

2019 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

of Texas United Ways for the
86th Regular Session of the **Texas** Legislature



Each day, United Ways across Texas work to build stronger communities. United Ways believe that active participation in policy advocacy is critical, not just to furthering the impact of our work, but to driving lasting systemic change. United Ways of Texas (UWT) 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



Texas UWs believe that educational opportunities should be available to all – children, youth, and adults – to ensure that we all reach our optimal potential and that Texas has a strong workforce for years to come.

- Improve and increase access to affordable, high-quality early care and education opportunities.
- Secure permanent funding for full-day, high-quality prekindergarten for all eligible students.
- Strengthen and expand efforts to effectively engage and support parents, families, and caregivers in their roles as the primary partners in learning from birth through adulthood.
- Incentivize and support development of community-based, cross-sector coalitions focused on education pathways from early childhood through adult success.
- Support efforts to align and link K-12 and post-secondary systems that successfully prepare students for the successful transition into the workforce.



In addition, UWT will advocate for work-based learning; quality out-of-school time; mentoring; reducing absenteeism; elementary/middle school career development opportunities; career technical education; drop-out prevention strategies; and adequate funding for quality public education.

HEALTH



Texas UWs believe that all Texans should have access to health services that protect and improve health and well-being among individuals and enhance measurable health outcomes of communities.

- Support expansion of promising and evidence-based practices that reduce abuse and neglect, improve maternal and child health, encourage positive parenting, and promote healthy child development and school readiness, such as home visitation.
- Address barriers to transportation and support regional public/private transportation solutions that expand access to health services.
- Eliminate barriers to accessing and expanding community-based services that address local behavioral health needs, especially in underserved areas.
- Support initiatives that foster a school climate that is safe, supportive, and engaging and that work to address student behavioral health and wellbeing.
- Promote early, integrated, and appropriate points of intervention and support for individuals with behavioral health needs.



In addition, UWT will advocate for targeted resources for special populations such as veterans and seniors; access to basic food and nutrition assistance; foster care improvements; affordable health care; prevention and intervention of trauma and toxic stress, including human trafficking and exploitation.

FINANCIAL STABILITY



Texas UWs believe that all families should have opportunities to achieve what we all want: good jobs with good wages, opportunities for workplace advancement, safe and affordable housing, and the resources and support needed to weather emergencies and make investments toward a bright future.

- Increase access to quality, affordable housing that includes a continuum of support to families to help them achieve stability, including supportive and transitional housing.
- Strengthen and expand paid work-based learning opportunities to ensure more Texans can develop the marketable skills needed to gain quality, living-wage employment.
- Support industry-led, community supported workforce partnerships and other strategies that address middle skills and ensure individuals have the skills and support needed to thrive.
- Strengthen the state's ability to align K-12, post-secondary, career and technology, and workforce systems.
- Protect and strengthen fair lending in Texas and support policies that foster responsible lending practices, including statewide payday/auto-title lending regulation.



In addition, UWT will support strategies to address middle skills; adult-education; building of financial assets; and increased access to financial literacy education, savings, tax preparation and credits, and home ownership.

NON-PROFITS



Texas UWs believe that the nonprofit sector is a critical part of our state's public infrastructure that must be supported, leveraged, and strengthened.

- Protect and strengthen Texas' nonprofit sector's ability to respond to community needs including disaster response and recovery and other community crises.
- Promote charitable giving in Texas including protection of the State Employee Charitable Campaign.
- Support the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral System through increased efficiencies, innovation, system integration, and effectiveness.

UNITED WAYS OF TEXAS



As the voluntary state association for local United Ways in Texas, United Ways of Texas creates lasting change in peoples' lives and in Texas communities by leading and collaborating with a trusted and powerful network of local member United Ways. UWT serves our member organizations and external partners with heartfelt passion, expertise, and a strong spirit of service. Together, our network is working collaboratively towards a future where all Texans thrive.



1910 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd Austin, TX 78702
(512) 651-1149
info@uwtexas.org

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.