



PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA 2009/2010

Executive Summary



TO OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC-SECTOR LEADERS

The Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) and its partner organizations represent the interests of more than 17,000 businesses in Northeast Ohio. We share a common vision for accelerating economic growth and increasing regional prosperity. While we are concerned about the unprecedented economic challenges that will unfold throughout the next two years, we are confident that our Public Policy Agenda, representing the “one voice” of our members, will help elected officials and public-sector leaders marshal the resources to respond effectively to these challenges.

The action items addressed in our Public Policy Agenda are organized into six areas of focus:

- Advance Small Business Success
- Accelerate Economic Inclusion
- Build a High-Impact, Sustainable Economic Development System
- Change the Face of Cleveland
- Strengthen Global Connections
- Initiate a Demand-Driven Talent System

The GCP and its partners are positioned to mobilize private-sector leadership, expertise and resources to improve the economic outlook for Northeast Ohio. In partnership with our elected officials and public-sector leaders, we stand ready to face the challenges ahead. Together, with “one voice,” we can bring economic prosperity for all who live and work in Northeast Ohio.



Henry L. Meyer III
Chairman, Board of Directors



Paul J. Dolan
Chairman, Government Affairs Council



Joseph D. Roman
President and Chief Executive Officer

OUR GOALS



ADVANCE SMALL BUSINESS SUCCESS

Our small business partner, the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE), has developed a public policy agenda that expresses in detail its positions on key issues. The Greater Cleveland Partnership works with COSE to advance these goals, which are detailed in the GCP 2009/2010 Public Policy Agenda and COSE's Public Policy Agenda for Policymakers.



ACCELERATE ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Among the challenges to minority business enterprises (MBEs) is access to bonding and capital needed to expand their businesses.

- Support continuation of the Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE) program.
- Secure federal funding for the Minority Business Accelerator 2.5+ initiative.



BUILD A HIGH-IMPACT, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Building on the system that the GCP has helped create, we can grow our capacity to retain and create jobs and wealth for all residents at scale.

Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- Support renewal of the Third Frontier program in a form that requires awards to be merit-based and without geographic allocations or constraints.
- Increase capital available for lending through the Innovation Ohio Loan Fund.
- Increase budget authorization limits for the Ohio Technology Tax Credit Program.
- Support changes in the administration of the Ohio Capital Fund that will allow it to grow at scale to the original goal of \$250 million.

Gaming

The GCP encourages the governor and state legislators to work together to enact a proposal that puts forth a responsible approach to gaming in Ohio, one that can be accomplished without the influence of individuals who may benefit from the outcome.

State Fiscal Responsibility

We realize that the state faces difficult decisions during the biennial budget deliberations. We appreciate the complexity of these choices but strongly emphasize that important tax reform policies must not be compromised in reaction to our fiscal crisis.

- Support passage of a biennial budget that meets basic needs but does not compromise the advances achieved through passage of House Bill 66.

Balancing Business and Labor Issues

With the election of a new president and Democrat majorities in Congress, union influence has new life and newly elected supporters. The GCP urges lawmakers to oppose legislation that will make it easier for unions

to organize in the workplace. We also caution against legislation that will reverse gains made in civil justice reform.

- Oppose efforts to enact any and all of the provisions of the Employee Free Choice Act.
- Work with other organizations to defeat a federal “Healthy Families Act.”
- Oppose harmful legal reform proposals related to federal preemption of state law, binding arbitration in consumer contracts, and medical malpractice.

Environment and Climate Change

Northeast Ohio faces serious environmental challenges that have an impact on the economic vitality of our region and the quality of life experienced by our residents. Among these are water resources, air quality and climate change. The GCP will continue to advocate for cost-effective and reasonable solutions that will lead to a high-impact, sustainable economic development system.

Water Resources

- Support the implementation of the federal Great Lakes Restoration Strategy.
- Support passage of legislation that protects the Great Lakes from discharges of untreated ballast water.
- Ensure that air and water quality regulations do not negatively impact the state’s ability to attract business and create jobs.
- Support legislation that enhances short sea shipping.
- Work with the Great Lakes Compact Implementation Advisory Board to ensure that water usage permits are based upon processing capacity rather than current withdrawal rates.
- Support implementation of standards in the Great Lakes Compact that recognize the Great Lakes basin as a whole.

Air Quality

Support continuation of the Diesel Emission Reduction Grant (DERG) program.

Climate Change

Support a balanced approach to slow, stop and reverse greenhouse gas emissions in a way that promotes sustainable economic growth and does not severely impact our economy.

Energy

The GCP will work with its technology partner NorTech to find state and federal solutions to our energy crisis that recognize the importance of advanced technologies and strike the right balance between those that are currently available and those of the future.



CHANGE THE FACE OF CLEVELAND

Working with its real estate partner, the Cleveland Development Advisors, the GCP advances physical development initiatives at the scale necessary to create jobs and amenities that enhance Cleveland’s quality of life and place in the region.

- Support preservation and extension of the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit.
- Support reauthorization of the federal New Markets Tax Credit program.
- Continue to advocate for several transformative projects in the region, including:
 - Completion of the Inner Belt and Lakefront projects
 - Repair/replacement of the Inner Belt Bridge
 - Opportunity Corridor
 - Move the Port of Cleveland to a new site

Local Governance

The GCP supports enactment of legislation to provide Cuyahoga County voters with options to restructure county government and enhance collaboration among local governments.



STRENGTHEN GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

The global competitiveness of the region and its companies is tied to having world-class physical and human capital assets, along with organizational capacities that support and increase research, innovation, and commerce with the rest of the world.

- Ensure that funding for the NASA program includes sufficient resources for the NASA Glenn Research Center.
- Secure funding for a 9,000-foot runway at the NASA Glenn Plum Brook Station facility.
- Support moving the NASA Glenn Visitor Center to the Great Lakes Science Center.
- Support policies and initiatives that ensure the long-term vitality of the region's air service.
- Secure federal funding to relocate the Port of Cleveland.



INITIATE A DEMAND-DRIVEN TALENT SYSTEM

In order to meet the demands of today's economy and to flourish in the future, it is essential that the private sector work closely with elected officials to enact policies that will make it easier for employers to identify, attract and retain qualified workers. Talent development, workforce training and retraining and immigration policies that support these goals will enable our region and state to compete at the state, national and international levels.

Workforce and Talent

- Support realignment of Ohio's workforce development programs to better align them with the needs of employers.
- Support adequate funding for "one stop" workforce centers.
- Support the Chancellor of the Board of Regents' 10-year strategic plan.
- Support funding to address future talent needs within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.
- Support efforts to reform the Workforce Development Act.

Immigration

- Support establishment of High Skill Immigration (HSI) zones
- Support visa reforms that will impact H-1B, H-1A, EB-2 and EB-3 processes and quotas.
- Re-establish H-1A visa program for registered nurses.
- Encourage U.S. embassies and consulates to expedite issuance of F-1 and J-1 exchange visas.
- Urge support for matching funds for "Welcome Centers" that connect and facilitate employer and community engagement with immigrants.

GCP STAFF CONTACTS

Carol Caruso

Senior Vice President,
Government Advocacy
(216) 592-2471
ccaruso@gcpartnership.com

Gary Smith

Director,
Government Advocacy
(216) 592-2244
gsmith@gcpartnership.com

Nick Gattozzi

Vice President,
Government Advocacy
(216) 592-2306
ngattozzi@gcpartnership.com

Deanne Dixon

Manager,
Government Advocacy
(216) 592-2342
ddixon@gcpartnership.com

