



GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

2024 Policy Roadmap Summary:

Creating Pathways to Financial Stability & Equitable Communities

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A Foreword From Our President

United Way of Pennsylvania recognizes that many individuals throughout Pennsylvania go to work every day and still struggle to provide basic necessities for themselves and their families. Referred to as **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed (ALICE), these households often have no savings safety net and are living paycheck-to-paycheck. In Pennsylvania, ALICE represents 1.4 million (27%) households struggling to afford the basic necessities of housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and a basic smartphone plan. Despite facing these financial challenges, ALICE often does not qualify for public assistance and is one emergency away from financial disaster.

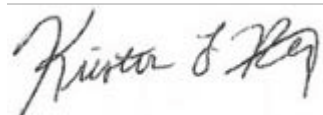
ALICE is in every Pennsylvania community, working in essential jobs across a variety of sectors including child care, home healthcare, retail, restaurant/hospitality, and more. When combined with Pennsylvania households who live in poverty, over 2 million families are living below the ALICE Threshold, which is a staggering 39% of Pennsylvania's population. Friends, family members, coworkers, and neighbors are faced with a variety of financial challenges that some of us may take for granted.

United Ways are committed to breaking down the barriers to financial stability that many ALICE families face. We utilize the ALICE Survival Threshold as a roadmap to support our Pennsylvania communities. For a full description of the ALICE Project, visit <http://www.uwp.org/alice>.

United Ways are in a unique position to develop meaningful and lasting cross-sector solutions to the challenges facing ALICE in our communities. Through the generosity of donors, United Ways are able to reduce the burdens ALICE encounters on a daily basis and collaborate through various partnerships to help ALICE move along their journey to financial stability.

On behalf of United Way of Pennsylvania's 43 member United Ways, and one United Fund, and our Board of Directors, I am pleased to share with you United Way of Pennsylvania's 2024 Policy Roadmap.

Sincerely,



Kristen Rotz
President, United Way of Pennsylvania

PA 211: Measuring Need, Connecting Volunteers, & Assisting People in Need

UWP Supports:

- ▶ Increased investment of state funds to continue a public-private partnership, strengthen PA 211, and ensure a consistent experience for every user in the state.
- ▶ Exploring ways to increase the efficiency of state and local governments by contracting to provide services currently offered through government-operated information phone hotlines.
- ▶ Leveraging PA 211's community data to help Pennsylvania address social determinants of health and build resource coordination platforms.
- ▶ Providing data for workforce development and health and human service planning at the state and local level.
- ▶ Partnering with state agencies including the Departments of Aging, Community and Economic Development, Education, Health, Human Services, Labor and Industry, and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency to save taxpayer dollars by connecting Pennsylvanians to the right services.

Rewarding Work and Supporting Financial Independence: PA Earned Income Tax Credit

UWP Supports:

- ▶ Enactment of a State Earned Income Tax Credit of at least 25% of the federal tax credit.
- ▶ Expansion and enhancement of the federal EITC to further support working families and reduce poverty.

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Investing in the Jobs of Tomorrow: High Quality Early Childhood Education and Out of School Activities

UWP Supports:

- ▶ **Consistent access to high quality and affordable early learning for all children through increased funding for Pre-K and Head Start programs with investments targeted to at-risk kids.**
- ▶ **Increased funding for Child Care Services to continue to provide reliable, high quality and affordable child care.**
- ▶ **Workforce development initiatives that include opportunities for child care workers, both in Pre-K and high-quality child care settings to further their training and career.**
- ▶ **Increased state and federal funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant to support the healthy development and school readiness needs of children.**
- ▶ **Creation of a forum for out of school time program funders, providers, schools, and policy makers to identify stable sources of funding, evaluate quality program standards, and foster partnerships.**
- ▶ **Aligning out of school activities with Pennsylvania's projected work force needs to prepare Pennsylvania's children for high-demand, family sustaining jobs.**

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Creating Paths to Opportunity for Greater Financial Stability: Strengthening Pennsylvania's Workforce

UWP Supports:

- ▶ Permanently increasing child care subsidy eligibility up to 85% of the Statewide Median Income or 300% of the Federal Poverty Level dependent on household size.
- ▶ Investments in new programs that help reduce the cost of child care for households transitioning off of subsidies.
- ▶ Using currently available resources such as PA 211 to ensure individuals who are eligible for public benefits post-pandemic are receiving those supports.

Uplifting ALICE: A Continued Commitment to Financial Stability

UWP Supports:

Housing Stability

- ▶ Improving Pennsylvania's housing infrastructure and affordable housing options in rural and urban areas for median and low-income individuals and families, veterans, seniors and the disabled.
- ▶ Reducing the housing and utility burden of families by supporting local solutions driven by the needs of Pennsylvania's geographically diverse communities.

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Digital Equity

- ▶ Continued investment and education in broadband and digital technology to build out broadband infrastructure that prioritizes Pennsylvania's unserved and under-served communities.

Affordable and Accessible Transportation

- ▶ Policies, programs, and infrastructure investments that break down transportation barriers for low-income individuals and families.

Food Insecurity and Nutrition Programs

- ▶ Protecting, strengthening, and increasing access to SNAP and WIC and enhancing benefits to keep up with rising costs.

Health Care for All

- ▶ Ensuring all children have access to health care by building on the success of Medicaid and CHIP. United Way supports increased funding for Medicaid and CHIP and targeted investments for at risk families.
- ▶ Promoting efforts to identify, improve, and maximize good health for children and families by advocating for nutritional opportunities, decreasing lead exposure in children, and increasing maternal health access for expecting and new parents.
- ▶ Expansion of evidence-based home visiting financing and strategies. Home visiting programs are shown to promote child development and school readiness; improve maternal and child health; reduce child abuse and neglect; and support economic self-sufficiency.
- ▶ Expanding access to vital and affordable health care programs including Medicaid and CHIP which provide all essential health benefits including behavioral health services.
- ▶ Implementing trauma informed practices and care that promote reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors for youth and families to break cycles of family and community trauma.

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Workforce Development and Building Financially Resilient Communities

- ▶ Job training and career development, and workforce retention policies such as Employer Resource Networks (ERN).
- ▶ Workforce development initiatives that help more of Pennsylvania's population achieve jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and lift them to a level of financial sustainability.
- ▶ Investing in workforce development, job training and skill-building to ensure workers have skills necessary to access and succeed in good jobs that businesses need filled.
- ▶ Amendments to state law which protect Pennsylvania's service recipients and service providers by ensuring that federal dollars allocated to the Commonwealth, and state dollars for essential services that directly impact the health and safety of Pennsylvanians, continue to be paid during a budget impasse.
- ▶ Fair and adequate funding for human services.

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About United Way of Pennsylvania

United Way of Pennsylvania is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to champion United Way as a leader and partner in building financially resilient families and thriving communities throughout Pennsylvania. United Way of Pennsylvania envisions an inclusive, impactful and collaborative network of United Ways working with business, community, faith and government leaders to advance equitable access to health, education and financial stability for all Pennsylvanians.

United Way is committed to raising charitable dollars that are invested in community impact work which addresses needs specific to the local community. In many cases, these funds support public-private partnerships that further leverage state taxpayer dollars.

Additionally, United Way commits to advocate for policy change which will help more Pennsylvania families and communities achieve the basic building blocks of a good quality of life in Pennsylvania. United Way of Pennsylvania is a membership organization which serves as the voice for 41 member United Ways and 1 United Fund across the Commonwealth.

For more information about United Way of PA's priorities, please contact:

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