

NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release



United Way invests in COVID-19 relief for seniors Federal funding flows to local agencies today

Elgin Middlesex, ON (May 11, 2020)—Local seniors affected by the coronavirus crisis will get a much-needed boost today, thanks to the new Seniors Response Fund. United Way Elgin Middlesex deployed the fund today with assistance from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Local social service agencies CMHA Elgin, CMHA Middlesex, Cheshire London and VON Middlesex-Elgin received almost \$120,000 combined to meet urgent needs for low income seniors 55+ across the region, including food, basic supplies and social connection. In total, \$9 million in Federal funds are being distributed by United Ways across Canada proportionally based on the local population of seniors 55+.

“As we care for our families and those closest to us, we see many seniors in our community who don’t have a support system around them,” says Kelly Ziegner, President & CEO, United Way Elgin Middlesex. “Today’s funding will help ensure that the most vulnerable do not get pushed further into the margins during this crisis.”

Cheshire London and VON Middlesex-Elgin, lead agencies for the Community Support Services Network, will share \$110,000 to provide basic needs to low income or isolated seniors 55+ in London and Middlesex County and St. Thomas and Elgin County, respectively. Community Support Pandemic Funds in each county will be accessed through the Community Support Services Central Intake system which ensures that seniors are connected to the right supports and services close to home, including grocery delivery, prepared meals and transportation.

CMHA received almost \$10,000 to start the Friendly Callers – Senior Support Program to provide social connection and linking to local services for seniors across the region. Volunteers will provide friendly weekly calls and referrals to services and supports, including virtual social and recreation programming.

“The pandemic has been especially hard on seniors, many of whom are isolated from family and friends,” says Lori Hassall, Director of Crisis and Short-term Interventions at CMHA Middlesex, noting that the organization’s Support Line is seeing a 43% increase in calls, including daily calls from seniors. “Social connection is the antidote to loneliness.” Funding will allow the organization to recruit experienced staff and get the word out to callers and volunteers. The new program goes live immediately.

“While physical distancing is essential to protecting seniors from COVID-19, it risks isolating them from their community,” says The Honorable Deb Schulte, Minister of Seniors. “That is why the Government of Canada is proud to work with United Way Canada to help support the needs of seniors during this

difficult time. By using local expertise, this funding will help provide support tailored to the unique, local needs of seniors across the country. As we work together to flatten the curve and slow the spread of the virus, the government is supporting Canadians every step of the way.”

The new Seniors Response Fund is administered by United Way Elgin Middlesex through its Local Love in a Global Crisis community response fund. This fund was launched in response to urgent needs due to COVID-19 and requests from corporations, labour and community leaders, and individual donors asking how best to help.

To date, United Way Elgin Middlesex has facilitated more than \$1 million in COVID-19 recovery efforts through government grants such as the Government of Canada’s New Horizons for Seniors Program, charitable giving and future pledges. Visit [Local Love in a Global Crisis](#) for details, donation announcements and how to get help or give help.

Funded by the Government of
Canada’s New Horizons for
Seniors Program



About the New Horizons for Seniors Program

The New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) provides grants and contributions for projects that help improve the well-being of seniors and foster their social inclusion. To provide immediate essential services to seniors impacted by COVID-19, the Government of Canada is providing \$9 million under the NHSP to be distributed through United Way Canada network. These funds will help organizations providing support to seniors dealing with the impact of COVID-19.

About United Way Elgin Middlesex

United Way works to ensure that every person in every community across our region has a fair shot at their best life. As the largest non-government funder of social services in Elgin and Middlesex counties, we tackle issues linked to poverty and social exclusion through strategic leadership, advocacy and investments at 52 partner agencies proven to get results. Donations stay 100% local, always.

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Community Support Services Network

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BACKGROUNDER
For immediate release



United Way Elgin Middlesex Seniors Response Fund

The Seniors Response Fund will meet the urgent needs of seniors 55+ impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on providing food and other basic needs as well as decreasing social isolation. This program is funded by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program. Funds are allocated proportionally based on the local population of seniors 55+.

In Elgin Middlesex the Seniors Response Fund will support:

CMHA Elgin / CMHA Middlesex - Friendly Callers – Senior Support Program - \$9,782
Serving London and Middlesex County and St. Thomas and Elgin County

Volunteers will do outreach telephone calls to seniors across the region who require additional social support and connection. Calls will be scheduled daily or a few times per week as requested. During calls, volunteers will complete a wellness check, provide therapeutic listening and will help seniors access additional supports including grocery delivery, Meals on Wheels and virtual social and recreation programming.

To access the program call: 519-434-9191 ext. 2223 Monday to Friday 8:30a.m.–7:30p.m.

Community Support Services Network - Community Support Pandemic Fund - \$92,400
Serving London and Middlesex County

The Community Support Pandemic Fund will provide basic needs to low income and isolated seniors 55+ in London and Middlesex County, including:

- food and essential needs through meal and grocery delivery
- subsidized transportation for medical and other appointments
- distribution of COVID-19 emergency kits

The COVID-19 emergency kits will provide low income and isolated seniors and their caregivers will basic needs items (e.g. non-medical masks, hand sanitizer, cleaning products), resource information (e.g. COVID19 Tip Sheets, phone numbers of “who to call,” comfort items such as puzzle books and non-perishable snacks, and a grocery gift card.

These services will be accessed through the Community Support Services Central Intake system which ensures that seniors are connected to the right supports and services, including regular wellness checks by telephone as needed.

To access the program call: 519-673-6617 Monday to Friday 8:30a.m. – 4:30p.m.

Community Support Services Network - Community Support Pandemic Fund - \$17,600
Serving St. Thomas and Elgin County

The Community Support Pandemic Fund will provide basic needs to low income and isolated seniors 55+ in St. Thomas and Elgin County, including:

- food and essential needs through meal and grocery delivery
- subsidized transportation for medical and other appointments
- distribution of COVID-19 emergency kits

The COVID-19 emergency kits will provide low income and isolated seniors and their caregivers will basic needs items (e.g. non-medical masks, hand sanitizer, cleaning products), resource information (e.g. COVID19 Tip Sheets, phone numbers of “who to call,” comfort items such as puzzle books and non-perishable snacks, and a grocery gift card.

These services will be accessed through the Community Support Services Central Intake system which ensures that seniors are connected to the right supports and services, including regular wellness checks by telephone as needed.

To access the program call: 1-888-866-7527 Monday to Friday 8:30a.m. – 4:30p.m.

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