GREATER IOWA CITY, INC.

2026 State & Federal Public Policy Agenda

Invest in Talent Development & Workforce Growth

To meet workforce needs, Iowa must be a place where skilled workers of all backgrounds choose to live and where young Iowa choose to stay. This will require modernizing immigration policies to fill critical jobs, investing in innovative education and workforce strategies, and aligning PK–postsecondary systems with employer needs through expanded work-based learning opportunities and early skill development. Together, these strategies are essential to retaining and attracting top talent and strengthening Iowa's workforce today and into the future.

At the same time, removing barriers to work is essential to growing our workforce. Expanding access to affordable child care and investing in underserved communities will close opportunity gaps, strengthen businesses, and boost productivity. Together, these efforts will grow Iowa's workforce and long-term economic vitality.

Policy Solutions	Federal Policy	State Policy
Invest in much-needed talent development programs such as the Last Dollar Scholarship program, aviation workforce development initiatives, community college job training programs, and local apprenticeship and work-based learning programs to prepare our region for the future. *	✓	✓
Support policies that simplify and expand high-skilled work and school visas, without immense costs to businesses, and provide a legal and permanent path to citizenship for individuals who came to America as children.	✓	
Modernize employment verification (e-verify) system to check work documentation, including no penalties for companies who act in good faith, and discourage a siloed state-by-state approach.	✓	✓
Support policies that address access to high-quality, affordable child care and early childhood education through public-private partnerships such as increasing wages and benefits to grow our child care workforce, and expand Child Care Assistance (CCA) benefits to support working families.	✓	✓

Increase funding and eligibility for the Pell Grant and protect the Iowa Tuition Grant so more students have access and options to post-secondary training and degrees for high-demand careers, including expanding access to short-term, job-focused training.	✓	✓
Support policies that are welcoming to all populations to move and remain in Iowa, allowing businesses to attract a diverse workforce and their employees to pay taxes in Iowa.	✓	✓
Support policies that modernize and improve the education funding formula in a way that serves all school districts and students and allows school boards to prioritize their financial resources.		✓
Expand funding for ESL programs to advance employment opportunities for immigrants and programs that encourage employers to gain broader language and communication skills.	✓	✓
Support policies that help prepare offenders for successful reentry to Iowa communities and employment, including the expansion of high school equivalency diploma pathways and apprenticeships.	✓	✓
Support increased funding and access for mental health services for businesses, schools, and communities, including funding for law enforcement crisis intervention training and staffing.	✓	✓
Address the nation's aviation workforce shortage by re-examining the 1,500-hour minimum flight time rule and lowering financial barriers to the profession.	✓	

***Featured priority**