

State Public Policy Agenda 2009-2010



United Way of Pennsylvania

ADOPTED

Education

Issue A: Support Public Investment Early Childhood Education (ECE)

- Expand resources in Child Care Works to remove 5,000 children from waiting list.
- Increase funding for the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts to expand enrollment to a total of 14,800 three- and four-year olds while increasing the number of full-day programs.
- Restore funding to the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program and pilot a state funded Early Head Start program.
- Increase the number of providers participating in Keystone STARS at STAR 2 or above by providing in additional resources and supports to assist them in their program improvement activities

Issue B: Reduce the Number of High School Dropouts Statewide

- Support funding for inclusive collaborative efforts between school districts, community partners and parents to address the dropout problem.
- Support uniform measurement and data collection for all elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as dropouts that can be disaggregated by a variety of categories including geography, race/ethnicity, gender, etc.
- Support middle school intervention programs such as graduation coaches, mentors, national service member projects.
- Support Exit Interviews as a late or last intervention strategy for students who wish to dropout.
- Connect high school completion to post secondary education and career opportunities.
- Promote coordination of existing funding streams at the federal, state and local levels that support dropout prevention.

Income

Issue A: Ensure the Basic Needs of vulnerable Pennsylvanians

- Support Increased State & Federal resources for Energy Assistance and conservation efforts; including LIHEAP and Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP).
- Support legislative and executive action to ease the burden on consumers associated with the ending of utility rate caps.
- Support programs and initiatives that increase food availability. (i.e. food purchasing program and hunger prevention programs at the State and Federal levels, etc)
- Amend the existing Housing Finance Agency Law to develop programs to build, rehabilitate and preserve homes for low and moderate income individuals and families, seniors and people with disabilities in Pennsylvania.

Issue B: Support Financial Stability of vulnerable Pennsylvanians.

- Support enactment of an enhanced PA Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a tax reduction and a wage supplement for low- and moderate-income.
- Support efforts to increase availability of funding, counseling and legal advice for Pennsylvanians impacted by mortgage foreclosures.
- Support public/private industry partnerships that connect low income workers with family sustaining careers.
- Support statewide quality standards for financial literacy curriculum.
- Promote and expand state Family Savings Program administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Health

Issue A: Creation of a Statewide 2-1-1 System

- Work to secure funding and other necessary authorizations to launch a 2-1-1 system in the Commonwealth

Issue B: Promote Disease Prevention & Wellness

- Support prevention and wellness policies that result in measured and sustained improvement in the health such healthy behaviors, management of chronic disease, etc.

Issue C: Promote Better Access to Quality Health Care & Reduce Health Disparities

- Support policies that result in measured and sustained improvement in the health of underserved populations (i.e. ethnicity, gender, pre-existing condition, geography, etc.)
- Support policies that result in increased access to health care for all Pennsylvanians related to geography transportation, insurance, etc.
- Support policies and initiatives that increase the number medical professionals in underserved areas of the Commonwealth (i.e. rural, urban, etc.)

Issue D: Promoting Healthy Aging At Home and Healthy Communities for All

- Support evaluation of eligibility criteria of senior programs and support policies that promote self sufficiency of older Pennsylvanians.
- Ensure maximum enrollment of older Pennsylvanians in programs that enhance self-sufficiency.
- Provide more available funding for community based housing options and nursing homes.

General Non-Profit Issues

Issue A: Promote Charitable Giving

- Review proposed legislation and regulations to change the state's charitable solicitation or not for profit corporation law to determine the impact on the activities of local United Ways and the programs they fund.
- Review proposed legislation and regulations that add reporting or restrictions to determine the impact on the activities of local United Ways and the programs they fund.
- Urge the state to use existing philanthropic organizations for distribution of publicly raised financial aid instead of creating their own charities. When the state does create its own, support a new requirement that a state operated charity be treated like any other charity with respect to registration and reporting requirements

- Work with the Governor's Office and local United Ways to recommend improvements to SECA regulations.

Issue B: Protect Nonprofit Tax Exempt Status

- Oppose legislation for payment in-lieu-of taxes (PILOT), mandatory fair share agreements, essential services fees and reductions in property tax or sales tax exemptions. [Defend against encroachment of tax exemptions provided under on Pennsylvania's Institutions of Purely Public Charity Act (Act 55 of 1997)]

Issue C: Reduce Undue Burden on Nonprofit Organizations

- Support legislation to relieve nonprofits of undue lobbying disclosure burdens; which may include legislation to increase the state lobbying disclosure threshold from \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- Support legislation that would ensure the ability of nonprofit organizations to communicate and interact with elected or appointed officials.
- Support efforts to reduce unnecessary or undue administrative burdens imposed through legislative or regulatory action on the activities of the local United Ways and the programs that they support.

Issue D: Promote Volunteerism and Partnerships with Nonprofits

- Support public and private sector efforts that enhances volunteerism and the ability of Pennsylvania citizens to contribute their time and talents to community service

Issue Category

Legislative Leadership Priorities (Tier 1)

UWP will assume a leadership role on Capitol Hill, with the Governor of Pennsylvania and in the Pennsylvania General Assembly with the human service sector, proactively lobbying and bringing visibility and voice to our issues.

Legislative Advocacy Issues (Tier II)

UWP will develop positions, lobby and generate grassroots support among local United Ways on an as needed basis.

Legislative Support Issues (Tier III)

UWP will monitor and respond to requests for support through such vehicles as sign-on letters. UWP will support the work of coalition partners who are thought leaders on each issue.