

In order to fully serve our community and advance our work; advocacy is a vital component. Our public policy agenda, issues and priorities are aligned with our Impact agenda – breaking the cycle of poverty by transforming the lives of children, families and communities throughout our diverse region.

This public policy agenda represents current public policy positions of United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey and serves as a platform for issue advocacy. In addition, UWGPSNJ engages in federal level advocacy consistent with the United Way Worldwide public policy agenda and partners with United Ways of New Jersey and United Way of Pennsylvania on state level matters.

We advocate for policies that help to ensure youth succeed in school, and families achieve stability because research shows that children succeed when their parents and caregivers succeed.

Successful Children and Youth – UWGPSNJ Supports:

- Ensuring all children have access to consistent, high quality, and affordable early learning and all families are trained on parenting skills and child development.
- Promoting research-based parent and community engagement programs to reduce non-academic barriers to learning throughout the school years.
- Expand access to affordable, high quality early care and education programs for children so they are kindergarten ready and provide a strong foundation to help them succeed in school.
- Supporting an adequate and equitable system of funding for pre-K to 12 public schools
- Increasing opportunities for education re-entry for opportunity youth who have discontinued their education.
- Credentialing, training and compensation programs for early childhood educators which are aligned with standards and benchmarks to assure all children in have access to high quality early learning opportunities.

Career Pathways & Pipelines – UWGPSNJ Supports:

- Promote career pathway programming for adults and teens to reduce the skills gap, expand the talent pool for local employers and identify job seekers who have capacity to do the job but lack traditionally required education/experience.
- Provide youth with alternative pathways to post-secondary education and careers of their choice (Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act).
- Increase funding for Workforce Investment Opportunity Act and national service programs that provide valuable job experience, and expand work-based learning opportunities.
- Funding and development of industry or sector partnerships as a means of closing the skills gap and expanding apprenticeships in in-demand industries.

Economic Self-Sufficiency – UWGPSNJ Supports:

- Promotion of sector-based policies and incentives that help meet employer demand for a more educated and skilled workforce as well as align education, training and workforce development programs to support these sectors.
- Expanded access to affordable, quality healthcare for low-income children and adults, ensuring that changes in our healthcare laws improve on existing healthcare coverage and reduce health disparities and costs.
- Income support policies which supplement lower-wage earners' income while removing barriers that diminish families' progress toward financial stability. We also help individuals and families meet their basic needs – food, shelter and safety. We support the following state and federal policies to preserve and improve: The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) as well as New Jersey State EITC, federal Child Tax Credit (CTC), Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, Emergency Food and Shelter program (EFSP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy families (TANF) and Individual Development Accounts (IDA).

Community Strengthening – UWGPSNJ Supports:

- Policies that encourage philanthropy and volunteerism to advance the common good. This includes protecting and expanding charitable giving incentives
- Statewide 2-1-1 system that serves as the central source of information and referral for Health and Human Services, and to coordinate health and human service needs resulting from emergencies or natural disasters with state and local emergency management agencies.
- Fair and adequate funding for human services.
- Laws and regulations that affect the operation of nonprofit help, rather than hinder the critical work done by charities and foundations every year.

Stay update to date and join United Way in advocating for these priorities for our community. Visit <http://www.unitedforimpact.org/ways-to-engage/advocate>.