***A Framework for Reopening our Province* lays out the government’s approach to a recovery plan for Ontario.** We are now poised to enter the second stage of that recovery plan. If nothing else, our response to Covid-19 has taught us that collectively working with communities and, engaging with policy makers an equitable way forward is possible.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the fragility that underpins our social and economic platforms. It however set the bar on how we can respond to the social and economic needs of some of the most vulnerable in our midst by: rapidly putting into place income supports, temporary and some permanent housing, made possible paid leave from work, responded to food security needs and the list goes on.

As recovery begins to be phased in we need to build on what has been shown to be possible. If we simply return to business as usual we run the risk of deepening the fragility exposed by Covid-19. We need a plan, we need to show the same collaborative strength that mended the tattered safety net of pre-Covid-19.

As we consider what the recovery will look like it makes far more sense to move forward, and build on that progress, than go backwards. This can help build a better and fairer community, which is badly needed, but these changes also make our whole community more resilient in the face of the next wave or the next crisis, by supporting the people who are most vulnerable to the pandemic.

As we think about what’s next, there is growing belief that policy makers need to recognize and act on the following things:adequate income supports,decent work, housing,sustainable reliable basic services.

The Canada Emergency Response Benefits (CERB) showed that at least $2,000 is required for **adequate income supports**, yet we provide less than half that for a single person on social assistance. It’s time to address and ensure people have enough to live on, especially as we emerge from a crisis of this magnitude.

The pandemic showed that, working people need **decent work** with a living wage, appropriate benefits like paid sick days, and protections from precarious employment and unsafe working conditions.

The pandemic dedicated the creation of literally thousands of new **housing** units in a matter of weeks. It is self-evident that the housing created in response to Covid-19 should be made permanent and the work of creating new units of affordable homes should continue. People have been struggling to obtain safe affordable housing. Now that some people have housing the work to expand permanent housing should continue.

We need access to **sustainable reliable basic services**, like child care, transit, long-term care and home care. The pandemic showed us how fragile those systems are, and they will need better, more systematic support in the recovery.

The non-profit sector swung into action during this crisis, meeting massive increases in demand for food, mental health services and support for victims of violence. Nonprofits and community based organizations proved flexible and responsive and contributed not only to caring for vulnerable people in new ways but also to identifying emerging issues quickly and accurately. This was made possible by organizations like the United Way allowing flexibility in the use of existing funding. The result was a response that exceeded all expectations. During this time, governments and policy makers demonstrated great **collaboration with community organizations**, and were able to support vulnerable people better as a result. The co-design and collaborative delivery of community services should continue – the public and non-profit sector work well in full partnership.

Governments, at all levels should commit to these goals in designing the recovery and work with communities and community organizations to flesh them out into concrete policies. By collaborating together we can move forward into a more resilient future, instead of sinking back into our all too vulnerable past.

***Join us on Monday, June 22nd at 10:30 a.m. as we work to together to Reimagine Our Community In A Just Recovery!***