2025 Advocacy Agenda

Recognizing that the services provided through United Way of York County and our fellow human service partners are only temporary solutions to embedded structural issues, United Way of York County will work in coordination with other local entities to advocate for policy adjustments at the local, state, and federal levels, aligning these efforts with our mission to assist working households on their journey to financial stability by collaboratively and equitably reducing barriers to prosperity.

Childcare

The evidence is clear that childcare in the United States is critically under-resourced, with broken business models leaving children, families, childcare professionals, and childcare providers all losing out. To begin to address these issues, United Way of York County will advocate for the following:

 Teacher Recruitment & Retention

Early learning advocates across Pennsylvania are working hard to get a $284 line item into Governor Shapiro’s budget that would be exclusively dedicated to early childhood educator teacher recruitment and retention efforts. These funds would be directed to all childcare centers who participate in the Childcare Works (CCW) subsidy program.

 Pre-K Counts

We will be advocating for a $45 million increase dedicated to Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program. These funds would increase the reimbursement rates to childcare centers with Pre-K Counts enrollment as well as expand Pre-K Counts slots to reach 209 additional Pennsylvania children.

 Categorical Eligibility

United Way of York County will continue conversations started in 2024 to pilot Categorical Eligibility in York County. This is a model adopted in several states nationwide that makes childcare free or low-cost for any staff working in childcare centers.

Transportation

United Way of York County understands how much transportation limitations affect a household’s ability to stay financially secure. To further our goal of transportation equity in York County, we support directing an additional 1.75% of state sales tax revenue to public transportation.

Financial Wellness

The 2024 ALICE Report reveals that two-out-of-five Pennsylvania (41%) households were living paycheck-to-paycheck in 2022. From 2021 to 2022, the total number of households in Pennsylvania grew by 1%, however, ALICE households grew by 6%. One of the greatest contributors to this was the expiration of federal tax credit enhancements included in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). For many working households, refundable tax credits help close basic needs gaps by providing additional financial resources.

 Working Families Tax Credit

United Way of Pennsylvania has backed legislation supporting a state Working Pennsylvanians Tax Credit at 25% of the federal EITC. That would provide an average benefit of around $600.

 Child Tax Credit

To help working families make ends meet, the United Way of Pennsylvania supports the return of federal tax credits enacted in 2021, including the extended Child Tax Credit, and the enhanced Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).