



United Community Services of Johnson County

2008 PLATFORM

Human services contribute to the quality of life by protecting, promoting and/or restoring the well-being of individuals and families. UCS supports policy decisions that effectively promote positive outcomes for people which in the long term create strong, vibrant communities.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

- Ensure a basic minimum safety net to protect vulnerable Kansas children and families.
 - Many children, elderly and disabled Kansans cannot depend upon employment to provide for daily basic needs. The state should maintain assistance that assures the provision of life sustaining basic needs.
- Promote public policies that encourage self-development and self reliance.
 - Critical supports to individual and family self-sufficiency include access to education, health care, child care and job training.
- Strengthen the role of prevention and intervention as a long-term strategy.
 - Preventing problems and intervening before they reach crisis level is less expensive in both human and financial terms.
- Strengthen the role of local communities in the delivery of social services.
 - Communities should be encouraged – through flexible funding pools, joint operation of programs, improved information sharing – to strengthen coordination and planning for effective services that meet local needs.
- Advance and sustain the delivery of effective, outcome based human services.
 - Programs should be accountable for measurable outcomes.

PRIORITY POSITIONS

- **Increase the Investment in Early Learning:** Early childhood is a critical time to impact school and life-long success for children age 0 to 5. UCS supports increased funding for successful programs, such as Early Head Start, Parents as Teachers, Smart Start Kansas and Kansas Quality Rating System.
- **Improve Food Stamp Outreach:** The Food Stamp program addresses hunger and malnutrition by helping low-income households, including working households, to buy food. UCS supports additional funding for Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services staff dedicated to Food Stamp outreach and bringing more of these federal nutrition dollars back to Kansas.
- **Increase Housing Opportunities for Vulnerable Populations:** Decent, modest housing is increasingly out of reach for many households. UCS supports the development and retention of housing opportunities that are affordable to low-income working households and special needs populations on fixed incomes.

ABOUT UNITED COMMUNITY SERVICES (UCS)

Established in 1967, United Community Services (UCS) of Johnson County is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) community planning organization that works to improve human service systems and the policies and funding which affect them.

UCS' mission is to identify human service needs in Johnson County, Kansas and marshal public and private resources to meet those needs. UCS provides leadership to shape more effective approaches to prepare for and meet the community's most critical needs. It works to create successful alliances between human service providers, policy makers, funders and community leaders. These partnerships ensure that the human service impact in Johnson County surpasses the accomplishments of a single entity.

Navigating the Future: Setting the Course 2007-2011, the latest planning effort spearheaded by UCS, is the result of a community-wide effort to study the most pressing human service issues facing Johnson County over the next few years. It prioritizes the most immediate concerns and identifies opportunities to improve the quality of life for those who work and live in the community. **2008 Priority Positions** were selected to support *Navigating the Future*.

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This public policy platform was developed with representation by United Way of Greater Kansas City



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