



**UNITED WAY**  
Pennsylvania

**211**

Pennsylvania

# 2026 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

## Financial Security

United Way of Pennsylvania advances policies that strengthen financial security for every Pennsylvanian, from children birth to five, to senior citizens beyond their working years, from ALICE households and beyond. Every individual and family deserves the opportunity to achieve stability and build a better future. When people can meet their basic needs, access steady employment, save and invest in themselves, families are stronger, their economic outcomes improve, and communities thrive.

### Tax Credits for Working Households and Families

- The establishment of a refundable state Child Tax Credit.
- Extending the federal Earned Income Tax Credit to provide more tax relief to working adults without children and the federal Child Tax Credit to provide additional tax relief to households with children.

### Benefit Cliff Reform

- Support the launch of state-funded demonstration projects that offer transitional support services, enabling low-income families to boost earnings while maintaining essential benefits.
- Adjust income thresholds for programs like TANF, SNAP, and childcare subsidies so benefits taper gradually rather than abruptly.
- Align childcare, healthcare, and housing assistance with workforce programs to ensure families can increase earnings without losing critical supports, creating a smoother path off public assistance.

### Addressing Housing Needs in Pennsylvania

- Strengthen partnerships with local housing and service providers to expand emergency shelter, transitional housing, and supportive programs that help individuals and families achieve long-term housing stability.
- Protect funding streams for the housing counseling programs to ensure households have access to qualified guidance on affordable, accessible, and safe housing options.
- Support state and local initiatives funded through PHARE (Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund) to expand affordable housing, preserve existing homes, and stabilize communities.
- Support federal and state programs that provide funding for comprehensive home repairs and hazard mitigation to preserve safe, healthy, and stable housing for low- and moderate-income families.
- Advocate for state and local efforts to support zoning reform initiatives and streamline the permitting process for affordable housing projects.

### Workforce Development

- Engage public and private partnerships in efforts to promote fair chance hiring practices to expand the labor pool, reduce recidivism, remove employment barriers and support economic growth.
- Reauthorizing and strengthening federal investment in workforce development programs and job-training programs.
- Support career and technical education and dual enrollment programs that support student pathways to self-sustaining employment.

### 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.
- Advocate for digital literacy and education emphasizing the proper and effective use of digital technology for accessing remote employment, educational opportunities, and for physical and behavioral telehealth treatment.

### Family Leave Policy

- Promote coordinated state, local, and employer efforts that enhance access to family leave policies tailored to the needs of working families.



## Youth Opportunity

We are committed to creating pathways for children of all ages to learn, grow and thrive. Strong early investments and supports give young people the foundations they need to access the paths toward opportunities to lifelong wellbeing.

### **Increasing Income Eligibility for Childcare Programs**

- Increase eligibility to 400 percent FPIG to expand childcare access for low- and moderate-income families, and for the Pre-K Counts program in alignment with statewide provider capacity, to allow more children the opportunity to attend high-quality early childhood programs.

### **Increasing Reimbursement Rates for Childcare Providers**

- Increase the reimbursement rates for childcare and Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program providers to keep pace with the rising cost of serving young children and ensure providers can maintain their workforce.
- Advocate for changing the rate methodology to reflect the actual cost of providing childcare.

### **The Child Care Development Block Grant**

- Increased state and federal funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant to support the healthy development and school readiness needs of children.

## Community Resiliency

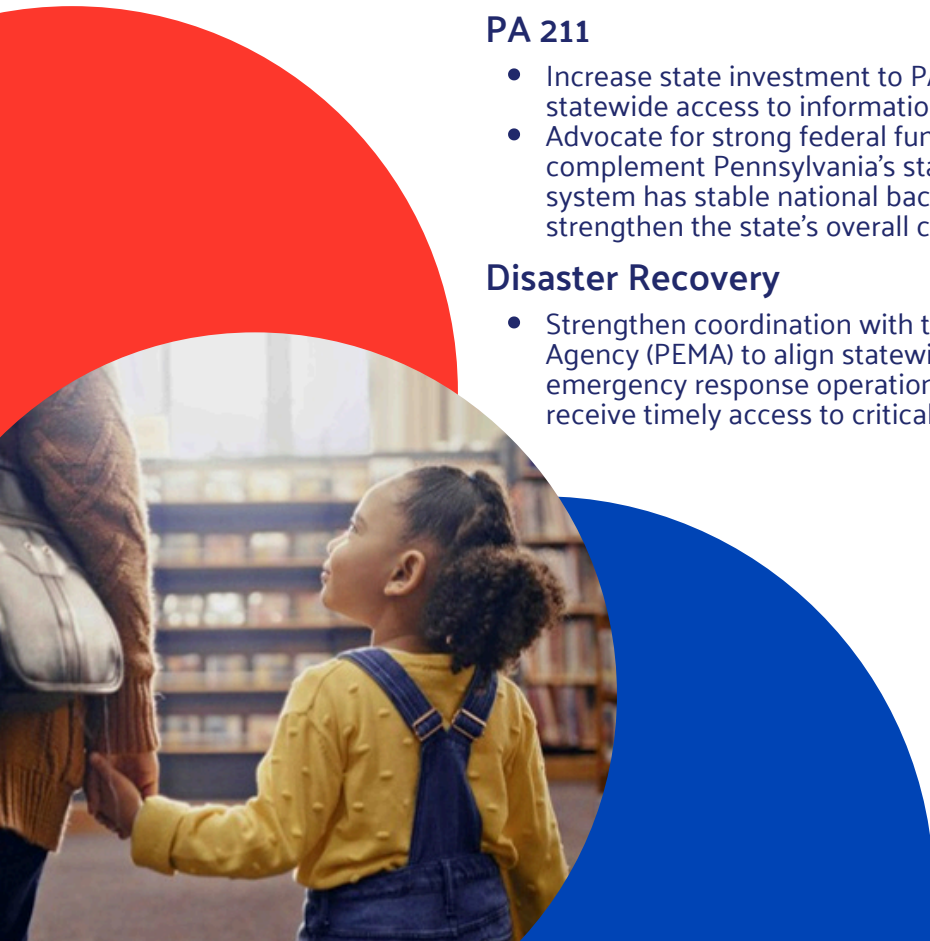
More than ever before, communities need strong, reliable and interconnected systems and networks to navigate the collective challenges they face, whether that's environmental and weather crises, or national catastrophes. Public community resources like PA 211, and digital access to information to stay informed and remain connected and find support, are vital in times of emergency. Strengthening these systems ensures the Commonwealth remains resilient and communities stay intact.

### **PA 211**

- Increase state investment to PA 211, ensuring residents maintain 24/7 statewide access to information and referral services.
- Advocate for strong federal funding for 211 services to reinforce and complement Pennsylvania's state-level investments, ensuring the state system has stable national backing to meet rising community needs and strengthen the state's overall crisis-response.

### **Disaster Recovery**

- Strengthen coordination with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to align statewide preparedness strategies, improve emergency response operations, and ensure vulnerable households receive timely access to critical services.





## Healthy Communities

Good health is vital to an individual's ability to live, work, and engage in their community. Access to high-quality, affordable healthcare and nutrition programs ensure that households – regardless of income – have the opportunity to lead healthier, more stable lives.

### Healthcare Access

- Support healthcare tax subsidies to ensure more households can afford health insurance coverage, reduce out-of-pocket costs, and maintain access to essential care.

### Food Access and Nutrition

- Advocate for continued appropriations for SNAP and WIC and child nutrition programs during federal government shutdowns to ensure families maintain uninterrupted access to essential nutrition benefits.
- Increase investments in the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS), the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), and the State Food Purchase Program (SFPP).





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