



IOWA CITY AREA  
**Business  
Partnership**  
the voice of business for johnson county

## IOWA LEGISLATURE UPDATES

Tuesday, April 19th was the 100th day of the Iowa Legislative session for the 2022 year. This day usually signifies the targeted date for session to adjourn, however, this year there is still work that needs to be done. The 2022 Iowa Legislative session will not be finished until the state's budget bills are passed.



The Iowa House and Senate Majority Leaders, along with Gov. Reynolds, are responsible for reaching an agreement on a budget. Disagreements in the Iowa Legislature have kept them in session longer than anticipated. Below are some of the bills that are still alive in the Iowa Legislature.

### **Iowa's state budget**

State spending packages are currently being negotiated in the Iowa House and Senate. The state budget is the main component that needs to be determined in order for session to be adjourned. The Iowa House has done its part by passing all budget bills except for the "Standings" budget. However, the Senate has yet to approve any of these bills. A budget needs to be approved by both chambers and Gov. Reynolds, by the start of the next fiscal year on July 1.

The current proposed budget is roughly \$8.2 billion dollars. Both chambers have previously released budget proposals that were about \$80 million apart, but have yet to reach an agreement.

### **Governor Reynolds' private school vouchers**

Reynolds has made it clear that private school vouchers are a priority for her this year after it did not survive the lawmaking process last year. However, the Iowa House is not fully convinced that this system is going to benefit the state or its students.

Reynolds' proposal includes using Iowa taxpayer money to create a program

for low to moderate income families to apply for one of 10,000 different approximately \$5,500 scholarships to be put towards private school tuition. The Iowa Senate has approved this legislation, but some Iowa House Republicans and all Democrats are opposing. They feel that this bill will not positively impact enough Iowans and may negatively impact rural school districts.

### **Iowa's unemployment benefits**

Another sticking point for Reynolds is a change to Iowa's current unemployment benefits. Reynolds has proposed reducing the length of unemployment benefits from 26 weeks to 16 weeks. Her proposal also requires unemployed Iowans to take lesser paying jobs quicker or they will risk losing their unemployment benefits.

The Iowa House and Senate have both passed this bill, however the Senate amended it to include a one-week period before the unemployed workers can receive their benefits. This one-week waiting period is the sticking point that lawmakers can not agree on. With falling unemployment rates, Legislators on both sides of the aisle argue that stricter unemployment rules will not ease Iowa's workforce challenges.

### **Other bills awaiting approval:**

- A bottle bill that will increase the fees paid by beverage distributors in order to create more funding for redemption centers where Iowans can return their recyclables
- An ethanol mandate, proposed by Governor Reynolds, would require all gas stations across the state to provide an E15 blend of gasoline from at least one pump at their station
- A vaccine bill that would prohibit government agencies, schools, and businesses from requiring vaccines and face coverings as a condition of employment.
- A K-12 transparency bill that would require schools to post their material and classroom curriculum online.

The Iowa Legislature will be in session until a budget is agreed on. To learn more about the bills that are still alive this year, click below.

[LEARN MORE](#)

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## **DESTINATION IOWA GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**



In early April, Governor Reynolds announced a new **\$100 million investment** towards Iowa's communities. [Destination Iowa](#) is a program that will provide grants to Iowa communities in order to increase attraction and improve their community.

"Destination Iowa will help more communities across the state move forward in their efforts to boost tourism and economic growth while enhancing the quality of life for Iowans," said Governor Kim Reynolds in her [press release](#) about the new grant program.

## Funding programs within Destination Iowa

Destination Iowa has 4 main funding programs in order to help attraction efforts, boost tourism, spur local economies, and raise Iowa's profile. When applying for a Destination Iowa grant, you must specify which program you are applying for. The funding programs and their respective allocated funds are below:

- Economically Significant Development, \$30 million
- Outdoor Recreation, \$40 million
- Tourism Attraction, \$10 million
- Creative Placemaking, \$20 million

## What is the application process for Destination Iowa?

The application will open on Monday, May 9th, 2022. These applications are reviewed on a rolling basis as funds are available. Any project that gets funding must be completed by June 30th, 2026. A more detailed explanation can be found by viewing the [Destination Iowa Slideshow](#) created by the Iowa Economic Development Authority team.

Destination Iowa information can be found by clicking the button below. Their page has information about the 4 funded programs, the application, and more.

[CLICK HERE](#)

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## INCLUSIVE ICR DEI INDEX LAUNCH



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DEI INDEX**

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**TAKE THE  
ASSESSMENT TODAY!**

[WWW.INCLUSIVEICR.ORG](http://WWW.INCLUSIVEICR.ORG)

The Inclusive ICR DEI Index launched on Monday, April 18th. This is a free and confidential Diversity, Equity and Inclusion assessment that is available to area employers from April 18 through May 13.

The assessment, known as the DEI Index, is a free, confidential evaluation of a company's position through the lens of five DEI pillars. After the completion of the assessment, each organization will receive a custom summary identifying their current position and opportunities for growth. It includes free tools and resources to support growth in undeveloped areas identified by the assessment.

More information about the about the Inclusive ICR DEI Index can be found by [clicking here](#) or by clicking on the image above. Take the quiz by clicking the button below.

TAKE THE ASSESSMENT

## ELECTION SEASON IS COMING!

Election season is upon us! The Primary Elections will be held on **Tuesday, June 7, 2022**. The Primary Election will determine each party's nominee for the General Election ballot in November.



The Business Partnership has created three candidate lists for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, along with lists for the Iowa Senate and Iowa House districts that are located in Johnson County.

You can find these helpful guides on our [Advocacy Page](#) on our website.

To find important information and resources including how, when, and where to vote regarding the June 7th, 2022 Primary Election, click the button below and read [the Business Partnership's recent news post](#).

ELECTION INFORMATION

The Business Partnership advocates for economic growth policies on the local, state and federal levels. We collaborate with the business community and other stakeholders and partners to develop our yearly policy agendas, to create a consistent voice for the region.

We are a non-partisan organization that does not endorse or donate to political candidates. We support First Amendment rights for all people and encourage elected officials, candidates and citizens to be civil in discussions and debates on policy issues and political opinions. We are committed to leading by example.

If you have particular projects or issues that you would like addressed, contact [Jennifer Banta](#), Vice President, Advocacy & Community Development.



IOWA CITY AREA BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

