

LEAD. INSPIRE. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
**TOGETHER, WE'RE MAKING
CHANGE HAPPEN.**



2016-2018 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

United Way of Greater Stark County

www.uwstark.org



Making bold changes that improve the lives of those in Stark County is fundamental to our mission and work. By engaging in public policy we can do more to make their lives better.



United Way of Greater Stark County welcomes volunteers interested in taking meaningful action to serve on our Public Policy Advisory Council. This diverse group of representatives work to galvanize people to speak out for change, and make a difference. We amplify individual's voices on important community issues. Our priorities address some of the most-needed changes in policy - locally, and at the state and federal levels. All exist to advance our work in Education, Income and Health.

- We work to make sure children have the best start to their life and school by being kindergarten ready and graduating on time.
- We work to help families make more money, save that money and build new assets.
- We work to build a healthier Stark County that values physical and mental health, healthy parents, thriving babies and fewer addictions

All of the policies that we support work to break the cycle of poverty that plagues families from generation to generation. We want to find common ground and work with new partners and organizations to build coalitions that solve problems and bring awareness to some of our county's most challenging problems. Advocating for to the needs of those in our county can take many forms, including working with local businesses and organizations to build an issue awareness campaign, using our voice to work with policy makers to update outdated policies with unintended consequences and bringing unlikely partners together to form real solutions.

We want to invite everyone to Be Bold and fight for lasting change with us. As we work toward improving the quality of life in our community, we need your help to make our Bold Goals a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Fernandez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Robert B. Fernandez
Chair, Income Impact Council
Chair, Public Policy Committee
Special Projects Directors, Stark County Family Court

We envision a community where all residents have access to programs and services that improve the overall health of Stark County. This includes encouraging healthy lifestyles, physical health and behavioral health.

HEALTH BOLD GOAL

- Goal 1:** Increase the number of Stark County residents who report they are healthy.
- Goal 2:** Reduce infant mortality to meet or exceed the Healthy People 2020 Objective and reduce disparity across races.
- Goal 3:** Reduce opiate substance abuse.

Tier 1 - Advocate

We will proactively advocate, convene stakeholders, lobby, support research, draft and/or support policies, provide public testimonies, and mobilize grassroots advocacy.

- **Policy 1:** Advocate for policies that support in-home visitation and learning for new mothers. New mothers also need access to health care before, during, and after pregnancy.
- **Policy 2:** Advocate in partnership with the behavioral health community for a Good Samaritan Law that includes anyone calling 911 for another person that has overdosed.
- **Policy 3:** Support policies that work toward true parity for mental and behavioral health care.
- **Policy 4:** Develop an education advocacy campaign around the best parenting practices that reduce infant mortality.

Tier 2 - Partner

We will work with a coalition of community partners who are leading the work on these issues. We will advocate, support visibility, and generate grassroots engagement.

- **Policy 1:** Work with other organizations to educate the public on how to care for infants in order to reduce infant mortality.
- **Policy 2:** Collaborate with other local organizations and governments to support their comprehensive and strategic plans.
- **Policy 3:** Promote efforts to combat human trafficking. Ohio is among the top five states in the US for human trafficking.

Tier 3 - Support

We will monitor these issues and respond to opportunities to protect the work of our BOLD GOALS. This includes signing joint letters, communicating with local officials and our advocacy network.

- **Policy 1:** Work with local agencies to educate the public on how low income and working individuals can apply for health insurance.
- **Policy 2:** Reauthorization of federal health and human service programs that address critical health and human service needs. This includes but is not limited to Children's Health Insurance Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- **Policy 3:** Support laws that encourage healthy behaviors including but not limited to those that promote healthy eating, routine doctors' visits for preventative illnesses, and physical fitness.

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We envision a community that supports and enables all students to reach age appropriate milestones leading to graduation and careers.

EDUCATION BOLD GOAL

Goal 1: Sustainable progress toward 100% of eligible students being kindergarten ready.

Goal 2: Sustainable progress toward 100% high school graduation rate.

Tier 1 - Advocate

We will proactively advocate, convene stakeholders, lobby, support research, draft and/or support policies, provide public testimonies, and mobilize grassroots advocacy.

- **Policy 1:** Expand SPARK and other high quality state home visiting programs.
- **Policy 2:** Advocate to keep the Five Star Quality rating system and work toward income based child care in order to reduce the negative impacts of the reduction of public benefits as income increases.
- **Policy 3:** Advocate for career-ready and technical opportunities in high school.

Tier 2 - Partner

We will work with a coalition of community partners who are leading the work on these issues. We will advocate, support visibility, and generate grassroots engagement.

- **Policy 1:** Build and expand mentoring and internship partnership between public schools and skill-based businesses.
- **Policy 2:** Advocate for the implementation of soft skills education and more relationship based advising for secondary education students.
- **Policy 3:** Support grade level reading and support state education standards.

Tier 3 - Support

We will monitor these issues and respond to opportunities to protect the work of our BOLD GOALS. This includes signing joint letters, communicating with local officials and our advocacy network.

- **Policy 1:** Expand access to physical, behavioral and dental health care of children.
- **Policy 2:** Support assessments that track child progress and give adequate feedback for interventions and system improvements.
- **Policy 3:** Partner with other agencies to increase extra-curricular activities and out of school opportunities for children.



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We envision a community where a cycle for financial success exists, allowing individuals and families access to building long-term, economic independence.

INCOME BOLD GOAL

Goal: 70% of Stark County residents will spend no more than 30 % of their income on housing.

This is achieved by working toward access to affordable housing, communities with job training and preparation and access to asset building programs.

Tier 1 - Advocate

We will proactively advocate, convene stakeholders, lobby, support research, draft and/or support policies, provide public testimonies, and mobilize grassroots advocacy.

- **Policy 1:** Work to increase funding for collaborations that make more mentorships, internships and apprenticeships to gain practical skills.
- **Policy 2:** Support policies that reduce barriers for people with criminal records to reenter the workforce.
- **Policy 3:** Increase access to work support programs, child care assistance, Medicaid and food stamps.

Tier 2 - Partner

We will work with a coalition of community partners who are leading the work on these issues. We will advocate, support visibility, and generate grassroots engagement.

- **Policy 1:** Work with City and County government to make homeless continuum of care a priority.
- **Policy 2:** Support policies that encourage “housing first” practices.
- **Policy 3:** Develop workforce readiness certification through Nation Career Readiness Certificate.
- **Policy 4:** Work with other organizations to develop a financial stability center that meets the needs of our cities as outlined in their comprehensive or strategic plans.

Tier 3 - Support

We will monitor these issues and respond to opportunities to protect the work of our BOLD GOALS. This includes signing joint letters, communicating with local officials and our advocacy network.

- **Policy 1:** Encourage workforce training on priority industry sectors.
- **Policy 2:** Support making the State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Refundable.
- **Policy 3:** Support a campaign of supportive employers who will hire special populations.
- **Policy 4:** Align advocacy support efforts to increase the stock of affordable housing for low income families.



The public priorities set forth in this document serve as a guide for our committee, staff and volunteers. They do not limit our work on any new policy issues that may arise.

For any questions regarding these issues please contact Nicole Thompson, Public Policy Manager at (330) 491-9972 or nicole.thompson@uwstark.org.