



2021 STATE POLICY FOCUS

With the help of our combined 2,000 members, partners and community stakeholders, the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance and Iowa City Area Business Partnership work together to develop comprehensive state and federal public policy agendas for the ICR region. Since the global pandemic, and the recent major natural disaster, we remain focused on economic growth policies that best support our communities now and into what has become a less predictable future.

Many of the issues in our public policy agendas cross over among workforce development, business development and community development. It's clear the need to grow, retain and attract a skilled workforce remains the number one challenge facing our region's business community. To that end, our policy agendas incorporate themes of closing the skills gap, accessibility and welcoming communities to grow our workforce, bridging rural and urban interests, and promote business-friendly regulations and tax structures to support the short-term and long-term needs of our business ecosystem, battered by the multiple hardships of 2020. It is also imperative to support policy solutions to close opportunity gaps and bring equity to our education, employment, and entrepreneurial systems.



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The Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance and Iowa City Area Business Partnership strongly support First Amendment rights for all people. We encourage elected officials, candidates, and citizens to be civil in discussions and debates on policy issues and political opinions, and we are committed to leading by example.

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While all the policy positions included in our public policy agendas are important to the growth of our region, together in 2021 we will focus on:

- Policies, programs and funding that align education and training systems with workforce needs, close Iowa's skills gap and mirror our economic growth priorities including Future Ready Iowa, the Ex-Offender Initiative, PK-12, Kirkwood Community College, the University of Iowa and grant opportunities at private institutions, and encourage high quality teachers and teaching methods.
- Policies that address workforce child care challenges, including the "cliff effect" to allow more employees to enter the workforce, incentives for local businesses, communities and nonprofits to develop solutions that increase accessibility to quality and affordable child care.
- Recommendations outlined by the Governor's Economic Recovery Task Force, as well as the development of immediately deployable resources for businesses during times of crisis when budget reserves are full.
- Sustainable and permanent funding sources to assist communities with placemaking projects that spur economic growth, welcome all populations and protect Iowa's natural resources.
- Policies that encourage fair and second chance hiring, reform penalties for unpaid fines, simplify the process for sealing certain non-violent convictions once fines are paid and restore voting rights for persons convicted of a felony once their sentences have been completed.
- Efforts to attract broadband investment and expand access in all areas of the state.
- Tax structures that encourage entrepreneurship and protect economic development incentives with a positive return on investment and work to further innovation, workforce and development in both rural and urban areas.

For more details on our comprehensive 2021 public policy agenda, visit www.cedarrapids.org or www.iowacityarea.com.