

# STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

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# Education & Workforce

*Attracting and retaining quality jobs requires a strong and well-supported education and workforce system. As our region's workforce continues to evolve, it is increasingly important to improve alignment among student instruction, parent engagement, and the development of the necessary skill for future and current employees to help employers fill job vacancies.*

## POLICY VALUES

### **Pre-K and K-12 Education**

Support policies that ensure children entering primary and secondary education are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared for success through high-quality, publicly-funded Pre-K programs. We also encourage the enactment of mandatory, fully-funded, full-day kindergarten by age 5 to create a consistent, quality early education pathway.

### **STEM Curriculum**

Support funding dedicated to policies that promote and deploy high-quality classroom science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curricula and STEM-focused professional development for educators. This includes, but not limited to, supporting curriculum planning that places a high emphasis on the importance of computer science and engineering courses at the primary and secondary levels to prepare graduates for college and career opportunities in high-demand STEM fields.

### **Education Officials Autonomy**

Empower local education officials to make administrative and structural decisions affecting individual school performance, including the option to extend school hours, merit pay options, and providing voluntary alternative retirement benefits options such as defined contribution plans for new teachers.

### **Business Professional Engagement**

Support the creation of a program that would provide an opportunity for members of the business community to serve as part-time or adjunct faculty in regional K-12 school districts—which would allow professionals to maintain their careers while supplementing local education options.

### **Military Personnel Recruitment**

Support efforts to recruit military personnel to the region and initiatives that increase employment opportunities for returning veterans by eliminating duplicative requirements and expediting processes for military-trained personnel to obtain the equivalent civilian license.

### **Reentry Employment Opportunities**

Support initiatives and policies that increase incentives to hire ex-offenders, expand pre-release entrepreneurship education and training, and funding for proven models for transitional employment and wrap-around services including access to housing and transportation.

# Investment & Infrastructure

*The condition of roads, bridges, schools and other physical assets greatly affects the economy's ability to function and grow. Commerce requires well-maintained roads, railroads, airports, and ports so that manufacturers can obtain raw materials and parts, and deliver finished products to consumers. Improving many types of public infrastructure boosts the productivity of businesses by reducing their costs. Better roads and public transit make it more efficient for workers to get from their home communities to their respective places of employment. Targeted initiatives to maintain and improve public infrastructure boost a region's long-term productivity, resulting in more economic growth and higher-wage jobs.*

## POLICY VALUES

### **Local Government Project Funding**

Support policies that ensure adequate funding for local roads and streets based on actual use and commercial impact by providing maximum flexibility to local governments in the financing, designing, and construction of local transportation infrastructure including the utilization of public-private partnerships.

### **Shovel Ready Development**

Support shovel-ready community redevelopment efforts through the creation of a statewide or local grant program to fund the demolition of blighted commercial properties.

### **Mobility and Transportation Modernization**

Capitalize on advances in personal mobility and transportation by making new mobility options safe and accessible. This may position the region as a center of innovation for mobility solutions. We also encourage the development of solutions that will eventually eliminate barriers to individuals and communities taking advantage of new-age mobility options.

### **Social and Economic Equity**

Support the advancement of social and economic equity, public health outcomes, and economic growth by supporting public and private strategies to expand and maintain the supply of affordable housing options.

### **Incentivizing Homeownership**

Support state and local government strategies that incentivize homeownership growth and efforts related to deploying federal relief dollars to enhance housing security and maintain the supply of affordable rental units.



# State & Local Economic Development

*Economic development is the process of building strong, adaptive, and resilient economies. Strategies driven by local assets, a diverse industry base and a commitment to equality of opportunity, and sustainable practices have emerged as those that will ensure a strong foundation for long-term stability and growth. It is imperative that elected and public officials raise awareness, help develop and communicate a common vision, and motivate stakeholders into action.*

## POLICY VALUES

### **Local Incentives for Development**

Support policies that secure and maintain flexibility of local incentives for economic and community development efforts to encourage new growth and redevelopment of existing resources.

### **Access to Capital**

Support policies and funding opportunities that prioritize increased access to capital and technical assistance for businesses and entrepreneurs of color.

### **Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

Support reviewing state entrepreneurship and innovation support operations to eliminate process barriers to equitable access.

### **Safeguarding Public Transit Funding**

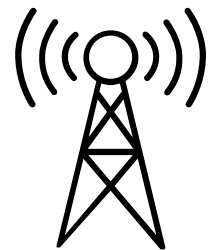
Support policies that protect local public transit agencies from funding cuts or unfair mandates, to maintain reliable transportation options that connect employers and workers.

### **Closing the Digital Divide**

Support initiatives to close the Digital Divide in the region with innovative solutions for access, adoption, and affordability to the internet for all residents. We encourage a focus on digital literacy training and device access to ensure that all residents are able to take full advantage of all the internet has to offer.

### **Telecommunication Infrastructure Modernization**

Support efforts by telecommunications providers to transition their networks from old legacy technology to an advanced all-IP, all-mobile, 5G supportive, all-cloud infrastructure.



# Water, Energy & Environment

*The region's business community values sustainability and good stewardship of our region's natural resources in addition to the wise management of our water resources and natural environment. We must work together to maintain clean air while providing low-cost, reliable energy for residents and businesses.*

## POLICY VALUES

### **Brownfield Site Investment**

Accelerate community reinvestment and accessible employment opportunities in and around brownfield sites. This will in turn drive economic development and maximize property values by creating tax incentives based on employment on former brownfield sites.

### **Management of Waste Streams**

Enhance our sustainability reputation and spur long-term economic growth by advocating for a clean, safe, reliable, affordable, and diverse energy portfolio for the region. This includes responsible management of all waste streams.

# Public Health

*Businesses are recognizing the need to promote the health and well-being of their employees and the communities they serve now more than ever. Small businesses, large corporations, and general enterprises are well-positioned to expand the reach and impact of public health messaging in their communities while developing social responsibility models across several areas affecting their employees' health and the community at large.*

## POLICY VALUES

### **Workforce Pipelines and Supports**

Enhance workforce pipelines and support for essential healthcare workers, public health system workforce, and mental health providers.

### **Wraparound Health Services**

Explore strategies to enhance funding for wraparound services, reimbursement of mental health providers, and public safety partnerships, learning from best practices garnered from the state's investment in mental health grants in the current budget cycle.

### **Affordable Telehealth Options**

Continue to support the expansion of affordable telehealth options to improve access to care and enable more preventative care.

# Business Climate

*Long-term economic growth and investment rely on our region's competitiveness; which we strengthen by leveraging strategic advantages and capitalizing on our assets. The Columbus Chamber focuses on encouraging innovation, growing our knowledge economy, fostering entrepreneurship, boosting business growth, and ensuring a strong quality of life for our region's residents and visitors. The next leaps forward in productivity and innovation will require more flexible, articulate, thinking workers. A wise investment in public education is an absolute must for creating a positive business climate.*

## POLICY VALUES

### **Competitive Tax Environment**

Support a competitive tax environment that maintains the state's economic and fiscal attractiveness and encourages business recruitment, retention, and expansion.

### **Access to Shared Resources**

Support the improvement of access to shared resources, information, and facilities for the conduct of both early-stage proof-of-concept work and scale-up of technology by providing incentives for businesses to collaborate as well as infrastructure and mechanisms to facilitate such exchanges.

### **Physical Infrastructure and Public Services**

Support the repair and maintenance of highways and sidewalks, the management and operation of schools, the prevention of crime, the safeguarding of public health, and the care of public parks, of which are all essential to a community's quality of life.

### **Funding for Technology Businesses**

Provide grants, low-interest loans, and accelerated depreciation tax incentives to mitigate the high start-up or retooling costs associated with high-technology businesses.

### **Higher Education Standards**

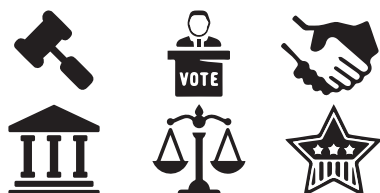
Advance higher standards and provide enhanced learning opportunities from pre-K through higher education to ensure that U.S. students have the critical technical and business background and skills needed for global competitiveness.

### **Federal Programming**

Support the expansion of federal programs that provide targeted support for science and engineering activities to help businesses commercialize technology from academic institutions and scientific research agencies.



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**Published Q2 2023**

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