



NEWS RELEASE
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Southern Interior Communities Better Equipped to Tackle Cold Weather Challenges

Cold Weather Preparedness Grants help agencies plan and prepare



Regional Office, Kelowna B.C. – United Way British Columbia (United Way BC)'s Cold Weather Preparedness Grant, made possible by the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR), provides support to communities facing extreme weather emergencies. Focusing on Northern BC, Thompson-Nicola Cariboo, and the Southern Interior, 19 agencies received funding to prepare for and respond to cold weather.

Most grants focused on proactive programming to prepare for winter and provide help to those most affected by extreme weather conditions. From free preparedness workshops, creating systems to better enable a response during the cold, and increased relationship building with vulnerable clients to creating and distributing cold weather kits, grants were used to address a growing need in many communities.

In Cranbrook, the grant helped Fresh Start Collaborative Society to develop a comprehensive response plan for the region that includes outreach and education, engagement with first responders, and the provision of equipment to alleviate the hardships of outdoor winter living. The plan also includes transportation to safe and warm spaces during inclement weather and ensuring safe transitions out of shelters during closed times.

The Westbank First Nation in West Kelowna is using the funds to provide cold weather resources to vulnerable members of the Westbank and West Kelowna communities, especially those who are

unhoused or low-income. Open to anyone in need, support will include distribution of cold weather kits that include warm clothing, blankets, and emergency supplies.

"Collaboration will enable the pooling of community supplies and resources and their delivery when needed. We will be able to provide winter clothing, blankets, emergency kits, and other essential items to those living unhoused in extreme weather conditions," said Tracey Amy, Regional Coordinator, Community Impact & Investment, United Way British Columbia. "Our goal is to support a robust community response plan to save lives and reduce injuries during cold weather. This funding will enhance our ability to respond effectively and expand our network to ensure equitable support for citizens in need."

United Way BC's Emergency Response provides year-round support to individuals, families, and communities affected by extreme weather events like wildfires, floods, and extreme cold. We are committed to fostering preparedness, social infrastructure recovery, and immediate crisis response. Through initiatives such as the Cold Weather Preparedness Grant, recovery grants, and [Extreme Weather Preparedness Guides](#), United Way BC helps communities build resilience.

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About United Way British Columbia

United Way BC helps build healthy, caring, and inclusive communities across our province. We strengthen vital connections that support people in need with a focus on emergency response, kids and youth, seniors, mental health, and food security.

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