

## Background

United Way's mission - to meet urgent human needs and improve social conditions - centers our work in poverty and the systemic conditions that perpetuate deep and growing inequities. We believe that every person deserves access to the opportunities and connections they need to build a good life - regardless of their income, the neighbourhood they live in, or their social identity. Reconciliation and Equity are at the heart of United Way's mission.

## Statement on Reconciliation and Equity

Ongoing violence and discrimination permeate Canadian culture. It has emerged from our nation's history of colonialism, systemic racism, and other intersecting oppressions and resulted in persistent barriers, exploitation and limited access to opportunities for Indigenous, Black and other structurally disadvantaged groups over generations - leading to long-term social, economic and health disparities.

UWGT recognizes that improving the lives of everyone in the communities we serve means we must explicitly focus on removing these barriers for those most harmed by them. This includes addressing the belief systems and attitudes, systems, policies, practices that privilege some and disenfranchise others. It is only through an intentional focus on removing these barriers that we can aspire to create the conditions that allow everyone the opportunity to thrive.

United Way Greater Toronto is not immune to these social issues. In the past, we have unintentionally played a part in maintaining systems that perpetuated disparities and barriers to opportunities. Now we are going to intentionally remove those barriers.

This means changing the policies, processes and practices that systemically exclude or disadvantage these groups. And it means working in closer partnership with the people and communities that our work is intended to benefit.

UWGT can and will use the principles of reconciliation and equity to make clear and measurable changes to eliminate systemic racism and discrimination from our work. In doing this, United Way will continue to demonstrate commitment to fighting poverty in all its forms.

## Reconciliation and Equity Vision

Communities where Indigenous sovereignty is honoured; where people's unique identities, experiences and voices are valued, celebrated, and protected; and where all have the resources and social capital to ensure their wellbeing and prosperity

## Guiding Principles

**These principles will shape and guide our work at all times:**

- **Share power:** make space for leadership and walk with others
- **Nothing about us without us:** listen and honor input from people with lived experience
- **Explicitly name discrimination and the systemic conditions** that lead to inequality and work to undo them
- **Embed an asset-based approach:** make visible and value the skills, knowledge, connections in people/communities
- **Be authentic:** acknowledge our advantages, question and unlearn our biases and stereotypes; be humble, open to learn, and ready to be uncomfortable

**Why Does Reconciliation and Equity Matter?**

We know that poverty impacts some groups more than others. Young people, Indigenous people, racialized people, immigrants, women, and those with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty and face significant barriers to getting out of poverty. Indigenous and Black people specifically have faced historical disadvantage whose impacts continue to be felt today.

**Accountability and Commitment to Reconciliation and Equity**

The Board of Trustees has approved UWGT's commitment to Reconciliation and Equity through the Statement on Reconciliation and Equity, a Vision and Guiding Principles. The Board has oversight for the Reconciliation and Equity Action plan through board approved Key Performance Indicators and targets which will be regularly monitored and reported. The plan embeds strategies and tactics across the organization to enhance our work and ensure that we respond and mitigate the deep socioeconomic shifts happening across our neighbourhoods in Peel, Toronto and York Region. The strategic directions and seven equity levers through which Reconciliation and Equity will be operationalized are:

- Organizational Culture and Practice
- Fundraising, Grantmaking and Resource Allocation
- Local Capacity
- Community Engagement and Mobilization
- Data
- Communications and Awareness Building
- Policy and Advocacy

Further details on UWGT's commitment and targets in the Reconciliation and Equity Action plan can be found here: <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/about-us/our-mission-and-values/reconciliation/>

The Board of Trustees of United Way Greater Toronto is committed to governing an organization that promotes Reconciliation and Equity in all internal and external relations.

**Board of Trustees approved on September 3, 2021**