



# Public Policy Priorities

## 2022 – 2023

*Adopted September 28, 2022*

United Way for Greater Austin advocates for issues of critical importance to the community we serve. As the community recovers from the impact of COVID-19 and an increasingly challenging economy, United Way champions data-driven policies in the core issue areas of education, health, and financial stability. We seek allies in our advocacy work and support many state and local groups to maximize impact.

### **Commitment to Equity**

United Way for Greater Austin recognizes that our fight against poverty is also a fight against inequity. Systemic racism and poverty are intrinsically connected, and one cannot be eradicated without the other. This is why, United with our community, we are working to reimagine systems that are rooted in equity and racial justice.

We are committed to creating a strong Central Texas that serves everyone, built on racial justice and equity for all. All of our work is aligned with our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **Education**

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

- Leverage state investments and innovative funding models, such as pre-Kindergarten partnerships, to fully fund the cost of high-quality early learning.
- Develop stronger coordination, that includes underlying data systems, across state agencies regulating early childhood services to ensure families have access to a coordinated, efficient system of early childhood services.
- Support efforts aimed at closing long-standing inequities in elementary reading and literacy attainment.
- Strengthen pathways to college and career, including wraparound supports and financial assistance initiatives.
- Support strategies and initiatives aimed at improving young learner’s social/emotional skills and well-being.



## Health

All Texans should have access to equitable services and insurance coverage that prevent illness, improve physical and mental health among individuals, and enhance measurable health outcomes of communities.

- Support promising and evidence-based practices, including home visiting, that improve maternal and child health, encourage positive parenting, promote optimal child development, and reduce abuse and neglect.
- Champion healthy moms, healthy pregnancies, and healthy babies by expanding access to health insurance and prenatal and perinatal services such as Family Connects and Early Childhood Intervention (ECI).
- Advocate for greater collaboration from private and public sectors to build a community information exchange that enables our community to shift away from reactive approaches and towards proactive, holistic, person-centered care.
- Address social determinants of health, such as access to quality food, employment, and transportation, through robust navigation systems such as 2-1-1 and ConnectATX.
- Support increased access to mental health services through community-based and tele-health health programs.
- Advocate for and support policies to increase access to preventative screenings and treatment for cancer.

## Financial Stability

All families should have opportunities to achieve what we all want: good jobs with good wages, opportunities for workplace advancement, and the resources and support needed to handle emergencies and make investments toward a brighter future.

- Stabilize and strengthen the child care industry as it is a critical workforce and an essential workforce support for other industries.
- Strengthen access to adult education and training programs that provide wraparound services and align with quality, family-sustaining jobs.
- Bridge the digital divide and ensure digital access to communities with low income.
- Support paid apprenticeship programs in critical industries.
- Support policies and practices that strengthen the financial health of our community members, including fair lending practices, financial literacy, credit repair, asset building, and access to banking.