



Pennsylvania Insights Review

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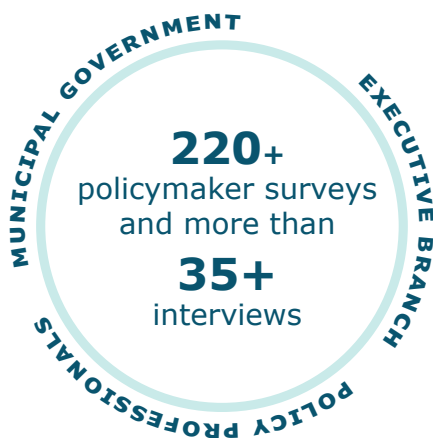




Executive Summary

From June-August 2021, we surveyed and spoke with over 250 state and local policymakers in Pennsylvania to understand policy priorities throughout the state and how the private and public sector are working on these issues.

In our analysis, policymakers highlighted transportation/ infrastructure, education, economic development, public health, and civil rights as key issue areas for Pennsylvania. Policymakers also discussed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the state and emphasized what they value in private-public partnerships.



Strengthening Pennsylvania's Infrastructure

- Policymakers are concerned about making improvements to road and highway infrastructure, electric grid infrastructure, and broadband infrastructure
- Broadband improvements are highlighted as an area of need



Improving Education Access and Equity

- Education is a top issue across party lines for Pennsylvania policymakers
- Policymakers are focused on closing education funding gaps and improving access and quality for students across the state



Spurring Economic Development

- COVID-19 relief funds are at the forefront of policymakers' minds in working to improve the economy
- Looking forward, policymakers are working to improve business growth to make attract more businesses and families to move to Pennsylvania



What Policymakers Want to See from the Private Sector

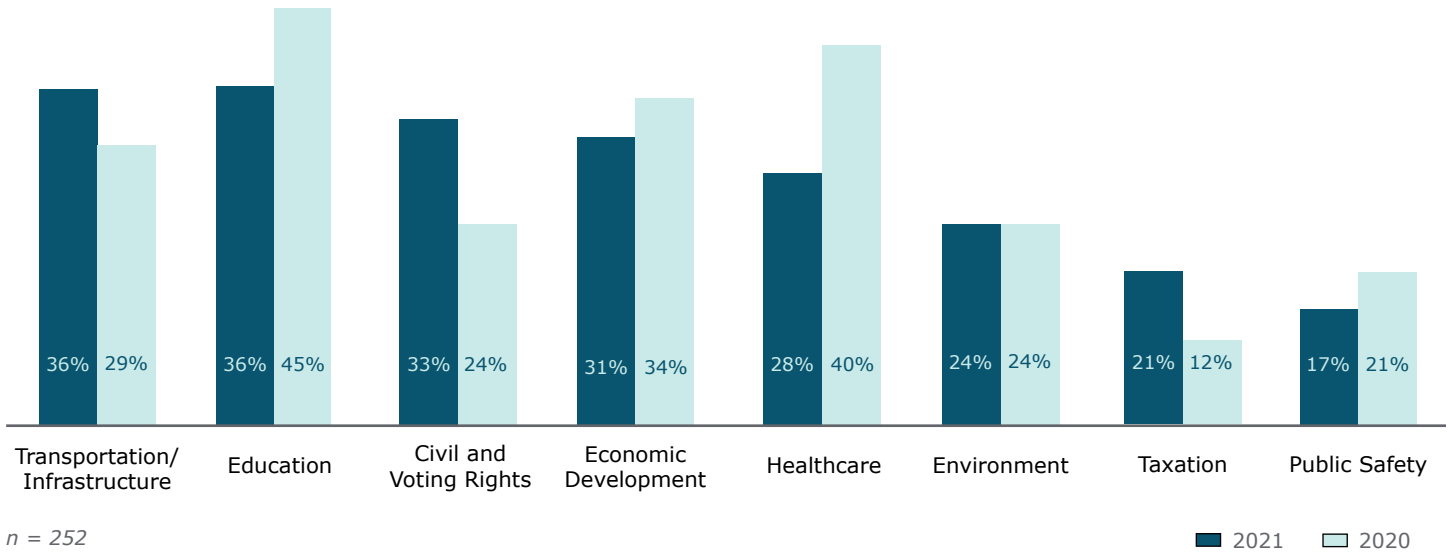
- Many policymakers see opportunities for companies to have authentic community involvement
- Authentic partnerships and community feedback are essential for corporate engagement



Top Issues in Pennsylvania

Policymakers highlighted five main policy priorities for the state of Pennsylvania in both 2020 and 2021: transportation/infrastructure, education, public health and healthcare, economic development, and civil and voting rights. This year, policymaker focus on infrastructure and civil rights rose, while education and education concerns receded somewhat relative to last year.

Top Pressing Issues in the State



Which of the following do you view as the most pressing issues facing the state?

Pennsylvania's Policymaker Priorities

This report focuses on three issues with the strong bi-partisan interest: **Education, Transportation and Infrastructure**, and **Economic Development**. While Civil and Voting rights was a top Democratic priority, it is a lower priority among Republicans. Similarly, Taxation was a top Republican priority, but was lower among Democrats.



Infrastructure & Transportation

"We need to address the infrastructural needs that were made very apparent by COVID-19. Schools weren't prepared for this. Businesses weren't prepared for this. We saw the commonwealth as a whole was not prepared for a pandemic of this magnitude."

Executive Director, D



Education

"We need to reduce the cost of higher education in our state colleges and universities because we're leaving people with way too much student debt, but without the ability to earn a family-sustaining living. That's vital."

State Senator, R



Economic Development

"Making sure that we are driving out federal resources in Pennsylvania and getting them into programs that are helping folks. We believe that our resources should be put on the street to impact the quality of people's lives."

State Senator, D

Strengthening Pennsylvania's Infrastructure

Policymakers across both sides of the aisle highlighted Pennsylvania's infrastructure needs including improvements to roads and highways, electrical grids and broadband.

Improving Roads and Highways



"We're not rural, but we do have a lot of farms and green spaces out here. So a lot of our roads are not up to standards. We have no access to the major highways like the PA turnpike, the various interstates. We don't have easy access to those. A lot of businesses that rely on trucking really have to go a long way on surface streets. So they go to other communities that are near highways. Nothing we can do about that on the local level."

Mayor, R

Strengthening Grid Security and Reliability



"In our city, [the power lines] are all above ground. So it makes us very vulnerable. And we have some really violent storms like we've had in the past month where you have downed trees, you have downed lines, and people are just out of power. We just have such old infrastructure and other cities have been able to invest in their electric lines more. And we just haven't had the federal funding to do that."

Assistant Chief of Staff, D

Expanding Broadband access



"A huge portion of my district has no broadband. They can't access the internet. It's 2021. So our infrastructure is in dire need of improvement. And not just broadband, but roads and bridges and pipelines, water lines, the whole works."

State Senator, Legislative, R

Broadband Needs Exacerbated Because of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed weaknesses in broadband infrastructure.

"There are going to be a lot of opportunities related to providing broadband access, high-speed internet. One positive that came from the whole pandemic is showing the need to have that connectivity in every part of the Commonwealth."

Representative, R

"We have a large area of our county that has no broadband reception, and that's an area that I think would be a good place to invest money for infrastructure."

Mayor, D

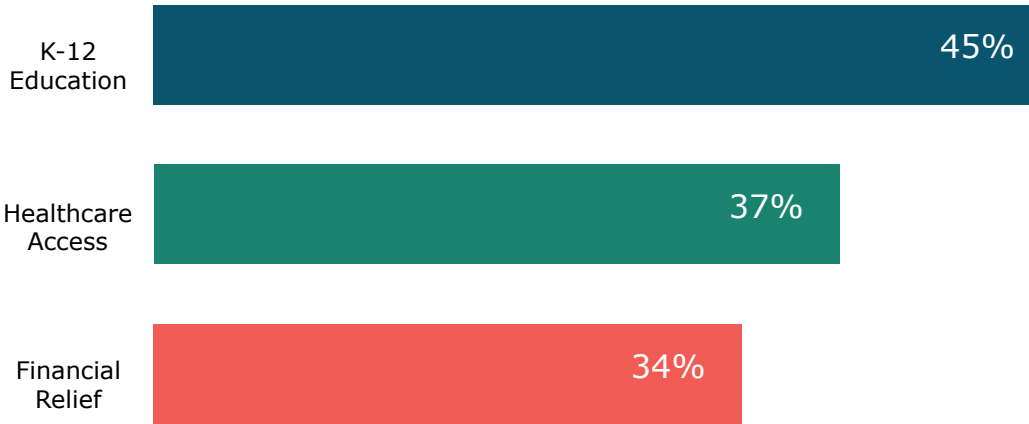
I know that we've been looking at a lot of different ways to provide funding for broadband. It's huge. So many people were having to work from home and in many, many cases, it was impossible because they just didn't have the broadband to do it.

State Senator, R



Improving Education Access & Equity

Nearly half of the policymakers (45%) pointed to K-12 education as a priority for resource allocation moving forward.



Inequitable Funding at the K-12 Level

Inequities in funding and education quality are concerns for both local and state leaders.

Closing education funding gaps

“Pennsylvania ranked one of the lower states in terms of the proportion of money that school districts receive from the state. We have 500 school districts, and we’re the worst in terms of educational disparities. Educational funding disparities between the haves and the have nots are the worst.”

Representative, D

“It’s significantly underfunded. The reliance upon our school districts to collect money from property taxes creates inequitable situations. We have some of the wealthiest in the country and we have some of the poorest in the country. The inequitable resources that are spent on our kids is a problem, and we have to rectify that.”

State Senator, D

Improving access and quality

“It’s hard getting young people back in school, young people access to school when it was virtual, making sure that folks within school had equitable access to resources and additional support. It’s been really, really hard here to make sure that, again, every child has the same access to high-quality education.”

Assistant Chief of Staff, D

“We need to be maximizing the opportunities for students. When I look at education, I really focus on students, not the school and the well-being of the school. How can we, using the dollars we have, focus those dollars on what gives the greatest bang for buck for our students?”

Representative, R

Spurring Economic Development



Economic development is a focus across the political spectrum. Using COVID-19 recovery funds and working towards creating more opportunities to attract businesses and families to the state are the top mentioned factors for economic development.

Using COVID-19 funds for economic recovery

Pennsylvania policymakers are using funding to support business development, business growth, infrastructure needs, and other programming needs in the state.

“One of the policy priorities would be rolling out those dollars to address needs in the community as well as comparable expenditures related to COVID-19. We saw when the American Recovery Reinvestment Act funds were spent all at once that there were a lot of gaping holes in our budget. I would hope that folks learned their lesson from that and that there’s already planning in the works to be prepared for these funds to go away.”

Executive Director, D



“We need to use [our COVID resources] and shore up a lot of our small business entities. Looking to make sure that our human service programs are fully funded and programs in the community, primarily mental health programs, are strong and have the ability to assist folks. A lot of our social safety net programs need to be shored up in many ways. Helping make sure that the entities that are impacted by the virus, small businesses in particular, have the proper procedures and policies in place to protect people particularly now that we’re dealing with this resurgence of COVID.”

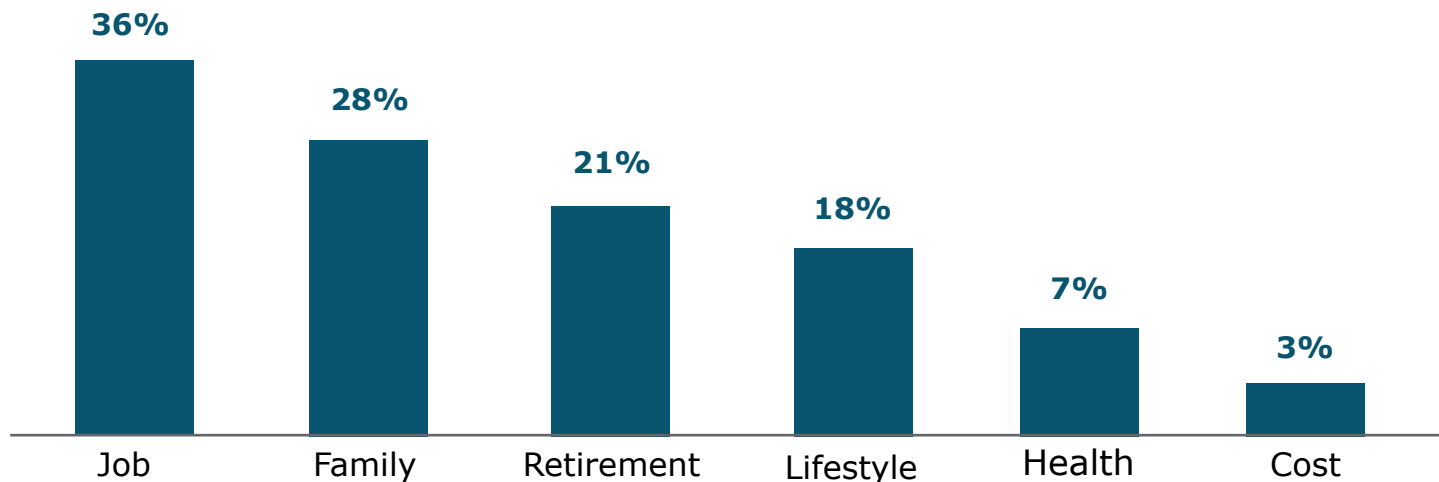
State Senator, D

Spurring Economic Development

Pennsylvania policymakers are looking to attract and retain citizens

Despite being the 5th most populous state in the United States, Pennsylvania experienced only 2.4% growth since the last census, compared to a national average of 7.4% growth (United States Census Bureau, 2021). Economic development and bringing jobs to Pennsylvania were top of mind as policymakers discussed how to make Pennsylvania a state where citizens want to move and stay.

Primary Reason for Moving Out of Pennsylvania



United Van Lines (2022)

Attracting Jobs & Families is Key to Growth

Be Business Friendly

We need to make Pennsylvania much more predictable in every way; not just regulation, but permitting, taxation, across the board in so many different departments. When any kind of industry wants to come into Pennsylvania, they are faced with 18 months, sometimes 24 months when they can [break ground] very readily in any other state in a fraction of that time. We need to be much more business friendly.

State Senator, R

Attract Families

Overall, we'd like to stimulate business growth and attract more family-friendly and family-sustaining jobs to come to communities. We'd like to inspire more time and labor, financial resources just to create a better image of Pennsylvania as a destination so people can visit. It can be a place to visit, play, and stay and grow business.

Deputy Secretary, Executive, D

What Policymakers Want to See from the Private Sector

Throughout last year, policymakers appreciated the private sector's involvement in local communities

Community involvement beyond COVID contributed to positive impressions of the private sector

Giving back to the community

"I think that the these two organizations actually really seem to put some energy into being good corporate neighbors because we see them out there having workshops that their employees are working to help people. And it could be collecting clothes, or it could be that type of thing. Or giving away school bags."

Representative, D

Investing in social responsibility

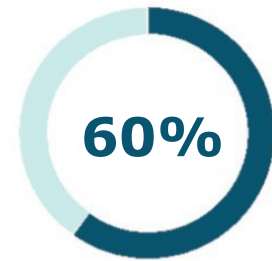
"In our community, one company that tends to stand out would be [insurance company]. They're one of our Fortune 500 companies. They are often putting [forward] social priorities, and they look at things through a lens that would, to the best of their ability, take into consideration social responsibility and equity. They're definitely an innovator in our community, forward-thinking."

Public Health Director, D

Supporting local development

"[In our program], the companies-- they became vested in the local affairs of the community...They care about, not just the workforce, their company, they care about the local economic development. They care about communities and the community's economic development, and the people that live there, not just their workforce, and not just their company, and not just their bottom line."

Deputy Secretary, D



60% of policymakers believe the business sector was "somewhat" or "very" effective in tackling COVID-19 challenges

“

[This energy company] was willing to work with me and do whatever we needed to do to get broadband access [during COVID] and rolled out some temporary towers so that the people working from home or those kids that couldn't get online could do that... Everybody wanted to pitch in and help however they possibly could. Some people don't seem to understand that with a lot of companies... These people live here. They have homes here. They raise their kids here. This is their community. And they don't want people to suffer. They can do something to alleviate it.

”

State Senator, R



What Policymakers Want to See from the Private Sector

Support Local Communities Authentically

*"We want to have more **authentic partnerships** with the community. With us it's really **getting community feedback** so you're not just making [plans] without community input. I think really being clear on what their mission is is how they're going to try to help."*

Deputy Director, Municipal, D

*"I would say to give back to their communities. If they can just give the smallest amount to the rural areas or even in Center City, Philadelphia... **if the bigger companies fix [social problems], maybe you give back to the communities a little bit, that would be great.**"*

Chief of Staff, Legislative, R



**Authentic
Community
Partnership is
Crucial**

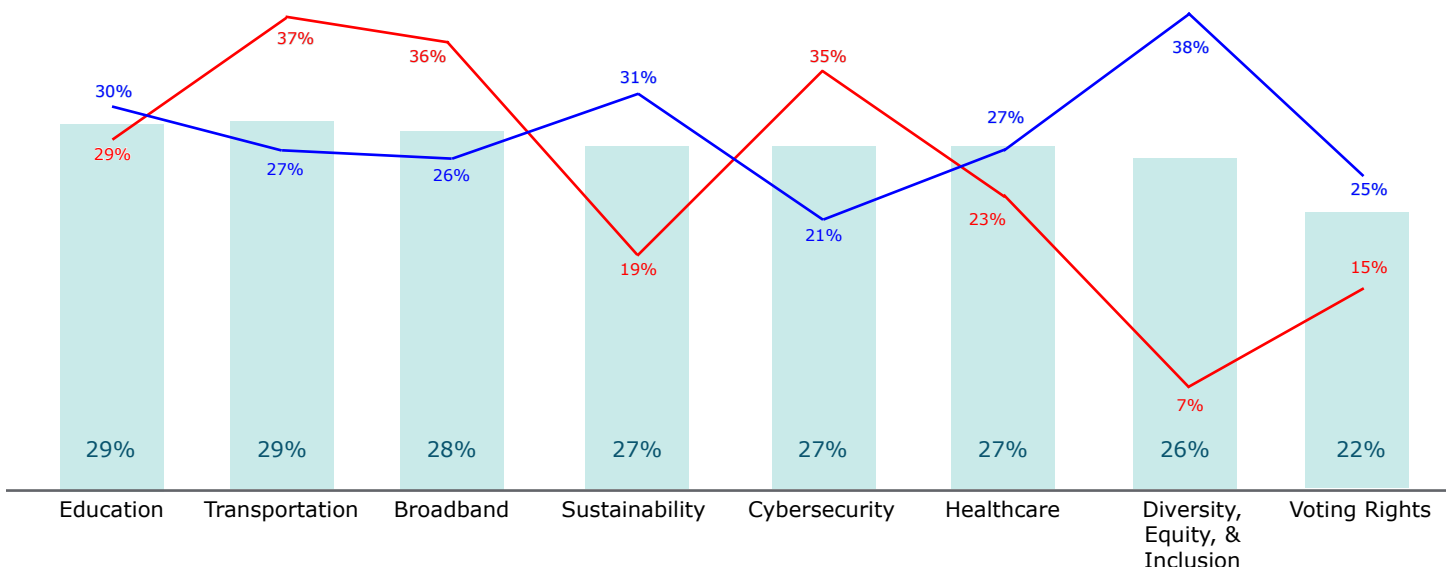
"There has to be some type of investment outside of just them getting what they want. They have to give something to the community, whether it's jobs, whether it's the support of a community-based group. It needs to be more than, 'You should be glad we're in your neighborhood.'"

Community Support Liaison, Municipal, D

*"A partnership that's based on mutual trust and respect where it's not necessarily a contest between the public sector and the private sector, **but rather, it's a partnership** where everybody's invested in the project in and of itself. **It needs to be done in the best interest of the project as opposed to the public or the private sectors' own interests.**"*

Director, Executive, D

Policymakers welcome this private sector engagement on a number of key issues, especially education, transportation, and broadband.



n = 251

Q: Aside from a COVID recovery, what other issues should the private sector prioritize in 2021? Please select up to 3 options

State Average Democrats Republicans

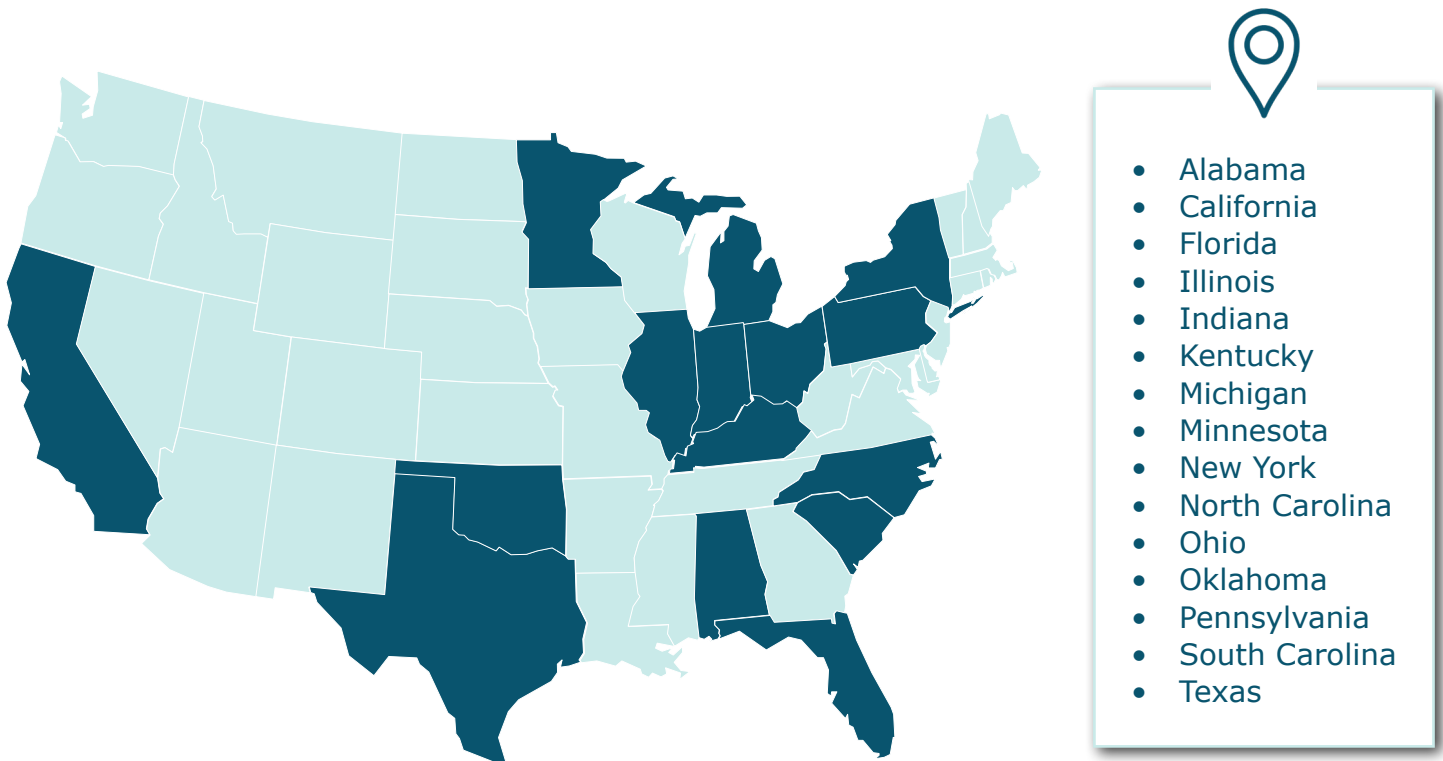
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States Insights Review

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Our Promise

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1. United States Census Bureau. (2021, August 12). 2020 Population and housing state data. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/2020-population-and-housing-state-data.html>
2. United Van Lines. (2022, January 26). 2021 National movers study. <https://www.unitedvanlines.com/newsroom/movers-study-2021>

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