



# RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APRIL 2011 VULNERABLE YOUTH REPORT

## 1) **More comprehensive and coordinated responses are required to address the complex issues faced by vulnerable youth and support them throughout their transition to adulthood.**

- The vulnerabilities experienced by youth are often further compounded and entrenched when their families are experiencing additional barriers to achieving well-being. To better inform future strategies in support of vulnerable youth, and their families, United Way is currently undertaking research into how to leverage supports and services for lower-income families so that they achieve greater well-being. A final report into the findings will be released in June of 2012.

## 2) **Vulnerable youth must be supported to (re)engage in education, with the entire community mobilized to realize this aim.**

- To improve high school completion rates, United Way has targeted provincial policy-makers with a recommendation to raise the age of publicly-funded high school classes from the current age of 19 to 24 years old, as well as to raise the age of mandatory school attendance from 16 to 17 years old. An updated Education Act will be revisited in the spring after broad public consultation. United Way will continue to campaign for these changes.

## 3) **Vulnerable youth need improved opportunities to access meaningful training and employment opportunities.**

- United Way is working with Alberta Education and Immigration (now Human Services) and other key stakeholders towards the development of an updated and revised Youth Employment Strategy that better reflects the experiences, assets and needs of vulnerable youth in Alberta.
- Based on findings from the vulnerable youth research, United Way supported a Commitment Coach Demonstration Pilot Project, a program designed for expectant and young mothers between the ages of 15 to 19 which provides participants with the opportunity to earn high school credits, develop a career and life plan, further their education, connect with others for support and gain valuable work experience.

## 4) **Improved access to basic needs for vulnerable youth will enable movement from crisis to stability.**

- A lack of access to affordable transit was repeatedly identified as a significant barrier for vulnerable youth in Calgary. Currently youth who are between the ages of 14 and 18 years old and who are not currently enrolled in school are not eligible for a discounted pass. United Way has presented to Calgary City Hall, recommendations to standardize age-based discounts across City of Calgary business units, so that discounts for youth are at least 50 percent or more for every eligible service, including transit, and to immediately remove the school attendance requirement for a discounted youth transit pass.



# RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APRIL 2011 VULNERABLE YOUTH REPORT (CONTINUED)

5) **Vulnerable youth are confronting barriers in accessing comprehensive mental health supports.** (to be updated in 2012)

6) **Vulnerable youth must have access to a range of diverse formal and informal networks and relationships in their communities.**

- **BeCause**, a United Way initiative aimed at engaging a younger demographic and the next generation of volunteers in Calgary, created a social design table which used 'Design Thinking' methodology to draw on the insights of practitioners as well as those with lived-experience. The table developed a program that aims to increase the size and quality of the social networks of 'vulnerable' youth in Calgary. Implementation begins in 2012.
- United Way has launched a **Vulnerable Youth Transitions into Adulthood Strategy**, a mixture of prevention and intervention programs, along with targeted initiatives, to assist vulnerable and/or at-risk youth to successfully transition to adulthood. The strategy is being launched in phases, to more effectively capture learning. The first phase will focus on families, the second on relationships outside of vulnerable youth's social circle (i.e. mentoring).