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SECTION 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The City of Ottawa has a well-deserved reputation as being one of the best cities in Canada in which to live, work, and raise a family. Many feel it offers all the amenities of a big city, and the connectedness and caring of a small town. It is also one of the fastest growing municipalities in the country. It is a municipality with a highly educated workforce, a strong economy, a growing multicultural and multilingual population, and a committed social services and community support network. It is also a city that has undergone, and continues to undergo, dramatic change. We are experiencing the ongoing effects of municipal amalgamation, federal and provincial restructuring of social services and health care, economic and population growth, and demographic changes. These changes bring with them both challenges and opportunities for our community; they require innovative and creative responses.

A truly great city is great for everyone.

This “environmental scan” is a first-step in assessing not only where we are as a community, but also where we are heading. It provides a snapshot of current and emerging socio-economic trends facing our community, and will help to identify community assets and needs. At United Way/Centraide Ottawa, we are in the business of creating meaningful and measurable impact—we build community by investing in frontline programs and community partnerships, and by investing in community-wide initiatives that seek solutions to challenges and issues. As an evidenced-based, cross-sectoral and non-partisan organization, we are able to mobilize individuals, groups, governments, corporations, organizations and other funders around community-wide issues.

We know that as a community we have to work together to identify challenges, develop agendas and strategies, mobilize and invest resources and measure our results. United Way/Centraide Ottawa offers the results and findings of the “environmental scan” to both our own volunteers and decision makers and to the community at large. We hope it will encourage discussion and debate, and provide information to a community that must deal with both the challenges and opportunities that come with change.

We are also encouraging readers to review the City of Ottawa's 2020 Report. The 2020 Report offers valuable information about where our city is headed, and some of the principles and values residents of this city want to see preserved and enhanced.

At United Way/Centraide Ottawa, we believe we all have a role to play in deciding what our community will look and feel like in the future. We must work together to meet the current and emerging needs of our city. We must work together to have a meaningful impact on a city that, we believe, can be truly great for everyone.

H I G H L I G H T S

At a glance, this “environmental scan” offers a snapshot of Ottawa that looks different than a snapshot taken even 5 or 10 years ago. It is a city that can boast of healthy and vibrant neighbourhoods, a strong multicultural and multilingual community, and a resilient and strong economy. However, that being said, there are pressure points. The pace of change is fast, bringing with it challenges that our community struggles, at times, to keep up with. And while our economy remains strong, there is evidence that there continues to be growing disparity between high and low-income wage earners in our community.

Some Specifics

Over 15% of the city's population belongs to a visible minority group and that number is expected to double by 2020. Many immigrant families are struggling. New Canadians are four times more likely to be unemployed than long-term Canadians. The snapshot also shows a city that is greying. Currently 1 in 12 people are seniors. That number will increase to 1 in 6 by 2020. The number of persons living with disabilities in Ottawa is expected to increase. One in five residents will likely experience either a permanent or a temporary disability. Three out of five disabled persons surveyed said they could not participate in community activities. On the economic front, overall this is a prosperous city. The median income is well above the national average. But there are cracks. Twelve per cent of families live on annual incomes below \$20,000 a year. While employment earnings in low-income neighbourhoods fell by 11% in 2000, they rose 16% in the city's richest neighbourhoods. The number of lone-parent families has increased dramatically and the lack of affordable housing continues to take its toll. The waiting list for

social housing is 5 to 8 years and a thousand people sleep in homeless shelters in this city every night.

The snapshot paints the picture of a city that is doing well, but one that could do even better. It shows a city that must deal with growing disparities and emerging needs, and a city that must be prepared to embrace more change over the next 10 years.

Highlights of the Scan

Ottawa has experienced many changes demographically

- Ottawa is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, having experienced a 7.3% growth rate between the 1996-2001 census period.¹
- The majority of growth (39%) occurred as a result of international migration, while at the same time natural population growth (due to birth rates) remained stable and inter-provincial migration was relatively low.²
- Ottawa is aging—currently 1 in 12 (88,995) persons are aged 65 and older. Projections show that the number of seniors will increase to 1 in 6 by 2020.³ This is occurring at the same time the relative proportion of the younger population remains stable.
- Over 15% (1 in 7) of the population of Ottawa belongs to a visible minority group, and more than 1 in 5 Ottawans are immigrants. These numbers are expected to double by 2020.⁴
- The language make-up of Ottawa has changed since amalgamation—65.43% of Ottawans claimed English as their mother tongue in 2001, down from 67.41% in 1996. French as a mother tongue has also decreased—from 16.59% in 1996 to 16.34% in 2001.^{5/6}

¹ Statistics Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2001

² Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *A Profile of the Ottawa Population: Demographic Report 1996-2001*, November 2002

³ Kathleen Nunn, *Regional scan for the Seniors' Agenda*, October 16, 2002:1

⁴ Canadian Labour and Business Centre, *Tapping the Potential – A Statistical Profile of Ottawa's Immigrant Workforce*, 2003

⁵ Statistics Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2002

⁶ The per centage of French speaking people does not include ethno-cultural groups that use French as a working language in Canada.



- The number of allophones in Ottawa has increased (3.05% compared with 2.18% five years ago), with Chinese and Arabic being the top non-official languages.⁷
- There was a 14% growth of lone-parent families between the 1996-2001 census periods. Females led (83%) 27,910 of these households.⁸
- In Canada, “there were as many one-person households in the latest census (2001) as there were households with four or more persons.”⁹ Ottawa virtually mirrors this trend.

Over the last five years, the gap between high and low income families and individuals has widened

- The economic situation of many in Ottawa is positive. For example, the median income in Ottawa was \$26,200 in 2000. This is well above the national median of \$21,600.¹⁰ However, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. The average net worth of the country’s poorest families dropped by 51% while it rose by 42.7% for the country’s wealthiest. At the same time, the growth in wealth for the middle income family saw an increase of only 3%.¹¹
- According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts in Ottawa during 2002 reached a level not seen since 1989. Construction began on an estimated 6381 housing units in 2003, up over 26% from 2001.¹² At the same time, almost half of all tenant households in Ottawa are in “core housing need” as a result of being confronted with the difficulty of paying 30% or more of their gross income on rent.¹³
- There is currently an affordable housing shortage in Ottawa, with 15,000 households spending an average of 5 to 8 years on the waiting list for social housing. Additionally, there are, on average, 1000 people sleeping in homeless shelters each night.¹⁴

⁷ Statistic Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2002

⁸ Social Planning Council, *Ottawa’s Families and Households: A Profile 1996-2001*, 2003

⁹ Statistic Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2002

¹⁰ Statistic Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2002

¹¹ Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada’s Children – 2002 Highlights*, November 2002

¹² Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>, 2003

¹³ Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario, *Adequate and Affordable Housing: A Child Health Issue*, Winter/Spring, 2003

¹⁴ Stewart, Dick (People Services, City of Ottawa). *Presentation*. September 10, 2002 and Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa, <http://www.efryottawa.com/research>, 2003

- Currently, 32,000 people per month receive assistance through the various agencies supported by the Ottawa Food Bank. Families, children and youth are becoming the fastest growing users of this service.¹⁵
- Economic divisions are becoming more apparent among public schools as restructuring of funding has put pressure on the ability of some schools to continue to provide school-based extra-curricula programming.¹⁶
- With increased user fees and decreased opportunities to participate in structured leisure activities in the school system, children from low-income families have limited access to recreation. For example, approximately 60% of children in poor families almost never participate in supervised sports, compared to less than one third of children in higher income families.¹⁷
- The size of the visible minority population is growing at almost four times the pace of the Ottawa population.¹⁸ 46% of multicultural families in Ottawa live below the low-income cut-off as defined by Statistics Canada.^{19/20}
- Unemployment in Ottawa is lower than the national average at approximately 7%. In fact, the total number of people with a job in Ottawa by the end of 2002 (585,800) was higher than the number of people employed two years ago at the height of the high-tech boom.²¹ However, it is important to note that there are still more than 30,000 workers every month who are actively seeking employment.²²

¹⁵ The Ottawa Food Bank, <http://www.theottawafoodbank.ca>, 2003

¹⁶ Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children – 2002 Highlights*, November 2002

¹⁷ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *The Research File: Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity*, 2000

¹⁸ Social Planning Council, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Languages in Ottawa: Fast Facts from the 2001 Census*, 2002

¹⁹ Defining poverty is very complex, however, for the purposes of this report, Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) is used. In a city the size of Ottawa, LICO for an individual is gross \$18,371, and gross \$34,572 for a family of four.

²⁰ Community Health & Resource Centres of Ottawa-Carleton, *Sustaining the Commitment to Families*, 1998

²¹ Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, *Unemployment Rate*, Ottawa Update on Economic Development, November 2002

²² Social Planning Council, *Our Social Capital*, December 2002



Changes to government income support programs and the shifting of social services to municipalities may place pressure on the community

- Federal and Provincial governments have shifted much of the responsibility of addressing social needs to municipalities. This shift has resulted in an increase of autonomy for municipal residents and governments and a potentially improved environment for free enterprise. At the same time, the community may struggle to meet its growing needs without the continued support of the Federal and Provincial governments.²³
- Changes to social support programs, such as Ontario Works, Employment Insurance, Social Housing, Child Care and Health Care present both opportunities and challenges when creating solutions for our community.
- In recent years, the growing needs of the community have become increasingly complex, often involving a multitude of issues. In response to this growing complexity, all sectors in the social service industry are faced with the reality of having to respond to changing community needs with high impact programs and services.

²³ Voluntary Sector Initiative, <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca>

SECTION 2 LOOKING FORWARD — WHY AN “ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN”?

This “environmental scan” is part of United Way/Centraide Ottawa’s ongoing commitment to community consultation, collaboration, and evidenced-based decision making. By illustrating change and identifying community assets and needs, we believe this research will stimulate discussion and lead to informed decision making about future community investment for our organization, and for other community groups.

Looking forward means that United Way/Centraide Ottawa has the opportunity to use its unique position to bring greater awareness to the pressing needs of our community. By responding to existing needs and recognizing emerging issues, it is possible to work together to build a city that enables its citizens to work and live to their fullest potential. For example, United Way/Centraide Ottawa expanded its reach in the community in 2002, and raised an unprecedented \$21,700,000—a fundraising record for both United Way/Centraide Ottawa and the community. In 2003, United Way/Centraide Ottawa is supporting over 180 programs, projects and partnerships offered by more than 100 community agencies. These agencies are helping to create solutions to meet the changing social needs in Ottawa.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa is engaged in developing and supporting new partnerships to address the growing socio-economic concerns in the community. It is only by working together—each level of government, the private sector and the voluntary sector—that we can develop coordinated responses to complex challenges, and move beyond serving needs to seeking community solutions.

The voluntary sector, and United Way/Centraide Ottawa in particular, has a significant role to play in building partnerships. It can work with government and support businesses to help them fulfill their corporate social responsibility mandate. It can work with the community to produce sound community-based research, identify priorities, develop effective service delivery mechanisms and leverage resources. By working together, and generating commitment from all sectors to focus on improving the social infrastructure of our City, the possibility to develop community-wide solutions is real.

BACKGROUND

At United Way/Centraide Ottawa, we have responded to the changes in our community by refocusing our efforts and by redefining our Mission. In 1998, United Way/Centraide Ottawa began the journey from fundraiser and allocator, to community builder. Our mission became to “bring people and resources together to build a strong, healthy, safe, community for all.” In an increasingly complex and changing community we now seek to not only support frontline programs, but to develop and support community solutions; community-wide strategies to address issues in a more holistic way.

As the capital city, Ottawa has long held the desirable reputation as being one of the best cities in Canada in which to live and do business. This reputation rests largely on the basis of the social, physical and economic infrastructure available, including vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods, high education levels, cultural and linguistic diversity, clean and safe streets, high employment levels and social cohesion generated and supported by a large network of social services. In order to maintain a competitive edge, it is important for Ottawa to preserve this foundation.

The City of Ottawa has experienced rapid change over the last five years—changes in economic, social and demographic realities, amalgamation, and federal and provincial restructuring of Canada’s social safety net are transforming the city. Although the Ottawa economy is stable and steadily improving, some in our community (18% of wage earners make under \$20,000 a year)²⁴ have benefited very little from recent improvements in the broader economy. At the same time, community agencies are feeling the stress of being overburdened with increasing numbers of clients who experience increasingly complex issues.

At United Way/Centraide Ottawa we are in the business of creating meaningful and measurable impact in the community we serve. As a community builder, we measure success with results; the lives we change and the community we help to shape. We build community in a number of ways: by investing in agencies that offer frontline programs and investing in community partnerships; by investing

²⁴ Statistics Canada, <http://www12.statcan.ca>, 2003

in community initiatives to bring groups together around community agendas; by increasing investment in those agenda areas and measuring the impact of that investment; and by investing in community capacity building which includes raising and leveraging resources, helping to increase the organizational capacity of community groups, and fostering voluntarism and philanthropy in the community-at-large.

OBJECTIVE OF THE “ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN”

The overall objective of this “environmental scan” is to assist in developing a long-range strategy that meets the current and emerging needs of our community and to provide data and research to other community partners/agencies to assist in their strategic planning.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE “ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN”

- To review and update our demographic information on current and emerging trends in the Ottawa community.
- To identify the major challenges and implications posed by each trend.
- To identify, according to issue areas, how United Way/Centraide Ottawa is currently responding to these issues.
- To identify opportunities to convene stakeholders to find community-wide solutions.
- To inform United Way/Centraide Ottawa in its strategic and business planning process.
- To provide background information for future and concurrent research and policy activities.

METHODOLOGY AND REPORT OVERVIEW

Information provided in this scan is based on relevant literature and secondary analysis of the current Ottawa situation, including Statistic Canada’s 2001 census data and the City of Ottawa’s 2020 Report. This scan provides a snapshot of some of the current and emerging trends in Ottawa, rather than an in-depth analysis of any or all issues. At this point, not all relevant trends, such as health and gender

issues, are addressed. It is expected that these issues will be explored in the coming months. Another important issue to be further explored is the impact that the changing nature of government support has had on our community. On the one hand, community agencies are able to fully explore new public/private partnerships leading to innovation and creativity. On the other hand, many community agencies are feeling the pressures of accessing a new and different funding base. For more detailed information on this issue please refer to the Canadian Council on Social Development, *Funding Matters: The Impact of Canada’s New Funding Regime on Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations*, 2003.

It is important to note that this is not a static document; rather, it should be viewed as a skeleton to which new information, as it arises, can be added. New community-based data will become available from Statistics Canada over the coming months. This new data may influence the information currently provided.

A number of current and emerging trends materialized throughout the research process. These trends are discussed in terms of their relevance to the Ottawa community. Some of the challenges related to each trend have been identified, and a variety of socio-economic and political implications are examined. A non-exhaustive list of policy options is included as potential mechanisms with which to break down socio-economic and political barriers faced by some individuals in our community. While these policy options are not new concepts, they are worthy of mention as potential solutions to be worked on in partnership between government, the private sector, foundations, charitable organizations and social service agencies.

Examples of how United Way/Centraide Ottawa’s current community building strategies and investments address these issues are provided. Many strategies and investments tackle more than one trend, and therefore similar themes may be seen under each of the identified issues. For further information on individual programs or agencies involved with United Way/Centraide Ottawa, please visit the website at www.unitedwayottawa.ca.

SECTION 3 IMMIGRATION AND ETHNO-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES:

The Ottawa Context:

Current demographic trends, reflecting in part the increased levels of immigration, are making Ottawa a community of great ethnic and cultural diversity. Immigration continues to be the main driver of population growth in Ottawa, and accounted for 39% of Ottawa's growth over the 1996-2001 census counts. In 2001, 3.3% of all new immigrants to Canada (representing approximately 8000 persons) chose Ottawa as their destination city.²⁵ This is approximately the same number of immigrants as the cities of Winnipeg, Hamilton and London combined.²⁶

Immigrants make up a growing share of Ottawa's population—more than 1 in 5 (165,120) Ottawans is an immigrant, and it is expected that this ratio will double by 2020. The number of visible minorities in Ottawa has increased from 1 in 10 in 1993 to 1 in 7 in 2002. It is expected that this number will increase to 1 in 3.5 by 2020.²⁷

The age and ethnic composition of immigrants complements and contributes to Ottawa's changing demographic and workforce. For example, while only 53% of the Canadian-born population are 'working-age' adults between the ages of 25 and 64, 69% of immigrants fit into this category. Seventy per cent of immigrants aged 15 and over who intend to settle in Ottawa also intend to seek employment.²⁸ These new labour force participants contribute to the growth of Ottawa's workforce, economy and diversity. At the same time, 23% of recent immigrants are less than 15 years of age.²⁹ The most common sources of immigrants include The People's Republic of China, followed by Somalia and Lebanon.

- Ottawa's population grew by 7.3% over the 1996-2001 census period.
- Ottawa is the fourth most populated municipality in Canada.
- 8000 immigrants chose Ottawa as their destination city.

²⁵ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *A Profile of the Ottawa Population*, November 2002

²⁶ Canadian Labour and Business Centre, *Tapping the Potential-A Statistical Profile of Ottawa's Immigrant Workforce*, 2003

²⁷ City of Ottawa, *Ottawa 20/20, Human Services Plan*, 2002 and the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, *Tapping the Potential-A Statistical Profile of Ottawa's Immigrant Workforce*, 2003

²⁸ Citizenship and Immigration, *Landing Records*, 2001

²⁹ Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children – 2002 Highlights*, November 2002

Immigrants are more highly skilled and educated than ever before. Over the past three years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of immigrants to Ottawa entering through the skilled worker category—54% were skilled workers and their dependents.³⁰ 51% of Ottawa-bound immigrants hold a university degree, this is an increase of 37% from 1999.³¹ While the majority (75%) of immigrants arriving speak either English or French, 25% do not have language ability in either of the official languages.³²

Pressing Issues relating to the increase of Recent Immigrants:³³

1) Recognition of internationally-trained qualifications: Recognition of qualifications leads to higher levels of employment and lessens situations of poor matching between jobs and skills whereby highly qualified individuals end up in “survival jobs”.

- Ottawa is the second most popular destination city in Ontario.
- There are 61 different ethnicities and more than 70 different languages spoken in Ottawa.
- The number of immigrants and visible minority members in Ottawa is expected to double by 2020.

- Recent immigrants to Ottawa aged 25 to 44 with university degrees are four times more likely to be unemployed than residents who have lived in Canada for 10 years or more (17% compared with 4%).³⁴
- Among employed recent immigrants in Ottawa who have a trade certificate or college diploma, 56% have jobs that typically do not require post-secondary education, 38% have jobs requiring secondary school graduation only, and a further 18% have jobs that usually require no formal education.³⁵
- The average weekly income of recent immigrants is lower than for Canadian-born residents with the same qualifications.

³⁰ Canadian Labour and Business Centre, *Tapping the Potential-A Statistical Profile of Ottawa’s Immigrant Workforce*, 2003

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Please refer to Key Definitions

³⁴ Canadian Labour and Business Centre, *Tapping the Potential-A Statistical Profile of Ottawa’s Immigrant Workforce*, 2003

³⁵ Ibid

2) Appropriate and Affordable Housing: Appropriate and affordable housing allows people to focus on building the skills necessary to integrate into Canadian society. Facilitating the integration of newcomers is important for settlement issues and encouraging full participation in the community of Ottawa.

- Twenty-six per cent of immigrants live in crowded households, compared to 3% of Canadian-born households.^{36/37}
- Forty-one per cent of immigrants spend more than 30% of their income on shelter, compared to 24% of Canadian-born households.³⁸
- Eleven per cent of immigrant households own their home, while 58% of Canadian-born households own their own home.³⁹

3) Equity and Integration: Many immigrants experience inequality, which hampers successful integration into the community, largely due to economic challenges and cultural, linguistic and religious differences.

- Close to 50% of recent immigrants experience low income (the median income of recent immigrants is less than one-half of the Canadian median family income)—50% of most recent immigrants have no income or income under \$10,000 a year.⁴⁰
- Immigrant children are more likely to have parents who work more than 50 hours a week, however one-third of immigrant children live under the low income cut-off (LICO),⁴¹ compared with one-fifth of non-immigrant children.⁴²

³⁶ Please refer to Glossary of Terms

³⁷ Research indicates that all people, regardless of age or culture, are vulnerable to negative psychological and physical effects associated with crowded housing. Please refer to, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, *Adequate and Affordable Housing: A Child Health Issue, An Overview of Research Linking Children's Health Status to Poor Housing*, 2003

³⁸ Community Health & Resource Centres of Ottawa-Carleton, *Sustaining the Commitment to Families*, 2000

³⁹ Canadian Policy Research Networks, *Immigrant and Cities: Making the Most of an Advantage*, 2003

⁴⁰ Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Reports*, 2003

⁴¹ The LICO for one person is \$18,842, 2 persons is \$23,551, and \$35,455 for a family of four. LICO has been criticized for not considering specific characteristics such as varying food and rent costs. As a result, other poverty measuring mechanisms have been developed to draw a more accurate portrait of poverty in Canada. However, LICO continues to be a standard measurement of poverty.

⁴² National Roundtable, *Developing A Public Participation Agenda for Children Age 6 – 12*, 2002

- Language and cultural barriers are problematic when considering access to health services, education services and basic necessities.

Socio-Economic and Policy Implications:

There are many indirect and direct costs associated with underutilizing the skills of immigrants. Lower-paying jobs affect the economic and emotional well-being of immigrants and their families, but also reduce the consumer spending of a significant portion of Ottawa’s population. At the same time, by developing policies that encourage and allow internationally-trained workers to gain access to jobs and experience in their fields, Ottawa has the potential to capitalize on the knowledge and skills needed to fill in gaps in the labour market.⁴³

Increases in immigration may change the number of houses and types of housing needed in Ottawa. Immigrants in Ottawa may have different housing needs and their social and economic conditions may differ from the Canadian-born population, affecting housing policy and building practices.

Immigration adds to the human and cultural capital of our cities, and is a source of creativity and innovation. Policies and programs designed to break down social and economic barriers are needed in order to create a mutually beneficial experience for Canadian born individuals and new Canadians.

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to tackle the potential of skill shortages, how can we continue to expand the current short-term training emphasis (language and orientation) to medium- to long-term goals such as job training, skills recognition, access to affordable housing, and life-skills training?
- In order to encourage the participation of internationally-trained workers in our economy, how can we improve the standardization of the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials?
- In order to promote feelings of inclusion among and between diverse groups, what further steps can be taken to counter discrimination in our community and the workplace?

⁴³ Canadian Policy and Research Networks, “Immigrant and Cities: Making the Most of an Advantage”, 2003

- In order to promote acculturation and integration for new immigrants, what steps can be taken to develop programs and partnerships that promote bridging (among groups) vs. bonding (within groups)?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

Recognizing the importance of both acculturation and integration for new Canadians, United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded agencies provide programs and services to immigrants that assist in acculturation—strategies to adapt to the Canadian culture. An example includes cross-cultural education whereby newcomers are shown how to become more active members of the community through settlement assistance, practical help, specialized support and counselling. Certain programs also promote the education and integration of students into Canadian society by stressing the importance of multi-cultural education in elementary and secondary schools.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa also supports community-building initiatives that encourage easier transition for all immigrants. As mentioned above, a major obstacle facing many immigrants is job accreditation. For this reason, the Ottawa Internationally-Trained Workers Project has been launched, under the partnership of the United Way/Centraide Ottawa, the Canadian Labour and Business Centre and LASI World Skills. The overall goal of the project is to develop a community-based strategy aimed at facilitating the accreditation and integration of internationally-trained workers into the Ottawa economy.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa has worked together with the Canadian Council on Social Development on a conference to “Enhance the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector and the Justice System to Respond to Violence Against Immigrant and Visible Minority Women.”

United Way/Centraide Ottawa also supports “Building the Ottawa Mosaic,” a collaborative effort committed to ensuring new immigrants get off to a good start in our region today. Through surveys and research, this initiative will discern the best possible ways of ensuring that Ottawa’s newly arrived immigrants have full access to information and services that will enable them to take an active role in society and contribute to the community.

SECTION **4** SENIORS**The Ottawa Context:**

Approximately 12% (88,995) of people living in Ottawa are aged 65 or over. This number is expected to almost double by 2028.⁴⁴ In light of this anticipated growth, it is important to understand some of the major issues associated with an aging population. For example, research indicates that seniors are more likely to experience disabilities and vulnerable seniors are more likely to live in low-income situations than younger age groups.⁴⁵ An aging population also has ramifications for the labour force and for the rate of natural growth experienced in Ottawa.

- 12% of the population in Ottawa are aged 65+.
- The number of seniors in Ottawa will double by 2028.
- The median age of the Ottawa population is increasing and is presently at 36.7 years of age.
- The oldest baby boomers will reach 65 in 2011.

Fortunately, many of Ottawa's seniors are financially stable and in good health. Ottawa seniors have an average income of \$29,000; this is higher than the national average income of \$22,000.⁴⁶ The fact that 12% of Ottawa's seniors are still employed (compared to the national average of 6%) and 14% of Ottawa's seniors make over \$50,000 a year, contributes to the overall positive economic situation of seniors.⁴⁷ On the other hand, 13% of Ottawa's seniors have a yearly income of less than \$10,000. Unattached seniors, particularly women, are especially vulnerable to living in low income situations; and in Ottawa, 17.7% of elderly women had an income of less than \$10,000 as opposed to only 6.3% of elderly men.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ City of Ottawa, Ottawa 20/20, *Human Services Plan*, 2002

⁴⁵ Kathleen Nunn, *Regional Scan for the Ottawa Senior's Agenda*, October 2002

⁴⁶ Statistics Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2002

⁴⁷ Kathleen Nunn, *Regional Scan for the Ottawa Senior's Agenda*, October 2002

⁴⁸ It should be noted that, for older women and men the gradual closing of the income gap has been due to the worsening income position of men. In 1999, the dominant income gap was generational: between women and men under the age of 35, and men aged 35 and older.

It should be noted that a senior's income level presents only part of the picture. In recent years, seniors have experienced changes in their expenditure patterns; income growth has most often not kept pace with increasing expenses.⁴⁹ For example, most seniors are on fixed incomes that do not increase to meet the increasing cost of living.⁵⁰

Research indicates that seniors in older age groups are more likely to require public health assistance than younger adults. This is reflected in the fact that in 2000-2001, 41% of health care costs were spent on seniors' health care.⁵¹ Similarly, most seniors have at least one chronic health condition, the most common being arthritis and rheumatism, and are expected to experience some form of mental, physical or sensorial disability.⁵²

The age profile of the City of Ottawa has changed, reflecting a nation-wide trend towards aging. The aging population has an impact on the natural growth cycle in Ottawa. For example, the median age of the Ottawa population is 36.7—1.7 years older than the median age in 1996 of 35.⁵³ At the same time, the population of adults between the ages of 20 and 64 remains relatively stable and the number of children aged 0-4 has declined by 7% over the last 5 years. This trend has the potential to create pressures on the labour market. While there are currently more people entering the workforce than leaving it, projections indicate that in a little more than 10 years, the number of people retiring will match the number of people (aged 20 to 24) entering the workforce.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Kathleen Nunn, *Regional Scan for the Ottawa Senior's Agenda*, October 2002

⁵⁰ A recent Statistics Canada report states that many seniors may be better off financially than these figures indicate, as their net worth tends to be greater than that of younger age groups.

⁵¹ The Regional Geriatric Assessment Program of Ottawa, *Creating a Senior Friendly Physical Environment in Our Hospitals*, 2002

⁵² Kathleen Nunn, *Regional Scan for the Ottawa Senior's Agenda*, October 2002

⁵³ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *A Profile of the Ottawa Population: Demographic Report 1996 – 2001*, 2002

⁵⁴ Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions, Second Actuarial Report on the Canada Student Loans Program established under the *Canada Student Loans Act* and the *Canada Student Financial Assistance Act*, 2002



Pressing Issues relating to the increasing senior population:

- The structure of Ottawa's population by age has changed significantly since the 1996 census count. Important trends include an aging population; a shrinking pool of young labour market entrants (24-35), and a declining number of children aged 0-4.

1) Questions arise as to the availability of skills and the impact on the economy if this trend continues. The fact that older workers will outnumber youth entering the labour market may have significant consequences on Ottawa's ability to compete globally, as well as fill labour demands locally.

- In Ottawa, it is projected that the percentage of older people will increase by 13% while the youth population will decrease by 13.2% by 2011.⁵⁵
- Ottawa's total dependency ratio has increased from 42 in 1996 to 44 in 2001. For every hundred working-age people, there are 44 children and seniors.⁵⁶

2) Independent living: Older generations have specific health, infrastructure and income support needs in order to age successfully and to continue to participate in our community.

- In 2002, there were 22,595 units of social housing available in Ottawa, 3767 of which were designated specifically for seniors.⁵⁶
- The Social Housing Registry in Ottawa manages the waiting list for social housing and estimated there are approximately 1500 seniors on the list with an average waiting time of two years.⁵⁷

3) Increased pressure on families: As the population ages, many families will experience the double burden of caring for both their own children and for elderly relatives. Social services such as childcare support, flexible work schedules and home care for the elderly will be necessary to assist families to meet this demand.

- Eighty-four per cent of seniors report receiving support, including light housekeeping or household maintenance activities, transportation, grocery shopping, banking, emotional support and personal care.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Statistics Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2002

⁵⁶ Kathleen Nunn, *Regional Scan for the Ottawa Senior's Agenda*, October 2002

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Ibid

- Seniors are most likely to receive support from spouses, daughters, friends and neighbours: 61% of these caregivers are female.⁵⁹

Socio-Economic Implications:

The size and age structure of the Ottawa population will have important implications for the City's labour market and economy, housing requirements, demand for social services, and charitable giving.

For example, the labour market will feel pressure as the working-age population begins to retire. There may not be enough younger people to sufficiently replace the retirees, and solutions include increased immigration, increased Aboriginal participation and the development of skills and earning potential of that portion of Ottawa's existing labour force that is currently underemployed.

Families of all incomes will likely be challenged as increasing responsibility for elder care by adult children increases family stress and requires more workplace flexibility. At the same time, given the mobility of the working population, there may be fewer adult children available to care for senior parents. As such, the need for physically accessible facilities, services and recreational opportunities, age-appropriate and affordable housing, respite care and similar services will increase. Continuing support for programs that reduce isolation and promote healthy aging for low-income and single seniors will be increasingly important.

As mentioned, as people age, their health need requirements generally increase. This has a significant impact on how health agencies provide adequate and affordable health support for seniors and will generate stress on health care resources. For this reason it is important to develop support systems to enable seniors to live healthy lifestyles.

Responding to and preparing for the emerging trends resulting from an aging population is important to ensure the positive life-long experiences of all citizens in Ottawa.

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to help mitigate skill shortages, how can we expand and improve skill and job training?

⁵⁹ Ibid



- In order to promote independence among seniors, how can we promote affordable and adequate home care strategies, affordable and appropriate infrastructure and housing so that seniors have an option to live independently for as long as possible?
- In order to create partnerships and promote community-building at the grassroots level, how can we promote the recognition of informal family and community support networks?
- In order to lessen the impact the aging population may have on the family, what steps are needed to promote the broadening of employment policies to include flexible retirement terms and flexible hours for caregivers?
- In order to promote healthy living lifestyles, what steps can be taken to expand support for healthy-living options for seniors?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

Recognizing the important role that seniors play in our community, United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded agencies provide programs and services that address the needs of seniors. Programs provide a welcoming place for seniors and are designed to keep seniors active in the community, independent and mentally and physically well. Accessible social and recreational activities, as well as services to seniors in their own homes, are again designed to keep seniors physically and mentally healthy, and to foster independence so that seniors have the capacity to cope with daily activities safely and live an enhanced quality of life.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa is involved in the Ottawa Community Support Coalition, a network which promotes the common goals of community-based, not-for-profit health and social service organizations that deliver community support services to seniors and those with special needs thereby helping them to maintain health and independence at home in their own communities.

Successful Aging Ottawa, a planning table for seniors, brings together funders and planners of services for seniors to share information and to develop a city-wide plan for a framework for successful aging for seniors now, and to the year 2020. The Successful Aging Ottawa framework will engage the community to look at strengths and gaps in services available for seniors and to develop a shared vision by and for seniors.

SECTION 5 THE FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY

The Ottawa Context:

Trends such as amalgamation and increased diversity in the community of Ottawa have resulted in a slight decrease of people claiming French as their mother tongue. Although francophones in Ottawa have very strong cultural and linguistic ties, French as a mother tongue decreased from 16.59% in 1996 to 16.34% in 2001.⁶⁰ At the same time, the number of allophones in Ottawa has increased during this time, with Arabic and Chinese being the top non-official languages.

Where francophones choose to live in Ottawa is also changing. While many francophones historically lived east of the Rideau River, they are now choosing to move to neighbourhoods such as Nepean and Kanata. This has increased the linguistic diversity of many Ottawa communities.

Although the economic, employment and education situation of many francophones has improved, the most recent data available indicates that areas with 'high' or 'very high' numbers of francophones may experience disproportionate incidents of low-income and poorer health outcomes.⁶¹

Pressing Issues relating to the Francophone Community:

1) Equitable access to social and health services: Although many programs are bilingual, access to French services is still often a challenge.

- The French Language Health Services Network of Eastern Ontario found that there is a need to increase the number of French language programs and services in Hospital Care, Community Care, Public Health, Mental Health and Drug addiction and Long-Term Care Programs.⁶²

⁶⁰ Statistics Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca> 2002. The percentage of French speaking people does not include ethno-cultural groups that use French as a working language in Canada.

⁶¹ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *The Challenges our Children Face: A Report Card on Child Poverty in Ottawa-Carleton*, 2000

⁶² French Language Health Services Network of Ontario, www.rssfes.on.ca

2) French language agencies are largely located in high French speaking density areas. It is important that francophones, regardless of where they live, have access to services.

- Francophones are choosing to live in many different areas across the city, rather than staying in known traditional neighbourhoods. This increases the potential for francophones to feel isolated as they leave their communities and community organizations.

3) There has been an increase in education among francophone youth in Ontario.

- Only 0.9% of francophone youth, compared to 1.3% of youth in the general population, do not complete Grade 9.
- 82% of francophone youth, compared to 80% of youth in the general population, undertake post-secondary studies

Socio-Economic and Policy Implications:

While linguistic and cultural diversity is key to a vibrant and dynamic city, there must be equity among groups to fully capitalize on the benefits of diversity. Promoting equal treatment of the francophone community involves recognizing and capitalizing on the contribution diversity makes in our community.

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to mitigate feelings of isolation, what steps are needed to promote awareness of the different programs and services available to the francophone community?
- In order to help preserve bilingualism in our community, what steps are needed to promote language retention?
- In order to support a diverse group of French speakers, what steps can be taken to increase programs for ethno-cultural francophone groups?
- In order to work towards real community solutions, what is needed to promote the evaluation and monitoring of the number and impact of francophone services currently available?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded francophone agencies provide programs and services that benefit the entire Francophone community. For example, counselling and family life education services provide support for families and individuals in crisis. A francophone crisis and referral service provides assistance to individuals in times of urgent need or crisis. Leadership and social development programs are designed to assist children and youth grow into happy and healthy individuals. Skills-training assists people in their quest to improve their life situation. There are also programs designed to integrate adults with intellectual challenges into our community, and day centres for seniors that seek to foster independence and a health lifestyle.

Recognizing the need for evidenced-based research about Ottawa's francophone community, United Way/Centraide Ottawa provides support to gather and analyze such data.

At the same time, many United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded agencies are bilingual and can offer services and programs appropriate to francophones.

The Comité des Affaires Francophones de Centraide Ottawa, a partnership of community members from the francophone community, is developing a strategy to further develop and promote United Way/Centraide Ottawa's relationship with the francophone community.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa also supports the francophone community through partnership grants. For example, L'Assemblée francophone et le Comité inter-agence, provides accurate and up-to-date social information and demographic data for the francophone and the francophone ethno-cultural communities. Le Regroupement des partenaires francophones et le Centre psycho-social pour enfants et familles d'Ottawa aims to improve the quality of life and increase the independence of francophone individuals living with developmental disabilities in our community.



SECTION 6

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Ottawa Context:

The Ottawa area is home to one of the fastest growing and most diverse urban Aboriginal⁶³ populations in Canada with more than 35,000 individuals self-identifying as First Nation, Inuit or Métis.⁶⁴ Ottawa also has the largest number of Aboriginal people outside of the North. As the urban Aboriginal community grows in Ottawa, it becomes increasingly important to understand the demographic and socio-economic situation of Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal communities are not experiencing the same rate of aging as the non-aboriginal population. For example, the average age for Aboriginal people, 25, is 14 years younger than the median non-Aboriginal age of 37. Approximately one-third of the Aboriginal population is under 15, compared with 19% of the non-Aboriginal population.⁶⁵ Many Aboriginal women have babies at a younger age and more frequently than non-Aboriginal women; they and their families also experience worse living conditions than non-aboriginal women and families. They must survive, on average, on an income below the low-income cut-off. Poor living conditions are taking a toll on the health and well-being of many urban Aboriginal peoples.

For example, summaries of interviews completed by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres have detailed the severe impact that living in poor living conditions is having on the day-to-day realities of Aboriginal Ontarians.⁶⁶ They conclude that even the most basic needs of urban Aboriginal peoples are not being met. The study found that a disproportionate number of homeless persons and people who suffer from poor physical health are Aboriginal—27% of the homeless population in Ottawa are Aboriginal.⁶⁷ Food insecurity has resulted in overwhelming demands for emergency supplies from Friendship Centres and other social-service agencies. As well, the damaging psychological effects of poor living conditions due to low-to-no income were mentioned in every interview.⁶⁸

⁶³ Aboriginal refers to groups or individuals identifying as First Nation, Inuit or Métis.

⁶⁴ City of Ottawa, Ottawa 20/20, *Human Services Plan*, 2002

⁶⁵ Statistics Canada, January 2003, <http://www.statcan.ca>

⁶⁶ National Roundtable, *Developing a Public Participation Agenda for Children Age 6 – 12*, June 20th – 21st, 2002

⁶⁷ City of Ottawa, Ottawa 20/20, *Human Services Plan*, 2002

⁶⁸ National Roundtable, *Developing a Public Participation Agenda for Children Age 6 – 12*, June 20th – 21st, 2002

Fortunately, efforts to respond to the poor quality of life experienced by many in the Aboriginal community have led to some positive outcomes. For example, although graduation rates remain significantly lower in the Aboriginal community, between 1986 and 1996, the proportion of young Aboriginal people without a high school diploma fell from 60% to 45%. At the same time, the proportion of those who completed their college education increased from 15% to 20%.⁶⁹ Also, the urban Aboriginal community is coming together to respond to the needs of its diverse community through forms of traditional healing and the celebration of unique cultural identities. However, many in the urban Aboriginal community continue to experience barriers to participation.

Pressing Issues relating to Urban Aboriginal Communities:

1) There are more signs of social distress in urban Aboriginal communities than the general population.

- Fifty-one per cent of Aboriginal people in Canada live in urban centres.⁷⁰
- Aboriginal people tend to have lower educational attainment, lower income and higher unemployment.⁷¹
- Aboriginal people are more likely to be in lone parent families, have poorer health status, have higher rates of homelessness and greater housing need.⁷²
- Aboriginal people are over-represented in the criminal justice system as both victims and offenders.⁷³
- Aboriginal children are the fastest growing segment of Canada's population.⁷⁴ In 2002, there were 25 babies per every 1000 Aboriginal person versus 12.5 per 1000 in the non-Aboriginal population.

⁶⁹ National Roundtable, *Developing a Public Participation Agenda for Children Age 6 – 12*, June 20th – 21st 2002

⁷⁰ Canada West Foundation, *Shared Responsibility: Final Report and Recommendations of the Urban Aboriginal Initiative*, February 2003

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Population Community Profile*, 2002



Socio-Economic and Policy Implications:

While the natural rate of growth in Canada among non-Aboriginals is declining, the growth rate of the Aboriginal community continues to increase. The direct and indirect social and economic costs of not focusing on the developmental needs of this diverse community is high.

Given the known link between social and cultural diversity in cities and higher economic competitiveness, a coordinated policy focus on the development needs of Aboriginal people is in our community's best interest.

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to improve the socio-economic situation of the urban Aboriginal community, what steps are needed to promote culturally specific strategies to address their specific needs?
- In order to improve the socio-economic situation of the urban Aboriginal community, what steps are needed to promote mentoring programs to improve life-skills and job-skills?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

United Way/Centraide Ottawa is carefully monitoring the situation of the urban Aboriginal community in Ottawa. It presently supports an inter-generational bridging program whereby young Aboriginal people meet with elders to learn about their traditional ways. The program is designed to build self-esteem and pride in both the young and the old.

SECTION 7 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Ottawa Context:

Local community agencies estimate that a significant number (one in five) of Ottawa's population will experience some form of disability in their lifetime.⁷⁵ As the population ages, so too will the number of people living with a disability.⁷⁶ Although there have been improvements over the last decade, barriers to participation remain a significant factor in the lives of many disabled persons in Ottawa.

Issues relating to Persons with Disabilities:

1) Many people with disabilities are unable to participate in our community to their fullest potential. Furthermore, research indicates that disabled people experience disproportionately lower levels of income and higher levels of unemployment.

- According to a recent survey of Ottawa citizens living with disabilities, a disproportionate number of persons with disabilities live in poverty. 52% of survey respondents indicated they live on less than \$15,000 a year, and 21% said less than \$9600 a year.⁷⁷
- Thirty-one per cent of people with disabilities in Ottawa are active in the labour force (compared with 75% of non-disabled) and they are not equally sharing in the new economy.⁷⁸
- Many disabled people are in core housing need or homeless as a result of unaffordable and inappropriate housing, coupled with low overall income levels.⁷⁹
- Affordable and appropriate transportation remains one of the leading barriers facing people living with disabilities.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Disability refers to a physical disability, mental or psychiatric disability, or a learning or developmental disability. City of Ottawa, Ottawa 20/20, *Human Services Plan*, 2002

⁷⁶ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *A Profile of the Ottawa Population: Demographic Report 1996-2001*, 2002

⁷⁷ Disabled Persons Community Resources, *Maximizing Our Assets: Partnering for Participation and Inclusion*, November 2002

⁷⁸ Line 1000, *People with Disabilities and the Labour Market in Ottawa*, May 2001

⁷⁹ Social Planning Council, *Ottawa: The People and Their City*, Our Social Capital, Volume 2, No.1, April 2001:18

⁸⁰ Disabled Persons Community Resources, *Maximizing Our Assets: Partnering for Participation and Inclusion*, November 2002

- 2) The number of disabled people in Ottawa is expected to increase over the coming years resulting in a need for appropriate social and physical infrastructure.
- One in five people in Ottawa will likely experience either permanent or temporary disability.⁸¹
 - As our population ages the number of people with one or more disability and chronic illness is increasing.⁸²
 - Three out of five disabled people surveyed said they could not pursue interests or participate in community activities. Over two-thirds of the disabled community are not working or volunteering because of lack of access, training opportunities and employer sensitivity.⁸³
- 3) Many people suffer from mental illness in their lifetime.
- Twenty per cent of Canadians suffer from mental illness.⁸⁴
 - As many Canadians suffer from major depression as from other leading chronic conditions, including heart disease, diabetes or a thyroid condition, according to new data on mental health and well-being.⁸⁵

Socio-Economic and Political Implications:

A significant number of Ottawa's residents are expected to experience some form of disability in their lifetime, and this trend is expected to increase as our population ages. Breaking down barriers that are impeding full participation in our community is important to ensure that an important and vital segment of our community is participating in our society.⁸⁶

⁸¹ City of Ottawa, *Human Services Plan*, Priority on People, Ottawa 20/20, 2003

⁸² Kathleen Nunn, *Regional Scan for the Ottawa Seniors' Agenda*, October 2002

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Statistics Canada, *Canadian Community Health Survey: Mental Health and Well-Being*, The Daily, 2003

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Centre on Governance, *Ottawa Works: A Mosaic of Ottawa's Economic and Workforce Landscape – Report 11: Profiling Ottawa's Workforce*, November 2002

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to promote inclusion of disabled persons in the workplace, what steps are needed to expand the standardization of workplaces for disabled people across multiple sectors?
- In order to promote independence among people with disabilities, how can we promote affordable and adequate home care strategies, affordable and appropriate infrastructure, transportation and housing so that people with disabilities have an option to live as independently as possible?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

United Way/Centraide Ottawa recognizes that as the population ages and grows, there will likely be an increase in the number of people experiencing some form of disability. As a community builder, United Way/Centraide Ottawa is addressing the needs of persons living with disabilities by supporting People with disABILITIES: A Community Coalition. The Coalition is made up of more than 20 local groups working with persons with physical and sensory disabilities; its goal is to increase independence, participation and integration of all persons living with disabilities in Ottawa. It also hopes to improve services for persons living with disabilities.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded agencies that work with issues relating to disabilities provide services and programs that support the disabled community on a wide range of infrastructure issues such as housing and transportation. Crisis intervention and mental health support programs are designed to promote self-esteem and assist clients who are at risk of self-harm. Outreach programs and community development programs support people with disabilities to become independent.

SECTION 8 HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

The Ottawa Context:

Affordable housing is fundamental to the quality of life of both individuals and for the overall health and well-being of the community. In spite of this, there is currently an affordable housing shortage in Ottawa. While the housing market in Ottawa is expected to continue to reach record activity as housing starts and the resale market are hitting record highs,⁸⁷ there are many in Ottawa who have trouble paying the bills.

The housing situation, for example, continues to strain the already low incomes of poor families: the number of children living in unaffordable housing increased by 91% between 1989 and 1996. Almost half of all tenant households in Ontario, including Ottawa, have difficulty affording the rent (they are paying 30% or more of their gross income on rent) and about 1 in 4 tenant households is paying 50% or more of their gross income on rent.

Families and individuals in core housing need⁸⁸ often have to choose between shelter and food. Currently, 32,000 people per month receive assistance through the various agencies supported by the Ottawa Food Bank—42% are children.⁸⁹ At the same time, the Mission, which serves meals to homeless men and women, has seen an increase of 100 (from 600 to 700) meals a day over the past year.⁹⁰

Unaffordable housing is one of the leading causes of homelessness. Ottawa, for example, has seen a significant rise in homelessness, and approximately 1000 people sleep homeless shelters every night. This number includes children—on any given night in 2002, sixty-six families, including 44 children under the age of six, slept in an emergency shelters.⁹¹

Counting the number of people sleeping in shelters does not paint a full picture. For example, it is estimated that as many as 4000 more individuals and families

⁸⁷ Ottawa Business Journal, *CMHC Expects Solid Year for Local Housing Market*, April 2003

⁸⁸ This is referred to as living in “core housing need” – a household living in a dwelling that falls below at least one adequacy, suitability or affordability standard and that the household is spending 30% or more of its income to pay average market rent.

⁸⁹ The Ottawa Food Bank, <http://www.theottawafoodbank.ca>, 2002

⁹⁰ Carleton University, “It’s a shame, it’s a crime,” <http://www.carleton.ca/ctown/archiv/> 2002

⁹¹ Success By 6, *Annual Report Card to the Community*, 2003

in Ottawa sleep under bridges, on the streets and in unstable housing—rooming houses so squalid “that it’s barely more adequate than sleeping under a bridge”.^{92/93}

Many people who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, or living in poor housing conditions are trying to improve their situation. As a result, there are 15,000 (over 7800 applicants are caring for at least one child) households on the social housing waiting list and the average waiting time for social housing is 5 to 8 years.⁹⁴

Pressing Issues relating to Housing and Homelessness:

- 1) Discrimination: The ability to find and secure affordable and adequate housing may be more difficult for immigrants and visible minority groups, youth, people with disabilities, families with young children and people on social assistance. Some landlords and housing policies discriminate against those who are in a desperate situation, who lack knowledge of their rights or who do not have a fixed address or the necessary resources associated with housing costs.⁹⁵
- 2) Impact on families: The conditions in which children live have clear consequences for their health, safety and development. The cyclical nature of unaffordable housing means that as people spend more money on shelter, they have less to spend on other basic necessities such as food, clothing, education and health care. Low-income families move into over-crowded and poorly maintained housing to ease financial pressure. The result can be poor health, hunger and poor education performance.⁹⁶
- 3) Affordable and Appropriate housing: The amount of available housing is only one component of the housing crisis. Affordability (do the incomes of people match the kind of housing available?) and appropriateness (does the kind of housing available match the kinds of households being formed?) are significant components of this issue.
 - Although the number of dwellings in Ottawa increased significantly more than the population grew over the 1996-2001 period (12% versus 7.3% respectively), affordable housing pressures persist, suggesting a gap in demand and supply.

⁹² The Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa, <http://www.elizabethfry.ca>, 2002

⁹³ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Made in Ontario Housing Crisis, <http://www.policyalternatives.ca>, 2001

⁹⁴ The Ottawa Social Housing Network, <http://www.socialhousing.org>, 2004

⁹⁵ Housing and Homelessness Network in Ontario (HHNO), www.povnet.org, February, 2002

⁹⁶ Brandon, Kristi, *Health Costs of Poor Housing: A Review of the Literature*, McAuley Institute, 2002



- The affordable housing shortage is exacerbated by the fact that the current rental vacancy rate is 2.9% (up from 1.9% in 2002) and rents increased by 25% during the 1996-2001 time period.⁹⁷ At the same time, the average cost of an owner-occupied private dwelling in Ottawa increased by 26% over the 1996-2001 time period (\$154,234 to \$194,000 respectively).⁹⁸ In 2003, the average price of a home on the resale market is \$212,500.⁹⁹

4) Homelessness is on the rise.

- Increasing rents combined with stable or decreasing income sources can result in homelessness. The number of people requiring emergency shelter in Ottawa has increased over the last 5 years—due largely to an inability to afford the cost of housing.¹⁰⁰

5) Hunger statistics are key indicators of the growing disparity between high- and low-income earners in Ottawa. High housing costs mean some families have very little money left over for essentials. As a result, more and more people are experiencing persistent hunger.

- In 2003, 777,869 people used a food bank in one month in Canada. This is an increase of 9.01% since 1998.¹⁰¹
- The Ottawa Food Bank has also experienced a 9% increase in demand—representing an increase of approximately 3000 emergency food visits per month.¹⁰²

Socio-Economic and Policy Implications:

There are many direct and indirect costs associated with an affordable housing shortage. The cycle of poverty is harder to stop when people in the community are facing core housing needs. Poor health outcomes increase when people live in sub-standard housing, and obviously worsen when homelessness becomes the only alternative.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ TD Financial, *Affordable Housing in Canada*, 2003

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>, April 2003

¹⁰⁰ Globe and Mail Update, *More than 14,000 Canadians call shelter home*, November 2002

¹⁰¹ Canadian Association of Foodbanks, *HungerCount 2003: Something Has to Give: Foodbanks Filling the Policy Gap in Canada*, 2003

¹⁰² The Ottawa Food Bank, www.theottawafoodbank.ca, 2003

¹⁰³ Canadian Policy Research Networks, *Housing is a Children's Issue*, 2002

The conditions in which people live, particularly affordability, also have clear consequences on their safety and security, success at learning, social engagement and feeling of community responsibility. These in turn have consequences on their ability to contribute to society and to fulfill their potential to participate fully in our community.¹⁰⁴

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to keep people housed, what steps are needed to develop affordable and appropriate housing strategies (such as increased social housing, regulation of rent control) that meet the needs of a changing society (age, ethnic composition, family structures and living arrangements)?
- In order to increase community awareness of homelessness and promote knowledge of tenant rights, how do we develop homelessness initiatives, including building the community's capacity to deal with homelessness and increased public awareness on tenant rights issues?
- In order to encourage self-reliance and autonomy, what steps can be taken to promote the importance of job skills training?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

While United Way/Centraide Ottawa does not address the issues of homelessness and housing directly, many of its funded agencies offer programs that have a positive influence on families and individuals experiencing a housing crisis. For example, trained volunteers are provided to offer advice and moral support to clients during any official meetings they may attend while being homeless or at risk of being homeless. United Way/Centraide Ottawa is currently supporting some agencies that provide life-skills services and programs to homeless or people who are at risk of being homeless. United Way/Centraide Ottawa has also participated in the Alliance to End Homelessness, a broad-based community-led initiative aimed at ending homelessness in Ottawa. The Alliance to End Homelessness brings together community groups, individuals—including homeless persons, governments and the private and voluntary sectors to address the problems of homelessness in Ottawa.

¹⁰⁴Sherri Torjman, *Reclaiming our Humanity*, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002



SECTION 9

ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT

The Ottawa Context:

The median income in City of Ottawa in the year 2000 was \$26,200. This is well above the national median of \$21,600. Similarly, unemployment in Ottawa is lower than the national average, hovering around 7%. In fact, the total number of people with a job in Ottawa by the end of 2002 (585,800) was higher than the number of people employed two years ago at the height of the tech boom.¹⁰⁵ According to Statistics Canada, this signals a return to expansion mode from recovery mode. However, it is important to note that there are still more than 30,000 workers every month who are actively seeking employment.¹⁰⁶

According to the Conference Board of Canada, Ottawa will be one of the fastest growing economic urban economies in the coming years. The Board expects the region's GDP to gain by 2.9% this year after rising 0.9% in 2002. The increase in the federal government's hiring was credited with the growth. For the next 3 years, Ottawa is expected to achieve growth of 3.1% per year.¹⁰⁷

Ottawa-based companies attracted over \$287 billion in venture capital in 2003. While this is not as high as in 2000-2001, it is higher than in the 1990s and is expected to continue to rise.¹⁰⁸ Despite the decline in manufacturing activity brought about by the slowdown in the high technology sector, the Ottawa economy remains strong, and indeed, has outperformed the national average in recent years. The local economy is becoming increasingly diversified, although it does rely heavily on the information and communications technology (ITC) sector (17%) and the public administration sector (19%).¹⁰⁹

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts in Ottawa during 2002 reached a level not seen since 1989. In 2003, construction began on an estimated 6381 housing units, up over 26% from 2001.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, *Ottawa Update on Economic Development*, 2002

¹⁰⁶ Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *Our Social Capital*, December 2002

¹⁰⁷ Conference Board of Canada, www.conferenceboard.ca, 2003

¹⁰⁸ Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, *Ottawa Update on Economic Development*, 2003

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>, April 2003

Pressing Issues relating to Economics and Employment:

1)The economic disparity between higher and lower income families continues to grow: This disparity means that there are people in our community who are unable to participate equally in our community.

- Although there is an upward trend in family incomes, 12% of families live on incomes below \$20,000. In a study released in December 2000, Statistics Canada found that employment earnings were increasingly concentrated in richer neighbourhoods and unemployment was increasingly concentrated in poorer neighbourhoods. For example, employment earnings in the poorest neighbourhoods fell 11%, while they rose 16% in the richest neighbourhoods. Through the same period, unemployment rose in the poorest neighbourhoods, but changed very little in the richer neighbourhoods.¹¹¹
- The results of living on a low income are most severe for single-parent families.
- Only 47% of Canadians in the lowest income bracket rate their health as very good or excellent, compared to 73% in the highest income groups.¹¹²

2)Unemployment and underemployment: Not fully engaging citizens to their fullest potential has societal and economic ramifications.

- Many jobs being created in Ontario are part-time contract, seasonal or low paying full-time positions—this means that employment is not necessarily enough to keep individuals and families out of the cycle of poverty.¹¹³ In Ontario, 1 in 4 low-income children live in families where at least one parent works full time.¹¹⁴

Socio-Economic and Policy Implications:

The standard of living for many Ottawans has improved over the last years. This is good news. However, at the same time, the gap between low-income and high-income individuals and families is increasing. There are certain groups in Ottawa

¹¹¹Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *Our Social Capital – Focusing on Our Neighbourhoods*, Vol. 11, No. 2, September 2002

¹¹²The Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, *Child Poverty Persists: Time to Invest in Children and Families-2003: Report Card on Child Poverty in Ontario*, 2003

¹¹³Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children – 2002 Highlights*, November 2002

¹¹⁴The Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, *Child Poverty Persists: Time to Invest in Children and Families-2003: Report Card on Child Poverty in Ontario*, 2003



that are at risk of experiencing higher rates of poverty, including visible minority groups and immigrants, disabled people, youth, seniors and lone-parent families.

The link between affordable housing, hunger and healthy development, especially in our children, is connected to the level of income of individuals and families.¹¹⁵

In order for a community as a whole to prosper, it is necessary to work together to break down the barriers that contribute to the increasing disparity of life situations within our society.

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to promote participation in our community and improve the situation of unemployed individuals and families, what steps can be taken to reduce skills barriers such as inadequate recognition of foreign skills and credentials and increased access to job training and skill development?
- In order to facilitate partnership-building, what steps can be taken to encourage and promote collaboration between levels of government to re-assess income supplements to match inflation levels?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

As a community builder, United Way/Centraide Ottawa is dedicated to providing resources to high-impact programs and services. In this way, diverse organizations from across sectors are brought together to best respond to current and emerging needs in our community. Many agencies and partnerships that receive resources from United Way/Centraide Ottawa deliver programs and services that directly and indirectly improve the life situation of people living in poverty.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa's funded agencies offer a wide range of programs and services that promote individual and community well-being and foster economic independence. Programs include life-skills training for unemployed and underemployed individuals, opportunities for individuals to develop important job-related skills, and outreach programs designed to enrich the feeling of community in a low-income neighbourhood.

¹¹⁵Child and Youth Health Network of Eastern Ontario, *Report Card: Child and Youth Poverty*, 2000

SECTION 10

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Ottawa Context:

The growth rate of children and youth in Ottawa has remained relatively stable over the last five years. For example, the number of children aged 0 to 14 in Ottawa grew by 0.02% over the 1996-2001 census period. The number of children between the ages of 5 and 9 increased by 2% and the number in the 10 to 14 age groups increased by 5%. The number of children aged 0-4, however, declined by 7%.¹¹⁶

The traditional family is changing. While the vast majority of children (84%) still live in two-parent families, a growing number are living in lone-parent households – 42,485 in 1996 compared to 48,125 in 2001, representing a 13.27% increase. Statistics illustrate that the number of lone-parent families has been steadily increasing over the last 25 years, and research indicates this number will continue to rise.

Many families, children and youth are also experiencing deeper levels of poverty and the associated risks. For example, although the number of families with low income fell to its lowest level in a decade, and the low-income rate declined to its lowest level since 1989 (from 7.5% in 1989 to 10.7% in 1996 to 7.9% in 2000), the overall financial situation of families below the low-income cut-off remained about the same.¹¹⁷

Many studies illustrate the connection between poor social and health outcomes and children growing up in poverty. The number of children in need of intervention from the Children's Aid Society (CAS) is one measurement of how Ottawa's children are faring. In 2001-2002, the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa experienced an 11% increase of protection investigations, from 2402 to 2873. Children served in their care rose by 2%. Despite significant efforts to recruit foster homes, the number of foster families decreased by 4.8% during the year. The number of days of care provided to children rose 5% as 8% fewer children were discharged from CAS's care.¹¹⁸ While

¹¹⁶Statistics Canada, *Community Profile*, <http://www.statcan.ca>, 2002

¹¹⁷Statistics Canada, *Family Income 2000*, The Daily, October, 2000

¹¹⁸The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, *Annual Report*, 2002



this is due in part to changing legislation, the increasing challenges experienced by families and children contribute to the growth of children in care situations.

While studies indicate that many families, children and youth are experiencing increased stress,¹¹⁹ they are also less likely to have the opportunity to relieve the stresses they are experiencing. For example, access to activities that can improve socialization skills and feelings of self-worth, such as leisure and recreational sports, has decreased. Poorer children and youth are particularly affected. Trends such as increased academic pressures leading to more homework and less physical activity, barriers to accessing leisure and recreation activities through schools and an increase of sedentary lifestyles have resulted in increased obesity in children and youth. The impact has been significant—50% of children and youth are not active enough for optimal growth and development.¹²⁰

Pressing Issues relating to Children, Families and Youth:

1) Although fewer families are living in poverty, lower-income families are increasingly feeling the impact poverty has on quality of life issues.

- Children living in families that function poorly are less likely to have positive experiences in school, less likely to participate in recreation and less likely to get along with friends.¹²¹
- Low-income families or families with little financial wealth have fewer resources and are more likely to experience unexpected challenges such as layoffs, health problems, unforeseen expenses and family break-ups.¹²²
- Families are the fastest growing users of homeless shelters and food banks—66 families, including 44 children under the age of six, slept in an emergency shelter on any given night in 2002.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Vanier Institute of the Family, *CONNECTIONS - Tracking the Link Between Jobs and Family*, 2002

¹²⁰ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *The Research File: Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity*, 2000

¹²¹ Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children – 2002 Highlights*, November 2002

¹²² Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*, Winter 2002, No. 67

¹²³ Success By 6, *Annual Report Card to the Community*, 2003

2) Parents are having greater difficulty balancing their work and family lives.

- In 2001, 74% of working women with children reported having too much to do, up from 67% in 1991.¹²⁴

3) Family structures are changing in Ottawa, and this trend is likely to continue over the coming years.

- The number of parents with children under 12 that are separated or divorced has tripled over the last 20 years.¹²⁵
- There was a 14% jump in lone-parent households in Ottawa from 1996 to 2001, and there are few indicators the financial experience of lower-income lone-parent families will improve.¹²⁶
- The chances of living in low income are greatest for members of female lone-parent households.¹²⁷ Low-income female lone-parent families remain, on average, \$8000 below LICO.¹²⁸

4) Many children and youth are reacting to increased stress related to multiple pressures.

- Violence among youth is decreasing, yet 1 in 4 young people is still being bullied at school.¹²⁹
- Following the national trend, Operation Go Home Ottawa, an agency that specializes in run-away outreach programs, saw a 100% increase of contacts from 1997 (2470 contacts) to 2001 (over 5000 contacts).¹³⁰ While each contact counted does not necessarily represent a different individual, the message remains clear—there are too many children and youth experiencing trauma in their lives.
- Higher numbers of young people have eating disorders and incidents of sexually transmitted diseases are on the rise.¹³¹

¹²⁴ Vanier Institute for the Family, *CONNECTIONS – Tracking the links between jobs and family*, 2002

¹²⁵ Voices 4 Children, *Fact Sheet*, <http://www.voices4children.org/>

¹²⁶ Social Planning Council, *Ottawa's Families and Households: A Profile 1996-2001*, 2003

¹²⁷ Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children – 2002 Highlights*, November 2002

¹²⁸ The Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto, *Child Poverty Persists: Time to Invest in Children and Families-2003: Report Card on Child Poverty in Ontario*, 2003

¹²⁹ Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, <http://www.camh.net>, 2002

¹³⁰ Operation Go Home, *Statistics*, <http://home.achilles.net>

¹³¹ Hopewell, The Eating Disorders Support Centre of Ottawa, <http://www.hopewell.on.ca/>, 2003



5) Lower-income students and families, as well as students with special needs, may not experience equal access to the public education system.

- Waiting lists for special education increased by 14% between the 1997/98 and 2001/02 period.
- Many studies show that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds perform better than do students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.¹³²
- Families in the top 25% income bracket are 25 times more likely to pursue a university education than those at the lower end.¹³³

6) Although Ontario students have fared very well during international testing, there is a considerable number of young people who are not completing their education.

- Although drop out rates for both sexes have declined since the early 1990s, 12% of youth between 15 and 19 are not in school.¹³⁴ Young men have higher high school drop-out rates than do women: by age 20, fifteen per cent of Canadian men are failing to meet what is considered to be the minimum educational standard compared with 9% of young women.

Socio-Economic and Policy Implications:

Poverty is detrimental to positive, healthy developmental outcomes for our society. Early childhood development casts a long shadow into adulthood in terms of educational outcomes, labour force attachment and overall adult health, both physical and mental. It has been estimated that “every dollar spent on early childhood development saves \$7 in potential costs to the justice, social service and health care systems.”¹³⁵

¹³²Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada's Children – 2002 Highlights*, 2002

¹³³Time to Invest in Children and Families: 2003 Report Card on Child Poverty in Ontario, 2003

¹³⁴The Social Planning Council, *The Challenges Our Children Face: A Report Card on Child Poverty in Ottawa-Carleton*, March 2000

¹³⁵National Post, *Healthy Cities Project: Exclusive Rankings*, 2002

The increase of lone-parent families has dramatic implications for the social and economic fabric of Ottawa. Lone-parent families have increased chances of experiencing poverty, increased need for subsidized childcare and increased need to experience the benefits of social cohesion.¹³⁶

A recent study completed by the Canadian Policy Research Network, states that achieving work-life balance has become increasingly difficult over the last 10 years. Members of the workforce, especially those with families, have become more stressed, physical and mental health has declined, and so has overall satisfaction with life. Today's families are facing increasing pressures on a number of fronts: isolation, hopelessness, a shrinking social safety net, unhealthy environments, insecure work environments and poverty are all acting to diminish the capacity of the family.¹³⁷

Although the number of children in the City of Ottawa has not increased significantly, other social factors that adversely affect children, such as increased depth of poverty, lone-parent households, and job insecurity could all increase the number of children in need of services.¹³⁸ For example, as parents work longer hours to support their families, the need for affordable and appropriate after-school programs and day-care facilities increases.

Some questions to keep in mind...

- In order to improve the situation of families, what steps can be taken to work in partnership with government to re-evaluate family related income support programs, especially for high-risk families?
- In order to support the healthy development of children, what steps can be taken to evaluate and expand early childhood education and Care programs, programs for children 6 to 12, and youth programs?
- In order to create and promote feelings of inclusion for all families, what steps can be taken to develop intergovernmental collaboration and partnerships across all sectors to address this important issue?

¹³⁶Social cohesion refers to the degree to which participants in a community feel committed to the community and the well-being of other residents, and the establishment of core and common values that cause individuals to feel a part of the community.

¹³⁷Newswest, *Building strong communities together*, November 2002

¹³⁸Ibid



- In order to promote positive parenting skills, what steps can be taken to expand parenting support programs for families?
- In order to promote equal access to the benefits of education, what steps can be taken to promote education as a top priority for all sectors of our community?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

United Way/Centraide Ottawa recognizes the importance of each stage of childhood development, from birth to young adult. As such, while many of the resources provided by United Way/Centraide Ottawa cut across boundaries and address the family unit as a whole, programs and initiatives are supported that support the three stages of childhood (0-6, 7-12, and 12-18.)

For example, United Way/Centraide Ottawa family-related funded agencies offer programs that provide family-life education, general counselling and a 24-hour distress line for families. Other agencies bring families and schools together to create healthier children and neighbourhoods.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa recognizes the importance of healthy development for children between the ages of 0 and 6, and is at the forefront of supporting Success By 6. Success By 6 is working to make it easier for parents and communities to give our youngest children everything they need to experience healthy development from the time they are born until they reach 6 years of age. Success by 6 works to increase awareness in our community about the important impact these first years have on a child's life.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa believes that follow-up programs and services are needed for children 6 to 12 in order to continue the positive outcomes resulting from programs developed for children 0 to 6. Research shows that it is important to create conditions and supportive strategies that enable children to continue to reach their full potential. Such strategies will go a long way to help mitigate problems in later years.¹³⁹ As such, United Way/Centraide Ottawa is a founding partner in the initiative to create a framework for the healthy development of children aged 6 to 12 in Ottawa and in the counties of Eastern Ontario.

¹³⁹ DRAFT, Judith Nolte, *Kids in the Middle: The Importance of the Years from 6-12, Background Paper*, January 2003

Programs that target youth between the ages of 14 and 19 complete the cycle and promote healthy growth into adulthood. Youth Action, a United Way/Centraide Ottawa initiative, supports and funds projects designed, developed and implemented by Ottawa youth. These hands-on projects carried out by young people aged 14 to 19 help build strong neighbourhoods and communities. Through Youth Action funding, United Way/Centraide Ottawa invests resources in young people to develop local projects that will positively impact on the health and well-being of their community.

School-aged children and youth benefit from United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded agencies that provide after-school programming. Many programs move beyond helping with homework and also provide information on nutrition, stress management skills, opportunities to increase physical fitness and mentoring opportunities.

Finally, United Way/Centraide Ottawa is an active member of POPCORN—a network of over 30 child and youth service providers in Ottawa. POPCORN provides leadership, brings partners together, identifies needs and priorities, influences policy and funding decisions, fosters coordination and collaboration, shares information and promotes joint planning—all to help ensure that our community nurtures and meets the needs of all children and youth.

SECTION 11

RECREATION
AND LEISURE**The Ottawa Context:**

Part of Ottawa's advantage is its proximity to both natural and urban resources that offer a wide array of leisure and recreation activities. There are vast opportunities for summer and winter sports, world-class museums and wonderful libraries offering programs for children and adults alike. The City of Ottawa has used this image of a "healthy city" to both attract and retain citizens.¹⁴⁰

Recreation as a necessary component for social inclusion and healthy development is slowly emerging as an important issue in Ottawa. Increased access to structured recreation for children and youth is a key issue that must be addressed. Participation in recreation and leisure activities has positive impacts on confidence, self-esteem, willingness to take on challenges, and on physical health. Studies show that these factors help children participate in society later in life.¹⁴¹

Research shows that recreation and active living are critical to young people's healthy development — physically, socially and emotionally. Regular physical activity has significant long-term health benefits.¹⁴²

At the same time, individuals of all ages need greater access to recreation and leisure activities. The benefits of keeping fit throughout an entire lifetime are immeasurable, both economically and for improved quality of life.

Pressing Issues relating to Recreation and Leisure:

1) Lower income families and individuals are less likely to participate in recreation, formal sports and leisure activities than those with higher incomes. User fees and time constraints due to work/family commitments are two major reasons for this gap.

¹⁴⁰ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *The Research File: Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity*, 2000

¹⁴¹ Donnelly, P. & Coakley, J, *The Role of Recreation in Promoting Social Inclusion*, Laidlaw Foundation: Toronto, 2002

¹⁴² Ibid

- Approximately 60% of children in poor families ‘almost never’ participate in supervised sports,¹⁴³ compared with 33% of children living in families earning over \$60,000.¹⁴⁴
- In 1995, nearly half of families with an income under \$20,000 a year said that high cost was a reason for not participating in physical activities, compared with 33% of families earning over \$60,000.¹⁴⁵

2) Lack of recreation and leisure activities contributes to poor health, emotional and intelligence development outcomes.

- Approximately 11% to 36% of seven serious disease conditions (coronary artery disease, stroke, colon and breast cancer, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and hypertension) could be eliminated if people who are sedentary became active.¹⁴⁶
- Two-thirds of Canadians risk their health due to insufficient physical activity and 35% of all deaths from heart disease are a direct result of inactivity.
- The total direct health care costs of physical inactivity to Canadians is \$2.1 billion.¹⁴⁷
- Between 1981 and 1996, rates of obesity nearly tripled among boys (from 5% to 13.5%) and more than doubled among girls (from 5% to 11.5%).¹⁴⁸
- Results from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth for 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2002 indicated a significant correlation between doing very well at school and participating regularly in recreation.¹⁴⁹
- Fifty per cent of children and youth are not active enough for optimal growth and development.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ National Roundtable: “*Developing a Public Policy Agenda for Children Ages 6 to 12.*” June 20th and 21st, 2002

¹⁴⁴ The Social Planning Council, *The Challenges Our Children Face: A Report Card on Child Poverty in Ottawa-Carleton*, March 2000

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

¹⁴⁶ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *Results from the 2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools*, 2001

¹⁴⁷ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *The Research File: Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity*, 2000

¹⁴⁸ Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Progress of Canada’s Children – 2002 Highlights*, 2002

¹⁴⁹ Statistics Canada, *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, 2002

¹⁵⁰ Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, *Results from the 2001 Survey of Physical Activity in Canadian Schools*, 2001



Socio-Economic and Political Implications:

Recreation as a necessary component for social inclusion and healthy development is slowly emerging as an important issue in Ottawa. Increased access to structured recreation is a key piece that must be addressed for children and youth. Participation in recreation and leisure activities has positive impacts on confidence, self-esteem, willingness to take on challenges, and on physical health. Studies show that these impacts help kids participate in society later in life.

What is needed in the community?

- In order to support and promote a healthy community, what steps can be taken to promote and support recreational, physical and leisure activities for all age levels, skill levels and income levels in both urban and rural neighbourhoods?
- In order to support and promote a healthy community, what steps can be taken to promote community awareness-raising activities?

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

As a community builder, United Way/Centraide Ottawa is dedicated to providing resources to results-oriented and high-impact programs and services. In this way, diverse organizations from different sectors are brought together to best respond to the current and emerging needs of the community. Many United Way/Centraide Ottawa agencies deliver programs and services dedicated to encouraging increased recreation and leisure participation by all in the community.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa recognizes the importance of a healthy and active community. Research indicates a healthy lifestyle can lead to improved physical, emotional and intellectual health for individuals and the community. United Way/Centraide Ottawa has responded to this by providing support to agencies that promote healthy and active lifestyles. For example, United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded agencies provide programs and services focusing on the promotion of healthy lifestyles for individuals at risk. Children and youth benefit from services and programs that focus on organized social, recreational or sports activities, summer camps and extra-curricular activities. Seniors can participate in United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded programs and services that offer recreation programs designed to promote 'successful aging.'

SECTION 12

CHARITABLE GIVING AND VOLUNTEERING

United Way/Centraide Ottawa is proud of the relationship it has with its volunteers and donors, recognizing that without the support of the community, United Way/Centraide Ottawa would not be in a position to contribute to the building of a stronger, healthier and safer community. For this reason, it is very important for United Way/Centraide Ottawa to be aware of changes in funding trends.

The 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) provides a snapshot of giving in Canada, including changes since the first NSGVP in 1997. On the surface, charitable giving appears to be healthy and on the rise. However, there are a number of warning signs that should be monitored. For example, although Canada has witnessed population growth, the percentage of Canadians who made a charitable donation (78%) was unchanged between 1997 and 2000. Similarly, while the total amount of donations increased by 11% in current dollars, they increased only 6% when the effects of inflation are taken into account. At the same time, growth in average donations (8%) has not kept pace with the growth in average household incomes, which increased by 16% between 1997 and 2000.¹⁵¹

Donors are increasingly concerned with how and where their dollars will make a difference. For example, 46% of donors think their donation is not being used efficiently—up from 40% in 1997. At the same time, donating should be made easy, and benefit the donor both emotionally (doing good works) and fiscally (through tax breaks). For example, 49% (compared to 37% in 1997) of people surveyed in 2000 noted they would contribute more if governments offered them a better tax credit for their charitable donations. This may be indicative of the increased need to foster clear, effective communications with all donors.¹⁵²

Ottawa's population is aging, and the tendency to give to charitable causes increases with age—the average donation of the 15-25 group was \$166 compared

¹⁵¹ Volunteer Centre for Philanthropy, *Volunteering ...A Booming Trend*, 2000

¹⁵² Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, *Changing Donation Patterns: A Warning for Charitable Organizations*, RESEARCH BULLETIN, 2001



to \$800 for the 55 and over group.¹⁵³ Older people continually represent a greater proportion of the population, and, as such, it is important to develop new volunteering and giving strategies attractive to older populations. However, as the older population retires, it is equally important to create a culture of giving and volunteering in the younger generation.¹⁵⁴

Similarly, Ottawa's immigrant population is increasing, making it important to assess the most effective means of encouraging philanthropy in the immigrant population. Attitudes toward charitable giving and volunteering may differ among different cultures, offering a significant opportunity to develop strategies to tap into this growing population of new volunteers/donors.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa Response:

United Way/Centraide Ottawa has been successful at generating support from the Ottawa community, and has experienced record-breaking fundraising achievements for the fifth consecutive year.

United Way/Centraide Ottawa hosts yearly events in order to allow donors to experience how their donations are invested effectively — first hand. For example, donors are invited to board a bus and tour various United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded agencies around the city during the *Seeing is Believing* tour. *Day of Caring* provides donors with the opportunity to lend a helping hand at various agencies for the day. Youth have the opportunity to participate in the same way during *Youth Day of Caring*. Importantly, these events allow volunteers not only to help out by getting involved by painting offices or serving food, they also witness the valuable and vital work done by United Way/Centraide Ottawa funded programs. United Way/Centraide Ottawa engages the community in a number of other events throughout the year and is planning on developing several more similar initiatives over the coming years to foster strong relationships with individual donors. These initiatives will include personalized tours of agencies and report cards that effectively describe the benefits derived from donors gifts to

¹⁵³Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *A Profile of the Ottawa Population: Demographic Report 1996-2001*, November 2002

¹⁵⁴Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, *Changing Donation Patterns: A Warning for Charitable Organizations*, RESEARCH BULLETIN, 2001

United Way/Centraide Ottawa. Effectively developing “Cases for Support” will further demonstrate to donors not only the importance of their gift, but its overall impact on the community.

The United Way/Centraide Ottawa Community Services department is responsible to a large degree for both community-building initiatives and investment of resources. It relies on the Community Services Cabinet, a volunteer committee made up of highly-qualified, representative and dedicated members of the community, to assist in steering Community Services in its decision-making processes.

In order to tap into the potential of growing and important segments of the community, United Way/Centraide Ottawa is involved in efforts to reach out to specific communities such as immigrants, youth and seniors, so that they may become engaged with United Way/Centraide Ottawa. For example, high-school students in Ontario are required to perform 40 hours of community work—through events such as *Youth Day of Caring*, youth are able to fulfill part of this requirement. United Way/Centraide Ottawa recognizes the importance of fostering strong relationships with working as well as retired donors and is developing effective individual giving strategies for the retired population, both through the retirees’ workplace and through direct-mail requests.

SECTION 13

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

This “environmental scan” confirms what many of us already know—Ottawa is changing. And the research shows that Ottawa will experience even more change in the coming decade. How we respond to these changes will determine our success as a community. For example, as the scan indicates, the increased number of new-Canadians in Ottawa presents social and economic challenges. At the same time these demographic changes bring with them wonderful cultural and economic opportunities. Again, how we respond to the challenges and how we celebrate the opportunities will depend on how well we work together to prepare for change.

At United Way/Centraide Ottawa, we see this “environmental scan” as another step in our community’s response to Ottawa’s current and emerging changes. By carefully reviewing the data, we will be able to better identify community assets and needs, both now and in the future. By coming together as a community, we will be able to develop city-wide strategies to respond to change. We will be able to define goals and objectives, identify resources, wisely invest those resources, and measure the difference we are making. This is not the work of United Way/Centraide, or any other individual agency. This is the work facing our community. All sectors, public, private and voluntary, will play a role in the evolution we are experiencing.

At United Way/Centraide Ottawa, our pledge to the community, and to our donors, is to invest dollars where they are needed most and where they will have the greatest impact. We believe our role in the community is shaped, in part, by our unique ability to convene. Our volunteer network, corporate and organizational connections, and community partners, put us in a position not only to raise, leverage and invest resources, but also to bring the community together around common goals. We look forward to the work ahead. We look forward to working collaboratively with our many community partners. Together we can build a strong, healthy, safe community for all. Together we can build a city that is great for everyone.

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SECTION 15

KEY DEFINITIONS

Core Housing Need: Core housing need refers to a household living in a dwelling that (1) falls below at least one of these standards—adequacy, suitability or affordability; and (2) the household would have to spend 30% or more of its income to pay average market rent for alternative market housing that meets all three standards.

Adequacy: Adequate housing refers to housing that, according to the occupants, is not in need of major repairs.

Suitability or Crowding: Suitable housing refers to housing that has enough rooms for the household size and composition. The National Occupancy Standard states that one bedroom should be available for:

- A cohabiting adult couple;
- An unattached household member or children under the age of 18 years; or
- An additional boy and/or girl in the household, unless opposite sex siblings are under the age of 5 years old (in this case they can share the same bedroom).

Affordability: Affordable housing refers to households that spend less than 30% of their pre-tax income on shelter costs, including electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services.

Insufficient Housing: Insufficient housing refers to dwellings that are both crowded and in need of repair.

Social Housing: Social housing refers to all forms of publicly-assisted/funded housing (public, non-profit and co-operative housing). This involves payment of on-going subsidies by government to supplement tenants' rent payments.

Disability: Disability refers to a physical disability, mental or psychiatric disability, or a learning or developmental disability.

Recent Immigrant: Recent Immigrants have been in Canada for less than 10 years.

Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO): The LICO for one person is \$18,842, two persons is \$23,551 and \$35,455 for a family of four. The LICO has been criticized for not considering specific characteristics such as varying food and rent costs. As a result, other poverty measuring mechanisms have been developed to draw a more accurate portrait of poverty in Canada. However, the LICO continues to be a standard measurement of poverty in Canada.

