



The Council for Health and
Human Service Ministries

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
#BeAVoiceCHHSM

BE A VOICE SUMMARY: CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY SERVICES

All Be A Voice Health and Human Service Advocacy Toolkit sections are on the advocacy page listed on the bottom of this summary.

BACKGROUND:

- Poverty remains the single greatest threat to children's well-being. Annually, 4.2 million youth and young adults experience homelessness; 40 percent of this population identify as LGBTQIA+. Gun violence is the second leading cause of death among U.S. children and adolescents.
- UCC-related CHHSM organizations provide foster care services, residential treatment programs, preschools and childcare, education, violence prevention, trauma counseling, and mental health programs.

CURRENTLY:

- Especially now during the pandemic, our state and federal safety net programs are underprepared. These measures need to be incorporated in moving forward:
 - Expand access and eligibility to the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit. Fully a third of those who would benefit from the CTC do not qualify for it because they don't make enough money.
 - Expand cash payment eligibility, amount and frequency. Right now, those with children only qualify for \$500 per child through the CARES Act, which means that a single parent of two would get \$2,200 while a married couple with no children would get \$2,400.
 - Expand and increase the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Expand this program by 15 percent along with an increase in the minimum SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30.
 - Increase and cover the State share for Medicaid programs and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
 - Increase funding for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to help families with children.
 - Increase supports focused on children and youth experiencing homelessness. We must also institute a national moratorium on evictions and utility shut offs during this health and economic crisis.
 - Block the public charge rule; release all children from Immigration Detention Facilities.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- Our safety net system is woefully underprepared and underfunded, causing vulnerable youth and children to not get the care they need. Can you name concrete ways you will work to make sure their needs are made a priority?
- Statistically, children born in poverty are more likely to remain in poverty. Given this, what do you think is the most important policy measure that needs to be taken to break this cycle?