

FIGHT FOR AMERICA'S RECOVERY

United Way Top Priorities For 5th Coronavirus Relief Package

Over the past few months the United Way network has been a strong and steady voice for coronavirus relief and recovery in communities across the United States. We have achieved big wins for our sector and the communities we serve but the fight is not over. As we approach final negotiations on a 5th coronavirus relief package, United Way Worldwide is recommending elevating the below priorities in your advocacy work. We need Congress to support policies that help communities recover from the devastation caused by the pandemic, including helping feed those facing food insecurity, connecting those in financial distress with resources to make ends meet and providing childcare to parents that are getting back to work. You can find the full list of policy priorities in [this June letter to Congress](#).

Advocacy updates and resources from past action opportunities can be found on [UWO here](#). United Way Worldwide will continue to send timely action updates via the [Public Policy Listserv](#), Breakfast, and in the [UW Public Policy and Advocacy Workplace](#) group. As always, if you have specific questions, feel free to reach out to public.policy@unitedway.org.

Top Six Policy Priorities:

- **Universal Charitable Deduction**

Advocacy Ask: Enhance charities' ability to raise private donations by [cosponsoring the bipartisan Universal Giving Pandemic Response Act \(H.R.7324 \(Walker/Pappas\); S.4032 \(Lankford/Coons\)\)](#) which expands the new nonitemizer charitable deduction and urge that the bill be included in the next legislation Congress passes to provide COVID-19 relief.

The temporary \$300 nonitemizer provision is a step in the right direction and it will potentially bring in millions of new donors and dollars, especially to faith-based and basic needs charities. However, we expect that the drop in giving caused by the economic recession will be immediate and dramatic at a time when people need our help the most.

Resources and Materials:

- [Send an e-mail to Congress](#)
- [Talking Points for United Way advocates](#)
- [Charitable Giving Incentives One-Pager](#)
- Response to recent Giving USA report: "[Assessing Giving USA 2020: Billions in Giving are Missing](#)"
- [#Relief4Charities letter signed by nearly 4,000 nonprofits](#)

- **Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit**

Advocacy Ask: Put more money into the economy by [expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit \(EITC\) and Child Tax Credit \(CTC\) for working individuals and families](#). With a recession projected for some time, Congress should enact these expansions to take effect for the tax year 2020.

Expanding the EITC for workers not raising children at home and lowering the age of eligibility, as well as increasing the CTC and making it fully refundable will enable millions of Americans to keep more of what they earn. Based on United Way's work around the country helping prepare taxes for millions of lower-income Americans, we know first-hand how powerful these changes will be in enabling workers to keep more of what they earn to pay for things like health care bills, car payments, and rent.

Resources and Materials:

- [Send an e-mail to Congress](#)
- [Talking points for United Way advocates](#)
- [State by state estimates from CBPP](#)
- [EITC one pager](#)

- **Temporary Increase in the Medicaid FMAP**

Advocacy Ask: Ease the financial strain on state budgets by providing a temporary increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to at least 12 percentage points.

During the Coronavirus pandemic Medicaid enrollment has sharply increased as low-income individuals lose their employment and have no other health insurance. The increase in the FMAP enacted in the bipartisan Families First law provided critical fiscal relief to states while also protecting health care coverage in Medicaid. We are asking Congress to build on that support and, in recognition of the mounting state fiscal emergencies, provide an additional temporary increase in the federal Medicaid matching payment to states. This is also critical to ensuring states preserve and protect Medicaid coverage for those who need it and are eligible.

Resources and Materials:

- [Send an e-mail to Congress](#)
- [Talking points for United Way advocates](#)
- [Medicaid FMAP one pager](#)
- [Medicaid FMAP from Congressional Research Service](#)
- [Medicaid FMAP estimates](#)

- **Emergency Funding for 211, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and Child Care**

Advocacy Ask: Provide supplemental emergency funding for programs that support the financial stability of families and communities including:

- \$150 million for 211
- \$12 million emergency appropriation for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program for this tax season and \$5 million additional funding for 2021 tax season
- \$200 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program
- \$50 billion to stabilize the child care system

Resources and Materials:

- [211 Funding Letter Signed by 415 Organizations](#)
- [VITA Funding Letter Signed by 158 Organizations](#)
- [FEMA Blog about EFSP Impact](#)
- [State by State Numbers for Child Care Funding](#)

- **Increase Basic SNAP Benefit Levels**

Advocacy Ask: Address the growing food insecurity needs of children and families by temporarily increasing the basic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit level by 15%.

Resources and Materials:

- [Letter signed by nearly 2,500 organizations](#)
- [SNAP benefits data from Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

- **Additional Investments in Enhanced Unemployment Insurance and Economic Impact Payments**

Advocacy Ask: Provide temporary economic relief for individuals and families by making additional investments in unemployment insurance and recovery rebates.

While the recently passed economic relief packages will provide much-needed relief for workers, children and families, our work isn't finished. As unemployment rates continue to remain high, we must further extend unemployment insurance benefits to respond to the growing number of job losses and furloughs happening across the country. We also must provide additional cash support for individuals and families, including seniors and very-low income Americans, so they have access to this critical support.