

United Way of Rhode Island Legislative Agenda for 2017 General Assembly Session November 2016

Below is a list of proposed priorities for the 2017 General Assembly Session. Some of these represent a continued effort in support of United Way's work, and others are being introduced for consideration. Our public policy and advocacy work is designed to support United Way's strategic goal of changing the lives of 250,000 people by 2020 with particular emphasis on three fundamental areas:

1. Rhode Islanders are in stable, affordable housing.

Legislative priorities:

- Create a **permanent funding stream** to provide capital for long term housing development.
- Protect the dedicated funding stream for **housing rental vouchers**. This funding supports the implementation of Opening Doors, the state's plan to end homelessness.

2. Life Long Learning

Legislative priorities:

- Implement strategies that will help reach the goal of **75 percent of third graders reading at grade level or higher by 2025**.
- Increase funding to the Rhode Island Department of Education for **quality afterschool and summer learning programming**.
- Increase funding to the Rhode Island Department of Education for **adult education to accommodate the estimated 1,000+ adults on waitlists** for classes statewide, only a fraction of the more than **80,000 working-age Rhode Islanders** who lack a high school diploma or equivalency.

3. Rhode Islanders are financially secure.

Legislative priorities:

- Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) - **Advocate to expand the credit to 20%** so more low-income workers are eligible to receive a larger refund.

United Way of RI also monitors, reviews and determines appropriate action related to policy that impacts the Rhode Island nonprofit sector with specific focus on changes to operations, charitable giving, and taxation law.

In addition to the 2017 Public Policy priorities to be approved by United Way of Rhode Island's Board of Directors, United Way staff will monitor and take action as appropriate on other important issues, with input and consent from the Public Policy Committee Chairperson, CIC Chairperson, President and CEO, and the Chair of the Board of Directors.