



United Way
Halifax

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way Halifax releases new United in Poverty Action Report

Report uses updated data, stories to provide poverty snapshot

HALIFAX/KJIPUKTUK – January 24, 2024 | Today United Way Halifax is releasing their new report, United in Poverty Action. The report is a follow-up to the 2018 report, Building Poverty Solutions, and provides updated data and stories to give a clear, holistic picture of who is most impacted by poverty across Halifax Regional Municipality.

“We all know there are many urgent challenges related to poverty that need to be addressed,” says United Way Halifax president and CEO Sara Napier. She notes there has been important work happening, and it will take a united effort to continue to move forward. “This report provides the foundation for solutions, and calls on government, businesses and individuals to join the social sector to make significant, lasting change.”

The report highlights positive policy changes and practices that have made improvements for people living in poverty, but also cautions that increasing income disparity and increases in food and shelter costs will likely continue to hamper efforts in the next few years.

“We appreciate United Way Halifax sharing information that will help shape the work we are doing to support vulnerable Nova Scotians, within and beyond HRM,” says Trevor Boudreau, Minister of Community Services for the Province of Nova Scotia. “Government will continue to improve access to healthcare, housing, food and shelter while working with our partners to ensure actions are coordinated, inclusive, and will help reduce poverty.”

In addition, the report draws attention to the importance of equity in decision making and policies, as marginalized and racialized residents continue to be disproportionately impacted by poverty.

“As we continue to grow, we must take advantage of the opportunities to be more inclusive, to ensure more people have access to these very opportunities,” says Mayor Mike Savage. “All orders of government and all of our partners must be focused on key issues such as housing affordability, food security, and social exclusion if we want to create a better HRM for all.”

As part of the report, United Way Halifax has also developed a set of community level measures that provide a baseline for poverty in HRM. The organization is committed to measuring these indicators again in five years’ time, to determine whether progress is being made. Business, government and other organizations are invited to become partners in poverty action and share their own efforts to achieve progress on these measures.

East Preston Daycare Centre’s executive director Trina Fraser will speak about the impact of poverty at the report launch event on January 24. Halifax Partnership’s CEO Wendy Luther will speak about the business community’s role in addressing poverty.

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United Way Halifax is a local impact organization bridging gaps for people experiencing poverty and marginalization in HRM. Our organization changes lives by providing funding, creating solutions, partnering with others and advocating for change.

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A PDF copy of the report can be found here: [Poverty-Report-Final-002.pdf \(unitedwayhalifax.ca\)](#)

Poverty Report Highlights

- The Market Basket Measure poverty rate for the Halifax CMA was 10.5% in 2021 but was much higher in some communities. It is expected that the actual poverty rate today is much higher, as Covid-19 supports such as CERB artificially inflated incomes during the census time period.
- United Way Halifax has developed 70 neighbourhood profiles and several population profiles that will be released at a later date. These profiles use composite indicators to determine the vulnerability of neighbourhoods and populations.
- Visible minorities in Halifax County Metropolitan Area (CMA) increased by 54% between 2016-2021. Poverty rate for visible minorities in Halifax in 2021 was 23%, which is more than double average poverty rate across city.
- Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in Canada, at 37%. An unattached single person with a disability, on income assistance had a total annual income of \$12,700 in 2022.
- The gap between this country's rich and poor is growing at record speed. The wealthiest 20% of Canadian households controlled almost 68% of the total net worth in Canada in the first part of 2023, while the least wealthy 40% accounted for only 2.7% of net worth.
- The percentage of those experiencing food insecurity dropped to 15.5 per cent in 2020. It has since increased to 2019 levels, at 20.5% in HRM.
- Climate change and energy poverty disproportionately impact people in vulnerable circumstances.
- Black and Indigenous people experiencing homelessness are overrepresented in homelessness numbers, and yet they are likely underreported.