

United Way of Tampa Bay Public Policy Agenda 2007

Preamble

United Way of Tampa Bay is called by its organizational mission and vision to actively engage the community to change the systems and conditions that affect people. True community engagement involves partnerships with individuals, human service agencies, the business sector, organized labor, as well as the public sector – government at all levels: local, state, and federal.

United Way of Tampa Bay has adopted The Council of Foundations' definition of public policy engagement: *Public Policy involvement is any legally permissible philanthropic activity, including funding and convening, that ultimately seeks to affect or inform the actions of any level of government expressed in laws, administrative practices, regulations or executive or judicial orders.*

Public Policy Vision Statement

To establish United Way of Tampa Bay as a valued leader and vital resource for representatives of local, state, and federal government in the development and enactment of legislation, regulations, and procedures that are beneficial to the citizens of Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties as well as to United Way and its constituents.

Public Policy Prioritization

In order to be a strong leader and reliable coalition partner, United Way of Tampa Bay will segment issues into categories differentiated by three strategies: Legislative Leadership, Legislative Advocacy, and Legislative Support.

Legislative Leadership

United Way will assume a high level leadership role – advocating for and bringing visibility to a specific policy position. Volunteers and Staff will be actively involved and additional financial support will be required for ongoing research, advocacy, and partnership mobilization efforts.

Legislative Leadership Issues - 2007

- *None:* As United Way of Tampa Bay begins its public policy engagement, we will research issues directly connected with our Community Impact Agenda, where United Way's future leadership and ongoing, active involvement could result in sustained community change.

Legislative Advocacy

United Way will help educate the community on an issue and will take a clear position on this issue. Key United Way Volunteers and Staff will be active on an as-needed basis, and additional monies may be necessary.

Legislative Advocacy Issues - 2007

- *The Calling for 2-1-1 Act:* Pass federal legislation to create nationwide access to 2-1-1; secure federal and state funding for the Florida 2-1-1 Network as authorized by Section 408.918, F.S.
- *Early Childhood/Youth Development:* Emphasize United Way of Tampa Bay's commitment to early care, children's literacy and education; protect the number of children served and work to increase the number of eligible children served by subsidized child care and out of school care; enhance Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten program (VPK) and provide increased incentives for quality pre-K child care through a Quality Rating System (QRS) or similar tool.
- *Economic Stability and Opportunity:* Protect and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credits (CTC); increase the number of families benefiting from financial literacy and asset-building strategies.
- *Hurricane/ Disaster Preparedness and Recovery:* Recognize United Way of Tampa Bay's leadership role in disaster recovery; work with local counties and state emergency management teams on disaster planning and preparedness.
- *Non-Profit Sector Strengthening Initiatives:* Advocate with United of America and United Way of Florida around Non-Profit Governance and Reform, as well as charitable-giving and charitable-giving tax incentives (Nonitemizers).

Legislative Support

United Way will monitor and respond to requests for support (in the form of sign-on letters, etc.) from coalition partners providing the primary leadership on policy issues aligned with United Way's mission and community priorities. Staff and Volunteers will react to such requests on an as-needed basis through the Public Policy Advisory Committee. No additional monies are likely to be necessary.

Legislative Support Issues - 2007

- *Affordable Housing Issues:* Section 8 Housing Vouchers, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), National Housing Trust Fund; Florida Housing Trust Fund (Sadowski Housing Act Trust Fund); as well as regional planning on workforce housing issues.
- *Health Care Issues:* Monitor Medicaid reform and SCHIP (Florida KidCare) reform; increase priority on substance abuse and mental health care.
- *Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)*
- *Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)*
- *Federal, State, and Local Budget Processes and Appropriations*