

2026 Kansas State Policy Agenda

Mid-America Regional Council

About MARC

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) is the association of city and county governments and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) serving the bi-state Kansas City region, including Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri. In addition to our nine-member counties, many of MARC's programs and services support communities across the two-state area. MARC is governed by a board of locally elected officials, and the board convenes nonprofit organizations, economic development organizations and other groups to address the priority areas addressed in this document.

About this policy platform

This policy platform represents a consensus of policy positions and priorities of the Kansas City region as discussed and discerned in various committees, working groups, and public engagement forums supported by MARC. It is approved by the elected leaders comprising the MARC Board of Directors as a statement of regional consensus and does not necessarily reflect the views of individual board members.

The Kansas State Legislature is encouraged to consider the following critical needs in the Kansas City region as they deliberate policy issues and appropriate funds in fiscal year 2026.

Funding overview

The state receives grant funds from many federal agencies to support programs at the local and regional levels. Kansas has worked cooperatively with local governments and regional organizations on the efficient and effective use of these federal resources. The state is encouraged to continue to pass through these grants to sustain important programs and services.

Examples of the **federal funds that come through the states** include:

- **Transportation:** CMAQ Way-to-Go, Congestion Management and Air Quality; Planning Sustainable Places; Operation Greenlight System; Destination Safe Coalition; Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Training; Consolidated Planning
- **Aging:** Public Health Education (Community Health Workers)
- **Emergency preparedness:** Public Health Emergency Response; Homeland Security
- **Environment:** Air Quality Implementation; Water Quality Management Planning; Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy; Regional Stormwater Standards Training and Outreach

Examples of state funding opportunities that could **replace reductions in federal funds**:

- Older Adult Services, including funds for home-delivered meals.
- Funds to address food insecurity, including replacing federal grant reductions in the SNAP program and additional funds to match USDA grants.
- Support for environmental needs in areas of solid waste disposal, brownfield clean-up and revitalization, water quality, and environmental problems in housing (mold, lead, etc.).

- Support for housing development through state low-income housing tax credits to use along with the federal program.
- State funds to support infrastructure needs that cannot be addressed with federal funds, such as local roads and bridges, water and sewer system improvements, etc.

Local government authority

MARC supports local government decision-making and authority. MARC supports the ability of local governments, school districts and other special districts governed by local elected officials to make decisions for their communities, particularly tax and revenue decisions, to ensure efficient, effective and quality operations, infrastructure and other investments.

Transportation

MARC supports policies that guide investment and support coordinated efforts to achieve a regional vision for people, places and communities, including:

- Transportation **modal funding** and **planning** policies to ensure the Kansas City region receives appropriate resources as a major economic hub, with multi-modal transportation options, and a safe and secure transportation system.
- Maintain strong relationships between the Kansas State Department of transportation, regional planning agencies and local governments to **align transportation investment priorities** and expedite delivery of federally funded projects.
- Support the expansion of passenger rail to connect communities across Kansas.

Economy & Housing

MARC supports policies that enhance the performance of the metropolitan economy and expand economic opportunities through regional growth and housing, including:

- Regional **economic development projects** in key industries that offer the opportunity to transform regional and state economic prosperity.
- Policies to achieve safe, stable and **attainable housing** that meets the needs of families and older adults.

Environment

MARC supports policies that help keep the region's air and water clean, reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills, and restore green infrastructure, including:

- The Kansas City region's efforts to **reduce ozone** and fine particulate matter pollution and maintain its status in compliance with national ambient air quality standards.
- State and local plans that protect water resources and protect residents from the risk of **extreme weather conditions**.
- Policies and regulations that enable local governments to address **solid waste and recycling** in ways that respond to their community's needs.

Safety & Security

MARC supports policies that strengthen the region's ability to protect, prepare, respond and recover, including:

- Continued support for the locally owned **Kansas City Regional 911 System** and improved interoperability across the state line.
- Regulations that enable EMS agencies to ensure a quality, time-critical diagnosis program and provide **reimbursement payments and program regulations** for high-quality, pre-emergency care.
- **Community paramedicine programs** that allow EMS agencies to improve care for patients in their homes.

Health

MARC supports policies to improve health and wellness outcomes for all, including:

- Funds to fully maintain and expand access to **healthy foods** for families and older adults.
- Investment in strong state and local public health infrastructure to ensure that communities are protected from, and able to respond to, **public health threats**.
- Allow agencies that use community health workers to be **reimbursed through Medicaid** and other public health care programs.
- Continued support for a strong, **accessible Medicaid program** for all Kansans.
- Support additional state resources for behavioral health services to students and correctional facility inmates.
- Support high-quality, pre-emergency care through **reimbursement payments** along with continued integration with behavioral health centers.
- Implementation of forthcoming **Rural Health Transformation Program** funding through preventive and pre-emergency care, use of community health workers, technology-based services and local regional community care hubs.

Early Learning

MARC supports policies that help build an early learning system with strong families, skilled teachers, quality programs, sustained and sufficient funding, and multi-sector collaboration, including:

- State resources to build a robust **child care system**, including affordable services and a quality workforce pipeline while increasing access for families.

Aging

MARC supports policies that help strengthen systems for the region's most at-risk residents, including older adults, by promoting healthy, active lifestyles and nutrition for residents, including:

- Supporting additional funding and flexibility for regional and local agencies to respond to specific needs of **older adults**.
- Funding for **community care hub** services in the Kansas City area through the Community Support Network.