



2024 Legislative and Policy Priorities

REAP's purpose is to provide a unified voice for the region at the state and national level to advance greater economic prosperity from regional cooperation and address issues that cross political boundaries. The following issues have been identified by members of REAP to help grow the economy in South Central Kansas.

REGIONAL JOB GROWTH & BUSINESS EXPANSION

- REAP supports state investments targeting workforce development and skills training strategies in high-demand areas vital to job growth in South Central Kansas including, but not limited to:
 - Excel in CTE
 - Work Based Learning for High School Students
 - Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship
- REAP encourages state support for the Kansas Air Service Development (KASD) program to expand commercial air service and enhance the competitiveness of all commercial airports in Kansas including Eisenhower National Airport.
- REAP supports increased need-based aid funding for first generation or non-traditional students aiming for higher education to bolster workforce talent.
- REAP supports public policy that increases access for workers to quality and affordable childcare opportunities to increase labor force participation.
- REAP supports economic development incentives, programs, and tools to keep the state competitive regionally, nationally and globally.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- REAP encourages additional investments to address access to mental health support and treatment, beginning with youth and serving all age groups, as well as the associated facilities in South Central Kansas.
- REAP supports innovative partnerships among state and local governments to address the issues of unhoused in South Central Kansas.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- REAP encourages utilization of available federal funding to support infrastructure investments in broadband, water and wastewater systems, resiliency in the energy industry, cybersecurity protections and enhancing the regional transportation network.
- REAP is a member of the South-Central Kansas Transportation Coalition and supports the regional projects identified as priorities for growing the regional economy and vital to business and industry.
- REAP supports state funding for existing freight rail service and expansion of passenger rail in Kansas, specifically passenger rail service expanding the Heartland Flyer from Dallas/Ft Worth and Oklahoma City connecting through Wichita to Newton and the Southwest Chief.
- REAP supports policies and strategies to protect water resources critical to the economy of South Central Kansas including protection of the Equus Beds Aquifer that supplies water for

20% of the Kansas population.

- REAP encourages equitable representation on the Groundwater Management District 2 (GMD2) Board of Directors.
- REAP recognizes the importance of energy to the regional economy and supports access to, and production of a variety of energy sources from oil, natural gas, and hydrogen to clean energy to help drive economic development while providing affordable, reliable power.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- REAP favors maintaining existing Home Rule protections.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- REAP supports full funding for employment and skills training projects like the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to enhance sector-based partnerships to meet the needs of employers and job seekers in South Central Kansas.
- REAP supports federal funding for expansion of passenger rail in Kansas, specifically expanding the Heartland Flyer from Dallas/Ft Worth and Oklahoma City connecting through Wichita to Newton and the Southwest Chief.

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