during COVID-19,” says Simone Thibault, Executive Director at Centretown Community Health Centre, one of the agencies involved in leading the Counselling Connect program through the Ottawa Health Team-Équipe Santé Ottawa. “Seamless access to mental health supports is vital during this time of increased anxiety, financial stress, and family challenges. The Government of Canada joining United Way to support our community means we can continue and strengthen these online programs.”

The strategy to provide this support was a direct result of the input from the more than 70 partners that participate in the United Way-led COVID-19 Community Response table. After ongoing conversations with social service agencies, public health authorities, municipalities, and elected officials, United Way has a strong picture of the different challenges vulnerable populations are facing across East Ontario. By collaborating with other local funders, United Way ensures the impact is targeted, and there is no duplication of efforts during this time of heightened need.

United Way has invested approximately \$1.76 million in these 18 programs, in collaboration with the Government of Canada’s Emergency Community Support Fund. These programs aim to help more than 67,000 people over the course of nine months.

A further \$890,000 of the Emergency Community Support Fund will be invested by the end of July, totalling \$2.65 million in new investments to support our communities during this ongoing time of crisis. This adds to the 17 programs United Way-supported in the first few months of the pandemic.

“The social challenges people face on a regular basis have not gone away because of COVID-19,” says Michael Allen, President and CEO of United Way East Ontario. “Our collaboration with the COVID-19 Community Response Table has positioned us well to respond to these needs with our investments, but also with advocacy, partnership and creative problem-solving so no one feels invisible during this extended period of uncertainty.”

“Charities and non-profit organizations are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, acting as lifelines for many vulnerable Canadians,” says The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. “The Government of Canada is pleased to work with its trusted partners to support these organizations through the Emergency Community Support Fund so they can continue to help those most in need during this crisis.”

“I’m proud to be a working member of United Way East Ontario’s table of community partners during COVID-19,” says Marie-France Lalonde, Member of Parliament for Orléans. “I’ve seen and been part of the collaboration at the table that has enabled United Way to act quickly in investing the federal funds into the community, making sure vulnerable people are supported during this difficult time. Across levels of government and party lines, we are all engaged in this work to help those most in need through COVID-19.”

In early March, in partnership with Ottawa Public Health, regional public health authorities and dozens of organizations across the community sector, United Way launched an initiative to help support the most vulnerable in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) affecting our region. This collaboration has enabled local problem solving, prioritization of needs, and collaboration. **To learn more about United Way’s work, or if you require community service assistance, please visit unitedwayeo.ca/covid19.**

About United Way East Ontario:

Working with communities in Prescott-Russell, Ottawa, Lanark and Renfrew Counties, United Way East Ontario invests resources where they are needed most and will have the greatest impact. Through research, evaluation and partnerships with community experts, we identify the root causes of the biggest social challenges facing our communities and help find solutions that change tens of thousands of lives for the better. 100% of donations to United Way are put to work in the communities where they are raised to help those most in need.

About the Emergency Community Support Fund:

The Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF) provides financial support to charities and other qualified donees adapting their frontline services to support vulnerable Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ECSF was announced by the Government of Canada and is administered in collaboration with United Way Centraide Canada, Community Foundations of Canada and the Canadian Red Cross.

Canada

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Note that interviews will be coordinated via Zoom, Skype or FaceTime to adhere to physical distancing guidelines from public health authorities.

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Social media - ECSF announcement

Twitter - Thread

1. The social challenges people face on a regular basis haven't gone away because of #COVID19. For many, those challenges only get worse as time passes. With no end to the pandemic in sight, we're committed to being here for our communities for the long haul.

TAG IN TWEET THAT INCLUDES IMAGE: @ESDC_GC

2. Today, with the #GoC Emergency Community Support Fund, we're building on our #COVID19 work & strengthening our communities' ability to endure the effects of the pandemic. We're investing approx. \$1.76 million in 18 programs to help 67000+ people in the next 9 months.

3. These programs will provide technology, #mentalhealth supports, multilingual social programs, basic needs like food & PPE, summer cooling, and much more—making sure people don't fall through the cracks during #COVID19. Read more: [insert link to press release]

Twitter - following days

TAG IN ANY TWEET THAT INCLUDES IMAGE: @ESDC_GC

- Vulnerable Canadians are experiencing the effects of the #COVID19 pandemic differently. We're pleased to be working with @ESDC_GC and @UWCCanada to ensure rapid relief provided through the #ECSFund reaches those that need it most, and that no one is left behind: #LocalLove
- ICYMI: thanks to the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund, we're working with our agency partners to ensure 67,000+ people struggling during #COVID19 have the support they need for the coming months. Read more:
- The Government of Canada's #ECSFund means we can provide our communities' most vulnerable with food, PPE, mental health supports, summer cooling, multilingual social programming and much more during #COVID19. Read more:
- Last week, we invested to build on our #COVID19 work, thanks to the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund. Read about our latest efforts to support the most vulnerable through the lasting effects of this pandemic:
- ICYMI: We recently invested \$1.76 million in vital frontline programs thanks to the Government of Canada's #ECSFund. This will ensure people who are still struggling due to #COVID19 don't fall through the cracks. Read more:

- 1. "I've seen and been part of the collaboration that has enabled United Way East Ontario to act quickly in investing the federal funds into the community, making sure vulnerable people are supported during this difficult time," says @mflalonde, MP for Orleans.
- 2. With the Government of Canada's #ESCFund, we're providing the most vulnerable people with food, PPE, mental health supports, multilingual social programs, summer cooling, & more. Take a look:

Facebook/LinkedIn

The social challenges people face on a regular basis haven't gone away because of #COVID19. For many, those challenges only get worse as time passes. With no end to the pandemic in sight, we're committed to being here for our communities for the long haul.

We're pleased to be working with @ESDC.GC and @UnitedWayCentraide to ensure rapid relief provided through the Emergency Community Support Fund reaches those that need it most, and that no one is left behind.

Today, thanks to the #ECSFund, we're building on our #COVID19 work and strengthening our communities' ability to endure the effects of the pandemic by investing approximately \$1.76 million in 18 programs that will help more than 67,000 people over the coming nine months.

Read more about the impact this will have: [insert link to press release]

#LocalLove

Comment under post on FB: We're grateful to The Government of Canada, United Way Centraide Canada, Community Foundations of Canada, and the Canadian Red Cross for this partnership to strengthen the resilience of our communities.