

CONTENTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	2	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	10	TALENT DEVELOPMENT	19
BUSINESS CLIMATE	2	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	10	EDUCATION	19
Deficit Reduction		Brownfields Funding		Early Childhood Education	
Federal Crop Insurance		Housing		K-12 Education	
Insurance Regulation				Postsecondary Education	
Regulatory Reform		QUALITY OF LIFE	11	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	20
Small Business Assistance		Arts, Culture and Heritage		Immigration	
		Ape Cognition and Conservation Initiative		Workforce Development	
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	4	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE	12	HEALTH CARE	22
Energy		Broadband		Affordable Prescription Drugs	
Municipal and Private Activity Bond Financing		Cybersecurity		Health Care Reform	
New Markets Tax Credit		Telecommunications Reform		Behavioral Health	
Opportunity Zones		TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY	12	Public Health Initiatives	
		Aviation		Health Care Workforce	
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT	5	Complete Streets		Medicare	
Bio-Based Renewable Products		Mobility Infrastructure		Medicaid	
Biotechnology		Public Transportation		Opioid Epidemic	
Iowa State University Research		Rail		Specialized Pediatric Medical Care	
Intellectual Property		Regional Trails			
Research and Development		Surface Transportation			
USDA/NIFA Funding		Technology			
		Transportation Projects			
TAX AND BUDGET	7	WATER INFRASTRUCTURE	17		
Earned Income Tax Credit		Conservation			
Employee Access to Stock Options		Flood Mitigation			
Pensions		Water Trails and Water Quality			
Social Security Reform					
Taxes					
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	8				
Trade					
Iowa Economic Development Authority Export					
Homeland Security and Emergency					
Preparedness					
Iowa National Guard					

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As the regional economic development organization in Greater Des Moines (DSM), The Greater Des Moines Partnership strives to drive economic growth for the region and beyond. Through collaborative partnerships, The Partnership recruits and assists new and expanding businesses. DSM is nationally recognized as a best place to live, work and start a business. With a highly trained workforce, tax advantages, business incentives and business-friendly state and local governments, DSM's business climate is thriving. The Partnership supports a strong federal business climate with policies that ensure fiscal predictability, stability and efficiency. Following the uncertainty created by the events of 2020, inclusive economic recovery is necessary for a strong post-pandemic economy.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

DEFICIT REDUCTION

The current U.S. national debt has exceeded \$28 trillion and budget deficits are projected well into the future. While The Partnership is hopeful that tax reform will produce necessary economic growth, the increasing federal budget deficit remains a serious concern and should be methodically reduced through spending restraint and entitlement reform, in addition to increased economic growth. Addressing these challenges by enacting a credible budget plan will boost both short- and long-term economic confidence. Therefore, The Partnership supports the enactment of a credible long-term deficit reduction and balanced budget plan.

FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE

The Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP) protected 22 million acres and \$11.9 billion worth of crops in Iowa in 2020. With 7,000 agents and two of the 15 companies licensed to handle FCIP based in Iowa, ensuring a successful crop insurance program is vital to Iowa's economy.

The Partnership opposes any cuts to the crop insurance program. Crop insurance provides farmers with a familiar and proven successful tool to help mitigate the risks inherent to farming. Any further cuts to the crop insurance program would detrimentally undermine the risk management products and services available for Iowa's farmers.

INSURANCE REGULATION

State-based insurance regulation has helped create the largest, most competitive insurance system in the world, including comprehensive financial and consumer protections and the most transparent and inclusive procedures. It is critical to protect the fundamental principles that have governed the highly effective U.S. insurance system for decades from undue interference. Specifically, Congress should preserve and protect state-based regulatory standards and should act to maintain and improve partnerships with the private insurance market, including flood insurance and terrorism risk financing.

Additionally, The Partnership asks Congress to exercise oversight over the activities of federal agencies to ensure insurance regulatory powers remain reserved to the states. The Partnership further asks Congress to encourage regular consultation between state and federal officials on insurance matters and to direct U.S. representatives to demand more transparency and accountability in international standard setting.

REGULATORY REFORM

The Partnership supports initiatives aimed at reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens on the nation's industries, promoting economic growth and job creation and minimizing the impacts of government actions on small businesses.

Furthermore, efforts should be made to eliminate future unnecessary or overly burdensome regulations by amending the process by which these types of regulations have been created in the past.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

Accordingly, The Partnership supports:

- Reforming the rulemaking process to make it more transparent, effective and accountable.
- Responsibly streamlining and accelerating the regulatory permitting process.
- Requiring all federal agencies to ensure all existing and future federal regulations are carefully designed, promulgated and enforced to achieve the intended benefits while minimizing the regulatory burdens on small business, stemming from both individual regulatory mandates as well as the cumulative burdens imposed by additive regulations.
- Requiring environmental regulations to be based on science.
- Requiring economic and employment impacts of major rules be independently evaluated and disclosed to the public, thereby ensuring the costs of rules are clear from the beginning.
- Allowing affected members of the public to obtain independent review of agency actions.
- Providing for an up-or-down recorded vote by Congress for regulations deemed to have a major impact on jobs.
- Providing for independent periodic review of current regulations and sunseting those deemed ineffective or unnecessary.
- Strengthening the efforts of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Office of Advocacy to ensure the interests of small businesses are fully considered when agencies begin crafting new regulations. The Office of Advocacy at the SBA plays a vital role in ensuring federal agencies adequately consider how policies impact America's small businesses.
- Legislation replacing single-director governance of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) with a five-member commission. Prudential banking regulators should actively participate in the consumer protection rule-writing process and be mindful to not implement unnecessary requirements that could prevent community banks from serving important needs of customers. The Partnership recognizes the appointment of new experts from outside the federal government to the Consumer Advisory Board, Community Bank Advisory Council and Credit Union Advisory Council in 2018 as a step in the right direction.

SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Small business is the backbone of the American economy, and the federal government should help drive innovation and create more jobs. Because small business ownership is the path to prosperity for many Americans, small and disadvantaged businesses should be nurtured. Small businesses employ 50% of all private sector employees and have generated 60 – 80% of net new jobs annually during the last decade, according to the SBA.

Since the start of the global pandemic, the SBA has played an integral role in assisting the survival and recovery of the small business ecosystem. Programs developed and expanded to support business during the pandemic, such as the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, should continue to see funding and flexibility as the recovery continues. The Partnership supports continued funding for:

- The SBA's efforts to provide technical and financial assistance and access to capital for small businesses.
- The Office of Small Business Development Center network.
- The Manufacturing Extension Program.
- The Minority Business Development Agency.
- The Small Business Investment Company Program.
- The State Small Business Credit Initiative.

Further, The Partnership supports streamlining the government procurement process and increasing business opportunities for the private sector in the federal market.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ENERGY

Energy is essential to a strong economy, and DSM has long enjoyed low energy prices that have provided a competitive advantage to the region. Iowa is a leader in renewable energy production, including wind and biofuels, which has provided significant economic benefits to the state and DSM. Reliable and affordable energy are essential to running a business and fueling economic growth and competitiveness. To meet future energy demand in an environmentally responsible manner, the U.S. needs a comprehensive energy policy that ensures the development and deployment of affordable, reliable energy supplies, expands alternative energy sources, increases energy efficiency, lessens dependence on foreign energy supplies and creates jobs. To this end, The Partnership supports:

- Tax incentives or direct investment in support of continued research to develop and expand wind, solar, hydrogen, geothermal, nuclear, biofuels and other low carbon and renewable forms of energy.
- Further extending the Wind Energy Production Tax Credit, a predictable, stable, pro-growth tax policy that will help ensure investment in wind development at levels needed to meet environmental goals. More than 31% of the electricity produced in Iowa last year came from wind, the highest percentage of any state. Furthermore, Iowa ranks second, behind only Texas, in total installed wind capacity. The wind energy industry in Iowa supports approximately 7,000 direct and indirect jobs and is expected to provide more than \$1.5 billion in lease payments to landowners and property tax payments to communities over the next 30 years.
- Extending the Solar Investment Tax Credit, which will lead to sustained growth in the U.S. solar industry, and providing a normalization opt-out provision for investor-owned utilities, which will allow those utilities to use the ITC in the same manner as non-regulated developers, thus increasing competition for solar projects and lowering costs to customers.
- Extending and expanding the 45Q carbon capture tax credit, 30(C) alternative fuel infrastructure and 30(D) qualified plug-in vehicle tax credit to facilitate carbon reductions through common-sense incentives.
- Modernizing, expanding and protecting energy infrastructure necessary to generate, store, transmit and transport energy. This includes power plants, pipelines, refineries, transmission lines and the electrical grid.
- Tax incentives and research and development for energy producers to develop the necessary infrastructure for the use of renewable energy.
- Creating an investment tax credit for new or repurposed transmission lines designed to bring renewable energy resources to population centers. The existing U.S. network is not sufficient to achieve the scale of wind and solar power needed to derive all electricity from carbon-free sources by 2035. Achieving a fully “green grid” will require a new infrastructure initiative comparable to rural electrification that started in the Great Depression or the post-World War II buildout of the nation’s interstate highway system. Some experts estimate that the U.S. needs to expand its transmission grid by as much as 60% for wind and solar to make up just half of U.S. electricity capacity by 2030.
- Tax incentives for energy producers to develop long-duration energy storage assets, including pumped hydro facilities.
- The continuation of Landfill Gas (LFG) tax credits.
- Tax incentives and research and development to develop technology for electric vehicles, transportation electrification and battery and electric drive components.
- Tax incentives and research and development that encourage the entrepreneurial development of energy-efficient products, designs, processes and other green innovation.
- Tax incentives for commercial, industrial and residential green building and redevelopment programs that promote and encourage energy efficiency and other environmentally friendly practices.
- Efforts to reduce carbon emissions, ensuring those efforts are done in a common-sense manner, promote new technologies and efficiencies, recognize the problem is international in scope, are not designed to favor some regions of the country at the expense of others and do not cause undue harm to the U.S. economy.

MUNICIPAL AND PRIVATE ACTIVITY BOND FINANCING

The Partnership supports maintaining the ability of state and local governments to utilize tax-exempt bonds. State and local governments access the tax-exempt bond market to fund critical infrastructure, and therefore The Partnership opposes elimination or limitations on the exclusion of interest thereon from federal tax, which will increase costs and could result in decreased investment in needed areas. The Partnership also supports re-instituting the ability of state and local governments to advance the refunding of outstanding tax-exempt bonds.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

NEW MARKETS TAX CREDIT

The Partnership supports legislation permanently extending and expanding the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program to spur new investment and economic development in disadvantaged communities. Since 2000, a total of 65 economic revitalization projects have received financing through this program, making the NMTC an essential component of numerous job creation projects in severely distressed areas of the state, including rural and urban areas of DSM.

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 established a new economic tax incentive called Opportunity Zones. Incentivized to encourage long-term, private investments in low-income census tracts, Opportunity Funds are specialized tax vehicles aimed at spurring investment and entrepreneurialism. Tracts in Des Moines, Grinnell, Marshalltown, Perry, West Des Moines and Winterset have been designated as Opportunity Zones. The Partnership supports the continuation of Opportunity Zones and plans to continue to work with designated areas throughout DSM.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

BIO-BASED RENEWABLE PRODUCTS

The Partnership supports federal programs to promote and assist in research, development and commercialization of biofuels and bio-based materials. Achieving widespread use of biofuels in America will require a range of biofuels from a variety of feedstocks. This will mean expanded production of today's biofuels — ethanol and biomass-based diesel. It also will require consistent Congressional support for research, development, demonstration and commercialization to improve existing biofuels, as well as the next generation of biofuels, including those from cellulosic feedstocks and new fuel such as biobutanol. The Partnership supports incentives for the full range of biofuels and feedstocks. The Partnership also supports incentives to assist with market development, commercialization and/or demonstration projects that bring new non-fuel bio-based products to market that further help reduce dependence on fossil fuels while advancing rural development. To this end, The Partnership supports:

- Implementation of the current Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) as intended by Congress.
- Continuation of the biodiesel blenders tax credit.
- Funding initiatives for the installation of biofuel blending infrastructure.
- Creating a production tax credit for bio-based materials.
- Full funding for loan guarantee and grant programs to accelerate the commercialization of cellulosic biofuels.
- Encouraging investment incentives in infrastructure to support a renewable fuels pipeline.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

The Partnership supports policies that support the continued development and expansion of biotechnology. The Partnership's objective is to maintain the position of American business as a leader in biotechnology and promote the potential applications of biotechnology in food, feed, textiles, medical applications and manufactured products. To ensure a competitive edge, The Partnership supports the rigorous enforcement of science-based and nationally uniform federal regulations to sustain public confidence in these products. The Partnership urges the federal government to advocate for science-based regulations with governments around the world. The Partnership also urges the federal government to ensure innovative and promising biotechnology products are approved in a timely manner.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

The Partnership supports sustained levels of funding for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) lab in Ames, which is a necessary program that provides critical research to the agricultural sector and conservation programs. The ARS is the USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency on farming productivity, sustaining natural resources and addressing food safety and nutrition priorities.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Partnership supports promoting and defending robust Intellectual Property (IP) rules globally, while strengthening enforcement efforts in the U.S. and abroad. The IP generated by U.S. companies is critical to America's prosperity and leadership in the global economy. IP rights provide a legal framework for innovation and creativity. To incentivize inventors and entrepreneurs to create, companies need reassurance that ideas will be protected by law. Protecting ideas helps spur investment in new research to solve the world's most pressing problems.

Unfortunately, the IP rights of innovative industries are increasingly under assault around the globe from criminal counterfeiting and piracy networks, anti-IP coalitions, patent trolls that do not actually create anything and even some governments that seek to erode patent, trademark and copyright protections. Counterfeiting and piracy have enormous economic implications and are responsible for the loss of billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of jobs annually. In addition to the economic ramifications, consumers are exposed to often dangerous and defective products. Protecting IP supports job creation in the nation's innovative sectors and ensures that the products consumers use are authentic, safe and effective. Accordingly, The Partnership supports:

- Strengthening IP protection and enforcement, nationally and internationally, with the U.S. leading by example.
- Improving the patent and trademark systems.
- Protecting companies from frivolous litigation by "patent trolls."
- Expanding the efforts of the U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator.
- Advancing trade agreements with modern-day IP provisions.
- Fighting IP theft online.
- Ensuring IP compliance by America's trading partners.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership supports sustained federally funded basic fundamental research to spur the development and deployment of advanced technologies in areas critical to the nation's ability to innovate, compete and grow. Specifically, The Partnership supports:

- Agencies such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology, National Institute of Health, the National Science Foundation and other federal research providers to promote research and development.
- Federally funded university research to develop products and processes that keep the nation healthy, safe and prosperous. This research is especially critical in this time of heightened external threats. Adequate funding is necessary to support research and development efforts in the region, including at the corporate level, but specifically at Iowa State University. Stable and sustained growth in scientific research funding is essential to efforts that address many of the fundamental issues society faces, such as energy, national security and the continuing search for new vaccines and cures for disease.
- Continued investment of the Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. This is critical as energy costs and demand continues to increase globally.

USDA/NIFA FUNDING

The 2018 Farm Bill included an authorization for a coordinated research initiative known as the Agricultural Genomes to Phenomes Initiative. Obtaining information about phenotype information is a limiting step in converting genomic information into useful improvements in agriculturally important species. Significant research is needed to fully characterize the phenotypes, which are collectively known as the "phenome." Understanding the relationships between genotypes/genes, phenotypes/traits and environmental factors will enable researchers to identify combinations of genetics and management practices best suited for use on individual farms and ranches. The Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative will develop the tools, resources and knowledge needed to enable researchers to more efficiently and rapidly develop improved crops and livestock to meet global demand for U.S. agricultural products while overcoming challenges associated with a changing climate and emerging pests and pathogens. This will, in turn, provide farmers with increasingly productive and resilient crops and livestock as well as the tools and information to make better management decisions, thereby increasing farmer profitability, food security and agricultural sustainability of U.S. agriculture for the benefit of all members of society. The Partnership supports ongoing federal funding for the Agricultural Genome to Phenome Initiative.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

TAX AND BUDGET

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

The Partnership supports the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) because it rewards work and helps to reduce poverty in communities. According to the United Way of Central Iowa and the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed Central Iowans (ALICE) report, nearly 37% of Iowa families with children do not earn enough to provide for a basic standard of living without public assistance, despite one or more full-time workers in the family. The EITC supports working families, who in turn spend income in Iowa communities.

EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO STOCK OPTIONS

In 2006, the Financial Accounting Standards Board issued a rule called FAS 123 which requires companies to account for stock options as if a cash expense, therefore reducing the net income of the company. The rule also requires stock options to be recognized as more shares outstanding, thus diluting share values for the company's existing stockholders. As a result of this duplicate cost, it became more expensive for companies to offer this opportunity to employees earning less than \$100,000 annually.

The Partnership supports a Congressional override of FAS 123, making it more affordable for companies to allow employees whose cash compensation is less than \$100,000 per year to have access to stock options, while having no impact on those employees earning in excess of that amount.

PENSIONS

With Baby Boomers retiring at a rate of approximately 10,000 per day, it is increasingly important to ensure the strength of the private retirement plan system. Millions of retired Americans rely on private pensions and employer-sponsored retirement savings as the most important source of income after Social Security. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the following pension reforms:

- Preserve and enhance existing tax incentives and contribution limits and increase the limit for catch-up contributions. The Partnership opposes dollar caps on retirement savings assets and proposals to limit the tax rate at which upper-income taxpayers can use itemized deductions and other tax preferences to reduce tax liability to a maximum of 28%.
- Ensure the viability of Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) through the use of reasonable assumptions while providing temporary funding relief related to historically low interest rates for single employer pension plans. Also, The Partnership opposes delegating to the PBGC Board the authority to independently set the level of premiums, as well as the authority to factor into premium levels the risk that the plans pose to retirees and to the PBGC.
- Legislation that encourages greater adoption of automatic enrollment and escalation of safe harbor designs among small- and mid-size employers by reducing bureaucracy and administrative requirements and simplifying plan design requirements, such as the bipartisan Securing a Strong Retirement Act of 2020 (SECURE 2.0).
- Legislation that removes barriers to and promotes useful decumulation strategies pertaining to annuities, long-term care insurance and other products without overly burdening plan sponsors.
- Reforms of government regulations that achieve fewer adverse consequences for jobs, innovation and overall competitiveness.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

The Partnership supports meaningful reform of the Social Security system that addresses long-term solvency. Since changes to Social Security enacted in 1983, the Congressional Budget Office anticipates that the Social Security Trust Fund will be exhausted by 2037. Thereafter, tax income would be sufficient to pay only about three-quarters of scheduled benefits through 2085, as there will be a large gap between outlays and revenues because of an aging population and an employee base that is growing more slowly. The system should be substantially revamped to avoid this fiscal crisis and maintain its long-term solvency and viability. The earlier these challenges are faced, the less drastic and divisive the solutions will be. The Partnership supports reform efforts that avoid unnecessary tax increases or benefit cuts.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

TAXES

The Partnership is committed to pro-growth tax policies that preserve America's global competitiveness, and it opposes tax increases that reduce businesses' ability to grow, invest and create jobs.

While The Partnership supports the changes and business environment created by the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017, analysis shows it has had a negative impact on charitable giving. Expanding the charitable deduction to non-itemizers will protect against the unintended consequences that will fall on charitable organizations from the increased standard deduction. The Partnership supports a universal charitable deduction, which will unlock additional charitable giving and recognize the principle that all charitable gifts are analogous, regardless of whether they were given by a large or small donor, or whether the donation resulted in a tax credit. It recognizes the long-standing effectiveness of the charitable deduction in encouraging taxpayers to support communities, build quality of life and strengthen civil society. Additionally, The Partnership does not support the current limitation on the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

TRADE

The Partnership is dedicated to building DSM's global presence through a robust trade agenda supporting Iowa companies to increase exports and foreign direct investment. This is integral to the Global DSM Trade and Investment Strategy, which was developed as part of the Global Cities Initiative, a joint project of the Brookings Institution and JP Morgan Chase. The program equips metropolitan leaders with the information, policy ideas and global connections needed to bolster regional positions in the global economy.

It is important for Congress and the Administration to support pro-trade policy initiatives, trade and investment policies and agreements that will help American companies and workers to remain the most competitive in the world. Many foreign countries still maintain steep tariffs and other barriers against U.S. exports, while the U.S. market is largely wide open. Across the world, there are nearly 300 free trade agreements (FTAs) in force and the U.S. has FTAs in effect with 20 countries. American workers and farmers deserve the opportunity to compete — and succeed — on a level playing field. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the following pro-growth international trade and investment policies and principles:

- Successful implementation of the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA).
- Work with China to successfully attain the goals and measures set forth in the U.S.-China Phase I Deal agreed to in January 2020. Successfully position the U.S. with traditional trade allies to negotiate further for deeper reforms with and within China to yield a freer, fairer and safer global security and trading environment.
- Negotiating additional bilateral investment treaties with major markets around the globe.
- Modernizing U.S. export controls to enhance national security and competitiveness.
- Boosting business and leisure travel and the jobs sustained by improving the visa process and expanding the Visa Waiver program.
- Lifting Section 201 tariffs on solar panel imports to the U.S., decreasing costs for customers and businesses looking to build more renewable energy in the state.

IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY EXPORT ASSISTANCE

The Partnership supports continued funding of the State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) grant program administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Iowa has been fortunate to receive substantial funds via the STEP program in recent years. These funds have been awarded to small businesses as grants predominantly for activities that increase international sales (i.e. exhibiting in international trade shows and trade missions). This program has a high return on investment and has assisted small businesses that might not have considered exporting due to limited budgets.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Partnership is acutely aware of the critical need to be prepared for, respond to and recover from both natural and human-caused disasters and understands that government cannot carry this burden without active involvement of the private sector. It is imperative that businesses have access to the necessary tools and information for maintaining continuity in the event of a disaster. It is also important for the business community to work with governments at all levels to foster active public-private partnerships and develop strategies to protect the nation's critical infrastructure, facilitate information sharing and spur public-private engagement to effectively manage all types of hazards. The Partnership will continue to support the efforts of and engage with the Safeguard Iowa Partnership, the U.S. Chamber National Security Task Force, Emergency Preparedness Department and others to continue to develop public-private partnerships with the federal, state and local governments to enhance homeland security and emergency preparedness efforts.

IOWA NATIONAL GUARD

The Iowa National Guard mission is to remain operationally relevant and always ready to deploy, operate and succeed as part of every mission in the U.S. or abroad. The Partnership supports the mission and goals of the Iowa National Guard through the following:

- Policies and funding that preserve and enhance key infrastructure in DSM, including Camp Dodge, Joint Air Base Des Moines located at the Des Moines International Airport and surrounding area readiness centers.
- Public-private partnerships to provide innovative and whole of government opportunities that increase the Iowa Army National Guard's ability to achieve success in shared missions.
- Local efforts for enhanced rail and aerial supply facilities, range and simulation activities in support of local law enforcement agencies and the Joint Readiness Center / Fire Training Campus in partnership with the City of West Des Moines.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

From rural to urban, DSM is home to many unique communities that support a strong quality of life for individuals and families. Ensuring strong community development policies and programs by Congress aids in the ability of the state and local governments to support neighborhoods and the lowans who call them home. From strong infrastructure investment to programs supporting arts, culture and heritage, community development initiatives provide for a welcoming region and further The Partnership's mission to grow opportunity, help create jobs and promote DSM as the best place to build a business, a career and a future.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BROWNFIELDS FUNDING

The Partnership supports continued U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields funding for sites in DSM. Brownfield sites provide a significant challenge and negative economic impact to distressed urban and rural communities by allowing the continuation of blight. These sites can be successfully redeveloped and put back into active uses that are beneficial to both the local community and the business sector. Federal investments in the Brownfields program have yielded 10 times the economic return, making the program a proven and critical economic stimulus tool.

HOUSING

Like many states, Iowa is forecasted to need tens of thousands of additional housing units within the next ten years, a demand that cannot be fulfilled within the constraints and costs of traditional building techniques. While the State of Iowa is exploring innovative solutions to be able to affordably construct housing for lowans, The Partnership recognizes and respects the essential federal role in housing and community development and encourages Congress to protect and adequately fund essential programs that make housing affordable for all DSM households. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- A waiver of the current required HUD headquarters' noise approvals and instead allowing state and local governments to set appropriate noise parameters for much-needed housing that would eliminate a current barrier in the development of affordable housing.
- The consolidation of housing programs to be under HUD management eliminating confusion for both developers and low-income household applicants.
- Streamlining housing services for low-income lowans through the Section 8 Project-Based Program, to be administered by the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA).
- Expanded eligibility criteria for Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) to encourage more public-private partnerships.
- Expanding the flexibility of the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program to assist low-income families in emergency housing situations.
- Policies that expedite HUD disaster resources following a natural or human-caused disaster.
- Clarity on down payment assistance (DPA) programs for low to moderate income homebuyers who currently experience unequal access due to confusion created by a 2017 report issued by the HUD Office of Inspector General.
- Additional funding and expansion of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program.
- Funding of the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) from a percentage of the profits of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and or substituting a similar funding stream in the event housing finance reform replaces these government-sponsored organizations.
- Adequate funding for the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), which serves as the only federal block grant program for state and local governments designed exclusively to produce affordable housing for low-income families.
- Increased funding for Housing Assistance Payments (HAP), also known as Housing Choice Vouchers.
- Increased funding for administration fees necessary to administer the Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency.
- Enforcement of HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule (AFFH), which helps communities better understand and meet fair housing obligations and promote housing choice.
- Continued funding for and flexible use of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), HUD's main economic revitalization program.
- Homeownership incentives in the recently revised tax code, specifically the deductions for mortgage interest and local property taxes.
- Tax credits and other provisions that when leveraged with additional resources can be used to reduce the cost of construction and rehabilitation of housing and require a period of guaranteed affordability for low-income owners and tenants.
- Resources and programming to support lowans who experience homelessness. Local programs include permanent supportive housing, which often collaborate with private landlords and a variety of supportive, health and mental health organizations.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

- Increases in funding for the programs administered by the local Public Housing Authority, simplification of federal regulations, allowing the Public Housing Authority to create more local policies to support the needs of the community and the expansion of partnership programs with local service providers.
- Expansion of the HUD Moving to Work Program.
- Funding for the HUD Family Self-Sufficiency program to link HUD-assisted households with job training, child care, transportation, financial literacy and other supportive services and help build assets through interest-bearing escrow accounts.
- Expanding funding and criteria for the HUD Healthy Homes Program to allow remediation of health hazards independent of lead remediation.
- Increased funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which provides \$55 million in grants annually to support Iowans struggling to pay home energy costs.

QUALITY OF LIFE

ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Arts, culture and heritage elevate and enrich a vibrant DSM. As essential contributors to the region's quality of life and economic vitality, dozens of organizations, attractions and programs help draw regional tourism, increase resident satisfaction, help attract and retain talent and make DSM a premier place to work, live and play. According to a 2017 economic impact study of the arts completed by Americans for the Arts and supported by Bravo Greater Des Moines, arts, culture and heritage organizations in the region contributed more than \$185 million in total economic activity, supported 5,677 jobs and generated \$16.8 million in state and local tax revenue.

Public investment in arts, culture and heritage provides tremendous value and has been a catalyst for the creative sector while also generating unparalleled private support. This continued investment and meaningful partnership will further position Iowa as an innovative, progressive state.

As the U.S. and world continue to reopen and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, arts, culture and heritage will play a pivotal role in revitalizing the economy. To that end, it will be important to recognize the need to rebuild institutional knowledge, stabilize the arts and culture ecosystem and redefine accessibility. Therefore, The Partnership supports the following:

- Flexibility of funding to support short- and long-term community planning efforts and support for digital arts and creative programs that connect culture and the community.
- Increased funding for Iowa's National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) – State Arts Agency Partnership Grant to invest in people and projects that foster economic growth and enhance the cultural identity of local communities.
- Increased funding of the National Park Service – Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) which includes grant-in-aid to Iowa's State Historic Preservation Office for heritage preservation and protection programs that preserve the nation's heritage, create jobs and revitalize communities.
- Increased funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which helps to ensure universal access to the vital public services provided by Iowa Public Television (IPTV). IPTV relies on CPB's investment to educate people of all ages, partner with public safety officials to help save lives and foster a well-informed citizenry with historical, cultural and civic resources on air, online and on the ground.
- Increased funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the National Science Foundation (NSF), whose agencies' resources and grant programs make these investments possible at the state and local level.
- Continued support for Iowa's Rural Heritage Revitalization Grant, funded through the U.S. Department of the Interior Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Program.

In addition to the support of the above programs, The Partnership supports competitive grants offered to the state and local level through federal funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Parks Service (NPS) – Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Specific grants include:

- An \$80,500 grant application from CultureALL for Folks and Traditional Arts programming.
- Civic Music Association application for the NEA American Rescue Plan Arts and Creative Industries grant.
- A \$35,000 NEA Grants for Arts Projects grant for the upcoming exhibition about Louis Fratino at the Des Moines Art Center.
- A \$20,000 NEA Grants for Arts Projects grant to support activities for the Iowa High Schools Musical Theater Awards Program, submitted by Des Moines Performing Arts.
- A \$10,000 NEA grant application from Iowa Stage Theatre for Summer Shakespeare.
- An application from Des Moines Metro Opera to the NEA for 2022 OPERA Iowa educational activities.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

APE COGNITION AND CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

The Partnership supports the Ape Cognition and Conservation Initiative (ACCI) request to National Institutes of Health (NIH) that it be certified to allow chimpanzees to be retired at this facility. As NIH continues to minimize the use of chimpanzees as a model for the study of some human diseases, it will continue to permit behavioral, cognitive and genetic studies that are noninvasive and that fit comfortably within the parameters of the Institute of Medicine report.

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

BROADBAND

The Partnership supports federal policies that spur private sector investment in broadband infrastructure, foster public-private partnerships, recognize the competitive nature of today's telecommunications market and avoid over-regulation. These investments will support the business and talent recruitment efforts of the region and state.

The Partnership supports federal policy and programs that encourage technologies such as fiber-backed systems which provide broadband service and performance levels capable of meeting current and future needs. At the core of these developments that will further grow the rural economy is the expansion of STEM education, research, regulatory modernization and infrastructure. Leveraging these innovations in an increasingly data-driven economy will also require further development of rural data management capabilities.

Additionally, The Partnership supports streamlined federal financing and refined mapping of broadband gaps that qualify for funding in underserved communities to connect lowans throughout the state. Support for accurate data complements the efforts of the Central Iowa Broadband Initiative. E-connectivity is more than simply connecting households, schools and health care centers to each other as well as the rest of the world through high-speed internet. It is also a tool that enables increased productivity for farms factories, schools and hospitals. E-connectivity is fundamental for economic development, innovation, advancements in technology, workforce readiness and an improved quality of life. Reliable and a ordable high-speed internet e-connectivity will transform America as a key catalyst for prosperity.

CYBERSECURITY

The Partnership recognizes the lack of standards in notifications of consumers after a data breach leads to unnecessary confusion for both the victims of the breach and payments service providers. Therefore, The Partnership supports efforts at the federal level to bring a uniform minimum standard to the notification of consumers after a breach occurs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REFORM

The Partnership supports updated federal telecommunications laws that reflect the competitive nature of the industry, spur economic development, encourage the deployment of new technologies and services and eliminate federal policies that hinder investment in technology.

Additionally, The Partnership supports modernization of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which gives limited attention to the internet and has no mention of "broadband" or "high speed internet." Intelligent regulatory restraint will also serve the purpose of encouraging private sector investment in this critical and evolving technology.

TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

AVIATION

The Partnership supports the Des Moines International Airport's Terminal Concept Plan to create an airport that keeps up with Iowa's growing corporate aviation and commercial passenger demand. The Des Moines International Airport has a \$644 million annual economic impact on the State of Iowa. The Partnership believes that as the current terminal facility comes to the end of its useful economic life that it is imperative to invest in a facility and space that accommodates DSM's economic growth and allows the flexibility that the airport will need in the future.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

The Partnership also supports the efforts of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to work with the Des Moines International Airport and Ankeny Regional Airport to fund capital improvement projects. The Partnership supports an increase to the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and encourages Congress to make timely appropriations of the AIP funds necessary for the capital improvement projects. Accordingly, The Partnership supports:

- Annual infrastructure funding to be used on both AIP eligible and non-AIP eligible projects.
- Increasing the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC). PFCs are not a tax, but instead a user fee charged to passengers using the airport. PFCs have no impact on the federal budget, as the fees are collected by the airlines and returned directly to the airport for use on projects that are approved by both the FAA and the airlines.
- Ensuring the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office fully staffs the office at the Des Moines International Airport by adding staff positions to match staffing levels with other comparable airports in the Midwest.

COMPLETE STREETS

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act made significant strides in directing states and metros to build safer streets by including Complete Streets policy in federal surface transportation for the first time. The Partnership supports continued federal support for Complete Streets, including increased flexibility to allow multimodal transportation accommodations on streets, roadways and the public right of way. The Partnership also supports design standards like the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide, that focuses on street design for all users, ages and abilities.

MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The transportation system is vital to the DSM economy. Businesses and residents depend on a multi-modal network that connects people to jobs, educational opportunities, businesses and services needed to live healthy, productive lives. Transportation funding also results in job creation.

Accordingly, The Partnership advocates for a comprehensive approach to solving the nation's looming transportation infrastructure crisis. Specifically, The Partnership believes that a multi-modal and intermodal vision must prioritize maintenance of existing facilities, manage capacity, expand alternative transportation modes, reduce congestion, reduce GHG emissions and improve the efficient, safe and sustainable movement of goods and people throughout the country and world.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Partnership encourages further investment in public transit and mobility options. With one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, more and more businesses are turning to public transportation as a way to help attract and retain employees. Specifically, The Partnership supports:

- The approval of long-term surface transportation authorization legislation, as well as funding levels that address the shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Account, helping to bring public transit systems into good repair. This includes restoring the transit capital investment ratio and providing infrastructure funding to support the change.
- Increasing funding to the Bus and Bus Facilities Program.
- Action on a robust infrastructure package that federal funding for bus transit programs.
- Overall increased flexibility in discretionary grant processes to pursue funding to address major capital needs and accelerate fleet replacement.
- The development of new policies and updates to existing ones that address growing demands for increased mobility choices, including adapting funding, regulations and allocation methods to encourage new modes of transit.
- The Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority's (DART) pursuit of federal grant funding for a new DART Operations and Maintenance Facility as part of maintaining a robust regional system.
- Grant programs targeting bus transit, which have a strong return on investment for localities. For example, the federal grant program that resulted in DART Central Station allowed for the revitalization of the Walnut Street corridor and a safer, more attractive transfer facility for customers.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

RAIL

The Partnership supports extending high-speed passenger service connecting Chicago, the Quad Cities, Iowa City, DSM, Council Bluffs and Omaha, studying the extension of high-speed passenger rail service from Minneapolis-St. Paul to DSM to Kansas City, and continued enhanced federal investment in high-speed passenger rail funding. Additionally, The Partnership supports the enactment of an infrastructure investment tax credit for, and opposes the re-regulation of, the freight rail industry.

REGIONAL TRAILS

Numerous studies have shown that trails, parks, recreation and green space help improve communities and grow local economies by increasing physical activity, lowering health care costs, decreasing traffic congestion, attracting businesses, improving property values, increasing tax revenues, creating jobs and providing a safe alternative to driving. Accordingly, The Partnership supports continuing federal funding for multipurpose trails and other transportation and recreation programs that improve community health and livability.

Additionally, multi-use trails can be utilized as an alternative mode of transportation and provide significant quality of life enhancements and recreational opportunities for Iowans. To help DSM become the “Trails Capital of the World,” that provides exceptional recreational and transportation corridors in the metro, The Partnership supports continued investment in the Federal Recreational Trails Program as well as the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Set Aside program. The Partnership also supports continued funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, which provides matching grants to state and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

Annually and in partnership with the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), The Partnership develops a list of priority trail projects of importance to the region. This list is intended to keep Iowa’s Congressional Delegation informed about priority projects, should additional federal resources become available. The list of trail projects identified are as follows:

2021 BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

ID	Sponsor	Project	Description	Total Cost
1	City of Ankeny	Oralabor Gateway Trail – SW State St. Grade Separated Crossing	Regional trail underpass of SW State St./Hwy 415 at the intersection with SW Oralabor Rd./Hwy 160	\$1,900,000
2	City of West Des Moines	Raccoon River Pedestrian East Trail Bridge	Pedestrian bridge across the Raccoon River between Raccoon River Park and Walnut Woods State Park	\$6,000,000
3	City of West Des Moines/ City of Windsor Heights	73rd St./8th St. Trail Connection	Trail to connect Windsor Heights and West to Des Moines to 73rd St./8th St.	\$2,500,000
4	City of West Des Moines	Sugar Creek Greenway Trail	Trail along Sugar Creek to connect Waukee and West Des Moines	\$8,000,000
5	Polk County Conservation	Broadway Ave. to Neal Smith Trail Gap with pedestrian bridge over NE 14th St.	Trail to connect the Broadway Ave. Reconstruction Project to the Neal Smith Trail with pedestrian overpass or tunnel at NE 2nd St. and NE 14th St.	\$6,000,000
6	Polk County Conservation	Polk City to High Trestle Trail (HTT) Connector Trail	1-mile of trail from the oasis on the HTT to a future 57-acre park in Polk City and eventually to the Neal Smith Trail through Polk City	\$1,100,000
7	City of Des Moines	Connect Downtown Priorities	One- to 2-way conversion of Grand Ave./Locust St. (5th to 17th) and 6th/7th (MLK Pkwy to University Ave.); installation of 2-way on-street bicycle facilities on 5th St. (Laurel St. to Grand Ave.) to improve traffic safety, spur economic development, include DART operations and increase AAA downtown bicycle facilities	\$12,000,000

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

Investment in the nation's transportation network remains one of the key components of economic recovery and the future. As the demand for transportation increases, the financial resources committed to preserve and invest in needed capacity and service improvements remain inadequate. Additional long-term and reliable investment levels are necessary for Iowa's economic future.

The Partnership will continue to work with Congress, Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT), Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance (CIRTPA), local governments and other partner organizations to strategically identify and prioritize regional surface transportation projects. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the following:

- A national transportation authorization program utilizing federal funding that allows states the flexibility to accomplish national goals within state priorities.
- Increased federal transportation funding to Iowa. The Partnership advocates against reductions in federal funding or redirection of funds to larger metropolitan centers outside the state. The Partnership also supports increased flexibility in the use of federal funds by local communities.
- Continued improvements to the existing Highway Trust Fund, which finances roughly one-quarter of all public highway and mass transit spending in the U.S. The Partnership supports the development of a sustainable, dedicated and sufficient funding solution for the Highway Trust Fund to ensure federal resources are adequate for the ongoing needs of transportation infrastructure.
- A transportation reauthorization (preferably a 5-year reauthorization) to support critical transportation infrastructure. The reauthorization bill should include protections against unfunded mandates that add expenditures at the state and local level, make funding available for all modes of transportation including public transportation and critical infrastructure maintenance, and maintain federal infrastructure programs, such as the Better Utilizing Infrastructure to Leverage Development (BUILD), the newly announced Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) and the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant programs.
- The use of value capture as a public financing tool to recover a share of the value created by public transportation investment (i.e., tax increment financing, special assessments, land value tax).
- Designating the U.S. 65/Iowa 5 beltway, also known as the Purple Heart Highway, as part of the U.S. Interstate System. Designating this part of the beltway as an interstate would open up economic development opportunities for communities along the route and help to defer congestion on the existing interstate system in the metro area. Designation must be approved by both the Federal Highway Administration and the Iowa DOT. Although no new construction is necessary, new signage and a minimum speed limit would be required, and future maintenance and upgrade responsibilities will need to occur.

TECHNOLOGY

The Partnership supports policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of emerging transportation technologies. These technologies include, but are not limited to, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, transportation network companies and vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure Smart City technology necessary for autonomous vehicles.

With respect to automated transportation, The Partnership supports objectives identified by the Iowa Council on Automated Transportation, including the following items that will require a national effort:

- Develop national standards for communications with and between vehicles and infrastructure to ensure infrastructure readiness.
- Establish a uniform national policy on legal and liability issues, insurance, privacy and related issues to avoid a patchwork of state regulations, as well as a national vision and strategy to support the safe deployment and integration of automated technology on the public transportation system.
- Foster national leadership to promote public, private and people partnerships that will shepherd innovation and adoption.
- Implement national guidance and standards that support safety data collection such as crashes involving automated vehicles.
- Federal policies and programs that incorporate the future adoption of electric vehicles and charging stations.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The Partnership annually develops a list of priority transportation projects of importance to the region, in collaboration with the MPO. This list is intended to keep Iowa's Congressional Delegation and the DOT apprised of key transportation investments planned for the region, should additional federal resources become available. The list of transportation projects identified are as follows:

2021 MPO/GREATER DES MOINES PARTNERSHIP PRIORITY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS				
ID	Sponsor	Project	Description	Total Cost
1	City of Altoona	36th Ave. SW Reconstruction	South of 8th St. SW intersection to north of Hubbell Ave. intersection	\$3,000,000
2	City of Altoona	8th St. SW Reconstruction – Phase 2	8th St. SW Reconstruction – Phase 2	\$5,700,000
3	City of Ankeny	NE Delaware Ave. Reconstruction – NE 5th St. to NE 18th St.	Reconstruct 2-lane arterial rural roadway to a 5-lane PCC urban street with raised medians, new traffic signals, fiberoptic interconnect, triple RCB culvert replacement, 8' shared use sidewalk and associated improvements	\$10,500,000
4	City of Bondurant	Commuter Loop (Grant St. S Realignment)	Realign and reconstruct Grant St. S and replace bridge	\$8,500,000
5	DART	New Operations and Maintenance Facility	A proposed new facility would include a maintenance building, bus storage and an office building, would alleviate flooding concerns, allow for expanded use of electric vehicles and improve overall safety and operational efficiency	\$65,500,000
6	City of Des Moines and City of Pleasant Hill	SE Connector	Four-lane complete street connecting Downtown DSM to U.S.-65. The Partnership supports the 2021 BUILD grant application to complete the SE Connector.	\$50,000,000
7	Des Moines International Airport	New Terminal	Development of a new 14-gate terminal at the existing airport	\$500,000,000
8	Iowa Department of Transportation, City of Urbandale and City of Clive	I-35/I-80 Interchange with U.S. 6/ Hickman Rd.	Widen I-35/I-80 and construct auxiliary lanes from Douglas Ave. to University Ave. and reconfigure U.S. 6/Hickman Rd. Interchange	\$58,350,000
9	Polk County, City of Des Moines and City of Pleasant Hill	NE 23rd Ave./Easton Blvd. Reconstruction Project	Reconstruction of NE 23rd Ave./Easton Blvd. and NE Oakhill Dr. from E. 42nd St. in Des Moines to NE 56th St. from a 2-lane open ditch rural roadway to an urban 3-lane curb and gutter roadway with continuous center left turn lane, including signalization of the intersection of Easton Blvd./E. 42nd St. and NE Oakhill Dr./ NE 56th St.	\$6,125,000
10	City of West Des Moines	8th St. from I-235 to Clegg Rd.	Widen existing street to accommodate turn lanes and various pedestrian enhancements	\$4,570,000
11	City of West Des Moines	Mills Civic Pkwy from S. 91st St. to Grand Prairie Pkwy	Reconstruction of 7,500 ft. 2-lane rural arterial street to a e-lane urban street, including new bridge, new box culvert and pedestrian/bike trail	\$9,440,000

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY

The Partnership supports expanding conservation programs that address environmental challenges including soil erosion, flooding, water quality and wildlife habitat, such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Conservation programs should empower farmers and land managers to make environmentally-compatible land and water management improvements that maintain the competitive posture of American agriculture. Therefore, The Partnership supports:

- Continuation and expansion of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), which targets funding for USDA conservation cost share programs to high-need areas, leverages funding for greater impact, encourages public-private partnerships across the agriculture sector and engages USDA with private sector agriculture organizations and businesses. This includes support for the Precision Conservation Management Program.
- Continuation of the existing law regarding conservation compliance as a requirement to receive federally subsidized crop insurance in the 2018 Farm Bill, which supports implementation of conservation practices on agricultural lands.
- Continuation and expansion of the Source Water Protection program in the 2018 Farm Bill, which authorizes NRCS and the State Technical Committees to work with community water systems to identify state and local source water protection priorities. The Partnership supports continuation of this community-agricultural partnership.
- Policies, practices and funding opportunities for progress toward Iowa's share of the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force Interim Target of 20% reduction of total nitrogen and phosphorus load by 2025 and 45% reduction in total nitrogen and phosphorus load by 2035.
- Establishing a Restoration Initiative in the Upper Mississippi River Basin through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), dedicated to research and restoration of the regional watersheds.
- A "culture of measurement" of water quality, including the establishment of measuring and monitoring tools that assist in quantifying environmental benefits of practices and policies.
- Funding and support of Watershed Management Authorities and the work executed to develop and implement comprehensive watershed management plans across Iowa.

FLOOD MITIGATION

Flooding has always been a reality in the region, and it is likely that future flood events will be more severe and frequent due to extreme weather events and the introduction of more impermeable surfaces in watersheds. The Partnership supports flood mitigation policies across federal agencies that help states, counties and municipalities manage changing flood risks. Strategies may include targeted buyouts of repeatedly flooded properties and investments in upstream infrastructure that holds and slows flood waters to reduce danger and damage for downstream communities.

The Partnership will continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Congress, the City of Des Moines and other partner organizations to identify and secure timely approvals required to address flood control and mitigation on the Des Moines River and its tributaries.

The City of Des Moines is continuing to pursue the required analysis, design, real estate and construction to provide reliable protection against a 100-year flood with a FEMA-accredited flood protection system and to address the increased flood risk communicated in the USACE Des Moines River Regulated Flow Frequency Study, issued in January 2011. Timely USACE response, approvals and coordination is crucial to mitigating flood risk in Des Moines and USACE actions have included Section 408 review/approvals, resolution of longstanding real estate actions and specific real estate conditions and direction related to the federal levee. In addition to actions required to accomplish the necessary improvements to Downtown and Southeast Des Moines levee projects, authorization and funding to mitigate under-seepage of the Birdland Levee is required. Therefore, The Partnership supports continued coordination between the City of Des Moines and USACE.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

To further enhance the efforts of cities and government agencies in the region, The Partnership supports:

- Prioritizing the use of green infrastructure techniques (restored wetlands, restored oxbows, etc.) installed upstream to slow the flow in the upper reaches of the watershed, resulting in lower peaks in flood events in the lower watershed. Specifically, The Partnership will work with agency partners and metro communities to secure funding through programs such as the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC).
- Incentivizing the use of farmland management practices that reduce runoff at the origin (tree intercropping, no till practices, perennial biomass, afforestation, managed grazing, etc.).
- Coordinated timely actions with USACE to obtain the necessary approvals, including Section 408 and actions related to the Federal Southeast Des Moines levee, to reduce flood risk in the City. This may include federal authorizations, federal funding opportunities and agreements to receive credit for future matching fund requirements.

WATER TRAILS

The State of Iowa has a strong legacy of investing in Iowa's soil and water infrastructure — an infrastructure that is critically important to the state's wealth and prosperity. As efforts to expand outdoor recreation and natural resource amenities in DSM increase as an opportunity to attract and retain talent, the importance of health soil and water is more vital than ever.

Therefore, The Partnership supports building a regionally connected system of natural resource areas and corridors to support the Central Iowa Water Trails Project. In the spring of 2018, business and community leaders from DSM unveiled an ambitious water trails plan to bring recreation to Downtown DSM's rivers and create a network of 150 miles of water trails across the region. As one of many organizations working on the project, The Partnership views the primary pathway to success as a public-private investment. With private dollars from individuals and businesses already committed, The Partnership supports allocating adequate and permanent funding sources to meet the infrastructure needs of the project. Funding options include partnering with federal agencies, nonprofits and other granting authorities to make the project a reality.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Getting Iowans back to work is essential to ensuring a strong recovery following the events of 2020. As employers and employees continue to react to and recover from the impacts of the pandemic, the need for talent continues to be the number one issue heard from employers on a consistent basis. That will still be true in economic recovery. DSM must continue to prepare the talent pipeline, attracting, retaining and training a talented and diverse workforce. The Partnership continues to support talent development policies that further the education attainment goals from early childhood through postsecondary education and for lifelong learners. Growing the workforce through welcoming immigration policies will ensure Iowa businesses can continue to expand and prosper.

EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Educational research demonstrates conclusively that quality early childhood education plays a key role in student success through all levels of education and skills training and in careers as adults. Availability of quality early childhood programs are increasingly becoming a critical factor that employers face in the recruitment and retention of employees. For all these reasons, The Partnership supports strong state and federal commitments to early childhood education for three- and four-year-old children.

America's continuing efforts to improve education and develop a world-class workforce are dependent on a federal and state commitment to early childhood education for three- and four-year-old children. In today's world, where education and skill levels determine future earnings, the economic and social costs to individuals, communities and the nation of not taking action on early childhood education are far too great to ignore, especially when the benefits far outweigh the costs. The research is clear that the return on investment is linked to quality education. Simply increasing participation needs to be paired with ensuring program quality to produce positive results. Not only does high-quality early childhood education make a difference for children, it matters to employed parents. Employers increasingly find that the availability of good early childhood programs is critical to the recruitment and retention of parent employees.

Specifically, The Partnership supports increased federal investment in early childhood education programs coupled with accountability systems that measure results, ensure high program standards and expand the number of children served, including the support of the U.S. Department of Education Preschool Development Grants Program.

K-12 EDUCATION

The Partnership has long recognized the critical role of a robust K-12 education system to aid in economic success for individuals, businesses and the overall economy. To prepare students for the new, cross-functional jobs of tomorrow that require technical, social and analytical skills, it is vital to invest in teachers, curriculum and infrastructure that moves from memorization and standardized testing to problem-based inquiry that fosters creativity, agility and innovation. Accordingly, The Partnership supports:

- Robust funding to support innovative methods of obtaining necessary student achievement.
- Increased funding and support for college and career planning systems, programs and staffing.
- Promotion of methods to encourage K-12 students and families to become wise consumers of all available postsecondary options.
- In Iowa an additional set of challenges exists due to the increasing rate of childhood poverty, which complicates efforts to lift students into the skilled workforce. Statewide, over the last 20 years, the percentage of kids qualified for free or reduced-price lunch has increased from 27% to 42%, and in Des Moines that number has risen from 45% to 75%. The Partnership supports several federal programs and targeted investments designed to meet these challenges including:
- Adequate funding for Title I, as current funding levels leave gaps despite increasing needs. The cycle of poverty can be reversed by giving these students the extra support needed to successfully enter the workforce.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

- Adequate funding for Title II which supports efforts to recruit, retain and train a high-caliber teaching force.
- Funding for 21st Century After School Programs, used to provide job skills and computer training, as well as summer enrichment programs to increase students' success. Continuing this program is critical for helping the most vulnerable kids successfully complete an education.
- Continued implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), with a focus on high standards, quality assessments and resources for schools in most need. Specifically:
 - Provide for the fair and comprehensive participation of special needs and English Language Learning (ELL) students with particular focus on "at risk" students and high-needs schools.
 - Reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act to retain local flexibility for school districts and retain the current formula grants.
 - Oppose mandated joint applications from school districts and community colleges (currently permissible but not required).
- Arts education for all students in all public schools by leveraging the expertise and experience of the partners involved in arts education.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Growing the nation's economy and maintaining DSM's global competitive edge in areas such as science and technology requires investing in expanded access to and increasing completion of post-secondary education credentials through affordable post-secondary education options. Increasing availability can be achieved by expanding delivery methods such as online programs, satellite campuses, dual credit courses for high school students and weekend and evening classes. Increasing affordability starts by reducing the absolute cost of post-secondary education to students and families. It also includes supporting needs-based grants and work-study programs and improving access to loans with favorable terms and repayment options. Given the prominent role the federal government plays in higher education policies and funding, The Partnership supports the following objectives:

- Promote methods to help students and families be prudent consumers of post-secondary options.
- Make post-secondary education accessible and affordable for all qualified students through significant increases in need-based aid programs.
- Simplify and improve federal programs to maximize utilization by all who need them.
- Promote innovation in delivery methods to expand post-secondary participation and encourage completion.
- Strengthen education and workforce development connections in key fields of economic priority.
- Promote innovation and competitive agendas that focus on enhancing the government's support for basic research.
- Strengthen the nation's talent pool in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Encourage public-private and state-federal partnerships to achieve shared goals.
- Promote timely referrals of unemployed individuals from workforce development offices to skill development programs in high-demand job areas while on unemployment assistance.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

IMMIGRATION

The Partnership has long been an advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. Like many things, the global pandemic has highlighted the further need for reform to help address an increasing need for talent in Iowa. Travel restrictions related to COVID-19 have served to make clear how critical foreign nationals are to Iowa and the country. Decreases in international student enrollment has negatively impacting Iowa's colleges and universities, as it will all U.S. higher education. The decrease is not only related to COVID-19 but to the lack of options remaining for work in the U.S. following studies due to the small number of H-1B and employment-based immigrant visas currently available. Few options for entrepreneurs to immigrate are available, which is also a roadblock for many students.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

The Partnership, along with more than 30 other business, education and community leaders across the state, continues to support the Iowa Compact on Immigration, which calls for bipartisan immigration policy reforms that ensure the federal system meets the needs of employers and the labor market, provide a permanent solution for undocumented lowans who make significant contributions to the state's economy and secure the southern border while enforcing the nation's laws. Specifically, The Partnership supports the following to be incorporated into a modernized immigration system:

- Support of the full and rapid re-opening of consulates and embassies worldwide, the closure of which negatively impacts Iowa's economy and institutions of higher education.
- Expansion of the H-1B Visa Program for highly skilled workers, without the use of a wage ranking system.
- An increase of the H-2B Visa Program cap to realistically account for the needs in agriculture and construction industries.
- Expansion of the Employment-Based (EB) Immigrant Visa Program, including recapturing unused visas from past years and ceasing to count spouses against the total allocation.
- Creating a clear path for foreign-born entrepreneurs to create business in the U.S. and hire U.S. workers.
- Modernizing the immigration system through dual intent for international students and codifying access to practical training benefits and during of status for F-Visa, M-Visa and J-Visa holders.
- Creating temporary visa programs for workers to fill essential non-professional roles for which U.S. workers are not available, but not limited to seasonal jobs.
- Passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act which provides legal status for young people who were brought to this country as children, have grown up as Americans and now face an uncertain future.
- Funding of the Office of Refugee Resettlement budget at a level that allows local service providers and communities to be prepared to receive new lowans.
- Passage of the J-1 "Conrad 30" and Physician Access Reauthorization Act.

Finally, The Partnership sees Iowa as a welcoming state and supports policies that further the goals of a diverse and inclusive population.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership supports efforts to create a federal employment and training system that is driven by the actual needs of employers based on accurate and timely regional labor market data. Given the increasing pace of change in workplace technology and the growing demand for flexible, highly-skilled employees in all sectors of the economy, not even the most experienced workers can afford to rely on existing skills. To remain competitive, businesses must invest not only in the preparation and recruitment of new talent, but also the continuing development of workers at all stages of a career.

The Partnership supports investing in the workforce by:

- Expanding access to affordable child care and policies that aid in that effort, including programs that support public-private partnerships to provide options to Iowa parents and guardians.
- Maintaining new investments in the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to help support expansion of state child care assistance programs, a key workforce support that assists lowans in the high cost of child care and allows for participation in the workforce.
- Expanding Pell Grants to Short-Term Credential Programs and incarcerated individuals. Pell Grants are a critical component necessary for low-income lowans to pursue post-secondary education. Expanding Pell Grants to short-term credentials and certificates would also address the middle-skills gap. Currently, Pell Grants may only be used toward a program that results in a two or four-year degree. Many short-term credential and certificate programs do not meet the program of study threshold of the Pell Grant program and an expansion would assist many more lowans in pursuing skill-building.
- Reauthorizing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in alignment with the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA). TANF is an essential part of the funding stream used by states to support low-income families. However, the program has not been reauthorized or reformed since the 2014 WIOA. Aligning the TANF program with the objectives and parameters of WIOA would assist states in providing opportunities for skill attainment, education and asset-building among public assistance participants, while reducing the need for reliance on such programs.
- Promoting stronger connections between adult education and workforce, supporting career pathways and private sector partnerships and serving people with barriers to employment by increasing funding of WIOA.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

- Ensuring that any infrastructure bill includes new investments in training partnerships, consistent with the bipartisan Building U.S. Infrastructure by Leveraging Demands for Skills (BUILDS) Act. Proposed new investments in the nation's roads, bridges and other infrastructure could create millions of new jobs in the coming years, but nearly half would require some education and training beyond high school, supported by an increase in apprenticeship programs and other skills strategies.
- Increasing investment and utilization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training program, a skills and job training program for SNAP participants administered by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. Providing adequate federal funding for adult education and English as a second language, the WIOA Title II Program. A total of 36 million adults have limited English, reading or math skills that prevent pursuit of middle-skill credentials, but only 1.5 million are served annually through federal programs.
- Passing the Community College to Career Fund Act to provide dedicated support for partnerships between industry and community colleges. Community and technical colleges could use these funds to support high quality training in partnership with local industries, workforce boards and other stakeholders.
- Passing legislation redirecting the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to support apprenticeship and other work-based learning. Many businesses are investing in work-based learning to help entry-level employees advance, but WOTC does not reward employer investments after making a hire.
- Funding Wagner/Peyser Employment Service (ES) activities under Title III of WIOA at current levels to ensure job seekers can access these key labor exchange services and to support greater alignment between the ES and other federal workforce investments.
- Supporting the U.S. Department of Treasury's Financial Literacy and Education Commission, which sets strategic direction for policy, education, practice, research and coordination so Americans can make informed financial decisions.
- Continuing the Career Pathways Innovation Fund, Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development, High Growth Job Training, General Education Development and Adult Basic Education initiatives and enacting the Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success Act to promote workforce development efforts.
- Continuing support for the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), which helps workers, firms and others negatively impacted by trade.
- Continuing to fund the Senior Community Service Employment Program and the TAA to sustain federal training programs to ensure adequate parameters for serving older workers in an ever-changing global workforce. In today's economy, workers are likely to need frequent skills updating to remain competitive. Older workers will continue to need training, help with job placement and other assistance as individuals continue to be actively engaged in the workforce.
- Continuing funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Programs such as AmeriCorps and the SeniorCorps provide opportunities for more than 5 million Americans to volunteer, gain valuable career experience and share experiences.
- Ensuring that veterans receive comprehensive counseling and related services regarding all higher educational options, in addition to funding the Centers of Excellence for Veterans Success in the Higher Education Act.

HEALTH CARE

AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The Partnership supports Congressional efforts to lower drug costs and provide a pathway for generic versions of brand name drugs and biosimilars to enter the marketplace. Allowing Americans to legally access prescription drugs from outside the U.S. would provide competition in the marketplace and help patients get medications currently in short supply. Promoting transparency so patients have information on the cost of prescription drugs to inform choices is another option to address high costs. Therefore, The Partnership supports exploring the safe importation of prescription drugs from Canada as a potential option to increase the supply of prescription drugs and lower costs.

The 340B Drug Pricing Program is an additional option for low-income and underserved patients to have access to affordable and often life-saving medications. The Partnership supports Congressional efforts to safeguard the program and allow the continuation of covered entities to provide low-cost prescription drugs to uninsured, underinsured and other vulnerable populations.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Congress and the Administration are considering how to create a viable and functional health insurance market where Americans can buy affordable insurance that meets the needs of the individual. As Congress tackles these complex issues, The Partnership believes sound health care policy that offers affordable options must be based on several principles:

- Continued support of free COVID-19 vaccines for anyone without insurance as well as hospitalization and health care costs associated with the pandemic.
- The Affordable Care Act (ACA), with its consumer protections, including prohibitions on preexisting condition exclusions, no annual or lifetime dollar limits on coverage and allowing young adults to stay on parents' health plans until age 26, provides a good option for many lowans, particularly those who receive federal subsidies to make ACA-compliant plans affordable.
- Individuals who have and like pre-ACA coverage, known as grandfathered and grandmohered plans, can keep them.
- A stable and broad insurance pool is essential for the long-term viability of the health insurance market. Congress and the Administration must adopt strong incentives for continuous coverage, so people do not buy health insurance only when there is an illness.
- The government must provide a reasonable level of premium assistance for people who cannot afford health care. Premium assistance and insurance rating rules must be designed to ensure young and healthy people participate in the insurance market.
- Because the costs for serious medical conditions are growing rapidly, a relatively small number of severely sick people significantly drive up premium costs for everyone. Programs such as high-risk pools or reinsurance help address these catastrophic costs and lower premiums.
- States should return to the traditional role of being the primary regulators of the health insurance market.
- States need increased flexibility to drive innovation that allows people to purchase health coverage they want and can afford, subject to oversight by state legislatures and regulators.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The Partnership supports legislation to expand programs and funding for mental health services, especially those that are community-based, to ensure access to coordinated, holistic care. Further, The Partnership supports actions to improve mental health services and ensure parity within the Medicaid and Medicare programs by enacting critical reforms to allow for same-day and same-location mental health and primary care services and to repeal the current Medicaid exclusion on inpatient psychiatric care for certain individuals. Additionally, The Partnership supports efforts to strengthen mental health parity and provide incentives to states to help integrate mental and physical health services.

According to the Iowa Hospital Association, the use of telehealth between March and June 2020 was up 2,600% during the early phase of the pandemic. Despite this dramatic increase, patient satisfaction rates have been high through the use of telehealth and more people now have experienced the benefit of this access to health care. With the expansion of telehealth due to COVID-19, investing in and addressing regulatory barriers is critical to ensuring a continuation of these services beyond the pandemic. With the use of telehealth, patients can more easily access behavioral health care services.

PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

While it may have taken a pandemic for the importance of public health to be recognized by many, The Partnership has made public health a long-standing priority for a healthy regional community. Additional funding for the planning of future pandemics and recovery from additional strains of the virus must be allocated to ensure everything is being done to prevent or prepare for the devastating impacts.

HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

The Partnership supports expanded funding for federal programs supporting Graduate Medical Education (GME), including both Direct GME and Indirect Medical Education payments. The Partnership further supports resources to be made available to allow Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to consider exceptions for funding GME positions beyond the cap in areas with demonstrable physician shortages for particular specialties, e.g. Psychiatry, Primary Care Specialties, OB/GYN, Emergency Medicine and General Surgery.

2021 FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

With a shortage of OB/GYN physicians in rural Iowa communities, many community hospitals are at risk of closing. Health care leaders in DSM are looking at ways to increase the number of residency programs to support those graduates interested in staying in Iowa and serving the rural and urban needs of fetal maternal care. As Iowa is currently 49 out of 50 in the number of specialists in this field and with only one OB/GYN residency program in the State of Iowa at the University of Iowa, The Partnership seeks support of Congress for approaches to increase residency programs in this field for those interested in staying in Iowa to serve this important need.

Additionally, The Partnership supports the expansion of programs designed to encourage health care providers to provide care in underserved areas including the National Health Service Corps and Nurse Corps.

MEDICARE

The Partnership supports improving fairness and equity in Medicare payments between geographical areas and supports the implementation of new reimbursement models, such as the shared savings program, that reward quality and efficiency, not quantity of services. Specifically, The Partnership supports eliminating the inaccuracies and inequities in the Geographic Practice Cost Index (GPCI) geographic adjusters to Medicare payment for physicians and using contemporary market or actual cost data for physicians.

With the rapid adoption of telehealth due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some barriers to providing these services have been temporarily relaxed or permanently addressed. The Partnership supports the permanent ability to bill Medicare as a distant site for telehealth services. As the State of Iowa works to address inequities in access to affordable and high-speed broadband services, The Partnership supports the continuation of the ability to bill Medicare for audio-only visits to ensure continuation of care and to eliminate barriers in accessing telehealth services.

MEDICAID

Medicaid expansion has provided thousands of lower income Iowans with access to health care. Congress should carefully consider changes to the Medicaid program to make sure that low-income persons continue to receive coverage. Additionally, The Partnership supports federal initiatives to extend the policy of granting women with Medicaid-covered births with coverage for 12 months postpartum.

Community-based disability providers serve 160,000 clients in Iowa. The services provided allow persons with disabilities to live, learn and work in that communities. The providers are safety net providers receiving all, or the majority, of revenue from Medicaid. The current Medicaid rates are insufficient. The Partnership supports legislation to increase the wages of direct support professionals.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Iowa families and communities have been devastated by the impact of opioids and The Partnership supports efforts to address this epidemic, including funding for the prevention and treatment of substance use disorder (SUD) programs. Additionally, The Partnership supports initiatives that require the Drug Enforcement Administration to use data to track and prevent the diversion of prescription opioids into illegal sales, and to provide education and training for health care providers to learn best practices when prescribing controlled substances to address the opioid abuse and subsequent impact on public health.

SPECIALIZED PEDIATRIC MEDICAL CARE

Children with complex medical conditions receive better results with highly coordinated care. Nearly two-thirds of the three million children with complex medical conditions are covered by Medicaid, representing close to 40% of Medicaid costs for children. The Partnership supports legislation that would enable health care providers to coordinate care, lower costs and improve quality outcomes for all children with complex medical conditions on Medicaid who require specialized care.