

UWSVI Priority Population Descriptions

United Way believes that all people have the right to live in a strong and caring community, and that everyone can, at different times in their lives, be at risk of one or many challenges. However, we must focus our limited resources for the greatest impact.

UWSVI focuses on people who are most vulnerable to living in a state of economic, cultural, social, and political poverty. Although belonging to one or more of the following groups does not necessarily make one most 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' - it is often a combination of factors that can lead to increased vulnerability¹.

The various factors for each of the following groups might include:

Families – are families that experience chronic low-income and few social supports, teen parenting or lone parenting with low income, high household mobility, homelessness, low personal capacity and/or family dysfunction.

Children & Youth – are children and youth who live alone or are homeless, live in families experiencing chronic low-income, live in dysfunctional families, experience or witness abuse or trauma, lack interpersonal and social skills, have cognitive deficits or emotional or mental health issues, are not engaged in or succeeding at school, or experience low sense of belonging in school or community.

Seniors & Elders - are 65 or older, who live alone (key risk factor for social isolation, along with being 75+), have low income, are single or bereaved, are in poor health, experience language/cultural barriers, and/or have transportation difficulties.

Indigenous Peoples – are individuals and communities that have been affected by the multigenerational impacts of colonialism, especially the effects of residential

¹ Source for some of the definitions of vulnerability is FCSS Calgary, *Outline of Proposed areas for FCSS Investments in Programming and List of Relevant Definitions*. 2010



schools. These effects may include systemic racism and discrimination, resulting in chronic low income, high mobility, loss of culture, and other negative social indicators. Indigenous Peoples include First Nations (status, non-status and Bill C-31 individuals), Métis, and Inuit people.

People with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities – are individuals who have physical, cognitive, or other challenges that can hamper or reduce a person's ability to carry out day to day activities, have low income, are in poor health and includes those living with chronic illnesses.

People with Mental Health and/or Addictions Challenges – are individuals who face barriers such as mental health challenges, trauma, and/or substance addictions that interfere with their daily living activities and employment opportunities.

Newcomers – are recent refugees and immigrants to Canada (generally defined as those who arrived in the last five years), who face discrimination, have language barriers, have low income, are unable to obtain employment commensurate with their credentials, are stay-at-home parents or seniors, and/or belong to ethno-cultural communities with few members in the Capital Region.

Black Communities and/or People of Colour – are racialized communities who are facing the immediate and historical impacts of individual, institutional, and societal racism, discrimination, and marginalization.

Survivors of Sexual and/or Domestic Violence – are men, women and children who have experienced sexual assault and/or abuse, as well as those who have experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional trauma in domestic relationships.

LGBTQI2-S Community –lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning individuals² who are facing harassment, bullying, prejudice and discrimination among other barriers affecting their wellbeing and equality.

² Reference: Russell, S., Kosciw, J., Horn, S., & Saewyc, E. (2010). Safe Schools Policy for LGBTQ Students. *Social Policy Report*, 24(4), 3-5. Retrieved October 29, 2014, from http://srcd.org/sites/default/files/documents/spr_24_4_final.pdf