

## **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**

#### **1.2 AND MAINTAIN LOCAL DECISION MAKING**

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 GOVERNMENT 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 spending over \$148 million to provide state services for the citizens of Johnson County. Over five years, net county tax dollars used to support state-mandated services increased 10.3 percent. Over that same period, state support for mandated services went from \$19.7 million in 2011 to \$18 million in 2015 – a decrease of 8.77 percent. 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, allowing local control as opposed to 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 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)

## **ACTION AGENDA PRIORITIES**

### **Top 8 Action Priorities**

#### **2.1 REPEAL OF THE PROPERTY TAX LID**

We strongly oppose any state-imposed limits on the taxing and spending authority of cities and counties and urge the repeal of the property tax lid legislation passed during the 2015 Session. We believe those elected to manage the affairs of cities and counties can be most responsive to the local taxpayers and make

budget and tax decisions that are most reflective of the community's need and financial interests. We note that these same taxing and spending limits on cities and counties were not placed on state government. State government should abide by the same taxing and spending decisions as they impose upon cities and counties.

Absent repeal, the state-imposed tax lid on local governments should be modified to require a public vote based on a protest petition provision. Also the Legislature should review and consider including appropriate exemptions that existed largely under the prior tax lid but were not included in the current law such as human resources costs, KPERS, intellectual and developmental disabilities, transit equipment, and mental health among other items. (Added in 2016, 2017)

## **2.2 STATEWIDE EXPANSION OF MEDICAID**

Johnson County supports Medicaid expansion through KanCare in Kansas. 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 absent the state's participation in Medicaid expansion, county taxpayers are required to pay for these services that would otherwise be covered by Medicaid. Through local tax revenue, Johnson County provides approximately \$6.4 million in charitable care for mental health services and over \$2.2 million in uncompensated care for Med-Act services (approximately 1 mill) that could be significantly reduced by Medicaid expansion. (Added in 2014, 2017)

## **2.3 K-12 EDUCATION FINANCING**

Johnson County Government is supportive of the Kansas 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. We support Johnson County schools in their efforts to craft a new school finance formula that supports local components and treats local property tax contributions fairly for local property taxpayers and schools. (Added in 2004)

## **2.4 COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

To ensure the critical well-being of Kansas infrastructure, we urge the Legislature to follow through on the commitments made in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, also known as T-WORKS. The current funding level is far from adequate to address ongoing statewide infrastructure needs in the areas of preservation, maintenance, and safety; therefore, it is crucial for our state highway funds to be used for the purpose they are collected. Funds should be allocated strategically to ensure there is an identifiable long-term return on investment for the entire state. Additionally, because investment in growth areas is vital to creating a sustainable revenue stream that will address statewide infrastructure needs, we encourage the state to invest in public transportation that specifically demonstrates regional coordination in both rural and urban areas, and to support innovative platforms like ridesharing to increase access to employment and educational opportunities, as well as ease congestion and delay the need for costly road expansion. (Added in 2010, 2017)

## **2.5 KPERS FUNDING**

We support achieving a fully-funded public employees retirement system within a reasonable period of time. Local governments have fully funded their share of the KPERS pool. The Kansas Government should fully fund its portion of the employer contributions at the Actuarial Required Contribution (ARC), and the local KPERS should be separated from the state and school retirement system. We support the state making its 2016 re-payment with interest as soon as possible. If any delays in the 2017 payments are made, than these re-payment(s) should be made with interest. The system should accumulate sufficient assets during members' working lifetimes to pay all promised benefits when members retire. Additionally, we support current provisions as they relate to accumulated leave and other human resources policies to determine a

retiree's benefit. Possible policy changes could have a negative impact on local government employee recruitment and retention, particularly in competitive employment markets. (Added in 2010, 2017)

## **2.6 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 includes more than 500 Johnson County citizens who have 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 supports the State's Employment First Policy with competitive and integrated employment being the first option considered when serving people with disabilities. Johnson County encourages the State to align the Employment First Policy with the various programs through which Kansans with disabilities receive supports and services. (Added in 2007, 2015, 2016)

## **2.7 DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE STATE OF KANSAS**

We strongly encourage the State of Kansas to develop a comprehensive plan to foster and enhance the State's fledgling economy. Toward this end and in the absence of a statewide effort by legislators and executive branch officials to do so, the County pledges support to bring proven statewide organizations and educational institutions together to create such a plan. (Added in 2017)

## **2.8 LOCAL CONTROL OF RIGHT OF WAY**

2016 Legislation granting the automatic placement of cell towers in city and county owned right of way, should be repealed. Regulation of the placement of cell towers should be subject to reasonable local zoning processes which review important community values such as safety and neighborhood concerns. (Added in 2017)

## **Second Tier Issues**

### **2.9 TAX POLICY**

We support stable revenue sources and urge the Kansas Legislature to avoid applying any further exemptions to the ad valorem property tax base, including exceptions for specific business entities or the state/local sales tax base, as well as industry-specific special tax treatment through exemptions or property classification. The local tax burden has shifted too far to residential property taxes due to State policy changes. We do not support changes in State taxation policy that would narrow the tax base or significantly reduce available funding for key joint State/County programs such as corrections, mental health, and public health. These changes would place the County at a further competitive disadvantage with state of Missouri. We do not support a sales tax on professional services. (Added in 2012, 2016)

### **2.10 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. Kansas Government's use of these local funding sources may benefit the Kansas Government, but it will increase the local property tax burden to replace the lost revenue or reduce services. Local governments in recent years have had to cope with the Kansas Legislature not funding Local Ad Valorem Property Tax Reduction (LAVTRF), County City Revenue Sharing (CCRS) demand transfers, and the machinery and equipment property tax "slider" and should not be forced to further aid in balancing the State's budget.

Since 1997, more than \$1.8 billion in formula demand transfers from the State to local governments have not been made. LAVTR dates back to the 1930s with the existing statutory framework being established in 1965. LAVTR represents the local share of certain cigarette revenue, stamp taxes and cereal malt beverages taxes that the state removed in exchange for the commitment to fund the LAVTR. CCRS was established in 1978 as part of an agreement between the State and local governments regarding a number of different taxes related to cigarette and liquor enforcement. (Added in 2010, 2016)

### **3.1 SUPPORT OF SALES TAX ON INTERNET SALES**

Johnson County encourages the Kansas Legislature to support federal legislation requiring sellers (with no physical presence in a state) to collect and remit sales tax. It would establish uniformity among the states' sales tax laws with regard to the collection of sales and use taxes on remote retail sales by Internet, mail order, and telephone based on destination-based sourcing rules, by sourcing sales to the location where the purchaser receives the item. Retailers who ship or deliver sold items to their customers' locations will be required to collect the local sales tax in effect where delivery is made. (Added in 2017).

### **3.2 CONTRACTS BETWEEN CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES**

Johnson County supports expanding the municipalities permitted by K.S.A. 12-2908 to contract with other municipalities to perform a 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. Formal agreements require the Kansas Attorney General approval. This results in delays for municipalities. 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 through enhanced efficiencies and dedicated expertise. (Added in 2015)

## **STANDING POSITIONS**

### **Taxation, Finance, and Other Administrative Issues**

#### **3.3 SALES TAX EXEMPTION**

Johnson County supports the current law that exempts local government and public construction projects from sales tax. State imposed tax on current government purchases and projects will have only one effect: increased local property taxes. Purchases have to be made and construction must occur; imposition of a sales tax would increase the local tax burden to cover those added costs. This sales tax revenue does not help local government, but in fact, hurts our local economy and our residents who have to pay higher property taxes. Increased property (and sales taxes) ultimately reflects negatively on the state, particularly given our proximity to the state of Missouri. (Added in 2016)

#### **3.4 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)

#### **3.5 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. (Added in 2012)

### **3.6 REMOVAL OF THE 5% MANDATE IN K.S.A. 79-1460**

The Johnson County Appraiser, along with other county appraisers, request the removal of this commercial valuation mandate. This mandate is unfair to the county and to other property owners because the property owner's recommendation of value is presumed correct unless the county provides a fee appraisal of the property. In the event the property owner also provides a fee appraisal, it is presumed correct. This makes the valuation process unfair and inequitable, also likely unconstitutional. (Added in 2017)

### **3.7 REMOVAL OF THE SUMMARY OF REASONS REQUIREMENT IN K.S.A. 79-1448 AND AMEND THE AGRICULTURAL LEASE PROVISIONS**

This is a very costly, time-consuming process. Counties provide any and all data used in establishing a property's value upon request, at no cost to the property owner. We encourage this exchange of information because it helps resolve questions and appeals, while ensuring the appraiser's values are accurate. Most of the appeals that result in value reductions are a result of this two-way exchange of information between property owner and county. Mandating this is unnecessary and it only promotes additional misconceptions about the appraisal process.

The agricultural lease provisions unfairly allow a property owner to file a lease and gain agriculture use classification regardless of whether any agriculture use. The County is already mandated to verify agriculture use annually. (Added in 2017)

### **3.8 REPEAL OF K.S.A. 79-1496-INDEPENDENT APPRAISAL AFTER APPEAL**

This legislation is unconstitutional since it essentially caps valuation changes. In Johnson County alone, the valuation increases have ranged 3-6 percent for residential properties and 6-8 percent for commercial properties. Placing caps on valuations quickly causes inequities among individual properties, and cause many properties to pay tax burdens shifted to them as a result of the inequities. This would be unconstitutional since all properties are required to be at fair market value per the Kansas Constitution. (Added in 2017)

### **3.9 AMEND K.S.A. 79-1412a(c) TO ALLOW COUNTY APPRAISER TO REQUEST INFORMATION FROM A TAXPAYER**

During the appeals process, the County Appraiser should be able to request (1) independent recent fee appraisals; (2) fee appraisals done during the last twenty-four months; and (3) detailed income and expense information for commercial properties. Independent recent fee appraisals can be an excellent point of reference in valuation appeals. Many times, tax representatives have balked at providing recent appraisals done for mortgage finance purposes because they validate the county's valuation. The county provides any and all data used in valuations. It would be unfair to counties to be unable to request information, such as these fee appraisals. Fee appraisals done during the last 24 months or less can be a great source of information during the resolution of valuation appeals. The additional sales data, income and expense data, etc. can have a positive effect for counties and property owners when establishing accurate values. Detailed income and expense information is crucial to any appraiser (mass or fee) when establishing accurate values for commercial properties. In fact, Kansas statutes say county appraisers are supposed to use the income approach as the primary/preferred valuation method, if possible. This information is considered confidential and not an open record according to Kansas statutes. (Added in 2017)

### **3.10 MOTOR VEHICLE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

Johnson County supports greater flexibility in the use of technology as a driver for automating, and transforming the operation, new approaches to service delivery and appropriate funding at the local level in providing motor vehicle services. Burdensome State statutes combined with poorly designed computer systems at the State level and the transfer of duties and responsibilities from the State to County Treasurers have created inefficiencies and increased the resources needed to provide motor vehicle titling and

registration services. Johnson County specifically supports elimination of the requirement for County Treasurers 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 Kansas Insurance Commissioner, the Administration, and County Treasurers to determine how best to achieve this verification. (Added in 2010, 2014, 2016)

### **3.11 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)

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

Johnson County believes that an open government is essential to building public confidence. We support the retention of the limited exceptions in the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA) and the permitted subject matters for executive sessions contained in Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA) 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)

### **3.13 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 a newspaper. (Added in 2012)

### **3.14 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)

### **3.15 NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS**

Johnson County supports continuing local elections on a nonpartisan basis. Vacancies in nonpartisan elected positions should be filled through nonpartisan 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)

## **Infrastructure and Environment**

### **3.16 SOLID WASTE**

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 will receive their fair share of landfill tonnage fee revenue to support local waste reduction projects. (Added in 2006)

### **3.17 WASTEWATER DISCHARGE LIMITS**

Johnson County recognizes that clean and safe water resources are critical to the environment, public health, safety, and recreation. The County supports sustainable water quality standards that are based upon the latest available scientific information and a public decision-making process related to water quality standards and use designations when determining wastewater discharge limits. (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)

### **3.19 ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES**

Johnson County supports the use of alternative and renewable energy sources and encourages the Kansas Legislature to provide incentives for such energy sources that protect air quality and reduce dependence on oil. (Added in 2002)

### **3.20 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)

### **3.21 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)

## **Human Services**

### **3.22 STATE AID PROGRAMS**

As a local safety net provider for vulnerable residents, Johnson County supports the state of Kansas fully funding all state-mandated human service programs at levels that reflect the actual cost of services. (Added in 2005)

### **3.23 AGING SERVICES**

Johnson County supports the restoration of Senior Care Act (SCA) Funds for Area Agencies on Aging. The state budget reduction impacted Johnson County's program particularly hard, reducing the Area Agency on Aging budget by 38 percent or \$296,000. 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. By example, it costs on average \$200 per month to serve someone on the SCA program compared to \$6,000 per month to serve the same person in a Medicaid facility bed. (Added in 2015)

### **3.24 ADEQUATE STATE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL RESOURCES**

Johnson County appreciates the action taken by the state of Kansas to provide funding to utilize the former Rainbow Mental Health Facility for crisis intervention for the mentally ill in Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth and Wyandotte Counties. This has prevented persons from being placed in jail and has assisted them with appropriate referrals for services. From April 2014 through September of 2016, 2,536 unique individuals have been triaged by Rainbow Services, Incorporated (RSI), representing a total of 4,629 separate interactions. Services at RSI have successfully diverted 1,851 individuals from hospital emergency rooms, 157 from the state hospital, and 253 from jail. The State must ensure adequate funding for the program to continue providing this much needed service. (Added in 2003, 2007, 2012, 2015)

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

Johnson County supports efforts to increase the number of individuals placed in psychiatric residency positions in Kansas to address a shortage of licensed psychiatrists at Community Mental Health Centers

(CMHCs) and state psychiatric hospitals. 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)

### **3.26 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) 2016, 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. As a result of these reductions as well as other policy decisions, Johnson County spent approximately \$7.9 million on charitable care for the uninsured and underinsured. Johnson County supports the restoration of these state funds to the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services budget, and opposes any proposal to further reduce CMHC grant funding.

### **3.27 EMERGENCY OBSERVATION AND TREATMENT**

Johnson County supports efforts to prevent the escalation of behavioral health crises and to avoid unnecessary incarcerations and hospitalizations of people with mental illness and substance use disorders. The Kansas Legislature should amend K.S.A. 59-2946 to define 24-hour crisis observation facilities and to give behavioral health providers in communities with such facilities the authority to keep individuals in crisis for up to 72 hours of emergency observation and treatment. (Added in 2016)

### **3.28 HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES (HCBS) IN THE KANCARE PROGRAM**

As the KanCare program nears the end of the first five years of the demonstration project and the State of Kansas seeks federal approval of the next application, Johnson County urges the state to evaluate the success of HCBS programs in KanCare and determine if the KanCare program is well suited for continuation of overseeing HCBS programs. Additionally, the concept of integrating all seven HCBS Medicaid waivers has been discussed. No integration of HCBS waiver programs should occur until the entire HCBS program is stabilized and current capacity and quality concerns are sufficiently addressed, regardless of whether it resides in or out of the KanCare program

### **3.29 INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES & MENTAL HEALTH**

Johnson County supports funding to address the lack of acute community options for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and mental illness who are experiencing a crisis situation. Funding should also be dedicated to training both the IDD and mental health systems to develop greater community capacity at the direct staff level as well.

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

Johnson County supports Kansas law designating CDDOs and CMHCs by boards of county commissioners. 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 state statutes. (Added in 2004).

### **3.31 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

Johnson County strongly supports increased state funding of local health departments that have many mandated, but unfunded functions. Kansas lags behind public health investments nationwide with a current ranking of 47<sup>th</sup> (down from 46<sup>th</sup>) in spending per capita at \$12.40. The state's ranking for health status has dropped from 10 in 1992 to 26 in 2015 as reported by America's Health Rankings. State funding is needed, particularly around prevention and control of communicable disease, which negatively impacts quality of

life and increasingly drives up the overall cost of health care for all Kansans. Driving the expanding rates of chronic disease is the ever-escalating number of overweight and obese Kansans (65% 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.

Control of communicable disease is a bedrock function of public health and the reduction of vaccine-preventable diseases is among the greatest achievements of public health. That progress must be sustained by protecting the current requirements for childhood immunizations. Additionally, Johnson County urges the Kansas 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)

### **3.32 REGISTERED DENTAL THERAPIST**

Access to dental care continues to be a challenge for low-income Kansans, including those in Johnson County. In its recent Community Health Assessment, 1 in 10 people in Johnson County said they had a problem getting healthcare for themselves or a family member in the last 12 months, and of those 32 percent had difficulty accessing dental care. Passage of the Registered Dental Therapist legislation will increase access to quality, cost-effective dental care for Kansas families.

## **Education**

### **3.33 INCREASED INVESTMENT IN EARLY LEARNING**

Johnson County supports expanding and strengthening proven effective early learning programs, such as Head Start, Parents as Teachers and all-day kindergarten, since early childhood is a critical time to impact school and life-long success for children age 0 to 5. (Added in 2008)

### **3.34 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**

### **3.35 COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS/CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Johnson County recognizes the value of a state and local partnership that strives to promote public safety through the use of highly structured supervision being offered by community corrections programs.

With the passage of Senate Bill 367 in the 2016 Legislature, Johnson County has been working with all of its stakeholders who work with youth in our community to ensure that the intent of the bill is realized with our local youth. Section 13 (now codified as K.S.A. 75-52, 164) states that state funds saved as realized by the reduction in out-of-home placements in the state shall be utilized to support community programming

for youth as alternatives to out-of-home placements in an amount of up to \$8 million. The amount available statewide is currently only \$2 million, which is not nearly enough to support community programming throughout the state. Johnson County supports the use of the savings for community programming and encourages the Kansas Legislature to hold to the promise that was made for the use of these funds in Senate Bill 367. In order to help youth remain in their homes in the community, there will need to be much community support and programming. Effective, evidence-based prevention programming aids in the development of competencies that enable children and their families to become responsible and productive members of the community and helps avoid further penetration into the criminal justice system.

Johnson County supports the expansion of behavioral health programs for adult community corrections populations and urges the continuation of state funding to reduce recidivism, prevent the return of intensive supervision probation offenders to prison beds at a higher cost, and help to alleviate overcrowding of the state prison system.

Johnson County also supports the efforts of the District Court, District Attorney and County Corrections in local jurisdictions across Kansas to pursue pretrial supervision of defendants by deploying validated risk assessment tools to guide the release-and-detention processes. The purpose is to ensure that courts have the best information available regarding bail decisions and to more accurately assess which defendants may represent a greater risk of new criminal charges or failure to appear for future court hearings. Pre-trial 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, 2016)

### **3.36 COURT ADMINISTRATION**

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. The efficient administration of justice is considered to be a priority to protect the rights of all our citizens.

Johnson County also supports an adequate budget for the Office of Judicial Administration to fully execute the duties of the judiciary. Court shut-downs create delays in the administration of justice, including hearings for those who may be held in county jails, which then impacts county budgets. Additionally, Johnson County supports market rate compensation for judicial employees and judges. (Added in 2007, 2009, 2015, 2017)