

Wilder Foundation

2024 Legislative Agenda



Wilder is a collective force for social good that works to see all people thrive.

We champion stability and wellness through direct services, advocacy, and research. We understand that society has created advantages for certain groups and not others; we find ways to see and change how we make 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, etc. 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, Monitor, and Engage with efforts that 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”**. The “cliff effect” occurs when an increase in income triggers disproportionate loss of public assistance.
 - **Streamline Service Application Processes** Applying for services that one is eligible for should not 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. Enrollment in certain benefits can lead to the unintentional disenrollment of others. Whenever possible, the state should align service requirements for public service programs like CCAP, SNAP, MA, MFIP, DWP, etc... as well as city and county services.
 - **Community Navigators** Wilder will also lead policy efforts to integrate community navigators into their respective systems and increase their ability to continue connecting people with available services.

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LEADING PARTNER *(continued)*

- **Increase Use of Presumptive Eligibility & Continuous Eligibility Models** Every year, families who qualify for benefits are dropped from vital services because they failed to confirm that they remained qualified. Minnesota should shift to presumptive eligibility models wherever possible.
- **Reevaluate Asset Limits** Asset limits disincentivize professional advancement, transitions to employment, ownership of vehicles and 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 time lines for asset limit reporting allows for asset development without affecting the 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 worked with partners in 2023 to introduce the MN Basic Income Grant Program and will continue advancing this bill during the 2024 legislative session.
- **Sustainable Support for the Minnesota Homeless Study** Understanding the varied experiences of homelessness is critical to eliminating it. Wilder seeks sustainable public support so that Wilder Research can amplify the impact of the tri-annual study that quantifies homelessness and provides a narrative for those living it.

SUPPORTING PARTNER

- **Wilder Programming Priorities & Supports:** Wilder will work to sustain and grow the positive impact of Wilder programming through legislation that promotes:
 - **Affordable Childcare Access** Wilder will support efforts to improve access to quality and affordable childcare.
 - **Safe Schools** Wilder will work to enhance safety for kids and adults in schools throughout Minnesota, focusing on St. Paul and Intermediate School District 287 schools.
 - **Healthcare Workforce** Wilder will work with its statewide partners to address the critical workforce crisis by implementing practical solutions to ensure that our healthcare workforce, particularly home and community-based services, have the needed resources to provide quality care for all.
 - **Align Mental Health Service Regulations** Aligning service regulations will increase access to services that allow mental health experts to focus on quality service delivery.
 - **Healthy Aging** As a member of the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging, Wilder supports making Minnesota the best state for healthy aging for people of all ages.

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SUPPORTING PARTNER *(continued)*

- **Coalition & Network Priorities & Supports:** Wilder will work on legislation in partnership with various coalitions and networks that lead to:
- **Stable & Accessible Public Health Care Programs** By promoting the agendas of the This is Medicaid Coalition and the Mental Health Legislative Network.
 - **Improved Access to Affordable Housing** Advances the agenda of the Homes for All Coalition
 - **Prevents Homelessness** Supporting the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless and its agenda
 - **Quality Intergenerational Services** Through our work in the Education Partnership Coalition, Aspire Network, and the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging.

MONITOR & ENGAGE (Endorse or Oppose)

Wilder will consider endorsing or opposing proposals in accordance with the organization's mission, vision, and values. Issue areas Wilder is monitoring include but are not limited to:

- Racial Equity and Anti-Discrimination Initiatives
- Enhancing Tenant Protections
- Culturally Specific/Relevant Approaches to Social Services
- Efforts to Address Food Insecurities for Children and Adults
- Closing the Opportunity Gap
- St. Paul Revitalization
- Criminal Justice System Reforms
- Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing
- Opportunities for Wilder Program Sustainability and Innovation

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.

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

Monitor: Wilder will monitor developments and may endorse or oppose proposals based on its values and mission.

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