



## **GROW CEDAR VALLEY 2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND POLICIES**

### **Economic Growth for the Cedar Valley and for Iowa is our priority**

Grow Cedar Valley advocates for smart pro-business policies on a continuous basis that support our priority of economic growth for the Cedar Valley and for Iowa. Grow Cedar Valley will advocate for policy proposals in three main areas:

#### **Talent Development, Attraction and Education**

- Promote smart and comprehensive investment to develop, attract and retain world-class talent and workforce through full funding of the Future Ready Iowa Initiative.
- Address barriers to entry for employees to reenter the workforce or find employment such as availability of child care and transportation.
- Consider the multi-faceted nature of creating attractive places for Iowans to work and live including providing tools for communities to leverage local assets.
- Support high-quality education at all levels from pre-school through post-secondary education that prepares graduates with career ready skills.

#### **Economic Development**

- Ensure consistency in state and local policies that provide return on investment for taxpayers.
- Maintain valuable existing, flexible economic development and housing tax credits and incentive programs
- Provide a climate for business growth through fiscal prudence across all levels of government and a predictable regulatory environment.

#### **Transportation, Infrastructure and Connectivity**

- Support long-term infrastructure planning and mindful allocation of resources to fund these critical, capital-intensive projects reliably into the future.



## **SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND POLICIES**

### **Talent Development, Attraction and Education**

- Fully fund the Future Ready Iowa initiative.
- Fully fund UNI's general operating appropriation request to maintain access for Iowa residents, reflecting the university's role in educating Iowans who stay and build a career or business in Iowa.
- Advocate for state funding to renovate UNI's Industrial Technology Center as this Center prepares advanced manufacturing and construction professionals, and Iowa's career - technical educators.
- At a minimum, increase State General Aid for Hawkeye Community College and Iowa's community colleges at a rate equal to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- Give elected Community College Boards the authority to access local funding to support college operations and programs.
- Continue to support programs and training opportunities such as the Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E) and the Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F), and Iowa's Registered Apprenticeship Programs as these programs offer direct access to skilled training for employers.
- Fully fund the Iowa Skilled Worker/Job Creation Fund and New Jobs Training Programs.
- Continue to support dedicated public/private funding opportunities for credentialed training partnerships among Community Colleges, businesses and other entities through Work Based Learning.
- Advocate for appropriate funding of the Iowa Tuition Grant program for Iowa's private colleges, such as Wartburg College and Allen College.
- Maintain and strengthen standards and accountability in pre-K-12 education by reinforcing high quality preparation of educators through college- and university-based educator preparation programs.
- Address funding requirements of the pre K-12 system, adding predictability in funding levels, and restoring Iowa as a national leader in elementary and secondary education outcomes.
- Maintain the School Tuition Organization (STO) tax credits for private and parochial education systems.



- Assure that necessary resources are available to provide needed child care and transportation to people that are restrained from joining the workforce now due to a lack of these services.
- Develop innovative strategies to incentivize private investment as well as private/public programs to address the child care shortages in Iowa.
- Provide incentives to veterans to obtain post-secondary credentials, training in targeted, high value and high skill employment sectors, and hiring.
- Recognizing the importance of a base of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) knowledge and skills, secure and expand its funding for Iowa and Northeast Iowa region STEM, while maintaining the administrative control of the Iowa STEM initiative at UNI.
- Fund Enhance Iowa at sufficient levels for the planning and construction of major community attributes and recognizing Enhance Iowa will support workforce attraction and retention by further improving the quality of life in the Cedar Valley.
- Support the state partnering with communities through sustainable and permanent funding sources and the continued funding for programs such as the Community Attraction and Tourism grant program and the Iowa Main Street grant program.
- Incentivize and develop opportunities for former Iowans to return.
- Enact fair employment strategies, including a statewide prohibition on the unfair use of criminal records in hiring decisions, which provide employability and specific high value skills training to those who are preparing to return to the community following incarceration, while providing employers a shield of indemnity from liability for wrongful employment claims and criminal action in the workplace.
- Evaluate policies that could increase the number of high skilled workers, such as adapting licensing and certification requirements to accommodate international education, training and possibly including offering incentives to refugees to live and work in the state.
- Support innovative efforts to meet affordable and/or work force housing and address skilled worker needs through programs such as Homes for Iowa.
- Encourage policies and practices by the federal government to support and simplify legal immigration in Iowa that will strengthen talent acquisition and retention, business development and economic growth.



### **Economic Development**

- Support tax credits and incentive programs that have a documented return on investment with clear objectives of growing the economy through capital investment, spurring higher wages, and creating quality jobs.
- Create and expand tax credits and incentive programs that encourage investment in technology/automation to help companies remain competitive and up-skill their current and future workforce.
- Explore and establish economic development and tourism programs that attract and create quality jobs, foster innovation in products and high value services and systems, and spur overall business growth and expansion.
- Expand programs and initiatives for entrepreneurs that will foster startup and continuing expansion of new and emerging businesses in the Cedar Valley.
- Expand housing tax credits, the local housing trust fund programs and housing rehabilitation programs, all of which provide collaborative opportunities for local governments, particularly in rural communities, to increase housing diversity to ensure access to economic development/redevelopment.
- Protect tax increment financing (TIF) and maintain maximum flexibility for local government in its use as an essential economic development tool and discourage attempts to further restrict or eliminate its use.
- Support the continuation of the commercial property tax backfill.
- Modify statutes and policies regarding intergovernmental relations to allow local governments and utilities to engage in collaborative contracts or create new entities for shared and mutual services which have been authorized by participating local governments.
- Explore solutions for the impending shortage of long term housing and healthcare for the elderly and other affected groups.

### **Transportation, Infrastructure and Connectivity**

- Ensure that new monies from the increase in the fuel tax are allocated through the state's TIME 21 formula, leading to a larger share being allocated to better account for regional population and miles driven.
- Enact alternative methods for funding transportation infrastructure construction that do not involve taxing fuel in recognition of greater fuel efficiency in today's vehicles.
- Encourage the state to partner with communities that have commercial air service to sustain current levels of service and to recognize that future growth will require substantial



resources to upgrade our airport infrastructure, recognizing these expenditures are necessary due to the outsized impact air service has on the attraction and retention of economic opportunities.

- Enact a water quality initiative containing a funding mechanism with a flexible policy regime sufficient to adequately address water infrastructure improvements, recognizing that these improvements are needed both immediately and in the foreseeable future at a cost of billions of dollars for point sources in implementation of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, in addition to routine water system maintenance and upgrades.
- Support investment in Iowa's broadband and Internet Protocol (IP)-enabled services from local, regional or national partners and a regulatory environment that will encourage such investments.

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