

Vancity and Vancouver Foundation Launch Community Response Fund

Fund will support services and programs designed for the most vulnerable populations across British Columbia

Friday, March 20, 2020, Unceded territories of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations/Vancouver B.C. – A collection of British Columbia organizations announced today the creation of the **Community Response Fund** — a special fund to rapidly deploy essential relief to organizations that provide frontline services to people and organizations that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and its economic consequences.

The partnership is led by four Community Advisors: Vancouver Foundation, Vancity credit union, United Way Lower Mainland, and the City of Vancouver. This group will evolve as the Fund grows and expands its focus.

“We’re in this together as the coronavirus pandemic affects all of us,” says Tamara Vrooman, president and CEO of Vancity. “By coming together we can ensure that our communities can support our most vulnerable, and this Fund will do exactly that.”

The Fund is made possible through the generosity of its Founding Donors:

- \$1-million from Vancouver Foundation
- \$1-million from Vancity Credit Union
- \$500,000 from United Way Lower Mainland
- \$688,000 from anonymous individual donors to Vancouver Foundation

“This growing coalition of philanthropy, the private sector, governments, and individuals represents the very best of all sectors in BC,” said Kevin McCort, CEO of Vancouver Foundation. “British Columbians have a way of coming together to face challenges head-on — and that’s what we’re doing now.”

The Community Response Fund currently sits at just over \$3-million. **Partners in the Fund are calling on organizations and individuals to give now at:**

www.vancouverfoundation.ca/covid19

The Fund will support charities that provide frontline services to populations disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus and its economic consequences. The first phase of grant recommendations will prioritize community-based organizations who are addressing:

A collaborative community response that will deploy resources to charities at the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Immediate needs of low-income populations caused by COVID-19 related closures, including access to food, hygiene, housing and other basic needs
- The economic impact of reduced and lost work within the non-profit sector.
- The information needs of among our vulnerable community members to promote resiliency and mitigate fear and confusion.
- Mobilizing our citizens to assist their vulnerable neighbours with the challenges they are facing from isolation.

“People want to support one another during tough times, and we encourage them to participate in this unique initiative,” said Michael McKnight, CEO of United Way Lower Mainland. “By being nimble and responsive to the evolving needs of the crisis, the Community Response Fund will strengthen our community’s long-term resiliency.”

Funding will be offered as flexible operating grants that enable charities to maintain or expand services to vulnerable populations affected by quarantine, closures, shortages, access to services, loss of income, or other economic impacts. This funding is designed to complement the work of public health officials and expand local capacity to address all aspects of the outbreak as efficiently as possible.

“We are so appreciative of our partners’ initiative in providing support for the people most in-need during this difficult time,” said Mayor Kennedy Stewart, City of Vancouver. “Thank you to Vancouver Foundation, Vancity credit union and the United Way for coming to the table to help fund the community response. So many people are looking for ways to contribute right now, and this Fund is a great opportunity for the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and individuals to get involved.”

To join the growing list of supporters visit: www.vancouverfoundation.ca/covid19



-30-

About Vancouver Foundation

Vancouver Foundation is dedicated to creating healthy, vibrant and livable communities across BC. Since 1943, our donors have created 1,800 endowment funds and together we have distributed more than \$1 billion to charities. From arts and culture to the environment, health and social development, education, medical research and more, we exist to make meaningful and lasting improvements to communities in BC.

About Vancity

Vancity is a values-based financial co-operative serving the needs of its more than 543,000 member-owners and their communities, with offices and 60 branches located in Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Victoria, Squamish and Alert Bay, within the

unceded territories of the Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw people. With \$28.2 billion in assets plus assets under administration, Vancity is Canada's largest community credit union. Vancity uses its assets to help improve the financial well-being of its members while at the same time helping to develop healthy communities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

Tweet us [@vancity](https://twitter.com/vancity) and connect with us on facebook.com/vancity

About United Way Lower Mainland

United Way Lower Mainland believes local love is the key creating the kinds of communities we all want to live in. We've been improving local lives since 1930. Today we help make life better for thousands across Metro Vancouver, from the Sea to Sky corridor and the Sunshine Coast, to the Fraser Valley and beyond.

Media Contacts:

Vancity

Nora Eastwood

mediarelations@vancity.com

778-837-0394

Vancouver Foundation

Glenn Ewald

glenn.ewald@vancouverfoundation.ca

416-629-7477

United Way Lower Mainland

Michael McKnight

michaelm@uwlm.ca

604-268-1310