



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

TOP 10 COMMISSION PRIORITIES

1 **Medicaid Expansion**

Legislation

The Unified Government supports expansion of the Kansas Medicaid program which will improve access to care for those most vulnerable in Wyandotte County. It is estimated that expansion would provide insurance for 8,736 currently uninsured Wyandotte October 2021 County residents, bring \$58,452,576 in new annual healthcare spending to Wyandotte County and create hundreds of new healthcare jobs.

2 **STAR Bonds and Food Sales Tax**

Legislation

STAR Bonds have proven to be one of the most effective economic development and job creation tools in the State of Kansas. The Unified Government encourages the Kansas Legislature to continue a workable STAR Bond policy with maximum flexibility and without unnecessary restrictions.

The Unified Government supports the elimination of the State portion of the sales tax on groceries but needs to protect its local authority for economic development projects.

3 **Increased State Infrastructure Funding**

Appropriation

The Unified Government is strongly supportive of state funding for a broad range of infrastructure need. Federal infrastructure dollars sent to the state should be shared with local governments to support revitalization of infrastructure that is critical to economic growth and quality of life.

4 **Allow Flexibility for Alternative Revenue Sources**

Legislation

Cities should be authorized to approve alternative revenue sources which best suit the individual community in order to maintain appropriate levels of funding for the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens. This includes local earnings/income taxes, development excise taxes, and other local taxes and fees now prohibited by state law.

5 **Expanded Childcare and Universal Pre-K**

Appropriation

High quality childcare and Pre-Kindergarten should be extended to all children in Kansas. The State should develop and fund a plan to address the urgent need for childcare services in all communities, including in Wyandotte County. The need for childcare is a top concern for businesses.



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

6 Equalize Motor Vehicle Taxes Legislation

The Unified Government supports changes in the tax formula used to assess motor vehicles to equalize motor vehicle taxes from county to county.

7 Local Share of Sports Betting Revenue Legislation

UG supports the State providing a share of sports betting revenues to local government.

8 Pay Prevailing Wage Legislation

The Unified Government supports paying prevailing wage on public works projects and economic development projects where tax incentives are given. The Unified Government strongly urges the Kansas Legislature to repeal the law banning the use of prevailing wage on public works and economic development projects.

9 Increased Funding for Mental Health and Psychiatric beds Appropriation

The Unified Government supports full state funding for mental health services, including additional bed space for psychiatric patients. This will reduce the number of people with behavioral or substance abuse issues who are inappropriately incarcerated in county jails or who end up unhoused. This includes expanded State of Kansas mental health facilities that are backlogged.

10 Increased Funding for Services to Senior Populations Appropriation

1) Funding to provide improved support for aging population, including full funding of Home and Community Based Services for the Frail Elderly waiver; funding Access to Core Services; and legislation to allow unused prescription drugs from nursing homes, hospice, and other health care agencies to be distributed for use by medically indigent seniors.

2) Restoration of \$850,000 in state funds cut from Nutrition services (FY22) for older Kansans and Caregivers. State funding for nutrition services has not increased since 2009. These monies are highly leveraged with funds from federal and local sources and with voluntary donations from participants and the thousands of hours volunteer hours that make this program work in Kansas communities. This is supported by the Kansas Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disabilities.



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Expanded Development Financing Tools

Legislation

UG supports legislation that allows economically distressed urban communities to utilize the same set of financing tools that are available to rural areas to increase the supply of housing and reinvigorate downtown areas.

Increased State Community College Funding

Appropriation

The Unified Government supports a funding formula for Community Colleges that gives full funding without increasing or placing an undue burden on local property taxes. A public education and Community College system which helps create a well-educated and trained workforce is crucial.

State Comprehensive Tourism Plan

Appropriation

Wyandotte County offers destination attractions which draw millions of visitors a year to Kansas. The Unified Government urges the State of Kansas to enact a comprehensive tourism plan and increase funding of tourism promotion and marketing.

Study Committee on Creation of a Riverfront Authority

Legislation

Legislation authorizing a Study Committee to explore creation of a Kansas City, Kansas Riverfront Authority to develop the Kansas riverfront into a premier attraction.



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Alternate Construction Delivery

Legislation

The Unified Government supports changes in State law which allow local governments to use design build and construction manager at risk techniques for public construction projects. These techniques have saved Wyandotte County taxpayers millions of dollars on several major public construction projects but are difficult to use under current State laws.

State Energy Policy for Energy Efficiency

Legislation

The Unified Government supports energy efficiency and the development of a statewide energy policy which enables local governments to act individually or in cooperation with others to address energy efficiency.

Felony Assault on Public Transit Employees

Legislation

Increase penalty from misdemeanor to felony for assaulting public transit driver/ operator. The past few years have seen increases in assaults on public transit operators. Increasing the penalty would provide additional protections for these critical public servants.

Restore Executive Branch authority to manage emergencies

Legislation

The Unified Government supports repealing the portions of Senate Bill 40 that severely curtailed the powers of the State of Kansas Executive Branch to manage emergency responses and recovery. This is critical for local units of government to be able to request resources from the State of Kansas and the Federal Government. This is supported by Kansas Association of Counties and Kansas Emergency Managers Associations.



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Increase Local Health Department Funding

Appropriation

The Unified Government supports increased investment in public health funding to protect the health of Wyandotte County residents. The State of Kansas ranks near the bottom nationally for public health funding. Kansas ranked 47th in per capita expenditures on public health in FY 2019-2020. State aid to local health departments has remained unchanged since 1995.

Expand Treatment and Harm Reduction Approaches for Substance Abuse

Legislation

- 1) The UG supports expanded state funding for substance abuse in-patient and out-patient treatment facilities in Wyandotte County. The rapid acceleration of opioid overdoses in the community requires urgent expansion of treatment services.
 - 2) Redefine what constitutes drug paraphernalia under State Law. Current law allows for charges for possession of items related to marijuana use.
 - 3) Remove from State Law that a 3rd charge for possession of marijuana is a felony.
 - 4) Kansas puts needles and syringes in the category of drug paraphernalia under state law, making their possession illegal, and prohibiting any sort of Syringe exchange programs. Needle exchanges are an evidence-based approach to decrease the spread of deadly infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C.
 - 5) Allow Fentanyl testing strips (FTS). Many people who try drugs for the first time, or when their drug of choice is a stimulant, do not expect fentanyl to be in their supply. FTS allow people to check their drugs for the presence of fentanyl in advance, savings lives by preventing unwilling consumption of fentanyl resulting in overdoses.
 - 6) Good Samaritan Overdose Laws protect individuals who act in good faith and call for help for a drug related overdose, should they be found to be in possession of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia. Studies have shown that opioid users are much more likely to call 911 during an overdose event when these laws are in place. Analysis from May of 2021 shows that Kansas is one of only 3 states that does not have a Good Samaritan Overdose Law.
-

Allow Expedited Partner Therapy

Legislation

Allow for Expedited Partner Therapy in the case of sexually transmitted infections. EPT is the clinical practice of treating sex partners of patients diagnosed with chlamydia by providing prescriptions or medications to the patient to take to their partner without a health care provider first examining the partner. Kansas is one of only six states which do not explicitly allow EPT.



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

Youth Fatality Review Board and Support for Services for At-risk Youth

Legislation

- 1) The Unified Government supports continued refinement of fatality review board administration to include confidentiality protection for and guidelines related to local review boards.
- 2) Foster Care Support After Age 18 - provide State financial support to youth who age out of the foster care system at age 18. Additional financial support improves the likelihood of successful transition from foster care to being a productive resident and reduces risk of people who age of foster care ending up in the criminal justice system.
- 3) Expand Child-in-Need-of-Care Support Services to provide cognitive behavioral counseling and enhanced support for youth to prevent future incarceration or violence.

Remove Active Consent for School Surveys

Legislation

Remove active consent requirements for surveys conducted in schools. The Kansas Community That Cares (KCTC) survey, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and others, provide valuable, health-related behavior data that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth. The change to active consent a few years ago means students do not complete these assessments unless parents proactively opt in to taking them.

Prohibit Source of Income Discrimination

Legislation

UG supports "source of income non-discrimination policies." Low-to-moderate income households, including community members on disability, veterans, and those that are unsheltered, have a higher likelihood of being denied housing due to their participation in housing assistance programs. In Wyandotte County, it is estimated that more than 400 vouchers go unused each year because voucher recipients cannot find landlords who will accept their voucher.

Allow Medical Cannabis

Legislation

The Unified Government support the legalization of medical cannabis. Medical marijuana should be subject to existing state and local sales tax and cities should be able to levy their own excise fees and receive a portion of any state funds to offset the impact of medical marijuana. Also, cities should have the ability to opt-in to allowing dispensaries in their city. Kansas should only allow the cultivation and processing of medical marijuana and THC in licensed facilities and should not allow residential grow operations of any sort.



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

PUBLIC SAFETY

Funding for Programs that Reduce Violence

Appropriation

Appropriate funding to support local communities that wish to establish programs such as Violence Interrupter / Cure Violence programs that are focused on reducing violence using evidence based approaches.

Establishment of a Wyandotte County Public Defenders Office

Appropriation

Funding for the State Board of Indigent Services that will allow the establishment of a Public Defenders Office to serve Wyandotte County. A well-funded public defender's office in Wyandotte County would address inequalities and assure efficiency, oversight, fiscal responsibility, and justice without delay for all victims.

Extreme Risk Protection Order

Legislation

Legislation that allows law enforcement to seize firearms from a person who poses an immediate danger of injury to self or others, while also providing due process protections to ensure fairness. Such legislation would reduce risks for suicidal individuals as well as reduce incidents of domestic violence, and has been enacted in 19 states.

Clean Slate Automated Expungement

Legislation

The Unified Government supports the automated expungement of qualifying criminal records from public view. In Kansas, current expungement of a record requires a petition filed through the court and payment of fees.

Support Offender Re-integration

Appropriation

The Unified Government supports full funding for community-corrections programs and grants that provide support for individuals to successfully re-integrate into the community. These include programs for behavioral-health initiatives that reduce community risk and offender recidivism.



Unified Government 2023 State Legislative Agenda

TAX AND FINANCE

Allow Impact Fees and Exactions

Legislation

The State of Kansas does not allow any exaction for a property development. It is a best practice from the American Planning Association. In many municipalities across the country to charge an impact fee for any proposed development. These fees could be used for both direct improvements related to the specific development and for other community infrastructure needs.

Allow E-Commerce Delivery Fee

Legislation

The increase in delivery rates from e-commerce has substantially increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT). In order to create a revenue stream to partially address this increase in VMT, and its increased wear and tear on roadways, implement a tax or fee on e-commerce deliveries to be collected and redistributed to local communities to support transportation services, roadway maintenance, and expansion of alternative modes of transportation. This is a best practice recommended by the American Planning Association.
