



# JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS

**State Legislative Platform**

**2015**

**[jocogov.org](http://jocogov.org)**

## **CORE PRINCIPLES**

The federal, state, and local governments have a partnership through which numerous governmental services are funded and made available to citizens. This partnership is dependent upon stable funding, decision-making at the appropriate level, and removing barriers to efficient and effective access to services. Johnson County strongly supports the following core principles as the means to an effective and improved partnership among each level of government.

### **1.1 Retain and Enhance County Home Rule Authority**

Johnson County supports the retention and strengthening of local home rule authority to allow locally elected officials to conduct the business of their jurisdiction in a manner that best reflects the desires of their constituents and results in maximum benefit to that community. The County further supports putting forth a constitutional amendment granting counties — as one of the cornerstones of Kansas government — the constitutional home rule authority currently enjoyed by cities.

(Added in 1998)

### **1.2 Maintain Financial Stability for County Governmental Services**

Many critical county government services are financed by the federal and state governments and subsequently provided by local governments. As a key provider, Johnson County seeks federal and state appropriations at levels adequate to meet the needs of the recipients. Furthermore, Johnson County opposes reductions in funding for services that result from actual reductions, as well as, cuts in “real dollars” which result from a lack of inflationary adjustments. Johnson County is a partner in providing services for the State. Annually, Johnson County spends over \$146 million to provide state services for the citizens of Johnson County. Our local effort supports the provision of state services. We do not support reductions in state funding, nor do we support changes in state taxation that would reduce resources available for the State to carry out these functions. Moreover, the State should explore the possibility of providing greater flexibility to local units of government, to allow local control over implementing any additional reductions in programs or services due to State funding cuts.

(Added in 1998)

### **1.3 Oppose Unfunded Mandates**

Johnson County supports minimizing the financial and staffing implications of “devolution,” the passing down of responsibilities to counties by the state and federal governments, by seeking funding for mandates and reasonable periods of time to phase in new funded responsibilities. Any budget reductions or changes in state taxation that reduce state resources with an impact on county government services should be evaluated closely by the State and based on a cost benefit analysis of how such reductions would increase cost demands at either the local or state level. If the State reduces funding for county government services, the State should provide greater flexibility and increased local ability to raise revenue beyond primarily sales and property tax sources.

(Added in 1998)

**1.4 Maintain Local Control of Revenues and Spending**

Recognizing that communities are best served and citizens' values and standards are best reflected when local control of taxing and spending is maximized, Johnson County opposes any state imposition of tax or spending lids which place limits on how much revenue a local government can raise or spend from year to year.

(Added in 1998)

**PRIORITIES**

**2.1 SAFETY FEATURES ALONG K-10**

Johnson County supports the Kansas Department of Transportation's efforts to address the issue of cross-over traffic crashes along the K-10 corridor and other similar transportation corridors in Kansas. From 2010 – 2013 the Kansas Department of Transportation reported 55 Cross-Median crashes that resulted in 3 fatalities and 26 injuries. We support the increased use of safety features and programs, including cabling, along the K-10 corridor to prevent cross-over traffic crashes.

(Added in 2014)

**2.2 LEGISLATIVE PARTICIPATION**

Johnson County supports local officials and their representatives' ability to freely participate in the legislative process through advocacy and education on issues affecting the County. Local officials, representing their citizens and taxpayers, must retain the authority to make decisions regarding membership in organizations and to participate in the legislative process through advocacy without cumbersome reporting requirements.

(Added in 2014)

**2.3 NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS**

Johnson County supports the current schedule and structure of local elections and is opposed to any legislation that would require that local elections be conducted with partisan identification, or vacancies in non-partisan elected positions be filled through partisan means. The Johnson County Charter, approved by voters in 2000 and reviewed by a Charter Commission in 2011, specifically looked at the issue of partisan elections and determined that they were not in the best interest of Johnson County citizens. This is an issue that is best determined by the citizens and elected officials of each jurisdiction.

(Added in 2014)

**2.4 CONTRACTS BETWEEN CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES**

Johnson County supports expanding the municipalities permitted by K.S.A. 12-2908 to contract with other municipalities to perform government service, activity or undertaking. Current law allows for cities, counties and townships to enter into such contracts, which are not considered to be formal interlocal agreements, which would require Attorney General approval. Johnson County seeks to expand this contract authority to include fire districts, water districts, school districts and other local government public entities. This will allow for more collaboration and partnerships and can further reduce the cost of government for citizens.

(Added in 2015)

### **2.5 BUS ON SHOULDER AUTHORIZATION**

Johnson County supports amending K.S.A. 8-1517 to allow for the operation of public transit buses on certain right shoulders within Wyandotte County. Johnson County Transit has been operating buses on select right shoulders of highways since January 1, 2011 during peak commute hours, approximately 2900 times, all without incident. Many congestion points are located in Wyandotte County as the buses travel to and from downtown Kansas City, and the expansion of this exemption would help reduce commute time further.

(Added in 2015)

## **Standing Position**

## **Taxation and Finance**

### **3.1 MODIFICATION TO PENSIONS AND RETIREMENT**

Johnson County supports the current plan design, as it applies to Counties, and full funding of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs). Local governments have fully funded their share of the KPERs pool. Johnson County urges the State to fully fund its obligation at the Actuarial Required Contribution (ARC).

(Added in 2001)

### **3.2 OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS ON INTERNET**

Johnson County supports amending current statutes to allow counties the option of publishing required notices on the official County website in lieu of publication in the official county newspaper.

(Added in 2012)

### **3.3 TAX POLICY**

Johnson County supports stable revenue sources and urges the Legislature not to provide any further exemptions to the ad valorem property tax base or the state/local sales tax base, as well as industry specific special tax treatment through exemptions or property classification. Johnson County does not support changes in State taxation policy that would narrow the tax base or significantly reduce available funding for key joint State/County programs, put the County at a competitive sales tax disadvantage with Missouri, or impose a sales tax on professional services.

(Added in 2001)

### **3.4 MODIFICATIONS TO CONCEALED CARRY LAW**

Johnson County believes local jurisdictions are in the best position to determine how best to maintain the safety of its facilities and employees. Additional definitions of facilities and security measures, as well as personnel policies, should remain in local jurisdictions' authority.

(Added in 2013)

### **3.5 MORTGAGE TITLE TRANSACTIONS**

Johnson County supports statutory amendments requiring the tracking of all land record mortgage instruments through proper public notification of assignments and releases as directed by KSA 58-2308. The recording of these documents must include an accurate paper trail to ensure a complete chain of title to protect the interests of the property owner and lending institution. This legislation is sponsored by the Kansas Register of Deeds Association and the Kansas County Officials Association.

(Added in 2012)

### **3.6 COUNTY REVENUE SOURCES**

Johnson County supports legislation to provide statutory local option fees and taxing authority to finance county services, which could be exercised on a county-by-county basis.

(Added in 2000)

### **3.7 LIMITS ON APPRAISED VALUATION GROWTH OR MILL LEVY RATES**

Johnson County supports the continued ability of local governments to establish budgets without limitations on appraised valuation growth or increases in expenditures. Such limitations would erode the ability of local officials to make decisions close to the public and will reduce bond ratings, resulting in more expensive debt service payments on needed capital projects.

(Added in 2001)

### **3.8 KANSAS OPEN RECORDS AND OPEN MEETINGS ACT**

Johnson County believes that an open government is essential to building public confidence. However, we recognize that in some circumstances the public interest is better served by preventing the disclosure of sensitive information. We support the retention of the exceptions in the Kansas Open Records Act and the permitted subject matters for executive sessions contained in the Open Meetings Act currently found in the law. Additionally, Johnson County supports the existing allowances for cost recovery for open records requests included under current law.

(Added in 2004)

### **3.9 LOCAL OPTION FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ACT**

Johnson County supports the continuation of local option provisions in the Public Employer-Employee Relations Act (PEERA). Local governments should remain empowered to decide collective bargaining issues based upon local conditions, circumstances, needs, values, and the desires of local taxpayers.

(Added in 2000)

### **3.10 STATUTORY PASS-THROUGH FUNDING**

Johnson County calls for the preservation of local government revenues which pass through the State of Kansas's treasury. These funds come from a longstanding partnership between local governments and the State, and are generated via economic activity at the local level. Both alcoholic liquor tax funds and the local portion of motor fuels taxes should not be withheld from local governments and siphoned into the State General Fund. Local governments in recent years have had to cope with the legislature not funding LAVTRF,

demand transfers and the machinery & equipment property tax “slider,” and should not be forced to further aid in balancing the State’s budget.

(Added in 2011)

### **3.11 MOTOR VEHICLE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

Johnson County supports greater flexibility at the local level in providing motor vehicle services. Burdensome State statutes combined with poorly designed computer systems at the State level have created inefficiencies providing motor vehicle titling and registration services. Johnson County specifically supports elimination of the requirement for County Treasurer’s to verify proof of insurance during the vehicle registration or renewal process. This time-consuming requirement does not ensure compliance with the law. We urge the Insurance Commissioner, the Administration and County Treasurers to determine how best to achieve this verification. Johnson County also specifically supports giving more local control of the MVRS system and encouraging further State financial support of KDOR to finish correcting and implementing programming changes to improve the system.

(Added in 2010)

## **Infrastructure and Environment**

### **3.12 SOLID WASTE**

As home to the largest regional landfill in Kansas, Johnson County supports a regional approach to landfill management and waste reduction methods. Johnson County also supports state legislation that ensures counties and cities receive their fair share of landfill tonnage fee revenue to support local waste reduction projects.

(Added in 2006)

### **3.13 COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

Recognizing it is critical to maintain Kansas infrastructure, Johnson County supports continued investment in the Comprehensive Transportation Program known as T-WORKS. We recognize the current funding level is far from adequate to address ongoing statewide infrastructure funding needs and state highway funds should be used for the purpose they are collected. As such, funds should be allocated strategically to ensure there is an identifiable long-term return on investment for the entire state. Investing in growth areas is critical to creating a sustainable revenue stream that will address statewide infrastructure needs. Additionally we encourage state investments in public transit services, particularly along the K-10 corridor, which can ease congestion and delay the need for costly road expansions, as well as the feasibility of expanded toll road utilization.

(Added in 1999)

### **3.14 ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES**

Johnson County supports the use of alternative and renewable energy sources and encourages the legislature to provide incentives for such energy sources that protect our air quality and reduce our dependence on oil such as gas-electric hybrid and other alternatively fueled vehicles provided the alternatives do not produce a negative environmental impact on the County.

(Added in 2002)

### **3.15 EMINENT DOMAIN**

Johnson County supports current law regarding the use of eminent domain by local units of government. The County believes that restrictions upon the purpose and/or the future transfers of title be left to the local governing body. Johnson County has not used and has no intention of using eminent domain for economic development purposes but only for utilities and public infrastructure improvements.

(Added in 2005)

### **3.16 PROMOTE E-GOVERNMENT AND COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES**

Johnson County supports initiatives that enable the use of innovative technology to promote more efficient and effective delivery of government services to its citizens.

(Added in 2001)

### **3.17 WASTEWATER DISCHARGE LIMITS**

Recognizing that clean and safe water resources are critical to the environment, public health, safety, and recreation, Johnson County supports sustainable water quality standards that are based upon the latest available scientific information and a public decision-making process relating to water quality standards and use designations.

(Added in 2006)

### **3.18 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENERGY CONSERVATION**

Johnson County supports state efforts to (1) develop and implement cost effective, scientifically-based energy and environmental plans, including plans to address greenhouse gas emissions, (2) stimulate investment in energy conservation and alternative energy technology (3) consider economic, social and natural resource impacts when making decisions, and (4) provide local governments flexibility and resources to meet the community's energy and environmental goals.

(Added in 2010)

## **Human Services**

### **3.19 MEDICAID EXPANSION**

Providing Medicaid is the responsibility of the State and Federal government. The decision to limit Medicaid expansion has an impact on the citizens of Johnson County. The federal government will pay 100% of the costs associated with the expansion of Medicaid through 2016 and 90% afterwards. If Kansas does not take this action, there will continue to be approximately 14,000 people in Johnson County (130,000 – 150,000 statewide) without health insurance. These people are below 100% of the federal poverty level (Individual: \$11,500/year, Family of four: \$23,500) but above 32% (Individual: \$3,677/year, Family of four: \$7,520), the cut off for Medicaid in Kansas. The Affordable Care Act provides people in Kansas whose incomes are between 100% and 400% of the federal poverty level access to health insurance through the Marketplace and provides subsidies to help them with the cost.

Those individuals that neither qualify for subsidies or for Medicaid will not be able to obtain preventative and primary care, likely causing them to utilize expensive emergency room service or the safety net services provided by Counties. The Kansas Hospital Association

estimates that Kansas would have received in excess of \$286 million in additional funding if Medicaid eligibility had been expanded, and the Urban Institute estimates that over 10-years Kansas Hospitals will lose \$2.6 billion in reimbursements. Kansans are paying federal tax dollars that are being used in other states that have expanded Medicaid, but our own citizens are not receiving the same benefit.

(Added in 2014)

### **3.20 MEDICAID ADMINISTRATION**

The State implemented Medicaid managed care in January 2013 with the intent to promote efficiency, care coordination, and increase access to health care through KanCare. The State has pledged there will be no reduction in services, eligibility, or reimbursements rates. KanCare affects vulnerable populations in Kansas and Counties are partners in these programs. We support close oversight of the promised benefits of this managed care model.

(Added in 2006, 2012)

### **3.21 AGING SERVICES**

Johnson County supports the maintenance of current funding and service levels for Area Agencies on Aging. These services are essential to keep the aging population out of the Medicaid Nursing Home Program and are cost effective for the State and Federal funding sources that support the frail elderly population.

(Added in 2015)

### **3.22 ADEQUATE STATE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL RESOURCES**

Johnson County appreciates the action taken by the state to provide funding to utilize the former Rainbow Mental Health Facility for crisis intervention for the mentally ill in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties. This has prevented persons from being placed in jail and has assisted them with appropriate referrals for services. From April through August of 2014, Rainbow Services, Incorporated (RSI) successfully diverted 61 individuals, or 11% of those served by RSI from jail. The State must ensure adequate funding for the program to continue providing these much needed services.

(Added in 2003, 2007, 2012, 2015)

### **3.23 FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED**

Johnson County supports restoration of state funding to community mental health centers (CMHCs) to pay for state required mental health treatment of low income, uninsured and underinsured persons who do not qualify for Medicaid or other state funded benefits. While state funding remained constant in fiscal year (FY) 2015, from FY 2007-2014, state funding to CMHC's has been reduced significantly, with Johnson County losing a cumulative \$1.2 million during that time. Johnson County supports the restoration of these funds to the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services budget, and opposes any proposal to further reduce CMHC grant funding.

(Added in 2010)

### **3.24 INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

Johnson County supports efforts to fully fund the statewide Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver program and its waiting list which contains over 500 Johnson County citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Furthermore Johnson County supports recommendations to increase HCBS reimbursement rates for all IDD providers to a reasonable and adequate level. HCBS reimbursement rates for the IDD system have not been increased since state fiscal year 2008. In an effort to achieve these goals, Johnson County encourages and supports efforts by the State of Kansas to participate in federally approved financing plans for services.

Johnson County values our network of providers of IDD services and supports safeguarding the current IDD provider network. The State should continue to encourage and maintain a positive business environment by supporting adequate, timely and accurate payment for services rendered to all IDD providers from the Managed Care Organizations under KanCare.

Johnson County supports a case management system guaranteeing individuals with I/DD and their families the ability to retain their current case manager, as was represented in a presentation before the Board of County Commissioners. This guarantee should be maintained by:

- Adherence to the Developmental Disabilities Reform Act
- Requiring health home partners to contract with case managers chosen by individuals and their families
- Refraining from efforts to reduce case management provision by restricting the services which can be provided by case managers and/or preventing the implementation of arbitrary caps on the amount of case management services which can be provided; both of which limit choice of case manager by reducing the financial viability of providing the service.

(Added in 2007. 2015)

### **3.25 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY ORGANIZATIONS (CDDOs)/COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS (CMHCs)**

Johnson County supports State law, designating CDDOs and CMHCs by boards of county commissioners and determination of the appropriate structure for services to Kansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities or mental health needs should be determined locally or regionally. The KanCare Medicaid managed care contracts with the privatized managed care companies must continue to adhere to the CDDO and CMHCS structures rooted in Kansas statutes.

(Added in 2004)

### **3.26 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

Local health departments have many mandated but unfunded functions, particularly around prevention and control of communicable disease, which negatively impact quality of life and increasingly drive up the overall cost of health care for all Kansans. Driving the expanding rates of chronic disease is the ever-escalating number of obese Kansans (30% of adults). Investment in Public Health prevention activities and implementation of system, environmental and policy changes that support healthy choices are critical to stopping the

rate of increase in obesity and improving the overall health of the population. Johnson County strongly supports increased state funding of local health departments to address these issues because Kansas lags behind public health investments ranking 44<sup>th</sup> in spending per capita at \$14.07. Kansas's ranking for health status has dropped from 12 in 1990 to 27 in 2013 as reported by America's Health Rankings.

Additionally, Johnson County urges the legislature to ensure that appropriate Federal funds directed at containing and treating communicable disease outbreaks reach local health departments. Local health departments are partners with the State in the responsibilities and costs associated with responding to such outbreaks.

(Added in 2011, 2015)

### **3.27 PROTECT ACCESS TO MEDICALLY NECESSARY MENTAL HEALTH PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

Johnson County supports current requirements regarding patient access to medically necessary mental health prescription drugs that provide the greatest potential to treat symptoms and enable recovery. Physicians are best suited to make decisions regarding medications and treatment options for their patients. Restrictive policies regarding the use of generic medications, restrictive formularies and "fail first" requirements can threaten the safety and health of individuals, and ultimately jeopardize the recovery process for persons with a mental illness.

(Added in 2015)

### **3.28 SUPPORT INCREASE OF PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY PROGRAMS**

CMHCs and the State Psychiatric Hospitals are facing a shortage of licensed psychiatrists. To address this shortage, Johnson County supports efforts to increase the number of individuals placed in psychiatric residency positions in Kansas. Johnson County also supports proposals that would require these additional residents to work two years at a State Psychiatric Hospital or three years at a CMHC in order to complete the conditions of their residency appointment.

(Added in 2015)

### **3.29 STATE AID PROGRAMS**

The human service needs of our most vulnerable residents continue to increase, as does the number of persons who are economically disadvantaged. As a safety net provider for these vulnerable residents, Johnson County supports the state fully funding all state mandated human service programs, at levels that reflect the actual cost of services.

(Added in 2005)

### **3.30 INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF ACCESS**

Johnson County supports updating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations to allow for the use of the new concept "Accessible Icon" to identify ADA compliance, and urges the Kansas Legislature to encourage the United States Government to make the necessary changes to law to allow for its use. The symbol aims to remove the idea that it is representative of people with disabilities and change the focus to reinforcing that people with disabilities can be active and engaged in their lived environment. The goal is to change the perceptions of how society and individuals view people with disabilities.

(Added in 2015)

## **Education**

### **3.31 K-12 EDUCATION FINANCING**

The Board of County Commissioners is supportive of the Legislature adequately and equitably funding primary and secondary education to a level that places Kansas among the leading states in support of a “world class” education.

(Added in 2004)

### **3.32 INCREASED INVESTMENT IN EARLY LEARNING**

Early childhood is a critical time to impact school and life-long success for children age 0 to 5. Johnson County supports expanding and strengthening proven effective early learning programs.

(Added in 2008)

### **3.33 STUDENT DATA PRIVACY ACT**

Johnson County supports changes to the Student Data Privacy Act to exempt surveys that do not collect personally identifiable information. The act, passed in 2014, jeopardizes the viability of the Kansas Communities that Care (KCTC) student survey. The KCTC survey does not collect personally identifiable information, but the requirement under the law of obtaining parental consent puts the rate of participation of the survey at risk. The survey provides vital data needed for monitoring, evaluating and prevention planning vital to youth health and safety, as well as tracking longitudinal trends across the County. It provides data needed by the County in order to apply for community grants that include Office of National Drug Control Policy grants, Department of Justice grants, and Drug Free Communities. In order to not put the future of prevention planning at risk, Johnson County supports changes to the Student Privacy Act that exempt surveys such as the KCTC that do not collect personally identifiable information.

(Added in 2015)

## **Public Safety**

### **3.34 COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS/CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Johnson County recognizes the value of community programs for higher risk youth that can prevent them from becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. This approach has worked very successfully beginning with the state’s juvenile justice reform efforts in the 1990’s. Unfortunately, funding for juvenile prevention programs has decreased significantly in the past few years. State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014 juvenile prevention funding in Johnson County was a reduction of 81% compared to SFY 2008. In SFY 2015, the state increased juvenile prevention funding for Johnson County by \$53,025 (from \$80,374 to \$133,399), but this amount is still very inadequate to fund needed programs. Without adequate prevention funds, more youth will become involved in the juvenile justice system taking up very expensive shelter and correctional beds and resulting in communities that are less safe. Johnson County urges the State Legislature to increase prevention funding for juvenile programs in local communities.

Johnson County appreciates the actions taken by the 2014 Legislature to restore funding to the budget for the Kansas Department of Corrections, including those funds that support the expansion of behavioral health programs for the adult community corrections populations. It

will be important to continue this funding to reduce recidivism and prevent the return of intensive supervision probation offenders to very costly prison beds.

Johnson County supports proposed 2015 revisions to KSA 75-5291 legislation that will eliminate the older provisions of this statute that many commonly refer to as the Community Corrections “target” population. This will remove any potential conflict with the newer statutes that specify that probation assignment shall be determined solely by LSI-R risk score. Evidence tells us that the frequency and intensity of supervision should be determined by the risk of the offender, not solely by the offender’s offense and position on the Kansas Sentencing Grid. Johnson County has been utilizing the LSI-R risk score for determination of probation placement since the County began participating in a pilot project in 2003. The pilot was very successful in Johnson County, and the use of the LSI-R has now been expanded statewide for the same purpose. A statewide LSI-R cut-off level/matrix has been established by the Kansas Sentencing Commission for future placements throughout the state.

Johnson County supports the efforts of the District Court, District Attorney and County Corrections in local jurisdictions across Kansas to pursue pretrial supervision of defendants deploying validated risk assessment tools to guide the release and detention processes. The purpose is to insure that courts have the best information available regarding the bail decision and more accurately assess which defendants may represent a greater risk of new criminal charges or failure to appear for future court hearings. Pretrial supervision represents a viable alternative to protect the public while also reducing the cost of incarceration for defendants charged with low level offenses and presumed to be probation eligible if convicted.  
(Added in 2001, 2006, 2015)

### **3.35 COURT ADMINISTRATION**

The efficient administration of justice is considered to be a priority to protect the rights of all our citizens. To this end, Johnson County supports changes to current law in order to allow for judges to cover more than one county and to realign and fully fund judicial positions among judicial districts to reflect current needs based on the changing distribution of the population in Kansas. Additionally, Johnson County supports an adequate budget for the Office of Judicial Administration to ensure the continuous funding of the courts and prevention of furloughs, including increase of fees for services as needed to provide supervision according to risk. Court shut-downs create delays in the administration of justice including hearings for those who may be held in county jails which impacts county budgets. Additionally, Johnson County supports appropriately compensating judicial employees and Judges.

(Added in 2007, 2009, 2015)

# JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND CITIES JOINT 2015 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Adopted 12-4-14

*State and local government are partners providing numerous governmental services that are funded and made available to citizens. Local units of government are closest to the citizens and very closely represent the interests of citizens in the communities in which they live. The partnership depends upon stable funding, efficient use of citizens' resources, and responsiveness at the city and county level. We support respect and preservation of local authority, maintenance of local control of local revenue and spending, and oppose the devolution of State duties to local units of government without planning, time and resources. The Johnson County Government and Cities advocate on the following issues in the interests of our elected representatives and on behalf of the citizens who live in our county and cities.*

## **MAINTAIN LOCAL CONTROL OF REVENUE AND SPENDING**

Recognizing that communities are best served and citizens' values and standards are best reflected when local control of taxing and spending is controlled by local voters and taxpayers, we support the continued absence of state imposition of tax or spending lids which place limits on how much revenue a local government can raise or spend from year to year.

(Added in 2011)

## **LIMITS ON APPRAISED VALUATION GROWTH**

We support the continuation of no artificial limits on appraised valuation growth or budgets by the state. Such limitations erode the ability of local officials to make decisions close to the public and will reduce bond ratings, resulting in more expensive debt service payments on needed capital projects.

(Added in 2013)

## **TAX POLICY**

We support stable revenue sources and urge the Legislature not to provide any further exemptions to the ad valorem property tax base, including exceptions for fitness clubs, or the state/local sales tax base, as well as industry specific special tax treatment through exemptions or property classification. We do not support changes in State taxation policy that would narrow the tax base or significantly reduce available funding for key programs, put Kansas counties and cities at a competitive sales tax disadvantage with Missouri, or impose a sales tax on professional services.

(Added in 2012)

## **OPPOSE UNFUNDED MANDATES**

We support minimizing the financial and staffing implications of "devolution," the passing down of responsibilities to counties by the state and federal governments, by seeking funding for mandates and reasonable periods of time to phase in new funded responsibilities. Any budget reductions or changes in state taxation that reduce state resources with an impact on government services should be evaluated closely by the state and based on a cost benefit analysis of how such reductions would increase cost demands at either the local or state level. If the State reduces funding for government services, the State should provide greater flexibility and increased local ability to raise revenue beyond primarily sales and property tax sources.

(Added in 2013)

## **COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Recognizing it is critical to maintain Kansas infrastructure, we urge the Legislature to follow through on the commitments in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan known as T-WORKS. We recognize the current funding level is far from adequate to address ongoing statewide infrastructure funding needs. As such, funds should be allocated strategically to ensure there is an identifiable long-term return on investment for the entire state. Investing in growth areas is critical to economic vitality and job creation.

(Added in 2010)

# JOHNSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND CITIES JOINT 2015 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Adopted 12-4-14

## **STATUTORY PASS-THROUGH FUNDING**

We call for the preservation of local government revenues which pass through the State of Kansas' treasury. These funds come from a longstanding partnership between local governments and the State and are generated via economic activity at the local level. Both alcoholic liquor tax funds and the local portion of motor fuels taxes should not be withheld from local governments and siphoned into the State General Fund. Local governments in recent years have had to cope with the legislature not funding LAVTRF demand transfers and the machinery & equipment property tax "slider" and should not be forced to further aid in balancing the State's budget.

(Added in 2010)

## **KPERS FUNDING**

We support achieving a fully-funded public employees retirement system within a reasonable period of time. The State should fully fund its portion of the employer contributions, and the local KPERS should be separated from the state and school retirement system. The system should accumulate sufficient assets during members' working lifetimes to pay all promised benefits when members retire.

(Added in 2010)

## **KANSAS OPEN RECORDS AND OPEN MEETINGS ACT**

We believe that an open government is essential to building public confidence. We support the retention of the exceptions in the Kansas Open Records Act and the permitted subject matters for executive sessions contained in the Open Meetings Act currently found in the law. Additionally, we support the existing allowances for cost recovery for open records included under current law.

(Added in 2010)

## **NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS**

We support the current schedule and structure of local elections and are opposed to any legislation that would require that local elections be conducted with partisan identification, or vacancies in non-partisan elected positions be filled through partisan means.

(Added in 2014)

## **LEGISLATIVE PARTICIPATION**

We support local officials and their representatives' ability to freely participate in the legislative process through advocacy and education on issues affecting local governments. Local officials, representing their citizens and taxpayers, must retain the authority to make decisions regarding membership in organizations and to participate in the legislative process through advocacy without cumbersome reporting requirements.

(Added in 2014)

## **INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF ACCESS**

Johnson County supports updating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations to allow for the use of the new concept "Accessible Icon" to identify ADA compliance, and urges the Kansas Legislature to encourage the United States Government to make the necessary changes to law to allow for its use. The symbol aims to remove the idea that it is representative of people with disabilities and change the focus to reinforcing that people with disabilities can be active and engaged in their lived environment. The goal is to change the perceptions of how society and individuals view people with disabilities.

(Added in 2015)

## **METRO LAW ENFORCEMENT MUTUAL AID**

We support mutual aid legislation allowing law enforcement agencies to work cooperatively with their counterparts in adjoining states. Such agreements can foster more efficient responses to emergencies.