United Way of Pierce County's (UWPC) 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 11, United Way hosted its Day on the Hill. There was representation by a stellar group of 15 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 2020 session of state legislature concluded on March 12, 2020. The following bullet points describe the result of each of our agenda items:

**TIER ONE**

STABLE INDIVIDUALS

* **Washington 2-1-1 [HB2126]** - Statewide WIN 211 received a $200,000 allocation as requested for the technical upgrade.

**RESULT** – HAPPENED

STRONG FAMILIES

* **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** – **TANF Policy Restoration [SB 6478/HB 2441] -** Rules changed to eliminate lifetime cap on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families "TANF" Benefits and to allow Child Support Pass-Through. SB 5144 was also passed allowing families to receive a portion of their child-support payments alongside their TANF grant. Previously, families who were on TANF and *would have* received child-support from a non-custodial parent were not allowed to receive their child-support, which was instead collected by the state. Now, custodial parents will receive between $50-100 a month of child-support, depending on family size.

**RESULT** – HAPPENED

SUCCESSFUL KIDS

* **The Fair Start for Kids Act - Increase Access and Affordability of High-Quality, linguistically relevant early learning including child care and preschool that meets family’s needs and choices [SHB 2661] –** The legislature authorized almost $32 million to increase rates for providers accepting state “Working Connections Child Care” clients. Additional funding will result in capping co-pay rates to 12 percent of family income. The legislature also created a second tier of eligibility to reduce the “cliff effect” caused when modest pay raises result in a net loss of family income. Nearly $7 million increases the rates for Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program providers. Passed policy committee, however it never made it out of House Appropriations Committee. No action since February 6.

**RESULT** – DIED

* **Early Learning Workforce [HB 2556] –** Providing regulatory relief for early learning providers. Passed both House and Senate. Signed into law by Governor Inslee on April 3. Goes into effect on June 11, 2020.

**RESULT** – HAPPENED

* **Eliminate School Lunch Co-Pay for Low-Income Students [HB 1892] -** This is a 2019 bill that did not pass. It was re-introduced in the 2020 session on January 13. Never got a hearing.

**RESULT** – DIED

**TIER TWO**

* **Housing Trust Fund -** The 2020 Supplemental Capital Budget exceeded our $10M request by adding $40 million to the Housing Trust Fund to build affordable homes. Another $10 million will go to preserve currently affordable homes that are at risk of losing affordability requirements. Another $68 million will be targeted for temporary shelter space.

**RESULT** – HAPPENED

* **Prevent evictions – Allowing Tenant Installments [HB 1694] and Tenant Protections [SB 6378] –** Allowing tenants to pay some of the upfront rental entry costs in installments and clarify tenant protections to ensure that tenants with limited resources are able to maintain stable housing, like how and when tenants can access emergency rental assistance to pay off unlawful detainer judgment amounts, when tenants can request a different rent due date, and that a landlord cannot threaten a tenant with eviction or failure to pay fees not related to rent. and residential tenant protections.

**RESULT** – HAPPENED

* **Miscellaneous Housing –** Overall, affordable housing and homelessness resources included in the final budget totaled $173.8M and included $15 million for operations and maintenance of permanent supportive housing – a critical part of the solution to homelessness is housing people with significant behavioral and physical health needs and $68 million for shelter for people experiencing homelessness.
* **Provide ongoing Housing and Essential Needs (HEN)**
	+ Increased investments in the Housing and Essential Needs Program "HEN" in the amount of $15 million. Also invested $60 million onetime funding for local temporary shelters partially to help with Coronavirus beds, $5 million for cottage communities, $7.8 million for emergency shelters and $1 million to preserve mobile home parks.
	+ Invested $5 million in a special housing project for homeless people on SSI and $2.3 million for pregnant women in homeless shelters.
	+ Increased Permanent Supportive Housing operations and maintenance by $15 million.

**RESULT** – HAPPENED

**OTHER LEGISLATIVE ITEMS**

* **COVID-19 -** The legislature tapped the Budget Stabilization Account (“rainy day fund”) to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.[Governor](https://default.salsalabs.org/T6eb3f954-1299-4cf4-8001-225ee96828cf/1d6b0097-d627-4e8c-9875-e61c8d55b4d6) Inslee implemented a statewide eviction moratorium on February 29, 2020 andissued a proclamation on April 16 extending it until June 4. The moratorium includes transitional housing (including hotels/motels), lots/parcels where mobile homeowners rent their land, commercial tenants, people whose leases are expiring, and more. The proclamation also prohibits late fees and rent or deposit increases, and it prevents tenants from being subject to debt collection for unpaid housing costs during the moratorium, reducing the threat of harm to their credit scores.

**FOLLOW UP OPPORTUNITIES**

* Keep Senator Zeiger informed of the learnings from two-generation pilot in the Franklin Pierce School District.
* Invite legislators/aides to participate in our Poverty To Possibilities Summit
* Developing a year round engagement strategy for legislators.