United to Drive Economic Growth: One Voice, One Mission, One Region

The Greater Des Moines Partnership is the economic and community development organization serving Central Iowa, united to drive economic growth with one voice, one mission and as one region. Together with 22 Affiliate Chambers of Commerce and 5,800 business members, The Partnership grows opportunity, creates jobs and promotes the best place to build a business, a career and a future.

The Partnership believes that state government plays an important role in setting the stage for business competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment-generating investment by the private sector to promote economic growth. Economic growth is achieved by creating an environment that is conducive to business success, leading to job expansion and increased state and local revenues. The result will be an economically thriving state and growing communities that plan and build for the future. Accordingly, The Partnership supports policies that promote economic growth statewide, and align with both Capital Crossroads and The Tomorrow Plan strategic plans for the Greater Des Moines region.

The Partnership appreciates the opportunity to work with the Governor, the General Assembly and state agencies to accomplish mutually beneficial legislative goals and objectives for the economic betterment of the State of Iowa.

FEATURED PRIORITIES

Although all of the policy positions included in The Partnership’s 2017 State Legislative Agenda are important, The Partnership will focus on the following priorities, listed in no particular order:

- **Water Quality**: The State of Iowa has a unique opportunity to invest in Iowa’s soil and water infrastructure — an infrastructure that is critically important to the state’s wealth and prosperity. The Partnership views the primary pathway to success as a public/private investment in waterways across the state. The Partnership supports allocating sufficient, permanent and dedicated funding sources to meet infrastructure needs for non-point and point sources that are targeted and prioritized by watershed with annual accountability for the state’s investment. Funding options include: Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (IWILL), SAVE (a portion of growth from penny sales tax extension), tax credits and water quality trading. Other options may surface.
- **Corporate and Personal Income Taxes:** The Partnership believes Iowa’s tax code should encourage business growth, limit the size and costs of government and reflect the principles of equity, neutrality, simplicity and predictability. Accordingly, The Partnership supports efforts to reform corporate and personal income tax policies to simplify and reduce Iowa’s income tax rates to strengthen Iowa’s economic competitiveness. This includes giving businesses and individuals the option of either retaining the ability to deduct federal income taxes or choosing to forego federal deductibility in exchange for significantly reduced state income tax.

- **Local Option Sales Tax (LOST):** The Partnership supports provisions to provide Central Iowa communities more local control of sales tax revenues.

- **State Historical Building:** The Partnership supports funding for the renovation of the State Historical Building and State Historical Museum. The building is at a critical juncture as the building itself and its systems no longer serve the needs of housing the state’s flagship museum. The renovated building will allow the museum to once again serve as a world-class attraction for visitors to our capital city. When completed, the museum will allow greater access to and better preservation of the state’s artifact collection and will become a 21st century educational resource for Iowa history to better connect Iowans to the people, places and point of pride that define our state.

- **Future Ready Iowa:** The Partnership supports the state’s Future Ready Iowa initiative to ensure that the state has a talent pipeline that is aligned to and prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The Future Ready Iowa initiative will better align our education, workforce and economic development programs in efforts to close skills gaps.

**Economic Development**

Robust incentive programs are a critical element in Iowa’s effort to create and retain high-quality, high-paying jobs. Therefore, The Partnership supports state business development programs for local economic development projects that use performance-based criteria to ensure job creation, capital investment, workforce training, wages and wealth creation in exchange for tax incentives and direct financial assistance, including:

- **Business Development Incentive Programs** – To create jobs and grow the economy, it is essential that the Governor and the General Assembly continue to provide adequate resources for the state’s business development programs. The most effective way to do that is to increase the resources available to programs such as the High Quality Jobs Program. Therefore, The Partnership supports: (1) a maximum aggregate tax credit cap that is set high enough to spur growth in local communities; and (2) an economic development budget for direct financial assistance that keeps Iowa competitive with other states. Additionally, The Partnership supports the continued refinement of program requirements, such as laborshed wage thresholds, so that state programs remain easy to use and accessible to local communities.

- **Public-Private Partnership** – Both the private and public sectors have a role to play in improving global competitiveness. The Partnership supports continued funding for the Iowa Innovation Corporation (IIC). The relationship between the IIC and the Iowa Economic Development Authority
(IEDA) represents a unique delivery structure for economic development programs, and it has great potential to foster entrepreneurship, diversify the economy and upskill Iowa’s workforce.

- **Entrepreneurship and Early-Stage Industries** – A balanced approach to economic development does not just require traditional relocation and expansion programs. It also requires the care and feeding of new business startups. Accordingly, The Partnership supports increased funding for programs that promote entrepreneurship and provide capital to targeted industries, such as those identified by the Battelle Institute. IEDA programs like the Demonstration Fund and Innovation Fund Tax Credits accelerate the growth of innovative business, enhance the development of early-stage industries and create critical pathways to follow-on funding.

- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – The Partnership supports Iowa’s TIF law and opposes any effort to limit its scope, duration or flexible use for commercial and industrial development.

- **Public Accountability in State Programs** – The Partnership supports transparency in the administration of state economic development programs, but also seeks to ensure that such transparency strikes a prudent balance between private interests and public accountability.

### Education and Workforce Development

The Partnership believes that a strong and aligned education system and proven workforce development programs are critical to Iowa’s quality of life, as well as a critical attractor of business to Iowa. Learners from pre-kindergarten to adult must have access to quality education and skills development opportunities. Investments in early childhood education including literacy proficiency create a solid foundation for Iowa students. Our future workforce must possess high-level reading skills, effective oral and written communications skills, problem-solving skills and the ability to work in diverse groups. Alternative pathways must also be established to allow Iowans who have not completed their high school diploma to gain the adult education and skills necessary to be competitive in Iowa’s 21st century workforce.

Because learning and skills development cannot end with graduation from high school, Iowa must strive for postsecondary credentialing opportunities — diploma, college degree, certificate, credential or apprenticeship — for all learners. The readiness of Iowa’s workforce will determine Iowa’s economic security and quality-of-life. Learning opportunities within the PK-12 education system, the higher education system, postsecondary credentialing and workforce development programs must be aligned and integrated into a meaningful whole if Central Iowans are to truly become lifelong learners and economically-secure citizens. It is imperative that Iowa invest in viable and sustainable economic development and foster partnerships between education and the private sector.

To help address Iowa’s future workforce needs, The Partnership encourages policies and practices by government and private sector to support the legal immigration of new Iowans, assist the refugee population in integrating into society, encourage former Iowans and other prospective and current residents from both an attraction and retention perspective.

To properly educate and develop our students and current workforce, and attract and retain skilled workers, The Partnership supports the following:
**Early Childhood Education** – The Partnership supports continued investment in 21st century accredited pre-kindergarten early education and supporting quality early childhood education programs to help ensure readiness for kindergarten, increase high school graduation rates and develop a strong, stable and productive workforce for tomorrow. The Partnership maintains that all children, including four-year olds, should have access to high quality pre-school. The Partnership also supports the literacy and school readiness skills among at-risk children by raising the per-pupil funding level for children in preschool.

- **K-12 Education** – The population of Central Iowa is becoming more diverse due to shifts in race, ethnicity, immigration and economic diversity. These shifts are changing our landscape with profound implications for education, policy makers, parents and the community. Changing demographics have and will continue to alter school practices, policies and budgetary needs.

Additionally, all Iowa students need to be better prepared to make informed career pathway decisions aligned to the workforce needs of the future through expanded Career and Technical Education (CTE), career exploration opportunities and regional planning involving both educators and employers.

The Partnership supports legislative solutions that can be enacted to better equip our students to compete in the global marketplace and enjoy a high quality of life. To this end, The Partnership supports the following initiatives and reforms:

- Create a system to differentiate individual needs and differences for each student such as English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESL), special needs, behavioral issues, etc., beginning with the level each student enters into the education system.

- Implement the new CTE law enacted during the 2016 legislative session to bring about regional planning involving both educators and employers. Iowa must increase the opportunities for secondary students to have work-based learning experiences and to earn college credits or industry-specific certifications/credentials. Iowa’s future workforce depends on all students graduating high school as college- and career-ready.

- Full implementation of the Iowa Core which establishes high academic standards in Iowa, including the Smarter Balanced Assessment which is aligned with Iowa Core as Iowa’s new comprehensive student achievement assessment.

- Support a statewide focus on having great teachers in every classroom and effective principals in every building, enhancing educator evaluations and accountability and demanding high expectations for all Iowa students.

- Expand the Iowa Teacher Loan Forgiveness program to effectively address critical shortages in curricular areas such as math, science, foreign languages, ELL and special education.

- To support the growing need for STEM education, Iowa will need more young people choosing to become STEM educators. Therefore, the state must create additional incentives to encourage STEM careers in education versus more lucrative careers in
private industry.

- Maintain the increased focus on STEM learning initiatives and supporting the establishment of a stronger internship program for businesses to attract and retain STEM educated students.

- Continue support for the full implementation of Iowa’s historic teacher leadership system so that every teacher has the opportunity to earn professional recognition and additional compensation for assuming leadership roles that improve the teaching profession and student achievement.

- Support summer learning and literacy programs for all at-risk students to prevent summer learning loss. Specifically, provide funds for schools to implement the law requiring an intensive summer literacy program for third graders not reading proficiently by end of third grade. Intensive summer literacy programs will begin at the end of the 2017-18 school year, thereby making it critical to receive funding in the 2017 legislative session.

- Authorize the Department of Education to create a Seal of Biliteracy to recognize a student who has attained proficiency in English and one or more other world languages by high school graduation. The recognition of attaining biliteracy becomes part of the high school transcript and diploma for these students. The Seal serves to certify attainment of biliteracy for students, employers and universities. It is a statement of accomplishment that helps to signal evidence of a student’s readiness for career and college, and for engagement as a global citizen.

### Postsecondary Education

Technological advancement, global competition and the emerging knowledge-innovation economy are driving an increasing demand for postsecondary education and training. In the United States, 65 percent of all jobs in 2020 will require some level of postsecondary education, and the demand will reach 68 percent in Iowa. Iowa’s future economic growth and competitiveness depends on increased postsecondary attainment by our workforce.

Accordingly, The Partnership supports efforts to expand college accessibility, affordability and completion through:

- Expanded promotion of financial literacy initiatives, college savings options, available tax incentives and other programs designed to help students and families prepare financially for future higher education expenses.

- Continued support for the state-funded Iowa Tuition Grant, Kibbie Grant, Iowa Scholars and other programs that invest in financially-eligible students attending Iowa’s high quality public and private higher education institutions.

- Expand funding for the STEM Internship program to Iowa employers developing STEM talent.
• Support for initiatives designed to reduce the costs of higher education for Iowa students and families.

• Support for initiatives that help students efficiently complete postsecondary degree or certificate programs, including but not limited to ideas such as awarding prior learning credits to adult students, dual credit programs for high school students, internship programs and policies that make it easier for students to transfer credits.

• Support for incentives to enroll qualified out-of-state students in Iowa’s postsecondary institutions without reducing Iowa residents’ access to in-state tuition.

• **Workforce Development** – The Partnership believes the state should continue to encourage partnerships between Iowa’s business and industry and all education institutions, as well as support training incentives to businesses. The Partnership supports:

  o The continued funding and refinement of proven programs within the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Education that: (1) measure success and ensure accountability; (2) invest in regional strategies and industry-based public-private partnerships; (3) build career pathways to good jobs for all Iowans; (4) secure new investments for Iowa’s integrated learning programs, which combine basic skills development and occupational skills training for low-skilled adult workers; and (5) expand access to supportive services for adult learners enrolled in education and training programs.

  o The work and recommendations of the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition to further up-skill and train more workers for Iowa’s key industries. This includes the expansion of high school equivalency diploma pathways as recommended by the Iowa Department of Education HSED Task Force, adult education programming for offenders, and apprenticeships that train skilled workers in a career pathway while earning credits toward an equivalent diploma.

• **Immigration** – As the marketplace becomes more globally connected, Central Iowa’s ability to compete for global talent and investment is more important than ever before. Greater Des Moines in recent years has achieved economic development success in this arena by placing a strong emphasis on being a welcoming region for immigrants. As Central Iowa looks to the future, the state must continue this tradition of being a welcoming state as The Partnership looks to attract the next generation of business and innovation. The Partnership strongly believes that enabling hard-working global talent who choose to live and put their skills to work in the United States will enhance our international competitiveness and net many high-paying jobs for all Americans. To strengthen talent acquisition and retention, business development and economic growth in Central Iowa, The Partnership supports immigration-related legislation that will continue to improve our economy and opposes state-based punitive anti-immigration proposals. Therefore, The Partnership encourages support for the following key priorities:

  o Increased programming and access for ESL and ELL classes.
o Incentives for Iowa companies to hire international students as interns. The Partnership further encourages Iowa colleges and universities to continue to recruit top international students.

o The creation of a statewide refugee task force, appointed by the governor, to address the challenges and create efficient methods of resettlement for refugees in Iowa.

o Increased supportive services for refugees to address the adjustment challenges that refugees face in navigating their new communities across the state.

o Recognizing the contributions of foreign-born residents to our economy and workplaces, create welcoming initiatives that seek to integrate and maximize those contributions of immigrant workers and entrepreneurs of all backgrounds, including the ability of immigrants to obtain safe, reliable transportation options.

- **Future Workforce Recruitment and Retention** – The Partnership supports the creation of loan forgiveness and/or tax credit programs designed to benefit Iowa higher education students who stay in the state following graduation and employers that assist college graduates in repaying student loans, in an effort to recruit and retain a future workforce. The Partnership also supports expanding existing programs or new initiatives that incentivize Iowa employers to provide tuition assistance to incumbent workers who seek to improve their skills through continuing educational attainment. The Partnership also supports the State’s Future Ready Iowa initiative to ensure Iowa has a talent pipeline that is aligned to and prepared for the jobs of today and in the future.

- **Military Recruitment/Retention** – The Partnership recognizes that returning or retiring military personnel have many skills and talents that Iowa businesses need, and supports aggressive efforts to recruit and retain these honored individuals to Iowa. The Partnership supports the state’s Home Base Iowa initiative and believes the state needs to create a “one stop shop” to assist veterans with their employment and education needs as well as integration into the community.

- **Study Iowa Program** – The Partnership supports the Study Iowa Program to encourage more enrollments of international students at Iowa colleges and universities.

**Business Climate**

To encourage business expansion and foster the growth of new and existing businesses and jobs, The Partnership supports measures to strengthen Iowa’s business climate, removing regulations that act as hidden taxes, inhibit innovation and investment, hinder productivity and stifle economic growth, including:

- **Preservation of Business Climate** – To maintain and enhance Iowa’s attractiveness to current and potential businesses, it is essential that Iowa do what is possible to lower costs to employers and maintain the current balance of employee and management protections. Accordingly, The Partnership strongly supports the preservation of Iowa’s “Right to Work” law, supports Iowa’s current workers’ compensation system, opposes mandating prevailing wage rates and project labor agreements for public construction projects and opposes changes to Iowa’s current collective
bargaining law that would put additional burdens on local governments and/or business owners.

- **Minimum Wage** – The Partnership supports a statewide minimum wage policy, ensuring any adjustment provides for statewide uniformity.

### Research and Development
The Partnership supports state-funded programs and initiatives to help generate and harness the latest in scientific and technological developments to keep Central Iowa at the forefront, including:

- **Renewable Chemical Production Tax Credit** – Iowa’s Cultivation Corridor is a global center of investment, talent, research and technology in the agbiosciences. In order to aid in the expansion of the bioeconomy and create new jobs in the Corridor and across the state, The Partnership supports the recent creation and funding of the renewable chemical production tax credit and encourages continued support for this important economic development initiative.

- **Research Activities Credits (RAC)** – Iowa’s continued economic strength depends on our ability to generate and harness the latest in scientific and technological developments and to apply these developments to real world applications. Iowa must continue encouraging companies to invest additional resources in the research, development and experimentation of various products and services that promote both job creation and economic expansion. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the preservation of Iowa’s refundable RAC.

- **Cultivation Corridor Priority Projects** – As global demand for food, feed, fiber and energy increases, the need to invest in innovation, technology and production capacity also will increase. Accordingly, The Partnership supports projects within Iowa’s Cultivation Corridor, a dedicated effort to establish Central Iowa as a global center for agbioscience investment, talent and research. Additional priority projects within the Corridor include, but are not limited to, the ISU Agriculture Experiment Station, the ISU Research Park, Small Business Development Center and Student Innovation Center for experimentation, innovation and interdisciplinary research for students in the Colleges of Engineering and Design. The Partnership supports additional renewable energy, value added agriculture and other research and development initiatives; commercialization and technology transfer initiatives; enhanced Science, Technology, Education and Math (STEM) education programming; and other initiatives to enhance and expand the Central Iowa agbioscience ecosystem.

### Tax and Budget
The Partnership believes Iowa’s tax code should encourage business growth, limit the size and costs of government and reflect the principles of equity, neutrality, simplicity and predictability. Accordingly, The Partnership urges comprehensive income tax reform and opposes efforts that would increase the tax burden on Iowa employers. The Partnership supports:
• **Retirement Savings Options** – The financial services industry offers a wide variety of retirement savings options, including 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, 401(a) plans, 457(b) plans, SIMPLE IRAs, SEP IRAs and traditional IRAs. The Partnership supports state initiatives — such as education and incentives — that promote retirement savings by private sector workers in such plans and products, and supports state-sponsored marketplaces open to all interested plan and product providers. The Partnership opposes efforts by states to launch state-run retirement plans for private sector workers.

• **Local Option Sales Tax** – The Partnership supports provisions to provide Central Iowa communities more local control of sales tax revenues.

• **Commercial and Industrial Property Taxes** – The Partnership supports the current implementation of property tax relief and will continue to support meaningful property tax relief that is coupled and linked with targeted alternative revenue streams, meaningful regulatory relief and state backfill for local governments.

• **Corporate and Personal Income Taxes** – The Partnership supports efforts to simplify and reduce Iowa’s corporate and personal income tax rates to strengthen Iowa’s economic competitiveness.

• **Single-Factor Corporate Income Tax** – The Partnership supports the preservation of Iowa’s corporate single-factor income tax formula. The single factor formula has been a pillar of economic development for the state since 1934. In recent years, other states have recognized the success Iowa has had with the single factor formula and are moving to adopt similar statutes to compete in today’s global economy.

• **Federal Deductibility** – The Partnership supports giving businesses and individuals the option of either retaining the ability to deduct federal income taxes or choosing to forego federal deductibility in exchange for significantly reduced state income tax.

• **Combined Corporate Reporting** – The Partnership opposes the adoption of a combined corporate income tax reporting structure in Iowa. Moving to combined reporting would add complexity to an already complex system and may lead to costly litigation and may result in a net revenue decrease for the state.

• **Public Pension Plans** – Escalating public pension costs are compromising the ability of state and local governments in Iowa to deliver quality services and to keep taxes level, both of which are critical elements in a climate for growth. Therefore, The Partnership supports a broad-based review of Iowa’s public pension systems to better understand what is necessary to meet commitments that have already been made, to contain future growth in public pension obligations and to evaluate how well our systems serve the needs of today’s employees and retirees. Any changes to Iowa’s public pension plans should not reduce payments to current retirees nor reduce benefits already earned by current employees, but should seek to better fit the needs of all employees and protect current and future generations of Iowans from unsustainable costs, escalating taxes and declines in public services.
Water Quality and Infrastructure
The State of Iowa has a unique opportunity to invest in Iowa’s soil and water infrastructure — an infrastructure that is critically important to the state’s wealth and prosperity. Fixing and maintaining our state’s water quality will require a commitment similar to how Iowa has continued to invest in the road and bridge infrastructure. As a state, our communities have come together to find common ground solutions to fund transportation infrastructure, and there is a tremendous opportunity right now to do the same for our soil and water infrastructure. The Partnership sees the primary pathway to success as a public-private investment in waterways across the state. Therefore, The Partnership supports the following important water quality and infrastructure issues:

- **Drinking Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Infrastructure** – Safe reliable water is important to healthy living. Aging infrastructure, degradation of source waters treated for drinking water and the increased frequency of flood events is putting Iowans at risk. These are expensive and complex challenges that need a unified statewide approach to lessen the burden on individuals and business and industry. Therefore, The Partnership supports a statewide focus on policies and funding for modernization of our water systems, source water protection and comprehensive planning to mitigate threats to life and property from flooding.

- **Establish Financial Resources at Scale** – Allocating sufficient, permanent and dedicated funding sources to meet infrastructure needs for non-point and point sources that are targeted and prioritized by watershed with annual accountability for the state’s investment. Funding options include: Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (IWILL), SAVE (a portion of growth from the penny sales tax extension), tax credits and water quality trading. Other options may surface. This investment should be utilized to leverage other public and private dollars through public private partnerships.

- **Waterways and Land Protection** – The Partnership believes in the importance of creating and maintaining parks, trails, habitats and waterways. The Partnership further supports the development and funding of the state water trails program to enhance recreational opportunities in and along the many miles of waterways and adjoining greenways that are a vital natural asset in Iowa.

- **Watershed Approach and Planning** – In order to provide safe and affordable drinking water, wastewater treatment and storm water mitigation, The Partnership supports regional watershed planning and ongoing funding of targeted conservation practices, identifying proactive approaches to optimize nutrient and other chemical applications and sustainable urban development.

Transportation and Infrastructure
The Partnership, which strongly believes that investing in a complete multimodal transportation system and infrastructure is a core function of state government that is critical to driving commerce, efficiently moving goods and people, creating jobs and spurring additional economic growth supports the following public policy priorities:

- **Surface Transportation Funding** – Continuous investment in Iowa’s transportation system is essential to support economic growth and help attract new businesses to the state.
Partnership supports the funding formula for surface transportation funding established by the Transportation Investment Moves the Economy in the Twenty-First Century Fund (TIME-21).

- **Road Use Tax Fund** – The Partnership supports continued improvements to the existing Road Use Tax Fund (RUTF) to reallocate funding to more highly-traveled primary roads. The Partnership also supports the concept of swapping federal transportation dollars for state transportation dollars to give local governments more flexibility with transportation decisions.

- **Transit Funding** – The Partnership supports providing more funds and/or funding tools to Regional Transit Authorities. As the community looks to recruit and retain employees and businesses; connect people to jobs, education and economic development; and ensure age-friendly communities, it is essential to provide funding for a variety of mobility options to ensure the region’s competitiveness.

- **Rail Funding** – The Partnership supports continued investment in the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Rail Revolving Loan and Grant Fund to help develop rail improvements and support Central Iowa’s freight rail facilities in recognizing that the freight rail system provides critical infrastructure for transporting certain commodities and other commercial goods. The Partnership also supports continued funding for the IDOT Passenger Rail Fund Program to provide matching funding for passenger rail infrastructure development, with the goal of establishing intercity passenger rail service from Chicago to Des Moines to Omaha along the Iowa Interstate Railroad.

- **Aviation Funding** – Airports provide a tremendous economic impact to the area and regions they serve. The infrastructure of these national resources is deteriorating and in desperate need of rebuilding and expansion. Therefore, The Partnership supports continued Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Funding for the Commercial Service Vertical Infrastructure program. Funding for the General Aviation Vertical Infrastructure program, which is currently funded through the State Aviation Fund, should also be funded through the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund as it was prior to 2016. This move would increase funding from the State Aviation Fund for pavement(s) necessary for the safe operations of aircraft. The Partnership also supports new programs that will support the reconstruction and development of airports in Iowa through the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund to be administered by the IDOT Office of Aviation.

- **Alternative Fuel/Power Vehicle Readiness** – The Partnership supports state policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of electric vehicles in Iowa, including policies that simplify the establishment of more charging stations statewide.

- **Technology** – The Partnership supports state policies and programs that ease the introduction and widespread adoption of emerging technologies in Iowa. 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.
The Partnership supports non-mandated incentives to develop, expand, and promote Iowa’s renewable energy sources, research and development to improve traditional energy sources, cost effective energy efficiency programs and other green products and processes, including:

- **Energy Development** – The Partnership supports comprehensive policies that ensure energy remains affordable, reliable, and available for the state’s businesses and communities. The Partnership urges lawmakers and regulators to continue to act on energy policies that will bring long-term benefits to all Iowans, reduce the nation’s dependence on foreign sources of energy and implement regulatory changes that will allow Iowa businesses to better compete. In particular, The Partnership supports the continued development, expansion and promotion of Iowa’s renewable energy sources, including biofuels, wind, solar, hydrogen and other forms of alternative energy, while avoiding mandates or cross subsidies. The Partnership also supports continuing to explore the transport of biofuels via pipeline. Additionally, The Partnership supports research and development in clean coal technologies, nuclear, hydro and other more traditional energy sources. While The Partnership supports the continued growth of renewable energy, it recognizes that traditional sources of energy will be needed for many decades to maintain the reliable and low cost energy that Iowa businesses and individuals demand.

**Sustainable Development**

Communities need to grow and develop, but they need to do so as efficiently, responsibly and sustainably as possible. Therefore, The Partnership supports incentives that encourage green development that encourages energy efficiency and conservation. The Partnership also supports transit-oriented development, historic preservation, environmental remediation, complete streets and redevelopment that is pedestrian-friendly and encourages walkability. Accordingly, The Partnership supports:

- **Brownfield and Grayfield Redevelopment** – The Partnership supports efforts to enhance the Brownfield and Grayfield Redevelopment program to encourage green sustainable redevelopment efforts and to revitalize economically obsolescent and energy-inefficient structures and commercially blighted areas. The Partnership supports additional funding for the program due to its current limited reach.

- **Historic Tax Credits** – Historic Rehabilitation Tax Incentives stimulate downtown housing, business expansion, and neighborhood revitalization. Accordingly, The Partnership supports the continued improvement and further expansion of the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program.

- **Distressed Areas and Urban Core Development** – Some areas of our state need more time, resources and attention than others if they are to return to economic prosperity. Therefore, The Partnership supports efforts to drive state resources, including housing tax credits, into distressed areas and urban core projects.

- **Program Flexibility** – The redevelopment and sustainable development needs of the state are diverse, shift over time and are unique. Because of this, The Partnership believes incentives for sustainability should remain flexible and not impose arbitrary program requirements.
• **Housing** – The availability of housing for all people, regardless of their age, race or socioeconomic status, is foundational to everything valued in a community. Safe, stable and affordable housing has a positive impact on the health of residents, improves educational outcomes for children and stabilizes the region’s diverse and growing workforce. Therefore, The Partnership supports ongoing and increased investment in affordable housing programs, specifically the State Housing Trust Fund and Workforce Housing Tax Credits, as well as funding for programs that support modifications of homes to help people age in place and people with disabilities. The Partnership supports policies and programs, particularly those of the Iowa Finance Authority, that incentivize affordable housing that is truly affordable when the full cost of housing and transportation are considered together.

• **Top Soil** – The Partnership supports the federal standard as set by the Environmental Protection Agency and adopted by the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission with respect to topsoil requirements in effort help prevent urban stormwater runoff and keep excess nutrients and pollution out of our waterways. This practice is in line with the good land stewardship goals of the statewide Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

• **Comprehensive Planning and Iowa Smart Planning Principles** – In effort to advance Greater Des Moines’ competitiveness nationally and internationally, The Partnership supports comprehensive planning and the Iowa Smart Planning Principles. These include collaboration; efficiency, transparency and consistency; clean, renewable and efficient energy; occupational diversity; revitalization; housing diversity; community character; natural resources and agricultural protection; sustainable design; and transportation diversity.

**Quality of Life**

Quality of life is widely recognized as a critical factor in location decision-making for both workers and companies. A region cannot be world-class without a comprehensive and consistent commitment to its culturally rich diversity, the arts and recreational amenities, all of which serve as key economic drivers for globally-minded, rural and urban community development.

Central Iowa’s most pressing need for the future is to attract and retain a strong workforce. At the heart of this issue is how Central Iowa is perceived by those who live here and perhaps more importantly, those the region is hoping to attract. The Partnership supports efforts of the community to develop and build upon plans that develop a long-term community vision for the arts to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. This includes plans such as a Community Cultural Plan, Capital Crossroads, the Tomorrow Plan, Central Iowa Community OpporTUNITY Plan, Age-Friendly Greater Des Moines Initiative and existing city master plans.

Accordingly, The Partnership supports the following legislative initiatives:

• **State Historical Building Renovation** – The Partnership strongly supports funding for the renovation of the State Historical Building and State Historical Museum. The building is at a critical juncture as the building itself and its systems no longer serve the needs of housing the state’s flagship museum. The renovated building will allow the museum to once again serve as a world-class attraction for visitors to our capital city. When completed the museum will allow greater
access to and better preservation of the state’s artifact collection and will become a 21st century educational resource for Iowa history to better connect Iowans to the people, places and point of pride that define our state.

- **Enhance Iowa** – The newly created Enhance Iowa program includes the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT), River Enhancement Community Attraction and Tourism (RECAT) and Sport Tourism funds. The Partnership supports continued CAT funding and new funding for the RECAT and Sports Tourism funds.

- **Multi-Use Trails** – Multi-use trails are utilized as an alternative mode of transportation and provide significant quality of life enhancements and recreational opportunities for Iowans. To help Central Iowa become the “Trails Capital of the World,” The Partnership supports:
  
  o Amending the Iowa Code to remove the prohibition against the condemnation of agricultural land for multi-use trails as is currently allowed for non-agricultural land, while recognizing that certain existing uses of some agricultural land may necessitate unique considerations, in that current law has significantly restricted efforts to connect public regional multi-use trails networks.

  o Continued investment in the IDOT State Recreational Trails Program.

  o Continued investment for recreational trails by fully funding the Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program.

  o A funding mechanism for regionally coordinated maintenance of the trails network that has become an important cultural amenity.

  o Funding for the strategic completion of critical gaps in the existing trails network and making connections between major trails.

- **Bike Infrastructure and Safety** – The Partnership supports the development of on-street bike facilities that connect to and integrate with the trails in order to have a complete network for bicycling as a form of alternative transportation. The Partnership also supports strengthening laws to protect bicyclists using Iowa’s roadways.

- **Local Revenue for Quality of Life Investments** – The Partnership recommends that the General Assembly allow additional local option hotel/motel tax to be collected and distributed according to the requirements of the existing Iowa statute and to be used at the discretion of local governmental entities for quality of life expenditures.

- **Cultural Investments** – Arts, media, history, science and culture are catalysts for vibrant and livable communities that will position Iowa to be more competitive as an innovative, progressive state. The Partnership supports the continued efforts of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Iowa Arts Council funding and promotional initiatives and strongly supports a greater investment in arts and culture.
• **Endow Iowa Tax Credits** – The Partnership supports the continuation and expansion of the Endow Iowa Tax Credit program to further strengthen communities through charitable giving and building permanent endowment funds to benefit Iowa charitable causes.

• **Gaming** – The Partnership recognizes the economic and community development importance of Prairie Meadows and the gaming industry across Iowa. Accordingly, The Partnership opposes increasing the tax rate for the gaming industry.

**Health Care**
The foundation of the Community Health Needs Assessment is our guide to the priorities and initiatives for The Partnership in the area of health care. The Partnership supports the recommendations and initiatives established through the Community Health Needs Assessment 2016 Plan as there was considerable input and effort from the various stakeholders involved in this plan. The Partnership will advocate for policies that support implementation of this plan for our community. The Partnership supports:

• **Chronic Disease** – The Partnership understands chronic disease is the major cost driver in our health care system, costing central Iowa business millions in lost productivity and insurance premiums. Accordingly, The Partnership supports expanding access to health care to prevent and better control chronic conditions and expanded access to palliative care in order to empower providers and individuals to actively manage and improve their health by providing them with the tools and incentives to succeed. Additionally, The Partnership supports policies that provide insurers with incentives and flexibility to provide coverage options that promote and reward disease prevention to encourage early detection and aggressive treatment of chronic diseases. Further, The Partnership supports public-private partnerships to engage families, communities and schools to reverse the growth in childhood obesity and similar partnerships that fuel medical advances in prevention and treatment of chronic diseases.

• **Mental Health** – The Community Health Needs Assessment for mental health clearly outlines the needs and current state of affairs for the State of Iowa in regards to the priorities for mental health in our state. Significant work needs to be done for long term sufficiency and system sustainability throughout the entire spectrum of mental health including children, adolescent, and adult services. The priorities to address mental health needs for our community include funding and support for the Adult Mental System Redesign and work toward eliminating the threats to its success including the support of a long-term funding formula in the form of a per capita county levy and design and implementation of a children’s mental health system that includes statewide crisis services. Additionally, The Partnership supports insurance reform and reimbursement, training and incentives to build an adequate mental health workforce and adequate funding and staffing for the 5th Judicial District to reduce recidivism in our jails.

• **Public Health** – Public Health has an important role in population health. Local health departments are critical partners that bridge the gap between clinical healthcare providers and the communities they serve. They work within a system to address upstream factors, improving health and quality of life and preventing chronic disease and premature death. Funding for response to issues, such as Zika, needs to be made readily available to allow our community to respond to time sensitive and urgent needs to protect Iowans.
• **Tobacco Control Program Funding** – The Partnership recognizes the lingering burden of tobacco on Iowa’s economy and health care system. Iowa spends over $1.2 billion in annual health care costs directly caused by smoking — approximately $365 million of that is covered by the state Medicaid program. These costs are borne by taxpayers — $875 per household annually — regardless of whether or not they use tobacco products. Smoking-caused productivity losses in Iowa total $1.21 billion. The Partnership supports adequate funding for the state Tobacco Control Program to help ensure prevention and cessation resources are available to all Iowans. Insufficient Tobacco Prevention Funding will ultimately cost Iowans more. Iowa’s tobacco prevention and control program has successfully reduced youth smoking and helped smokers quit across the state.

• **Telemedicine** – Telemedicine can increase access to health care for persons who live in underserved areas, who require specialty care, or who face barriers in transportation. Telemedicine also has the potential to reduce health care costs for providers and patients. The Partnership supports efforts to increase the use of telemedicine to help more Iowans access health care while ensuring that quality remains high.

• **Certificate of Need** – Iowa’s health care system is among the highest quality and lowest cost in the country. This is due, in part, to Iowa’s Certificate of Need laws, which requires review by the Health Facilities Council for any new institutional facilities in the state. This includes hospitals and nursing facilities. In recent years there has been discussion of eliminating Iowa’s Certificate of Need statute, opening the possibility of the entry of more for-profit specialty providers to open facilities in our state. The Partnership supports the continuation of the Certificate of Need process in order to maintain oversight over aspects of health care spending and control costs.

• **Individual Health Insurance** – The individual health insurance market — where people buy insurance directly for themselves rather than through their employer’s health plan — is in trouble. Several years of multi-million dollar losses by insurers despite very large premium increases have made the individual health insurance market unsustainable. The Partnership believes that Iowa should develop and receive a Section 1332 State Innovation Waiver to permit Iowa-specific solutions that allow Iowans to access affordable, quality individual health insurance products and ensure that the individual insurance market functions sustainably in the future.

• **Forgivable Loan and Graduate Medical Education (GME)** – In recent years the Iowa Legislature has supported the Iowa Forgivable Loan for those recent physician graduates committed to practicing in a rural community. The Partnership supports adequate funding to maintain the pipeline of physicians to rural Iowa. With over 55% of our Iowa physicians at age 55 or older, it is necessary to ensure an adequate number of new physicians entering health care in Iowa. This is both a workforce issue and an economic development issue for the State of Iowa. The continuation of the GME Funding from the State of Iowa is strongly encouraged as there has been success in building collaborate relationships to address the great need for additional GME residency positions for those fields of the greatest demand in the State of Iowa such as Psychiatry and Family practice.

• **Dental Education Loan Repayment** – The Fulfilling Iowa’s Need for Dentists (FIND) program has successfully supported placement of 31 dentists to practice in rural Iowa since 2002. The program
offers an award of up to $100,000 for repayment of dental education loan debt in exchange for agreeing to practice in a dental shortage area and dedicating 35 percent of the practice to serving underserved populations. The Partnership supports continued, adequate funding from the Iowa Legislature to support FIND, which represents a public/private partnership that creates a powerful recruitment package for rural Iowa communities to attract and retain a dentist helping to maintain healthcare access within the community and drive economic development.

- **Medicaid Dental Health** – Medical research shows that poor oral health results in increased risk for diabetes, breathing disorders, cardiovascular disease and poor pregnancy outcomes such as preterm births and stillbirths. It also affects eating, speaking and self-esteem, as well employability. Low-income adults are 40 percent less likely than those with higher incomes to have seen a dentist in the last year. Lack of regular dental care also drives up cost, including increased visits to the emergency department for treatment of dental pain. People with dental insurance are twice as likely to go to the dentist, which helps contribute to their overall health. Most oral health conditions are preventable. Accordingly, The Partnership supports maintaining a strong, comprehensive Medicaid dental program for children and adults.