



UNITED WAY OF DANE COUNTY PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA 2024-2025

United Way of Dane County’s work is guided by the Plan for Community Well-Being — a plan built with our community, for our community. This vision for a brighter future focuses on increasing individual and family well-being in the areas of early childhood, education, income and health so that all people in Dane County can lead healthy, thriving and secure lives. Addressing these interconnected areas collectively is essential to increase overall family well-being. The Public Policy Committee, a standing committee of the United Way of Dane County Board of Directors, biennially develops a policy agenda aligned with the Plan for Community Well-Being.

Early Childhood

Our goal is to reduce the number of children under age five experiencing poverty in Dane County.
We support public policies that:

- Expand under-resourced families’ access to affordable, high-quality childcare that meets developmental, cultural and linguistic needs for all children in Dane County.
- Provide effective professional development and family-sustaining wages for early childhood professionals.

Education

Our goals are that all children read on grade level by third grade and all students graduate from high school.
We support public policies that:

- Close educational achievement and opportunity gaps, particularly for children of color, by supporting students both in and outside of the classroom.
- Increase access to affordable, high-quality education and training programs to ensure all Dane County students are prepared for college, careers and community life.

Income

Our goal is that all Dane County residents’ income is above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level*.
We support public policies that:

- Improve access to job training and workforce development programs and provide support, like childcare and transportation, that workers need. The goal is to connect low-income people with jobs that offer family-sustaining wages, benefits and stable work schedules and ultimately reduce racial disparities in income and wealth in Dane County.
- Promote equitable, anti-racist labor market practices and work environments that provide opportunities for career advancement for all.
- Expand the amount of affordable housing in Dane County, especially for families with incomes at 30% or less of the Area Median Income** and address the racial and ethnic disparities in homeownership rates.
- Promote efforts to prevent eviction, support housing stability, reduce family homelessness and address the needs of families that are doubled-up in housing.

*200% of the Federal Poverty Level is equivalent to \$49,720 per year for a family of three.
**30% of the Area Median Income is \$33,000 per year for a family of three in Dane County.

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Health

Our goal is to eliminate general health and average life expectancy disparities between white residents and people of color in Dane County. We support public policies that:

- Protect and improve access to affordable, high-quality health insurance, including for those who age out of parental coverage or otherwise face transitions in their coverage.
- Eliminate bias and racial inequities in health care and increase the provision of culturally appropriate, safe, trauma-informed care.
- Grow and diversify the healthcare workforce.
- Expand access to healthy food by reducing food deserts and inequities in food security.

Community Strengthening

In alignment with United Way of Dane County's mission, we also provide support and promote citizen engagement as keys to strengthening the community and its nonprofit organizations. Therefore, we support public policies that:

- Promote United Way of Dane County 211 as our community's most comprehensive health and human services information and referral resource.
- Promote civic engagement, voter education and representational leadership.
- Promote trusted and community-centered policing best practices.

United Way of Dane County is invested in and has expertise related to each of the focus areas above. The Public Policy Committee welcomes engagement and questions and can connect policymakers to data about local conditions related to each policy priority. **To get in touch, contact Nicole Sandler at nicole.sandler@uwdc.org.**

