

2017 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

85th REGULAR SESSION OF THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE



Each day, United Ways across Texas work to improve people's lives and bring about local community change. United Ways believe that active participation in policy is critical, not just to furthering the impact of our work, but to driving lasting systemic change. United Ways of Texas focuses on overall support for the Texas non-profit sector, as well as the areas of education, financial stability, and health— three pillars of a quality life.

EDUCATION



Early Education

- Permanent funding for pre-kindergarten program established by HB 4 that emphasizes quality such as full-day, ratios, and parent engagement;
- Support for programs that strengthen the successful transition from early learning through elementary school;
- Promising and/or evidence-based practices, like home visitation, that build school readiness, engage parents, and support teachers and schools.

Student Success and Career Preparation

- Incentivize public/private partnerships that support students and families in their career decisions and pathways;
- Incentivize companies to offer paid internships, externships, job shadowing, and apprenticeships for high school students and beyond;
- Support for opportunities that ensure students successful transition through middle/high school and post-secondary learning and into careers.

In addition, UWT will advocate for early childhood development; social-emotional learning; efforts that engage parents and multi-generations; quality child care; out-of-school time; mentoring; special education; reducing absenteeism; drop-out prevention and overall high school, two-year, four-year, and technical training completion; veterans education efforts; and adequate funding for public education.

FINANCIAL STABILITY



Increasing Income and Building Assets

- Support initiatives that build financial capability and assets of low-to-moderate individuals and families;
- Incentivize communities to develop industry-led partnerships that build skills with paid internships that link individuals to career pathways;
- Encourage policies that improve access to affordable credit and help build credit scores;
- Support policies that foster responsible lending practices including statewide payday/auto-title lending regulation.

In addition, UWT will support efforts to align local workforce preparation with community needs; job skills training; income tax preparation assistance; affordable housing; and targeted services for veterans.

HEALTH



Child Abuse and Neglect

- Increased funds for promising and/or evidence-based practices that reduce abuse and neglect such as home visitation;
- Significantly increase funding and support for children in foster care such as mental health services, human resources, and other infrastructure needs that impact the quality of life for children in care;
- Support strategies that result in successful transition of youth aging out of foster care into successful, independent opportunities.

Health and Wellness

- Adequate mental health resources for under-served, high-need populations;
- Investments and strategies to close the mental health provider gap;
- Support opportunities to connect families and individuals with affordable health care.

In addition, UWT will advocate for overall health and wellness strategies; access to healthy foods; substance abuse treatment and prevention; and targeted resources to special populations such as children and seniors.

NONPROFITS

UWT will continue to support the State Employee Charitable Campaign, the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network, community responses to disaster relief, as well as overall capacity development and sustainability of the many nonprofits that are critical backbone service providers in every Texas community.