



**United Way**  
Oxford

# COMMUNITY IMPACT INVESTMENTS Application Process An Overview 2021

## INTRODUCTION

Since 2012, United Way Oxford has made it our mission to identify and understand the social issues facing our community and work with our partners to make strategic and meaningful change in Oxford County.

To truly understand the needs in our community we conduct conversations with the people who live in Oxford County and use the services. The combination of public knowledge with local expert knowledge forms the basis of our funding strategies. Since our early days, we have had the privilege to support programs which bring services to people who need them, shortens waitlists, provide innovative programming tailored to the client, and provides basic needs. Each funding year brings new opportunities and we hope that 2021 will be no different. Here is a brief overview of what we do, how we do it and where your agency might fit in.

United Way Oxford believes that our community becomes stronger when we support the most vulnerable. Our funding model aims to not only provide basic needs but to invest in programs that help people make positive changes to their lives. In our community conversations, everyone described a community where those who wanted to, could find a connection, a place to be, the right supports.

## OUR MISSION

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

*United Way Oxford is more than just a funder. United Way Oxford connects people to resources, and invites new partners to the table. United Way Oxford also sits at community tables and committees dealing with homelessness, poverty, food security, mental health and more. We believe that real change happens when we work together.*

## OUR ASPIRATION

Through shared leadership, United Way Oxford aspires to build a stronger community and continue to improve the quality of life for everyone in Oxford County.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT PLAN AND FOCUS AREA FRAMEWORK

For the past 12 years, United Way Oxford has been intentional in its efforts to learn about the needs and hopes of our community. We have conducted over 70 formal community conversations with various groups from youth to seniors, working adults to those on assistance, those who are using various services and those who are new to our community. Through those conversations, themes emerge and are grouped to reflect what was heard – we call those ‘Community Narratives’. Volunteers with specific expertise and local knowledge add to the themes which are then framed into funding strategies. Local agencies who are confident that their programs and services can address some part of those strategies

are welcome to apply for United Way Oxford funding. To learn more about our Community Narratives, please visit [unitedwayoxford.ca](http://unitedwayoxford.ca).

**United Way Oxford’s THEORY OF CHANGE**  
**When we tackle our communities’ most pressing social challenges,**  
**people’s lives are improved and the entire community benefits**

OXFORD COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLBEING					
INVESTMENT IN PROGRAMS			COMMUNITY IMPACT		
SUPPORT	INTERVENTION	PREVENTION	BUILDING CAPACITY	NEW INITIATIVES	CHANGING SYSTEMS (COLLABORATION)

**SUPPORT** – United Way Oxford invests in programs that provide ‘getting by’ supports such as basic food and housing needs, immediate medical needs, etc.

**INTERVENTION** – United Way Oxford invests in programs that are designed to move people forward by providing ‘getting ahead’ supports. These programs have the potential to change someone’s situation by providing resources that build up mental, social, financial and educational, resources.

**PREVENTION** - United Way Oxford invests in programs that are forward-thinking, identify developing issues and address them before they become a crisis by putting the right interventions in place. There is a lens to the future and these programs are seen as early interventions.

**BUILDING CAPACITY** – United Way Oxford invests in programs and opportunities to build the capacity of our partners, local organizations, citizens so that, as a community, we are better equipped to handle emerging and crisis situations.

**NEW INITIATIVES** - United Way Oxford invests in innovative and forward thinking programs which have the potential to become community-changing initiatives.

**CHANGING SYSTEMS THROUGH COLLABORATION** – United Way Oxford invests in well-developed collaborations designed to address a pressing social issue. When agencies and organization work together in a cohesive way to address a community issue, real change can occur.

**PRIORITY AREAS**

***POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY***

United Way Oxford is committed to support community needs and invest in long term programs so that those living in poverty can make positive, meaningful changes in their lives. For some, this is about more than income and can include improving access to resources, opportunities, and connections.

*People who lack necessities like food, shelter and safety cannot get ahead in life. Those that struggle to find work or manage their finances aren't able to reach their full potential.*

<b>FUNDING STRATEGY</b>	<b>PROGRAM LEVEL OUTCOMES</b>	<b>COMMUNITY LEVEL OUTCOMES</b>
Options for accessing and preparing affordable, healthy food	Access healthy and affordable food on a regular basis	Services and programs are available to address all levels of the basic needs continuum
Supports and options to obtain and maintain affordable, safe and stable housing	Access to and can maintain short term and long term housing	Community members who have received supports are living in stability and become contributors to the community and/or economy
Opportunities to participate in life-development resources	Access to education and learning resources designed to move people out of poverty	Fewer people seek/are on supports

***STRONG COMMUNITY & HEALTHY PEOPLE***

United Way Oxford is committed to promote a strong and healthy community for all through resource development, community capacity building and connecting people to resources.

*The strength of a community is in the well-being of the people who live there. Everyone – no matter who they are or where they live – needs and deserves a chance to reach their full potential.*

<b>FUNDING STRATEGY</b>	<b>PROGRAM LEVEL OUTCOMES</b>	<b>COMMUNITY LEVEL OUTCOMES</b>
Ensure timely and appropriate interventions for those struggling with mental health and addictions issues	Access to mental well-being and addictions issues in a timely way	People report and improved sense of well-being
Provide consistent relationships for those working through mental health and addictions issues	Options for dealing with mental well-being and addictions	Community members who are receiving supports are able to live in stability and contribute in a positive way to the community

<p>Improve access to services through effective communication and awareness</p> <p>Create safe and inviting places for community members</p>		
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**ALL THAT KIDS CAN BE**

United Way Oxford is committed to supporting children and youth, along with their caregivers, with supports to help them thrive and to ensure that they experience success as they transition to adulthood.

*Early development –from childhood to young adulthood- is a strong predictor of future success. Too many kids and families face barriers to achieving their dreams.*

FUNDING STRATEGY	PROGRAM LEVEL OUTCOMES	COMMUNITY LEVEL OUTCOMES
<p>Children and youth have resiliency, strong self-esteem, and a sense of acceptance, so that they are able to cope with day to day challenges</p> <p>Interventions and supports for children, youth and families dealing with mental health and addictions issues</p> <p>Safe, welcoming opportunities for children and youth to pursue educational, leadership, mentorship, recreation and social interests</p>	<p>Access to a variety of opportunities that meet interests and needs</p> <p>Positive mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Healthy decision making</p> <p>Readiness to learn</p>	<p>Young people choose to stay in the community because of local opportunities and supports</p> <p>Children and youth experience successful transitions</p> <p>The community is able to respond to challenges presented by children and youth both proactively and reactively</p> <p>Parents and caregivers feel empowered and supported as they deal with their children’s development</p>

**AGENCY FUNDING ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA**

Organizations applying for United Way Oxford funding must:

1. Be a registered charity with the Canada Revenue Agency (see listing at <http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities-listings.html>) or meet the CRA criteria as a Qualified Donee;
2. Be fully inclusive and not be deemed discriminatory, as defined by the Human Rights Code;

3. Be able to prove a clear demarcation between religious teachings/expectations and community services;
4. Provide service in Oxford County and preference will be given to organizations located in Oxford;
5. Recognize that the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted fundraising for all charitable organizations and United Way Oxford is no exception. For this reason, we will limit this application round to a one-year funding commitment, with approved payments beginning in April 2022.

The funded program must address one or more of United Way Oxford funding strategies and the Agency must be able to demonstrate impact through quantitative and qualitative data. Funding amounts are not based on historical funding but, rather, on programs that are effectively working within our priority areas.

Program funding is intended for:

- agencies who require funding in order to deliver an established, proven program;
- programs that are part of an organizations over-arching structure and mission;
- expanding an established program based on new learnings and community need;
- promoting a collaboration of programs and services between/amongst other agencies;
- supporting a program until other sustainable funding revenues are obtained.

Program Funding Criteria:

- the program aligns closely with United Way Oxford’s Funding Strategies;
- the program addresses an identified urgent need facing our community;
- the program is viable and evidence-based;
- the program provides services without discrimination as outlined in the Human Rights Code;
- the program is led by an organization that is sustainable, stable and strong.

## COLLABORATIVE FUNDING

When agencies and organizations work systematically together to address a social issue, the opportunity for collective impact increases.

The Tamarack Institute has developed a Collaborative Spectrum to help groups identify the level of collaboration of a particular initiative:

**Compete** – competition for clients, resources, partners, public attention

**Co-Exist** – no systematic connection between agencies

**Communicate** – inter-agency information sharing

**Cooperate** – as needed, often informal interaction, on discrete activities or projects

**Coordination** – organizations systematically adjust and align work with each other for greater outcomes

**Collaborate** – longer term interaction based on shared mission, goals, shared decision-makers and resources

**Integrate** – fully integrated programs, planning, funding

Collaborative funding is intended for:

- Agencies that are willing to work together in the Coordination and Collaborative spectrum;
- Agencies willing to enter into a formal agreement outlining partner roles, responsibilities, expectations, etc.;
- Agencies who can measure the collective impact of their work through shared data.

### **United Way Oxford’s COMMUNITY IMPACT AND INVESTMENT COUNCIL (CIIC)**

The CIIC is comprised 25-30 knowledgeable community members with area specific experience who have a deep interest in the well-being of our local community. The role of the CIIC is to review and assess each funding application based on United Way Oxford criteria and investment strategies. The process includes an individual review, group meetings, providing feedback for agencies, meeting with each agency and final recommendations to the United Way Oxford’s Board of Directors. Final decisions will be confirmed by March, 2022.

### **FUNDING APPLICATION SCHEDULE**

Agencies looking for United Way Oxford funding will submit a Statement of Interest by October 1, 2021. The Statement of Interest is intended to provide the CIIC with a brief overview of the program, the amount requested and ensure that the agency meets eligibility requirements.

The CIIC will approve/deny the Statement of Interest by mid-October. Each applicant will be given feedback.

Agencies invited to move forward will be invited to complete the full application; an invitation to move to the next step of the application process is in no way a commitment of future funding. Submission of the full application will be due by December 10, 2021.

The CIIC will begin the review process in early December by generating questions and comments for each application. The comments and questions will be shared with each agency in preparation for a meeting with the CIIC in January. Each agency will meet with the CIIC to address the feedback and, provide additional information not captured in the application.

The CIIC will meet in early February to review all the data collected and begin the final decision making process.

Along with the information collected through the application and the agency meeting, the CIIC assesses the program based on the following:

- alignment of the program to United Way Oxford strategies and priorities;
- understanding of the community – both current and emerging needs;
- capacity of the agency to do the work;
- the agencies understanding of community narratives and the needs of theirs of their client;
- potential for future collaboration;
- possibility of leveraging or securing additional or sustainable funding;
- readiness of the community for the program;
- amount of funding available by United Way Oxford for allocation.

Final decisions are presented to the United Way Oxford’s Board of Directors for approval before the end of March, with monthly funding payments beginning in April.

## **OUTCOME MEASUREMENT**

What is Outcome Measurement?

Outcomes are desired changes in individuals, systems, community conditions, services, processes or products as a result of the particular project / program. Achieving desired outcomes contributes to community impact and improves conditions for all. It asks the question “are we really making a difference and how do we know?”

Along with our Funded Partners, we measure outcomes to:

1. Continuously improve, learn, adjust and grow
2. Provide evidence that change is occurring
3. Be able to demonstrate and communicate the impact of change on individuals and community

Measurement Definitions

Evaluation vs. Measurement

- Evaluation is the process of collecting and synthesizing evidence. This is the raw data, asking the right questions, finding the right process to collect information.



- Measurement is the systematic tracking of the target group experience. It can be Formative (use it to learn how things are going), Diagnostic (what needs to change) and Summative (how did we do).

#### Activities vs. Outcomes

**Activities** – What the program does with its resources to fulfill its purpose. Activities are actions that are performed to achieve the intended outcome

**Outcomes** – these are the benefits or changes that participants or communities experience during or after their involvement in the program. Outcomes can relate to changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, behaviour and/or conditions.

#### Good Measurement

- Is practical and can be collected given the resources
- Is actionable and will inform decisions moving forward
- Is relevant and answers the ‘so what’ question
- Is controllable and within your sphere of influence

United Way Oxford is interested in learning more about individual, community and organizations outcomes. It is our belief that building capacity within our community and organizations will make our community stronger and able to deal with future crisis and issues. While we are in the beginning stages of identifying that data, we know that working with other community groups will provide with a good measure of how our community is doing. Community Conversations are a large part of that data collection.

#### Expectations of funded agency partners

Successful program funding recipients will be expected to:

- Meet the requirements of the funding agreement;
- Participate in United Way Oxford donor engagement activities as requested and where appropriate including sharing stories and photo content (where appropriate), impact stories, agency tours, corporate volunteering, Day of Caring and other United Way Oxford events;
- Run a United Way Oxford workplace campaign and support the community campaign efforts;
- Partner with United Way Oxford on opportunities, initiatives, and media engagement as appropriate;
- Connect United Way Oxford to program participants for media, events and donor engagement as appropriate;
- Track and measure program outcomes and financial management and submit a mid-year and end-of-year report to United Way Oxford through the online system.