



2011 UNITED WAY OF ILLINOIS PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

EDUCATION: HELPING CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACHIEVE THEIR POTENTIAL

Less than 40% of children enter school with the skills needed to succeed. Research shows preschool-age years are critical for cognitive and social development, along with providing a foundation for future success. To effectively reduce the high school drop-out rate, we must begin by improving access to quality and affordable child care and early childhood education.

To accomplish this goal, United Way of Illinois will focus on:

- Consistent, high-quality and affordable early learning opportunities for all children.
- State programs for infant and toddler home visitation.
- Early learning standards and benchmarks for children to be ready for kindergarten.
- The development of broad-based coalitions and partnerships to position schools as centers of communities focused on increasing student academic achievement.
- Policies to enable ongoing support for children, from birth to college, and collaboration with an array of service agencies committed to improving conditions that support learning.
- Uniform measurement and data collection for all elementary, middle and high school students, as well as dropouts.
- Implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which revise K-12 learning standards, to better prepare Illinois students for success in college and careers.

INCOME: PROMOTING FINANCIAL STABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE

The first step toward financial stability is ensuring access to tools and resources that help individuals and families reduce debt, increase income, build savings and grow assets.

To accomplish this goal, United Way of Illinois will focus on:

- Evidence-based workforce training and job creation programs that help people move forward financially.
- Supportive programming (childcare, transportation, counseling, crisis management) that helps families with lower-wage jobs address personal and family challenges.
- Creation of a financial literacy service-learning program that incorporates U.S. Department of Treasury Core Competencies.
- Incentives for employers to provide workplace financial literacy courses.
- Enhanced statewide quality standards for K-12 financial literacy curriculum.
- Policies and practices that help eligible, lower-income individuals and families enroll in public, private and informal benefits and ensure that state, local and federal programs and processing systems are structured to facilitate enrollment.

**Join United Way in advancing the common good by advocating
for issues important to you and your community!**

HEALTH: IMPROVING PEOPLE'S HEALTH

Access to quality, integrated health services and addressing the common underlying factors of chronic disease are key to the health of our community. However, low-income populations do not have the same access to needed care as their higher-income counterparts.

To accomplish this goal, United Way of Illinois will focus on:

- Access to affordable health services for children and low-income adults.
- Comprehensive health coverage, which helps to remove barriers to care and improves overall health outcomes.
- Policies that support wellness and healthy lifestyles for children, youth and older adults.
- Efforts to combat childhood obesity, including improvements in school wellness/physical fitness programs.

HUMAN SERVICE SECTOR STRENGTHENING: BUILDING CAPACITY TO ADVANCE THE COMMON GOOD

In order for communities and families throughout Illinois to succeed and prosper, we must repair and strengthen the essential services that protect public health, improve public safety, revitalize local economies and enhance learning.

To accomplish this goal, United Way of Illinois will focus on:

- A state budget that preserves the current level of investment in Illinois' health and human services system.
- Policies and procedures that ensure prompt payment to community service providers and require reasonable notice of any material changes to their contracts.
- Fair, efficient and transparent contracting practices between service providers and government funders.
- Efforts to reduce unnecessary state administrative burdens on human service providers and their programs.
- The development of a statewide 2-1-1 information and referral system to connect Illinois residents to needed health and human services.

If you have questions or would like more information, please visit unitedwayillinois.org or contact:

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Local United Ways Supporting United Way of Illinois

Barrington Area United Way	United Way of Eastern LaSalle County
Batavia United Way	United Way of Edgar County
Bureau County United Way	United Way of Effingham County
Colona-Green Rock-Orion United Way	United Way of Elgin
Fox Valley United Way	United Way of Greater Beardstown
Genoa-Kingston United Way	United Way of Greater McHenry County
Heart of Illinois United Way	United Way of Greater St. Louis
Kewanee Area United Way	United Way of Grundy County
Kishwaukee United Way	United Way of Illinois Valley
Lake Area United Way	United Way of Kankakee County
McDonough County United Way	United Way of Knox County
North Shore United Way	United Way of Lake County
Northwest Suburban United Way	United Way of Lee County
Prairieland United Way	United Way of Logan County
South-Southwest Suburban United Way	United Way of McLean County
Streator Area United Way	United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
United Way of Adams County	United Way of Pekin
United Way of Boone County	United Way of Pontiac
United Way of Brown County	United Way of Quad Cities Area
United Way of Central Illinois	United Way of Rock River Valley
United Way of Central Kane County	United Way of South Central Illinois
United Way of Champaign County	United Way of Southern Illinois
United Way of Christian County	United Way of Spoon River Country
United Way of Coles County	United Way of Whiteside County
United Way of Danville Area	United Way of Will County
United Way of Decatur and Mid Illinois	Warren County United Way
United Way of DuPage/West Cook	

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