



SASKATCHEWAN INDEX OF
WELLBEING

Guest Blog

Wellbeing belongs to everyone
by the Community Initiatives Fund



March 2020

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Our appreciation for our health, both individually and collectively, has increased dramatically in recent weeks. Expanding our definition of health to include wellbeing - achieved when people are physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy; are economically secure; have a strong sense of identity, belonging, and place; and have the confidence and capacity to engage as citizens - we recognize how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect many aspects of our lives beyond our physical health.

Our sense of wellbeing might look different for each of us, but one thing is certain - it is affected by the intersection of our social, cultural, economic, and physical environments. Over the coming weeks it will become clearer how current events will impact our wellbeing, both in positive and negative ways.

The [Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing \(SIW\)](#), the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), and the [social determinants of health](#) provide unique but interconnected frameworks for understanding wellbeing and the factors that contribute to not just individual wellbeing, but our wellbeing as a global community.

Each of these frameworks provide us with indicators that if effectively addressed through policies, programming, and resources, would benefit everyone - not only those that are most vulnerable.

Reducing social and economic inequities is key to improving the overall health and wellbeing of Saskatchewan residents. While we focus on caring for our families and workplaces during the coming weeks, let us not forget those in our communities who are most vulnerable in these types of events.

Those affected by poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, mental health, and other illness, and those who are isolated (e.g., seniors, remote communities), will be especially impacted by facility closures, suspension of programs, and lack of accessibility to supports.

Our communities and society as a whole have a responsibility to ensure all residents of Saskatchewan receive access to and positive outcomes from supports and services. We are becoming more connected through important initiatives like [211 Saskatchewan](#), which provides timely and easy access to information and referral services for all Saskatchewan residents regardless of location, language, or time of day. Services like this help to decrease the barriers encountered by those seeking the supports and opportunities they require to enjoy wellbeing in their own circumstances.

Wellbeing belongs to all of us. We need to ensure that individuals have access to services, supports, and programming designed to nurture wellbeing. The [SIW report](#) is meant to encourage solution-oriented conversations and actions to address the gaps at an organizational, local, regional, and provincial level. As a province, we need to mobilize individuals to set priorities and make changes.

We all have a role in this, as citizens, volunteers, and through our places of work. The only way to solve these complex problems is by making large and small scale impacts – through working together.

More information on the Community Initiatives Fund: cifsask.org

More information on the Saskatchewan Index of Wellbeing: saskwellbeing.ca

