
Financial Stability

Texas United Ways believe that we are all better off when our neighbors have a roof over their heads, food on the table, and reliable transportation to get to work. Unfortunately, now more than ever, too many Texans are struggling to make ends meet. As a result of the devastating impact of the pandemic on Texas communities—especially Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE), women, and people of color—our United Way network advocated for policies that would address barriers to financial stability and workforce opportunities: childcare, housing affordability and stability, transportation, and strategies to strengthen the financial health of all Texans. Fortunately, there was significant movement around strengthening childcare this session, and several bills focused on making it easier for Texans to access safety net programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) made it further in the legislative process than in years past. However, lawmakers failed to make progress on housing affordability and stability for low-income Texans, access to quality, affordable transportation, and on key workforce initiatives—including education and training programs that would both help more Texans gain the skills needed for family-sustaining wage jobs and help employers meet their workforce needs.

Passed

Childcare

SB 1555 by Zaffirini	This bill ensures federal funds that support childcare are equitably distributed to programs serving infants and toddlers.
HB 619 by Rep. S. Thompson	This bill requires the development of a strategic plan to support the childcare workforce.
HB 1792 by Rep. Button	This bill strengthens Texas Rising Star by consolidating the certification process and ensures the monitoring of programs is fair, consistent, and reliable across the state.
HB 2607 by Rep. Talarico	This bill ensures that childcare subsidy providers participate in Texas Rising Star through a phased approach. It ensures that public funds go to programs that commit to safe and quality care.

Passed

Housing and Transportation

HB 707 Rep. Moody

This bill requires a study on expanding recovery housing in this state.

HB 531 by Rep. Walle

This bill requires flooding disclosures for rental property owners.

HB 1558 by Rep. Button

This bill would require the state's ranking system to grant bonus points to properties that provide a leasing preference to low-income veterans and that are located no more than 2 miles from a veteran's hospital.

Other Barriers to Workforce & Financial Stability

SB 50 by Sen. Zaffirini

This bill seeks to improve and increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) served by the state's Medicaid waiver programs.

SB 181 by Sen. Johnson

This bill revises laws automatically suspending a person's driver's license upon conviction of certain drug offenses to ensure certain discretion. The bill also amends the educational program for people with a suspended license.

SB 224 by Sen. Perry

This bill simplifies the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application and recertification process for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

SB 337 by Sen. Powell

This bill establishes a grant program to facilitate the participation of certain veterans and military personnel in apprenticeship training programs.

SB 798 by Sen. Nelson

This bill establishes an alternative, no-cost process for obtaining a birth certificate and state-issued ID for a victim of dating violence, a victim of family violence, or a child of a victim of dating or family violence.

HB 700 by Rep. J. Johnson

This bill requires the development of a plan to ensure eligible foster children receive college credit for completing the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program.

Passed

HB 757 by Rep. Dutton

This bill prohibits deferred adjudications which resulted in a deferral and dismissal— subject to certain conditions—from being used to deny, suspend, or revoke professional or occupational licenses or certificates of an individual otherwise entitled to or qualified for the license or certificate.

HB 1301 by Rep. Guillen

This bill expands the purpose of a colonia self-help center to include assistance to low-income and very low-income individuals to improve living conditions as well as help colonia residents develop professional skills and achieve financial literacy.

HB 2352 by Rep. Parker

This bill would expand the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's (TDCJ) educational and vocational training pilot program to include inmates released on early parole as authorized by the bill. At least two sites would have to be identified for the program and the program cap of four sites would remain.

HB 4544 by Rep. Swanson

This bill aims to help youth being released or discharged from the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) supervision get personal identification certificates.

Key budget items include \$8 million for employer and community-based partnerships to support an employment program at the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as well as funding to maintain 2020-21 funding levels for Texans Feeding Texans Programs, which includes \$19.7 million for the Home Delivered Meals program and \$10.2 million for the Surplus Agricultural Products Grant Program.

Passed

Financial Health & Consumer Protections

SB 1063 by Sen. Alvarado

This bill establishes courses in personal financial literacy and economics for high school students in public schools.

SB 2038 by Sen. Menendez

This bill requires freestanding emergency rooms to disclose the prices charged for testing or vaccination for an infectious disease based on a declared state of disaster and any related facility fees or supply costs. The bill also prohibits a freestanding ER from price gouging during a declared state of disaster.

HB 3529 by Rep. Meyer

This bill expands the ability of survivors of financial abuse, including victims of domestic violence and elder financial abuse, to seek remedies and protection.

HB 3774 by Rep. Leach

The bill includes language requiring court rules to establish a clear process for people whose bank accounts are seized or frozen by debt collectors with a court judgment. It allows people to know who is taking their money, understand their rights, and take action to protect money that is exempt from debt collection or should not otherwise be taken.

HB 4477 by Rep. S. Thompson

This bill gives Adult Protective Services (APS) additional tools to address elder financial exploitation.