



United Way of King County

United Way of King County Policy Agenda for 2009-2011

The mission of United Way of King County is to mobilize the community in ways that no single agency, individual, or government can to enhance the ability of people to care for one another. The mission is carried out by: (1) bringing the community together to address critical issues, (2) investing in programs that people need to be successful, and (3) encouraging people to contribute money and time to improving the community.

The 2009-2011 Policy Agenda has been developed to provide guidance to United Way of King County on a variety of local, state and federal policy and legislative issues that may arise during 2009-2011. It focuses on policy issues that help to end homelessness and ensure that all children are ready for school, two of our priority issues, as well as areas that we have identified as important to our work in making measurable progress towards achieving community impact in King County.

United Way of King County funds less than 10 percent of health and human services for poor and vulnerable individuals in King County. Most of the remaining services are funded by state government with state and federal dollars. We at United Way recognize that in order to achieve our mission of strengthening the community by enhancing the ability of people to care for one another, we must advocate for effective, efficient and adequate programs provided by government. Our advocacy work is consistent with our organizational direction of having a true and measurable impact in our community. We will particularly focus on prevention efforts, recognizing the need to lessen the impact on our community's safety net over the long term as people become self-sufficient, healthy and stable.

United Way of King County will provide information to legislators and to the public in an effort to increase understanding and awareness of the impact of policy and budget decisions that affect health and human service issues. In addition, we will consult with our colleagues to determine where our efforts can be distinctly effective.

Preventing and Ending Homelessness

Support funding, policy and services that:

- Increase the availability of permanent, supportive housing for those transitioning from homelessness
- Help meet the basic and immediate needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by strengthening the social support structure
- Prevent homelessness by helping increase the availability of affordable housing for low income individuals and families
- Facilitate linkages to housing for individuals who are at risk of homelessness upon leaving state correctional, mental health, foster care and juvenile justice systems
- Assist low income individuals and families in moving toward greater financial stability and self-sufficiency



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Ensuring Every Child is Ready for School

Support funding, policy and services where:

- Everyone understands how experiences and relationships in the first days and years of life affect the development of the brain
- Parents have the support they need in their role as their children's first and most influential teachers
- Families can access high quality formal and informal child care and early education that meets their needs
- Young children with special needs and challenges get the additional help they need to achieve their potential
- Children are supported in making smooth transitions into Kindergarten

Strengthening Communities

Support funding, policy and services that:

- Promote philanthropy and charitable giving
- Enhance the capacity for effective local volunteerism
- Strengthen non-profit boards and organizations' ability to carry out their missions
- Support programs that address the communities' most vulnerable populations in a culturally competent way and address racial and other inequities in accessing services
- Promote information and referral to critical community health and social services
- Promote use of community indicators to identify problems, emerging issues and best practices in addressing those issues
- Support infrastructure changes that will address community responses to emergent situations