

United for BC Wildfire Recovery



United Way

Backgrounder – 2017 BC Wildfire Recovery

As fires continue to devastate British Columbia, United Way is mobilizing efforts in preparation for the recovery and rebuilding of communities across the province.

The state of emergency in British Columbia continues as 374 wildfires burn across the province with 27 wildfires of note. There are currently 16,000 evacuees displaced from their homes, primarily from the municipalities of Ashcroft, Cache Creek, 100 Mile, Lake Country, Williams Lake and Princeton.

The municipalities of Kamloops, Williams Lake and Prince George are currently hosting the majority of evacuees with Emergency Operation Centres opened and fully-functioning in both communities. An outpouring of support has been seen from local residents and also those from afar – including groups from Fort McMurray who themselves were wrought by the Alberta fires of 2016.

United Way is collaborating with Emergency Operation Centres and partners at the Canadian Red Cross who are currently accepting monetary donations to support the immediate needs of evacuees including cots, blankets, family reunification, food, clothing and hygiene products.

In these early days, United Way is working to connect evacuees and volunteers to community agencies and encouraging those affected by the wildfires to take advantage of bc211.ca – a resource that can provide access to housing supports, financial assistance, food and supply providers, trauma and mental health supports. This service will connect those in need to critical supports that will help over the short and longer term

Once these immediate needs are fulfilled, United Way will be launching the “United for BC Wildfires” campaign to raise funds that will address important social needs like finding permanent housing, food assistance, trauma and mental health supports, and rebuilding social infrastructure to meet community needs once the fires die down and residents prepare to return home.

In preparation for the hard work ahead, United Way is also currently compiling a database of volunteers wanting to aid in the recovery from the BC Wildfires. As volunteer opportunities arise, we will be reaching out to this database for help as we work together with other local agencies and organizations to rebuild the communities affected.

Quick Facts

- ✚ **374** fires burning, **27** of note.
- ✚ **37,000 evacuees** currently registered in BC from Williams Lake, 100 Mile House, Lake Country, Clearwater, Cache Creek, Ashcroft Reserve, Princeton, and more.
- ✚ Kamloops and Prince George have been the primary reception centres for evacuees, with ESS Receptions 374Centres now open in:
 - Barriere Reception Centre (4936 Barriere Town Road)
 - Chilliwack Reception Centre (Chilliwack Secondary School at 46363 Yale Road)
 - Kamloops Reception Centre (Sandman Centre at 300 Lorne Street)
 - Kelowna Reception Centre (1480 Sutherland Avenue)
 - Lillooet Reception Centre (Lillooet Fire Hall at 570 Main Street)
 - Merritt Reception Centre (Merritt Civic Centre at 1950 Mamette Avenue)
 - Penticton Reception Centre (Penticton Community Centre at 325 Power Road)
 - Prince George Reception Centre (College of New Caledonia at 3330 – 22nd Avenue)
 - Princeton Reception Centre (Riverside Community Centre at 148 Old Hedley Road)
 - Surrey Reception Centre (Cloverdale Arena at 6090 176th Street, Cloverdale)
 - Vernon Reception Centre (Vernon Curling Rink at 3400 39 Avenue)
- ✚ **United Way Thompson Nicola Cariboo, United Way of Northern BC, and United Way Central & South Okanagan-Similkameen** are the primary United Ways collaborating on this effort with the support of other United Ways in BC and United Way Centraide Canada.
- ✚ All initial donations were encouraged toward the **Canadian Red Cross** to address immediate needs.
- ✚ **Beginning July 17th (TENTATIVE), "United for BC Wildfires"** will raise funds that will address important social needs like finding permanent housing, food assistance, trauma and mental health supports, and rebuilding social infrastructure.
- ✚ **bc211.ca** is a resource that can provide those in need access to critical supports including housing, financial assistance, food and supply providers, trauma and mental health supports, and so much more.
- ✚ **Volunteers** will be needed as we work alongside local agencies and organizations to rebuild and recover the communities affected. People can sign up at **unitedforbcwildfires.ca**.



For more information, please contact:

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