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.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Funding ★★★ Priority Issue

**Recommendation: Look for ways to raise new revenues to address the state’s transportation needs and protect existing T-WORKS funds for transportation purposes.**

The Kansas Legislature passed T-WORKS in May 2010 to support continued investment in the state’s transportation system. The Kansas Department of Transportation has outlined a $4.3 billion plan to ensure the preservation of the state’s highways and bridges. MARC supports the implementation of an effective multi-modal transportation program aligned with the region’s priorities, measures to encourage regional approaches to public transit and transportation planning, and the practice of long-term multi-year comprehensive transportation programs developed in collaboration with local governments and other stakeholders. State investment in the regional transportation system will facilitate business access to workforce, access to goods and services and access to external markets for local products. A well-funded, well-planned and well-maintained multi-modal transportation system will enhance regional competitiveness by helping attract, retain and grow area businesses. 2018 House Sub. for SB 391 was passed and signed by the governor. The Joint Legislative Task Force will meet through November 29, 2018.

### Automated Vehicles ★★★ Priority Issue

State legislators must consider the potential opportunities and challenges that early adoption of automated vehicle technologies could offer businesses, residents and communities in Kansas and Missouri. 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 in both Missouri and Kansas.**
**Transportation Safety**
Safety is a growing concern among transportation professionals, law enforcement and others. The legislature is urged to address a number of safety issues in 2019, including: retain the current 75 mph speed limit (not increasing it); amend current law to include liability protection for Child Passenger Safety Technicians and their agencies; support helmets for children under 18 years of age using ATVs; and encourage attentive driving.

**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.

**EARLY LEARNING**

**Child Care Subsidies ★★★ Priority Issue**
One of the primary obstacles to keeping parents in the workforce is the availability of affordable child care. If Kansas children do not have child care, their parents cannot work. Without access to child care assistance, many low-income working parents must choose between their work and the wellbeing of their children. Subsidy reimbursement rates for providers in many regions of the state are still below 75% of the actual market rates for child care, some are as low as 19% of the market rate. 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. **Recommendation:** Support efforts to increase the child care reimbursement rate for child care subsidies up to 75% of the current market rate.

**Children’s Initiatives Fund and the Kansas Endowment for Youth Fund ★★★ Priority Issue**
The Kansas Endowment for Youth Fund (KEY) and Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) were created by the Legislature in 1999 and serve as the cornerstone of funding for the Kansas early care and education system. The KEY Fund is designed to serve as an endowment for investments in early education, and is funded by annual payments from the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement. Money flows from the KEY fund into the CIF, and from there is distributed to early childhood programs. This infrastructure has created a successful system that the Kansas Legislature’s own efficiency audit described as a gold standard for government accountability. Unfortunately, over $228 million has been swept from the KEY Fund since 1999 to plug revenue shortfalls and in recent years there have been efforts to eliminate the CIF and move those dollars into the State General Fund. Maintaining the state’s investment in the CIF and insuring that all future KEY funds are invested in the CIF will ensure that today’s children will be equipped to lead Kansas toward a more prosperous future. **Recommendation:** Support efforts to protect existing funding for the CIF and KEY funds and work to secure future funding to protect these critical investments in early childhood programs across Kansas.
Expand Access to Quality Home Visiting Programs:
Research shows high quality home visiting programs provide parents with children under the age of five with parenting support and child development knowledge help prepare children for school at a time when the child’s brain is developing at its most rapid pace. During the 2017 session the Kansas Legislature reversed previous funding changes that restricted the number of families Parents as Teachers (PAT) was able to serve each year. Although these changes now allow the PAT program to serve more families, budget cuts over the past decade have restricted PAT and other quality home visiting programs from reaching all the families that could benefit from these vital services.

Recommendation: MCEL and PIQ support efforts to expand funding for high quality home visiting programs to increase access for more Kansas families.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

Support the Expansion of Health Care Insurance Coverage
Expand Medicaid coverage to increase health care access for low and moderate income residents that are not currently covered by the program.

Public Health Funding
Increase financial support for local public health.

KANSAS 911 SERVICE

Legislation has been in place since 2011 (KS 12-5362) to collect a 911 surcharge statewide and ensure its equitable distribution to local agencies responsible for receiving and processing 911 calls for emergency response. The current law provides for a monthly fee of $0.53 on all devices capable of calling 911. Legislation will be proposed for 2019 to:

1. Raise the current fee on devices capable of calling 911 from $.53 per month to $.90 per month.
2. Deposit $.10 from each 911 fee remitted into the 911 state grant fund.
3. Raise the minimum county distribution from $50,000 to $60,000 annually.
4. Allow the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council to establish training standards and programs related to the technology and operations of the NG911 hosted solution.
5. Allow the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council to establish data standards, maintenance policies and data reporting requirements for GIS data.
6. Allow the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council to engage a contracting firm to review and update the GIS data for a PSAP with GIS data that has not been updated in more than a year, assessing the cost of this update to the governing body that oversees the PSAP.

Recommendation: Support legislation to ensure that 911 services across the state of Kansas remain high quality and all counties have a minimum level of funding to support their operations.

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.