



COVID-19 Recovery State Policy Focus - Results

The Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance and the Iowa City Area Business Partnership's advocacy strategies remain focused on pro-growth policies as we pivot to a post-pandemic reality. With our members' recovery needs in mind, and as the Iowa legislature reconvenes to bring the session to a close, the need to grow, retain and attract business and workers remains a challenge. **We support targeted policies that ease the way for employers to rebound, add and keep their employees and grow their businesses.**

We respectfully ask the Governor and state lawmakers to address the following:

- ✓ Pro-growth business regulations and policies that encourage job creation, including:
 - Legal protection for businesses who act in good faith to control the spread of COVID-19 to employees and customers
 - [The COVID-19 liability protection bill \(SF2338\)](#) provides those who produced personal protective equipment with product liability protection, gives liability protection to healthcare providers and businesses that follow guidance, ensures that someone must have a minimum medical condition before bringing an action forward, gives businesses liability protections regarding exposure claims, limits evidence of past medical costs to actual amounts paid rather than amounts that have been billed by providers and is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2020. *Status: Signed into law 6/18/2020*
 - Clarity for the hemp industry, as an emerging industry for Iowa's economic recovery.
 - [The hemp regulation bill \(HF2581\)](#) regulates hemp as a commodity and allows for the manufacture, testing, sale and consumption of "consumable hemp products" by humans, when made in compliance with THC caps and certain packaging and labeling requirements. *Status: Signed into law 6/17/2020*
- ✓ Pro-growth business regulations and policies that encourage job creation, including:
 - Supplement Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund to ensure its solvency so businesses will not have to compensate for it this year, nor see increased rates next year.
 - [Gov. Reynolds directed \\$490 million of the \\$1.25 billion in Coronavirus relief funds Iowa was provided through the CARES Act, to be deposited into Iowa's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. The deposit will enable Iowa employers to remain in the same tax table for 2021 and ensure eligible Iowans continue to receive unemployment insurance benefits.](#)
 - Economic development incentives that address post-pandemic unemployment realities through innovation and job growth.
 - [No changes made to tax credit programs, but also no increased funding for the much-needed Angel Investor Tax Credits and other development tax credits. May still see some funding with federal CARES Act monies.](#)
- ✓ Policies that make child care centers and workers essential components of our economy's successful reopening.

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- Creation of the Child Care Challenge Fund within the Future Ready Iowa initiative (HF2629), which allows for businesses and organizations to receive a grant to repurpose a facility into a child care center. *Status: Signed into law 6/29/2020*
- ✓ Fund the Regents' Universities and community colleges as they face dire budget shortfalls due to COVID-19 and are economic lifelines for our communities.
 - Community Colleges received level funding; but we are disappointed Regents' Universities saw more deep cuts, causing devastating and ripple effects for our region.
- ✓ Fund Future Ready Iowa initiatives, PK-12 public schools and community colleges to better align and upskill workers to the new post-pandemic employment needs.
 - Future Ready Iowa (HF2629) creates the Expanded Registered Apprenticeship Opportunities Program allowing apprenticeship sponsors with programs of 20 or fewer apprentices to take advantage of funding to facilitate such programs, expands computer science education opportunities for K-12, allows for more individuals to take advantage of the Last-Dollar Scholarship Program, creates the senior year plus program and creates the Childcare Challenge Program to provide matching grants to employers who create childcare facilities or retrofit buildings for such purposes. *Status: Signed into law 6/29/2020*
- ✓ Alleviate the impact on local government's loss of revenue due to COVID-19 to safeguard businesses and property owners from making up for revenue shortfalls.
 - The state honored its previous commitment to backfill cities for previous losses due to commercial property tax cuts (HF2643) and no changes to tax increment financing (TIF) that cities use to spur economic growth. *Status: Signed into law 6/30/2020*
- ✓ Fund high-speed broadband for all students and workers to have reliable access to school and work from home, as well as the ability to access health resources.
 - Empower Rural Iowa (SF2400), a priority of Governor Reynolds provides investment in the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program, designed to reduce or eliminate underserved and underserved areas in the state. *Status: Signed into law 6/25/2020*
- ✓ Fund community placemaking projects that spur economic growth, retain and attract workers.
 - A \$100 million to reauthorization the Iowa Reinvestment Act (HF2641), a state program that allows cities to create special districts where a portion of sales and hotel/motel tax can be set aside for projects that drive economic growth. *Status: Signed into law 6/29/2020*

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