

# Community Investment Framework

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United Way Halton & Hamilton  
2020 - 2026

Community Impact, UWHH  
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## Introduction

The United Way Halton & Hamilton Investment Framework is the methodology that guides how we invest in our communities – a cornerstone of the work we do in order to fulfill our mission of improving lives, building community, and igniting action. Through this framework we will invest in the solutions that help us fulfil our vision of strong, empowered communities without barriers, in which everyone can thrive. Like many in the national United Way movement, we have evolved our role to move from umbrella funder to an impact focused one. Community impact is about achieving meaningful, long-term improvement to the quality of life for our community members; this is achieved not only by alleviating the symptoms, but by addressing root causes through agency and program investments, capacity building efforts to strengthen the entire social service sector, and advocating for system level change.

We also recognize we cannot carry out this work alone. In order to achieve our vision, we have been taking an ecosystems approach to the revitalization of our Investment Framework and working closely with community agencies, academic institutions, donors, and community leaders to leverage skill sets, change behaviours and traditional ways of thinking and operating, and challenge the way we work as well. UWHH operates with a continuous improvement mindset and this Investment Framework is no exception – it will continue to evolve and change as we ourselves, our sector, our economy, and our communities change. This process has involved many different forms of consultation, surveys, focus groups and extensive research and we welcome feedback from our various stakeholders as we continue to evolve to meet the needs of the community.

This document is meant to provide applicants with an overall view of the entire approach to our new investment framework and to provide tactical guidance on the various focus areas, application guidelines, assessment criteria and what we hope to achieve through this approach. Applicants are encouraged to read the entire document, but we have broken it up into sections to facilitate a more targeted use when filling in a new application for funding.

## Guiding Principles & Community Impact Model

### Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles of the Investment Framework are intended to ground the work we undertake based on our organizational mission and values. While the issues might change and our communities evolve, these principles will ensure that we stay true to our roots.



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- **Stability:** United Way values being a trusted source of community support. Our decision-making processes will reflect this through the range of supports and investments we provide the community. We will continue to honour our existing relationships while we build new ones in order to fulfill our mission to achieve and maintain a strong community network.
- **Growth & Balance:** United Way recognizes the changing funding and community landscapes and our duty to respond to them. The pace of our growth and change will reflect the time that is needed and the resources we have available to respond to the changing needs of our stakeholders.
- **Maintenance & Innovation:** United Way recognizes the need to support and foster innovation while respecting effective supports that have a trusted history in community. Our sector is deeply relational and this will be reflected in our flexibility and stability of funding and other supports.
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** while we serve the whole community, we recognize the historic and present-day inequities that shape the reality and limit the future of too many members of our community. We stand committed to reducing barriers and to building trusted relationships with historically marginalized and oppressed groups and individuals.
- **Needs & Evidence-Based:** United Way recognizes we must respond to gaps in service and direct support to the greatest community needs in a way that leverages our position in community. We also acknowledge the importance of this work continuing to be locally-informed and evidence-based.
- **Donor & Community Stewardship:** United Way is committed to leveraging our strong fundraising network to strengthen our community ecosystem. In order to achieve this, we recognize it is crucial to steward the donor-community relationship, by translating and centering community impact through effective and engaging methods that nonetheless respect the expertise of those delivering service.

## Community Impact Model

While we are traditionally known as fundraisers and funders, UWHH is committed to leveraging all of our assets as we invest, build capacity and advocate for systemic change by convening diverse stakeholders, conducting research, and building and enhancing partnerships. Most recently, our unique role and trusted voice in the sector has enabled us to advocate nationally for significant emergency funding through the federal government, but we have a long and rich history



of these types of activities. Our partnerships with NFPs, business, government, labour, and academia allow us to invest the time, treasure and talent of the community as we collectively address complex problems such as poverty, mental health and social isolation. And finally, our commitment to transparency, trust-based and community-centred philanthropy ensures that our supports prioritize and focus on flexibility, multi-year funding agreements, collaborative partnerships, and a community focus. All of this is embodied in our theory of change and underpins our community impact strategy. Our theory of change is manifested through a series of activities that include investing through grants, capacity building and strategic initiatives.



#### A) Capacity building

- a. ConnectED series: Operating virtually through webinars, or in-person workshops when possible, the ConnectED series aims to provide accessible capacity building opportunities to nonprofit agencies in and beyond our network. Training is developed based on needs identified by agencies within our network and broader research in the sector, and has included a range of topics from human resources and insurance, to fundraising and equity, diversity and inclusion. The program is regularly evaluated and UWHH is continuously seeking new ways of strengthening supports.

#### B) Research

- a. Through partnerships with academic institutions including McMaster University, Mohawk College and Sheridan, and strategic partnerships with Social Planning

and Research Council of Hamilton, Community Development Halton, and other community-based researchers, United Way supports and participates in regular community research to better understand community need.

- b. We compile community data and conduct internal research and evaluation on impact, program design, social innovations, and other matters to ensure that our internal and external activities are effective and grounded in community impact.
- c. We are evidence-based and outcome focused: by leveraging and enhancing those partnerships, we seek to continuously improve and share our learnings with the broader community. As stewards of the community's dollars, we are obliged to invest wisely.

### C) Advocacy

- a. United Way is supported by our National partners in advocating to all levels of government on issues faced by the charitable sector and our communities, including poverty elimination, gender-based violence, access to food, seniors supports, and race-based discrimination.
- b. Period Promise is our campaign to end period poverty in our communities. We aim to work with community to raise awareness, advocate for menstrual health and hygiene, and raise products to support community members who do not have access to these necessities.
- c. Through our research and investments, we recognize our unique ability to advocate for increased support of social services and the communities we serve.
- d. This pillar is continuously expanding and will be integrated into our investment streams. We hope to work with our community partners to increase our advocacy efforts and strengthen our work with and alongside equity-seeking groups.

### D) Strategic Initiatives

Building on our research, we also lead, convene and partner on strategic initiatives. These include our participation and leadership in the following:

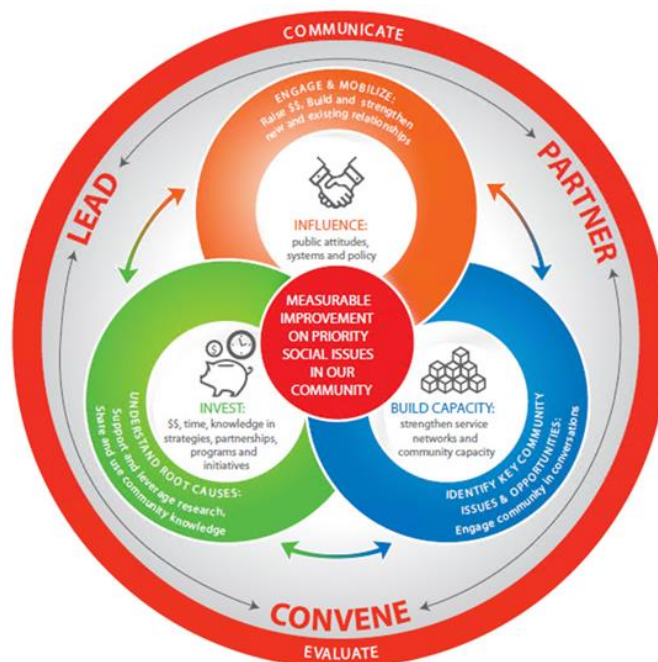
- a. Behavioural Insights: When designing and evaluating programs, we must consider how people interact with complex systems and meet people where they are. By investing in Behavioural Insights capacity, we can utilize the best research on why humans behave in certain ways in order to create interventions that positively nudge people toward beneficial outcomes, and create evidence-based approaches that can be integrated into processes, programs and policies.
- b. Social Prescription Roundtable: This Roundtable consists of community service and health practice members, who are committed to responding to



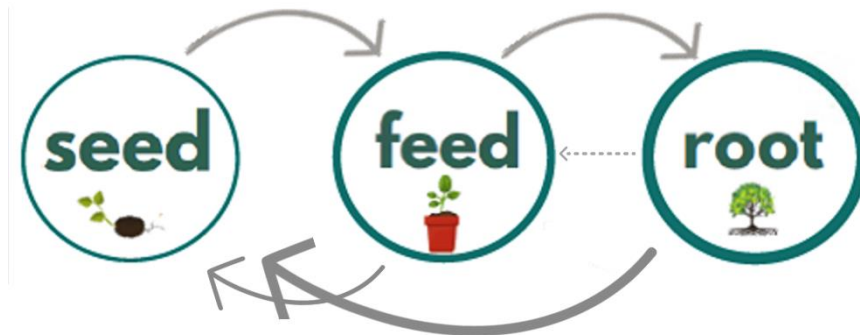
social determinants of health and creating more coordinated, holistic care systems for community members in need.

- c. Halton Poverty Roundtable: This Roundtable consists of community organizations, and community members experiencing or with lived experience of poverty, working together to combat poverty in Halton through advocacy and community events.
- d. Financial Empowerment and Problem Solving Program (FEPS): Operating in both Halton & Hamilton in different capacities, FEPS helps low income community members build economic well-being and empowerment through free tax filing and financial literacy workshops.
- e. Social Innovation Lab (SIL): Innovation happens when unusual suspects collide in structured and thoughtful ways. The SIL brings together diverse stakeholders through a design thinking curriculum to explore and test new solutions to old problems.

This selection of our strategic initiatives is meant to showcase how we as an organization are thinking more broadly about impact beyond grant-making. Rooted in our guiding principles, we are driven by our theory of change in order to make measurable improvements on priority social issues in the community through the full resources available to us. Our strategic initiatives involve all the components of our theory of change and are meant to help us fulfil and enhance our mission and vision.



## Investment Streams: An Ecosystem approach



There is no one size fits all approach to supporting the important work of the social service sector. For decades, funders have often focused on supporting discrete programs with defined outputs such as people fed or clients served. This often left organizations scrambling to align with the issue of the day or to fit into rigid and inflexible models driven by the funder and not by the community or need. It also made important investments into “overhead” and “administration” seem superfluous when it is indeed the foundation of our ability to deliver programs. It also left the sector vulnerable to shocks such as the ones we experience with COVID.

Our old model focused exclusively on programs, and following extensive community consultation and a pilot launch in Hamilton, we have continued to learn and gather feedback that has shaped our approach moving forward. In this framework we are attempting to balance flexibility and stability, innovation and maintenance, and long-term sustainability with agility to respond to emerging needs and crises. These investments are enhanced and augmented by the other activities we are engaged in and will continue to play a central part of what we do as an organization. Our rigorous evaluation process, evidence-based approach, and community led model seeks to meet the needs of our various partners and maximize the social return on investment (SROI) of every dollar donated to UWHH.

The Investment Framework encompasses three streams: Seed, Feed, & Root. Each of these streams will be explained after we outline the investment priorities, but each offers a unique path to funding and provides different tools for generating impact. All of them are guided by an overarching goal: Release. When appropriate, Release seeks to work with our partners in order to develop pathways towards sustainability through social enterprise, advocacy and de-risking innovation for government funders. Together, they form an ecosystem that works with our other activities to address root causes, identify best practices, test innovative new solutions, and invest in scalable, high-impact initiatives that support our agencies and focus on client outcomes at the same time. Briefly, seed provides innovation focused funding tied into capacity building and allows smaller community groups and non-profits to test new ideas and de-risk investments for institutional partners such as government. Feed provides programmatic funding focused on

upstream interventions and stable, three-year funding with generous provisions for agency capacity. Root provides five years of agency-based funding meant to support organizational transformation, collaboration, prevent mission drift, and enhance impact for multi-service agencies that meet our highest standard of impact.

## Focus Areas & Investment Priorities

In order to ensure that our investments are evidence based and focused on root causes rather than symptoms, all investments must fall into the following Investment Priorities. Each of the focus areas represent the high-level issue area which we share with our National United Way; the investment priorities are the identified local strategies through which we can address these issues. Beyond the investment priorities, we have our priority populations - those populations that face higher rates of systemic barriers within the priority area and therefore should be the focus when making investments. In order to translate the impact we hope to have on these priority populations through these investment priorities, we utilize outcomes as markers of achievements made by program participants. Applications will be assessed based on how effectively they demonstrate impact on each level and priority population.

Investment priorities and priority populations have been informed by community consultations (including those that took place through the Road to Greater Impact in 2016); local research (including that carried out by the Social Planning & Research Council of Hamilton and Community Development Halton); and ongoing agency feedback collected through yearly reporting, touch point meetings, and updates over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.



### Focus Area: Poverty to Possibility

**Goal:** United Way helps to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable people in our communities and build the capacity of individuals to become economically independent, so they can have the skills and resources to prepare for a better future and move from poverty to possibility.

**Definition & local context:** Poverty is defined as not having enough income to purchase goods and services in one's community - in Canada both the Market Basket Measure and the Low Income measure are used to define the poverty line. Poverty is the single largest determinant of mental, physical and social health. The prevalence of poverty in both Halton and Hamilton is unacceptable. The poverty rate in Hamilton has persisted around 15% since 2000.<sup>1</sup> While poverty rates have reduced across Halton since 1996, there are still 8.1% of Halton residents (43,750) that live in deep chronic poverty.<sup>2</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has also placed many individuals in more precarious situations resulting in more need of local supports; demand for both food and income supports in Halton and Hamilton increased by 13% when comparing April 2020 to April 2019.<sup>3</sup>

**Strategies:** Although an individual cannot move themselves out of poverty without external supports and financial assets, such as income and income supports, the development of human assets such as employment skills, education and training, and literacy is an important component of a comprehensive strategy to address poverty, and often an important step towards accessing employment, housing, or other kinds of resources. In addition, alleviating immediate needs like shelter and food are important first steps that can pave the way for accessing other supports like education and training, which build assets to help individuals build independent and sustainable livelihoods.



#### A) Investment Priority: Employment & Financial Security

Financial security contributes significantly to overall health and wellbeing. Financial instability can lead to food insecurity, social exclusion, depression, stress, and poor physical health. While income has been increasing for Canadians, this increase has not been equal across income brackets. In Canada, the average income of the top 10% of income earners is 8.6 times higher than that of the bottom 10%<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, precarious employment is on the rise. Research conducted in southern Ontario found that at least 20% of all employees are in precarious forms of employment, and that this percentage is on the rise<sup>5</sup>. Precarious employment is employment that offers little in the way of security or benefits, putting individuals more at risk of falling into poverty. Research also suggests the COVID-19 pandemic will deepen existing inequalities. So far, the negative impacts of COVID-19 are more pronounced for workers who are younger, unmarried or less educated.<sup>6</sup> COVID 19 is exacerbating existing inequalities that have been shown to impact outcomes through social determinants of health.<sup>7</sup>

Investments into employment and financial security will support basic literacy, skill building and training, career support and pre-employment services, income/credit counselling and financial literacy.

*Priority Populations:* racialized individuals, youth, adults, and seniors experiencing low income, persons with disabilities, and people living with or experiencing mental health challenges.

*Desired Outcomes:*

- People have access to training and skills development services
- People have sustaining and meaningful employment
- People have access to affordable goods and services and work towards financial security

B) Investment Priority: Food Security

Canada's Food Security Action Plan defines food security as being "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Food insecurity is defined as being uncertain of or unable to access enough food to meet the needs of all members of a family which can result from insufficient money or lack of access. 13,798 adults and 9125 children accessed food banks in Hamilton in 2019, a rise of 5% over the previous year<sup>8</sup>. 1 in 10 people in Halton experience hunger<sup>9</sup>. Again, we also see the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that are more severely affecting marginalized individuals and low-income earners; experts in food insecurity have signaled that the financial impacts of this pandemic could lead to an increase in the number of Canadians living in a situation of food insecurity<sup>10</sup>. While more upstream preventative measures to ensure individuals have the resources and income to support themselves are needed, we also acknowledge the reality of the many that are living on the edge of poverty can be one paycheck away from an eviction or food bank visit and need emergency food support, even if this is not the long-term solution. When possible, we encourage food security programs to connect with other types of supports and programing that look at the full range of social and income supports required to move someone from poverty to possibility.

Investments into food security will support individuals and families to increase their food security and independence through food provision, food literacy and education, and income support and assistance.

*Priority Populations:* individuals and families experiencing low income, racialized individuals, newcomers, women, lone-parent households, Indigenous Peoples

*Desired Outcomes:*

- People can access affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food
- People have the knowledge and skills to handle, prepare, and consume healthy, nutritious food
- People have the opportunity to come together around good food to build community

## Focus Area: All That Kids Can Be

**Goal:** United Way helps children and youth to realize their full potential and grow up strong and healthy.

**Definition & local context:** Children are born with limitless potential. Yet there are many societal and systematic barriers facing children and youth which can prevent their healthy development, transition into adulthood, and goal attainment such as experiences of poverty, bullying, social exclusion, and lack of academic support. More than 1 in 10 children live in poverty in Halton<sup>11</sup>. In Hamilton, the LICO (low income cutoff rate) for children has dropped over the last two decades but remains an alarming 20.5%<sup>12</sup>. Child Vulnerability, an index that measures a range of social, mental and emotional factors to rate overall school readiness in kindergarten students and highlights how many children are lagging behind, indicates Hamilton's rate has hovered around 26% since 2005 - a rate higher than the provincial average<sup>13</sup>. The number of vulnerable children in Halton has increased by 36% over a 9 year period<sup>14</sup>. Income inequality is a key factor in family and youth outcomes and is associated with more hopelessness and disconnection from education among young people in the lowest-income families<sup>15</sup>. Youth are also increasingly presenting higher rates of mental health challenges, especially stress, anxiety and depression. Mental health challenges can be disruptive to a child's development, it has the potential to have long term repercussions on relationships, functioning, and life course if not treated. Although the good news is, most mental disorders can be treated successfully when help is sought.

**Strategies:** To help children be all they can be, it is important to address the full spectrum of



developmental assets and acknowledge the environment in which children develop. Focusing on the physical, emotional and educational development of young people, as well as family/caregiver support helps address the child holistically and prevent the development of problems that can result from challenges experienced in childhood, such as failing to finish high school, unemployment, poor mental and physical health,

and the persistence of poverty. United Way helps to improve children's outcomes and lead happy, fulfilling lives - one in which they achieve their goals.

## A) Investment Priority: Child & Youth Supports

A key strategy to supporting youth is encouraging learning and academic and community engagement. Engagement in school helps steer youth through a positive transition into adulthood which may include post-secondary education, employment or further training. School readiness is a strong indicator of future success and heavily dependent upon factors such as income, gender, family structure and health status. In Canada, 27.0 per cent of children entering primary school are vulnerable in one or more aspects of cognitive, social, physical and emotional development<sup>16</sup>. In 2012, Canada's dropout rate was 7.8% and youth dropping out of school are among the most vulnerable in our society with higher likelihood of earning lower wages in their future workplaces<sup>17</sup>. A child's wellbeing and engagement are interconnected, and early evidence indicates this has also been affected by the pandemic. 59% of parents have noted behavioral changes in their child ranging from outbursts or extreme irritability to drastic changes in mood, behavior or personality and difficulty sleeping/altered sleeping patterns as well as persistent sadness<sup>18</sup>. Collectively, these barriers are disproportionately experienced by children and youth experiencing low income, young girls, and those belonging to the LGBTQ2+ community. How can we help these children and youth overcome barriers to engage positively in their community and in learning and build resilience to support them in their futures? Investments into youth supports will provide physical activity, academic support, mentorship and guidance, community engagement, and empowerment to children and youth across our five communities.

*Priority Populations:* school-aged children and youth ages 6 to 24, children, youth, and families experiencing low income, girls aged 6 to 24, children and youth identifying as Indigenous, LGBTQ2+ children and youth, newcomer youth, and racialized children and youth.

### *Desired Outcomes:*

- Children and youth improve academic performance and pursue further education/training
- Children and youth make positive health choices
- Children and youth demonstrate strong emotional and social skills
- Children and youth have positive relationships with peers and adults
- Children and youth are involved in their community

## B) Investment Priority: Family Supports

A child's first source of support, learning, and personal development are their families and caregivers. Without nurturing family behaviour and positive reinforcement, children are at greater risk of developing negative behaviours and health outcomes including poor physical health, drug and alcohol use, failure to complete school, and criminal and anti-social behaviours. Just as children and youth face barriers, so do many families and caregivers in Halton and Hamilton, specifically those who are lower income earners, newcomers to Canada, and are single parent led. Numerous studies report on the benefits of parental involvement in their child's development. "The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is... the extent to which that student's family is able to: create a home environment that encourages learning, express high expectations for their children's achievement and future careers, and become involved in their children's education at school and in the community"<sup>19</sup>. Investments into family supports will help provide education and engagement skills to parents, support parent/caregiver-child relationship building, provide mental health and counselling to young children and their families facing challenges like family breakdown or violence, and alleviate caregivers by providing supportive respite programming.

*Priority Populations:* families experiencing low income, lone-parent led households, newcomer families, families with children experiencing mental health challenges and/or anti-social behaviours

*Desired Outcomes:*

- Families have more capacity to work through challenges
- Families have more knowledge about available services and options
- Parents and caregivers have healthy engagement with their children

## Focus Area: Healthy People, Strong Communities

**Goal:** Positive wellness and belonging are experienced by all members of our five communities, regardless of age, ability, personal experience, and income.

**Definition & local context:** Positive mental health is the capacity of people to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance the ability to enjoy life and deal with challenges. Inclusion means that all people are respected and seen as valuable members of their communities and can participate in social, economic, and recreational activities. Mental health challenges and lack of inclusion can happen to anyone, at any point in their life, either for one instance or repeatedly, regardless of their identity and ability.



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Nationally, 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and of those, only 1 in 3 will seek help.<sup>20</sup> Only 65% of youth and adults strongly feel they belong to their communities<sup>21</sup>.

Marginalized groups (including those experiencing poverty) face societal and systematic barriers which can often lead to poor mental health; seniors, members of the LGBTQ2+ community, BIPOC, women, and people with disabilities, have been shown to have worse mental health outcomes. It is important to understand, for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, the physiological and psychological impacts of systemic racism. Physiologically, when an individual perceives an act of racism, they can experience increased cortisol levels, anxiety, high blood pressure, heart disease, and higher mortality rates.

Psychologically, this can lead to lower sense of belonging, stress and anxiety, sleep deprivation, fear of safety, binge drinking, and PTSD, among others<sup>22</sup>. For people with disabilities, there is also a strong linkage to mental health challenges. 90.5% of Ontarians with mental health or addiction disabilities report another type of disability<sup>23</sup>. COVID is exacerbating these issues for many and will likely cause what some are calling a shadow pandemic. A recent survey conducted by McMaster University looking at the mental health of parents during the pandemic found that “nearly 60 per cent of them displayed symptoms of depression, including losing sleep and feeling overwhelmed, and 40 per cent said their children's behaviour or mood had deteriorated during the lockdown.”<sup>24</sup>



**Strategies:** Inclusion, mental health and poverty are all strongly related. Poverty affects mental and physical health - data from all census areas in Canada reflect what is called the “social gradient in health” with higher hospitalization rates for people living in low socio-economic status (SES) neighbourhoods, compared to residents living in average or high SES neighbourhoods<sup>25</sup>. People with mental illness often live in chronic poverty which is defined as living below the low income cutoff for multiple years. Those facing challenges with mental illness may experience barriers, including stigma and discrimination, which can prevent them from securing education and employment. Lack of secure employment can in turn, affect one's ability to earn adequate income, eventually drifting into poverty<sup>26</sup>. Conversely, poverty can also lead to poor mental health - people experiencing economic hardship as a result of difficult life situations (like divorce, family death, job loss, etc.) may also lose other essential resources like housing, education, and employment. UWHH recognizes that a full spectrum of programming is required. Through prevention and education, intermediate intervention, engagement, and crisis programming, our investments meet the needs of individuals before problems escalate while acknowledging the many individuals facing crisis in our communities.

## A) Mental Health & Safety

Experiencing poor mental health can be the result of numerous factors like one's environment, income level, societal barriers, and genetic pre-disposition. Mental health is also strongly linked to other realms and if challenged can lead to other negative health effects including poor physical health, withdrawal from society and isolation. Most recently, mental health across Ontario has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic - 45% of Ontarians report that their mental health has deteriorated since COVID-19 began<sup>27</sup>. 42% of Ontario's adults having increased their substance or gambling use since the pandemic started and 28% are experiencing increased tension in the household<sup>28</sup>. With the prevalence of domestic violence, gender-based violence<sup>29</sup>, and human trafficking, which has only increased due to the pandemic<sup>30</sup>, it is critical to intervene in these spaces and acknowledge our communities are not safe for everyone<sup>31</sup>. Working towards ending violence means spreading awareness, educating others, advocating for groups that face violence, and investing into service for survivors.

Investments into mental health and safety will reduce barriers to accessing supports and improve individuals and family's wellbeing through one-to-one, group, or peer counselling services. Additionally, we recognize the need to invest in advocacy and education to the broader community to help prevent oppression and violence, social/communal programming to bring people together, and tailored therapeutic initiatives.

*Priority Populations:* individuals and families experiencing low income, children, adults, seniors and families experiencing mental health challenges including addictions, newcomer families and individuals, seniors with cognitive and/or developmental disabilities, women and girls, LGBTQ2+ community members, racialized individuals, survivors of violence, and caregivers.

### *Desired Outcomes:*

- People have more capacity to work through challenges by accessing the services they need
- Public awareness of mental health and violence is increased and stigma is reduced
- Community services work together to help people better navigate support systems and reduce barriers to access
- People have improved mental health
- Neighbourhoods and homes are safer for people, especially survivors of violence
- People are able to live independently and make healthy choices

## B) Community Inclusion

Community inclusion not only recognizes the importance of being involved in and feeling connected to one's community but also seeing one's identity represented in a positive way. Levels of social attachment/belonging are strongly indicative of social engagement and community participation. Having a social group in which you feel supported, being involved in volunteer work and supporting others, knowing what resources are available, finding meaningful employment, and having your voice heard through community advocacy are all examples of social engagement and community participation. Lacking belonging has been linked to increases in stress and depression which can in turn impact one's physical health as well. The decline in social trust across many western nations is being felt across many domains and can impact both community cohesion and individual mental health. Where societies are more unequal, social trust tends to decline<sup>32</sup>. It is therefore crucial to invest in programs that focus on rebuilding social trust as community engagement benefit individuals and society at large. Engagement can lead to community-based initiatives and citizen-led solutions to problems, shaping our local community's culture and economy and rebuilding frayed ties. Investments into community inclusion will promote inclusion and foster a sense of belonging through social support, skills development/sharing, and activity-based programming, community-based initiatives, and outreach to marginalized groups.

*Priority Populations:* individuals and families experiencing low income, children, adults, seniors and families experiencing mental health challenges including addictions, newcomer families and individuals, seniors with cognitive and/or developmental disabilities, women and girls, LGBTQ2+ community members, racialized individuals.

### *Desired Outcomes:*

- People develop stronger social connections and community trust
- Diversity is celebrated and people feel represented and included in their communities
- People are involved in their communities
- People feel a sense of belonging in their community
- People feel their contribution can influence the future of their community

## Investment Streams

As we work toward creating an ecosystem of supports, we've designed multiple investment streams with attention to interlinked as well as complementary components. As a whole, it involves the layering of processes, programs, and flows (financial, energy, talent) within and between components. Below you will find details about the stream, what each intends to accomplish, acceptable expenses, application details and evaluation criteria. Additional resources such as webinars will also be made available.

## Investment Stream: Seed



### Description and Purpose

Seed funding aims to cultivate new ideas and growth. While the nonprofit sector has innovated on shoestring budgets for years, many ideas fail to germinate or flourish due to lack of validation, funding, or staff capacity.

Incubators have become common in the for-profit sector as a way to connect people and companies with experts and training to help explore, improve and validate their ideas enough to attract start-up financing. While incubators are becoming more common in the non-profit sector, many focus on developing social enterprises that use technology or intellectual property, which are not always the best solutions in social service innovation. In Halton and Hamilton, very few options currently exist for the majority of nonprofits to access incubator programs that align with their missions.

Nonprofits also do not have the same financing options as for-profits, such as equity investing, and their ability to attract financing lays in their idea's potential for social impact. However, all organizations in the social service sector know how complex and messy it is to measure the full impact of programs on people, even when the programs are running. Innovative ideas may lack the direct evidence of success that donors traditionally seek. Social financing such as low-interest or delayed payment loans are becoming increasingly available to nonprofits, however, the high risk of failure that prevents donors from investing can also prevent nonprofits from seeking repayable options and the risk that may place on constrained budgets.

The Seed Stream aims to carve out supportive ways for nonprofits to innovate, where failure is expected and learning is prioritized.

Recognizing the gap in incubation services for social service organizations in Halton and Hamilton, UW HH launched a Social Innovation Lab (SIL) pilot in 2020, which would introduce our first round of Seed Funding. Unfortunately, this collaborative, in-person program is postponed due to COVID-19 and will relaunch in an adapted, virtual format once participating agencies have enough capacity to move ahead. Meanwhile, planning is also underway for what future SIL iterations could look like. The sections below outline some of the original key components involved in the Social Innovation Lab, however these may change as the program is adapted.

## Program Curriculum and Objectives

The SIL aims to create a non-profit sector that is agile, innovative and resilient; create deeper flows between sectors; and stable investment to test new social solutions that will help build empowered communities.

The pilot is based on several principles that are integral to our approach to innovation: collaboration, experimentation, iteration (failure and learning), and human-centered design. The program includes a structured design-thinking based curriculum for a cohort of agencies to explore, develop, and test innovative ideas with a design team of diverse stakeholders who donate time, treasure and talent to the cause. This approach brings agencies external expertise, perspectives and supports, and based on preliminary feedback, this was extremely valuable even after one workshop. It also aims to drive financial capacity by engaging investors in the actual design process, which will both enable them to contribute in various ways, while also helping to influence their understanding of the sector and in theory, building long-term commitments to the cause.

Each SIL will focus on a different topic or issue. For the pilot year, this was social enterprise, which was a core focus in United Way's strategic plan and a common interest amongst agency partners. The original pilot program involved five full-day workshops over five months, with project development in between. By the end of the program, the objective was for teams to have completed the five stages of design thinking: empathizing with the target audience to better understand their needs; (re)defining the project challenge based on new insights; ideating or brainstorming new solutions; making low-fidelity (and low-risk) prototypes; and testing these prototypes for real feedback from the target audience. At the end of the program, agencies could choose to apply for Seed Funding of \$10,000 to build on their preliminary learnings.

## Eligibility and Application Process

In its pilot year, the SIL was open only to agencies currently receiving support through the Community Investment Fund. This was intentional because as a structured program, space was very limited and social enterprise has been a common interest amongst currently funded agencies. As a pilot, United Way also wanted to work with agencies within our trusted network to test out new methods of collaborating and to provide critical feedback on how the program could be even more valuable to them. All agencies were invited to an information session in Fall 2019 and invited to apply by submitting a short application, which was adapted from Innoweave's social enterprise coaching stream readiness assessment criteria.

While we aim to offer the social enterprise topic again after pilot learnings, new topics will be identified through research and community engagement. The application process and program will be altered to the context of new topics. United Way will also be considering an open call for applications and consider eligibility for non-profits without charitable status.

## Funding & Requirements

To help build a supportive space for innovation and to encourage agency collaboration, each agency participating in the SIL (5) had the opportunity to receive \$10,000 in Seed Funding. While United Way may create other competitive elements of Seed Funding, by eliminating competition amongst the cohort members, we aimed to encourage collaboration and shared learnings. In order to receive funding, agencies would need to complete a separate application that builds upon their program learning, involving the following components:

- Community need, supported by learnings in “empathy” stage and other research
- Description of preliminary idea and client feedback from test phase
- Plans to adapt the idea based on client feedback and other information that would support the potential for success
- Compelling theory for why the project will create impact
- Self-determined target outcomes at individual, community and organizational levels
- Use of funds

As agencies implement and gain new insights, the flexible seed funding will allow them to adapt as needed, but will need to notify staff of any changes for documentation purposes. United Way will use a developmental evaluation approach to reporting that aims to capture key learnings mid-way and at the end of the project.

United Way recognizes that \$10,000 is not enough to launch a full idea from seed to fruition. The limit is directly connected to reducing risks for both agencies and donors to commit to exploring new ideas in the sector. Rather than taking years to develop a multi-million dollar idea with huge potential but little validation and high risk, this seed funding encourages agencies to experiment and fail early to succeed sooner. In some cases, success may mean that an agency tried a promising idea but learned it would not work. In these cases, United Way aims to provide continued capacity building supports and future seed funding opportunities. For agencies that complete the SIL and Seed Funding with positive impacts, United Way aims to work in partnership in order to build opportunities for growth and pending the availability of additional funds, will work with agencies to identify and scale new opportunities.

## Future Seed Funding

While United Way’s only approved mechanism for Seed Funding is currently through participation in the SIL, staff are also striving toward strong fund development that can support additional Seed Grants. We recognize that social innovation is varied and that in some cases, extensive capacity building or cohort-based programs will not be necessary. This is often the case for organizations wanting to implement ideas that are new for them but have strong

external evidence for success; or organizations who want to grow their seeded idea that has some preliminary traction and results.

For example, through the Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF), United Way invested in Ample Labs' Chalmers App. The digital application empowers individuals facing homelessness to access a chat-bot named Chalmers, who connects them to local supports in real time. Chalmers was launched in Barrie and Toronto with good success, and was looking to expand in Halton and Hamilton but struggling to get funding traction due to the risk of endorsing such a new service with no existing local results. United Way invested in the application through the ECSF, and by doing so, it de-risking the opportunity for Halton Region, which has co-invested in a pilot project in order to explore whether it would like to sustain the support moving forward. While this happened through emergency funding and not the actual seed fund, it provides a clear example for how seed funding can connect agencies with historically risk-averse investors.

In line with our Guiding Principles, United Way staff will continue to engage agency stakeholders to learn how to improve the Seed Funding stream and offer new opportunities that support the nonprofit sector to fill community needs through social innovation.

For more information, questions, feedback or ideas related to Seed funding please email Vivien Underdown, Senior Manager, Strategic Initiatives & Capacity Building at [vunderdown@uwhh.ca](mailto:vunderdown@uwhh.ca).

## Investment Stream: Feed



### Description and purpose

Feed funding provides three-year funding for established programs that align with one or multiple of the investment priorities (and by extension one or more focus areas). Feed provides multi-year, stable funding to programs that are designed to meet a gap in community, utilize a proven and effective program model, and have clear, achievable outcomes.

A program is defined as any structured group of activities that contribute to a shared goal for a specific group of individuals.

For example, a peer support group program for LGBTQ2+ youth who are living with a mood disorder may consist of the following activities with the goals of increasing confidence and wellbeing and building a stronger sense of belonging of its members:

- ongoing virtual outreach to LGBTQ2+ community members led by a counsellor
- weekly virtual meetings where peers discuss their issues, experiences, and event ideas together

- one on one (peer to counsellor) meetings to discuss challenges in a safe space and make personalized support plans
- monthly group events coordination led by peer members such as outdoor picnics, nature walks, virtual movie watching, virtual art sessions
- pre- and post-surveys with members (e.g. upon registration, then after continuous participation in 6 months of activities, and again after 1 year of participation)

Activities can be categorized as a “program” if they share the following:

- A specific goal (such as ensuring survivors of violence are heard and supported)
- A specific target population (such as isolated seniors, racialized youth, newcomer families)
- A set of outcomes (such as, youth believe in themselves; youth can better handle life’s challenges; and youth feel a stronger sense of belonging)

United Way acknowledges programs are often designed to deliver multiple supports and multiple benefits to an individual and therefore, our system will enable an agency to report on program outcomes under multiple strategic priorities. Unlike previous years where agencies had to report under one priority area, the new evaluation framework will encourage comprehensive evaluation that captures as much program impact as possible. A program may align with multiple focus areas and investment priorities as long as it is carrying out corresponding evaluations at the program level to justify this. This is encouraged as we aim to capture as much program impact as possible. For example, we know that mental health supports and family supports are often tied into social inclusion or that many programs have recently began to include food security elements to meet the needs of vulnerable clients.

## Eligibility and Funding Criteria

United Way Halton & Hamilton provides funding to established, registered charities operating and providing services within the five communities of: Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Milton, and Halton Hills. Organization operating as non-profits may apply for United Way funding only if sponsored by a registered charity who will act as the financial sponsor. United Way also encourages partnerships between agencies for program delivery; programs delivered through an agency partnership are permitted for the Feed application.

United Way does not provide deficit funding or debt reduction funding and does not provide funding to the following: primary health care services; mandated government services such as school boards or universities; environmental, heritage, or arts organizations unless programming intentionally services vulnerable communities; or political or faith-based organizations that require adherence to or promotion of religious or political views and affiliations. UWHH does not provide capital funding such as building and renovation costs.

To be eligible to receive Feed and Root funding from United Way Halton & Hamilton, agencies must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be incorporated and registered as a charitable agency/organization with the Canada Revenue Agency and operating for a minimum of two years before applying
- Have a clearly stated purpose and function within the voluntary human and social service sector operating in Halton & Hamilton
- Be supportive of United Way Halton & Hamilton's mission and policies
- Provide program(s) and service(s) that align with one or more of the funding focuses of United Way Halton & Hamilton
- Demonstrate how the program(s) fit with the criteria area(s) and contributes to the result within the funding focus most closely aligned to its program(s)
- Demonstrate that there is a need for a United Way Halton & Hamilton funded program(s) which can effectively meet identified needs not currently being met by other programs and services
- Utilize outcome measurement/evaluation as part of its program(s) planning and management
- Participate in an Agency Volunteer Review Night and have its programs assessed by volunteer reviewers
- Be governed by an active volunteer Board of Directors whose membership reflects the community it serves and is responsible for the agency's/organizations strategic plan and ensuring effective and efficient management of the agency's/organizations program(s) and budgets
- Have a local volunteer advisory committee that oversees the agency/organization, if it is part of a national, provincial or regional agency/organization
- Have a voting membership which reflects the community it serves.
- Individual voting members must be at least 18 years of age as required by the Corporations Act
- Effectively utilize volunteers in the delivery of program(s) and service(s), where appropriate
- Effectively manage risk related to the use of volunteers at the agency/organization, including carrying the appropriate level of insurance
- Have a realistic budget and produce annual audited financial statements unless annual income is less than \$100,000 (in which case financial statements subject to a Review Engagement are required)
- Adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code and not exclude anyone from service, accommodation or employment by reason of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability.

## Application Process

Applications for Feed funding typically occur every three years but may occur more frequently should funding become available. Application intake may be restricted to agencies who have, in the past year, received funds from the Community investment Fund, or be open to the entire community. This is also dependent upon available funds. Applications take place through an online portal and require agency level information (such as an explanation of agency capacity, staffing and volunteer levels, and agency financial statements) as well as program level information (such as a description of the program activities, program model, program target audience, budgets). Programs must also demonstrate how many clients intend to be served through the program and what outcomes clients can expect to achieve (e.g. increase engagement in school, achievement of employment goals). While United Way supports the evolution and continuous improvement of programs, outcomes being measured should be consistent year over year.

## Assessment Criteria, Evaluation, and Yearly Reporting

Applications will be reviewed by staff as well as community volunteers (Impact Cabinet) representing all five supported communities. The Impact Cabinet volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and expertise including social work, health care, education, etc. to provide diverse perspectives on applications and programming. Referencing the current application, publically available agency information, local data and knowledge, and agency meetings, the Impact Cabinet members evaluate the applications with support from staff based on the following criteria:

- Agency capacity to deliver the program
- Program alignment to the agency's mission
- Evidence and need for the program
- Adaptability and client-centeredness
- Alignment to focus areas and investment priorities
- Target population and clients served
- Impact of the program on clients
- Intended outcomes of the program

Staff and volunteers work together to create recommendations on which programs will create a strong network of supports exhibiting diversity in geography, populations served, and types of intervention. All recommendations and associated allocations are then presented to the United Way Board of Directors for final approval.

Once funding is approved, yearly progress reports are required to be submitted with a final report due at the end of the funding cycle. These reports are to inform United Way of program accomplishments, challenges or changes, and to gather data on clients impacted by the program. These reports will also gauge any changes in numbers of clients served or levels of

outcomes achieved. With the understanding that external and personal factors certainly influence program impact, the intention of this is to gain an understanding of the circumstances around these changing levels and to offer support if possible.

## Funding Thresholds and Use of Funding

Currently there are no maximum or minimum funding thresholds for programs or agencies under the Community Investment Fund. However, agencies must demonstrate and justify the need for the amount requested. If funding is approved, there is a chance the amount granted will be less than the amount requested. Funding decisions aim to ensure equitable distribution within our five supported communities.

Feed funding may go towards the following costs as long as they are related to/help to deliver the program: program materials (e.g. food, stationary supplies, books, art supplies, promotional materials, etc.), program staffing (salaries and benefits), communications (phone, internet), rent and utilities, minor equipment expense (e.g. laptops, cellphones, etc.) or other miscellaneous expenses such as staff travel costs, transit tickets for clients, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Capital costs (such as building and renovation costs) are not eligible under Feed. We recognize the need to invest in agency capacity, staffing, and administration as a pre-requisite for effective program delivery.

Agencies may receive funding both from the Feed and Seed investment streams. So those agencies receiving Feed funding for example, are not excluded from applying or being considered for the Seed stream. Similarly, agencies receiving Root funding, may also apply and be considered for Seed funding.

## Funding Conditions and Termination

If program reporting shows ongoing inability to achieve goals, have consistent impact, and fails to provide sufficient explanation and/or notice to United Way, funding reductions may occur and conditions may be assigned to the annual allocations. For example, United Way may require the agency to submit, along with their yearly report or application, a sustainability plan outlining the agency's capacity to support their clients and staff and ensure operations are viable.

For more information or for any questions related to Feed funding please email, Alecia Korkowski, Senior Manager, Community Investment at [akorkowski@uwhh.ca](mailto:akorkowski@uwhh.ca).

## Investment Stream: Root



### Description and Purpose

Root provides five-year agency-based funding for organizations meeting additional criteria and seeking to strengthen their agency at the root. Root funding will support multiple programs as well as foundational operating needs in order to strengthen and support agency development. The Root stream offers funding for a longer period of time, providing agencies and programs more time to plan, grow and scale to respond to community needs. Root funding may also

be shifted between programs within approved criteria. Approved applications will show clear alignment with United Way's long-term strategic objectives and focus areas, have increased engagement with United Way to work towards agency-desired outcomes, and take part in yearly Root agency meetings to promote learning, engagement, and advocacy efforts and to help strengthen the entire social service sector. Root agencies will help advise the UWHH around additional investments in capacity building and may partner on strategic initiatives.

While we recognize that many agencies play a vital role in the community, due to limited capacity, Root will be a highly selective process with strict eligibility requirements. To justify an investment largely in agency capacity, we are looking for partners who can play a unique role in addressing systemic issues (such as poverty) through advocacy, the development of new models and best practices that can be shared with the broader network. A Root agency should have the ability to help move priority issues along in significant ways and the funding is not primarily intended for program delivery, but rather, to invest in solving root problems.

### Eligibility/Funding Criteria

In order to receive Root funding, agencies must be a registered charity and meet the basic eligibility criteria (included above in Feed) along with the following additional elements that will be contained in a new application:

- I. **Collaboration:** the agency collaborates with others to improve service coordination, solve system challenges and inform agency service planning. Collaboration may take place between other social service organizations, other governing bodies, health care, educational institutions, service recipients or those with lived experience. Collaboration may take place in the form of: strategic planning, advisement and training internally or externally, human resources, marketing and communications, program transformation,

service delivery, and or evaluation. It should be substantive in nature and not simply based in referrals or partnerships.

- II. **Service Delivery:** the agency must deliver services that align with the focus areas and investment priorities, and are located and service within the boundaries of Halton Region and the City of Hamilton. Root agencies must demonstrate their agency delivers programs that align with at least two of three focus areas: All That Kids Can Be, Poverty to Possibility, and Healthy People, Strong Communities; and that these services are essential to meet the needs of vulnerable populations. Programmatic investments should focus on addressing root causes rather than symptoms. For example, given that food insecurity is primarily driven by lack of income, a traditional food bank that provides singular access to emergency food would not qualify as a program under this stream, but a training program that provides food insecure people with the skills to enter the food service industry may be funded.
- III. **Continuous Improvement:** the agency must demonstrate the formation of a recently developed (within the past three years), Board approved, strategic plan, which includes internal and external goals. The strategic plan should reflect the mission, vision, and values of the agency and include goals directed towards internal improvement as well as external performance. The agency must demonstrate which systems are in place to leverage local research and incorporate best practices to inform agency operations, program design and service delivery. A demonstrated commitment to outcome evaluation and research is also required and agencies may choose to invest in consultants or in-house staff whose focus is on continuous improvement and evaluation. In order to facilitate system level change, we encourage and will facilitate the distribution of key learnings, research and a broader community of practice through our ConnectED series. Root agencies will be expected to lead at least one ConnectED session per year to aide in the transfer of knowledge.
- IV. **Leveraging Funding Dollars:** Many other grants and funding come with an expectation that there is more than one source of funding. In recognition of this, the agency must demonstrate that funds from United Way will be used to leverage funds (of any amount) offered by other funders or corporations; e.g. The City of Hamilton's City Enrichment Fund, City of Burlington's Neighbourhood Community Matching Fund . Leveraging United Way funding to secure other grants or funding enhances the capacity of the agency to carry out its mission while also ensuring diversity in source funding and added stability.

Root agencies are recognized as key foundational multi-service agencies and subject matter experts that are aiming to solve systematic issues including through advocacy efforts. In order to facilitate sector wide engagement, Root-funded agencies will convene yearly to discuss systematic issues to both help promote learning, collaboration, and resource-sharing between

agencies but also to help inform and direct United Way's goals, advocacy efforts, and other supportive activities. These will be exploratory but will be informed by agencies expertise, communities of service, and cross-sectional issues that persist across communities.

## Application Process

Applications will be open only to currently supported agencies in this first pilot version. This is due to current revenue projections as our desire to test this model within our current network. Applications will be submitted online in the fall of 2020, and similar to the Feed application, contain questions around intended outcomes and activities, both at the agency and program level. This application will also contain questions directly related to the above additional four criteria. As with the Feed investment stream, both qualitative and quantitative data will be used to understand and assess the potential impact of Root funding within the agency.

## Assessment Criteria, Evaluation, and Yearly Reporting

Root funding still carries the expectation that funded agencies work aligns with the investment framework and outcomes, and so in addition to the evaluation criteria that applies to the Feed stream, agencies will be assessed on the four additional criteria of: collaboration, service delivery, continuous improvement, and leveraging funding dollars.

Evaluation will be carried out by staff as well as an advisory committee comprised of other funding partners including those from the City of Hamilton and Halton Region so as to leverage local sector knowledge. All final decisions require Board of Director approval and sign off.

If funding is approved under the Root stream, agencies and United Way will work together to understand the funding breakdown the agency will find most useful (see Funding Thresholds and Use of Funding below) and what actions, at the agency level, organizations will hope to achieve. Throughout this pilot cycle, agencies will partake in meeting with United Way at minimum twice a year to discuss agency expectations and intentions, strategic planning, challenges and changes, and to generally get an understanding of how agencies are progressing and fairing with this new form of funding.

## Funding Thresholds and Use of Funding

Successful agencies may choose to direct United Way Root Funding towards the following:

- A maximum of 70% of funding towards General Operating Costs – which may include: organizational effectiveness (including: staffing salaries, benefits, retirement plans, and those features that are considered Decent Work practices), community or sector engagement (including: events, conferences), capacity building (including: staff training, evaluation and measurement tools), social policy or research work, rent, utilities, and equipment under \$10,000. Funding is intended to sustain or enhance the organization's general operations so that it can meet the objectives of Root funding.

- A maximum of 80% of funding towards Service Delivery – programs that are offered by the agency that align with the focus areas in the investment priorities. Program costs may include: program materials (e.g. food, stationary supplies, books, art supplies, promotional materials, etc.), fundraising costs and materials, program staffing (salaries and benefits), communications (phone, internet), rent and utilities, or other miscellaneous expenses such as staff travel costs, transit tickets for clients, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). These programs should focus on addressing root causes of issues and should have substantial evidence behind the intervention.

Providing funding towards these two general categories acknowledges agencies need to support general operations, without which programs could not be delivered, while ensuring individuals are positively impacted by accessible services.

As is the case with Feed funding, there are no maximum or minimum funding thresholds for Root funded agencies under the Community Investment Fund. However, agencies must demonstrate and justify the need for the amount requested at the program and agency level. Depending on the total amount of the Community Investment Fund and the balancing of other investments, it is possible that the amount granted to a Rooted agency will be less than the amount requested.

In addition to the above, Root-funded agencies will be subject to the following allowances/restrictions:

- Successful agencies may shift their funding on a yearly basis, including between approved programs, provided an explanation is provided to United Way and yearly reporting is completed to reflect the shift. UWHH must be informed and may refuse the shift if it doesn't align with our mission or brand.
- Successful agencies may not direct Root funding towards capital builds, or building maintenance.
- Successful agencies may direct Root funding to new project or pilot programs so long as they show strong initial evidence of potential impact or have the potential to innovate on key outcomes for the target population.
- Successful agencies may apply for Seed funding through the yearly application process
- Successful agencies will not be permitted to apply for Feed (i.e. program) funding as a portion of Root funding is expected to be directed to service delivery.
- Successful agencies must be engaged with days of caring opportunities (whether in person or virtual), impact speaking events, as well as agency tours (unless agency locations/offices are not appropriate for tours due to space restrictions, sensitivity of clientele or security reasons).
- Successful agencies are expected to run an employee campaign to help fundraise for UWHH.

- Agencies will be expected to partake in research along with United Way to assess impact of Root funded towards intended goals.
- Root agencies will be expected to lead at least one ConnectED session per year to aide in the transfer of knowledge.

For more information or for any questions related to Root funding please email Alecia Korkowski, Senior Manager, Community Investment at [akorkowski@uwhh.ca](mailto:akorkowski@uwhh.ca).

## Release

Release is an aspirational goal of the investment strategy whereby supports (financial and non-financial) are offered to projects or programs that align with corporate social responsibilities, endowments funds, government funding and social enterprise development. Release will result from close relationships between corporations, community partnerships and advocacy, and will ensure support of the program/project so as to achieve a more sustainable position. It is the culmination of many activities and part of a commitment to stability we have with agencies that we see ourselves as partners in sustaining impactful programs within the broader social service ecosystem by diversifying revenue streams for agencies.

## Timelines & Dates

Given that this framework will take effect in the fall of 2020, see below for the current timeline:

Date	Investment Element
Late 2019 to Early 2020	Investment Framework development and agency feedback meetings
March 2020	Social Innovation Lab program and Seed Stream launch date, paused due to pandemic
October 2020	Release of revitalized Investment Framework
October 2020	Final Program Report Back for Currently Funded Programs
November 2020	Intake for Feed and Root Investment Streams
Early 2021	Applications Reviewed and Assessed
Fall 2020-Early 2021	Social Innovation Lab program redevelopment Research and agency engagement on alternative Seed Funding options
April - May 2021	New Feed and Root Investments Announced & Commenced
Mid 2021-2022	Launch of new Seed Funding options

Please note that this timeline is specific to the 2020-2021 investment intake and review and subsequent years will see different timelines, intakes, and reporting requirements.

## Other Policies

Other policies held by United Way Halton & Hamilton that extend to agencies include those regarding shifting of investments and guide financial activities like reserve funds and fundraising.

### Funding Reallocation Requests Form

This policy and form is for the purposes of an agency receiving Feed or Root funding desiring a change of funds from one program to another. This may occur in the case of program absorption into another, program dissolution, or significant program transformation. In the case of Root agencies, this would apply in the scenario that an agency wishes to reallocate funds to a program that has not been vetted/approved by United Way through the Root funding evaluation process. Agencies may submit a funding reallocation request to United Way at any time, however they will be reviewed by United Way twice a year, in the months of September and March with decisions communicated the month after review. Agencies will be expected to communicate the rationale behind the request and work with our Marketing and Communication team to communicate any approved shifts to the public. For more information on this form, please reach out to Alecia Korkowski, Senior Manager, Community Investment, [akorkowski@uwhh.ca](mailto:akorkowski@uwhh.ca).

### Investment Operating Policy

This policy is intended for agencies receiving Feed or Root funding through the Community Investment Fund and provides guidance on the United Way investment cycle, operating surplus, unrestricted reserves, fundraising activity and ethics, United Way identification, and donor designations. United Way encourages transparent and ethical fundraising practices, financial planning and stability, and adherence to the eligibility criteria (also contained). If you have questions regarding any aspect of this policy, or would like a copy of this policy please contact Alecia Korkowski, Senior Manager, Community Investment, [akorkowski@uwhh.ca](mailto:akorkowski@uwhh.ca).

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