

UNITING OUR COMMUNITY TO
IMPROVE LIVES

UNITED WAY OF SOUTHERN NEVADA ADVOCACY REPORT

2018 – 2019

United Way of Southern Nevada

uwsn.org

LIVE UNITED



ADVOCACY WINS WE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER IN 2019

ADVOCACY IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

United Way of Southern Nevada advocates for young children, students, working families, and community advancement through the Community-Based Agenda. This framework for achieving impact over time aims to identify opportunities to improve early education, high school achievement, and the systems that provide support for college students and workers. Advocacy often focuses on local, state, and federal policies that seek to create a more inclusive environment that empowers local communities to achieve their goals.

For United Way of Southern Nevada, the broad reach of our organization increases the importance of advocacy efforts. UWSN's service area includes Clark County, which holds 72% of the total population in the State of Nevada and is represented by a significant proportion of elected offices at state and Federal levels. Approximately three-quarters of both the Nevada State Assembly and the Nevada State Senate represent communities UWSN is working in. At the Federal level, three out of the four individuals representing Nevada in the House of Representatives are based in Clark County. UWSN is well-positioned to support and share the views of the United Way network, Clark County's nonprofit organizations, and the broader Southern Nevada communities that are working toward a more prosperous future.

In 2019, United Way of Southern Nevada adopted a proactive leadership role to ensure the continuation of funding for preschool programs in the State of Nevada. To achieve the key legislative and budgetary goals described in this report, the organization worked with the UWSN Board of Directors, Public Policy Committee, and an unmatched network of business, nonprofit, and community leaders. Together, we identified policy priorities and implemented strategies that helped us all step up to advocate for the community we live in and serve.



STATE OF NEVADA HIGHLIGHTS

Establishing a budget for the Nevada Ready! State Pre-Kindergarten Grant

Budget Amendment 2709 - UWSN staff and partners used a variety of communications, advocacy, and engagement methods to ensure state-level budgetary support for Nevada Ready! preschool seats and a quality rating and improvement system for early childhood education centers.

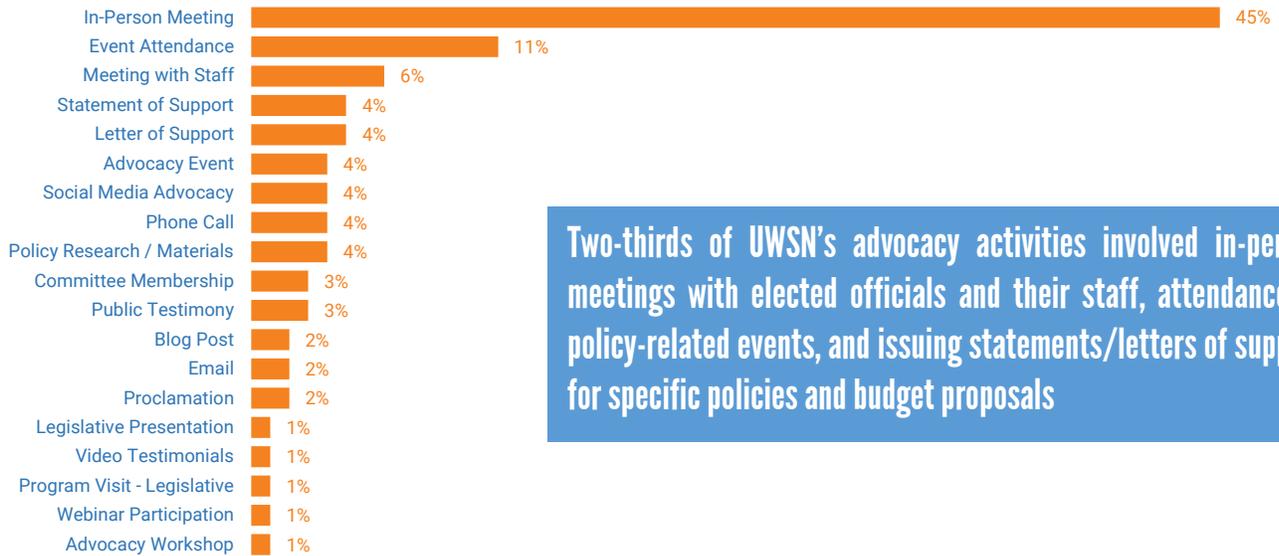
Revised provisions relating to the funding of public schools

Senate Bill 543 - Increases transparency about education funding decisions, ensures education funding stays within the education system, and implements a modern and student-centered weighted funding formula. The legislation provides additional funding for students who are low-income, have special needs, or are learning English as a second language.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Building relationships with elected officials is a cornerstone of advocacy efforts at United Way of Southern Nevada. UWSN staff had the opportunity to meet 55 different elected officials at local, state, and national levels. Connections are most-often made through in-person meetings in Las Vegas or Carson City. The organization also writes letters of support, provides public testimony, organizes advocacy events, and creates policy research to help our community have informed discussions about the issues affecting our day-to-day lives.

Leadership Activities (2019)



Two-thirds of UWSN's advocacy activities involved in-person meetings with elected officials and their staff, attendance at policy-related events, and issuing statements/letters of support for specific policies and budget proposals



United Way Day at the Legislature

Advocating for the issues that make a real difference in our community, staff at United Way of Southern Nevada traveled to Carson City to personally meet with senators and assembly members during United Way Day at the Legislature in April 2019.

Discussions focused on innovative ways to improve access to high-quality early education, state-level public school funding formulas, teacher training, high school graduation, child welfare, public safety, and sex trafficking. United Way of Southern Nevada was presented with two proclamations - one from the Assembly and one from the Senate - proclaiming April 26th to be "United Way of Southern Nevada Day" at the 2019 Nevada State Legislature.

SOUTHERN NEVADA HIGHLIGHTS

Revises provisions (definition and penalties) related to the crime of sex trafficking

Assembly Bill 120 - UWSN staff collaborated with legislators on both sides of the aisle to voice support for legislation that expands the definition of, and penalties for, the crime of sex trafficking. By passing this legislation, the state has made tangible progress on preventing and reducing the prevalence of sex trafficking in Southern Nevada.

Eliminating the statute of limitations for prosecution in certain circumstances

Assembly Bill 142 - UWSN staff and partners voiced support for legislation that called for the removal of a limit on the statute of limitations in sexual assault where DNA evidence is available. This legislation passed and will help to improve public safety for women, children, and other members of the Southern Nevada community.



United Way is engaged in nearly 1,800 communities across more than 40 countries and territories worldwide. The United Way network is focused on creating community-based and community-led solutions that strengthen the cornerstones for a good quality of life: education, financial stability, and health.

NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Taxpayer First Act House of Representatives HR 3151

In July 2019, the Taxpayer First Act was signed into law. Among the many provisions of this legislation is support to make permanent the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, as well as increased support for Low Income Taxpayer Clinics and taxpayer assistance centers. These changes will ensure low-income working families can more easily comply with tax laws and increase overall tax refunds coming back into Southern Nevada's taxpayers.

Working Families Tax Relief Act House of Representatives HR 3157

In 2019, UWSN staff wrote a letter to then-Representative Jacky Rosen, voicing support for the Working Families Tax Relief Act. She responded by agreeing to co-sponsor the bill, which would expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for working families and the Child Tax Credit for families with children. Estimates project this legislation, if passed, would increase the incomes of 46 million households and reduce child poverty across the country.



GET INVOLVED

United Way understands that effective advocacy takes collaboration, determination, and a well-educated community. Working together, UWSN was able to advocate for positive social change nearly 115 times in 2018-2019, reaching 55 elected officials at all levels of government. These activities are overseen by an all-volunteer Public Policy Committee. This board-level committee is made up of 10-15 members and meets for approximately 2 hours each month to track advocacy efforts and coordinate staff, volunteer, and board member efforts.

As an effective platform for beneficiary, volunteer, board, and donor engagement, United Way advocacy focuses public discourse on the policies and proposals that can effectively reduce poverty and expand opportunities for all members of our community. Although the next Nevada State Legislative session won't take place until 2021, United Way of Southern Nevada will be actively working to help create positive change through local and national policy efforts.

United Way of Southern Nevada offers a variety of opportunities to give, advocate, and volunteer for programs supporting working families across the region. Visit [uwsn.org/advocate](https://www.uwsn.org/advocate) to be a part of the change and join our efforts.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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