



First United Summary of Programs and Services 2018

Emergency Shelter

First United has been a designated site for BC Housing's Emergency Shelter Program since 2008. We are a low-barrier shelter and maintain 60 beds (40 men's-gendered and 20 women's-gendered) year-round. Shelter residents are provided with three meals a day, a storage space for personal belongings, and access to one-on-one sessions with a case planner.

Emergency shelter operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

Community Meals

We provide hot breakfast, lunch, and tea time refreshments for up to 200 community members most weekdays. Our Community Meal Program is supported by various meal sponsors and funders including businesses, families, individuals, foundations, and churches.

Community meals are offered Mondays – Fridays at 8.15am (breakfast), 12pm (lunch), and 2.15pm (tea time).

Legal Advocacy

A prominent program in the neighbourhood since 1973, First United's Legal Advocacy Program is supported in large part by the Law Foundation of BC as well as several other foundations and individual donors. We serve approximately 1,500 clients each year, predominantly in the areas of income security, EI, and tenant issues.

Legal Advocacy intake hours are first come, first served Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 9 – 11am and Tuesdays and Thursdays 12.30 – 2.30pm.

Taxes, Phone, and Mail Services

First United offers one of the only year-round tax filing service in the area that still files paper returns, which is necessary for those more than a couple years in arrears. We file for thousands of individuals each year which allows them to maintain eligibility for income assistance and unlocks refunds which can provide much-needed financial relief. We also serve as a mailing address for over 300 community members and provide access to free local and long-distance phoning.

Tax intake hours are first come first served, Mondays and Wednesdays 1-3pm. Phone and mail are available during Community Help Desk hours: Mondays – Fridays 8.15am – 4pm.

Personal Storage

In 2009, we converted part of our underground parking area into 200 spaces of free storage for Downtown Eastside community members. This important program enables community members to attend medical appointments or job interviews and allows them to take care of daily tasks many of us take for granted such as keeping bedding dry and using a public bathroom.

Storage is available Mondays – Fridays 8am – 12pm and 4pm – 8pm and Saturdays – Sundays 10am – 2pm.

Community Help Desk and Foot-Care

After major renovations in 2017, the help desk is better able to tend to the needs and safety of clients at First United. We distribute personal hygiene and harm-reduction supplies and offer referrals to other community organizations. We also operate foot-care out of the help desk drop-in area – this program provides free socks and allows folks to take a break and practice some self-care by soaking their feet and visiting with others.

Community Help Desk is open Mondays – Fridays 8.15am – 4pm. Foot-care is Tuesdays – Thursdays 9 – 11am.

Seniors' Programs

Our seniors' programs include weekly lunches, arts nights, and seasonal gardening activities and operate out of our social housing buildings on the Downtown Eastside. Our goal is to increase opportunities for seniors to age well at home and decrease tendency for isolation, loneliness, and depression.

Contact the First United Social Housing Society for details on seniors' programs.

Spirit Programs

Spirit programs at First United include Spirit Focus, Spirit Circle, and The Listening Ministry and acknowledge that spiritual health is just as important as emotional and physical health in the total wellbeing of a person. Although participation in spirit programs is never required in order to access other programs or services, they are always there for those who desire to participate. The community minister also provides memorial services for shelter residents and other community members who may not have the means to pay for service elsewhere.

Spirit Focus is Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 9am. Spirit Circle is Wednesdays at 6.30pm. The Listening Ministry is available weekdays from 10am – 12pm and 1 – 3pm.



Contact First United

Emergency shelter and all our day programs (except Legal Advocacy and Seniors Programs) are located at:

320 Hastings St. E
Vancouver BC V6A 1P4

Phone: 604-681-8365

Email: info@firstunited.ca

Web: www.firstunited.ca

CRA#826726135RR0001

Fax: 604-681-8928

Storage Direct Line: 604-619-5242

Legal Advocacy is located at:

524 Hastings St. E
Vancouver BC V6A 1P8

Phone: 604-251-3323

Fax: 604-251-2488

Seniors Programs operate out of First United Social Housing Society located at:

540 Hastings St. E
Vancouver BC V6A 1P8

Phone: 604-681-8365 ext. 402

Fax: 604-252-2673