

# 2019 Local Public Policy Priorities

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Building on our success with advocating for and passing the largest general obligation school bond in the state's history, we will continue to support local education systems. PK-12 and higher education curricula and programs are key in efforts to help build our future workforce as well as attract businesses and individuals to this community. Public and private sector partnerships are essential in efforts to train, attract and retain workers.

- Support an education system that aligns and coordinates with the business community to build a solid talent pipeline and produce workforce-ready graduates.
- Support and drive efforts to innovate our education system to meet current and future workforce needs.
- Support and drive efforts with the business community to connect with middle and high school students.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Local development propels economic growth, and incentives are integral to maintaining and advancing our progress in recruiting, retaining and expanding local businesses. Government's support is vital in promoting a business environment that fosters the entrepreneurial mindset and works to grow our economy. A strong and cohesive business community drives well-supported community initiatives. Where rules and regulations need to be created or amended, we support those that incentivize businesses to comply versus penalize.

- Support the reasonable use of tax increment financing (TIF) and other programs as economic development tools to assist in the recruitment, retention and expansion of business. These tools must be used to grow tax base and contribute to new opportunities for all our citizens.
- Support the University of Iowa's economic development efforts, particularly the role they play in furthering our entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Support pro-growth policies that are key to our members and the community.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring our community remains a welcoming place for all individuals with multiple opportunities and experiences helps local employers attract and retain the best employees. The Chamber community strongly supports business development that improves our community development priorities. Supporting initiatives such as improving affordability of housing, nurturing the arts community and developing parks and greenspace furthers our community efforts to attract and retain citizens.

- Collaborate with cities, University of Iowa, established affordable housing groups, and developers to support efforts to address lack of affordable housing.
- Support improvements to all transportation systems, including road, transit, rail, air and bike to meet the needs of local employers, employees and the community at large.
- Support "placemaking" initiatives that create desirable, diverse and robust communities.

# 2019 State Public Policy Priorities

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Iowa's workforce challenges remain a top concern for our member businesses. A strong education system is critical to meeting our region's current and future workforce needs. We must bring our schools back to world-class competitiveness and return our reputation as the best education system in the nation if we want to encourage more people to stay, return to or discover Iowa as a place to live. Iowa must support initiatives and programs that develop needed skills and encourage business collaboration and alignment with K-12, community colleges and universities to maximize local efforts to build Iowa's talent pipeline. Additionally, we encourage the legislature to examine ways to modernize and improve the education funding formula in a way that serves all school districts and allows school boards to effectively manage their financial resources to meet their responsibilities.

- Support innovative teaching in public K-12 schools to help meet the skills demand of Iowa's workforce, including supporting additional resources and programs that certify teachers for computer science training, increase of STEM classes for middle and high school students, increase of high school students internships and teacher externships and implement a comprehensive next-generation assessment system designed to measure learning skills in order to better align students with the careers of tomorrow.
- Support funding requests for K-12 and Kirkwood Community College, including increasing State General Aid at least at the same rate of growth as the State General Fund Revenue.
- Support the funding requests of the University of Iowa and Board of Regents that will move Iowa up in industry rankings and support our state's economic growth.
- Support funding Future Ready Iowa initiatives without diverting funding from other local and state efforts to build our region's talent pipeline, including the registered apprenticeship program.
- Support policies that address the child care "cliff effect" to increase access to quality and affordable child care assistance and allow more employees to enter the workforce.
- Support policies that help prepare offenders for successful reentry to Iowa communities and employment, including the expansion of high school equivalency diploma pathways and apprenticeships that train workers in a career pathway while earning credits toward an equivalent diploma.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Iowa has been able to successfully leverage economic development incentives to continue growing the economy, and these programs are key to keeping Iowa competitive. Economic development incentives have contributed to capital investment across the state, creating thousands of jobs, encourage investment in Iowa and must be protected. We will continue to advocate for tax policies that lead to economic growth and job creation, further simplification and predictability of the code, promote tax fairness and fiscal responsibility. Additionally, we encourage the ongoing review and analysis of agency rules and regulations to promote a business environment that fosters the entrepreneurial mindset and works to grow our economy.

- Protect key economic development incentives that demonstrate a positive return on investment particularly those that work to further innovation, workforce and re-development.
- Continue supporting the region's Automated Vehicle Proving Ground through policies that further the effective and successful research, development, testing, operation and implementation of autonomous vehicles in the state of Iowa.
- Continue exploring ways for businesses to provide more affordable and flexible healthcare plans.
- Protect the state's commitment to backfill cities, counties and schools.
- Support the reasonable use of tax increment financing (TIF) and other programs as economic development tools to assist in the recruitment, retention and expansion of business. These tools must be used to grow tax base and contribute to new opportunities for all our citizens.
- As rules and regulations of the 2018 tax reform are finalized, ensure outcomes focus on simplification, growth, fairness and fiscal responsibility.

# 2019 State Public Policy Priorities (continued)



## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Iowa needs to keep more Iowans in the state and attract new populations to make their home here contributing to our economic growth. Part of accomplishing that is creating desirable and robust communities with a great “quality of place.” High quality and reliable infrastructure systems are central to economic growth. We encourage long-term planning and examination of innovative funding mechanisms to make the necessary resources available for significant capital investment improvements.

- Secure sustainable, reliable funding for Enhance Iowa initiatives and other community attraction grants.
- Support funding sources and flexible policies to sufficiently address needed water infrastructure improvements, including full funding of the Iowa Flood Center.
- Support efforts to attract broadband investment and expand access throughout the state.
- Support the development of a commercial aviation infrastructure plan that invests the resources necessary to allow Iowa businesses to compete in a global marketplace.

# 2019 Federal Public Policy Priorities

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Higher education is an economic driver in our region, and a crucial element in meeting our workforce challenges. We support policies that connect local workforce strategies with local economic development strategies and education policies and programs that align with the workforce strategy needs of tomorrow. Additionally, ensuring skilled, qualified workers continue to have the ability to live and work in the United States will help meet current and future labor demands and drive innovation and entrepreneurship. This is an integral part of solving the workforce shortage in Iowa, and across the country.

- Support funding priorities for Kirkwood Community College, including allowing Pell Grants to be used for short-term, workforce-oriented programs.
- Support funding priorities for the University of Iowa, specifically robust funding for federal financial aid programs and research programs at the federal agencies.
- Support immigration reform that allows employers further access to skilled workers, including reaching a permanent solution for recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and a mandatory employment verification (e-verify) system feasible for employers of all sizes and industries.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Local economies and businesses from all industries benefit from investment of federal dollars in research and development, and funding for research granting agencies ensures Iowa continues to benefit from these dollars. We are encouraged by recent improvements to the federal tax code and regulatory rules. Tax, regulatory, trade and energy policies should encourage capital investment and global competitiveness, promote and grow local economies, provide equal treatment across industries and individuals, be responsible and expand access to additional markets. A sustainable, flexible and affordable healthcare system that provides certainty in the marketplace must be a priority for businesses and their employees.

- Support funding requests for research granting agencies that work to grow local economies and address nation-wide challenges.
- Support policies that make it easier for Iowa small business owners, entrepreneurs, manufacturers and farmers to sell their products abroad by eliminating taxes, tariffs and other trade barriers on American goods.
- Support the examination of new policies that provide a sustainable, flexible and affordable healthcare system.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Long-term funding for transportation and infrastructure that allows access to communities of all sizes will allow Iowa to maintain our current systems and build and improve to be competitive. Safe roads and bridges, reliable transit systems, and accessible airports and broadband are vital to community growth and competitiveness.

- Secure changes to transportation grant programs that increase access for all communities.
- Support measures to address the nation's pilot shortage, including lowering financial barriers to the profession and increase the number of pathways to accrue the necessary experience to ensure sustainable and competitive regional air service.
- Support implementing a long-term sustainable funding solution to meet the nation's infrastructure needs, including high-speed broadband.
- Support an increase in the supply of affordable housing through increased federal appropriations for key housing and community development programs, and the expansion of federal housing tools.
- Support the federal government's commitment to programs and projects to improve flood mitigation efforts.
- Support the Opportunity Zones program to encourage long-term investment in under-developed and lower income neighborhoods.