

February 3, 2022

City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Members of General Issues Committee,

Re: 2022 Municipal Budget Call for Action

Thank you for the opportunity to engage with you and voice our support of the Just Recovery Coalition's call for the 2022 Municipal Budget to work towards an equitable recovery for our Ambitious City.

The pandemic is not over and it continues to wreak havoc. Across the city, individuals and community groups have trusted us to understand the unique impacts that they're experiencing. The frontline agencies that we support have told us of devastating stories of isolation for their clients, burnout for their staff, and lower volunteer rates due to the risks involved. We've also heard from our donors and corporate partners of the emotional fatigue of those in their workplaces, due in part to the concerns and confusion of working from home and supporting families during this time. And, we know from our community partners that those who are most vulnerable – those with disabilities, and those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and those experiencing other forms of systemic oppression such as racism, homophobia & sexism in their many forms – have been further isolated during this pandemic.

More than 43% of the agencies that we are connected with have reported increased demand for their services, in addition to inconsistent support for those increased costs that they are incurring. With this in mind, as well as the emotional effects of the pandemic noted above, we call on the City of Hamilton to centre those most vulnerable in the 2022 Budget. There are many possibilities to do this; we can prioritize accessibility in the HSR transportation budget and snow clearing practices, and increase the City Enrichment Fund to recognize the increased costs incurred by the social sector, and invest in housing as a municipality by supporting temporary and permanent solutions to our homelessness crisis. You can be assured that United Way is grateful for the opportunities we have had through our donors and partners to increase our funding and provide emergency supports, and we hope you will take this opportunity to do the same. Whatever the options brought forward, United Way Halton & Hamilton, as members of the Just Recovery Coalition, appeal to you to thoughtfully and creatively centre equity and community support in your decisions.

It is only when we are all supported that we can thrive as a city. We thank the Council for the opportunity to delegate, and for the commitment to the community that you exhibit in this process and beyond.

Sincerely,



Brad Park
President & CEO
United Way Halton & Hamilton