

2022 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.

2022 State Legislative Priorities

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

To this end, for the 2022 Legislative Session, the Ames Chamber of Commerce encourages the Governor and Legislature to focus on the following four policy areas:

- **Talent**
- **Economic Development**
- **Business Climate**
- **Infrastructure**

As various policy proposals are developed and debated, the shared goal ought to involve growing Iowa's economy in an inclusive and beneficial way with specific support for:

- Developing policy strategies to grow Iowa's workforce that:
 - ensure Iowa is a welcoming environment,
 - address pressing employee needs like child-care, housing costs and student debt,
 - find ways to incentivize former Iowans to return,
 - retain more Iowans from our secondary institutions who become lifelong Iowans,
 - address "cliff effects" within benefit systems,
 - reintegrate Iowans who deserve a second chance and
 - attract new Americans through advocacy of an improved immigration system;
- Funding for existing programs and consideration of new resources that promote "placemaking" including quality of life and the arts;
- Fully funding the Future Ready Iowa Initiative;
- Developing and supporting incentives with proven return in targeted industries;
- Making business expansion and relocation decisions more competitive with a reduction of the corporate income tax rate; and
- Considering deployment innovation for costly infrastructure investments.

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



2022 State Legislative Priorities

Talent

- Continue to make Iowa a welcoming environment that is inclusive of a broad diversity of people;
- Ensure state workforce and economic development programs have the ability to address the most pressing employee needs like child-care and student debt;
- Incentivize and develop opportunities for former Iowans to return;
- Retain more Iowans from our community colleges, private colleges and universities, and the Regents institutions with potential tools to encourage their graduates to become lifelong Iowans;
- Address disparities within public support systems to avoid a “cliff effect” that acts as a disincentive for potential employees;
- Reintegrate Iowans into the work force who deserve a second chance including fully supporting the Governor’s FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice as it balances the needs of the new employee and their future employer;
- Attract new Americans by pushing for a uniform immigration system across all states to vet international talent and policies that welcome those new Americans to Iowa;
- Support for the recommendations presented by the Governor’s Child Care Task Force to address the ongoing childcare shortage;
- Ensure adequate funding for Iowa State University by increasing the general education appropriation by \$7 million and appropriating \$60.8 million for Phase II of the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab facility project.

Economic Development

- Research Activities Credits (RAC): Iowa’s RAC has been utilized as a model by other states to incentivize additional investment in research and development. Companies must balance substantial financial risk with market profitability and this credit allows businesses to strategically plan for the long-term. The RAC provides an offset to Iowa’s uncompetitive tax corporate climate.
- High Quality Jobs Credits: This program is one of the main tools for IEDA to attract new business and incentivize expansion in Iowa’s leading industries.
- Historic Preservation Credits: The tax credit aids the revitalization of historic properties that have the potential to catalyze surrounding growth and positively impact placemaking.

Business Climate

- Evaluate the current 9.8 percent top corporate tax rate and consider potential tax reform to address lowering this rate to 8 percent in order to be more competitive when attracting outside investment.
- Reduce revenue demand from local and state governments through public pension reforms and other measures that could positively impact local government budgets without tax increases.
- Explore additional resources to safeguard our businesses and consumers from cybersecurity risks
- Consider pension reform, multi-year budgeting, and review primary cost drivers to ensure sound budgeting.
- Ensure adequate access and funding for mental health resources for both children and adults.

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Build upon the 2021 \$100 million broadband investment and continue to attract talent, compete globally and ensure a fostering regulatory environment and resources for broader deployment across the state.
- Continue investment in Iowa’s water quality, transportation infrastructure, and broadband connectivity.
- Improve Iowa’s railways, workforce transit, intermodal rail, air service and create transportation hubs.