

Wilder Foundation

2023 Legislative Agenda



The mission of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation is to promote the social welfare of persons resident or located in the greater Saint Paul metropolitan area.

We understand that society has created advantages for certain groups and not others; we find ways to see and change how we are making decisions that impact marginalized or disadvantaged groups in unintended ways. Wilder welcomes the complexity that comes from the many differences that exist among

groups in one place: race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, ability, gender, nationality, and other differences. We believe diversity adds value and makes us stronger.

Informed by these values and principles, along with guidance from our client and staff communities, this legislative agenda reflects Wilder's commitment to Lead, Support and Endorse efforts which empower the important work our service providers conduct and promote the social welfare of our community members.

LEADING PARTNER

- **Addressing the Benefits Cliff:** Understanding the need for holistic and intersectional policy change that will support the whole family, **Wilder will work to address the “cliff effect” throughout the state.** The “cliff effect” occurs when an increase in income triggers disproportionate loss of government assistance.
 - **Streamline Service Application Processes** Applying for services that one is eligible for shouldn't be a full-time job, streamlining services will allow families to focus on solutions and long-term stability.
 - **Align & Simplify Eligibility Requirements for Services** Navigating uncoordinated requirements for assistance is time intensive and complicated. Whenever possible the state should look to align service requirements for public service programs like CCAP, SNAP, MA, TANF, etc... so that families can focus on achieving long term stability.
 - **Increase Use of Continuous Eligibility Models** Every year, families who qualify for benefits are dropped from vital services because they failed to confirm that they remained qualified. The pandemic further highlighted how problematic this approach to benefit eligibility verification is, Minnesota should shift to continuous eligibility models wherever possible.

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- **Reevaluate Asset Limits** Asset limits disincentivize professional advancement, transitions to employment, ownership of vehicles & the practice of maintaining a savings account. Failure to desist from the actions listed above put families at risk of ineligibility for critical benefits. Increasing, removing, and modifying timelines for asset limit reporting allows for asset development without impacting receipt of vital services like TANF, SNAP, MA, MA-EPD, Housing Support, etc.
- **Flexible Income for Families** Programs like Rai\$e allow families to utilize assistance in a way that best supports their needs and puts into action our Whole Families principles and values. Wilder will work to support Project Rai\$e by monitoring opportunities for expansion and working to secure waivers that will protect Rai\$e recipients from being bumped off the public assistance they currently rely on.
- **Agency Modernization** State Agencies like DHS, MDH, MDE, are in desperate need of modernization to streamline service administration. Technological modernization will allow for more coordinated government services and the simplification of enrollment and user experience.

SUPPORTING PARTNER

- **Stable and Accessible Public Health Care Programs: Wilder will work to improve access to healthcare in Minnesota.**
 - **Enhance Medicaid** Wilder will work through the This Is Medicaid (TIM) Coalition and other partners on proactive efforts to solidify and improve Minnesota's Medicaid Program.
 - **Healthcare Workforce** Wilder will work with its statewide partners to address the critical workforce crisis by seeking to implement practical solutions to ensure that our healthcare workforce, particularly home and community-based services and behavioral health, have the needed resources to provide quality care for all.
 - **Language Access in Healthcare** Wilder will work to ensure that spoken language does not dictate whether one is eligible for quality healthcare. Wilder will elevate the positive impacts of its Cultural Brokers program and will advocate to establish grants that help support interpreters, trainings and Cultural Brokers programs.
- **Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention: Wilder will work to increase access to safe and affordable and to prevent homelessness for all Minnesotans.**
 - **Homes for All Agenda** Wilder will work through the Homes for All Coalition, as a key leader, to improve housing stability and increase supports for people experiencing homelessness in Minnesota.
- **Affordable Childcare Access: Wilder will support efforts to improve access to childcare through:**
 - Establishment of and investments into scholarships that help families afford out of pocket expenses for critical services.

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SUPPORTING PARTNER *(continued)*

- Investments into programming that support families in paying for child care while they seek/attend work or training/school required for work.
 - Municipal initiatives that seek to expand access to affordable childcare access.
- **Wilder Programming Supports:** Wilder will look to sustain and grow the positive impact already being made by Wilder programming in the areas of:
- **Birth Equity** Wilder supports securing long term funding for our work in the African American Babies Coalition and Projects.
 - **Full Service Community Schools** Wilder supports investments to sustain and expand access to Full Service Community Schools (FSCS).
 - **Education Partnership Coalition (EPC)** Wilder supports initiatives to increase state support for the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood and other EPC sites around the state.
 - **School Linked Mental Health** Wilder will work to support School-Based Mental Health Services and increase investments into the Mental Health Innovation Grant Program.
 - **Healthy Aging** Wilder will advance legislation that makes Minnesota the best state for healthy aging, ensuring that our senior communities have access to critical health services, housing, caregiving supports, and nutritional security.

ENDORISING PARTNER

Wilder will consider endorsing proposals which are aligned with the organizations mission and vision.

These issues areas include but are not limited to:

- Racial Equity & Anti-Discrimination Initiatives
- Culturally Specific/Relevant Approaches to Social Services
- Efforts to Address Food Insecurities for Children & Adults
- Closing the Opportunity Gap
- St. Paul Revitalization
- Criminal Justice System Reforms
- Guaranteed Family & Medical Leave
- Transportation Grants that Increase Access to Wilder Services

Agenda Tiers: The following tiers represent how Wilder believes we can best allocate resources to advance these issues:

Lead: Wilder public policy will center this strategic or core priority during session.

Support: Wilder public policy will lend support through coalitions and partners to this priority.

Endorse: Wilder may lend an endorsement.

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