BUILDING A COMMUNITY WHERE ALL FAMILIES CAN THRIVE

2023 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA
United Way of Greater Cincinnati (UWGC) influences improvements to policies and practices so that all Greater Cincinnati families can thrive.

We are social change agents who collaborate with advocates, volunteers, partners, businesses, faith-based leaders, community leaders, donors and funders. Together, we strive to:

- **Focus on preventive solutions** to the economic challenges families face, particularly when focusing on efforts to help children and youth thrive
- **Center community** by embracing a shared motto of “nothing for us, without us”
- **Strengthen coordination** across issue areas, especially health care, child care, housing, education and mental health
- **Empower families**, particularly those struggling to meet their basic needs
- **Stimulate security and trust** to align efforts, share accountability and scale solutions

Our advocacy agenda is based on our **six priority impact areas**: Ready Kids, Resilient Families; NextGen Success; Equitable Economic Mobility; Improved Prevention, Stronger Communities; Housing First; and Responding to Community Need. To fully meet the challenges that our priority impact areas pose, we added a **seventh impact area** of Civic and Community Engagement.

**OUR 2023 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA INCLUDES:**

Enable equitable economic mobility by addressing the systemic barriers that get in the way of accessing and retaining good jobs, including self-employment, for individuals with low income; create opportunity for families to sustain intergenerational economic well-being through asset building; and address quality and affordability in housing for families in low-income communities.

**POLICY OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Help families climb the economic ladder by addressing benefit cliffs through refundable state tax credits for earned income through participation in the workforce
- Expand access to family support and care coordination initiatives that help families secure sustainable income and achieve financial stability
- Champion local, state and federal policies that promote digital equity and support local digital inclusion strategies
- Reduce poverty and grow the economy by making improvements to and utilization of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
- Increase funding for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program
- Promote economic mobility through skill-based hiring practices
Help children be ready for kindergarten through a stronger, interconnected early education and child care system that builds family resiliency and economic well-being.

**POLICY OPPORTUNITIES:**
- Support high-quality, affordable child care and preschool systems with mixed delivery options
- Attract, prepare, support and retain a qualified, diverse early childhood workforce, including addressing compensation, benefits and working conditions
- Develop and implement public-private-family partnerships to help families participate in the workforce and afford child care

Ensure youth from low-income communities have supportive and coordinated pathways toward economic well-being through continuing education or connection to employment after high school.

**POLICY OPPORTUNITIES:**
- Make education after high school more affordable by increasing federal and state need-based aid and state funding for public two- and four-year colleges and universities
- Increase the racial and cultural diversity of the K-12 teacher workforce so that the teacher population reflects the diversity of the student population
- Provide universal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion support for high school seniors and their families
- Collaborate to give students transparent, student-focused college and career pathways, including college-in-high-school and work-based learning experiences

Build stability in the financial foundations of families in low-income communities by addressing quality and affordability in housing through locally informed and regional collaboration.

**POLICY OPPORTUNITIES:**
- Partner to ensure all families have healthy housing options near where they work, learn, play and pray, at a price that their income allows them to afford
- Work with market actors and public policymakers to identify and implement policies and procedures that prevent evictions and reduce claim cost
- Promote market-based approaches to eviction prevention in Cincinnati and other Ohio communities
Ensure community members can access the right service at the right time by improving the responsiveness and effectiveness of the nonprofit service system of care through coordination, information sharing and data-informed approaches.

POLICY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Bolster the sustainability and capacity of 211, which connects community members to essential resources, with local and state support
- Help families meet their basic needs and reduce child poverty through tax relief
- Mitigate impacts of the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency
- Partner to provide equitable access to nutritious food for all
- Reduce administrative burdens at the local, state and national levels for families accessing safety net funding

Empower individuals and communities to make their voices heard, gain a role in policy decisions and impact institutions that influence their futures and those of their families.

POLICY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Champion tax incentives for charitable deductions by individuals, foundations and businesses
- Support voter registration and participation
- Educate voters on issues on a nonpartisan basis
- Enhance electoral integrity by safeguarding election infrastructure and technology

Much of the work we do in these seven priority impact areas is based on providing equity. We know Black people and other people of color are disproportionately affected in these areas because of historic racism. Systemic racism continues to undermine the foundations of well-being for communities of color by denying access to opportunity and making it more difficult to secure jobs, housing, health care, education, nutrition and equal treatment under law.
HOW UWGC ADVOCATES

To advance policy issues in each of our priority impact areas, we steward our resources by employing a combination of the following engagement strategies:

- Assume a leadership role in advocacy by representing UWGC before local, state and federal policymakers to proactively advocate for, and bring visibility to, UWGC priority issues
- Proactively engage our constituents and our community partners to advocate with their elected and appointed policymakers, including providing consultation, training, messaging and technical assistance
- Collaborate with or lead advocacy partnerships and coalitions of nonprofits and advocacy organizations on UWGC's policy priorities

For example, UWGC belongs to United Way Worldwide and state United Way associations in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio. Through these affiliations, we collaborate with other United Way affiliates to define, advance and achieve shared policy priorities.

In addition, we look to LISC's Housing our Future, All-In Cincinnati's Equity Is the Path to Inclusive Prosperity, Pritchard Committee's Big Bold Ask framework and Groundwork Ohio's policy agenda to advance our priority impact areas.

Finally, we will partner with our priority impact area grantees when their portfolio projects involve public policy advocacy.

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

The term “advocacy” encompasses a broad range of activities that can influence public policy and are permissible under the Internal Revenue Code. They include:

- Educating legislators by providing information on issues and inviting them to see our work in action
- Educating the public about the legislative process, including introducing our constituents to elected and appointed officials who represent them
- Research, including providing quantitative and qualitative data that illuminates key issues impacting our communities
- Equipping and mobilizing youth and families with lived experience to speak up and advocate for issues related to our priority impact areas
- Pushing regulatory and executive branch officials to adopt policies and procedures in support of our priority impact areas
- Educating the public on issues related to our priority impact areas
- Engaging in nonpartisan voter education and mobilization to highlight the importance of voting and access to the polls, educating voters on issues and increasing voter participation
- Lobbying for specific legislation within the limits for 501(c)(3) organizations which have taken the 501(h) election

As a 501(c)(3) organization, UWGC will remain nonpartisan and is prohibited by the Internal Revenue Code from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office.
ABOUT UNITED WAY OF GREATER CINCINNATI

United Way of Greater Cincinnati is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to building long-term solutions and aligning systems to help families in our community thrive. We do that by bringing people and organizations together to solve problems holistically, using family input and data-driven decisions.

Our services and solutions focus on quality education, health and basic needs, which are the building blocks to financial sustainability and economic mobility. Like the challenges people face, we view these areas as unique and interconnected, with no one single solution.

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