2027 Missouri State Action Agenda

November 2026

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MARC's state agenda is grounded in regional needs and the priorities of its members. MARC engages in a nonpartisan manner, working with legislators and administrations of any party, and focuses on programs, funding stability and local decision-making.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

Strong relationships will be the foundation of MARC's intergovernmental relations success. Building them with the Missouri legislators who represent the region and with key state agencies will be foundational to our activities in the 2027 session but will continue throughout the year.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING PRIORITY	
Why it matters	MARC's positions are most effective when legislators and state agency leaders already know MARC, understand the region's needs and view MARC as a trusted source of data and analysis. Relationships built before bills are filed allow staff to respond quickly and credibly as the session evolves.
Who we engage	• Legislators representing Districts from Kansas City region and their staff • Executive branch leadership and key state agencies, such as MoDOT, MDNR. • The Missouri Association of Councils of Government and its government affairs consultant, Gamble and Schlemeier.
What we will educate stakeholders about	• What MARC does and the services it provides to the region. • The region's needs and priorities. • The value of regional councils and regional collaboration.
What we will do	• Share examples of regional collaboration that make efficient use of state and federal funding. • Provide policy intelligence and information on regional impacts of proposed legislation, funding or regulatory changes. • Engage civic partner organization and issue-specific coalitions to share information and engage collectively. • Share regional data and needs assessments to build awareness of the region's priority issues.
How it supports the postures	Relationship building supports work in any posture. It is coordinated across MARC departments so that contacts are known, messages are aligned and staff can move quickly when an issue is elevated.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Bill prefiling begins Dec. 1, so the bills that matter most will not be known until the session takes shape. The Board sets MARC's positions and starting postures, and staff apply them to filed bills and executive actions. As a result, the Board will initially approve priority issues, starting positions and starting postures; staff will use these filters to review filed bills and executive

actions. Staff will keep the Board informed and look to the Board for guidance throughout the session (January through mid-May).

- Proactive: MARC will actively work to inform policy, funding or administrative outcomes with significant fiscal or regional consequences and a credible opportunity for action in the 2027 Missouri legislative session.
- Monitor: MARC will track a defined set of issues where state action is reasonably plausible and consequences could be significant, assess impacts and recommend targeted engagement when warranted.
- **Reserve**: MARC will maintain awareness of established interests and engage selectively when state action has material implications for MARC or the region

2027 AGENDA

The Board is asked to endorse the policy topics below, each with a starting posture. Each topic appears under its highest posture. Staff will apply the postures to specific bills as they are filed and may adjust as the session evolves.

PROACTIVE

MARC will actively engage on these topics where state policy, funding or administrative outcomes have significant fiscal or regional consequences and there is a credible opportunity for action in the 2027 session.

EARLY LEARNING	
Why it matters	Affordable, high-quality child care supports families, providers and the regional workforce, and depends on state funding and subsidy design. MARC has grants that support promotion of this work.
MARC position	• Support funding for the early educator workforce pipeline and credentialing, and for locally designed quality improvement programs. • Maintain funding for Child Care Works tuition cost-sharing and state-funded Early Head Start. • Support childcare subsidy reimbursement based on the true cost of care rather than market rate.
Starting focus	• **Proactive:** Child Care Works tuition cost-sharing. • **Monitor:** quality improvement programs for teaching staff and administrators, and state-funded Early Head Start.

AGING	
Why it matters	Demand for aging services continues to grow, and Area Agencies on Aging with wrap-around services help older adults stay in their homes and communities. These services depend on state funding and flexibility.
MARC position	• Preserve Senior Services Growth and Development funding. • Expand funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Starting focus	• **Proactive:** Funding and flexibility for Area Agencies on Aging.

HEALTH	
Why it matters	Access to healthy food, public health capacity, Medicaid and behavioral health services shape resident well-being across the region and depend on state funding and program design.
MARC position	• Maintain and expand funding for access to healthy foods. • Support investment in state and local public health infrastructure. • Preserve an accessible Medicaid program coverage continuity. • Support Medicaid reimbursement for agencies that use community health workers. • Expand state resources for behavioral health services for students and correctional facility inmates. • Support implementation of Rural Health Transformation Program funding through preventive and pre-hospital services, community health workers and technology-based services.
Starting focus	• **Proactive**: Funding for access to healthy foods (SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks) and funding for the Mid-America Community Support Network (CSN). • **Monitor:** Medicaid access and Rural Health Transformation Program implementation.

MONITOR

MARC will track these topics where state action is reasonably plausible and consequences could be significant. Staff will assess impacts and recommend targeted engagement when warranted.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY	
Why it matters	Local governments, school districts and special districts rely on their own tax and revenue decisions to fund services for residents. Changes in state law can limit that authority.
MARC position	• Support local government decision-making and authority, including tax and revenue decisions by local governments, school districts and special districts.
Starting focus	• **Monitor:** proposals affecting local decision-making and authority.

TRANSPORTATION	
Why it matters	The region's transportation investment depends on state funding and a planning framework that aligns priorities among MoDOT, regional planning agencies and local governments. Past legislatures have proposed significant changes to the Commission's authority and planning process.

MARC position	• Support transportation funding and planning policies that ensure the region receives appropriate resources, with multimodal options and a safe, secure system. • Maintain a planning framework that aligns investment priorities and expedites delivery of federally funded projects. • Support expansion of passenger rail connecting communities across Missouri.
Starting focus	• **Monitor:** funding and planning policies (especially any proposed budget cuts), the MoDOT planning relationship, and passenger rail, including potential funding for a third River Runner to St. Joseph and St. Louis.

ENVIRONMENT	
Why it matters	Local governments need the ability to address solid waste and recycling based on community needs, and the region must maintain compliance with national air quality standards. Solid waste was a very active issue last year, though it is unclear whether legislation will be proposed this session.
MARC position	• Support policies and regulations that enable local governments to address solid waste and recycling based on community needs. • Support regional efforts to reduce ozone and fine particulate pollution and maintain compliance with national air quality standards. • Protect water resources and residents from extreme weather through state and local plans.
Starting focus	• **Monitor:** local authority over solid waste and recycling, and state and local plans for water resources and extreme weather.

RESERVE

MARC will maintain awareness of these established interests, and any issue not listed, and engage selectively. Staff will review newly filed bills at prefiling and elevate a topic when state action has material implications for MARC or the region, as described in the trigger.

Topic	MARC position	Trigger for elevation
Economy & Housing	• Support policies that advance regional economic development projects in key industries. • Support policies that achieve safe, stable and attainable housing for all residents.	Elevate if a filed bill would materially affect regional economic development projects or housing supply and affordability, and MARC has a clear role. Relationship building and data sharing continue in the meantime.
Safety & Security	• Sustain the locally governed Kansas City Regional 911 System and interoperable emergency communications through policies, funding and governance. • Support EMS regulations and reimbursement payments for time-critical and pre-emergency care, including community paramedicine programs.	Elevate if a filed bill would materially affect the Kansas City Regional 911 System, emergency communications funding or governance, or EMS regulations and reimbursement.