

2021 Core Principles:

Federal, state and local governments have a partnership through which many governmental services are funded and made available to residents. This partnership is dependent upon stable funding, decision-making at the appropriate level and by 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 and subsequently provided by local 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

Support 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 new funded responsibilities.

ACTION AGENDA PRIORITIES

Top Two Action Priorities

1. **Sunflower Army Ammunition Remediation and Redevelopment:** Encourage the continued support of efforts for the full remediation and environmental clean-up of the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant and return of that facility to productive local development and use.

Current Issues and Concerns. The county has a few current issues and concerns, including:

- **Funding.** It is imperative that adequate funding be made available by the Army to remove the explosive risk and provide for the remediation. Those funds need to be identified and committed to Sunflower.
- **Timing.** The Army must be encouraged to move more quickly to complete the remediation. The year 2028 for completion is far too long. At a minimum, the public benefit transfers should be expedited. If funding is available, there is no reason that the full clean-up cannot be completed much sooner.
- **Parcelization.** The county has always had a concern that the property would be cleaned and transferred in parts. When that happens, the property cannot be planned or developed. Parcelization is in direct conflict with the county’s position and outstanding agreements. Any attempt to transfer and develop the property in parcels should be done only with discussions with the county and only when consistent with the county’s overall planning for the area.

- **Public Benefit Allocations.** The Public Benefit Transfers should be honored and given priority at this time.
- **Clean-up Standards.** The Army should follow the county condition that the property be essentially cleaned to residential standards. While the Army does not want to set that precedent and be bound by that standard, to clean the property to a lesser standard will potentially leave issues and rework requirements for future development.
- **On-site Disposal.** While the county has in the past opposed any on-site disposal of pollutants or contaminated soils, the county has informed the Army that it now is willing to consider on-site disposal of pollutants or contaminated soils if there are valid reasons and measurable benefits from doing so.

Redevelopment of the Sunflower property provides opportunities for constructing homes for tens of thousands of county residents, providing schools, businesses and parks, and other economic benefits by moving the property from idle acreage, generating few tax dollars, to public and private development as quickly as possible.

2. **Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act:** Support the full funding of the FAST Act for its authorization period and support the components of the transportation program that provide funding in a dependable and strategic manner for investment in multi-modal transportation infrastructure and operations.

2021 Legislative Positions

Taxation and Administration

3. **Tax Exempt Status of Municipal Bonds:** Support the current tax exemption for municipal bonds to finance public infrastructure projects.
4. **Streamlined Sales and Use Tax:** 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 regarding the collection of sales and use taxes on remote retail sales by mail order, telephone and the Internet based on destination-based sourcing rules, sourcing sales to the location where the purchaser receives the item. Any federal legislation should include language that distributes the funds to the state, counties and cities using existing state statutory formulas.
5. **Employee Benefit Annual Contribution Limits:** Support increasing annual contribution limits for employer-provided retirement plans and employee Flexible Spending Accounts.
6. **Tax Exempt Status of Employer Provided Health Benefits:** Support the current tax exemption on employer-provided health coverage benefits under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code.

- 7. Fee Transparency:** Support federal government efforts to require hospitals and other providers to publicize actual and negotiated fees for medical services and procedures.

Public Safety

- 8. Violence Against Women Act:** Support the ongoing funding of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) S.T.O.P Grant Program. The funds are crucial in maintaining a specialized domestic violence court and providing advocacy services to victims of domestic violence involved in our court system.
- 9. Increase in Size or Weight of Large Trucks:** Support existing limits on truck size or weight at all levels of government, without clear and convincing evidence that increasing current limits will not further endanger the motoring public.

Infrastructure

- 10. Wastewater Management Programs and Legislation:** Support full funding of WIFIA (Water Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act), state revolving loan programs for water and wastewater infrastructure projects, a revised affordability evaluation system, and integrated municipal storm water and wastewater planning for compliance actions.
- 11. Farm Bill:** Support provisions in the farm bill passed in 2014 that include plans to strengthen conservation programs that encourage reduced sedimentation runoff. We also support the continued funding for federal nutrition programs.
- 12. Support Funding for State and Local Homeland Security Programs:** Support restored funding for state and local homeland security programs. Congress has reduced funding for these programs, and as a result, many urban areas, including the Kansas City area, have lost much of their grant funding.

Health and Human Services

- 13. Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD):** Support strengthening Medicaid funded systems to promote inclusion and provide options for the I/DD population.
- 14. Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Assistance:** Support increasing assistance and flexibility of funding, including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for low-income, the elderly and persons with disabilities, with emphasis on Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV).
- 15. Mental and Behavioral Health:** Support Mental Health First Aid Act, expanding the Excellence in Mental Health Act and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act.

- 16. Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC):** Support CCBHCs as a shift to integrate physical and mental health care. We believe this is the model for the future.
- 17. The Addiction Crisis:** Support the National Council's work to build capacity in our healthcare delivery system to ensure that everyone who seeks addiction treatment can receive it. We are advocating for a \$100 billion investment in federal funds over ten years.
- 18. Workforce Development:** Support the National Council's work to train enough workers to meet the demand for services by 2030 by creating a loan repayment program for mental health professionals, advocating for expanded access to telemedicine, including access to Medication Assisted Treatment prescriptions for controlled substances via telemedicine.
- 19. Strengthen the Parity Law:** Support the National Council's work to achieve the full promise of parity by 2025 by enacting a requirement that issuers or plans submit comparative analyses upon request from federal oversight agencies as well as the creation of a Consumer Parity Portal. And we support legislation to provide the Department of Labor the authority to investigate and levy monetary penalties against health insurers and plan sponsors that offer health plans to employers that violate the law.
- 20. Medicaid and Justice-Involved Individuals:** Support legislation to ease and/ or undo the federal Medicaid inmate exclusion and require states to suspend, instead of terminating, Medicaid coverage for justice-involved individuals. Further, The United States Department of Health and Human Services should exercise their existing authority to provide additional state flexibility in the Medicaid program to cover justice-involved individuals.