OARC 2019-2020 Public Policy Agenda

The 2019-2020 Ohio Association of Regional Councils’ Public Policy Agenda lays out the interregional priorities of the 24 agencies that serve more than 10.5 million people across the state. As a statewide association, OARC advocates for regional approaches and solutions in order to create a larger voice for urban and rural areas before state and federal policymakers.

Regionalism

- Promote state designation and recognition of regional approaches to transportation planning and provision of government services both in state policy and the Ohio Revised Code. (OARC is comprised of urban, rural and suburban regional councils, all of which support regional planning to foster economic growth, prosperity, efficient use of resources, and a high quality of life for Ohio residents.)
- Support state and federal policies and legislation that recognize priorities and projects that regional councils promote for member governments, businesses and citizens throughout Ohio.
- Educate local, state and federal public officials on the benefits of regionalism.
- Support the restoration of funding for programs, such as the Local Government Innovation and Efficiency Funds, which provide resources to foster greater collaboration and efficiencies among local communities.
- Distribute federal and state revenue in an equitable manner using formulas that better ensure that dollars go back to, or are expended in, the communities and regions where they were collected.
- Support the use of regional approaches to transportation.

Transportation

- Advocate for and fund a regional, multi-modal, fully integrated, and technically advanced transportation system in Ohio that promotes connectivity.
- Seek additional revenue for multi-modal transportation options at the local, state, and federal levels, and in particular, fund public transit at a level commensurate with the benefit it provides to the entire transportation system – consistent with the findings and recommendations of ODOT’s 2015 Transit Needs Study.
- Advocate for legislation and policies that improve transportation safety for all users.
- Promote a transportation system that encompasses a broad spectrum of fully integrated, technically advanced options and modes.
- Support the development and implementation of transportation alternatives that use cleaner fuels and improve air quality.
- Promote efforts, such as DriveOhio, that use data and smart transportation system technologies to improve the operation and efficiency of the transportation network.

Environment and Sustainability

- Support comprehensive water quality planning performed at the regional level, especially through the continued partnership between the Areawide Planning Agencies and the Ohio EPA.
- Advocate for increased local, state and federal funding to address water quality issues.
Advocate for the restoration and protection of Ohio’s water resources, including supporting coordinated efforts by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and others to address water quality issues in the Lake Erie watershed, the Ohio River watershed, and throughout Ohio.

Support adequate funding levels for local health districts to facilitate implementation of Ohio’s new sewage rules in order to ensure proper functioning of onsite sewage treatment systems.

Promote a balance of responsibilities among the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and the Ohio EPA with respect to the oversight of agricultural sources of water quality impairment.

Support air quality legislation and public policy that is innovative, reduces emissions, protects public health, and leads to a strong economy.

Support efforts like the Clean Ohio Fund, a statewide program that provides grant funding to preserve green space and farmland, improve outdoor recreation and trail development, and clean up brownfields to encourage redevelopment and revitalize communities.

Promote land use best practices and planning tools that preserve and restore sensitive natural areas, reduce energy consumption, and encourage sustainable development and strategic reinvestment.

Economic Development

Support incentives to promote economic development opportunities in Environmental Justice (EJ) areas and continue to partner with JobsOhio to ensure all regions of the state receive adequate investment.

Advocate for policies and funding to support workforce development and improve access to jobs, workforce training, and resources that enhance the financial stability of the state’s low- and moderate-income households.

Support regional economic development strategies at the state and federal levels that attract new quality jobs and investments to regions.

Support continued development of Ohio’s ports, including intermodal facilities, rail, inland ports, and other freight investments.

Advocate for expanded broadband access in rural communities.

Support the continued efforts of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Ohio Governor’s Office of Appalachia to fund applicable economic development activities and projects.