

IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

August 7, 2025

IowaHouseRepublicans.com

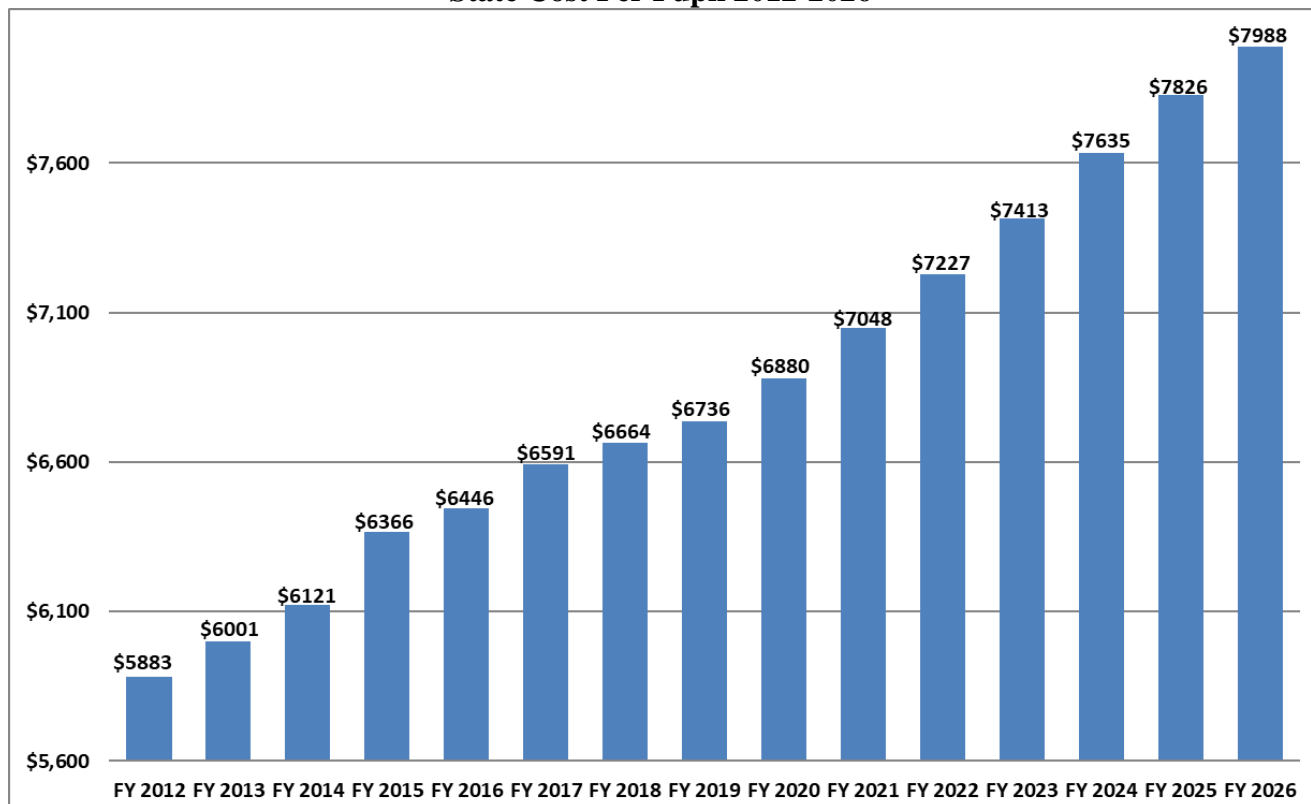
Appropriations

School Funding Overview

As students and teachers begin their school year preparations, it's time to review the level of state funding provided to Iowa schools for the next school year.

During the 2025 legislative session, the General Assembly set the growth factor for school funding at 2.00%. The Legislature also provided an additional \$5 per student to address the school funding equity issue that has existed since the implementation of the school funding formula in the 1970's. These increases have raised the state's funding level for each student – known as state cost per pupil - to \$7,988 for Fiscal Year 2026 (2025-2026 school year). This is an increase of \$162 over the previous year's level.

State Cost Per Pupil 2012-2026



Since Iowans put Republicans in control of the Iowa House in the 2010 election, school funding has steadily risen. State funding per pupil has grown by \$2105 over the past fifteen years. The overall amount of funding provided to schools each year has climbed from \$2.624 billion in Fiscal Year 2012 to \$3.915 billion for the upcoming school year.

Inside This Issue:

Appropriations	1
Agriculture	2
Commerce	4
Economic Growth	5
Education	5
Environmental Protection	6
Health & Human Services	6
Labor	7
Local Government	8
Natural Resources	8
Public Safety	9
State Government	9
Transportation	10
Ways & Means	10

This is a 49.21% increase in school funding over this period. This amount does not include the \$14 million the state has recently started providing to schools to help raise pay for para-educators and other school support staff.

Increasing the state funding per pupil amount has not been the only school funding change enacted by the Legislature. Since 2018 legislative session, the General Assembly has taken additional steps to address the inequity in transportation costs experienced by districts. At that time, some districts were spending up to one thousand dollars per student on transportation, while other districts were spending around \$100 per student. The goal of this program is to provide districts with funding to ensure a district's cost is the statewide average for student transportation. In the 2025-2026 school year, \$32.7 million of state funding will help Iowa school districts cover the cost of getting kids to school.

Iowa's General Fund is not the only source of state funding to local schools. The Secure an Advanced Vision for Education (SAVE) fund provides schools with funding from 1 cent of Iowa sales tax to be used on infrastructure needs. In Fiscal Year 2012, Iowa schools split \$394.1 million thru SAVE. Compare that amount to what schools received in Fiscal Year 2025. Thru the end of June, Iowa school districts had received \$661.4 million in Fiscal Year 2025. This amounts to a 68 percent increase in school infrastructure funding from the state since Republicans took control of the Iowa House of Representatives in the wake of the 2010 election.

As students and teachers kick off the new school year on August 25, some in the media and nearly all so-called public education advocates will once again issue their allegations and attacks over a lack of state dollars for public schools. What is never provided is an accounting of where the money goes. Simple math tells us that a class of 20 students, at \$7,988 state dollars per student, is \$159,760. That does not count federal dollars. The actual numbers show public schools receiving steady yearly increases and roughly half of the entire state budget.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Agriculture

ISU Extension & Outreach: Iowa Youth Get Their Hands Dirty Learning About the Benefits of Perennial Groundcover

On Friday, August 1, 2025, Iowa State University (ISU) Extension & Outreach issued a press release touting that from environmental science classes to Girl Scout troop meetings, over 2,000 Iowa youth have had the chance to participate in "*Where the Grass Is Greener*." This statewide program, from Iowa 4-H and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's Agriculture and Natural Resources program unit, provides youth with hands-on educational experiences demonstrating the benefits of perennial groundcover. Iowans can experience the program at the Iowa State Fair on August 9th at the Bruce L. Rastetter 4-H Exhibits Building. "*Where the Grass Is Greener*" showcases Iowa agriculture, Iowa State science and innovative conservation practices. Activities include erosion simulations, observation of soil microbes, identification of insects and games about weed suppression.

Central to the approach is developing and de-risking perennial groundcover systems, where a perennial cover crop is planted once and then persists for multiple years alongside annual crops such as corn and soybean. By providing year-round groundcover, perennial groundcover can deliver numerous ecosystem services, including conserving soil resources, reducing nutrient export, enhancing carbon sequestration and suppressing weeds, thereby reducing herbicide requirements. Compared to conventional cover cropping, a PGC approach has lower management requirements, which could facilitate widespread adoption of cover cropping systems critical to achieving measurable differences in large-scale environmental issues.

The lessons have been implemented in Iowa with youth in grades K-12. In these activities, youth learn about perennial groundcover for reducing soil erosion, increasing weed control, enhancing insect communities for improved insect pest management, and promoting soil microbial diversity for better soil health. In post-lesson surveys, youth reported a

better understanding of how different crop management practices, like perennial groundcover, affect the environment, and a better understanding of how science can help solve real-world problems.

50,000 in State Cost-Share Directed to Water Quality Practices Around 8 Public Iowa Lakes

On Tuesday, August 5, 2025, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release noting IDALS and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) were announcing that nine Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District partners will receive \$451,176 in water quality cost-share funding from the Publicly Owned Lakes program to help protect and enhance eight public lakes in Iowa. Jointly administered by IDALS and the DNR, the Publicly Owned Lakes program provides cost-share funding to landowners for conservation practices on private land within watersheds above public lakes and reservoirs. The funding will support the implementation of targeted conservation and water quality practices, including cover crops, water and sediment control basins, grassed waterways, terraces, grade stabilization structures, and other proven practices. These practices reduce nutrient loss and sediment delivery to Iowa's public lakes to help improve water quality and protect them for the enjoyment of Iowans and visitors to our state.

The following lakes were selected for cost-share funding this year:

Casey Lake

Black Hawk County Soil and Water Conservation District
Tama County Soil and Water Conservation District
\$7,012.50

Lake Geode

Des Moines County Soil and Water Conservation District
\$84,000

Lake Icaria

Adams County Soil and Water Conservation District
\$42,750

Union County Soil and Water Conservation District
Adair County Soil and Water Conservation District
\$45,000

3 Mile Lake

Union County Soil and Water Conservation District
Adair County Soil and Water Conservation District
\$133,793.19

Lake Miami

Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District
\$10,222

Pleasant Lake

Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Tree Damage and Insurance

The following was provided by the Consumer Advocacy Officer for the Iowa Insurance Division:

Severe weather, high winds, or old age can cause trees or large branches to fall, sometimes causing damage to your home, garage, fence, or vehicle. In the aftermath, many homeowners wonder if insurance will cover the damage and what steps to take next.

In most cases, standard homeowners insurance does cover damage caused by a fallen tree or large branch if the fall is sudden and accidental and caused by a covered peril such as wind, hail, lightning, or the weight of ice or snow. If a tree falls on your house, shed, or fence and causes damage, your policy may pay for:

- Structural repairs to your home or other covered buildings
- Removal of the tree, typically up to a certain dollar amount as defined by your policy
- Temporary living expenses if your home becomes uninhabitable

However, if the tree fell without causing damage, your insurance may not cover removal. If a tree falls due to neglect, disease, or rot, and the risk was known beforehand the claim may be denied.

If a tree or branch falls on your vehicle, the damage is not covered by homeowners insurance. Instead, review your auto insurance for the comprehensive coverage benefits. Comprehensive coverage pays for damage caused by non-collision events, including falling trees, theft, vandalism, and weather.

If you only carry liability auto insurance, which is the minimum requirement in Iowa, you will be responsible for the repair or replacement costs.

If your neighbor's tree falls onto your property and damages your home, your own homeowners insurance may cover it, but you will have to pay your deductible. If the tree was dead or poorly maintained, and your neighbor was negligent, your insurer may try to recover costs from their insurance through subrogation, which ensures the negligent party is responsible for the loss. In that case, your deductible may be returned.

If your tree damages a neighbor's property, they should file a claim with their insurance, but you could be liable if your neglect or poor maintenance contributed to the fall.

If a tree falls on your property, ensure safety first. Stay away from downed power lines and damaged structures. Call emergency services if there's a safety risk. Document the damage with clear photos and videos before making any changes or repairs. Mitigate against further damage by covering holes or broken windows with tarps or boards. Contact your insurance company if it appears the damage is over your deductible, and file a claim promptly and provide documentation. Only [hire registered contractors](#) and tree removal services. Don't sign service company contracts with any blanks, and know how much of the clean up cost you will be responsible for. Keep receipts for reimbursement.

Homeowners insurance may cover damage from fallen trees if caused by storms or other covered perils as defined by the policy. Car damage is only covered under comprehensive auto insurance. Understanding your policies and acting quickly can help minimize stress and out-of-pocket expenses in these unexpected events.

Always review your insurance coverage and speak with your agent regularly to ensure your home and autos have the proper protection. The Iowa Insurance Division is here to assist at 515-654-6600.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Economic Growth

Small Town Grocers Receive Grants

Rural grocers and food producers are among eight recipients of the latest Rural Innovation Grants by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Awarded through the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative, the grants total \$72,624 and will support projects designed to enhance local services and promote economic development.

The Rural Innovation Grant program encourages creative solutions to challenges faced by towns that have fewer than 20,000 residents and are not located next to cities with populations of 40,000 or more. This round of funding prioritized independently owned grocery stores implementing technology upgrades or new service models; food producers investing in equipment, technology or regulatory support; and established businesses pursuing new markets through a partnership with the Colorado-based National Center for Economic Gardening.

IEDA received 10 applications from across the state. The eight recipients selected are located in: Minden, Malcom, Winthrop, Independence, Charles City, Lake View, Riceville, and Sumner.

The grant program is administered by IEDA's Center for Rural Revitalization, in consultation with the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative task force. The next round of Rural Innovation Grant funding opened July 1 and focuses on increasing rural housing availability. The deadline to apply is 4 p.m. CDT Aug. 29.

(Contact: Kristi Kiious 2-5290)

Education

July 30, 2025 Meeting Recap

The Iowa Board of Regents met virtually [July 30, 2025](#), originating from Seerley Hall at UNI. [FY 2026 Budgets VIDEO](#)

The Board passed an \$8.4 billion FY 2026 Budget for the universities, the Board Office and the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. Of the \$8.4 billion budget, more than \$1.8 billion is designated for General University Operating Budgets, which include funds from general university state appropriations and tuition revenue. The general fund pays for instruction, academic support, scholarships and day-to-day expenses of the Regents enterprise.

Additionally, more than \$3.4 billion in the budget is restricted, which are funds specifically designated for a particular purpose. These funds cannot be used in any other way and include capital and tuition replacement appropriations, gifts, plant funds, sponsored funding from federal and private sources and athletics, as well as other auxiliary or independent functions.

Finally, more than \$3 billion in the budget is for UI Health Care. These dollars help UIHC offer a broad spectrum of clinical services to all patients and provide a base for innovative research to improve health care. The expansion of UIHC's footprint enhances access to quality health care in all 99 Iowa counties.

The three university presidents presented budget updates during the meeting.

Watch their presentations:

- [UNI President Mark Nook](#)
- [ISU President Wendy Wintersteen](#)

- [UI President Barbara Wilson](#)

The Regents agreed to continue budget discussions and offer potential amendments at future meetings.

[UNI Tuition and Fees for Contiguous States VIDEO](#)

The Regents approved tuition and mandatory fees for new students residing the six states bordering Iowa. Incoming students from those states will pay tuition rates equivalent to those of Iowa residents, which were approved in June.

[Center for Intellectual Freedom VIDEO](#)

The Board appointed UI Economics Professor **Luciano de Castro** as the interim Executive Director of the Center for Intellectual Freedom on the UI Campus. House File 437, which was signed into law on June 11, 2025, requires the creation of the Center at the University of Iowa under the purview of the Board of Regents.

(Info from Iowa Board of Regents)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Environmental Protection

EPA Announces Availability of \$14 Million in Funding for Brownfields Job Training Program Grants

On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a press release that announced the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Fiscal Year 2026 Brownfields Job Training Grants Program. These grants put the agency's commitment to protect human health and the environment into action while remaining good stewards of tax dollars and advancing policies to energize the economy. EPA Administrator Zeldin commented-- "*The Brownfields Job Training Grants Program is a prime example of how we can be both environmental stewards and champions of good-paying jobs for American families. EPA is Powering the Great American Comeback, ensuring our nation has the cleanest air, land, and water, while directly strengthening local economies.*"

This funding helps communities address challenges posed by Brownfields through robust job training programs that work alongside remediation and redevelopment efforts. Grant awards are selected through a competitive process and are available for up to \$500,000 with a project period of up to five years. The total amount of funding available for the competition is estimated to range from \$10,000,000 to \$14,000,000. The grant application may be found on <https://www.Grants.gov> and applicants must apply by September 26, 2025. For more information, visit [EPA's Brownfields Job Training Grants website](#).

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Health and Human Services

Iowa Holds Record for Smallest Baby and World's Earliest Preemie

The University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) continues to break records saving our most vulnerable children. [Recently it was announced that Nash Keen](#) from Ankeny, IA turned one-year old, making him the **Guinness World Records titleholder for most premature baby with being born at 21-weeks gestation**. Nash was born at just 10 ounces and after 189 days in the hospital, was able to go home in January 2025.

Within the last year, [UIHC also announced that the tiniest preemie in the U.S.](#) was discharged and able to go to her home in Solon, IA. **Evelyn Eilers was born at 8.46 ounces, making her one of three tied for third-smallest in the world.** After 7 months of care at UIHC, she was able to go home weighing 7 pounds 8 ounces.

These remarkable children show the importance of life and how science continues to improve in saving children earlier and earlier. The state of Iowa is incredibly fortunate to have the health care providers at [UIHC's NICU that have the highest survival rate for extremely preterm infants in North America.](#)

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Labor

Iowa Workforce Development at the State Fair

The Iowa State Fair is the best place to experience all that the state has to offer, and that includes Iowa's many great careers!

Iowa Workforce Development is bringing a large presence to this year's fair to connect with fellow Iowans, show them how to find new careers, and help them discover what's possible in our state. We're here to help, because **our job is to help you find yours!**

Come find us during the fair! From August 7-17, 2025, you can connect with Iowa's workforce team and discover resources that help advance your workforce goals. Whether you're a student, job seeker, or employers, there's something for every Iowan.

You can find Iowa's workforce team at one of two locations at the fairgrounds:

Varied Industries Booth

- **Location:** NW Corner of Varied Industries Building (just off the Grand Concourse).
- **Description:** An interactive indoor booth where you can explore different career paths in Iowa and get help from staff who can point you to resources that help you find and understand future careers.
- **Features:** Agency resources, "What is Your Dream Job?" Chalkboard, A "Career Explorer" tool , handouts and swag.

Mobile Workforce Center

- **Location:** East of Gate 10, next to Sky Glider West.
- **Features:** Job-ready resources for Iowans to help them get started in their career journey. Fairgoers can directly register on iowaworks.gov, build their resume, attend a workshop, and much more.
- **Description:** The IowaWORKS Mobile Workforce Center, housed outside, which acts as the front door to many different possibilities that exist within Iowa's largest jobs bank and employment network. You can register in the IowaWORKS system, learn how to get help, and become more job ready. Don't have a resume, or need to update your own? They can help you knock that out, too!

Theme Days

The IowaWORKS Mobile Workforce Center will also feature different themes through the fair that are focused on different areas of the workforce and the appropriate staff that's available to help.

- **IowaWORKS Day** (Finding a Job in Iowa) – August 7, 2025
- **Youth Day** – August 9, 2025

- **Veterans Day** – August 11, 2025
- **Work-Based Learn/New Career Pathways Day** – August 14, 2025

Stay tuned to our social channels for more information in the days ahead.
(Info from Iowa Workforce Development)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Local Government

National Volunteer Fire Council Hosting Recruitment Training

Across Iowa we have seen an increased need for volunteer emergency medical care providers and firefighters. Rural communities in Iowa have for years seen a rise in need for volunteers. Iowans have sacrificed and volunteered to ensure that fellow Iowans are taken care of. Volunteer emergency medical care providers, firefighters, and reserve peace officers work diligently to assist their communities in time of needs. These volunteers are often first on the scene to provide medical care, fight fires, and during the pandemic to help distribute PPE supplies in their communities.

This year [House File 1002](#) was signed into law to establish Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) for volunteer fire fighters, emergency medical care providers, and reserve peace officers. The new law will authorize municipalities to establish tax deferred awards for volunteers with a 3:1 state funding match up to \$500 per individual.

Additionally, the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is hosting a free virtual webinar for volunteer fire departments to demonstrate and explain tools that can simplify and improve recruitment efforts for departments. The National Volunteer Fire Council is the leading nonprofit membership association for volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The webinar will be on August 7 at 1:00 PM CDT. Any interested departments can sign up for the free webinar [here](#).

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Natural Resources

Hunter Education Program Opens Registration for Fall Courses

On Tuesday, July 29, 2025, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release announcing that it offers more than 200 hunter education courses each year, and now is the time to enroll before hunting seasons arrive. Hunter education is a mandatory program designed to introduce students to firearms safety and several other life-long skills that are important to the many different types of outdoor recreational activities. A person who is 11 years old or older may enroll in a course, but those who are 11 and successfully complete the course will be issued a certificate which becomes valid on their 12th birthday. Students may certify in several ways, such as the traditional classroom course or a hybrid online/field day course. Students 18 years of age and older may certify completely online with no field day requirement.

For more information on course options, visit the Iowa DNR's [Hunter Education & Safety](#) page.

DNR Urges Caution as Iowans Clean Up Storm-Damaged Trees

On Wednesday, July 30, 2025, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release noting that state forestry experts are encouraging Iowans to proceed with caution as they are cleaning up the tree damage from

storms that hit northwest Iowa in late July. Emma Hanigan, urban forestry coordinator for the DNR suggests homeowners and volunteers wear safety equipment, including hand, foot, leg, eye, face, hearing and head protection, and avoid wearing loose-fitting clothes while using a chainsaw.

After cleanup is complete, homeowners wanting to have their trees inspected should contact a professional, insured arborist. The arborist can examine trees for cracks or other issues that might have been overlooked. Routine tree care of young trees makes them more resilient long term and decreases the likelihood of storm-related damage. Hanigan said younger wind-thrown trees can be saved by staking and guying, but larger trees are less likely to recover. When the time is right, homeowners who have lost trees are encouraged to replant. Find helpful resources and tips for homeowners and community officials to prepare and respond quickly and safely after storm events online at www.iowadnr.gov/treedisaster.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Public Safety

Iowa Continues to Be Safe Place to Live

According to various rankings (safewise.com, crimegrade.org, commonsenseinstituteus.org), Iowa ranks favorably in public safety and crime metrics compared to other U.S. states. Based on available data, Iowa's violent crime rate is about 25% below the national average, while the property crime rate is roughly 32% below the national figure. Iowa's murder rate is the second-lowest nationwide while the robbery rate is the seventh-lowest at 25 per 100,000.

In the Common Sense Institute's Public Safety Competitiveness Index, Iowa ranks third best for drug overdoses and sixth for homelessness. U.S. News ranks Iowa 14th overall among states, with public safety contributing to its standing, based on FBI crime data for violent and property crimes.

On a city level, Sioux Center is Iowa's safest city, with low violent and property crime rates.

Iowans report feeling safer than the national average, with 66% feeling safe in their state (vs. 48% nationally) and only 45% perceiving crime as increasing, the lowest percentage nationwide.

(Contact: Jeff Mitchell 1-5137)

State Government

1 In 7 Iowans Have Unclaimed Property

State Treasurer Roby Smith is inviting Iowans to visit his Great Iowa Treasure Hunt booth at the Iowa State Fair and search for unclaimed money. "Many Iowans would argue there is nothing better than their favorite food on a stick," said Smith. "But I would argue those Iowans have never stopped by Great Iowa Treasure Hunt's booth to find unclaimed money with their name on it. More than 587,000 individuals and businesses have unclaimed property. The Great Iowa Treasure Hunt booth is located in the Varied Industries Building and has computers available for fairgoers to search. "Look for your name or the names of people and businesses you know," Smith said. Unclaimed property occurs when a business or financial institution loses contact with the owner of the asset after a specific period and turns it over to the State Treasurer's Office for safekeeping. Through the Great Iowa Treasure Hunt, Smith works to reunite the assets with the owners or heirs. Common examples include forgotten checking and savings accounts, stocks, uncashed checks, life insurance policies, utility refunds and safe deposit box contents.

The Great Iowa Treasure Hunt is Iowa's only legitimate source of unclaimed property. The website is free, secure, and allows you to search for your name or for businesses and people you know at <https://www.greatiowatreasurehunt.gov>.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

Have an Opinion About Iowa's Roads?

As the Iowa Transportation Commission begins its work to update the State Transportation Plan for Iowa, an invitation has been extended to Iowans to tell the seven-member panel what improvements should be addressed.

The State Transportation Plan is Iowa's five-year blueprint for how future investments should be made to Iowa's transportation system, including aviation, public transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, highways, and water transportation. As part of process, the Transportation Commission is asking for Iowans input. Late last month, the Commission released a short survey to collect feedback on the current system and gather ideas for the future of transportation in Iowa. The survey takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey is available at: <https://iowadot.gov/FutureTravel> and will remain open until August 31, 2025.

The current State Transportation Plan can be found here: <https://iowadot.gov/transportation-development/systems-planning/areas-planning/transportation-plans/state-transportation-plan>.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Ways & Means

Senate File 657—Changes to Endow Iowa Tax Credit

This article will focus on Division XII of Senate File 657—covering changes to the Endow Iowa Tax Credit. The Endow Iowa Tax Credit was established in 2003 to award taxpayers who make donations to a qualified community foundation or affiliate with a tax credit equal to 25.0% of the charitable donation with a \$100,000 individual maximum and a \$6.0 million annual aggregate maximum. According to the March 2025 Contingent Liabilities Report that tax credit claims totaled approximately \$3.9 million in FY 2022, \$4.5 million in FY 2023, and \$5.9 million in FY 2024.

The initial draft of what become Senate File 657 included language to repeal the Endow Iowa Tax Credit. House Republicans were not in support of that provision and worked toward reasonable, intentional changes in the program.

Changes to the program included in Division XII are:

- Removal of definitions that will no longer be applicable.
- Decrease in the aggregate amount of tax credits that may be awarded from \$6.0 million to \$3.5 million.
- Decrease in the maximum tax credit per taxpayer from \$100,000 to \$50,000.
- Requires that for donations to be eligible for a tax credit a fund cannot be named for a corporation or other business entity and requires community foundations assist the authority in verifying eligibility of donations.
- Removes county endowment funding for IEDA and Council of Foundations (lead philanthropic entity) for marketing etc.

For the next newsletter this article will be on changes to the Research and Development Tax Credit in Divisions XIII and XIV.

(Contact: Kristi Kiious 2-5290)