



**UNITED WAY**  
Piedmont

# 2026-2027 ADVOCACY AGENDA

# EXPLANATION OF ADVOCACY ROLES

Advocacy is continuous and takes many forms. In our advocacy efforts, United Way of the Piedmont remains non-partisan and issue-focused. Depending on the issue, our United Way team may utilize one or several of the following advocacy roles.

## **LEAD**

United Way of the Piedmont takes a high-level leadership role to educate legislators, partners, and community members on an issue with a clear policy position. Policies where we take a leadership role will be feasible, non-partisan, and move towards systems change. Staff dedicate time, resources, and capacity to support research, advocacy efforts, and partner mobilization efforts. Internal networks will be engaged for additional support and external partners may be engaged with action items.

## **ADVOCATE**

United Way of the Piedmont will have a clear policy stance at this level and bring visibility to an issue. Work will be focused on educating and empowering the community on an issue. United Way of the Piedmont may join coalitions at this level to advance policy and advocacy work. Staff provide educational materials, research, and actively track policy updates relating to the issue area.

## **SUPPORT**

Advocacy at this level entails lending our organization's name to sign-on letters, sharing information and data, and supporting other organizations. We will lean on those leading the work in the issue area and will be advised on how to utilize resources and social or political capital.

## **MONITOR**

We recognize some issues may align, but due to timing and/or resource constraints, we are unable to take a more active role. Also, there are issues outside our outlined priorities that could directly impact our work. United Way of the Piedmont will monitor bills and issues that directly or indirectly impact economic mobility, education, or health. We may or may not take a stance but will utilize available resources to track legislation and efforts of those organizing on the issues.

# CRITERIA FOR SELECTING POLICY PRIORITIES

- Does the policy address social, economic, educational, or health outcomes in Cherokee, Spartanburg, and/or Union counties?
- Is the policy nonpartisan and issue-focused?
- Does this policy promote equity, address opportunity gaps and structural barriers, or expand access to economic mobility, education, or healthcare?
- Is there a feasible pathway for enacting, paying for, and implementing the policy?
- Will those closest to the issue be better off if this policy is enacted? How so?
- Are there other community partners working on this policy?
- Is a member of the Cherokee, Spartanburg, and/or Union County Legislative Delegation likely to meet about this issue?
- Does the issue fall outside of the UWP scope but directly impact our work?

# 2025-2026 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES



## Financial Security

### LEAD

#### Local Level

- Champion the use of ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data in local decision-making to identify gaps and guide resources. Elevate ALICE's intersection with UWP's Bold Goal of decreasing the number of Cherokee, Spartanburg, and Union County residents living below the self-sufficiency threshold by 11,000.

### ADVOCATE

#### Local Level

- Promote strategies identified by A Place to Call Home within the Prevent, Serve, House framework to address homelessness and housing insecurity.
- Advocate for reducing barriers to employment, such as childcare and transportation, by partnering with local employers and workforce coalitions. Emphasize how these barriers impact recruitment, retention, and the broader workforce landscape.

#### State Level

- Advocate for incremental roll-off, rather than a sudden cut-off, in state benefits to reduce the benefits cliff for working families, removing disincentives to accept promotions and seek economic advancement.

#### Federal Level

- Support effective workforce development programs and opportunities such as AmeriCorps programs.

### SUPPORT

#### State Level

- Support Eviction Right to Counsel legislation, providing legal counsel to individuals facing eviction.

## SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

### Federal Level

- Support effective workforce development programs and opportunities such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), apprenticeships, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Support tax credits and tax assistance to support workers and families such as expanding the Child Tax Credit (CTC) for children in families with low incomes and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for workers not raising children in their homes and broadening the reach of and investments in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and other no fee tax filing options.
- Support the extension of the Affordable Connectivity Program to bridge the digital divide, creating new employment opportunities in underserved communities.
- Encourage the Bureau of Labor Statistics to provide nonprofit sector data in the Quarterly Census on Employment and Wages to provide benchmarking for nonprofits.



## Youth Opportunity

## ADVOCATE

### Local Level

- Promote the county-wide expansion of Hello Family, providing early childhood support services and high-quality childcare to build a strong foundation for children's academic and life success.
- Collaborate with education and business partners to develop multiple strategies addressing the accessibility and affordability of childcare across various age groups, supporting the needs of families and the workforce.

## SUPPORT

### Federal Level

- Support the reach and impact of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.

## SUPPORT (CONTINUED)

### Federal Level

- Back the extension of the Affordable Connectivity Program to reduce the digital divide, supporting educational access and career development from school to employment.
- Support access to high-quality post-secondary education options, including career pathway programs, that lead to gainful employment and increased professional mobility.

## MONITOR

### State Level

- Follow legislation focused on enhancing the sustainability of childcare centers through innovative partnerships, tracking developments for opportunities to support long-term stability for providers and families.



## Healthy Community

## LEAD

### Local Level

- Convene the Substance Use Disaster Group (pillar of the collective Mental-Behavioral Health Plan) to accomplish the goal of a 50% reduction in opioid overdoses and deaths by 2030. Support the pillars of Strengthening Youth & Families and Serious Mental Illness in their collective Mental-Behavioral Health Plan goals.

## ADVOCATE

### Local Level

- Advocate for the data-driven approaches, optimal continuum of care infrastructure, evidence-based strategies, and population-level outcome goals outlined in the comprehensive, community-wide behavioral health plan. Focus areas include thriving families and children, serious mental health issues, and substance use disorders, prioritizing marginalized communities and prevention efforts.

## ADVOCATE (CONTINUED)

### Local Level

- Promote the county-wide expansion of Hello Family to equip parents and caregivers with stress management and parenting resources, building protective factors for children, and promoting family resilience

## SUPPORT

### Local Level

- Endorse the recommendations within the Community Health Improvement Plans for Cherokee, Spartanburg and Union counties. Priorities include access to care, behavioral health, resilient children and families, and chronic health conditions

### Federal Level

- Back the reintroduction of the 211/HELP Act to strengthen and fund 211 and 988 infrastructure across the country.
- Support the extension of the Affordable Connectivity Program to bridge the digital divide, supporting telehealth access and addressing barriers to care for underserved populations.

## MONITOR

### State Level

- Track the progression of Cover SC, monitoring developments related to Medicaid expansion, healthcare access, and implications for our local population.



## Community Resiliency

## LEAD

### Local Level

- Strengthen resilient community infrastructure and access to resources through the Spartanburg Long-Term Recovery Group.

## ADVOCATE

### State Level

- Support the transition of SC211 from Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) to a more appropriate state department and the inclusion \$1.6 million in the 2026 budget for 211 Infrastructure Funding, aiming to develop a robust resource hub built for individual and state-wide crises.

### Federal Level

- Support the re-introduction of the 211/HELP Act in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress to strengthen and fund 211 and 988 infrastructure across the country.
- Strengthen disaster response efforts and infrastructure, with a focus on rural areas by broadening the reach of equitable and accessible disaster response programs, including the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and bolstering support for disaster preparedness and mitigation programs.

Learn more at  
[uwpiedmont.org/advocacy](https://uwpiedmont.org/advocacy)

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