**United Way of Dane County Public Policy Advocacy Criteria**

*When determining our approach to public policy advocacy, developing our biennial advocacy agendas, selecting positions on policy matters and responding to requests for policy actions, the United Way of Dane County Public Policy Committee and United Way staff will utilize the following criteria to guide our approach to public policy advocacy and engagement. Not all the criteria need to be met for United Way to engage in a policy issue; they are meant to serve as a guidepost in the deliberation process before adoption of policy actions.*

1. **Mission Alignment: the policy issue is clearly aligned with our mission and community impact work.**

Considerations:

* Does the policy issue advance one or more of our goals related to our Agenda for Change and our strategic plan? Does the policy issue hinder our goals if we do not take a stand?
* Does this policy issue contribute to racial inequities in our community?
* Does the policy issue build or support existing community work?
* Is there a base of support among our partners and constituencies for this issue? Who is supporting and championing the policy issue? Who else is working on this issue?
* Can this issue be advanced in a nonpartisan or bi-partisan way?
* Have we explored opportunities to build consensus or constructively engage in this issue?
* Have we consulted with other United Ways in our network on this issue?
* Are there clear initial steps for engaging in this issue?

1. **Impact: the policy issue passes the “can we make a difference” test and is large enough in scope to have a positive impact on communities we support.**

Considerations:

* Is there an opportunity for United Way to play a proactive role on this issue?
* Does our voice or brand add value to the effort? Does our voice fill a void?
* What is the recommended action for United Way to take to help achieve the impact goal?
* Can we clearly define what would be a successful result?
* Do we have organizational support, leadership and staff capacity to engage in this issue?

1. **Values: the policy issue is consistent with our priorities and values.**

Considerations

* Does taking a position on this issue strengthen our reputation and credibility in the community?

1. **Risk Assessment: the policy issue does not pose any risk or harm to our community partners.**

Considerations:

* Would our involvement cause harm to any of our agency partners or our reputation and credibility in the community?
* Is the issue politically divisive, “unwinnable” or too polarizing to engage in?
* Is there a broad range of community partners from diverse sectors engaging in this issue?
* Are we the right organization to take a position on this issue?