



United Way of Washtenaw County

United Way of Washtenaw County 2023 Public Policy Agenda

Why We Advocate

Programs help people beat the odds. However, it is shifts to public policies, practices, and resource flows that change the odds for people and communities most harmed by systemic and institutionalized racism.

Policy and advocacy are required to remove barriers and shift systems. We use our voice to prompt change. We listen as community members identify barriers and challenges to achieving their full potential in Washtenaw County. We use our relationships and influence to communicate what we learn to the public and policymakers.

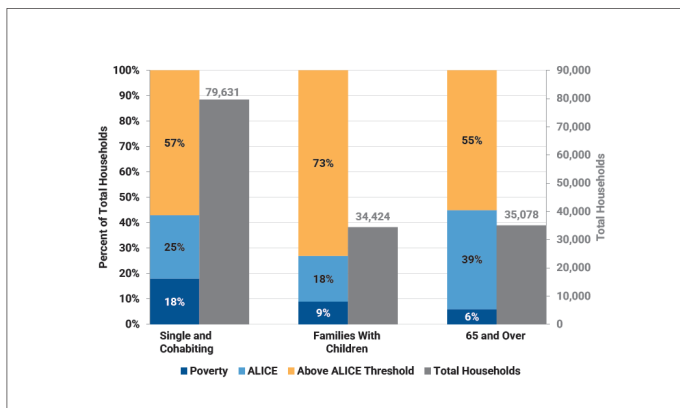
If you come together with a mission, and it's grounded with love and a sense of community, you can make the impossible possible.

JOHN LEWIS

In a diversifying County and country, fighting for racial equity lies at the core of our work. United Way of Washtenaw County is committed to advocating for shifts that address the racial inequities in access to healthcare, education and economic opportunity– the building blocks for a good quality of life.

For Whom We Advocate

Household Financial Status by Household Type, Washtenaw County, 2021



Source: ALICE Threshold, 2021; American Community Survey, 2021

[Over one in four of Washtenaw County's hard-working families and individuals struggle to provide for their basic needs](#) and lack access to the economic opportunities needed to thrive in a fast-changing world. **We work to create opportunities for ALICE - Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed - households - Washtenaw County people who work and pay taxes, but still struggle to make ends meet.**

Federal Policy Priorities

<p>Basic Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Fighting Hunger</u> - Protecting, strengthening, and increasing access to the Child Nutrition Programs and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Increasing funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). • <u>Healthcare</u> - Defend and expand the consumer protections and safeguards created by the Affordable Care Act. • <u>Housing</u>- Strengthening and enforcing renter protections and assistance.
<p>Economic Stability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Increase and Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit</u> - Encourages work and helps families pay for necessities that keep them working, like home repairs and vehicle maintenance. • <u>Increase and Expand the Child Tax Credit</u>- Helps provide stability for families with low incomes • <u>Increase funding for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance VITA</u>- allows more households with low incomes to access free tax preparation services
<p>Nonprofit Sector Supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Increase accessibility to philanthropy</u> by allowing the Charitable Tax Deduction to be taken by all taxpayers regardless of income level.

State and Local Policy Priorities

<p>Basic Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Support expansions to safe and affordable housing</u>- ALICE families in Washtenaw County often spend a disproportionate amount of their income on housing resulting in difficult decisions between housing and other necessities like food and utilities. • <u>Encourage improved transportation access</u> throughout Washtenaw County.
<p>Child Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support any policy that <u>increases the accessibility and affordability of childcare</u>, which helps parents gain and maintain employment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Increase reimbursement rates for child care providers</u> who are also often living below the ALICE threshold.
Civic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Protect the unfettered right to vote</u>, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring access to absentee voting. ○ Making it easier to register to vote. ○ Educating the public about polling and election information, as well as voter rights. ○ Ensuring our elections remain accessible and secure. ○ Opposing unnecessary restrictions and bureaucratic processes between the voter and the ballot.
Economic Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Restrict predatory loan practices</u>, which unjustly burdens households that borrow money. • Create an environment in which <u>every worker can earn a living wage</u> as defined in the ALICE report.
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure expanded <u>access to comprehensive mental healthcare</u> services. • <u>Promote gun safety</u> through the passage of red flag laws.

For More Information

- Sign up for advocacy action alerts at <https://www.uwwashtenaw.org/advocate>
- Contact Bridget Herrmann, bherrmann@uwwashtenaw.org

UWWC's public policy platform is informed by the public policy priorities of United Way Worldwide, the Michigan Association of United Ways, regional United Ways and local community conditions.