

FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

November 15, 2024



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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FY 2026 DEPARTMENT REQUESTS — EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund Requests. Departments are requesting a total of \$1.045 billion from the General Fund for FY 2026. This is an increase of \$26.0 million compared to estimated FY 2025.

General Fund Appropriation Totals					
	Actual FY 2024	Estimated FY 2025	Dept. Request FY 2026	Dept. Req. vs. Est. FY 2025	Percent Change
Department for the Blind	\$ 3,043,503	\$ 3,087,171	\$ 3,207,190	\$ 120,019	3.9%
Department of Education	419,954,611	442,924,100	442,924,100	0	0.0%
Board of Regents	560,658,748	572,998,420	598,878,420	25,880,000	4.5%
Total Education	\$ 983,656,862	\$1,019,009,691	\$1,045,009,710	\$ 26,000,019	2.6%

Department for the Blind. The Department for the Blind is requesting an increase of \$120,000, which includes \$53,000 to secure an additional \$129,000 in federal funds and \$67,000 to replace the federal funding no longer provided under the [State Plan for Independent Living](#).

Department of Education. The Department of Education is requesting a total of \$442.9 million for FY 2026. This is no change compared to estimated FY 2025. A new standing appropriation of \$750,000 for therapeutic classroom services is included in the actual FY 2024, estimated FY 2025, and FY 2026 Department request totals. This standing appropriation was established in Iowa Code section [256.25A\(1\)\(b\)](#) and provides per diem funding for defined students receiving services in a therapeutic classroom.

Board of Regents. The Board of Regents is requesting an increase of \$25.9 million from the General Fund compared to estimated FY 2025. The requested changes include:

- **State University of Iowa (SUI) — Rural Iowa Health Care.** This new \$10.0 million program would expand Iowa's rural health care workforce, delivery, and outcomes. The University will allocate \$1.5 million to mental health, \$2.0 million to maternal health, and \$6.5 million to primary care.
- **SUI — Nurse Innovators Program.** This new \$1.0 million program would help expand the program started in 2022 as a three-year grant from the Kauffman Foundation. The Program supports nurse entrepreneurship developing, prototyping, manufacturing, and packaging new tools and products. The new funding would target Iowa's 83 critical access hospitals.
- **Iowa State University (ISU) — Veterinary Early Acceptance.** This new \$1.0 million program would be used to fund scholarships through the ISU Production Animal — Veterinary Early Acceptance Program (PA-VEAP) that started in 2023. This appropriation would provide 10 students with scholarships forgivable after working in rural Iowa for 5 years.
- **ISU — Manufacturing Pipeline.** This new \$4.0 million program would help launch four manufacturing hubs across rural Iowa with the goal of expanding the State's rural manufacturing workforce and access to technology.
- **ISU — Agricultural Experiment Station.** This \$3.8 million increase would expand the program's mission of developing potential improvements to food production and agribusiness and State outreach in three specific categories:

- **Agricultural Workforce Development.** Funding would support workforce development and training programs sited at ISU teaching and research farms and investments in new equipment to deliver industry-relevant research and education. Funding would link online education to on-site laboratory or field experiences at ISU's outlying teaching, research, and demonstration farms, in partnership with Iowa community colleges.
- **Digital and Precision Agriculture.** Funding would expand forecasting tools through the statewide trials of the Iowa Nutrient Initiative, which provides recommendations for nitrogen rates, as well as for manure applications and phosphorus and potassium impacts.
- **Agricultural Economics and Policy.** Funding would support development of timely financial decision-making tools to help farmers and agribusinesses manage their businesses; for example, tools that offer new insights on Iowa cash rents, yields, inheritance taxes, cover crop returns, land values, biofuel margins, and more. Additional funding would allow for enhanced collection and integration of data from the fields of agricultural engineering, animal science, agronomy, and agricultural economics to help farmers make informed choices.
- **ISU — Cooperative Extension.** This \$1.0 million increase would support three agricultural extension programs:
 - **Workforce Development, Processing, and Entrepreneurship.** Funding would be used to build out existing extension short courses and develop new educational courses for farmers, entrepreneurs, processors, and small businesses in food safety, food manufacturing, and business development.
 - **Production Focused Digital and Precision Livestock and Crops.** Funding would expand the extension's Planter University, a program that helps farmers better understand optimize planting technologies, and create a Combine University with similar goals for farmers using the newest harvesting technologies, including the use of drones and sprayer technologies and additional programs utilizing precision and digital technologies in the livestock industry.
 - **Agricultural Economics and Policy.** Funding would expand efforts to analyze the economic impacts of timely issues such as emerging livestock diseases and vaccine use; potential changes to the Grain Indemnity Fund, a low-cost insurance policy for Iowa farmers that protects them from catastrophic financial losses; biofuel tax credits; carbon markets; and rural water utilization during drought. Funding would help to hire a regional economic scientist focused on supporting rural communities.
- **University of Northern Iowa (UNI) — General University Appropriation.** This \$2.5 million increase would support efforts to decrease UNI tuition compared to ISU and SUI.
- **UNI — Center for Civic Engagement.** This new \$1.0 million program would help launch a new Center dedicated to researching, teaching, and conducting public outreach in free speech and civic education.
- **UNI — UNI @ Iowa Community Colleges (IACC).** This new \$1.6 million appropriation request would allow for expansion of this program. UNI received \$4.2 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to develop the UNI @ IACC program, which helps students with an associate degree to complete their bachelor's degree online through UNI.

Fiscal Year 2026 Other Funds Requests. Departments are requesting a total of \$34.0 million from Other Funds in FY 2026. This is no change compared to estimated FY 2025.

Other Funds Appropriation Totals					
	Actual FY 2024	Estimated FY 2025	Dept. Request FY 2026	Dept. Req. vs. Est. FY 2025	Percent Change
Department of Education	\$ 34,000,000	\$ 34,000,000	\$ 34,000,000	\$ 0	0.0%
Total Education	\$ 34,000,000	\$ 34,000,000	\$ 34,000,000	\$ 0	0.0%

Additional Notes. Additional information can be found on the LSA website:

- [Appropriation Tracking](#)
- [Department Webpages](#)
- [Budget Unit Briefs](#)
- **Fiscal Update Article** — [Notice of Funds Transfer — Department of Education \(June 2024\)](#)

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Doc ID 1462976