City of Key West

2026 Federal Legislative Priorities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Key West, located in Monroe County, Florida, is a vibrant community with a resident population of approximately 24,602 (2023 U.S. Census Bureau estimate). As a major tourist destination, the city's daily population can swell to 80,000 during peak seasons, placing extraordinary demands on infrastructure, public safety, health, and human services. These challenges exceed the capacity of a small resident population, necessitating federal partnership to ensure Key West remains a safe, resilient, and welcoming community. The City works in coordination with Monroe County, federal agencies, and Florida's congressional delegation to advocate for federal funding and policies that address these unique needs.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Public Safety

- Support federal funding for law enforcement training, emergency response equipment, and community safety programs to address the pressures of a transient population of up to 80,000.
- Advocate for grants to cover overtime costs for police, fire, and emergency medical services during peak tourism seasons, similar to models used in cities like Nashville, TN, and Las Vegas, NV.
- Compile data on overtime hours and call volume increases during peak seasons to strengthen funding requests.

Health and Human Services

- Support federal funding for public health programs, including infectious disease surveillance, substance abuse treatment, and healthcare access for underserved populations.
- Engage with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to secure dedicated funding for the Jon Jones homeless shelter's operations and expansion, addressing critical homelessness needs.

Infrastructure and Resilience

- Support federal funding for infrastructure projects, including stormwater management, flood mitigation, and resilient transportation systems, to address climate change impacts like sea-level rise, hurricanes, and coastal flooding.
- Advocate for federal grants to support road elevation projects, potentially aligning with programs like the State's Resilient Florida Grant Program, while addressing restrictive match requirements.

Affordable and Workforce Housing

- Support federal grants for affordable housing development and rehabilitation to address the high cost of living and limited land availability for Key West's workforce and low-income residents.
- Pursue Community Project Funding (CPF) Grants through HUD Annual Appropriations to address homelessness and housing shortages.
- Coordinate with Key West city officials to lobby federal defense appropriations and policy bills, targeting solutions to housing challenges impacted by U.S. military land use and Navy personnel housing policies.

Economic Development and Tourism

- Support federal programs for economic development, historic preservation, and sustainable tourism initiatives to maintain Key West's unique character and tourism-driven economy.
- Advocate for sustained investment in infrastructure and cultural preservation to support the city's role as a world-class destination.

Energy and Environmental Issues

- Explore federal funding opportunities through the Department of Energy or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for waste-to-energy technologies or a modern trash incinerator to promote sustainable waste management.
- Collaborate with EPA officials to secure resources and technical assistance for water quality issues, including stormwater management, marine ecosystem protection, and compliance with federal clean water standards.

GENERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES/POLICIES TO MONITOR

- Support funding for Everglades and Florida Bay restoration to protect local waters.
- Support increased federal investment in mental health and substance abuse services.
- Support expanded federal resources for homelessness and veterans' services.

- Oppose unfunded mandates and cost shifts from the federal government to municipalities, and be mindful of local match requirements.

NOTES FOR ENGAGING FEDERAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Highlight Population Disparity: Emphasize the challenge of serving a daily population of up to 80,000 with resources designed for 25,000 residents to underscore the need for federal support in public safety, health, and infrastructure.
- Align with Administration Priorities: Frame requests to align with the Trump Administration's FY26 budget priorities, such as efficiency, federalism, and "Make America Healthy Again," focusing on local control, cost-effective infrastructure, and public health initiatives.
- Engage Congressional Appropriators and Florida Delegation: Build relationships with Florida's congressional delegation and House and Senate appropriators to advocate for discretionary funding programs like CDBG or FEMA grants.
- Address Funding Challenges: Acknowledge proposed cuts to non-defense discretionary spending in the Trump Administration's budget and highlight the critical nature of Key West's needs to advocate for sustained or increased funding.

CONTACT INFORMATION

City of Key West Elected Officials

Mayor Danise Henriquez	danise.henriquez@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
Vice Mayor Donald "Donnie" Lee	donald.lee@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
Commissioner Lissette Carey	lissette.carey@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
Commissioner Aaron Castillo	aaron.castillo@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
Commissioner Monica Haskell	monica.haskell@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
Commissioner Mary Lou Hoover	mlhoover@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
Commissioner Sam Kaufman	skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov

City of Key West Charter Officers

City Manager Brian L. Barroso	brian.barroso@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
City Interim Attorney Kendal Harden	kendal.harden@cityofkeywest-fl.gov
City Clerk Keri O'Brien	kobrien@cityofkeywest-fl.gov

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