

Background

Investor Development – a New Line of Business for United Way/Centraide Ottawa

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Donors and funders of all kinds – individuals, corporations, foundations and governments – want to know that their community development contributions create measurable impact. United Way/Centraide’s shift to strategic investment in impact areas which began in 2003 was very much aligned with this focus on making a measurable difference.

As we have evolved our impact work, engaging with partners including front-line agencies, research-based institutions, governments, corporations and others that share our community-building goals, we have formed many partnerships with individuals and organizations looking for new ways to contribute their skills and expertise to shape the direction and enhance the impact of their charitable donations. Our establishment of Investor Development as a new line of business responds to this opportunity.

What is Investor Development at United Way/Centraide?

Investor Development is a new line of business for United Way/Centraide. Its focus is on identifying and matching individual, corporate, government and foundation investment interests with community development opportunities here in Ottawa.

To facilitate this work, we have established an Investor Development department, responsible for:

- Identifying prospective donors, be they individuals or organizations
- Working with the donors to understand the outcomes they are seeking to facilitate through their donations
- Developing “products” – community development programs that can be funded by these donors, that align with the outcomes we are seeking to achieve in our six impact areas and that leverage our many community partners
- Reporting on progress and outcomes to donors

Fundamental to this new line of business is our ability to engage this special group of donors on their own terms – to work with them to help articulate their goals and to develop programs that will assist in meeting their goals.

What are the Characteristics of this New Kind of Donor?

The terms “venture philanthropist”, “social entrepreneur” and “strategic philanthropist” have gained currency over the last few years, as high-profile donors including Bill Gates, Bill Clinton and Alan Greenspan have made their marks in the philanthropic world. They apply their funds, their skills and their expertise to generate social value.

These donors are characterized by their engagement – their willingness to try new approaches, to invest financial and human capital and their long-term commitment. They focus on measurable results, establishing benchmarks and looking for regular progress assessment. They understand the value of leverage – that they can be catalysts for significant new directions and investments. And most fundamentally, they are committed to helping to strengthen the communities and the causes they support in the near-term and into the future.