

ADVANCING THE COMMON GOOD FOR HOOSIERS THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY

**United
Way**



TM

**Indiana Association
of United Ways**



2011 Priorities

2-1-1



2-1-1 is the easy-to-remember number to which people turn when faced with needs—a job loss, a medical condition, domestic violence, a challenge in parenting or caring for an aging relative and so much more. In 2009, Indiana’s 2-1-1 answered over 444,000 calls, recorded

over 453,000 needs and provided over 636,000 referrals to a network of over 21,000 government-, community- and faith-based organizations.

2-1-1 is available to 79 of Indiana’s 92 counties and in 47 states in the U.S. Government policies, telecommunications issues and lack of funding prevent 2-1-1 from achieving the cost-effective statewide system as envisioned.

To that end, laUW:

- Advocates for policies that support **universal access to 2-1-1** so all Hoosiers may connect with this vital service from any type of telecommunications device around the clock.
- Advocates for **2-1-1 as the central source of information** for resource databases, directories, disaster information and special campaigns. Federal and State governments duplicate efforts with too many 1-800 numbers, referral databases, services and ineffective outreach programs that do not reach the people who need them. 2-1-1 has a proven track record of success. 2-1-1 is an effective, standards-based and user-friendly solution to providing human service information and access to critical services. Other states have consolidated certain functions for more cost-effective outcomes.
- Seeks **federal and state 2-1-1 funding** to build a true public-private partnership. Investing in 2-1-1 means getting more for the taxpayer—with a common sense program that gives a positive return on investment. This includes identifying ways federal and state agencies may shift existing funds to 2-1-1 for increased effectiveness and streamlined access, inserting 2-1-1 supportive provisions into legislation and exploring grant opportunities.

Charitable Sector

Indiana’s nonprofit sector continues to meet increasing demands with decreasing philanthropic and government funding. Indiana’s nonprofits comprise an important part of Indiana’s economy, including over 54,000 organizations, most of them small, that rely on volunteers. United Ways support legislation and policies that help ensure a strong charitable sector. We generally support policies that promote: charitable contributions; ethical fundraising; volunteerism; rights of speech and association; and public information, accountability and transparency.

More specifically, laUW:

- Educates policymakers that **certain tax policies lay the foundation of the relationship** between the nonprofit and government sectors. laUW advocates policies that uphold the social contract with the nonprofit sector, including property and sales tax exemption, tax deductibility for charitable contributions and certain tax credits. laUW is concerned about efforts to alter the government-nonprofit relationship.
- Encourages policies that strengthen **volunteerism**, such as increasing the volunteer mileage deduction on tax return, streamlining and making affordable criminal background checks, etc.
- Advocates for policies that increase **charitable giving** such as tax deductibility for donations, including for non-itemizers, tax credits for certain donations and NAP credits.

Education/Early Childhood

The early years build the foundation for a child’s development and success—in cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social, regulatory and moral capabilities. Indiana continues to rank far too low in critical areas of school readiness, grade-level reading competency, middle school success and high school graduation. Many United Ways invest and support early care and education initiatives and community supports for children.

To help children and youth reach their potential in school, work and life, laUW:

- Advocates **policies that advance early care and education**, birth to age 7, such as child care regulations and continuation of Paths to Quality™, Indiana’s voluntary rating system, and **out-of-school time** programs.

- Supports policies that encourage **early reading** and **early intervention strategies** with the goal of improving the **high school graduation rate** and better preparing youth for life.
- Is in favor of **increased public investments in early education**, including child care development fund (CCDF) vouchers/subsidies, universal full-day kindergarten, Pre-Kindergarten and Head Start.
- Actively advocates **standardization of health and safety requirements** for all types of currently regulated child care. Parent choice is an important value, and regulations should reflect a range of options that provide comparable quality standards in different settings. Changes should standardize regulations rather than add complexity or opportunities for parent confusion. The State of Indiana has a fiscal and programmatic responsibility to ensure that CCDF vouchers are maximized and are used in quality settings that advance other goals for children (good health, safety, early learning and literacy).



Income/Financial Stability

laUW supports programs and policies that help people become financially stable and independent through asset-building activities, credit repair, financial counseling and matched savings accounts. Yet, during this challenging economic recovery, Hoosiers and their families continue to struggle to meet basic needs. Nearly two-thirds of families below the federal poverty line have one or more working in the home. Nearly 20% of all Hoosier children live in poverty. Indiana's United Ways understand the challenges of making difficult choices to meet increased needs with flat or declining revenues, as federal and state budget drafters will face in 2011.

Accordingly, laUW:

- Advocates state and federal budget writers to find creative ways to **protect and support vulnerable individuals and low-wage workers and the vital human services** that help keep them safe and stable in their homes and communities.
- Promotes policies that support access, awareness and maximization of **eligibility benefits**. These include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) and Medicaid (as medical bills are a leading cause of bankruptcy and foreclosure). laUW supports progress and accountability with the FSSA Hybrid Model to ensure continuation of services to those who qualify.
- Backs tax policies and programs to **support low- and middle-wage workers** such as Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), child care and dependent care tax credits, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), etc.
- Advocates policies and funding that supports **basic needs** such as key programs like food banks, LIHEAP-energy assistance and **emergency financial assistance** that is currently provided through township trustees. laUW advocates preservation of emergency financial assistance at the county level in the event local government reform efforts make changes to the township trustee system.

Health

Indiana's United Ways support programs and policies that improve people's health, including those that increase access to affordable, quality health care and increase participation in healthy behaviors and decrease participation in risky behaviors.

To that end, laUW works with partners to:

- Support policies and programs related to **affordable, accessible health care** such as the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP), full implementation of Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid, Hoosier Healthwise, sliding scale health and behavioral care services, etc.
- Advocate policies and programs that support **people's health** such as the Women's Infants and Children (WIC) program, child nutrition, breakfast and school lunch, Healthy Families and other in-home visiting programs, mental health supports, etc.

LIVE UNITED™

Indiana Association of United Ways (IaUW) represents 62 United Ways throughout Indiana. Together, Indiana's United Ways raise over \$90 million each year to invest in human services and meet critical needs of Hoosiers. IaUW is a nonpartisan organization that works to advance policy principles and compromise solutions for the common good.

IaUW advocates in five priority areas:

- 2-1-1
- Charitable Sector
- Education/Early Childhood
- Income/Financial Stability
- Health

What You Can Do

- Subscribe to the *IaUW Public Policy Update* and forward it to staff/board.
- Educate yourself about needs, programs and policies.
- Tell your elected officials about the critical needs in your community.
- Participate in "Third House" sessions and policy forums.
- Write an opinion editorial for your local paper—call us for help.
- Share your stories and issues with us.

How We Can Help

- IaUW offers monthly **Public Policy Updates** about programs and policies affecting Hoosiers and their United Ways. Check it out and subscribe at www.iauw.org.
- **Public Policy Training / Technical Assistance**—IaUW staff provides web-based and in-person trainings for United Ways, partners and other nonprofit organizations. Staff research and answer your policy questions. Contact us to schedule a session or to ask your burning question.



Indiana Association of United Ways

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