



CEDAR VALLEY 2024 LEGISLATIVE POLICY AGENDA

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. During the 2024 session of the Iowa Legislature, we believe the focus must be on talent attraction, recruitment and retention. The slow growth in Iowa's population has placed overwhelming pressure on our businesses as they struggle to find qualified candidates, with appropriate skills, who are ready to work. As we approach the 2024 session, Grow Cedar Valley encourages the Legislature to focus on attracting talent and transformational economic development to ensure future economic growth. We urge policy makers to make decisions promoting Iowa's small-town feel, the lower cost of living and the safety of our communities – attributes people rank highly in their decisions to come to or stay in Iowa. We also call for attention to education and other areas.

Talent

Grow Cedar Valley supports developing policy strategies to grow Iowa's population and workforce.

- Ensuring state workforce and economic development programs can address the most pressing employee needs like child-care, transportation, and housing
- Incentivizing and developing opportunities for former and current Iowans to return and stay by creating transformational economic development and enhanced job opportunities
- Retaining more Iowans from our community colleges, private colleges and universities, and the Regents institutions with potential tools to encourage graduates to become lifelong Iowans
- Addressing disparities within public support systems to avoid a "cliff effect" that acts as a disincentive for potential employees
- Strongly supporting programs and training opportunities that offer direct access to skilled training for employers including apprenticeships
- Streamlining the application process and removing other processing hurdles so more employers could take advantage of the workforce grants, programs, and incentives offered by the state
- Making Iowa a welcoming environment that is inclusive of a broad diversity of people
- Reintegrating Iowans into the work force that deserve a second chance
- Funding existing programs, such as Destination Iowa, and consider ways to make new resources available that invest in "placemaking," including quality of life projects, recreational opportunities, and arts initiatives
- Attracting new Americans by pushing for a uniform immigration system across all states to vet international talent and policies that welcome those new Americans to Iowa.

Economic Development

Grow Cedar Valley believes the use of economic development incentives are essential to our area's and the state's success. These tools must grow capital investment, increase wages and achieve quality job creation.

GCV supports:

- Recognizing that competition for large scale investments has become increasingly intense which calls for the tools necessary for the state to compete for large projects need to be sized appropriately and provide the necessary flexibility
- Ensuring the sustainability of tax increment financing (TIF) and abatements for use by our local governments that encourage expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of diverse new businesses
- Developing and supporting existing incentives with proven return in targeted industries (eg. advanced manufacturing, bioscience and financial and insurance sectors)
- Maintaining important economic development tools, such as the research activities credits, new and high quality jobs credits, workforce housing tax credits, and historic preservation credits, as well as brownfields/grayfields tax credits and other DNR programming and incentives that help redevelopment of infill sites

Education

Grow Cedar Valley has shown strong and consistent interest in and support of education. GCV will demonstrate that backing by advocating for:

- Supporting education at all levels from pre-school through post-high school options
- Providing additional general fund appropriations for the University of Northern Iowa and continued economic development appropriations funding for UNI Business and Community Services
- Increasing funding and continued efforts to improve dedicated workforce training and work-based learning programs at Hawkeye Community College and in our K-12 schools to keep up with demand from businesses

Complementary GCV priorities for 2024

Grow Cedar Valley will pursue several priorities during the 2024 Legislative Session that are complementary to the goal of seeing growth in the economy of our region and the state in an inclusive and beneficial way with specific attention to the following:

- Expanding targeted investments and incentives for the Iowa manufacturing sector as outlined in the Iowa Manufacturing 4.0 Plan
- Improving Iowa's general business climate through tax code improvements, sensible regulatory structures, controlling business cost drivers and making myriad infrastructure investments to ensure a policy environment that spurs business growth
- Encouraging long-term infrastructure planning and examination of innovative funding mechanisms and delivery methods, such as public-private partnerships and alternative project delivery methods, that protect taxpayers and make the necessary resources available for the significant capital investments required
- Aligning local infrastructure needs with federal infrastructure initiatives to position the Cedar Valley to capitalize on such opportunities
- Supporting efforts to eliminate scam calls and messages and provide resources to check the legitimacy of a contact
- Recognizing the developing problems with securing property and casualty insurance as well as certain personal lines, particularly homeowners' and personal auto insurance