



2024 Federal Legislative Platform

2024 Core Principles

United States federal, state, and local governments have a partnership through which many 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.

- **Maintain Financial Stability for County Governmental Services**
 - Many critical county government services are financed by the federal and state government. As a key service provider in many policy areas, Johnson County seeks federal and state appropriations at levels adequate to provide these services. Furthermore, Johnson County opposes reductions in funding for services that result from actual reductions in absolute appropriations, as well as cuts in “real dollars” which result from a lack of inflationary adjustments.
- **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. The county seeks funding for mandates and reasonable periods of time to phase in newly funded responsibilities.
- **Restore the Balance of Federalism and Optimize Intergovernmental Partnerships**
 - Johnson County supports efforts that recognize and respect the unique roles and responsibilities of counties as essential partners—not just stakeholders—in our nation’s intergovernmental system of federal, state, local, and tribal government officials. Consistent and meaningful engagement and consultation between intergovernmental partners is vital in the development and implementation of effective policies, programs, and regulations. Johnson county applauds the passage of legislation such as the Inflation Reduction Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the American Rescue Plan Act that designated funds directly to county governments. The County will continue advocating for legislation that unites all levels of government in supporting our unparalleled system of federalism.
- **Successful Implementation and Execution of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for County Governments**
 - Johnson County supports legislation that provides long-term and direct infrastructure investments to counties. As intergovernmental partners, federal policymakers should take action to provide meaningful and long-term investments directly to county governments to meet our local infrastructure responsibilities. It is critical that Congress prioritizes safety funding for roads and bridges, and flexibility for county elected officials to meet the varying needs of local communities in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act as well as any new infrastructure bill, including provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act. As public officials with significant infrastructure responsibilities, county officials support streamlining the federal permitting process to expedite the delivery of critical economic development projects and job growth.

2023 Action Agenda Priorities

1. **Sunflower Army Ammunition Remediation and Redevelopment:** From about 1942 through 1992, the Army manufactured powder and propellant munitions at the former Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant site which consists of approximately 9,035 acres in Johnson County. Due to these activities, the Sunflower Property requires significant environmental and explosive remediation. Johnson County encourages the continued support of efforts for the full remediation and environmental cleanup of the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant and the return of that facility to productive local development and use.

2024 Legislative Positions

Taxation and Administration

1. **Tax Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds:** Johnson County supports the current tax exemption for municipal bonds. Congress should ensure that access of state and local governments to the existing tax-exempt market should not be impaired.
2. **Employee Benefit Annual Contribution Limits:** Johnson County supports increasing annual contribution limits for employer-provided retirement plans and employee Flexible Spending Accounts. Johnson County supports legislation to give employers greater flexibility in designing benefit plans that more appropriately meet the needs of their workforce.
3. **Tax Exempt Status of Employer-Provided Health Benefits:** Johnson County supports the current tax exemption on employer-provided health coverage benefits under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. Increasing taxes on these plans leads to higher plan costs and potentially lower plan benefits for employers and employees.
4. **Implementation of the Financial Data Transparency Act:** Johnson County supports efforts to ensure that rulemaking associated with the implementation of the Financial Data Transparency Act considers comments provided by local governments.

Economic and Workforce Development

1. **Federal Role in Housing:** Johnson County encourages the federal government to follow a national housing policy that embodies clear annual housing goals, provides adequate and predictable funding levels, offers incentives for energy efficient builds on partnerships with state and local governments and the private and nonprofit sectors in support of new construction and rehabilitation for rental and homeownership properties, particularly for low and moderate-income persons.
2. **Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Assistance:** Johnson County urges Congress to maintain or increase housing assistance to support low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Further,
 - Johnson County requests more [local control and](#) flexibility from HUD in determining Fair Market Rents, Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) authorized HOME property valuation limits, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) public services limit;
 - Johnson County requests the opportunity to submit waiver requests for exceptions to regulatory limits defined for the referenced programs;
 - Johnson County supports an increase in the number of Housing Choice Vouchers, which would help to lower the number of cost-burdened renters but HUD has been historically inflexible in granting additional vouchers to Johnson County (the number of vouchers has remained constant for many years);
 - Johnson County supports increased, [local control](#), funding, and flexibility in determining HOME Program property valuation limits would allow more homeowners to be eligible for the program, leading to more safe and stable housing options, especially for elderly homeowners.

Economic and Workforce Development (continued)

- 3. Weatherization and Home Repair:** The county supports enhanced funding and expanded eligibility for weatherization assistance programs and home repair assistance programs.
- 4. The Federal Role in Community Development:** In order to address the community development social and economic needs in urban, suburban, and rural counties, federal programs must be funded at levels commensurate with national needs.
- 5. Workforce Development and Small Business Support:** Johnson County acknowledges a diverse, dynamic, and inclusive workforce is vital for economic development. The county supports policies that put a priority on workplace infrastructure and investment by improving access to much-needed human capital as vital to job creation, addressing workforce needs, and expanding the US economy.
- 6. Support for Small, Diverse and Startup Businesses:** Johnson County recognizes small, diverse, and emerging businesses as vital to job creation and supports federal initiatives that create jobs by stimulating entrepreneurship, startups, and innovation and closing economic development opportunities gaps.

Public Safety

- 1. Violence Against Women Act:** Johnson County supports the ongoing funding of the S.T.O.P Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). These funds are crucial in maintaining a specialized domestic violence court and providing advocacy services to victims of domestic violence involved in the court system.
- 2. Support Funding for State and Local Homeland Security Programs:** Johnson County supports restored funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) State and Local Programs, including the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). Reduced or eliminated funding from these sources jeopardizes both mass casualty preparedness and homeland security preparedness in Johnson County. Reduced or eliminated funding will impact the county's ability to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond, and recover from all threats and hazards.
- 3. Fire Station & Fire Truck Investment:** Johnson County supports robust federal funding opportunities, [like the Fire Station Construction Grants Act which would authorize \\$750 million](#), to help county governments construct new fire stations and purchase new fire trucks and other equipment.
- 4. Corrections:** Johnson County supports federal initiatives and policies that encourage innovation to provide needed treatment and reduce recidivism, specifically Corrections' Therapeutic Community programs, and encourages federal funding to support these types of efforts.
- 5. Expanded Eligibility for Public Safety Technology Funding:** Johnson County supports federal funding and expanded qualifying criteria for public safety entities to qualify for body-worn camera funding, specifically eligibility for EMS personnel and correctional staff to be qualified applicants for federal funding opportunities.
- 6. 911 Funding.** [Support legislation for federal funding for Next Generation 911 \(NG911\), a digital, internet protocol \(IP\)-based system that will replace the analog 911 infrastructure. And further supports programs that provide financial assistance to PSAPs to help fund their migration to IP-enabled emergency networks; adoption of NG911 services and applications, interconnection with emergency response organizations; and training of public safety personnel in 911 services.](#)

Infrastructure

- 1. Wastewater Management Programs and Legislation:** Johnson County supports full funding of state-revolving loan programs for water and wastewater infrastructure projects, a revised affordability evaluation system, and integrated municipal stormwater and wastewater planning for compliance actions.
- 2. Farm Bill:** As Congress and the administration begin work to reauthorize the Farm Bill before it expires in September 2023, Johnson County urges Congress to prioritize rural development, including streamlining the grant and loan application process for individual Rural Development Programs under USDA while preserving program structure and funding authority.
 - Sedimentation runoff and water quality:** Agriculture land management plays a significant role in water quality as well as the preservation of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation opportunities, and utility

infrastructure and operating costs. Johnson County supports federal policies that protect water quality by addressing nutrient and sediment pollution, including nitrates, at their source and recognizing this action as vital to reducing costs related to treatment at publicly owned treatment facilities.

Infrastructure (continued)

- **Nutrition Assistance Program:** Johnson County supports the federal nutrition program outlined in Title IV of the Farm Bill and opposes future cuts to the program. Johnson County supports all current nutrition programs under the 2018 Farm Bill are critical to ensure food access for all Johnson County residents.
 - **Composting:** Johnson County supports federal funding and initiatives that encourage increased participation and provide support for large-scale composting, including programs aimed at commercial, residential, and public sector entities.
 - **PFAS or “Forever Chemicals”:** Johnson County recognizes the prevalence of PFAS – commonly referred to as “forever chemicals” and the negative health outcomes associated with these materials. Johnson County encourages federal support of policies that enhance standard testing methodologies and investment in upstream prevention measures as cost-efficient.
 - **Watershed management and conservation:** Johnson County acknowledges the critical role that local governments play in balancing land use and sustainability of water supply, specifically the Ogallala Aquifer, and supports expanded funding federal and increased flexibility for planning and implementation of watershed management.
43. [Panasonic Development: The County acknowledges and appreciates the scale of investment in support of the 4,000-job Panasonic Energy electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant and encourages federal, state, and local partnerships to support infrastructure, public safety, housing, and economic development projects directly and indirectly related to the project.](#)

Transportation

1. **Transportation:** Johnson County supports long-term transportation policies with adequate, predictable, dedicated, and sustainable funding that maximizes the benefits derived from local, regional, and national transportation networks.
 - **Investment:** The County encourages investment in public transportation to relieve traffic congestion, minimize vehicle emissions and provide low-cost modes of transportation that connect employers with employees. The County acknowledges we have global leaders in engineering, design, and transportation in our region who are on the cutting edge of future technologies and supports policies that encourage investment in these fields and leverages the world-class expertise they provide.
 - **Intergovernmental Coordination:** Johnson County supports a coordinated and balanced transportation system that supports the interrelationship and connectivity of transportation infrastructure and services across all levels of government, including county/municipal, state, and federal transportation assets.
 - **County Role in Transportation Planning:** Johnson County supports opportunities for counties to participate in local/regional and statewide transportation planning processes and believes counties should be able to re-designate their local/regional transportation planning organization, in consultation with the state, if their organization is not adequately comprised of local elected officials.
 - **Smart corridors/streets:** Johnson County supports innovative street design opportunities to enhance capacity for residents.
 - **Airport:** Johnson County supports enhanced federal funding that provides opportunities to enhance critical infrastructure, including traffic control tower replacement, in addition to other infrastructure upgrades.
 - **Transit:** Johnson County supports additional transit options to accommodate the growing population, especially with Panasonic’s creation of 4,000 new jobs in the County. This includes, but is not limited to, bus rapid transit, connected transit for aging and underserved populations, and increased funding for fixed routes operating during longer periods of time.

- **Funding for Multimodal Transportation Projects:** Johnson County supports federal funding for multi-modal transportation projects through discretionary programs and believes local governments should be eligible as sole applicants for these programs.

Health and Human Services

1. **Medicaid Block Grants:** Johnson County Government relies on Medicaid funding for Core human services functions, such as services for those with mental illness or intellectual or developmental disabilities, payment for those accessing emergency medical services through MED-ACT, preventive health care services through the local health department and for assessing the need for services for the frail elderly, those with traumatic brain injuries and those with physical disabilities. Medicaid reimbursements for these services are critical for Johnson County to maintain high-quality services for these priority functions.
2. **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD):** Johnson County supports an improved rate structure to reflect the complexity of the work being performed by direct support professionals and leads to enhanced wages and benefits. The County supports policies that result in higher-quality community-based services for those with IDD, specifically:
 - Strengthened Medicaid-funded systems that promote community inclusion and provide a range of options for individuals with IDD, Advanced effective strategies that address the significant and mounting direct support professional workforce shortage, and
 - Enhanced support of additional transportation assistance to confront barriers to employment for individuals with IDD.
3. **Mental and Behavioral Health:** Johnson County supports the advance of legislation and administrative changes that will enhance the county's ability to provide comprehensive behavioral health services.
 - Promoting federal initiatives that support public education on mental illness and addiction such as the Mental Health First Aid Act.
 - Ensuring implementation and expansion of federal funding for community behavioral health organizations, as outlined in the Excellence in Mental Health Act.
 - Promoting and funding financial resources and incentives to help states and local governments expand drug treatment, prevention, and recovery efforts, as in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.
4. **Childcare:** Johnson County supports federal investment in childcare programs, facilities, and infrastructure. This is a priority for the County, especially with the influx of jobs and new residents coming to the county. Johnson County supports federal policies that encourage innovation and funding for pilot programs aimed at expanding the availability of childcare services.
- 4.5. **Medicare Reimbursement for Treatment in Place.** [Medicare to allow reimbursements for treatment in place in lieu of unnecessary transport to hospital emergency departments. We believe that if ET3 were instituted broadly, we would see large scale reductions in unnecessary transports to hospital emergency departments, and right-resourced care could occur for non-critical patients who could benefit from treatment in place.](#)

Johnson County Government County Manager's Office
111 S. Cherry St., Olathe, KS 66061 913-715-0725

jocogov.org

