



# VULNERABLE YOUTH STRATEGY PHASE TWO OVERVIEW 2015-2017

The Vulnerable Youth Strategy is a collaboration with community service providers to improve peer, family and adult social supports for youth (15-24) who struggle to transition successfully into adulthood.

## FOCUS

Phase Two of this strategy builds on the learning outcomes from Phase One (2012-2014), which centered on how natural supports play a critical role in promoting resiliency, social integration and positive behaviours for vulnerable youth.

In Phase Two (2015-2017), the focus shifts from learning to application. United Way and Burns Memorial Fund are expanding the work to include new organizations and enhance tracking of measureable change in youth and families, and within funded organizations.

## Phase Two is comprised of five components:

- Investing in application of learning
- Convening a change collective
- Mobilizing knowledge
- Informing funding practices
- Advocating for sustainability



**Burns  
Memorial Fund**

*A legacy for Calgary's children*



**United Way  
Calgary and Area**

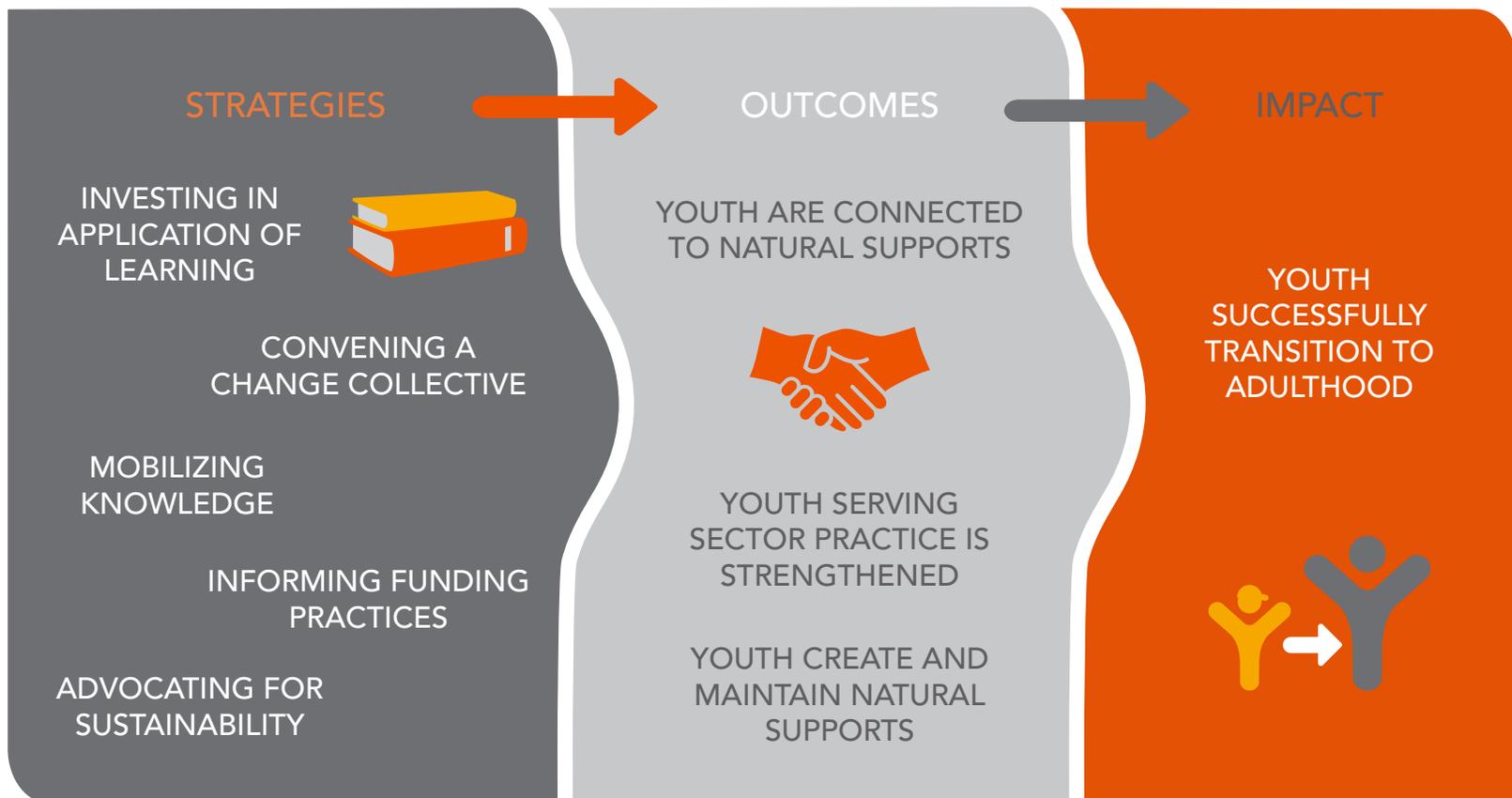
**Building a great city for all.**

# WORKING THEORY OF CHANGE

By creating a supportive learning environment where frontline staff and managers can examine existing practices and perspectives, and develop new ways of working with youth and their natural supports, the capacity of individual practitioners and organizations to support vulnerable youth to create and maintain a network of natural supports will be strengthened.

These new ways of working will then be shared more broadly within the youth-serving sector to build sector-level capacity, and in turn, to enable more successful transitions to adulthood for vulnerable youth.

## THEORY OF CHANGE



# VISION

The youth serving sector has the knowledge, skills, capacities and organizational structures to enable vulnerable youth to connect with and maintain networks of natural support so that they are more likely to transition successfully to adulthood.

## GOALS & SCOPE

### Investing in Application of Learning

**Goal:** The funded initiatives evolve into best practices for building sustained natural supports for vulnerable youth.

**Scope:**

- Support refinement and application of the value-based approach across other programs, integrating them into organizational procedures, policies and culture where applicable.
- Support reflection and tracking of milestones and measurable change in youth, families and practitioners.
- Provide evaluation support to each funded initiative.

### Convening a Change Collective

(Co-convened with Mount Royal University's Institute for Community Prosperity)

**Goal:** A shift in practice such that involvement of natural supports is an integral part of youth and family work.

**Scope:**

- Engage 14 organizations four times a year in a supported and facilitated learning environment.
- Explore innovative practice models and the integration of natural supports in policy and practice of larger systems.
- Analyze, reflect upon and improve practice in the area of natural supports and vulnerable youth.

### Mobilizing Knowledge

**Goal:** Develop and disseminate high quality products that effectively communicate lessons and promising practices related to both connecting vulnerable youth to their natural supports and innovative funding approaches.

**Scope:**

- Develop tools, resources and publications to share the methods supporting this work and how these are being embedded across organizations and the sector.
  - Seek opportunities to share the impact of this work with other funders, government, institutions and corporate partners.
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## Informing Funding Practice

**Goal:** United Way has greater capacity to inform internal funding decisions and practices as a result of learning from this strategy.

**Scope:**

- Share knowledge and effectively advocate for necessary professional practice shifts to support relationships between natural supports and vulnerable youth.
- Develop flexible funding practices, particularly in funding innovative approaches.
- Connect with the Social Innovation Team to inform this strategy and share learning.
- Invest in other opportunities for building non-professional supports for vulnerable youth.
- Revise the Transitions to Adulthood strategy within the Kids Strategy Workbook to reflect the learning from this strategy on natural supports.

## Advocating for Sustainability

**Goal:** Natural supports are a priority within youth and family work for funders, government, and public and private institutions.

**Scope:**

- Advocate, using measurable results, for other funders, institutions, and governments to make natural supports a priority of funding, systems change and/or policy change.
- Develop a sustainability plan in the first year of Phase Two of this strategy to foster on-going support for the funded initiatives and the work that is being done.
- Continue to make natural supports a priority within United Way's Transition to Adulthood component of the Kids strategy.