



United Way
Southern Interior BC



For immediate release: Central Okanagan

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Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy seeks to unify work across the region to reduce poverty

The United Way Southern Interior BC (UWSIBC), Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) and partners are continuing efforts to develop a Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy.

United Way SIBC provided an update on the project to the RDCO Governance and Services Committee yesterday. The update highlights the partnership building that is occurring across the region as well as the plan for engagement and involvement of Central Okanagan residents for opportunities to provide input into the strategy.

The Regional District is partnering with United Way Southern Interior BC (UWSIBC) on the strategy which will identify actions and priorities to address poverty and wellness for the region, while also continuing to reflect the unique needs of each community.

Poverty reduction is about more than numbers. It's about people. The Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy (COPAWS) will bring together the collective wisdom and input of Indigenous peoples, community advocates, representatives of all levels of government, service providers, community organizations, business leaders and most importantly, people with lived experience. Through multi-sector, diverse community partnerships and input received through extensive public engagement, the Strategy will harness the power of collective action to make life better for everyone in the Central Okanagan.

The project team is finalizing the plan for community engagement which will incorporate the voices of a diverse group of people throughout the Central Okanagan. There is an opportunity for all residents of the Central Okanagan to be involved in this work over the next few months during an extensive community engagement process.

“We have developed an engagement plan that builds on strong, collaborative networks to identify actions and priorities that address poverty and wellness for the region,” says Naomi Woodland, Poverty Reduction Manager, United Way SIBC. “Between April and July, we look forward to meeting with community partners, participants, the general public, community leaders and priority populations across the region in order to represent these voices in the Strategy.”

Learn more about this project and how to take an active role at:
<https://unitedwaysibc.com/wellness-poverty-strategy/>.

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Backgrounder:

In March 2019, the Province released their poverty reduction strategy called TogetherBC which set targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in British Columbia. Provincial funding was made available through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level.

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) and member municipalities supported applying for a grant with the RDCO as the regional applicant and in May 2020 the UBCM awarded \$149,000 for the development of a regional strategy to improve the wellbeing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

About United Way SIBC: The United Way mission is to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. For 70 years, we've been working to create opportunities for a better life for everyone in the Okanagan, Columbia, Shuswap and Similkameen. Every dollar raised here stays in our community and touches the lives of over 75,000 vulnerable children, families and seniors every year. For more info, visit: www.unitedwaysibc.com or call 1-855-232-1321.