



# Great Northwest Day at the Capitol

## Legislative Priorities

### 2025

#### *Top Priorities*

- ✓ **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION:** Reimagining Northwest Missouri Neighborhoods
- ✓ **INCREASING CHILDCARE OPPORTUNITIES:** Supporting Rural Families in Northwest Missouri
- ✓ **INCREASING WORKFORCE:** Building Talent in Northwest Missouri
- ✓ **EXPAND WORKFORCE HOUSING:** Strengthening Rural Northwest Missouri Communities

#### *Other Priorities Identified*

- **ROADS & BRIDGES:** Strengthening Connections in Rural and Northwest Missouri
- **HIGHER EDUCATION:** Investing in Rural and Regional Innovation
- **K-12 EDUCATION:** Empowering Rural and Northwest Missouri Generations
- **BROADBAND:** Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural and Northwest Missouri

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#### **COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION**

##### **Reimagining Northwest Missouri Neighborhoods**

Community revitalization in Northwest Missouri is essential for reimagining neighborhoods and fostering vibrant, thriving communities. Revitalization efforts breathe new life into public spaces, improve housing options, and support local businesses, creating a sense of pride and belonging for residents. By investing in infrastructure, beautification, and community engagement, these efforts can attract new families, retain young talent, and boost the local economy. Revisioning Northwest Missouri neighborhoods ensures they are livable and dynamic places where people want to live, work, and grow together.

- **Enhance Quality of Life and Address Derelict Properties:** Provide funding to rural Missouri communities for developing parks, trails, and community spaces while addressing abandoned properties to foster economic growth and livability. Support collaboration between neighboring rural municipalities, counties, and local agencies to pool resources and expertise for code enforcement. **HB 610, SB 35**
- **Invest in Water and Wastewater Infrastructure:** Target funding for modernizing water and wastewater systems to attract businesses and improve residents' quality of life in rural Missouri.
- **Support Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses:** Encourage the Missouri Department of Economic Development to support entrepreneurial activity and small business growth in rural communities with grants, affordable capital, and training resources. **HB 235, HB 675, SB 461**
- **Protect Rural Healthcare Access:** Advocate for policies ensuring access to critical healthcare services in Northwest Missouri, including supporting 340B legislation and additional medical residency positions for rural hospitals. Support additional residency positions at existing graduate medical education (GME) medical residency programs. There is a noted shortage of physicians in our rural health system including specialties of family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics, general obstetrics, gynecology (OB-GYN), and general psychiatry.

## INCREASING CHILDCARE OPPORTUNITIES

### Supporting Rural Families in Northwest Missouri

Increasing childcare availability in Northwest Missouri is vital to supporting rural families and strengthening the region's economic foundation. Accessible and affordable childcare empowers parents to participate in the workforce, pursue educational opportunities, and contribute to their communities without compromising their children's well-being. For rural families, where childcare options are often limited, expanding these services reduces stress, improves quality of life, and fosters stronger community connections. By prioritizing childcare, Northwest Missouri can build a supportive environment that nurtures both families and local economies, ensuring long-term stability and growth.

- **Streamline the Licensing Process and Support Tax Credits:** Simplify childcare center licensing processes and promote tax credits to address capacity shortages of providers in rural Missouri.
- **Strengthen Childcare Infrastructure:** Encourage investment in childcare facilities, especially in underserved rural communities, to support working families and bolster local economies.
- **Expand Childcare Capacity to Address Workforce Needs:** Promote childcare initiatives like the Employer-Provided Child Care Assistance Tax Credit to help businesses support employees and reduce workforce barriers in rural Missouri. *HB 215, HB 269, SB 455*
- **Support the Missouri Office of Childhood and Childcare:** Advocate for expanded resources and programs targeting the unique needs of rural families, particularly in Northwest Missouri

## INCREASING WORKFORCE

### Building Talent in Northwest Missouri

Building talent in Northwest Missouri is essential to drive economic growth, support local businesses, and ensure the region thrives in an evolving marketplace. By fostering a skilled and adaptable workforce, the area can attract new industries, retain young professionals, and create opportunities for innovation. Investing in talent development not only enhances productivity but also strengthens community resilience and positions Northwest Missouri as a hub for economic and cultural vitality. Building talent ensures a prosperous future by aligning workforce skills with the demands of emerging industries and fostering a culture of growth and collaboration.

- **Increase Supply of People:** Develop campaigns highlighting the benefits of rural living in Missouri such as work-life balance and community engagement, to attract workers. Promote local youth engagement in career pathways to grow a sustainable talent pipeline.
- **Offer Tax Incentives for Workforce Engagement:** Provide tax benefits targeted at encouraging workforce participation in rural areas in Missouri, which focus on parents, caregivers, and underemployed individuals. *HB 137, SB 190, SB 416, SB 475*
- **Support Employment Retention Programs:** Establish Employment Incentive Districts in rural Missouri to assist with relocation, workforce housing, and retention bonuses for working families.

## EXPAND WORKFORCE HOUSING

### Strengthening Rural Northwest Missouri Communities

Increasing workforce housing in Northwest Missouri is essential to strengthening rural communities and ensuring their long-term vitality. Affordable and accessible housing options attract and retain workers, enabling businesses to thrive and local economies to grow. For rural areas, workforce housing fosters stability, encourages population growth, and supports families seeking to live closer to their jobs and schools. By prioritizing housing development, Northwest Missouri can build stronger, more resilient communities where residents can live, work, and contribute to the region's collective success.

- **Increase Workforce Housing Availability:** Focus on creating affordable housing for essential workers in rural Missouri communities, addressing shortages with homes priced between \$180,000 to \$240,000.
- **Expand Housing Development Programs:** Implement rural workforce housing programs modeled after successful initiatives in other states, targeting rural Missouri communities under 100,000 in population. **HB 240, HB 245**
- **Revitalize Existing Housing Stock:** Provide grants for renovating older homes in rural Missouri communities under 100,000 in population to increase livable, affordable housing quickly. **SB 404**
- **Enhance Rural Housing Policies and Incentives:** Establish an Office for Rural Housing to craft tailored housing solutions and expand tax credits for rural communities in Missouri.

### *Additional Priorities Identified*

## ROADS & BRIDGES

### Strengthening Connections in Rural and Northwest Missouri

- **Advocate State Responsibility for Lettered Highways:** Ensure that the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) retains responsibility for maintaining lettered highways, particularly those critical to rural and Northwest Missouri communities, to relieve financial strain on county governments and maintain consistent upkeep statewide.
- **Establish Dedicated Funding for Lettered Highways:** Create a specific funding stream to repair and maintain lettered highways, which are lifelines for rural and agricultural areas, improving safety and reliability across regions like Northwest Missouri.
- **Promote Innovative Infrastructure Funding:** Support sustainable funding solutions to accelerate infrastructure modernization, including targeted improvements to key Northwest Missouri routes like Highway 36 during I-70 construction.
- **Provide Support for Community Roadway Maintenance:** Prioritize technical and financial assistance to local governments, with an emphasis on Northwest Missouri, enabling better maintenance of road networks, including enhancements for drainage, safety, and walkability in smaller towns and rural areas. Explore pooled bond financing options for rural communities to jointly fund needed improvements.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

### Investing in Rural and Regional Innovation

- **Increase Core Appropriations for Higher Education:** Advocate for increased funding to address inflation and expand services for public institutions including Northwest Missouri State University, Missouri Western State University, and North Central Missouri College. *HJR 7*
- **Modernize Energy, Water, and Wastewater Infrastructure on Campuses:** Support sustainability-focused infrastructure improvements at rural higher education institutions to reduce costs and enhance operations.
- **Maximize State and Federal Funding for Maintenance:** Prioritize deferred maintenance funding for rural campuses including Northwest Missouri State University, Missouri Western State University, and North Central Missouri College.

## K-12 EDUCATION

### Empowering Rural and Northwest Missouri Generations

- **Fully Fund the State Transportation Formula:** Advocate for full funding of student transportation formula, recognizing the unique needs of rural school districts like those in Northwest Missouri where longer bus routes demand greater resources.
- **Enhance Local Autonomy in Education:** Empower rural districts to make decisions addressing their unique challenges without unnecessary state interference.
- **Streamline Educational Administration:** Eliminate unfunded mandates that disproportionately burden schools, redirecting resources to students.
- **Address Teacher Shortage and Increase Pay:** Focus on raising teacher salaries and providing incentives to attract and retain educators in rural and Northwest Missouri schools where shortages are especially acute. *HB 368, HB 444*

## BROADBAND

### Bridging the Digital Divide in Rural and Northwest Missouri

- **Enhance Broadband Access in Rural Areas:** Prioritize investments in unserved and underserved areas of rural Missouri, including Northwest communities, by redefining "underserved" to include internet speeds below 100 Mbps down and up. This expansion will empower education, healthcare, and economic development.
- **Support the BEAD Program for Regional Growth:** Ensure that the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program allocates resources effectively to rural Missouri, addressing the connectivity challenges unique to rural areas including Northwest Missouri.
- **Promote Wireless Broadband for Key Regional Needs:** Advocate for wireless broadband expansion in rural Missouri to support agriculture, emergency services, and outdoor recreation, enhancing both safety and economic opportunities. *SB 185*