



children's
defense fund
minnesota

2023 ADVOCACY AGENDA

We all benefit when children and families thrive, including those growing up in Black, Indigenous, and communities of color. Children's Defense Fund believes every child has the right to a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life. We all play a part in ensuring our children and youth a successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

We at Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota (CDF-MN) are ready to work with policymakers to use the historic state budget surplus to create public policies and a budget that move Minnesota children and families forward in the following ways and more.

LEAD

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY-GENERATED SOLUTIONS

Communities know best what they need to create healthy children, youth, and families. Unfortunately, limited funding has left too many good ideas underfunded or unfunded.

CDF-MN will lead, in coalition, to use the state budget surplus to make permanent and fully fund the Community Solutions for Healthy Child Development grant program.



EXPANDING ACCESS TO PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

Access to paid leave to care for oneself or a family member is more important than ever, yet 73% of Minnesotans with children who were not working in late August received no pay. **CDF-MN will lead, in coalition, to advance a state Paid Family and Medical Leave social insurance program that addresses racial and geographic economic and health disparities.**



BUILDING A CHILDCARE SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES HIGH QUALITY CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION TO ALL

Increased emergency state and federal funding sustained a precarious childcare system with shortages even before the pandemic. **CDF-MN will lead efforts to align advocates around a transformation of the early care and education system that includes the permanent, new state and federal investments needed for a quality, affordable, inclusive childcare and early education system.**



CREATING A STATE CHILD TAX CREDIT AND IMPROVING OTHER TAX CREDITS TO INCREASE FAMILY ECONOMIC STABILITY

Tax credits are a proven approach to decreasing child poverty and its lifelong negative impacts on children. **CDF-MN will lead with local, state and federal partners to increase overall access to and periodic payments of state tax credits for children and their families.**



PARTNER

IMPROVING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR BIPOC AND RURAL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Mental health has emerged as a top priority identified by families, practitioners, and the business community as we cope with the ongoing fall-out of COVID-19. **CDF-MN will partner on coalition efforts to ramp up and improve mental health supports for parents and children, especially among infants and in BIPOC and rural communities.**



REDUCING BENEFIT CLIFFS AND INCREASING FLEXIBILITY, COORDINATION AND SIMPLIFICATION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Across Minnesota's working family supports, the crisis has revealed new ways of operating that better support children and families. **CDF-MN will partner with advocates, state and federal policymakers, and administrators to increase coordination, reduce barriers to access, and decrease benefit cliffs. In doing so, public programs—especially healthcare, childcare, and MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program)—will work better for children and families.**



IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS WITH CULTURALLY RELEVANT OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Culturally relevant approaches are proven approaches for achieving educational success among BIPOC children. **CDF-MN and its Freedom Schools® program will partner to advance the state and local policy changes and increase investments necessary to ensure culturally relevant out-of-school opportunities.**



SUPPORT

KEEPING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN STABLE HOUSING

Rental assistance and eviction moratoriums are among the policies that have helped mitigate homelessness and other potential unstable housing harms for children.

CDF-MN will support a continuation of these policies and various approaches to protect children and youth from homelessness and housing instability as Minnesota recovers from the pandemic and continues to address the long-standing effects of systemic racism on housing access.



DECREASING THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Firearms are the leading cause of death for Minnesota children. **CDF-MN will support community partners within the Freedom Schools® network and beyond to advance legislative and community solutions to prevent gun violence through a multi-faceted strategy that includes education and helping families and communities heal.**



ADDRESSING UNEQUAL OUTCOMES IN MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH

In Minnesota and throughout the U.S., BIPOC mothers and babies are much more likely to die or experience serious complications. **Through the Prenatal to Three coalition, CDF-MN will support a variety of proposals designed to ensure every pregnant person and baby thrives from the start.**



ADVANCING FOOD ACCESS TO ENSURE NO CHILD GOES HUNGRY

Minnesotans with children are twice as likely as those without children to report food insufficiency within the past seven days. **CDF-MN will support coalition campaigns to remove school meal barriers, build on pandemic EBT and other COVID innovations, and increase SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) access.**



For more information, please contact

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