

# United Way

## MaketheMonth.ca

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### Background

The Make the Month online poverty simulation was introduced by United Way Calgary & Area in 2014 – funded 100% by Imperial as a new way to engage employees during the campaign. The digital platform was created by Park Digital and gifted to United Way Calgary to be made publically available for use as a national campaign engagement activity. The following United Ways now offer this new digital platform:

1. Alberta Capital Region (Edmonton)
2. Calgary
3. Halifax
4. Kitchener-Waterloo
5. London & Middlesex
6. Lower Mainland (Vancouver)
7. Ottawa
8. Peel Region
9. Saskatoon
10. Toronto & York Region
11. Victoria
12. Winnipeg

**Note:** The communities connected to United Way Greater Toronto on the tool are: Brampton, Caledon, Mississauga and Toronto & York Region)

### What is Make the Month?

**MaketheMonth.ca** – the first digital poverty simulation tool in Canada – provides an online, interactive experience that offers a glimpse of some of the difficult and daily decisions that people living on low income face. The objective of the tool is to raise awareness around poverty and engage individuals in a discussion about the challenges faced by the most vulnerable individuals in our communities. After trying the simulation, individuals will gain a better understanding of the issue of poverty and be empowered to take action.

When you visit MaketheMonth.ca, you will be given the choice to simulate the life of a single person, single parent, or family of four. You will be given a budget and asked to make choices while living from paycheque-to-paycheque, challenging you to “Make the Month.”

As you decide whether or not to pay the increased rent on your apartment or move, buy fast food or more expensive nutritious food and pay for a transit pass or just risk it, you’ll get a better sense of some of the difficult choices that are made every day. You’ll also learn facts about poverty and gain insights into the important role that United Way plays within our region and across Canada.

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### **Facilitate a discussion**

Make the Month is a unique way to engage your team, build empathy, raise awareness about poverty in your local community and spark a discussion around the issues that people living on low income face. It will also give individuals a better understanding of how United Way works to make a positive impact across our region and country.

### **What is required to host a facilitated Make the Month?**

1. An engaging facilitator with information and stories about poverty in your community
2. Minimum 15 participants
3. Approximately 30 min to 1.5 hours
4. Technology – wireless internet and a browser that runs MaketheMonth.ca, plus:
  - **Option A:** small teams – multiple devices (laptops, computers, tablets or mobiles)
  - **Option B:** one group – projector, screen and laptop for facilitator

### **Facts on Poverty**

**There are more than 850,000 people living on low incomes across Peel, Toronto and York. 16.5% of the total population across Peel, Toronto and York live on low incomes.**

#### **Poverty is about more than a lack of money**

Poverty is not having the resources, choices and security necessary to enjoy an adequate standard of living. Poverty is being excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities. People living in poverty are often unable to participate fully in our community or reach their full potential.

#### **Poverty is a complex social and economic challenge**

Despite being one of the wealthiest regions in Canada, the gaps between those who are doing well financially—and those who are not—continue to widen across our communities. Entire families and neighbourhoods are being left behind.

**United Way is working to help people and communities move from poverty to possibility.**

Visit MaketheMonth.ca and for more information on booking a facilitated discussion, please contact:

**Donor Engagement**

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