



## GREATER DES MOINES PARTNERSHIP 2021 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

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

The Greater Des Moines Partnership is the economic and community development organization that serves Greater Des Moines (DSM), Iowa. Together with 24 Affiliate Chambers of Commerce, more than 6,500 Regional Business Members and 360+ Investors, The Partnership drives economic growth with one voice, one mission and as one region. Through innovation, strategic planning and global collaboration, The Partnership grows opportunity, helps create jobs and promotes DSM as 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, small business growth 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 with growing communities that plan and build for the future. Accordingly, The Partnership supports policies that promote economic growth statewide and align with the Capital Crossroads vision plan for DSM.

Amid a global pandemic, natural disasters and months of social unrest, 2020 has presented many challenges to DSM and the State of Iowa. While issues such as broadband access, affordable child care and justice reform are not new issues, these unprecedented events have exacerbated the need to address the inequities that exist. Many of these issues are included as recommendations for COVID-19 recovery within the Governor's Economic Recovery Advisory Board report.

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

As the state continues efforts to recover from the global pandemic, The Partnership has focused on three overarching priorities – **keeping business in business, keeping people working and keeping the community healthy**. It is with these broader goals in mind, the 2021 Featured Priorities are identified, to support **inclusive economic recovery** following the events of 2020.

Although all of the policy positions included in The Partnership's 2021 State Legislative Agenda are important and reflective of the diverse group of Members and Investors, The Partnership will focus on the following priorities:

- **Broadband** – The Partnership supports policies that aim to bridge the digital divide by expanding access to affordable broadband in both rural and urban areas of the state through private investment, supporting education, small business, health care, agriculture and the quickly changing workforce.
- **Invest in Iowa** – The Partnership supports passage of the Invest in Iowa proposal, which would fund Iowa’s Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (IWILL) and provide needed support for the mental health system in Iowa.
- **Child Care** – The Partnership supports expanded access to affordable child care and policies that aid in that effort, including addressing the child care cliff effect and programs that support public-private partnerships to provide options to Iowa parents and guardians.
- **Justice Reform** – The Partnership supports the recommendations of the Governor’s FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice Reform and further efforts to create an equitable environment for all Iowans.
- **Community Placemaking** – The Partnership supports the creation of a large-scale investment program that aims to transform Iowa’s communities, main streets and local economies through creative placemaking and community development.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Robust incentive programs are a critical element in Iowa's effort to create and retain high-quality, high-paying jobs. While Iowa continues to see improving economic indicators as the globe navigates the COVID-19 pandemic, now is not the time to waiver in efforts that will aid in recovery. 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.

### Business Climate

- **Business Climate** – To provide enhanced responsiveness to current conditions and continue to promote Iowa's attractiveness to existing 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.
- **Judicial Access** – The Partnership supports funding opportunities and programs that help ensure fair and equal access to the justice system. Access to justice initiatives include but are not limited to adequately funding the judicial branch, supporting programs to promote efficient and fair access to the court and legal system, alternative methods to provide appropriate assistance from legal counsel, including legal aid programs, and various studies and task forces seeking ways to more efficiently and fairly ensure justice for all.
- **Government Purchasing** – The Partnership supports Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) as the preferred process for the selection of design professionals and Construction Manager at-risk (CMaR) as a viable delivery method option for all public projects.
- **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 to launch state-run retirement plans for private sector workers.
- **Small Business Support** – Small businesses employ 50 percent of all private sector employees and have generated 60-to-80 percent of net new jobs annually during the last decade. To create an environment where small businesses can continue to be successful and to promote a sustainable business environment, The Partnership supports tax-free federal and state grant and forgivable loan programs and legislation that targets all types of small businesses. These types of programs positively impact the ability to support and retain businesses in Iowa. Further, The Partnership supports the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and other entities providing assistance in local and regional

economic development efforts that lead businesses to flourish during economic turbulence and maintain a strong workforce in diverse industries. Specific programs include the Targeted Small Business Program and funding to the Iowa Small Business Development Center.

## Economic Development

Key to the mission of The Partnership, economic development is essential to the growth of Iowa's population and economy. With a footprint representing both urban and rural Iowa, The Partnership supports the Empower Rural Iowa Initiative, along with economic development programs that support recruitment and retention of business and talent throughout the state.

- **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 a maximum aggregate tax credit cap that is set high enough to spur growth in local communities and 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 state programs remain easy to use and accessible to local communities.
- **Energy Development** – The Partnership supports comprehensive policies that ensure energy remains affordable, reliable and available for the state's businesses, families and communities. The Partnership supports optional 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 incentives for building transmission and other energy infrastructure projects necessary to deliver renewable energy to the customers that demand it. The Partnership urges lawmakers and regulators to continue to act on energy policies that will improve safety, 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 globally. Specifically, 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 directives or cross subsidies. Finally, The Partnership supports the transport of biofuels via pipeline and electric transmission projects that benefit Iowans.
- **Entrepreneurship and Early-Stage Industries** – A balanced approach to economic development requires the care and feeding of new business startups in addition to traditional expansion programs. Accordingly, The Partnership supports responsible funding for programs that promote entrepreneurship and provide capital to targeted industries. IEDA programs like the Demonstration Fund and Innovation Fund Tax Credits, among others, accelerate the growth of early-stage businesses, enhance the development of these industries, create critical pathways to sustainability for organizations and promote economic development of all types in Iowa communities. Specifically, The Partnership supports increased funding for the Angel Investor Tax Credit Program as a necessary tool for incentivizing investment in entrepreneurs.

- **Public Accountability in State Programs** – The Partnership supports transparency in the administration of state economic development programs and also seeks to ensure that such transparency strikes a prudent balance between private interests and public accountability.
- **Public-Private Partnerships** – 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 IEDA represents a unique delivery structure for economic development programs, and it has great potential to foster entrepreneurship and small business development, diversify the economy and upskill Iowa's workforce.
- **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.

## Research and Development

The Partnership supports programs and initiatives to create and leverage scientific and technological developments to keep the region at the forefront.

- **America's Cultivation Corridor Priority Projects** – As global demand for food, feed, fiber and energy increases, the need to invest in innovation, technology and production capacity will also increase. Accordingly, The Partnership supports projects within America's Cultivation Corridor, a dedicated effort to establish DSM and Iowa as a global center for agbioscience investment, talent and research. This includes the establishment of a nationally renowned innovation ecosystem in Iowa-advantaged bioscience platforms to grow and diversify Iowa's economy. 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 Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. 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 region's agbioscience ecosystem.
- **Renewable Chemical Production Tax Credit** – America's Cultivation Corridor is a global center of investment, talent, research and technology in the agbiosciences. 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 the 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.

## 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 supports continued exploration of income tax reform and opposes efforts that would increase the tax burden on Iowa employers.

- **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, may lead to costly litigation and may result in a net revenue decrease for the state.
- **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.
- **Federal Deductibility** – The Partnership supports giving 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 rates. Given the 2018 tax reform legislation, The Partnership further supports an accelerated timeline for the full removal of federal deductibility.
- **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.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A region cannot be world-class without a comprehensive and consistent commitment to its culturally rich diversity, the arts and recreational amenities. Quality of life is widely recognized as a key factor for workers and companies when deciding where to locate. At the heart of this issue is how DSM is perceived by those who live here and those the region is hoping to attract. This requires a commitment to creating an entrepreneurial region inspired by a creative economy that leads to innovation, dynamic arts and cultural experiences and a recognition that to grow the state, all Iowa communities must welcome racial diversity and offer opportunities for equity.

The Partnership supports efforts to develop and build upon plans that develop a long-term community vision to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. This includes plans such as Capital Crossroads, The Director's Council One Economy Blueprint for Action, Bravo's Regional Cultural Assessment, Global DSM: International Talent Strategy, The Tomorrow Plan, Central Iowa Community OpportUNITY Plan, Age-Friendly Greater Des Moines Initiative and existing city master plans.

### Community Development

Communities need to grow and develop with efficiency, responsibility and sustainability in mind. Therefore, The Partnership supports incentives that encourage green development that spurs 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.

- **Brownfield and Grayfield Redevelopment** – The Partnership supports efforts to enhance the Brownfield and Grayfield Redevelopment program through additional funding to encourage green, sustainable redevelopment efforts and to revitalize economically obsolescent and energy-inefficient structures and commercially blighted areas.
- **Comprehensive Planning and Iowa Smart Planning Principles** – In an effort to advance DSM's competitiveness nationally and internationally, The Partnership supports comprehensive planning and the Iowa Smart Planning Principles.
- **Distressed Areas and Urban Core Development** – Some areas of the state need more time, resources and attention than others to return to economic prosperity. Therefore, The Partnership supports efforts to drive state resources and public-private partnership investments into distressed areas and urban core projects.
- **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.
- **Housing** – The availability of affordable housing for all people, regardless of age, race, ability level or socioeconomic status, is foundational to the continued economic vitality and livability of DSM. Safe, stable and affordable housing improves the health of residents, improves educational outcomes for children and contributes to the recruitment and retention of the region's diverse and growing workforce. The Partnership supports strategies that

leverage a variety of state and local resources to increase the number and variety of homes available in the region, including the ability of local governments to maintain existing tools to expand workforce housing. Specifically, The Partnership supports:

- Increased investment in the State Housing Trust Fund (SHTF), by removing the annual cap on the Real Estate Transfer Tax, allowing the SHTF to grow through its dedicated 30% share of the Real Estate Transfer Tax.
- Increasing the annual allocation of credits to the Workforce Housing Tax Credit program. Recent revisions to the program make much needed improvements to the program and allowing the program to grow annually will keep Iowa from falling behind in meeting its housing needs.
- A specially designed State Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program that targets the housing needs for projects too specialized or too small to compete for the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Credits from the program should be designed to appeal to local investors seeking a vehicle to invest in Iowa communities.
- Changes in legislation to make it easier for cities to obtain ownership of abandoned homes for purpose of conveyance to redevelopers such as local land banks that support the conveyance of residential property for redevelopment.
- Local governments maintaining all tools available to them to preserve and expand workforce housing.
- Exploring additional incentives for communities and employers to invest in housing specifically suited to their local needs, including programs that help fund modifications of existing homes to help Iowans age in place and support people with disabilities.
- **Topsoil** – 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 to help prevent urban stormwater runoff and keep excess nutrients and pollution out of the waterways.

## Digital Infrastructure

- **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. The Partnership also supports state policies to incentivize the development of cellulosic ethanol from perennial sources such as switchgrass.
- **Smart City 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.

- **Broadband** – The Partnership supports increased access to broadband and investment in broadband infrastructure, including the Empower Rural Iowa Initiative and Connect Every Iowan Initiative, to better connect Iowans while supporting workforce readiness. An issue prior to the global pandemic, the need for reliable connectivity in both rural and urban areas of the state is necessary for today and the future of Iowa’s economy; this is true of many industries, but most notably education, small business, health care, agriculture and the quickly changing needs of the workforce.

## Quality of Life

- **Community Development and Placemaking** – The Partnership supports a bold investment in placemaking with a major financial package that allows for the expansion of programs that will invest in creating culturally vibrant communities — both large and small — building upon the authentic assets with enhanced attractions and tourist destinations. Further, The Partnership supports an expansion of the Enhance Iowa program, which includes Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT), River Enhancement Community Attraction and Tourism (RECAT) and Sport Tourism funds, along with the Iowa Great Places program with a new level of funding that will serve as a catalyst for public-private investment in quality of life projects that provide an economic impact and attract and retain a strong workforce.
- **Cultural Investments** – The Partnership supports continued investment in arts and culture through the Department of Cultural Affairs and Iowa Arts Council to develop culturally vibrant communities and places that attract businesses and highly skilled workers to Iowa. Research shows arts, film and media, culture, history, historic preservation and science can serve as catalysts for vibrant and livable communities that will position Iowa to be more competitive as a leader in innovation. Arts and cultural organizations enhance the quality of life by making communities more desirable places to live, work and play, attracting young people and families with unique experiences.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** – The nation and region has reached a critical moment in history, calling on DSM and the state to address racial equity in meaningful ways. The Partnership, through efforts including the CEO Commitment to Racial Equity in DSM, supports state policies that lead to racial equity and social justice. This includes the work of the Governor’s FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice Reform and supporting the One Economy Blueprint for Action.
- **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.
- **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 to market the state and DSM.

- **State Historical Building Renovation** – The Partnership strongly supports continued funding for the renovation of the State Historical Building and State Historical Museum to become a world-class attraction for visitors to the capital city. Renovations will better preserve the state’s vast artifact collection, will provide greater public access and will create 21st-century educational resources rich with exhibits on Iowa history and culture. A reinvented museum will better showcase the people, places and points of pride that define Iowa.

## Transportation and Mobility

The economic impact of transportation systems to a region, state and nation cannot be overstated. The Partnership 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.

- **Aviation Funding** – Airports provide a significant economic impact to the area and regions served. The infrastructure of these vital resources is deteriorating and in desperate need of rebuilding and expansion. Therefore, The Partnership supports increased Vertical Infrastructure Program funding for Iowa airports, including annual allocations to Commercial Service Airports and General Aviation Airports.
- **Mobility Infrastructure and Safety** – The Partnership supports diverse mobility options, including micro-mobility innovations and the development of on-street bike and mobility facilities that connect to and integrate with the existing system to have a complete network and encourage all forms of active transportation. The Partnership also supports strengthening traffic laws to improve the safety of bicyclists using Iowa’s roadways. Specifically, The Partnership supports a ‘Vision Zero’ policy that utilizes data-driven and evidence-based best practices to reach the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on city streets.
- **Multi-Use Trails** – Multi-use trails are utilized as a mode of transportation and provide economic development benefits, significant quality of life enhancements and recreational opportunities for Iowans; particularly in the world adapting to a global pandemic, trails and outdoor recreation have served as an increasingly important outlet to support mental health. To help DSM become the “Trails Capital of the World,” The Partnership supports:
  - Continued investment in the Iowa DOT State Recreational Trails Program.
  - Continued investment in trails by fully funding and extending the Iowa Department of Natural Resources’ Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program.
  - A funding mechanism for regionally coordinated development and maintenance of the trails network that has become an important cultural tourism amenity.

- Funding for the strategic completion of critical gaps in the existing trails network and making connections between major trails and destinations.
- Investing in signature trail projects that generate economic opportunities for local communities and celebrate the heritage of our places, such as the Great American Rail Trail.
- Investing in on-street infrastructure and safe routes to school projects that fill critical gaps in the non-motorized trail network and improve connectivity to schools and workplaces.
- **Rail Funding** – The Partnership supports continued investment in the IDOT Rail Revolving Loan and Grant Fund to help develop rail improvements and support DSM'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 DSM to Omaha along the Iowa Interstate Railroad.
- **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. Additionally, The Partnership continues to support the Iowa Transportation Commission's swapping process that allows federal transportation dollars to be exchanged for state transportation dollars to give local governments more flexibility with transportation decisions.
- **Surface Transportation Funding** – Continued investment in Iowa's transportation system is essential to support economic growth and help attract new businesses to the state. The 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).
- **Transit Funding** – As the community looks to recruit and retain employees and businesses, connect people to jobs, grow the economy and ensure age-friendly communities, it is essential to provide funding for a variety of mobility options. The Partnership supports the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) Commission's efforts to increase and diversify funding options available through state legislation, which may include raising the property tax levy cap or identifying an alternative funding source.
- **U.S. 65/Iowa 5 Interstate Designation** – The Partnership supports designating the U.S. 65/Iowa 5 Beltway/Purple Heart Highway as part of the U.S. Interstate System. Designating this part of the beltway as part of the U.S. Interstate System would open up economic development opportunities for the communities located along the route, give DSM a true Interstate ring like many other competitor metro areas across the country and possibly decrease current Interstate congestion. Designation must be approved by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, with an application submitted by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT). 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.

## Water Infrastructure

The State of Iowa has a unique opportunity to invest in Iowa's soil and water infrastructure – an infrastructure critically important to the state's wealth and prosperity. While the state has started down a path of increased investments, more resources are needed to address the challenges. The Partnership sees the primary pathway to success as a public-private investment in waterways across the state.

- **Dam Mitigation and Water Trails** – Creating vibrant communities with recreational amenities is essential to workforce attraction and economic development. As such, The Partnership strongly supports the funding of programs that mitigate low-head dams and help to establish water trails. Specifically, The Partnership supports the restoration of Iowa's Low-Head Dam Mitigation and Water Trails program – a line item of the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund. There is significant interest in water trails and dam mitigation in rural and urban areas, and state funding for these efforts is essential for leveraging investments from local jurisdictions and private-sector partners. Additionally, The Partnership supports the policy updates that provide liability protections to the communities supporting outdoor recreation amenities.
- **Data Driven Investment** – The Partnership supports the effective use of public funds to encourage water quality monitoring at the watershed level by using technology and data to inform state investment within watersheds. This data is important to inform and implement adaptive management. Meaningful measurement networks will require collaborative work across jurisdictional boundaries, building from monitoring work already accomplished through public utilities, private partnerships and voluntary monitoring. In addition, the Partnership supports investments in continued and expanded academic research of best practices, programs and policies.
- **Regional Water Utility** – The Partnership believes local solutions often provide the best policy. Therefore, The Partnership changes to local water utilities should be determined at the local and regional level.
- **Wastewater, Stormwater and Flood Mitigation Infrastructure** – Frequency and intensity of flooding has increased in recent years, with devastating impacts to both our rural and urban communities. These events provide a grim reminder of the need for more strategic investments in flood mitigation, resiliency and stormwater infrastructure that prioritized multi-benefit solutions. Addressing this challenge will take a unified statewide approach that supports natural as well as built infrastructure. Therefore, The Partnership supports a statewide focus on policies and funding for modernization of flood mitigation and resiliency strategies, water systems, source water protection, wastewater treatment and comprehensive planning.
- **Watershed Approach and Planning** – To provide safe and affordable drinking water, wastewater treatment and stormwater mitigation, The Partnership supports regional watershed planning. It also asks for ongoing funding to implement these plans through targeted conservation and flood mitigation practices, proactive approaches to optimize nutrient and other chemical applications and sustainable urban development. As the

watershed providing drinking water to one-sixth of the state's population, the Raccoon River watershed must be designated as a top priority.

- **Watershed Investment Strategies and Financial Resources** – The Partnership supports allocating funding sources to meet infrastructure needs for flood mitigation and water quality improvements that are targeted and prioritized by watershed with annual accountability for the state's investment. Funding must be permanent, adequate, timely, reliable and sustainable, and create incentives that spur public and private investments in watersheds across jurisdictional boundaries. Priority should be given to funding the Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund (IWILL) and the recreation, conservation and water quality goals outlined in the voter-approved formula. In addition, The Partnership supports tax credits and market-based approaches focused on multi-benefit collaborative transactions. These investments should be used to leverage additional dollars through public-private partnerships.
- **Waterways and Land Protection** – The Partnership believes in the importance of creating and maintaining parks, trails, natural places and Iowa's creeks, rivers and lakes. Strategic investments in outdoor recreation serve as catalysts to revitalize communities, enhance quality of life and grow the region's workforce. The Partnership supports increased investments in the state's water and land resources by funding programs that build the water trails network, enhance safety, improve water quality and provide connected habitat corridors in and along the many miles of waterways and adjoining greenways that are a vital natural asset in Iowa.

# TALENT DEVELOPMENT

## Education

The Partnership believes a strong and aligned education system and proven workforce development programs are critical to Iowa's quality of life and are leading factors in recruiting business to Iowa. Learners from pre-kindergarten to adult must have access to quality education and skills development opportunities that will encourage DSM residents to become lifelong learners and economically secure citizens. Circumstances of 2020 further highlighted challenges and disparities among many Iowans, particularly marginalized populations. To properly educate and develop all of the region's students and current workforce, and attract and retain skilled workers, The Partnership supports the following:

- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** – All Iowa students need to be better prepared to make informed career pathway decisions aligned to the workforce needs of the future through expanded CTE, career exploration opportunities and regional planning involving both educators and employers.
- **Child Care** – The Partnership supports the recommendations of the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition to lead efforts to increase affordable access to quality child care and promote stabilization in the child care workforce through increasing Child Care Assistance income limits and provider reimbursement rates.
- **Early Childhood Education** – The Partnership supports efforts to ensure quality, accessible and equitable early childhood education opportunities for virtual and in-person learning. The Partnership maintains that all children, including 4-year-olds, should have access to high-quality pre-school. The Partnership also supports improving literacy and school-readiness skills among at-risk children by raising the per-pupil funding level for children in pre-school. Additionally, The Partnership supports funding a full-day program for children in poverty to support the schedules of working families.
- **K-12 Education** – The population of DSM is becoming more diverse due to shifts in race, ethnicity, immigration and economic diversity. These shifts are changing the landscape with profound implications for education, policymakers, parents and the community. Changing demographics have and will continue to alter school practices, policies and budgetary needs. To minimize the impact of political and economic swings, The Partnership supports establishing a benchmark of an appropriate investment in the education of Iowa's future workforce.

The Partnership supports legislative solutions that can be enacted to better equip the region's 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:

- A funding formula that includes weighting for poverty level, recognizing that children raised in poverty are twice as likely to start kindergarten needing extra help to read by third grade and are four times more likely to drop out of school.
- Efforts to develop equitable access to broadband for all students across the region.
- Efforts to establish comprehensive community mental health systems to offer preventative and treatment services and comprehensive school mental health programs

that include increased access to in-school mental health professionals via in-person or telehealth visits, funding for mental health professionals serving students, ongoing training to improve the awareness and understanding of child mental health needs, integration of suicide prevention and coping skills into existing curriculum and the creation of a mental health resources clearinghouse for schools and community providers.

- As the region's school districts continue to seek paths to recruit and retain qualified educators in a variety of disciplines, The Partnership supports increased flexibility in teacher certification and accelerated approval of teachers who are credentialed in another state.
- Expansion and enhancement of the Iowa Teacher Loan Forgiveness program to effectively address critical shortages in curricular areas such as math, science, computer science, foreign languages, English Language Learner (ELL) and special education. Additionally, The Partnership supports the inclusion of mental health professionals who agree to provide services to schools.
- 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.
- To support summer learning and literacy programs for all at-risk students to prevent summer learning loss. Specifically, provide funds for schools to provide research-based, intensive literacy programing for all students who are not proficient in reading.
- To support programs and initiatives that expand the time and opportunities for school counselors to work with students on college and career planning.
- Due to enrollment decreases caused by the global pandemic, The Partnership supports one-time funding for school districts to help alleviate dramatic budget shortfalls.
- **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 the workforce. To ensure DSM has the highly skilled workforce needed to succeed, The Partnership supports state initiatives to promote affordable and accessible postsecondary opportunities and efforts to increase completion rates in these programs. 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.

- 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.
- Continued support of the Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund, Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program and the Iowa Jobs Training Fund as implemented through the community college system throughout Iowa.
- **Talent Development** – The world of work is rapidly changing due to the integration and augmentation of new technologies across all industry sectors and jobs. 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 to invest in large scale upskilling and reskilling of our existing workforce. Therefore, The Partnership supports:
  - Full funding for the Future Ready Iowa Initiative to help grow Iowa’s workforce through new investments that build on the solid foundation of programs and funding currently in place.
  - Expanded funding for the STEM Internship program to Iowa employers developing STEM talent.
  - Continued funding and refinement of proven programs within the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Education that measure success and ensure accountability, invest in regional strategies and industry-based public-private partnerships, build career pathways to good jobs for all Iowans, secure new investments for Iowa’s integrated learning programs that combine basic skills development and occupational skills training for low-skilled adult workers and expand access to supportive services for adult learners enrolled in education and training programs.
  - The recommendations of the Iowa Skills2Compete Coalition to further up-skill and train more workers for Iowa’s key industries. This includes maintaining current investments in adult basic education, PACE programs, pathway navigators, industry sector partnerships and GAP tuition assistance and expanding PACE programs to include apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities.
  - The recommendations of the Governor’s FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice Reform.
  - The development of a Certificate of Qualification for Employment program designed to help individuals with criminal convictions obtain employment and professional licensure which certifies to employers the returning citizen has gone through a rigorous employability review process.

## Talent Development

- **Global Talent** – 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 the region's international competitiveness and net many high-paying jobs for all Americans. To strengthen talent acquisition and retention, business development and economic growth in DSM, The Partnership supports immigration-related legislation that will continue to improve the economy and opposes state-based punitive anti-immigration proposals. Therefore, The Partnership encourages support for the following key priorities:
  - Increased programming and access for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Language Learner (ELL) classes, for both K-12 students and adult members of those families.
  - Creation of incentives for Iowa companies to hire international students as interns by adding this population as a category in the state intern program.
  - Increased supportive services for refugees to address the adjustment challenges that refugees face in navigating new communities across the state.
  - Recognizing the contributions of foreign-born residents to the economy and workplaces by creating 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.
  - The creation of a task force to study and recommend a process to review professional certifications, credentials and licensure, held by foreign-born residents and residents new to Iowa, granted by institutions outside of the state and/or the U.S., and where applicable, recertify to state and federal standards in an effective and efficient manner.
  - 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.
- **Military Recruitment/Retention** – The Partnership recognizes that returning or retiring military personnel have many skills and talents that Iowa businesses need and therefore supports aggressive efforts to recruit and retain these honored individuals to Iowa. The Partnership supports the state's Home Base Iowa initiative as a "one-stop-shop" approach to assisting veterans with employment and education needs as well as integration into the community.
- **Talent Recruitment and Retention Benefits** – The Partnership supports policies that offer employees and employers benefit options to attract and retain an educated workforce. Specifically, The Partnership supports:
  - Efforts to increase access to broadband to further the ability to attract teleworkers from across the country to live in DSM.
  - Implementation of the scheduled tax exemption from state income tax liability for employees on student loan repayment benefits.

- The creation of loan forgiveness and/or tax credit programs designed to benefit Iowa higher education students who stay in the state following graduation.
- The establishment of a state income tax deduction for employees receiving employer-paid student loan repayment benefits.
- Expanding existing programs or new initiatives that incentivize Iowa employers to provide tuition assistance to incumbent workers who seek to improve skills through continuing educational attainment.

## Health Care

The importance of health care has never been more prevalent in the community, country and world than it is today, in response to COVID-19. The importance of equitable access to health care along with a strong health care workforce is critical. As the health care system continues to care for those impacted by the virus, plans are being created for future protection with a vaccine, therapeutic and, ultimately, recovery from the pandemic. The Partnership recognizes the value of partnerships with both government and local hospital systems, which are essential moving forward as DSM works through issues exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **COVID-19 Response** – COVID-19 has presented Iowa’s health care system with unprecedented challenges. Through collaboration and resilience, health care leaders across the state have stepped up to keep Iowans safe. The Partnership supports continued COVID-19 mitigation efforts such as ensuring adequate personal protective equipment for essential workers, continuing diagnostic testing and adhering to social distancing and mask recommendations from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Further, The Partnership supports the following policies to support an effective distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine:
  - Efforts to produce a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine are underway at labs across the country. Once a vaccine is approved by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and available for distribution, The Partnership supports efforts to ensure seamless, transparent and safe distribution of the vaccine to all Iowans. Moreover, The Partnership supports policies that encourage public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaboration to achieve effective vaccine distribution.
  - Distribution and administration of a COVID-19 vaccine will require a comprehensive and coordinated effort that includes Iowa’s health care community, including federal, state and local public health officials, elected leaders and private industry. The Iowa Registry of Immunization Registry Information System (IRIS) will play a vital role in tracking provider capacity and vaccine administration. The Partnership supports efforts to streamline IRIS operations and ensure all providers administering the COVID-19 vaccine are promptly reporting dose administration to facilitate a coordinated statewide effort.
  - Initial vaccine supply will be extremely limited and priority for administering initial doses must be given to the highest risk populations, including seniors and front-line health care workers as recommended by the CDC. In addition, the public must be reassured the vaccine — like all FDA approved vaccines — has been appropriately tested to ensure safety and efficacy. The Partnership supports efforts to educate the public about the dangers of vaccine hesitancy, the importance of continuing to follow COVID-19

mitigation efforts and the need for prioritizing initial distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

- **Health Care Workforce** – Iowa has significant shortages of health care providers. An adequate health care workforce is critical for access to care and economic development for the entire State of Iowa. The Partnership supports a variety of initiatives to increase the health care workforce.
  - The Partnership continues to support loan repayment programs and other recruitment and retention efforts for health care professionals. The aging population of both dentists and physicians in Iowa requires a robust pipeline of newly trained providers for Iowa.
  - Direct care support professionals are Iowa's largest occupation, yet among the most difficult to attract and retain, due to low wages, lack of access to benefits, the physical and emotional demands of the work and few opportunities for career advancement within the field of direct care. To ensure the state is prepared to meet the need, The Partnership supports reimbursement rates and policies that allow providers to offer pay and benefits that support recruitment and retention of direct care workers to Iowa.
  - Establish funding for fellowship programs in child and adolescent psychiatry and primary care Ob/Gyn.
  - Graduate Medical Education (GME) funding for additional graduate medical and dental education to grow Iowa's health care workforce, with a focus on priority needs such as primary care, fetal maternal health, psychiatry and dentistry. In addition, The Partnership supports those with an Iowa connection be given priority for state and federal funded opportunities for graduate medical education to retain as many Iowa graduates as possible.
- **Mental Health Funding** – The Partnership supports long-term or subacute care to support community-based services at a sustainable rate and to provide for adequately funded adult and children's mental health services. Specifically, The Partnership supports the following:
  - State investment to ensure statewide availability of robust mental health services, including trained staff to field crisis hotline calls, mobile dispatch teams and case management services.
  - Funding for intensive residential services for individuals with severe mental illness and/or developmental conditions.
  - Defined length-of-stay limits to be established in Iowa Administrative Code for crisis residential and subacute care needs.
  - Sustainable funding for community-based providers to ensure community placement is viable.
  - The establishment of a sustainable funding formula to protect the mental health care needs of adults and children contending with chronic mental health conditions.

- **Public Health** – Today's greatest public health challenges are highly complex and often linked to causes and solutions beyond traditional public health departments (e.g., housing, transportation, education, water and air quality, criminal justice and employment). The Partnership supports a focus on the social determinants of health to achieve meaningful, systemic care savings and efficiencies. Additionally, The Partnership supports adequate funding and policy changes that curb vaping and tobacco use for both young people and all Iowans.
- **Telemedicine** – Virtual care and telehealth services have exploded during the COVID-19 pandemic. The positive experiences of patients and providers demonstrates the demand for these services, the added convenience for the patient and provider, reductions in travel time and the overall transformation in the delivery of health care services. The Partnership supports continued efforts to find cost-effective ways to expand the availability of telehealth, working closely with providers and payors to find the optimal reimbursement model for Iowa to ensure ongoing access to care for patients.
- **Tort Reform** – Iowa's access to health care services, increases in health care costs, recruitment of physicians to Iowa and facility closures effecting Iowans due to litigation are all impacting the overall quality of health for Iowans and adding to the health care workforce shortage issue, impacting Iowa and its rural communities. To address this issue and stave further impact, The Partnership supports a tort reform cap.