



East Valley Partnership 2018 Legislative Priorities

As a regional coalition of business, community, education and government leaders, members of the East Valley Partnership have identified the following priorities for the State of Arizona 2018 Legislative session.

1. EDUCATION FUNDING AND PRIORITIES

Education and economic development are inter-twined. Arizona seeks to grow and enhance a world class system of education from Pre-School and K-12 to Community Colleges and Universities. It is doing so through a combination of choice, innovation, accountability and evolving partnerships between government, business and the range of community institutions. Achieving this goal depends on attention and effort at all levels of the education spectrum. Improvement in any one level of the continuum cannot be achieved if it comes at the expense of any other.

Significant barriers exist that hinder universal progress toward our aspirations. Teacher shortages, aging capital infrastructure, imminent expiration of Proposition 301, and the need to address preparation for and access to higher education and career readiness are among the most visible of these obstacles. Only by thinking systemically can the East Valley, and the State, be assured that our system of education will meet the needs of our youth.

To prepare and support our future workforce, and to provide “opportunity for all”, it is essential that a long-term solution to the education funding challenges that exist in Arizona, be developed and implemented. Meaningful discussion on several interrelated funding topics need to be started. These include:

- All day kindergarten funding options
- Options involving the extension and possible expansion of Proposition 301 for the benefit of the P20 systems
- Strategies that will lead to increased wages, improve working conditions, and enhance professional development for teachers
- A focus on building the pipeline of computer science and information technology skilled students
- Other potential funding strategies

Based on Arizona Board of Regents recommendations to support resident students, cut costs and streamline processes for our three State universities, we support plans to:

- Raise the State’s resident student support to 50% of the total cost of education.
- Seek a strategically planned transition from the state health benefits plan to a tri-university health insurance plan or individual insurance plans by university.

Based on the recommendation of the Maricopa Community College District ,we support their request for full STEM formula funding.

Based on the recommendation of the East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT), we support 100% funding of the long-established formula for students in Joint Technological Education Districts.

Related to additional education initiatives we support:

- Statewide Achieve60AZ goals
- Expect More Arizona Initiatives

2. COMPETITIVENESS INITIATIVES

We endorse continued efforts to improve Arizona’s competitive position with other States. Specific recommendations include:

- Support the continuation of [the](#) Arizona Commerce Authority
- Create financing mechanisms or tools (i.e., Tax Allocation Districts) to improve local governments’ competitive position for business attraction, retention, and expansion.
- Reinstate the Arizona Commerce Authority’s job training incentive fund.
- Enhance job creation programs to allow increased flexibility in reducing tax liabilities associated with job creation.
- Support efforts to integrate workforce development programs and reinvigorate the job training program to help companies attract and retain a competitive workforce.
- Support policies that create value for stranded tax credits earned by companies investing in Arizona.
- Support Arizona’s efforts to establish a leadership position that encourages adoption and growth of new, disruptive technologies.
- Support policies that promote the security, reliability and resilience of utility infrastructure, and that encourage low and stable energy prices for the benefit of customers and economic development.
- Support a statutory clarification regarding the taxation of digital goods and services with the objective of providing taxpayer clarity and certainty regarding the taxation of the cloud-based services industry.

3. STATE, COUNTY, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

State/County/Local government legislative initiatives that are priorities include the following:

- Support efforts to adequately fund critical State Agencies including Department of Water Resources, the Arizona State Land Department, and the Department of Environmental Quality.
- Advocate that State Agency permitting fees, be used to fund those programs for which the fees are assessed.
- Support Arizona Cities, Towns and Counties efforts to protect state shared revenue streams.
- Support the Citizens for the Arts proposal to increase funding levels for the Arizona Commission on the Arts.
- Support efforts to address the funding and governance challenges of the Public Safety Retirement System.
- Ensure that changes to the construction sales tax system creates a sustainable policy that maintains state and local revenues and provides simplicity for the construction industry.
- Pursue modifications to state and federal laws that regulate group homes to protect health, safety and welfare of the residents and surrounding communities.

4. TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING/WATER POLICIES

While we understand that many critical transportation/infrastructure needs must be addressed in the short-term, we emphasize the need to identify long-term and innovative transportation funding solutions.

- In addition, we oppose efforts to shift or eliminate funds designated for the development and maintenance of roads and highways. We support providing the ADOT Director with the authority to initiate a Highway Safety Fee to fund the Arizona Highway Patrol.
- The State of Arizona and its political subdivisions have a well-earned national representation for developing and implementing progressive water management policies. We support on-going and inclusive review of future water needs and the implementation of new regulatory rules and strategies that will ensure that the State remains at the forefront of proactive water security measures.
- We support the protection of the Arizona State Aviation Fund.
- We advocate to ensure school safety and the continued viability of airport operations through public policy providing future separation of public schools from airspace hazard zones.

5. HEALTH CARE

In collaboration with Healthcare leaders in our Region, the following priorities have been identified:

- Protect and advance Arizona's Medicaid program through advocacy for responsible solutions that advance access to coverage, improve quality in patient care, protect Arizona's fiscal stability, and mitigate onerous mandates on private business and unsustainable burdens on the healthcare industry.
- Lead efforts to advance Arizona's Healthcare Industry: Support policies that protect AHCCCS' ability to remain a low cost/high quality program and national model for innovation among Medicaid programs; that do not increase the hidden healthcare tax on business; that do not create an adverse fiscal impact on state government; and that do not increase the rate of uncompensated care on the healthcare industry.
- Support the recruiting and training of technical and clinical professions that will help us grow a strong and sustainable healthcare workforce for the benefit of Arizona's residents and healthcare economy. This will help us address the shortage of nurses, doctors and mid-level technical staff in the State.
- Support extension of federal funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)