The Mid-America Regional Council serves as the metropolitan planning organization and nonprofit association of city and county governments for the bistate Kansas City region. Each year, the MARC Board of Directors adopts state legislative platforms to highlight issues of importance to the region for state legislators in Missouri and Kansas.

In addition, most local governments in the Kansas City metro actively support the legislative agendas of state municipal and county leagues. MARC’s regional platform is consistent with those agendas.

GENERAL POLICY POSITIONS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

Local Government Home Rule
Effective local government is built on the longstanding principle of home rule that is embedded in many statutory provisions, which enables cities and counties to legislate and determine local affairs. Many state and federal statutory, budgetary and regulatory actions limit the ability of local leaders to make decisions. They often impose financial burdens and impede the ability of local communities to govern themselves. **Recommendation:** Consider the impacts of state statutes and budget decisions on local governments, avoid unfunded requirements, and support the principle of flexible home rule to maximize opportunities for local self-determination.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Funding
**Recommendation:** The Legislature is encouraged to identify additional resources beyond existing motor fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees to address the state’s growing transportation needs, including funds for public transit. State legislators must address the issue of insufficient revenues at the state level to meet Missouri’s multi-modal transportation needs. This includes taking steps to protect the integrity of current state funding and working to identify new resources for highway, major roadway and bridge infrastructure, public transit, bicycle, pedestrian and aviation needs across the state and in the Kansas City metro area. In 2017, the General Assembly adopted HCR 47, which established the 21st Century Missouri Transportation System Task Force. From the 21st Century Transportation System Task Force report: "Providing cost-effective multimodal options for Missouri businesses and residents would add efficiency and resiliency to our state’s economy. Even a small investment of about $80 million (about $1.55 per month per driver) would allow MoDOT to give attention to transit, railroads, waterways, bike/pedestrian facilities, airports, and more. Expanding the state’s portfolio of transportation is an inexpensive way of attracting and retaining new and existing residents and businesses, especially as transportation preferences shift in new directions."

Automated Vehicle Technologies
State legislators must consider the potential opportunities and challenges that early adoption of automated vehicle technologies could offer businesses, residents and communities in Missouri and the greater Kansas City area. Potential opportunities include enhanced safety and efficiency in highway, freight and public transportation operations. Potential challenges include increased infrastructure
maintenance costs, impacts to state and local revenues, new traffic and pedestrian safety concerns and uncertainty about liability and insurance requirements for driverless vehicles.

Transportation innovations, including autonomous and connected vehicles, hold promise to improve safety, decrease operating costs and enhance regional economic competitiveness for key sectors including design professional services, automotive manufacturing and freight and logistics businesses. **Recommendation:** Develop state policies to enable and encourage safe and effective deployment of autonomous and connected vehicles. Policies and regulations should promote local innovation, maintain the integrity of local transportation systems, and be compatible with adjoining states.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Solid Waste and Recycling**
The MARC Solid Waste Management District is one of 20 such districts in Missouri charged to supporting local communities to increase waste reduction and recycling to reduce the material going to landfills. **Recommendation:** Continue support for solid waste management districts in Missouri in order to protect local government rights to develop and implement local and regional integrated solid waste management systems and strategies, including waste disposal and materials diversion facilities and services, which are designed to protect human health and the environment and to maximize waste reduction and diversion.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Education at the K-12 and college and university levels is changing to better align educational outcomes with the needs of students to become career-ready and to better meet the needs of the region’s employers. **Recommendations:** Support state education policy that encourages school districts to adopt curriculum and teaching methods to help students be ready to enter the workforce, and develop career pathways, internships and apprenticeships aligned to local workforce needs. Support appropriate funding of Access Missouri and the Missouri A+ Schools Program to ensure that all eligible students can receive meaningful tuition support.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**Energy Conservation**
Communities in the Kansas City region and throughout the state have adopted energy efficiency initiatives to save money, drive investment, create jobs and reduce environmental impacts. The adoption of a state energy plan should include clean energy generation, and support affordable, reliable energy with opportunities to attract high-paying energy jobs to the state. Continued investment in energy efficiency programs translate into economic returns for the state. Creative implementation of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies offer the potential to create a state and local communities that are environmentally sustainable and economically prosperous. Energy efficiency saves money, drives investment across all sectors of the economy, creates jobs and reduces the environmental impact of energy use. Energy efficiency programs for residential customers include property-assisted clean energy (PACE). **Recommendation:** Support legislation to encourage greater investment in energy conservation and renewable energy and energy efficient technologies.
SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY
Streamline Sales Tax
Local governments are being impacted by the increasing use of online sales for goods and services, and a corresponding decrease in sales at retail store locations. A number of states have allowed for sales taxes to be applied to online sales based on the delivery address for purchased goods. 

Recommendation: Support legislation to allow for collection of sales tax for online retail purchases.

TRANSPORTATION
Transportation Safety
There is increasing support to address the use of wireless devices by drivers. Other safety issues: support a primary seat belt law; maintain current law requiring helmet use for motorcycles; and strengthen protections for transit operators from workplace violence. 

Recommendation: Support legislation that will restrict use of wireless phones to hands-free technology and broaden restriction on texting while driving to apply to drivers of all ages. Consider support for other safety measures around motorcycle helmet use, primary seat belt law and safety for transit operators.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
Child Care Subsidies
Quality early learning is critical to helping children to be ready to enter kindergarten and thrive in school and in life. Access to quality child care creates a more productive workplace as well. Parents who trust that their child is well cared for while they are working and who have access to quality, reliable child care are more productive employees and are less likely to miss work due to child care concerns. But the cost of child care can be prohibitive for many parents. In 2019, the average annual cost of infant care in Missouri is $10,041. Infant care in Missouri costs 19.7% more per year than in-state tuition for a four-year public college. In order to help parents work and to provide children with safe, quality child care, Missouri provides child care assistance to qualifying families based on income. Without this assistance, quality child care options would be out of reach for many of Missouri’s most at-risk families.

Nationwide, the average income eligibility for child care is 180 percent of the federal poverty level. Eligibility for Missouri’s child care assistance program has long been lower than most other states, ranking 49th in 2014. Although lawmakers did increase eligibility levels, Missouri still lags behind most other states, including most neighboring states. In addition, subsidy reimbursement rates for providers in many regions of the state are still below 75 percent of the actual market rates for child care. These lower rates make it difficult for providers to serve subsidy-eligible children, making it nearly impossible for many low-income families to access quality child care programs for their children.

Recommendations: (1) Support efforts to increase the income eligibility rate for families who qualify for child care subsidies to 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level; (2) Increase the child care reimbursement rate for child care subsidies to 75 percent of the current market rate; and (3) Ease the sudden loss of subsidy eligibility that can be triggered by minor income increases (the “cliff effect”).

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)
Quality Rating and Improvement Systems provide a framework for a comprehensive early childhood system by measuring and setting benchmarks for quality; developing infrastructure to provide targeted and coordinated quality improvement supports to programs; and providing families with useful information to help them make informed child care choices. In 2017 Missouri passed legislation to develop and pilot an early learning quality assurance report. And in 2019, funding was provided to pilot a Quality Assurance Report (QAR). The QAR is a helpful start to measuring and supporting quality, however, due to differences that are present in needs, structures, and resources throughout the state, a
framework that allows for regional customization could provide important support for quality improvement efforts. **Recommendation: Support efforts to fund the development and full implementation of a QRIS framework for the state of Missouri while advocating for regional customization.**

**Expand Access to Quality Home Visiting Programs**
Research shows high quality home visiting programs, like Parents as Teachers, provide parents with children under the age of five with parenting support and child development knowledge to help prepare children for school at a time when the child’s brain is developing at its most rapid pace. Budget cuts over the past decade have restricted PAT and other quality home visiting programs from reaching all the Missouri families that could benefit from these vital services. **Recommendation: Support efforts to expand funding for high quality home visiting programs to increase access for more Missouri families.**

**HEALTH AND MEDICAL**

**Medicaid support for Community Paramedic and Community Health Worker**
National studies show that helping connect patients with non-medical social and community services as well as helping them follow their doctor’s directions can improve patient outcomes and reduce health care costs. EMS agencies are establishing programs targeted to those residents who call for emergency transports by EMS agencies to help them prior to the 911 call. These community paramedic programs enable EMS agencies to help residents get connected to community services and understand and follow doctor directions. Similarly, health care and other community organizations employ frontline health care workers called Community Health Workers to help connect patients with community-based services and learn how to manage their health care. Neither of these services are currently able to be reimbursed by Missouri Medicaid when the patient is covered by that insurance. A change to Missouri’s Medicaid Plan would enable reimbursement for EMS agencies and community organizations to improve services to patients and reduce health care costs. **Recommendation: Seek a Medicaid State Plan amendment to allow for reimbursement for Community Paramedic and Community Health Worker services.**

**Revise Do Not Resuscitate Law to allow for TPOPP**
TPOPP is based on the belief that individuals have the right to make their own health care decisions. The Transportable Physician Orders for Patient Preferences (TPOPP) initiative is designed to honor values and goals of care for persons living with serious illness. It is designed to address the needs of seriously ill patients by translating patient goals and preferences into medical orders, whether the person is in a hospital setting, skilled nursing facility or living independently in their own community. The Do Not Resuscitate Law in Missouri does not allow for TPOPP. **Recommendation: Revise Missouri DNR laws to enable seriously ill patients and their families to work with their physicians to translate their preferences into medical orders.**

**Time-Critical Diagnosis**
The TCD program provides for the rapid recognition of stroke, heart attacks (STEMI) and serious trauma by EMS services and hospitals. MARCER, the regional committee for EMS and hospital coordination, played a leadership role to establish the Missouri TCD program. The original legislation passed in 2008 was ground breaking in the nation as an effort to assure all patients with these critical problems rapid and effective management no matter where they are in Missouri. There are numerous medical studies that have demonstrated that a statewide system approach has a dramatic impact on the outcome of these patients. The Missouri TCD law sets up a system where the ambulance services will identify and rapidly transport patients to hospitals that have been previously designated based upon the resources and personnel they have to treat these specialized situations. The hospitals are designated at differing levels and the various regions of the state have developed plans to pre-determine where these patients
will be taken to expedite care. The whole concept is based upon getting the right patient to the right hospital rapidly. **Recommendation: Support funding to continue the Time Critical Diagnosis Program with certification of hospitals as trauma centers and provide funding to support the collection of data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the TCD program.**

**Support the Expansion of Health Care Insurance Coverage**
Missouri did not expand Medicaid (MO HealthNet) under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Non-disabled adults without children are not eligible for Medicaid regardless of how low their income is, and parents with dependent children are only eligible with incomes that don’t exceed 22 percent of the poverty level. Only Texas and Alabama have lower Medicaid eligibility caps, at 18 percent. If Missouri were to expand Medicaid, an estimated 200,000 people would be newly eligible for coverage. Missouri is one of 14 states that have not yet expanded coverage (Idaho and Nebraska are counted among the states that have expanded coverage, although their coverage expansions don’t take effect until 2020). There are 124,000 people in Missouri who are in the coverage gap and have no realistic access to health insurance. **Recommendation: Expand Medicaid coverage to increase health care access for low and moderate income residents that are not currently covered by the program.**

**Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (Registry for Opioids)**
Missouri is one of a few states that do not have a drug monitoring program for physicians to check on opioid prescriptions for patients prior to issuing additional prescriptions. **Recommendation: Support the creation of a statewide prescription registry for opioids for use by physicians.**

**Public Health Funding**
The state of Missouri provides little state funding to support local public health departments. The funding is important to ensure that the public’s health is protected from disease outbreaks and that the public’s health is improved through preventive programs and services. **Recommendation: Increase state financial support for local public health.**

**Funding for Older Adult Services**
MARC is the Area Agency on Aging and provides services to older adults including home delivered meals that are supported with state and federal funds. The state has reduced its support for these programs, which are experiencing substantial increases in demand as the number of older adults grows. Funding was increased in recent years after cutbacks during the economic recession. The need for services continues to grow. **Recommendation: Increase state funding to Area Agencies on Aging for home delivered meals and other services.**

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
There is a need to increase opportunities for high school students to earn college credit hours from public or nonprofit postsecondary institutions in the Kansas City area that offer programming that supports their career interests, including skilled trades. **Recommendation: Support legislation to allow qualifying students to seek state financial aid for college courses taken prior to high school graduation, and support policy changes that would simplify the current process for certifying teachers to teach these dual credit courses and improve access by removing geographic restrictions.**