



2026 Legislative and Policy Priorities

REAP provides a unified voice for the region at the state and national level to advance greater economic prosperity through regional cooperation and to address issues that cross political boundaries. REAP Members have identified the following priorities to continue building a stronger, more resilient economy in South Central Kansas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- REAP remains an active member of the South-Central Kansas Transportation Coalition and continues to support regional transportation projects critical to economic growth and industry competitiveness.
 - Continue to support state funding for existing freight rail service and the expansion of passenger rail in Kansas, specifically extending the Heartland Flyer from Dallas/Ft. Worth and Oklahoma City through Wichita to Newton and the Southwest Chief.
 - Encourage state support for the Kansas Air Service Development (KASD) program to expand commercial air service and enhance the competitiveness of airports across Kansas, including Eisenhower National Airport.
 - Support policies that protect and sustain critical water resources vital to the South Central Kansas economy, including protection of the Equus Beds Aquifer, which provides water for 20% of the state's population.
 - Recognize the importance of diversified energy sources—oil, natural gas, hydrogen, and renewable energy—to ensure affordable, reliable power that drives long-term regional economic development.

HOUSING

- REAP recognizes that accessible, affordable, and quality housing remains foundational to workforce attraction and community vitality in South Central Kansas.
 - Support continued partnerships between state and local governments, housing authorities, and private developers to address housing availability and affordability challenges.
 - Encourage innovative strategies to address homelessness and support programs that provide pathways to stable housing.

JOB GROWTH & BUSINESS EXPANSION

- REAP continues to prioritize investment in workforce development, business growth, and the expansion of economic opportunities for South Central Kansas residents.
 - Support targeted workforce investments and skills training programs in high-demand fields vital to regional job growth, including:
 - Excel in CTE (Career and Technical Education)
 - Work-Based Learning for High School Students
 - Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs
 - Support policies that expand access to affordable, high-quality childcare to increase

- labor force participation and family stability.
- Encourage state economic development incentives and programs that maintain Kansas' competitiveness regionally, nationally, and globally.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- REAP supports continued investment in health and human services that strengthen community well-being and workforce readiness.
 - Advocate for expanded access to mental health services and treatment across all age groups, including facility investments that meet regional needs.
 - Support initiatives that promote public safety and the integration of health services with community-based support systems.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- REAP supports federal programs and funding that advance regional priorities and strengthen the South Central Kansas economy.
 - Continue advocating for full funding of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other workforce development initiatives that enhance employer partnerships and training opportunities for job seekers.
 - Support federal investment in passenger rail expansion, particularly the Heartland Flyer connection from Dallas/Ft. Worth through Wichita to Newton and the Southwest Chief.

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