

88th Texas Legislative Agenda Priorities

Through collaborations with our Denton County nonprofit sector and community partners, United Way of Denton County advocates for change that creates long-lasting improvements, and we want your voice to join ours. These priorities were developed through a lens of racial equity in **collaboration with Denton County nonprofit organizations**, area Chambers of Commerce, School Districts serving Denton County, higher education institutions, and municipalities, and approved by our Board of Directors:

The continuation of Denton County's strong economic productivity depends on effective education that produces a highly skilled workforce that is healthy, mentally well, housed, and protected to promote healthy families in North Texas. These legislative priorities are often interdependent, but when outpaced by our region's rapid growth, limit North Texans' ability to thrive.

ACADEMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Integration of **academic** and **workforce development** policies that create **cradle-to-career** pathways, upskilling financially fragile workers, providing a **better-educated workforce and sustainable income that enables self-sufficiency**. Aid individuals entering or returning to work by closing the child care desert gap heightened by the pandemic and addressing transportation barriers to employment.

BEHAVIORAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Continue to increase funding that would expand the entry points for **coordinated, comprehensive, and accessible services** for **behavioral health**. Ensure **individual well-being** and **community safety** for residents of all ages. Increase the number and assist in the licensing process of mental health professionals serving North Texas.

VETERAN SERVICES

Continue to increase funding for **housing, transportation, health, and behavioral health services** for veterans transitioning from military life and for those already in our community.

EDUCATION

Increase access to **high-quality and affordable child care**; fund innovative **dropout prevention programs** including before and after school care for at-risk students that improve student achievement and workforce readiness. Support programs that address academic gaps and mental health needs exacerbated during the pandemic.

AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

Support for prevention and intervention programs that make **homelessness** rare, brief, and nonrecurring, and expand funding that **lower barriers** and promote an increase in **affordable housing** for vulnerable populations throughout the state.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Support policies, funding, and trauma-informed programs that promote justice, safety, and healing for **children and adults experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation**.

PREDATORY LENDING

Reform the statutory framework for **predatory lending** regulation to protect **financially vulnerable Texans** from aggressive and harmful lending practices.