



2021 Legislative Priorities

METL is a regional coalition of the Manhattan, Emporia, Topeka, and Lawrence Chambers of Commerce, which seeks to leverage the combined strength of nearly 3,000 member businesses and organizations, represented by 30 elected representatives and senators in our region. Our motto is **Stronger Together**. METL pledges to work side-by-side with state officials and elected representatives to maintain fiscal responsibility while helping lead economic recovery efforts in our communities and throughout the state.

FUND TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS IN NORTHEAST KANSAS. Undisrupted movement of people and goods into and across the METL region is critical to unlocking the enormous economic potential along the Animal Health Corridor. METL supports the Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program and will work as an active partner with local, state and federal officials to ensure the projects to replace the I-70 / Polk / Quincy Viaduct in Topeka and expand the west leg expansion of the South Lawrence Trafficway (K10) from two lanes to four proceed without delay through the Development and Construction Pipelines.

GET KANSAS STUDENTS READY TO WORK. Availability of a trained and competent workforce is the most acute economic issue facing Kansas. METL urges the state to work with employers to develop creative approaches to workforce development and talent attraction. METL urges further collaboration among all the relevant stakeholders (K-12, higher education, early childhood education providers, technical educators, community colleges and the business community) in the area of workforce training.

HIGHER EDUCATION. A robust system of higher education is key to supplying a well-trained and competent workforce for Kansas employers. METL supports the requests of the Kansas Board of Regents to restore funding for public universities, community colleges, and technical colleges to pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore, proper funding of need-based student aid programs will also ensure student access to private colleges and universities in Kansas. METL also supports updating and extending the University Engineering Initiative Act to continue funding the Kan-Grow Engineering Fund.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FEDERAL FUNDING BY EXPANDING MEDICAID. METL supports strategies and solutions that would help control health care costs, improve outcomes, expand access, support wellness initiatives and create a culture of health in the workplace. METL supports a common-sense public policy approach to ensure the ongoing viability of health care providers and those they serve. This includes taking advantage of federal funding by expanding Medicaid.

PLAN TO GROW KANSAS. METL strongly supports the continued development and implementation of the long-term economic development strategic plan, the Kansas Framework for Growth. Such a plan should include staffing the Department of Commerce with the professionals needed to compete globally as well as the preservation of existing incentives, such as the High Performance Incentive Program (HPIP), Providing Employment Across Kansas program (PEAK), and STAR bonds. METL supports legislation to authorize the use, sale or refund of unused earned business tax credits. These important tools, as well as the property tax exemption for business & industrial machinery & equipment, are critical to the state's future growth. METL also supports the use of CARES Act funds and additional state efforts to expand broadband coverage. Broadband technology is one of our greatest economic development tools. A strong partnership between the State and public and private stakeholders in our communities is needed to expand broadband access to homes and businesses. Finally, METL supports bringing the Department of Tourism back into the Department of Commerce. Tourism plays a significant role in economic development efforts.