



United Way of Pierce County

**2019 ADVOCACY
POLICY AGENDA FINAL REPORT**

United Way of Pierce County's advocacy agenda provides guidance on a number of issues most important to Pierce County that address our work in breaking the cycle of poverty and align with our bold goal of lifting 15,000 households out of poverty by 2028.

LOBBY DAY HIGHLIGHTS

On February 28, United Way hosted its Day on the Hill. There was representation by a stellar group of 23 advocates, including board members, volunteers and staff. They had contact with 30 legislative offices, meeting with legislators themselves, or their aides.

UWPC ADVOCACY AGENDA RESULTS

The 2019 session of state legislature concluded on April 29, 2019. The following bullet points describe the result of each of our agenda items:

TIER ONE

STABLE INDIVIDUALS

- **Washington 2-1-1 [HB2126]** - WIN/2-1-1 received a funding increase of \$1 million over its base funding

STRONG FAMILIES

- **Working Families Tax Credit (HB1527)**. This became a law in 2008 but has not been funded by the state legislature. It gained considerable momentum but now remains unfunded.
RESULT – NO MOVEMENT
- **Expand Access to Fresh Fruit and Vegetables for SNAP and WIC Households (HB1587/SB5684)**
RESULT – PASSED
- **Raise Temporary Assistance for Needy Families TANF Benefits (HB1603)** including extending time limit for recipients experiencing homelessness and eliminating the permanent disqualification rule
RESULT – PASSED

SUCCESSFUL KIDS

- **Universal Home Visiting (SB5683)**
RESULT – DIED in SENATE
- **Increase Access and Affordability of High Quality Child Care (HB1344/SB5437)** to expand the number of ECEAP slots, access to early ECEAP, and Working Connections
RESULT – PASSED
- **Eliminate School Lunch Co-pay for Low Income Students (HB1892)**
RESULT – DIED in HOUSE

TIER TWO

- **Allow Local Governments to Retain a Portion of the State's Sales Tax for Affordable Housing Collaboration** across the public sector is required to preserve and expand affordable housing (HB1406).
RESULT – PASSED
- **Increased investments in Housing and Essential Needs Program** (25%) and **Housing Trust Fund** (\$175 million)
RESULT – HAPPENED
- **Revision of Hunger-Free Rights Bill (ESHB2610) from 2018 and advocated for the increased use of community eligibility for school meals (HB1892/HB1685)**
RESULT – DID NOT PASS. However, legislature did invest in OSPI's Child Nutrition Services Department for their capacity to help ensure families/school have access to free school meals.
- **Initiative Support of Washington Initiative 1000** - restored and clarified the definitions of affirmative action in Washington's State code without the use of quotas or preferential treatment.
RESULT – PASSED
- **Protect and Increase Access to Quality Behavioral Health Services (SB5432)**
RESULT – PASSED
- **Unaccompanied Youth Support (HB1657)** for innovative young adult homelessness approaches.
RESULT – PASSED

OTHER LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

- United Way received \$200,000 net capital funding to assist with the costs of the building's HVAC system.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

- **Public Charge** - A proposed rule would punish immigrants going through official immigration processes and their families for applying for or receiving critical government benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid and housing assistance, for which they are legally eligible. United Way opposes this rule
RESULT - The rule cannot take effect until at least 60 days after DHS publishes a final rule, which cannot be published until after the comment period ended on December 10, 2018. The final published rule may have a later effective date. Under usual circumstances, it would take at least six months and possibly a year or more for an agency to review and respond to comments on a rule this complicated. However, it is possible that this Administration may try to rush the approval process and post a final rule more quickly. As of May 3, 2019, *Reuters* reported that The Department of Homeland Security's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) posted on October 10, 2018 interprets the public charge inadmissibility ground, not the public charge deportability ground. The Department of Justice, which oversees immigration courts, may propose a separate rule that addresses the deportability ground.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

- **Statewide Poverty Action Network**
 - Signed on to support letters
 - Asked for an end to predatory loans, TANF work at the state and national level, etc.
- **Project Child Success**
 - Worked and supported Project Child's Success work to help alleviate the child care benefit's effect by signing letters of support to local and statewide legislators, attending their advocacy training day and joining them on their Day on the Hill in early February 2019. This initiative stemmed from learnings from the Poverty to Possibilities event where attendees challenged United Way to address the systemic barriers for struggling families.
 - United Way also advocated, in partnership with First 5 FUNDAMENTALS/Project Child Success, to implement the Pierce County Pilot Project "Help Me Grow" based on a national model that uses existing resources to identify vulnerable children, birth to give, link these families to services, support children's healthy development and strengthen community connections. This was in partnership with 2-1-1 as they will serve as the clearinghouse for resources in the targeted zip codes in the county.

RESULT - Pilot project funded

- **Pierce County Human Services Coalition**
 - Worked with Amanda DeShazo, the Pierce County Human Services advocacy chair, on helping to develop a countywide advocacy agenda to represent the work and priorities of the consortium.
 - Due to involvement, United Way was able to personally ask for letters of support for our initiatives, including the support of 2-1-1 and letters were received.
- **Eviction Reform:**
 - SB5600 was fully funded to allow tenants 14 days (instead of 3) to catch up on late rent before losing their homes.
 - HB1440 was passed and increased the amount of notice from the current 30 days to 60 days that landlords must give tenants for rent increases.

FOLLOW UP OPPORTUNITIES

- Keep Senator Zeiger informed of the learnings from two-generation pilot in the Franklin Pierce School District.
- Invite legislators/aides to tour 2-1-1, especially those who have referred callers and visitors.
- Developing a year round engagement strategy for legislators.