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## Policy Matters: Sara Middleton

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*Later this year, Canadians will vote in the 43rd federal election. Many non-profit organizations, networks, and coalitions see elections as a critical opportunity to raise relevant public policy issues. Recently, the rules for charities engaging in public policy have become a prominent source of debate and discussion in government and the sector. As we countdown to the next election, The Philanthropist [is asking non-profit leaders](#) what public policy issues are top of mind for them.*

**Name and organization:** Sara Middleton, United Way Elgin Middlesex

### **What current election issues might impact your work?**

There is increasing public awareness and agreement that poverty impacts everyone. But because of deeply embedded social and structural inequities, some groups, including Indigenous people, are more likely to live in poverty. If the federal election brings attention to systemic inequities and a commitment to a full and complete implementation of the TRC Calls to Action as a way to address challenges faced by Indigenous people in our community, this will support our organization's continued efforts to end poverty. Conversely, negative election storylines related to diversity or equality could be a distraction from realizing solutions to deeply embedded social challenges like poverty.

### **What issues would you like to bring more attention to in the election?**

As federal public investments for infrastructure continue to flow to communities, public policy goals like the development of local economies or the reduction of poverty could be accomplished simultaneously through the implementation of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs). CBAs deliver training and job opportunities to equity-seeking or vulnerable groups;

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provide procurement opportunities for local suppliers offering needed goods and services; and can include other supplementary benefits like new public assets. Infrastructure Canada announced a Community Employment Benefits initiative under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program in June 2018, but the policy could be broader in its application and content and more Canadians should be aware of it.

**Where can we learn more about these issues?**

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)

[London for All: A Roadmap to End Poverty](#)

[Community Benefits Agreements: Empowering Communities to Maximize Returns on Public Infrastructure Investments](#)

[Community Benefits Agreements](#)