

## 89TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Through collaboration with our Denton County nonprofit sector and community partners, United Way of Denton County advocates for change that enables everyone to thrive, and we want your voice to join ours. These priorities were developed in **collaboration with Denton County nonprofit organizations**, area Chambers of Commerce, School Districts serving Denton County, higher education institutions, 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 secure families in Texas. Many of these legislative priorities are interrelated and impact the most vulnerable Texans. Resources to help the most vulnerable people have been outpaced by our region's rapid growth, reducing their ability to receive the help needed to return to security and to thrive.

### BEHAVIORAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Continue to increase funding to local communities that would expand the entry points for **coordinated, comprehensive, and accessible prevention and intervention services** for **behavioral health**. Ensure **individual wellbeing** and **community safety** for residents of all ages. Increase the number and improve the licensing process of mental health professionals serving Texas.

### ACADEMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Integration of **academic** and **workforce development** policies and funding 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 that was heightened by the pandemic and address transportation barriers to employment.

### 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 including seniors.

### FOOD SECURITY

Support food security programs and funding to reduce the number of food insecure households and address gaps to ensure that every Denton County resident has **access** to **nutritious and affordable food**.

### EDUCATION

Fund effective **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 for children and youth.

### VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Support policies, funding, and trauma informed programs that promote fair and equitable access to programs and resources to promote healing and stability for **children and adults experiencing abuse, neglect, and exploitation**.

### 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.