



Ames[™]
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PUBLIC POLICY

2021 State Legislative Priorities of the Ames Chamber of Commerce

Ames Chamber of Commerce Mission

The mission of the Ames Chamber of Commerce is to provide our members services that strengthen the economic vitality and enhance the quality of life throughout Story County.

Ames Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Program Mission

To promote unity in the business community and encourage Chamber involvement through informed and active participation as public policy advocates for local business and industry.

2021 State Legislative Priorities

The Ames Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice for promoting economic growth policies and initiatives on behalf of the Ames and Story County business community. Each year, the Ames Chamber of Commerce crafts strategic legislative priorities to advocate for the strengthening and growth of Ames, Story County, Central Iowa, and the State of Iowa's economic and community development efforts.

To this end, for the 2021 Legislative Session, the Ames Chamber of Commerce encourages the Governor and Legislature to focus on the following five policy areas:

- **Recovery and Resiliency**
- **Talent**
- **Economic Development**
- **Business Climate**
- **Infrastructure**

The Ames Chamber of Commerce will ensure any policy proposal being considered by the Executive and Legislative Branch in the 2021 Legislative Session is judged on the basis it will ultimately grow Iowa's economy in an inclusive and beneficial way. Several policies we believe will assist in doing so are:

- Those recommendations outlined by Governor Reynolds' Economic Recovery Advisory Board;
- Funding for existing programs and consideration of new resources that promote "placemaking" including quality of life and the arts;
- Development of immediately deployable resources for large scale disasters when budget reserves are full for businesses to recover;
- Favorable policies and additional funding for broadband priorities outlined through the Empower Rural Iowa Initiative;
- Fully funding the Future Ready Iowa Initiative;
- Addressing barriers to employment such as student debt repayment or access to child-care;
- Supporting education at all levels from pre-school through post-high school options;
- Developing and supporting incentives with proven return in targeted industries; and
- Removal of the sunset for both the brownfield & gray fields programs.

To advance these priorities, the Ames Chamber of Commerce will collaborate with Iowa State University, the City of Ames, Story County, our community school districts, Des Moines Area Community College, and our chamber and economic development partners throughout the state.



2021 State Legislative Priorities

Recovery and Resiliency

- Support the recommendations made by the Governor's Economic Recovery Advisory Board in the areas of: Agriculture, Connectivity, Economic Growth, Education, Government, Public Health and Healthcare, and Expanding Iowa's Workforce.
- Expand investments in broadband and broadband infrastructure opportunities.
- Support for Industry 4.0 initiatives to make Iowa a leader in innovation

Talent

- Ensure adequate funding for Iowa's universities.
- Consider opportunities to grow our population via student loan repayment strategies and childcare assistance programs. Also consider incentivizing former Iowans to return to Iowa and find ways to keep Iowans attending our post-secondary institutions in the state via placemaking and quality of life initiatives.
- Ensure Future Ready Iowa is fully funded, as well as workforce training programs such as the Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training Program (260E), the Iowa Jobs Training Program (260F), and Iowa's Registered Apprenticeship Programs.
- Address the cliff effect, which prevents potential employees from entering the workforce.
- Support the Governor's Criminal Justice Work Group to provide second chance opportunities to Iowans.
- Educators at all levels must know the needs of the marketplace and ensure workforce ready graduates.

Economic Development

- Foster economic growth through the continuation and development of incentives that are responsible and assist in attaining and retaining innovative projects throughout the state.
- Protect IEDA's budget and key tax credits and programs that have a proven return on investment. These include, but are not limited to: the Research Activities Tax Credit; the Angel Investor Tax Credit; Renewable Fuel and Biochemical Tax Credits; High Quality Jobs Tax Credits; Workforce Housing Tax Credits (including the elimination of the urban backlog); Iowa Jobs Training Programs; Historic Preservation Credits; and Redevelopment Tax Credits.
- Protect local economic development resources, such as tax increment financing and tax abatement, as well as the property tax backfill. Eliminating the backfill will have negative implications for our partners at the city, county, and community school district.
- Fully fund Empower Rural Iowa to provide key infrastructure and housing assistance in rural Iowa.
- Expand the Workforce Housing Tax Credit to address project backlogs.

Business Climate

- Ensure a portion of any sales tax increase is used to decrease Iowa's corporate rate to 8 percent.
- Any income tax reforms need to be competitive, invest in growth, be simple, be permanent, predictable, and certain, be fair and responsible, and provide a clear transition path to success.
- Create new taxable revenue, such as allowing businesses to file as Benefit Corporations.
- Consider pension reform, multi-year budgeting, and review primary cost drivers to ensure sound budgeting.
- Evaluate rules and regulations for necessity, effectiveness, efficiency, enforceability, and financial impact.
- Ensure access to quality healthcare across the state by supporting the portions of Invest in Iowa that positively impacts county budgets related to mental health funding.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Build upon the investment Empower Rural Iowa provided and continue to find innovative ways to fund roads and bridges, water and wastewater, energy, and telecommunications infrastructure in a reliable manner.
- Consider implementing a large infrastructure investment program similar to the Iowa Reinvestment Act.
- Continue investment in Iowa's water quality, transportation infrastructure, and broadband connectivity.
- Improve Iowa's railways, workforce transit, intermodal rail, and create transportation hubs.
- Support the expansion of port authorities to be used as an economic development and placemaking strategy
- Enhance service levels and funding opportunities for air service.