

Wins for TX communities
Email Update
Written by: *Ashley R. Harris*
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Dear UW Advocates,

The Texas legislative session ended Monday! Please note that our weekly policy calls are now over with session ending—there is no call today. More importantly, you won't have to hear from me every week as this is my last weekly email until the 2021 legislative session 😊 Many thanks to everyone who participated on those calls and your active engagement throughout the legislative session. Your input, advocacy, and support has made my first session with United Ways of Texas so meaningful and fun!

There were big wins for Texas communities and some disappointments. However, there are a million reasons why we are so proud of our network of Texas United Ways. This session, we raised our collective voices to bring attention to education, financial stability, health, and the nonprofit sector in each of our communities and policymakers listened.

The 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral System will see significant upgrades, such as text capability and access to real-time call data, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. With your help, [HB 2325 by Metcalf](#) and a budget rider passed requiring improved technology, transparent access to real-time 2-1-1 data, and the use of inter-state agreements to rotate 2-1-1 calls during times of disaster. Many thanks to all of our local United Ways who helped push these improvements forward this legislative session.

Texas pre-k had a big win! In a historic move, the legislature provided funding for full day pre-k ensuring our youngest Texans have a strong start. United Ways have been strong voices on this issue for many years and this win is an example of what can be accomplished through collective, tireless advocacy.

There were some big disappointments on maternal and children's health coverage. However, the legislature recognized the importance of addressing maternal mental health, improved access to medical transportation, and increased access to and information about women's health programs. Similarly, while the high rate of uninsured children in Texas was not addressed, important gains were made in other areas of children's health.

We worked to pass [HB 25 by Gonzalez](#) alongside our advocacy partner, Texans Care for Children ensuring that more moms have transportation to prenatal care and postpartum appointments. A special shout out to United Way of Nacogdoches for raising their voice on this important issue for mom's in their community with their state leaders and helping to get this bill successfully through the legislative process.

None of our advocacy efforts could have been successful without you, our network of Texas United Ways—the voices of Texas communities.

So, now what? The Governor has until June 16 to veto legislation the last day Abbott can veto legislation passed by the House and Senate. After that, UWT will draft a legislative recap report for our UWT members.

Do you want to know what happened this legislative session and how it impacts your community? Join our legislative recap webinar on June 20th, 10:00am-11:30am. [Register here.](#) We will share more information on where all of our priorities landed this legislative session, the anticipated impact of policy changes, and community opportunities to move priorities forward.

Again, we appreciate everyone's advocacy this legislative session and truly believe voices together can drive powerful change - for the community, region, and state.

Best,
Ashley

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