

As a network, we advocate for critical issues and solutions that lift up Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) and the communities we serve. We urge state leaders to advance policies in education, health, financial stability, and community strengthening to build more equitable and resilient communities.

## EDUCATION

Equitable educational opportunities should be available to all – children, youth, and adults– to ensure that we all reach our full potential, and that Texas has a strong workforce for years to come.

- Ensure equitable access to affordable, high-quality early education and out of school opportunities, including full-day, high-quality pre-K.
- Improve early literacy and numeracy, including efforts to effectively engage and support caregivers in their roles as partners in learning and literacy.
- Close long-standing gaps in student outcomes among the state’s low-income and minority communities and provide targeted supports to students whose education is most likely to have been adversely impacted by COVID-19.
- Support strategies and initiatives aimed at improving student health and wellbeing.
- Ensure our current and future Texas teachers and educational professionals are trained, supported, and compensated to best support student success.
- Strengthen pathways to college and career, including supportive services to provide equitable access to postsecondary opportunities.

In addition, UWT will advocate for work-based learning; adult education and literacy; English Language Learners (ELL); mentoring; reducing absenteeism; access to materials and library resources; elementary/middle school career development opportunities; career technical education; drop-out prevention strategies; and adequate and equitable funding for quality public education.

## HEALTH

All Texans should have access to quality, affordable health services that protect and improve individual health and well-being and enhance measurable health outcomes of communities.

- Increase investments in promising and evidence-based programs that reduce child abuse, neglect, and toxic stress, improve maternal and child health, encourage positive parenting, and promote healthy child development.
- Ensure access to comprehensive, high-quality, and affordable health care services, including pharmacy services especially in underserved and rural communities.
- Improve and ensure access to appropriate and timely mental health care and behavioral health services, including substance use treatment and suicide prevention.
- Strengthen maternal and child health outcomes and reduce health disparities, including increased enrollment in and continuous health coverage of families in Medicaid and CHIP.
- Expand access to vital and affordable health care coverage programs for low-wage Texans which provide all essential health benefits including behavioral health services.
- Address nonmedical drivers of health, such as food, housing, transportation, and employment within the healthcare delivery systems by leveraging information and referral systems, such as 211, our statewide information and referral system.

In addition, UWT will advocate for targeted resources for special populations such as veterans, adolescents and young adults, and seniors; access to basic food and nutrition assistance; foster care improvements; prevention and intervention of trauma, including human trafficking and exploitation; and culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS).

# FINANCIAL STABILITY

All families should have opportunities to achieve what we all want: good jobs with good wages, opportunities for workplace advancement, safe and affordable housing, and the resources needed to weather emergencies and make investments toward a bright future.

- Boost the safety net and update eligibility requirements for benefit programs to help Texans meet their basic needs and better support a family's pathway and transition to long-term self-sufficiency.
- Stabilize and strengthen the childcare industry as it is an economic driver and enables parents and caregivers to enter and stay in the workforce.
- Support a continuum of services focused on ending housing insecurity and ensuring that all Texans have access to safe, affordable, and stable housing.
- Increase access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options for underserved communities.
- Support policies and practices that strengthen the financial health of all Texans, including responsible fair lending practices, financial literacy, credit repair, asset building, and access to banking.
- Support strategies to raise household wages to keep pace with inflation and rising cost of living and address barriers to job training and workforce development programs that align to quality, family-sustaining wage jobs.

In addition, UWT will support strategies to address court fines and fees; upskilling and reskilling; building of financial assets; and increased access to financial literacy education, savings, tax preparation and credits, including Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and home ownership.

# NON-PROFITS & COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

Strong communities and an adequately resourced and supported nonprofit sector are critical to ensuring an equitable and thriving Texas.

- Ensure a state budget that addresses community needs in key areas and provides investments in programs provided by our state's nonprofit sector.
- Invest in our state's information and referral system—211 Texas—and strengthen its ability to serve as a front door, connector, and data resource for community needs and services.
- Strengthen the capacity of nonprofits to ensure they can continue to support all Texans and communities, including improvements to contracting and partnerships between nonprofits and government.
- Support policies, partnerships, and programs that promote fairness, equity, and inclusion creating more equitable systems and communities.
- Bridge the digital divide for communities across Texas through digital equity and inclusion.
- Recognize and support volunteerism and charitable giving in our state, including the Statewide Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC).

In addition, UWT will advocate for; disaster response, recovery, and resiliency; diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); criminal justice reform; and voter and civic engagement

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