



2024 Legislative Agenda

Metropolitan Family Services provides and mobilizes for programming that strengthens families and communities. Our legislative agenda was formulated with the intent of advocating for a comprehensive strategy to empower families to earn, learn, heal, and thrive and solutions to build upon a strong human services sector.



EDUCATION

Young people and their caregivers should have access to a strong early foundation, quality equitable educational supports, including specialized services, and the tools for academic achievement to be prepared for life-long learning and success.



EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Individuals of all life stages shall have access to wrap-around mental health care and be equipped to cope more effectively with stressors and experience true mental and physical wellness. Tailored supports for those affected by individual and community violence contribute to necessary individual, familial, and communal healing.



ECONOMIC STABILITY

Individuals shall have access to the tools and training to earn a living wage, contribute to strong families, and form the foundation of vibrant, flourishing economies. Communities prosper with equitable resources and access to avenues of wealth creation and retention.



EMPOWERMENT

Families and communities thrive when individuals are assured their basic rights, understand how to navigate systems, have access to equal justice, and are provided tools to heal. Communities are made whole when systemic issues that influence violence are addressed and injustices are remedied.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Child Tax Credit (HB4917/SB 3329)

Sponsors: Rep. Marcus Evans & Sen. Omar Aquino

Families continue to struggle with rising costs of raising a family. Historical data has shown that the child tax credit has reduced poverty, created an economic stimulus for local communities, and improved health and education outcomes. This bill would establish a \$300 per child credit for families at or below median income, positively impacting nearly half of all children in Illinois.

School Workplace Readiness Week (HB4417)

Sponsor: Rep. Gregg Johnson

Newly- graduated students often enter the workforce without knowledge of their rights as workers. This bill would provide that public high schools observe "Workplace Readiness week," to provide students in grades 11 and 12 information about their rights as workers.

EDUCATION

\$40 Million Increase for Early Intervention (EI) Services (HB5782/SB3914)

Sponsors: Rep. Elizabeth "Lisa" Hernandez & Sen. Lakesia Collins

EI Programs provide critical services to children who have or at risk of significant developmental delays or disabilities and are a set entitlement the state must offer. Yet the percentage of families waiting for EI services is now more than double that of 2022. An additional investment of \$40 million in EI services for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 is needed to respond to growing caseloads, increasing service delays, and an impending workforce crisis.

Extend Child Care Assistance for Child Care Educators (HB4936/SB3387)

Sponsors: Rep. Nabeela Syed & Sen. Ram Villivalam

Some Early Childhood staff do not have the resources to pay for the full cost of their own child care, but may be priced out of eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). This bill extends CCAP eligibility for some Early Childhood educators, helps alleviate the early childhood workforce crisis, and enables more children in IL to be served.

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Workforce Direct Care Act (HB5094)

Sponsor: Rep. Lindsey LaPointe

Behavioral health (BH) staff often face significant repetitive administrative burdens that result in less time on care and more time on data collection and bureaucratic tasks. This bill would establish the BH Administrative Burden Task Force to assess policies and regulations to improve the BH industry and draft an administrative burden reduction plan with policy recommendations to improve BH outcomes and practices.

Amending the Health Care Worker Background Check Act (SB3661)

Sponsor: Sen. Laura Murphy

BH professionals that have lived experience are culturally competent and supportive to patients. Despite this, they are subjected to a strenuous background check process to provide services at community-based mental health centers. This bill would address the timely need to clear background checks for incoming behavioral health professionals serving in community.

EMPOWERMENT

Karina's Bill (HB4469/SB2633)

Sponsors: Rep. Maura Hirschauer & Sen. Celina Villanueva

In Domestic Violence (DV) homicides where DV survivors had an order of protection, 1/5 of victims were killed within two days of the order being issued. This bill would clarify and strengthen the law to require a firearm to be removed when a DV survivor is granted the firearm remedy in an order of protection.

Crime Victims Compensation Act Improvements (SB3713)

Sponsor: Sen. Robert Peters

The Crime Victims Compensation Act is not meeting the needs of many survivors of gender-based and community violence. This bill would make changes to the Crime Victim Compensation Act making it more accessible, impactful, equitable, and just for victims of violent crimes through improving programmatic processes.

ADMINISTRATIVE & HUMAN SERVICES WORKFORCE

IL Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Act (HB4601/SB3082)

Sponsors: Rep. Lindsey LaPointe & Sen. Laura Fine

MFS advocated for the establishment of the IL Human Services Professional Loan Repayment Loan Program, which would provide student loan relief up to \$25,000 for human service professionals, depending on the degree or certification received, to address the financial burden human service workers face. Unfortunately, this program has remained unfunded. This bill would fund the program at \$15 million for FY25.

Community Partners Fair Contracting Act (HB5064/SB3457)

Sponsors: Rep. Dagmara Avelar & Sen. Michael Halpin

Community-based nonprofits contracted to provide essential community services often face delays in payment from state agencies and other burdens in administering contracts. This bill will rectify structural inequities in the state's contracting, payment, and court of claims systems to ensure that health and human services providers can better meet the needs of their communities.



If you have any comments, questions, or concerns about Metropolitan Family Services' Legislative Agenda or advocacy work, please contact advocacy@metrofamily.org.