

bentonville AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE | Chamber FAYETTEVILLE | nwa Northwest Arkansas Council | RLC RogersLowellChamber | The Chamber Siloam Springs Chamber of Commerce | SPRINGDALE Chamber of Commerce

NWA REGIONAL

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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What is the Legislative Agenda?

Since its creation in the late 2000s, the Northwest Arkansas Regional Legislative Agenda has served as a unified voice for the region's business community, identifying the policy priorities that will strengthen Northwest Arkansas's economy, workforce, infrastructure, and quality of life. What began as a collaborative effort among the region's Chambers of Commerce has evolved into a shared agenda supported by both the Northwest Arkansas Chambers and the Northwest Arkansas Council, reflecting a regional commitment to advancing policies that benefit businesses, communities, and residents across the region.

The Legislative Agenda is not intended to address every issue considered during the General Assembly. Rather, it serves as a guiding framework for the issues our organizations will actively monitor, advocate for, and engage on throughout the legislative session.

As the Arkansas General Assembly convenes for the 2027 Regular Session, the following priorities will guide our engagement with state policymakers and stakeholders.

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

- Support updates to the Industrial Development Authority Expansion Act that address local concerns and oversights (Act 576)
- Support Enabling Legislation for Issue 3:
  - Including framework for economic development districts inclusive of all industries
  - Broad-based access to financing tools, infrastructure investment, and growth opportunities
- Support streamlining permitting:
  - Statutory changes to eliminate barriers that are a result of the Governors Executive Order Number 26-04
  - Encourage legislation that boost development across Arkansas while protecting natural resources
- Support modernization of AR incentive structure to be more competitive with surrounding states
  - Focus on emerging industries, expanding employers, and high-growth investments
- Encourage state and regional coordination for grants and partnerships tied to energy, environment, economy, aviation, and infrastructure.
- Support the Consensus Privacy Approach:
  - Encourage adoption of data privacy framework aligned with other states
  - Establish clear consumer rights to access information
  - Reduce compliance burdens across state lines
- Support changes to the Equity Investment Tax Credit (EITC):
  - Targeted reforms to increase access to startup capital
  - Modernize eligibility, simplify administration, and encourage investment statewide
- Support a formal statewide framework for administering SSBCI and venture capital programs:
  - Ensure Arkansas is prepared to leverage and pursue future investment opportunities in a timely manner

- Support policies that promote a transparent, fair, and predictable civil justice system to strengthen the business climate
- Encourage the development of a coordinated AI strategy:
  - Support business adoption, workforce readiness, and innovation

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

- Support efforts to keep students in the region after graduation
  - Strengthen higher education-employer partnerships to align academic programs with workforce needs and expand internships and career pathways
  - Expand career and technical education, apprenticeships, and industry-recognized credentials to prepare students for high-demand careers after graduation
- Simplify duplicative or conflicting requirements that limit schools' ability to offer after-school care
- Support expanding after-school care to more working families
- Support tax credits going directly to families and employers for affordable childcare
  - Encourage conforming to the federal childcare tax credit
- Encourage equipping AR students and workers with skills needed for an AI-driven economy.

HEALTHCARE

- Support regional collaboration to prepare providers and institutions for future regional demand
- Incentivize specialty care and regional centers of excellence
  - Support access to high-quality care closer to home
- Strengthen medical and residency programs to support rising demand
- Encourage value-based clinically integrated networks (CINs)
  - Allow for independent and system providers to coordinate care to improve outcomes and control costs
- Position NWA as a leader in telehealth, AI, and digital care
  - Support reducing regulatory barriers and innovative pilots
- Strengthen maternal care from pregnancy through the entire postpartum period
- Support sustainable healthcare financing policies without disproportionate increases to costs for employers and employees
  - Improve efficiency and strengthen provider capacity while preserving access to care

HOUSING

- Support expanding housing supply options to allow for faster, more affordable builds:
  - Allow for Modular Housing
  - Encourage Lot Size Reform and updated building codes to increase access to smaller starter homes and missing middle housing
- Reduce zoning barriers
  - Allow by-right development of multi-use and multi-family developments in commercial zoned areas; and housing on church or nonprofit- owned land
- Reuse land more effectively
  - Encourage redevelopment of underused, vacant, or abandoned property
  - Expand land bank authority to encourage infill and other productive reuse in established areas
- Recognize housing as economic development
- Increase approval speeds and predictability of development
  - Support development of preapproved housing plans

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Enable stronger regional collaboration with flexible partnerships and coordinated planning to address critical utility/infrastructure needs
  - Encourage interlocal financing abilities
- Support state policies that help NWA compete for federal infrastructure funding
  - Encourage implementation-ready planning and project delivery

- Support policies that strengthen waste and recycling planning
    - Expand infrastructure and encourage innovative waste management solutions.
- Advance regional transit and public transportation funding that supports workforce mobility
- Support Arkansas' Waste Tire Management System
    - Encourage reuse in infrastructure development and regional coordination for reducing stockpiles
- Support legislation that provides funding to attract new air service to any of the state's commercial airports

TOURISM

- Expand Arkansas' Tourism Development Act incentives:
    - Offer higher tax credits or faster approvals for new lodging, attractions, and hospitality venues
- Support hospitality workforce through state-backed programs and marketing
- Expand human trafficking prevention training for hospitality employees
- Support local decision-making regarding tourism revenues







For questions or more information, reach out to:

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