



United Community Services of Johnson County

2010 PUBLIC POLICY PLATFORM

All Kansas residents benefit when the state provides access to essential human services. These services contribute to the quality of life by protecting, promoting and/or restoring the well-being of individuals and families. Adequate funding is essential if public programs are to deliver desired outcomes that lead to a better future.

PRIORITY POSITIONS

Enhance the lives of children:

- ◆ Maintain the state's long-standing commitment to children by preserving the Children's Initiative Fund, including funding for the Early Childhood Block Grant.
- ◆ Improve safety for children in child care by requiring all providers be licensed and inspected.
- ◆ Study the issue of child support enforcement and identify ways to improve collection rates.

Preserve essential safety net services:

- ◆ Sustain General Assistance and Medikan – the only financial aid available to single adults.
- ◆ Maintain eligibility level for public child care assistance for working parents at 185% FPL.
- ◆ Implement strategies, such as eliminating the asset test for the Supplemental Food Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance to Families, and paperless verification of income for Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), to streamline and simplify enrollment and renewal for public assistance programs.

Improve the response to alcohol and other substance abuse:

- ◆ Maintain the current distribution formula for alcohol excise tax in order to support community-based alcohol and other substance abuse programs.
- ◆ Establish a single system of licensure for addiction counselors under the Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board to advance professionalism in order to achieve positive outcomes for people seeking help.
- ◆ Redesign the DUI system, as recommended by the DUI Commission, to reflect evidence-based treatment practices.

Improve individual and community well-being through physical and mental health strategies:

- ◆ Support actions to improve the response to people who are mentally ill and come in contact with the criminal justice system.
- ◆ Oppose the closure of Rainbow Mental Health Facility, a facility that serves an important role in community safety and improved mental health outcomes.
- ◆ Maintain CHIP eligibility levels at 250% FPL. Expand outreach efforts and capacity of KHPA to process enrollment and renewals.
- ◆ Support statewide clean indoor air to protect the public from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke.

Meet the growing demand for services due to the recession:

- ◆ Maintain essential human service programs and provide services to those who are eligible, which may require reviewing existing tax policy to identify revenue.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE POSITIONS

- 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, housing, transportation and job training. Asset accumulation and financial education are cornerstones of self-reliance.
- 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.
- 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**: Public programs should be accountable for measurable outcomes and provided the necessary resources to deliver desired outcomes.

ABOUT UNITED COMMUNITY SERVICES (UCS)

For more than 40 years UCS has spearheaded efforts to make vital human services available to individuals and families in Johnson County, especially those facing challenges. This neutral, nonprofit organization brings together **human service providers, policy-makers, funders** and **community leaders** to **address issues impacting the well-being of residents**. These partnerships ensure that the collective human service impact in Johnson County is far greater than the accomplishments individual organizations can achieve working alone. In addition to providing leadership for community-based planning, UCS provides information and trend analysis while playing a vital role in securing funding for the area's human service organizations.

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