BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

UNITED WAY POLICY AGENDA

FOR THE 115th CONGRESS

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

UnitedWay.org/publicpolicy
CONTENTS

PRESIDENT’S REMARKS ................................................................. 1
UNITED WAY POLICY ENGAGEMENT ........................................... 2

POLICY PRIORITIES ..................................................................... 3–19
   Education .............................................................................. 4
   Financial Stability ............................................................... 8
   Health ............................................................................... 12
   Community Strengthening ............................................... 16

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................. 21
Strong communities are cohesive places where people are healthy, able to receive a good education, and can get a job that provides for them and their families. Yet, to build more of these kinds of communities, we – as a society – must address our social and economic challenges head on.

Our society is facing disruptions associated with globalization, demographic change, and digital technology – just to name a few. Each of these disruptions requires us to rethink the way in which we go about building stronger communities. Whereas once we could rely on business to create jobs, government to provide a safety net, and nonprofit organizations to fill in the gaps, solving today’s challenges requires more. Strengthening communities today requires cross-sector partnerships that find new ways to provide for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community.

Right now, a primary focus of our organization and our partnerships must be creating good-paying jobs that are accessible to entire communities. Good jobs give people income and hope, but too many people lack the means or opportunity to advance. Additionally, only certain segments of our society have reliable access these opportunities. As long as this situation remains, we will fail to make progress as a nation.

Our public policy agenda for the 115th Congress reflects our cross-sectoral approach and our commitment to improving opportunities for all community members. Our agenda is part of our comprehensive effort – on the ground, with local and state policy makers and in collaboration with diverse public, private, and nonprofit partners – to fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community. Our goal is to ensure children get a strong start in school, youth earn the credentials they need to thrive in the job market, people of all ages live a healthy life, and that everyone can pursue employment opportunities that raise their economic status.

Creating lasting change requires United Ways to work with partners old and new, including educators, health care providers, labor, the faith community, neighborhood and community groups, and civic and fraternal organizations. And it requires all of us to raise our voices – in big ways and small – to make sure decision makers understand the community’s challenges and act accordingly.

While this policy agenda is organized around education, financial stability, and health, we know these issues are tied together. It’s the poorest children who are struggling the most in school, kids who don’t eat well or exercise enough who have a tougher time learning, and those lacking access to good education who have trouble getting and keeping jobs. At the end of the day, education, financial stability and health are inextricably intertwined.

And our futures are intertwined as well. That’s why it’s important for everyone – every person in every community across America – to speak out. Years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of the urgency of now. His words ring true today. We all need to step forward and play our parts in making our communities as strong as they can be, both for today’s generations and those yet to come.

Brian A. Gallagher

President and CEO
United Way Worldwide
Because government is a critical decision maker and the major provider and funder of health and human services, United Way must actively engage in public policy.

United Way Worldwide Standards of Excellence 1.4

In rural areas, towns and cities nationwide, local United Ways assess the needs of their communities and work to meet them through strategic investments, partnerships, and direct services. This work on the ground enables United Ways to gather accurate, detailed knowledge about local human needs – information that is vital for policy-makers at all levels of government.

As the largest non-government funder of human services in the United States, the United Way movement directs several billion dollars and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours each year towards creating long-lasting community change. While our impact is vast, United Way recognizes that government spending in our primary areas of work totals in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

United Way engages in public policy advocacy because we recognize that it is our civic obligation to use our experience and knowledge to help inform policy-makers’ decisions regarding public policy and funding of government human services programs.

United Way is a policy leader in the nonprofit community because we help to craft practical long-term solutions to human needs. We remain non-ideological and nonpartisan in our advocacy, urging lawmakers to set aside partisanship and to work together. United Way uses our convening power, bringing together all of our partners – business, labor, nonprofits, and advocates – to fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community.

United Way Worldwide’s Policy Agenda for the 115th Congress helps fulfill our obligation to assist policy-makers in crafting the best possible governmental policies in the areas of education, financial stability and health, while also tackling important policies that strengthen communities at-large.

For additional information on United Way Worldwide policy engagement, please visit www.unitedway.org/publicpolicy.
Developed in consultation with United Way leaders across the network and national thought-leaders and experts, United Way Worldwide’s policy agenda reflects the work and strategic direction of the network in the areas of education, financial stability, and health. United Way Worldwide advocates for policies that will strengthen our communities’ capacity to advance the common good. While there are any number of important policy issues that we support and on which we could advocate to advance this goal, we have sought to identify the policies that are most critical to our mission, politically viable, and where United Way can most impact the national dialogue.

United Way Worldwide will employ a combination of the following engagement strategies to advance these policies:

- Assume a leadership role in advocacy on Capitol Hill, before the Administration, and with the human services sector, proactively lobbying and bringing visibility to our issues.

- Proactively develop positions, advocate, and generate grassroots support among local United Ways on an as-needed basis.

- Monitor and respond to requests for support from coalition partners through such vehicles as “sign-on letters.”
EDUCATION
HELPING CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL
Education is a cornerstone for success in school, work, and life. High school graduates have higher earning potential and contribute more to their local economies, and those who manage to obtain a post-secondary credential increase their earning potential even further. While the recent rise in high school graduation rates is encouraging, our nation still struggles with issues of inequity. The graduation rate for low-income students is about 14 percent lower than their peers and almost half of all Black and Hispanic students in the country attend high-poverty schools.\(^1\) As research shows that there is a strong correlation between academic achievement and school poverty rates,\(^2\) it is no wonder that our country has made only modest gains towards closing the achievement gap.\(^3\) The disparities in college access and completion rates are equally alarming.

In order to ensure strong communities, it is imperative that all of our nation's students graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education or the workforce. This preparation starts early, with access to affordable, high-quality child care and early learning opportunities so that children enter school ready to learn. Elementary and secondary school students must have access to a challenging, well-rounded curriculum and wraparound supports, such as afterschool and summer learning programs. Schools must be held accountable for ensuring that all students, including those from traditionally disadvantaged groups, succeed academically, and should engage families and communities in this effort. And because a high school diploma is not sufficient in today's knowledge economy, every young adult should have the opportunity to pursue a quality degree or credential, even as higher education costs continue to rise and despite the barriers to entry and completion that exist for low-income students.

The United Way network is working to improve educational opportunities and quality along the continuum of education, from cradle to career. United Way Worldwide will focus its education advocacy efforts on the following policies.

**Increase access to high-quality early care and education opportunities.**

Research shows the preschool-age years are critical for cognitive and social development, laying a foundation for success in college, work, and life.\(^4\) Despite the data, there is still a great need for affordable and high-quality early care and education.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) grants funding to states to provide access to child care services for low-income families and improve the quality of child care. The law was reauthorized in 2014 to update and improve health and safety, quality, and eligibility provisions. The federal government provides support for preschool primarily through the Head Start program and has also provided funding to states to build or support state-sponsored preschool programs.

United Way will fight to:

- Increase CCDBG funding to improve access to high-quality child care.
- Support increased access to high-quality early learning opportunities via Early Head Start, Head Start, and state-sponsored Pre-K programs.

In only five years, the Graduating Our Future initiative implemented by the United Way of Forsyth County (Winston-Salem, North Carolina) and its community partners has yielded impressive results. At Parkland Magnet High School—the school that once had the lowest graduation rate in Winston-Salem, the graduation rate increased by 16.2 percent, and the community at-large has seen an increase of more than 11 percent in its graduation rate. Graduating Our Future has clearly demonstrated that increasing tutoring, family engagement, counseling, and mentoring opportunities for at-risk students can make a real difference. That’s why United Way fought for the inclusion of critical wraparound support programs and family engagement provisions in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act and will continue to fight to ensure that these programs are adequately funded.
While a post-secondary degree is necessary to compete in the global economy, many students graduating from high school are not prepared for college. In 2015, Congress passed the long overdue reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Through a variety of policies and programs, ESSA attempts to ensure that every student graduates ready for college or a career. The law includes critical protections for disadvantaged students, additional supports and accountability requirements for low performing schools, and authorizes promising and proven programs that supplement and advance efforts to improve our nation’s schools.

United Way will fight to:

- Ensure that ESSA’s accountability provisions are implemented with fidelity at the state level to protect disadvantaged groups and that families and communities are engaged in these efforts.
- Secure and increase funding for the critical programs authorized in ESSA that address literacy, out-of-school time, and wraparound supports.

Expand opportunities for students to obtain a post-secondary credential.

By 2020, an estimated 35 percent of job openings will require at least a bachelor’s degree and another 30 percent will require at least some college or an associate's degree. However, the current economy, lack of economic mobility and rising college tuitions combine to create a major cost barrier for low- and moderate-income families. Federal grants and tax credits alleviate some of this burden, but not nearly enough. For low-income students, additional barriers, such as lack of preparedness, information, and adequate supports, prevent young people from accessing and completing college. Low- and moderate-income students who do attend college are acquiring astronomical amounts of debt, borrowing over 50 percent more than their peers did 10 years ago.

United Way will fight to:

- Support federal efforts to increase college access, persistence, and completion, as well as strengthen programs and policies that minimize student debt and help families make more informed borrowing decisions.
- Strengthen federal programs that provide youth with alternative pathways to post-secondary education and the careers of their choice, through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act and other federal programs.
FINANCIAL STABILITY
PROMOTING FINANCIAL STABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE
We LIVE UNITED against Financial Instability:

Hundreds of United Ways across the country help families keep more of what they earn at tax time by connecting them to vital tax credits at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites and through MyFreeTaxes.com. In fact, free tax prep efforts across these communities helped nearly two million households access $2.2 billion in tax refunds in 2015. For example, United Way of Buffalo & Erie County (Buffalo, New York) and its partners served more than 18,500 households and brought back more than $23.5 million in refunds. That’s money spent to put food on the table, make car repairs to get to work, and save for a rainy day. And that’s why United Way is fighting to expand the EITC and increase funding for VITA.

Incomes are rising for the first time in years and in 2015, the United States experienced the largest decline in the national poverty rate since 1999. While these gains are encouraging, more than 43 million Americans live in poverty with abundant disparities across race — for example, 24 percent of Blacks and 21 percent of Hispanics live in poverty in contrast to nine percent of non-Hispanic Whites. Also troubling is that one in five children live in poverty and their prospects for economic mobility — a fundamental American aspiration — are bleak. Recent studies have shown that 43 percent of children whose parents were in the bottom income quintile stay in the bottom fifth as adults. So while the Census data suggests we are moving in the right direction collectively, we need to ensure we are moving forward in a way that includes every person in every community.

Communities are stronger when every individual and family, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, is financially stable and has the opportunity for economic mobility. Americans are best positioned for economic mobility when they have quality education that leads to good-paying jobs which allow them to access housing and save for the future. For low- and moderate-income Americans, supports like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit and programs that provide food to children and families are instrumental in helping families cover the basics while encouraging and supporting work.

The United Way network invests in and supports a variety of programs that help workers secure and maintain employment, access tax credits, find stable housing, and build savings and assets for the long-term, including through local and state policy efforts. United Way Worldwide will focus on the following policy priorities for the next Congress.
Reauthorized in 2014, the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) creates and strengthens job training programs nationwide. Adequate funding and effective implementation of quality workforce development programs continues to be critically important to ensure that every American is able to learn the skills necessary to obtain a family-sustaining career. Additionally, investments in higher education and job training programs help youth acquire the skills, training and mentorship to make a successful transition from school to work. This includes strengthening the school-to-work pipeline for available jobs, but also to jobs that will become available as key sectors experience rapid growth and struggle to find employees sufficiently qualified to fill vacant positions.

United Way will fight to:

- Invest in high quality education and job training programs that ensure more young people are well-equipped for the workforce.
- Increase funding for the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) and national service programs that provide valuable job experiences, and expand work-based learning opportunities in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- Incentivize sector-based strategies that help meet employer demand for a more educated and skilled workforce.

United Way will fight to:

- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for workers not raising children at home and lower the age of eligibility from 25 to 21.
- Strengthen the Child Tax Credit to ensure the lowest income workers and families with young children can access a robust credit.
- Authorize and increase funding for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance grant program.

FINANCIAL STABILITY: PROMOTING FINANCIAL STABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Protect and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and access points through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance grant program.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) are refundable credits that allow working families to keep more of what they earn to pay for necessities like reliable transportation, child care, and groceries. Together the EITC and CTC lifted 9.8 million people out of poverty in 2015. Individuals and families connect to the EITC and CTC at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, through which IRS-certified volunteers help lower-income workers accurately complete their tax returns for free, connecting millions of people to billions of dollars.

Despite the success of the credits, millions of low-income working Americans not raising children at home are largely excluded from the EITC, including young people striving to get a foothold in the workforce, non-custodial parents, and veterans and service members. Approximately 7.5 million workers are actually taxed into — or deeper into — poverty, primarily because the EITC is too small to offset income and payroll taxes. Further, millions of the lowest income working families cannot access the full amount of the Child Tax Credit due to the inadequacy of the current structure.

United Way will fight to:

- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for workers not raising children at home and lower the age of eligibility from 25 to 21.
- Strengthen the Child Tax Credit to ensure the lowest income workers and families with young children can access a robust credit.
- Authorize and increase funding for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance grant program.

Strengthen job training and workforce development programs.

Reauthorized in 2014, the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) creates and strengthens job training programs nationwide. Adequate funding and effective implementation of quality workforce development programs continues to be critically important to ensure that every American is able to learn the skills necessary to obtain a family-sustaining career. Additionally, investments in higher education and job training programs help youth acquire the skills, training and mentorship to make a successful transition from school to work. This includes strengthening the school-to-work pipeline for available jobs, but also to jobs that will become available as key sectors experience rapid growth and struggle to find employees sufficiently qualified to fill vacant positions.

United Way will fight to:

- Invest in high quality education and job training programs that ensure more young people are well-equipped for the workforce.
- Increase funding for the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) and national service programs that provide valuable job experiences, and expand work-based learning opportunities in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- Incentivize sector-based strategies that help meet employer demand for a more educated and skilled workforce.
Support policies to improve the nation’s affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income individuals and families.

In the past decade it has been increasingly challenging for households to secure affordable housing as incomes have not kept pace with housing and utility cost increases. In particular, the rising cost of housing places a greater strain on renters, as they generally have lower incomes than owners and are twice as likely to pay more than half of their incomes on housing. The high cost of housing leaves working families particularly vulnerable to eviction or foreclosure if their income is interrupted. The limited supply of affordable housing, coupled with long waiting lists, and confusing application processes can make it difficult for low-income working families to obtain affordable housing.

United Way will fight to:

- Adequately fund and protect the Section 8 Housing Voucher program to increase rental assistance to low-income families.
- Protect and adequately fund programs like the Housing Trust Fund, Low Income Housing Tax Credit and the HOME block grant to increase the stock of affordable housing.

Strengthen child nutrition programs, SNAP and other nutrition-related income supports.

Food insecurity exists in every county in the U.S., and in 2015, children in 3 million households did not have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food. Additionally, between 1990 and 2013, multiple studies demonstrated that low-income communities and communities of color do not have access to healthy foods. Nutrition-related income supports like the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and Summer Food Service Program (collectively known as the Child Nutrition programs), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), and Women Infants and Children (WIC), stabilize families when their assets and incomes are limited and ensure babies, mothers, children and families have access to nutritious food in tough times.

United Way will fight to:

- Protect, strengthen and increase access to the Child Nutrition Programs and SNAP.
- Increase funding to the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and WIC.
HEALTH
IMPROVING PEOPLE’S HEALTH
We LIVE UNITED against the Opiate Epidemic:

In response to a rise in new rates of HIV infection, coupled with being at the epicenter of the opiate epidemic, United Way of Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida) led a broad coalition of local, regional and state organizations to develop and implement a community action plan. The Opiate Action Plan includes a media and public awareness campaign focused on opiate overdose prevention, outreach in schools, increased access to substance abuse treatment and data sharing. To address the link between the rise in HIV infection and heroin use, United Way of Broward County and its coalition successfully advocated for the passage of a pilot needle exchange program with the state legislature. United Way will fight for increased federal resources to support efforts in states and local communities that are working to address the opiate epidemic.

We know that for children to succeed academically, and for adults to maintain self-sufficiency, they must be in good health and have consistent access to quality, affordable healthcare. To ensure that every individual and family in every community can live a healthy life, United Way believes in a comprehensive approach to health care access and integrated health management systems so that Americans are healthy through every stage of life. To address the health disparities that still exist, especially among low-income households and minorities, access to care must not be blocked by cultural, linguistic, financial or logistical barriers.\(^\text{16}\)

The United Way network invests in and supports a variety of programs that: expand access to quality healthcare, improve health outcomes through healthy eating to address obesity rates, and ensure healthy beginnings for infants and healthy, independent aging for seniors.

To build toward United Way’s goal to ensure all children and adults have access to healthcare and improve their health outcomes, United Way Worldwide will fight for the following federal policies.

### Expand access to healthcare coverage for children and adults.

Since the implementation of the Affordable Healthcare Act (ACA), 20 million people have become insured and the rate for the uninsured has dropped to the lowest on record. Still, more than 11 percent of Americans remain uninsured, and the rate is disproportionately higher among Millennials, Blacks and Hispanics at 25 percent to 28 percent.\(^\text{17}\)

Critical and lifesaving programs like Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation Programs (MIECHV) ensure that low- and moderate-income families can access the quality care they need but cannot afford on their own.

Medicaid provides coverage for millions of children, seniors, and people with disabilities. CHIP offers comprehensive, age appropriate pediatric networks of healthcare, providing coverage for 8 million children in working families that earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but too little to afford private insurance. MIECHV supports voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services for at-risk expectant mothers and parents with young children, providing mental and developmental health services.

These programs work together to support the developmental and physical health of children and the overall well-being of families.
United Way will fight to:

- Ensure that changes to our healthcare laws improve on existing healthcare coverage, reduce health disparities and leave intact consumer protections for all Americans.
- Protect Medicaid from program changes that would harm coverage for children, seniors and people with disabilities.
- Support the reauthorization of CHIP with full funding over the next four years.
- Support reauthorization of MIECHV with incremental funding increases up to $800 million over the next five years.

Expand access to behavioral health services.

Healthy mental and physical development ensures young people are positioned for success, and access to mental health and chemical dependency treatment for both youth and adults promotes healthier and safer communities.

More than forty million adults and one in five children in the United States suffer from a mental health disorder. Research tells us that toxic stress — stress caused by long-term, persistent factors such as mental health issues, extreme poverty, family violence, and abuse or neglect — can affect the architecture in the developing brain of a child. Untreated toxic stress can have a major impact on a child’s physical and mental health into and through adulthood.18 Too many individuals are being left to deal with these issues on their own, and many face complicating life circumstances such as drug and alcohol addictions, homelessness, incarceration or chronic health problems.

Among the many programs offered to support mental health for all Americans, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) ensures that people have the counseling, mental health and crisis intervention services needed to support their ability to lead productive lives.

According to the CDC, an estimated 1.9 million people suffered from chemical dependency disorders related to prescription opioid painkillers in 2014, and the overdose rate between 2000 and 2014 increased 140 percent nationwide. This increase is attributed mostly to the misuse of opiates, including heroin, fentanyl and other poisonous opiate analogs. Due to the lack of resources and access to mental health and substance abuse services, many communities across the United States are facing a public health and safety crisis.

United Way will fight to:

- Support full funding of SAMSHA programs enabling youth to succeed in school and adults to lead healthy and productive lives.
- Increase federal resources for states and local communities to address the opiate epidemic.
COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING
BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO ADVANCE THE COMMON GOOD
Although the economic outlook is improving, the recession and drawn-out economic recovery have resulted in significant cuts to federal and state funded human service programs. Many low- and moderate-income families have been left out of the recovery altogether. Middle class workers both support and rely on help from United Way and its nonprofit partners. The need for a robust nonprofit sector and government recognition of the sector's vital role in our society is now more apparent than ever. Nonprofit organizations provide critical services that contribute to healthy, educated and economically stable communities. Strong nonprofits that are supported and valued by government can address the complex issues facing their communities and spur opportunity for all.

United Way strongly supports policy initiatives that seek to strengthen communities by enhancing the nonprofit sector’s capacity to serve through tax policy, expanding the 2-1-1 system, protecting human rights, and supporting laws and regulations that encourage philanthropy.

**Protect and expand charitable giving incentives.**

Americans overwhelmingly trust charities and they support tax policies that create incentives for charitable giving. A recent survey commissioned by Independent Sector indicates that 88% of voters believe that it should be easier for people to deduct charitable contributions from their taxes.19 While Americans are primarily motivated to give for altruistic reasons, tax incentives allow more people to give more. Similarly, businesses can provide more support to charities when tax policies create giving incentives.

United Way will fight to:

- Protect the full value of existing federal tax incentives, including the charitable deduction.
- Expand charitable giving incentives to millions of middle-class workers who do not itemize their taxes.
- Support individual and business tax incentives that provide critical support to charities across the country.

We LIVE UNITED against Human Trafficking:

United Ways across the U.S. are working at the state and local level to address the needs of human trafficking victims. For example, the United Way of Greater Atlanta (Atlanta, Georgia) played an instrumental role in getting a state constitutional amendment adopted at the November 8, 2016 General Election. The amendment, which establishes a constitutionally dedicated fund to pay for rehabilitative services needed by children who have been bought and sold for sex, was adopted by 83.8 percent of Georgia voters. Spearheaded by the United Way of Greater Atlanta’s Tocqueville Women’s Leadership Council, the fund is expected to yield some $2 million annually to help sexually exploited children. In 2016, the United Way Center on Human Trafficking and Slavery, worked with partners to pass the End Modern Slavery Initiative Act. This bold, bipartisan initiative will authorize $25 million to fund programs that contribute to the freeing and sustainable recovery of victims of modern slavery.

In 2016, the United Way of Greater Atlanta (Atlanta, Georgia) played an instrumental role in getting a state constitutional amendment adopted at the November 8, 2016 General Election. The amendment, which establishes a constitutionally dedicated fund to pay for rehabilitative services needed by children who have been bought and sold for sex, was adopted by 83.8 percent of Georgia voters. Spearheaded by the United Way of Greater Atlanta’s Tocqueville Women’s Leadership Council, the fund is expected to yield some $2 million annually to help sexually exploited children. In 2016, the United Way Center on Human Trafficking and Slavery, worked with partners to pass the End Modern Slavery Initiative Act. This bold, bipartisan initiative will authorize $25 million to fund programs that contribute to the freeing and sustainable recovery of victims of modern slavery.
Strengthen and expand 2-1-1.

2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their community. United Way funds, operates, and supports the free and confidential 2-1-1 service in communities throughout the U.S., connecting millions of individuals and households to available social services. Through 2-1-1, seniors have gained access to healthcare and food, parents to childcare and housing, veterans to education and employment, disaster survivors to recovery resources, and more. In several communities, 2-1-1 centers demonstrated success in smoking cessation and addiction recovery, improved hospital readmission rates, and reduced homelessness. Currently, 2-1-1 can be reached by 95% of Americans, but there is more work to do to achieve its potential.

United Way will fight to:

- Expand access to 2-1-1 so that every American can connect with the vital services that 2-1-1 provides by landline, cell phone, text, and web chat.

- Position and promote 2-1-1 as a central source of information and referral for all health and human services nationwide and an eligible use of existing federal funding streams.

Expand and strengthen programs that prevent human trafficking, punish offenders and support survivors.

Human trafficking is one of the greatest under-addressed issues of our time. There are more than 20 million victims of human trafficking around the world. \(^{20}\) Human trafficking cases have been reported in every country in the world and in every state and territory in the U.S. The International Labor Organization estimates that traffickers make more than $150 billion in profit annually. \(^{21}\) Current U.S. investments in combatting human trafficking are anemic, totaling a little more than $100 million per year for both domestic and international programs. In order to combat this global crime, we need dramatic increases in funding and enhanced U.S. leadership to elevate, prioritize, and fund proven interventions to combat human trafficking at home and abroad. \(^{22}\) Additionally, public policy should provide incentives that reward businesses for eliminating sex and labor trafficking from their operations and supply chains.

United Way will fight to:

- Increase U.S. investments and diplomatic leadership in anti-trafficking efforts.

- Protect victims of human trafficking and promote social services for survivors.

- Address slavery and human trafficking in business supply chains.
Advocate for policies and regulations that support nonprofits.

All manner of policies and regulations designed for the business community also apply to nonprofit organizations. Because of the distinct nature of how nonprofits operate, these policies often have an unintended negative impact on the ability of nonprofits to benefit the public. In some cases, policies or regulations impacting nonprofits can be misguided or uninformed. In other cases, policies intended to single out a bad-actor can undermine the entire sector. United Way’s leading role in the sector requires it to be vigilant on issues affecting the sector and to work to ensure laws and regulations promote, rather than weaken the sector.

United Way will fight to:

- Revitalize the Combined Federal Campaign, historically the single largest source of charitable giving, which once raised more than $280 million per year for large and small nonprofits across the United States.

- Ensure that laws and regulations that affect the operations of nonprofits help, rather than hinder, the critical work done by charities and foundations every year.

- Support funding for vital federal government programs, such as AmeriCorps, that enable nonprofits to serve their communities.
NOTES


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A wide variety of United Way leaders and national policy experts informed our policy priorities. United Way Worldwide thanks each of the following organizations and advisory groups for their time and thoughtful contributions as well as the countless others who provided support throughout the process.

**National Partners**
- AFL-CIO
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Red Cross
- Boy Scouts of America
- Campaign to Invest in America’s Workforce
- Campaign for Home Energy Assistance
- Catholic Charities
- Center on Budget & Policy Priorities
- CFED
- CLASP
- Feeding America
- First Focus
- Girl Scouts of the USA
- Goodwill Industries International
- Habitat for Humanity
- National Council of Non Profits
- National Skills Coalition
- National Urban League
- New America Foundation
- Share Our Strength
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Volunteers of America
- YMCA

**United Way Advisory Groups**
- National Professional Council (NPC)
- United Way Center on Human Trafficking
- United Way Council of States
- United Way Worldwide U.S.A. Board of Trustees

---

**THE UNITED WAY WORLDWIDE PUBLIC POLICY TEAM**

Steve Taylor  
Senior Vice President & Counsel for Public Policy  
Steve.Taylor@unitedway.org  
@Steve_Taylor_DC

Soncia Coleman  
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
Soncia.Coleman@unitedway.org

Megan Tracz  
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
Megan.Tracz@unitedway.org  
@MegTracz

Patty Hall  
Senior Associate, Public Policy  
Patty.Hall@unitedway.org

Caitlin Carey  
Manager, Public Policy and Advocacy  
Caitlin.Carey@unitedway.org  
@caitlinmcarey

Lindsay Torrico  
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
Lindsay.Torrico@unitedway.org  
@LindsayTorrico

Dave Wallace  
Director, Health Policy  
Dave.Wallace@unitedway.org