

# Community Partnerships

United Way is the largest funder of social programs in Waterloo Region, second only to government. But we invest in more than just agency programs. We are also an integral part of several community-wide initiatives/partnerships.

By participating in and funding broader community initiatives, we can learn alongside other funders, government, agencies, and members of the public about local issues and how we can all work together to make positive change. As well, we can extend our funding because it supports a collective system of work. Another benefit is ensuring that we have up-to-date information regarding critical issues in our community. This strengthens our decision making process around priorities and funding decisions.

**211** - <https://211ontario.ca/>

211 is a helpline and online database of Ontario's community and social services. 211 is answered and updated by highly-trained specialists 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in 150 different languages. Help is provided by phone or through a searchable database. Coming soon is live chat and text capability.

**How is United Way involved?** United Ways are mandated to fund 211. We are also responsible for promoting the service locally to increase usage. Our local partner is Region of Waterloo, who focuses on gathering the local data required for 211 staff to answer requests for information (e.g. agency information, social service information, etc.).

**Why is United Way involved?** We are involved in 211 because there is a provincial agreement that United Ways will work to deliver 211 locally. The partnership looks different in each community, but at its core, it is an agreement to help residents access the help they need at any time.

**Wellbeing Waterloo Region** – <http://www.wellbeingwaterloo.ca/blog/>

Wellbeing Waterloo Region (WWR) is a community led initiative made up of citizens, service providers, community organizations, government, and businesses. We approach local issues collectively in order to create new, significant, and impactful solutions.

Three Catalyst Groups currently in progress...

- **Affordable Housing:** Everyone has a place to call home.  
Challenge statement: Mobilize the community to end chronic homelessness in Waterloo Region by 2020.

- **Social Inclusion:** Everyone is welcome and can belong.  
Challenge Statement: Create in Waterloo Region a social inclusion movement that seeks equity, prevents isolation, and strengthens belonging.
- **Healthy Children and Youth:** All children and youth have the foundation they need to thrive and reach their potential.  
Challenge statement: To be determined. Now that the Smart Cities challenge is complete (we did not win), The Children’s Planning Table and WWR will regroup on this initiative in fall of 2019.

**How is United Way involved?** United Way WRC has been involved with WWR since its inception. We are a funder, have staff participating in two catalyst groups (All In 2020 and Social Inclusion), and senior leadership acting as a co-convenor (chair) of the Connectors Hub (steering committee). Staff have been involved in the Measurement and Monitoring Working Group, have helped with the evolution of the enabling structure of the initiative, and participated in a small group to develop the membership of this phase of the WWR journey.

**Why are we involved?** We know that social issues are complex. No one agency can solve them alone. Funding more programs is not the answer to our community’s biggest issues. By thinking intentionally about how we can work differently TOGETHER to create transformational change, we can consider new and different approaches, solutions other than or in addition to money, and consider what policy implications there are for success. This can only be accomplished through broad community initiatives with the right players at the table.

## **Immigration Partnership –**

<https://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/en/immigration-partnership.aspx>

The Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership is a collaborative of community members, organizations, and business partners from multiple sectors.

- **What We Do:** Facilitate successful settlement, integration and community involvement of immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region.
- **Why We Do It:** So Waterloo Region will be a community where immigrants and refugees successfully settle, work and belong.
- **How We Do It:** By being rooted in our guiding principles, we foster community driven impact by being responsive, collaborative and results-oriented.

**How is United Way involved?** United Way WRC has been involved in the Partnership since its inception. United Way has a seat at the Council; the governing body of the Partnership. We also provide funding to support the Partnership.

**Why are we involved?** A bigger impact is possible by being part of the Council than by funding programs alone. We are able to help inform and coordinate the immigrant and refugee services available and identify areas for action. The Council works on three areas – work, settle, and belong – to ensure all newcomers have what they need to be successful in Waterloo Region. The Council also helps to ensure we understand the broader picture of what is happening locally and what supports may be needed and where resources are available.

## **Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region (CYPT) –** <https://childrenandyouthplanningtable.ca/>

This community-wide partnership includes over 500 service providers, researchers, planning bodies, and funders serving children, youth, and families in our community.

- **Our Vision:** Happy, healthy children and youth- today and tomorrow.
- **Our Mission:** To collectively mobilize as one system for children and youth in Waterloo Region that relentlessly strives to maximize wellbeing throughout generations.

**How is United Way involved?** We are voting members of CYPT and attend general forum meetings. Staff have been part of the Virtual Access Development Working Group and the Collective Impact Recommendation Working Group and we continually participate in working groups as appropriate. We do not fund this initiative.

**Why are we involved?** One of our focus areas is children and youth. Participation in the Children and Youth Planning Table is vital in order to understand the system's direction and be able to align our funding to support and/or complement that direction. Being part of a larger scale planning group provides us with information to help make meaningful funding decisions. This is another example of how working intentionally with many partners can create a better community.