

Building

COMM[UNITY]

THROUGH *Policy*



Metro United Way

KENTUCKY | 2024

METRO UNITED WAY'S PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

At Metro United Way, we know that what policy has built, programming alone cannot transform. Systemic change requires us to work at every level to provide equitable access to education, economic mobility, and health. That’s why we advocate at local, state, and federal levels for community-driven, evidenced-based policies that propel Kentucky forward.

	OUR FOCUS Metro United Way is...	OUR WHY Metro United Way knows that...	OUR PRIORITY AREAS Metro United Way advocates to...	OUR PROGRAMS, RESEARCH, & INVESTMENTS Metro United Way...
THRIVING KIDS	There’s nothing more important than making sure our community’s children have what they need to thrive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every dollar invested in early childhood yields a \$5 return in benefits.• After-school programs triple the return on investment by increasing youth earning potential, improving school performance, and reducing crime and juvenile justice involvement.• Only 44% of children in Kentucky enter kindergarten ready to learn. When children start behind, they tend to stay behind.• 200,000+ Kentucky children want to participate in out-of-school time and after-school programs but do not have available options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase availability of affordable, high-quality early childhood education programs through public-private partnerships.• Attract, prepare, support, and retain a qualified, diverse early childhood workforce including addressing compensation and benefits.• Ensure all families can access evidence-based home visiting and parent support programs.• Enhance accessibility to high-quality out-of-school-time programming and dropout prevention and recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported the safe operation of 300+ local child care programs by securing and deploying more than \$5 million of regional federal relief funds.• Screened 598 children through our Ages & Stages Questionnaires developmental tool that equips families, provides evaluations and referrals, and includes books and activities.• Launched in partnership with the Center for Disease Control, a community-wide program focused on lead poisoning treatment and prevention.• Provided quality investment and training to 150+ youth development programs whose participants have higher school attendance and lower suspension rates than their peers.
STRONG HOUSEHOLDS	When we have strong households, we are creating pathways our of poverty to prosperity, which is a win for all of us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 170,000+ children in Kentucky are food insecure.• In our region, non-White children are 4.3 times more likely to grow up in low-opportunity neighborhoods.• 40% of individuals in our region are not in the labor force. This number could grow as more than 20% of Kentucky child care providers say they may close as COVID-19 relief resources run out in early 2024.• Incarceration increases the likelihood that Kentuckians will experience poverty, yet the Commonwealth has the 7th highest incarceration rate in the nation and the highest for women.• Black Kentuckians represent 9% of the Commonwealth's population but 21% of the state's prison population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support greater access to safe and affordable housing, including all aspects of housing costs.• Work with industry leaders and lawmakers to identify and implement policies that prevent evictions.• Improve pathways to prosperity by fortifying short-term safety net programs, eliminating abrupt program exits, and streamlining application and renewal processes based on lived experiences.• Implement equitable, commonsense reforms to reduce financial barriers, increase pretrial services, and promote successful reentry from the judicial system.• Connect justice-involved children to family-focused services and prevent youth from entering and persisting in the justice system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answered 33,168 calls and requests through our 2-1-1 helpline that connects individuals to available resources in our community for issues like housing, child care, and more.• Helped 151 youth in our community gain financial stability, achieve long term goals, reduce stress, improve mental health, and improve their job and housing situations through a guaranteed income pilot.• 262 families and 528 children participated in programs to prevent homelessness and school instability. Of these participates, 99% avoided a disruptive school move, 65% increased their income, and 66% improved their housing situation.
EQUITABLE COMMUNITY	We envision the Greater Louisville region as a place where zip code doesn’t determine destiny and everyone have the opportunity to live up to their full potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More than half of Kentucky counties lack an OBGYN, and Kentucky has the sixth highest maternal mortality rate in the nation.• Mothers with access to paid leave have higher employment rates after pregnancy than those without paid leave.• In our region, 67% of Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black residents receive early prenatal care, compared to 80% of White mothers.• Our White neighbors live three years longer, on average than our Black neighbors due to social determinants of health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve access to reliable, quality healthcare programs and services.• Expand access to paid leave programs that support families, the workforce, and economy.• Leverage service referral technology to meet needs and increase connectivity and efficiency among providers.• Allow Kentucky voters to empower local governments to invest in regional needs by modernizing the Commonwealth's Constitution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported 32 local nonprofits with a total of \$3 million to support the basic needs of families, including more than 24,000 meals provided and housing-related supports for more than 3,000 individuals.• Through our first cohort, invested \$1 million in local Black-led nonprofits through MUW's Black L.O.V.E. Philanthropic Partnership.• Invested \$1.1 million from 2022-2024 in the California Neighborhood through our initiative called United Neighborhoods to lift under-resourced neighborhoods.
NONPROFIT SECTOR	Empowering nonprofits to continue meeting critical community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nonprofits represent Kentucky’s 3rd largest private sector industry, employing more than 150,000 individuals.• Nonprofits produce \$26 billion in expenditures benefiting Kentucky’s economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote tax policy that fuels community solutions through nonprofits and encourages philanthropic giving.• Protect nonprofits’ right to advocate for their missions and civic participation on a non-partisan basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnered with 130 local nonprofits to maximize investments, build collaborative programming, and drive community progress.• Supported more than 100 nonprofit organizations in joining the United Community platform to provide “no wrong door” access to comprehensive community services.



Metro United Way

For more than 100 years, Metro United Way has been improving lives and our community, which includes Jefferson, Bullitt, Oldham, and Shelby counties in Kentucky. In addition to our footprint, we are also part of a larger network of 20 United Ways across Kentucky advocating for our children, families, and individuals. We are uniquely positioned to harness the power of donors, volunteers, thought leaders, other nonprofits, and government at all levels to ensure positive, sustainable change for every person in our region.

QUESTIONS

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GET INVOLVED



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