



Mayors' Partnership for Progress

2023 Issues and Positions

AN OVERVIEW: REVITALIZING SOUTHEAST OHIO

Southeastern Ohio has endured many hardships in the past, including a lack of essential resources. Mental health resources, COVID-19 relief assistance, water accessibility, and state and federal investments that reach parity with more affluent areas in Ohio and around the Country have been largely absent in our region of the state. However, the creation of the Appalachian Community Grant Program will direct significant financial investment and resources toward communities inside of the Mayors' Partnership for Progress' (MPP) footprint.

The Appalachian Community Grant Program will enable many new opportunities for municipalities in Southeast Ohio—the possibilities are seemingly endless. This year, meaningful and impactful collaboration among MPP members will be our largest focus as we begin working to prepare for large-scale development projects that specialize in healthcare, workforce development and community revitalization. With the expansion of the Mayors' Partnership for Progress footprint and increasing membership, it is critical that we continue to focus on collaboration between ourselves and other organizations that could be helpful to our membership.

PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

MPP members support and prioritize the need for funding and resources to revitalize our communities, inclusive of investments to improve or extend municipal-owned infrastructure, expand or attract entertainment and tourism businesses and revenue, and redevelop, rehabilitate, or repurpose aging buildings to better serve the needs of today's rural residents and consumers.

HEALTHCARE

Our region and the state of Ohio have been ravaged by rising substance abuse and mental health complications. Unfortunately, it has put a strain on our treatment facilities and other programs. **MPP members support and prioritize attracting financial resources and the professional expertise to grow our healthcare capacity** as we continue to address mental health, substance abuse and other health complications post pandemic.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Local government funds distributed at the state level continue to diminish, however with new federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, it is critical the state invest funding directly into communities and ensure local governments have access to the resources they need to effectively plan for and manage those investments. **The MPP supports the efforts of the Voinovich School at Ohio University to secure financial resources to assist members to improve their ability to attract and manage additional state and federal funding programs critical to realizing robust community revitalization efforts.**

CHILDCARE

The MPP supports continued efforts to improve childcare payment rates, with specific attention to in-home childcare aides. Our region has lost one-third of its publicly funded childcare capabilities in recent years and increased training and technical requirements have forced many childcare providers out of business. We want to reverse this trend.

WATER ACCESSIBILITY

The MPP supports additional state investment to enable expansion of its partnership with community action agencies to aid low-income residents to afford access to public drinking water. The MPP seeks to increase the level of benefit to address the realities of the current living arrangements being faced by low-income families, which will require understanding and acceptance by those in positions of authority that these situations exist and should factor into the financial modeling being utilized to determine financial support levels.

In addition, **the MPP supports an increase in state and federal funding for our region's water systems in order to meet EPA quality standards.**

PROTECTING HOME RULE

The MPP supports the preservation of home rule/local authority rights. The Ohio Constitution gives dually elected local governments the right to Home Rule. The Ohio legislature is eroding these rights and local authority in areas including, but not limited to: minimum wage; parking enforcement; collection and administration of municipal income taxes; local hiring; gun control; predatory lending; ability to tax plastic bags; and red-light traffic cameras.

REDUCING THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF STATE AUDIT REQUIREMENT

The Mayors' Partnership for Progress stands by the belief that the state should provide auditing services through a line item versus fees imposed upon municipalities. **We support the Auditor of State efforts to obtain additional state funding for its operation, to utilize for the reduction or elimination of local/municipal audit fees. We also encourage a significant expansion of training opportunities from the County Auditors for local governments.** We recommend that participants in the Treasurer's Checkbook program be given a discount on audit costs.

FIRST RESPONDER WORKFORCE ASSISTANCE

The MPP supports additional financial and professional capacity to continue to recruit, train and retain first responder employees and volunteers to protect the safety of our citizens. The law enforcement and fire department workforce and volunteer base are aging out and local governments in our region struggle

to offer competitive wages, are more reliant on volunteers, and experience tremendous turnover of first responders.

UNSPENT TANF FUNDS

The MPP calls on the state to immediately deploy its unspent Temporary Assistance to Needy Family (TANF) funds to help our low-income families. Over five years ago the MPP helped uncover an unspent balance of TANF block grant funds and we made proposals to use those funds to help our low-income families with basic necessities. The balance was about \$200 million in 2017. Our families still have serious needs and the unspent balance of TANF funds stands at over \$650 million.