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November 16, 2026

Mr. Charlie Smithson
Secretary of the Senate
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Des Moines IA 50319

Ms. Meghan Nelson
Chief Clerk of the House
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Des Moines IA 50319

Tim McDermott, Director
Legislative Services Agency
State Capitol Building
Des Moines IA 50319

Dear Members of the Iowa General Assembly:

Pursuant to Iowa Code and Iowa Acts, the enclosed annual report includes information from the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa, and their respective research foundations as follows:

Patents and Licenses Report	262B.3
Activities, Projects, and Programs Funded with Board of Regents Innovation Fund Approp.	2026 House File HF2772 §10; 2026 Iowa Acts, Ch. 1193.10
Technology Commercialization, Entrepreneurship, Regional Development, and Market Research Report	2017 Iowa Acts, Ch. 169.32; 2017 Iowa Acts, Ch. 169.17; SF513 §17.1.b.1.b, §32.1.b.1.b

Collectively, in FY 2026, the three Regent universities provided $1.3 billion dollars in total sponsored funding to the state of Iowa, including $551.5 million from competitive federal grants and awards.

The Regent universities aid hundreds of businesses and start-up companies across Iowa. In FY 2026, there were 3,985 employees in the 218 companies located in the universities' research parks and incubators. The universities also executed 169 license and option agreements on institutional intellectual property and were awarded 156 patents. For FY 2026, the Iowa General Assembly appropriated nearly $13.5 million in total funding for economic development, technology transfer, and research commercialization.

If you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

Mark J. Braun
Executive Director

\Box Sync\Board of Regents Shared\BF\Legislative\2027 session\Reports\

Attachments

ANNUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER REPORT

Action Requested: Receive the report.

Full Reports Available: The FY 2026 annual reports from the University of Iowa (UI), Iowa State University (ISU) and the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) are available on the Board of Regents website and will be provided to the General Assembly, Governor's Office, Legislative Services Agency and the Iowa Economic Development Authority as required by law.

Executive Summary: Iowa's three public universities collaborate with one another and with business and industry partners to foster success for economic development and entrepreneurship efforts throughout Iowa. Through research-based expertise and business assistance and partnerships, the universities provide valuable resources to Iowa's businesses, industries and communities in all 99 counties. Academic research generates intellectual property discoveries and innovations that create opportunities for commercialization, strengthen Iowa's economy and improve quality of life. These efforts provide Iowa with an educated workforce. Research and scholarship conducted by faculty and staff at the Regent universities often lead to the discovery of innovations that can improve the quality of life for people in the state, the nation and worldwide.

The Regent universities research and economic activities outlined in their reports meet the Board of Regents Strategic Plan, Priority 2, Objective 2.3: The Regent Enterprise will build strategic collaborations among universities and with outside entities to foster opportunities for innovation and economic development. Each institution shall report annually on significant partnership and/or collaboration activities. This includes both quantitative and qualitative metrics that demonstrate the impact of these activities.

FY 2026 Highlights: Collectively, in FY 2026, the three universities provided $1.3 billion in total sponsored funding to the state of Iowa, including $551.5 million from competitive federal grants and awards. The Regent universities work diligently to develop breakthroughs that help to improve Iowa's economy through economic development, technology transfer and commercialization of research. The Regent universities faculty and researchers compete nationally and internationally to secure funding for their research. These efforts provide students with valuable opportunities to gain hands-on experience participating in this research.

The Regent universities aid hundreds of businesses and start-up companies across Iowa. In FY 2026, the Regent universities' research parks and incubators supported 218 companies employing 3,985 individuals. The universities also executed 169 license and option agreements involving institutional intellectual property and were awarded 119 patents. These numbers only tell part of the story. They do not fully capture the value of assisting licensees and startup companies in transforming early-stage research discoveries into commercially viable products and services. In addition, revenue from licensed patents is only collected during the patent term, which results in an underreporting of revenue generated from products that contain university technology. Despite these limitations, these statistics reflect excellent performance when compared to peer institutions and reflect the economic value the Regent universities provide to the State of Iowa.

The charts below show the combined statistics for the three universities over the past five fiscal years. See the chart at end of the docket item for the details from each university.

Licenses, Intellectual Property and Patents	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Patent applications filed	284	289	253	257	253
Patents awarded	150	158	150	156	119
Disclosures of intellectual property	197	215	201	209	246
Total license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property	84	136	56	111	113
License and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property **in Iowa**	16	27	21	23	25
License and option agreements yielding income	208	201	215	189	169
Revenue to **Iowa** companies as a result of licensed technology	$12.1 M	$11.5 M	$13.2 M	$32.2 M	$23.7 M
Royalties and license fee income	$6.5 M	$5.3 M	$5.3 M	$6.1 M	$4.7 M

Companies	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Total startup companies formed through licensing activities	5	7	8	4	6
Startup companies formed **in Iowa** through licensing activities	3	6	8	4	4
Startup companies formed through UNI assistance	98	75	107	77	72
Companies in research parks and incubators	274	287	272	235	218
New companies in research parks and incubators	95	102	85	60	77
Employees in companies in research parks and incubators	3,231	3,828	3,956	3,490	3,985

Income and Funding	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Total sponsored funding	$1,515 B	$1.277 B	$1.390 B	$1.291 B	$1.307 B
Sponsored funding from federal grants	$617 M	$687.8 M	$632 M	$626.9 M	$551.5 M
Total corporate-sponsored funding	$199.9 M	$203.0 M	$229.3 M	$175.9 M	$244.9 M
Corporate-sponsored funding **in Iowa**	$27.6 M	$32.6 M	$30.9 M	$24.5 M	$33.2 M

State Appropriations: Stable state funding allows the Regent universities to grow Iowa's economy. In many cases sponsored projects, including federally sourced projects, require matching funds ensuring the sponsor and the university have a financial stake in the project. By using a portion of state appropriations to meet these requirements, the Regent universities can leverage additional external funding, effectively doubling or, in some cases, more than doubling the impact of state dollars. This ability to maximize state investments expands the universities' capacity to advance research, support innovation and contribute to Iowa's economic growth.

Additionally, federal agencies will only invest in institutions that demonstrate financial stability, compliance with federal regulations, access to advanced technology and instrumentation, robust public service portfolios, and highly qualified scholars and researchers. State funding supplies these resources, allowing the Regent universities to attract federal and non-federal funds so that

every state dollar invested in the Regent universities multiplies the impact on Iowa's communities and economy.

For FY 2026, the Iowa General Assembly appropriated nearly $13.5 million in total funding for economic development, technology transfer and research commercialization, maintaining the same funding level as FY 2025. Of this amount nearly $4.4 million was appropriated through two state general fund appropriations, allocated as follows:

- Nearly $4.0 million to ISU and UI for the biosciences innovation program (divided $2,963,995 to ISU and $1,000,000 to UI), which is the same as FY 2025. The funding continues to support the four bioscience platforms identified in the TEConomy report: biobased chemicals, precision and digital agriculture, vaccines and immunotherapeutics, and medical devices. These investments promote innovation and economic development by facilitating technology transfer and commercialization, supporting start-ups companies, attracting external funding and strengthening the innovation ecosystem, and developing a skilled workforce.
- $394,321 to UNI for the Metal Casting Center's foundry 4.0 initiatives related to investment castings technology, automation, IoT sensors and industry support, which is the same level of support as FY 2025. This program was initially funded at $400,000 in FY 2020.

The remaining $9.1 million is allocated to the Regent universities from the Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund (SWJCF):

- $3 million to the Regents Innovation Fund, which supports technology commercialization, marketing, entrepreneurship, business growth and infrastructure projects and programs authorized under Iowa Code chapter 262B (Commercialization of Research). The Regent universities invest the funds that yield successful startups, innovative business assistance, and critical research leading to commercialization. The universities are required to match the funding on a one-to-one basis from non-state resources. Research grants, private investors or companies interested in a project, and other university funds are often used as match dollars. The legislation divides the funding as follows: 35% to UI, 35% to ISU, and 30% to UNI.
- $2 million to UI for implementing the entrepreneurship and economic growth initiative. The appropriation is used to expand public/private partnerships and programing through the Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center.
- $209,279 to UI for the UI Research Park, Technology Innovation Center and UI Pharmaceuticals (formerly Advanced Drug Development program). UI must invest in research projects that provide economic stimulus for Iowa and emphasize providing services to Iowa-based companies.
- $2.42 million to ISU for small business development centers, the ISU Research Park and the Center for Industrial Research and Service. At least $735,728 must be allocated for small business development centers. Funding for research must prioritize projects that stimulate Iowa's economy and provide services to Iowa-based companies. The CIRAS industrial incentive program must focus on Iowa's industrial sectors and seek financial and in-kind contributions from businesses, industrial foundations and trade associations. Program funds may only be used for directed contract research or nondirected research projects that receive matching private-sector contributions. Small businesses must provide $1 for every $3 in state funding, while other businesses, industrial foundations and trade associations must provide a dollar-for-dollar match.
- $1.47 million to UNI for the Metal Casting Center, Family Business Center, the Center for Business Growth and Innovation, and the Institute for Decision Making. UNI must

direct expenditures for research toward projects that will provide economic stimulus for Iowa and emphasize providing services to Iowa-based companies.

Annual Report Highlights

In FY 2026, the University of Iowa secured $771.7 million in external funding, including $536 million for research, scholarship and creative activities across more than 2,100 projects. The federal government remained the university's largest source of research support during FY 2026, providing $295.8 million for projects spanning medicine, public health, engineering, education, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities. These investments demonstrate confidence in the expertise and capabilities of UI researchers, but they do more than support scholarly efforts — they make possible discoveries that improve health and strengthen communities in Iowa and beyond.

In FY 2026, Iowa State University raised a total of $487.9 million in total external funding, including $254.6 million in sponsored research funding dedicated to studies of agricultural technology, women’s health, semiconductors and many other projects. Iowa State researchers submitted 1,999 new research proposals during the 2026 fiscal year, the highest number in the past six fiscal years. Research funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grew year over year, to $30.6 million and $17.9 million, respectively, increases of 24.7% and 1.8%. Research support from corporate and industry sources also increased, jumping by $10.6 million to $32.8 million.

The University of Northern Iowa provided economic development assistance to all of Iowa’s 99 counties for the 27th consecutive year. These efforts, led by UNI’s economic development outreach programs, are housed in the Business and Community Services (BCS) division, and work toward supporting UNI strategic goal 3, to “Empower Communities to Shape Their Future.” Since 2000, BCS has engaged the entire university community in its outreach efforts, including faculty, staff, students and alumni – all of whom play a critical role in Building a Better Iowa. BCS outreach centers and programs recorded 4,848 unique client interactions, a record high.

	FY 2022				FY 2023				FY 2024				FY 2025				FY 2026			
Indicators	**ISU**	**SUI**	**UNI**	**Regents Total**	**ISU**	**SUI**	**UNI**	**Regents Total**	**ISU**	**SUI**	**UNI**	**Regents Total**	**ISU**	**SUI**	**UNI**	**Regents Total**	**ISU**	**SUI**	**UNI**	**Regents Total**
Number of disclosures of intellectual property	82	103	12	197	130	72	13	215	101	87	13	201	101	95	13	209	112	117	17	246
Number of patent applications filed	94	188	2	284	112	175	2	289	129	121	3	253	131	124	2	257	120	133	0	253
Number of patents awarded	69	80	1	150	97	59	2	158	64 US only; 79 total	69	2	150	48-US only; 58 total	97	1	156	53-US only; 69 total	49	1	119
Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property **in total**	34	48	2	84	87	47	2	136	25	29	2	56	57	53	1	111	88	25	0	113
Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property **in Iowa**	10	5	1	16	14	12	1	27	13	7	1	21	18	14	1	23	20	5	0	25
Number of license and option agreements yielding income	113	83	12	208	113	76	12	201	111	92	12	215	108	71	10	189	98	62	9	169
Revenue to Iowa companies as a result of licensed technology	$5.5 million	2.32 million	$4.3 million	12.1 million	$3.0 million	$4.0 million	$4.5 million	$11.5 million	$3.6 million	$4.4 million	$5.2 million	$13.2 million	$15.3 million	$12.4 million	$4.5 million	$32.2 million	$11.1 million	$9.1 million	$3.5 million	$23.7 million
Number of startup companies formed, **in total** (through licensing activities)	1	3	1	5	1	5	1	7	5	2	1	8	1	2	1	4	3	1	2	6
Number of startup companies formed, **in Iowa** (through licensing activities)	1	1	1	3	1	4	1	6	5	2	1	8	1	2	1	4	2	1	1	4
Number of startup companies formed through UNI assistance	--	--	98	98	--	--	75	75	--	--	107	107	--	--	77	77	-	-	72	72
Number of companies in research parks and incubators	142	112	20	274	159	105	23	287	146	108	18	272	132	91	12	235	122	84	12	218
Number of new companies in research parks and incubators	45	42	8	95	48	42	12	102	24	54	7	85	15	37	8	60	30	40	7	77
Number of employees in companies in research parks and incubators	1,945	1,253	33	3,231	2,491	1,300	37	3,828	2,651	1,283	22	3,956	2,483	1,027	25	3,490	3,014	952	19	3,985
Royalties and license fee income	$2.8 million	$3.65 million	$35,600	$6.5 million	$3.1 million	$2.16 million	$49,068	$5.3 million	$3.0 million	$2.3 million	$68,810	$5.3 million	$4.5 million	$1.6 million	$33,200	$6.1 million	$3.3 million	$1.4 million	$32,484	$4.7 million
Total sponsored funding	$601.7 million	$867.2 million	$46.5 million	$1.515 billion	$530.5 million	$704.1 million	$42.7 million	$1.277 billion	$544.6 million	$811.0 million	$35.1 million	$1.390 billion	$549.3 million	$705.5 million	$36.3 million	$1.291 billion	$487.9 million	$771.7 million	$47.2 million	$1.307 billion
Sponsored funding from federal grants	$251.7 million	$343.1 million	$22.2 million	$617 million	$261.3 million	$366.3 million	$20.2 million	$647.8 million	$298.7 million	$314.3 million	$19 million	$632 million	$303.0 million	$300.2 million	$23.7 million	$626.9 million	$229.1 million	$295.8 million	$26.6 million	$551.5 million
Corporate-sponsored funding **in total**	$62 million	$136.6 million	$1.27 million	$199.9 million	$67.6 million	$134.2 million	$1.22 million	$203.0 million	$70.5 million	$157.7 million	$1.12 million	$229.3 million	$55.3 million	$119.6 million	$1.03 million	$175.9 million	$73.5 million	$169.5 million	$1.9 million	$244.9 million
Corporate-sponsored funding **in Iowa**	$18.8 million	$8 million	$800,000	$27.6 million	$22.8 million	$8.8 million	$950,000	$32.6 million	$19.4 million	$10.7 million	$825,000	$30.9 million	$15.1 million	$8.57 million	$781,000	$24.5 million	$18.2 million	$13.6 million	$1.4 million	$33.2 million

The University of Iowa

FY26 Annual Economic Development Report

The University of Iowa (UI), founded in 1847, is the state of Iowa's oldest higher education institution. Of three missions assigned the institution by the state legislature, one directly tasks the UI is to "bring learning and discovery into the service of the people of the state of Iowa, the nation, and the world, improving lives through education, health care, arts and culture, and community and economic vitality."

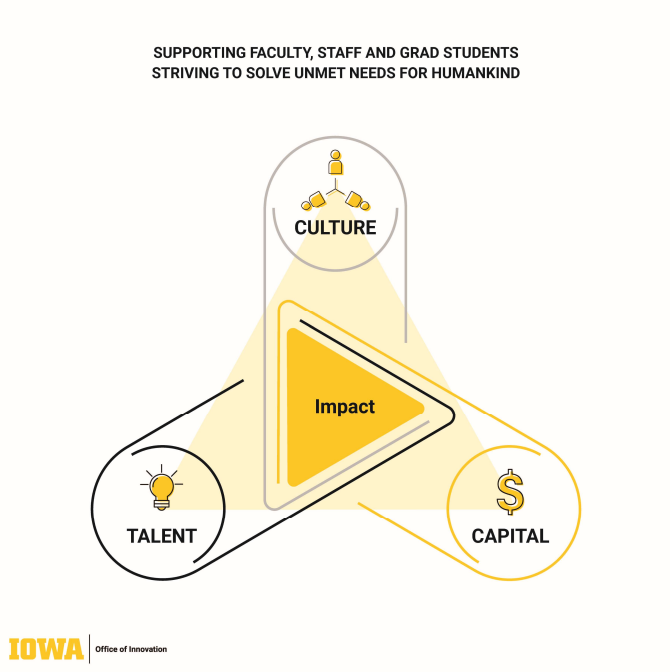
The University's contribution begins foremost through its educational mission. In FY26, the UI served nearly 33,000 students annually (approximately 23,000 undergraduates and 9,500 graduate students and postgraduate scholars). In fulfilling this educational role, the UI trains the talent that is critical to Iowa's prosperity. In addition to educating the preponderance of the State's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lawyers, and teachers, the UI provides accreditation and continuing education used by those professionals to maintain their skills.

The UI received $771.7 million in external research support during FY26, which fuels its research and innovative activities. Initiatives spearheaded by the Office of Innovation and the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) help translate ideas arising from this research towards viable commercialization pathways or other avenues (tech transfer, start-ups) to greater public use. These organizations offer central support open to the entire UI community to connect with resources, information networks, and bring best practices into the UI.

The UI is deepening relationships with key sectors in the state to provide students with enhanced experiential opportunities while fostering broader engagement with industry leaders. For each of the sectors designated "Iowa's Leading Industries" by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) (Insurance and Fintech, Biosciences, and Advanced Manufacturing), the UI is connecting with industry leaders to improve skills needed by students to successfully pursue careers in those sectors and engage faculty, staff and students to increase translation of research and innovative ideas relevant to industry/community needs.

The University's 2022-2027 strategic plan specifically calls on campus to "Accelerate entrepreneurship and support broader economic development through innovative engagement and partnerships with industry and community organizations." This strategy is implemented by:

- Creating increased opportunities for entrepreneurial education, new venture creation, technology transfer, with a specific focus in medtech innovation and
- Connecting faculty, staff, and students to organizations and subject matter experts to solve unmet needs.



The UI's strategy to promote research translation and application of knowledge for positive economic outcomes directly supports faculty, staff and students by helping them to access Talent and Capital while changing Culture. Appropriate Talent (meaning individuals who have successfully started and scaled high technology enterprises) often is unknown or inaccessible to UI innovators. The State of Iowa has few local sources of venture capital or angel investors and those that do exist in the state frequently do not match the technical ventures being developed at the UI. Consequently, programs at the Office of Innovation and JPEC are focused on connecting faculty, staff and students with appropriate individuals who can offer guidance, experience, and access to networks of expertise and capital. At the same time, programs and activities help change the institutional Culture to create conditions where prospective innovators feel empowered to bring ideas forward and are encouraged to do so.

I. Support Economic Development

The Chief Innovation Officer, who reports to the Vice President for External Relations with a dotted-line report to the University President, oversees and coordinates the economic development activities for faculty, staff and graduate students at the University of Iowa. The Chief Innovation Officer oversees: Protostudios, the Medical Innovation Launch Lab (MILL), UI Research Park, Translational Research Incubator (TRI), UI Ventures, MADE, and Nurse Innovators. JPEC sits within the Tippie College of Business serving the undergraduate student body and select faculty and graduate students via the NSF I-CORP and Venture School programs.

In FY26, several broad themes served as the central organizing principles, including:

Philanthropic Gift Supports Innovation Activities

After decades in medicine, Laura I. Rankin (73MD), has a clear perspective on progress—what happens when it accelerates, and what's at stake when it doesn't. Rankin, one of just 13 women in her medical school class, encountered questions about whether women belonged in medicine long-term. She went on to prove otherwise, building a career defined by persistence, impact, and care. Throughout her career as a nephrologist, Rankin saw fields like her own remain largely stagnant, even as patient numbers continued to grow. Only recently have research approaches and new therapies begun to meaningfully change how chronic and acute kidney disease are treated. That led her to invest in companies focused on rapid detection of brain injury, improved treatment for inflammatory bowel disease, using electronic health record data to predict sepsis in ICU settings, and, more recently, to establish the **Laura Rankin Innovation Fund** within the University of Iowa's Office of Innovation.

During recent visits to campus, Rankin was struck by the pace and practicality of innovation happening across the university—from advances in pharmaceuticals and medical devices to the collaborative spaces where clinicians, researchers, engineers, and students work side by side. "What stood out to me was how mainstream and fast-moving it all felt," she says. "That kind of continued progress is essential."

The Laura Rankin Innovation Fund is designed to support early-stage ideas and hands-on experimentation, particularly through the Medical Innovation Launch Lab (MILL). By providing flexible resources for supplies, prototyping, and testing, the fund helps innovators move quickly from identifying a clinical need to developing a potential solution.

Rankin sees private philanthropy as a critical catalyst. "If private individuals can help science move forward, then we need to do that." Through the Laura Rankin Innovation Fund, she is investing in momentum—ensuring that promising ideas at Iowa don't stall for lack of resources, and that innovation continues to translate into better care for patients.

Establishing the Medical Innovation Launch Lab. With the support of an $8 million grant from the Governor's office, the Office of Innovation has constructed the Medical Innovation Launch Laboratory, located adjacent to the UI's Hospitals & Clinics and healthcare campus. Construction work was completed in early 2026 and Office of Innovation staff are installing equipment, testing features, and taking key stakeholders through the facility. Creating an innovation hub within the healthcare complex is a major cultural breakthrough that will reduce the bottleneck of faculty seeking start-up company wet lab space while propelling nascent entrepreneurs forward. There they can access unique equipment, resources, wet lab space and expertise while also commingling with other innovative faculty, staff and graduate students. A key success factor in similar spaces elsewhere is proximity to the "day jobs" of those clinicians, researchers, and graduate students eager to take advantage of this offering.

Seeding Interest in Translational Activities with the Next Generation. The Iowa Innovation Leadership Fellows program continued its growth in FY26 with the fourth cohort of the fellowship. This group of 12 competitively selected graduate students, postdoctoral

researchers, and trainees represents a broad swath of healthcare-related disciplines such as medicine, pharmacy, engineering, and public health. Through the program, Fellows gain exposure to the basics of how research moves from the university to commercial use, methods for identifying and addressing unmet needs, and opportunities to engage with industry leaders and innovation professionals. Participants learn about the university resources available to support entrepreneurship, technology commercialization, and venture development, while building connections with faculty innovators, alumni, and experienced entrepreneurs. In addition to their professional development, Fellows provided valuable perspectives that help to inform the Office of Innovation's outreach efforts, strengthen engagement with academic departments, and promote broader awareness of innovation and commercialization pathways across campus.

Application of Innovation Funding Programs*.* Encouraging proof of concept and translational projects is a key building block in the Economic Development pipeline. UI Ventures altered the focus of the GAP program to require recipients to participate in additional training as a prerequisite for accessing additional funding. Participants met monthly with Office of Innovation for education and training sessions while their technical work progressed towards designated short-term milestones. Achievement of milestones unlocked additional support. Participants meeting these expectations were invited to pitch at an event in Spring 2026 for the opportunity to receive additional funding. The milestone and training staged approach improved faculty participation and led to stronger investment in technologies that demonstrate stronger commercialization potential, clearer market need, and a more credible path to licensing or as investible startups. The program awarded full or partial awards to 11 projects totaling over $215,000.

Expansion of Nurse Innovators. The Nurse Innovator program seeks to unlock the creative, entrepreneurial and problem-solving capabilities of Iowa's nurses by showing them pathways to prototyping, testing and eventually applying their ideas to tackle clinical and bed-side challenges. In 2026, the Office of Innovation created a roadshow series to expand reach into rural Iowa. The roadshow included a Spark Innovation workshop in Cherokee in addition to a pitch event in Iowa City.

UI Receives APLU Innovation and Economic Prosperity Designation. In fall 2025, the UI was recognized with the Innovation and Economic Prosperity designation by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). This national designation recognizes the University's commitment to economic and community development.

JPEC Launches AI Services Challenge. JPEC partnered with Amazon Web Services, PREDICTif Solutions, and the Iowa SBDC to launch the AI Services Challenge - a competitive process where selected Iowa companies were awarded up to $50,000 each in AI implementation services. Selected companies participated in two on-site, NDA-protected 1:1 working sessions with AWS and PREDICTif experts to evaluate their AI or analytics opportunity, and determine feasibility, scope, and next steps. The direct engagement approach allowed Iowa companies to deeply explore their needs, understand the impact of technical choices and define pathways forward.

II. University of Iowa Economic Development Infrastructure

University of Iowa Research Foundation (UIRF)	Researchers at the University of Iowa continue to develop innovative solutions to address the world's most pressing issues, while entrusting their inventions to the UI Research Foundation (UIRF) for patenting and licensing into the commercial market. UI researchers have seen great success over the last year both in the lab and through commercial efforts. Companies licensing UI-invented technologies are making strides in developing products in areas traditionally associated with academic technology transfer at UI—human health care and engineering—but also in the fields of education and even some in the agricultural and animal health arenas. Revenue from the licensing agreements UIRF negotiates with company partners is shared with inventors and supports department, collegiate, and cross-campus research efforts. Many licensing relationships also lead to sponsored research at the university. And in fact, the connection between research grants and inventions goes both ways—federal agencies, non-profit-foundations, and corporations usually include intellectual property provisions in their grants, and UIRF takes the lead in helping researchers satisfy these requirements.
University of Iowa Research Park	The Iowa Research Park (IRP) has evolved into a dynamic hub where entrepreneurs, start-ups, and industry leaders connect with world-class university resources to accelerate growth and innovation. By leasing sites and flexible space tailored to technology-driven companies, the Park provides an ideal environment for businesses that require sustained collaboration with the University of Iowa. Since its founding, the Park has supported more than 100 UI start-ups and emerging ventures. Today, IRP offers more than space - it delivers access to the University's extensive research and business resources, including UI library systems, hazardous waste management services, SBIR/STTR grant support, educational programming, networking opportunities, and logistical support. These assets create a strong foundation for companies to scale quickly and effectively. At the heart of the Park is the BioVentures Center (BVC), which provides flexible wet-lab and office space to life sciences, medtech, engineering, and technology-based companies. Demand for wet lab space remains high, with the BVC at capacity with a waiting list, underscoring the Park's role as a critical resource for Iowa's growing bioscience sector. In addition, the Park is home to three of the University's specialized core facilities, each serving as a unique asset for both start-ups and established industry partners: • Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing (CBB): Offers expertise in microbial fermentation, upstream and downstream bioprocessing, and process scale-up for products ranging from food and biofuels to biopharmaceuticals and advanced biotechnology.

	• Driving Safety Research Institute (DSRI): Conducts cutting-edge research and development on driving safety for government, military, and private industry partners. • State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL): Iowa's environmental and public health laboratory, serving all 99 counties and regional clients through infectious disease testing, tracking, and public health innovation. Together, these facilities, companies, and university resources create a vibrant ecosystem where ideas become products, discoveries become companies, and Iowa strengthens its role as a leader in research-driven economic growth.
Translational Research Incubator	The Translational Research Incubator (TRI) serves a critical role in launching medtech companies by providing 1) a physical location for the company in close proximity to clinical founders; and 2) shared lab equipment so companies can focus their limited resources on technology-specific development to maximize their funding. Much of the support for TRI goes to purchasing and maintaining equipment that can be shared among the company tenants with an in-kind contribution of at-cost facility space. The TRI space, located in the Medical Laboratories building, can house up to four early-stage research-based biomedical or life science companies focused on commercializing technology developed at the University of Iowa. The space is ideal for small start-ups that need to conduct early-stage proof-of-concept experiments, often with SBIR/STTR funding, to attract the investment needed to expand operations at the UI Research Park and other locations. The TRI has proven successful in helping companies secure over $12 million in both federal (SBIR/STTR) and private grants. These companies have gone on to raise over $57 million in equity funding.
UI Ventures	UI Ventures assists university faculty and staff in transforming their research into successful business endeavors so their technologies can reach the population it was intended to help. As part of the Office of Innovation, UI Ventures supports cultural transformation on campus and provides access to capital and world-class talent to build successful companies around innovations originating from research at the university. As faculty develop technology, they are often left with an unknown question of "What's next?" as their research evolves beyond basic principles and requires additional expertise and funding beyond what is available at the University. UI Ventures supports this transition through deployment of GAP funds to address specific business validation questions and utilizes a robust network of experts who have successfully started, scaled, and exited companies in the same areas as UI faculty entrepreneurs. If faculty choose to start a new company, UI Ventures facilitates connections with industry-specific executives and funding resources to launch and grow their companies as well as serving as a liaison between the company and university services. UI Ventures routinely brings venture capitalists and successful entrepreneurs from around the country to campus so that faculty may directly engage with those who have direct experience.
Protostudios	Protostudios is a state-of-the-art, rapid-prototyping facility located in the MERGE co-working space in downtown Iowa City, Van Allen Hall, the MILL and at UIHC. It works with UI researchers, researchers from other Iowa universities and healthcare institutions and businesses and entrepreneurs to develop fully

	functional prototypes of product ideas, allowing innovators to test, redesign, and determine manufacturing paths and demonstrate usability to investors. Protostudios primary focus is on biomedical and electronics prototyping with access to 3D printers (plastics, metals, ceramics) milling, laser/wet jet cutter, printed circuit board fabrication, and consulting from on-staff industrial designers and engineers.
Iowa MADE	Iowa MADE is a first of its kind program in the nation as an FDA registered Class I manufacturing entity sitting within a university, whose mission is to encourage and facilitate the UI community to bring innovative products to market addressing a specific unmet need in healthcare delivery with the goal of enhancing economic development at the university and improving patient care as an extension of research and scholarship. Largely driven by engineering students, the undergraduate student operations team maintains the FDA compliant quality system, manufacturing, product management, marketing, and sales. These students have the unique opportunity to gain in depth real-world experience and leadership skills on campus to complement their classroom education.
John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (Iowa JPEC)	The John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (Iowa JPEC) is an engine for entrepreneurship, innovation, and statewide economic growth. Ranked #17 in the nation by *The Princeton Review*, JPEC is recognized as one of the country's premier entrepreneurship programs equipping students from every discipline with the mindset and skills to launch ventures, drive innovation, and lead organizations. Academic offerings span the BBA in Entrepreneurship, the BA in Enterprise Leadership (on-campus and online), and undergraduate and graduate certificates - including Entrepreneurial Management and Technological Entrepreneurship - reaching more than 1,900 students annually with applied, team-based, and capstone-driven learning. In addition, JPEC extends entrepreneurship education to the next generation, impacting 22,692 K-12 students in Iowa from 85 counties. Beyond the classroom, Iowa JPEC offers one of the most comprehensive venture ecosystems in the nation. Students, faculty, and community members access resources ranging from business incubation and consulting projects to the NSF I-Corps program, gaining direct experience in building and scaling companies. Flagship initiatives such as Venture School, the Venture Mentoring Service, and Enterprise Internships connect entrepreneurs to world-class mentors, interns, and problem-solvers. The recently launched Hawkeye Ventures Seed Fund is set to expand this pipeline by providing early-stage capital and linking students, alumni, and investors in accelerating Iowa's most promising start-ups. JPEC's impact extends across the state, powering Iowa's economy through training, mentorship, and hands-on support for all entrepreneurs. Faculty and staff programs accelerate technology commercialization, while community businesses gain growth through consulting, accelerators, and statewide workshops. By uniting education, incubation, mentorship, and capital, Iowa JPEC fosters lifelong entrepreneurial learning, fuels job creation, and positions the University of Iowa as a national leader in innovation and economic vitality.

University of Iowa Center for Advancement's (UICA)	The UICA's Corporate and Foundation Relations (CFR) acts as a catalyst for organizations in achieving philanthropic goals. CFR's partnerships with the state's economic development organizations and the University of Iowa's office of Vice President for Research are levers that ensure the innovative research taking place at the University of Iowa is included in proposals for philanthropic support. In addition to connecting companies with the university, the UICA is a key player in tapping the university's extensive alumni base to support entrepreneurship and technology commercialization through philanthropic giving and, equally important, advice and expertise.
UI Pharmaceuticals	With over 50 years in the pharmaceutical industry, UI Pharmaceuticals is the longest running, university affiliated, FDA registered pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in the country. As a premier partner to academic, biotech, and government clients, UI Pharmaceuticals supports the path from bench to bedside for therapies across various therapeutic areas including oncology, neurology, cardiovascular disease, and rare diseases. UI Pharmaceuticals offers formulation development, analytical testing, and sterile and non-sterile manufacturing, spanning early proof of concept work through commercial scale production. It operates as a division of the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy and employs approximately 80 pharmaceutical professionals across seven departments, comprising Sterile Manufacturing, Non-Sterile Manufacturing, Quality Assurance, Analytical Services, Pre-formulation and Formulation Development, Business Development, and Engineering and Facilities. Located on campus, UI Pharmaceuticals operates two sterile production facilities, within the Iowa Bioscience Innovation Facility (IBIF) and the College of Pharmacy Building (CPB), supporting small to large scale sterile production with fill/finish and lyophilization services, and three non-sterile suites equipped to handle potent drug molecules and DEA controlled substances. These facilities position UI Pharmaceuticals to serve a diverse pharmaceutical client base and their requests, from early formulation work through commercial manufacturing, providing end-to-end solutions.
Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing (CBB)	The Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing (CBB) operates a unique biomanufacturing facility that is internationally recognized for optimizing and scaling up complex bioprocesses engineered to produce proteins. As a contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO), the CBB's bioprocessing facility operates in a niche-space that uses recombinant microbial cell lines to produce proteins of commercial and research value. Protein manufacturing is performed in either our research and process development (RPD) suite or our *current good manufacturing practices* (cGMP) suite. Both have the equipment, instrumentation, and professional staff required to carry out the upstream and downstream manufacturing operations required to produce purified bulk protein. Each manufactured protein is produced under a rigorous quality policy appropriate for its intended application, whether clinical studies, medical diagnostics, scientific research bioreagents, or biocatalysis products for use in biomanufacturing.

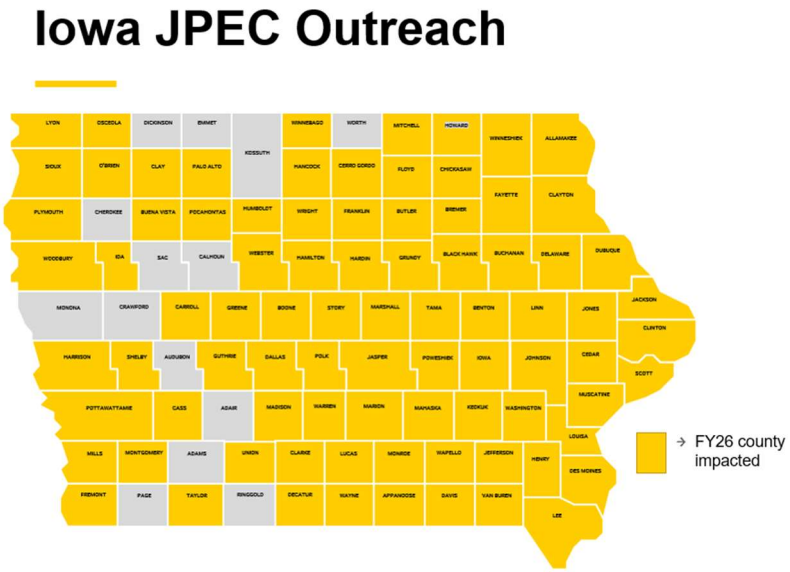
	The CBB bioprocessing facility services include consultations regarding product development designed to accelerate the translational path required to realize commercially viable products from laboratory discoveries. In the biotechnology sector, failure to demonstrate manufacturability is a major barrier to commercialization. The CBB's expertise in both the development and scale-up of robust biomanufacturing processes is ideally suited to help startup companies to bridge this gap. Successful demonstrations of manufacturability reduce the risk of technology and increases its commercial value, thereby enhancing investment opportunities. While entrepreneurs in Iowa receive preferred pricing and scheduling, the Center regularly serves clients at universities throughout the US and companies across the globe.

III. University of Iowa's Economic Development Activities in FY26

- **UI Research Park**
  - The Iowa Research Park is home to 36 companies with 949 private sector employees working directly on the Park. Average wages in the Park's core sectors of biosciences and technology start in the low 6-figures and climb quickly, making the Iowa Research Park a concentrated home to some of the best paying jobs in the region.
  - The Iowa Research Park is also home to hundreds more high-paying jobs in the public sector with the main campus of the State Hygienic Laboratory, the Center for Biocatalysis & Bioprocessing, The Driving Safety Research Institute, and the IIHR Wave Basin.
  - Companies residing on the Research Park, and in particular those residing in the BioVentures Center, have access to a variety of services, including: Shared laboratory equipment room; Executive board room and conference rooms; Multi-purpose room seating 70; Breakroom/vending area, atrium and lounge areas; Shipping/receiving area; High-speed wired & wireless internet; Emergency backup generator; Shared equipment room that includes: Autoclave, Laboratory glassware washer/dryer, RO/DI water system, Ice machine, -80° freezer; and the vast resources at the UI's Carver College of Medicine via their core facilities.
- **UI Ventures**
  - UI Ventures currently supports 40 companies including 1 that formed in FY26.
  - Faculty and staff founded companies raised over $156.9 million in equity funding in FY26.
  - In FY26, four UI faculty/staff companies were awarded $2.5 million in SBIR/STTR grants.

    - In FY26, 11 Innovation Fund awards, worth $219,000, were made to faculty and staff to aid the translation of their research towards commercial potential.
    - Supported the fourth cohort of Innovation Leadership Fellows comprised of graduate and postgraduate students, medical students, and scientists.
- **Iowa MADE**
    - MADE had 4 FDA Class I products available for purchase in FY26 in addition the Educational Caries Teeth (ECT) and non-sterile versions of the medical devices.
    - Students continued to develop additional products originating from the Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry, and the UIHC Dept of Nursing.
    - MADE alumni continue to receive competitive job offers directly related to their work at MADE and are 100% employed upon graduation.
- **Protostudios**
    - Protostudios worked with 95 clients across 126 unique design and production projects in FY26.
    - Employed 8 UI students providing them with hands-on experience in client interaction, project management, design, and a variety of technical skills. Alumni have received co-ops and employment in Iowa and elsewhere, crediting their Protostudios experiences with preparing them to succeed immediately.
- **Nurse Innovators**
    - The Nurse Innovators program has engaged more than 2,100 healthcare professionals in 31 of Iowa's 99 counties and building a network of frontline innovators committed to improving care delivery in its 3-year history.
    - Through this engagement, participants identified 76 point-of-care challenges representing opportunities to improve workflows, enhance patient and staff experiences, and address unmet needs in healthcare delivery. These challenges resulted in 41 innovation projects launched by frontline healthcare professionals. To support early-stage ideation and rapid prototyping, the program distributed 50 innovation kits, equipping innovators with hands-on tools to explore, test, and refine potential solutions.
- **Iowa JPEC**
    - Impact Summary
        - Start-up Companies Served: 168 new business starts supported
        - Program, Seminar & Workshop Participants: 3,658 people engaged
        - Jobs Created: 250 new jobs created via JPEC-supported ventures
        - Client Support: 12,087 hours of direct mentoring and consulting
        - Total Clients Assisted: 630 individuals received one-on-one support
        - Youth Impact: 22,692 K–12 students (326 schools from 209 school districts in 85 counties) inspired through entrepreneurship programs

- Business Competitions: $255,650 awarded through campus-wide pitch and business plan competitions and $582,500 in-kind awarded.



Statewide JPEC Program Highlights

- Business Consulting: Business consulting provides zero-cost strategic management consulting services to alumni and Iowa-based organizations while also giving students real-world experiences. FY26 provided 10,530 one-on-one consulting with 78 projects across 37 industries in 24 counties.
  - A business in Iowa shared, "This was one of the most valuable real-world learning and consulting experiences I have participated in. The student team was professional, thoughtful, organized, and genuinely invested in understanding both the business model and the human side of the project. One thing that stood out most was the balance between research, analytics, storytelling, branding, and practical implementation strategies. The recommendations felt realistic, actionable, and tailored specifically to my business rather than generic consulting advice. This program exceeded my expectations and provided meaningful strategic value to my business."
- Iowa Venture Mentoring Service (Iowa VMS): Iowa VMS is an MIT affiliated program that pairs entrepreneurial and nonprofit ventures with a dedicated team of experienced volunteer mentors to grow their business. Iowa VMS supported 56 entrepreneurs across four counties and some University of Iowa alumni outside Iowa with 79 mentors in FY26.
- Jacobson Institute (JI): JI engages K-12 students in innovation, invention, and entrepreneurship. Students identify and solve real-world problems while developing future ready skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and resiliency. Through teacher education, innovative curricula, and community-connected programs, JI teaches the "entrepreneurial mindset" preparing students for success in college and

career. JI programs include BizInnovator Startup, Iowa Invention Convention, DesignDash, KidInnovator, and Innovator Competition.
    - Delivered BizInnovator Startup curriculum in 333 schools nationwide, reaching 19,988 students.
    - Launched the Innovative Leader Industry Recognized Credential.
    - Hosted 11 DesignDash community-connected educational programs engaging 800 Iowa high school students, 107 educators, and 140 community partners in a daylong authentic learning experience.
    - Scaled Iowa Invention Convention increasing impact from 194 students in FY25 to 2,562 in FY26.
- NSF I-Corps Training Program: Supported by a multi-year NSF I-Corps federal grant and in a joint effort amongst the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, the UI Office of Innovation, UI Ventures, and JPEC. Five cohorts trained 52 teams of 77 participants resulting in two teams advancing to Nationals, securing $200,000 in federal grants.
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC): The SBDC provides no-cost, confidential business advising and resources to help clients launch, grow, and sustain their business within its five-county service area (Johnson, Washington, Poweshiek, Iowa, and Cedar). Served 423 clients, resulting in $6.44M in equity raised, $23.1M sales growth, and creation of 121 jobs.
- Venture School: Lean LaunchPad-based training offered statewide; 78 startups made up of 80 entrepreneurs received 4,680 hours of mentoring in FY26. Locations included Mason City, Iowa City/Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Dubuque, Quad Cities, and virtually.
- Hawkeye Ventures Seed Fund: Following 2021 legislation (Iowa Code 262.14(3)(f)) allowing Regents institutions to invest in private enterprises, the University of Iowa's Tippie College of Business, through JPEC, launched Hawkeye Ventures. The donor-powered seed fund will provide early-stage equity investments of $25,000–$250,000 to University of Iowa–affiliated startups (students, faculty, staff, and alumni). The fund is overseen by an investment board of experienced investors, with profits from exits reinvested to sustain future rounds. Institutional approval to proceed was granted in the spring of 2024, and fundraising is underway toward an initial $10 million target (with a longer-term goal of $25 million) via the UI Center for Advancement. First investments are targeted for FY27, positioning Iowa to address funding challenges for early start-ups as well as to better align with peer and Big Ten institutions' venture funds.

Student JPEC Entrepreneurship Highlights

- Academic Programs: 1,825 students enrolled across the BA in Enterprise Leadership, BBA in Entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship certificates; 133 graduate students completed advanced entrepreneurship coursework.
- Alumni-Student Mentoring Program: 167 students paired with 80 mentor pairs enhanced students' professional growth and problem-solving skills.

- Bedell Student Incubator: Campus hub with offices, coworking, and mentoring; supported 48 teams in FY26.
- Jacobson Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship: Delivered BizInnovator curriculum in 333 schools/academies nationwide, reaching 19,988 students.
- Okoboji Entrepreneurial Institute: Week-long entrepreneurship immersion via Iowa Lakes Corridor Development and other Iowa universities and colleges partnerships; 6 students participated in FY26
- Summer Startup Incubator: 12-week accelerator using Lean LaunchPad methodologies, daily lectures, and weekly pitch sessions advanced 11 team ventures of 14 students.

Statewide JPEC Partnership Highlights

- Regional Partnerships: Collaboration with multiple chambers of commerce, economic development groups, and community colleges across Iowa leveraging these networks to connect entrepreneurs with critical resources, mentorship, and funding opportunities. NewBoCo, EntreFest, InnoVenture Iowa, Cedar Rapids 1Million Cups, Iowa City 1Million Cups, and Cedar Rapids Entrepreneurial Development Center.
- Accelerator Partnerships: Engagement with the Global Insurance Accelerator, Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, Iowa Startup Accelerator, and TechStars providing specialized support, access to capital, and national networks for early-stage ventures.
- Hawkeye Ventures: Established to act as a conduit to connect students, faculty, alumni, and investors through seed funding, mentoring, and events.
- National & Global Engagement: Active in GCEC, USASBE, and InBIA; faculty and staff present Iowa's best practices on national and international stages ensuring JPEC's programming remains at the forefront of entrepreneurial education with an impact beyond the borders of Iowa.
- Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Ventures Competition: Annual statewide competition awarding $100,000+ to Iowa start-ups; Sponsored by JPEC in partnership with ISU, UNI, Drake and NIACC Pappajohn entrepreneurial centers along with the IEDA.
- Educational Collaborations: Joint programming with ISU, UNI, Drake, NIACC, DMACC, Kirkwood, Morningside University, Indian Hills Community College, and others to expand entrepreneurship access, foster cross-campus innovation, and share research initiatives.

- **UI Center for Advancement**
  - Engages with economic development entities across the state- demonstrating the UI Center for Advancement values and supports state, regional, local priorities.
  - Aligns more than 500 foundations and corporate donors with the UI's highest priorities through philanthropic giving. Generates engagement and philanthropic giving to advance the university's mission in education, research, and patient care through investments in:
    - Student scholarships and financial aid

        - Capital projects and facilities
        - Academic, clinical, and community-based programs
        - Research and innovation
        - Faculty recruitment, retention, and excellence

- **UI Pharmaceuticals**

  Impact on Healthcare by Accelerating Life-Changing Therapies

    - UI Pharmaceuticals supported nearly 80 clients, and manufactured approximately 68 batches in FY2026 across its non-sterile and sterile manufacturing facilities. These batches, delivered to clinical sites nationwide, supported clinical trials spanning first-in-human research through Phase 3 studies. Many of these trials focus on oncology, neurological conditions, and cardiovascular disease, advancing candidates with the potential to become future treatments.
    - Provided support to Zetagen Therapeutics ZetaMast™, designed to treat aggressive breast cancers that have metastasized to the liver. The formulation is designed to deliver the compound directly to liver tumors, concentrating the therapy where it is needed. In preclinical studies, ZetaMast reduced the tumor volume by a factor of four compared to standard therapy models of Triple Negative Breast Cancer that had metastasized to the liver.
    - Building on the successful manufacture of SurVaxM at UI Pharmaceuticals' sterile production facility, MimiVax's first-of-its-kind immunotherapeutic vaccine targeting survivin has continued to advance through clinical development. SurVaxM is now in a Phase 2b clinical trial for glioblastoma, and additional trials are exploring its potential in neuroendocrine tumors, multiple myeloma, and pediatric relapsed high-grade glioma, expanding treatment options for patients facing some of the hardest-to-treat cancers.

  Impact on Next Generation Leaders through Educational Contributions

    - Supported two College of Pharmacy graduate students through UIP fellowship program. UI Pharmaceuticals provided tuition assistance to the two students while they gained valuable experience within the analytical and formulation development departments.
    - Supported and mentored three students within the Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing's Predoctoral Iowa Biotech Training Program. The students were supported through a 3-month summer internship and gained valuable experience within the pharmaceutical industry.
    - Provided APPE rotations for PharmD students to enhance the student's knowledge and understanding of the pharmaceutical industry. This is a one-of-a-kind opportunity available at The University of Iowa College of Pharmacy.
    - Collaborated with College of Pharmacy faculty and taught lyophilization concepts and GMP topics to PhD students in the PSET department to strengthen their educational experience.

- Provided industry immersion experience where PhD and PharmD students from College of Pharmacy gained insight into pharmaceutical product development and testing.
- Employed 70-75 full-time staff within UI Pharmaceuticals, more than 60% of whom are from Iowa.

Impact on Research Through Collaborations with UIowa Researchers

- Supported a funded research program with Iowa Health Care and provided regulatory assistance to assist in supporting a second project in FY27.
- Provided Letters of Support for 2 College of Pharmacy grant applications and one Iowa Health Care application.

- **Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing**
  - Completed the installation and qualification of a custom designed, pilot-scale fermentor with a working volume of 1500 liters (≈400 gallons). The fermentor is now supporting clients' increasing demand for fermentations at this scale.
  - Secured seed funding from the bio-based manufacturing program administered by Iowa State University. These funds were used to support process development efforts for two projects, one new industry client and one UI faculty project. Provided leadership to the NSF EPSCoR program focused on biomanufacturing of proteins for diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines, and industrial reagents.
  - Administered the CBB/NIH T32 "Iowa Biotechnology Training Program", which currently includes a cohort of 19 pre-doctoral PhD trainees across nine graduate programs and four colleges (Engineering, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Pharmacy and Medicine). Trainee fellowships are supported by a $2.2 million award from the NIH to CBB Academic Director Michael Schnieders and Prof. Maria Spies, with matching support from the CBB.
  - Designed and implemented undergraduate internships in biomanufacturing. Two internships provided hands on experience in large scale fermentation to produce a protein designed to enhance cellular imaging. The other two undergraduate internships were awarded to non-science majors and provided them with experience in the marketing of the Center and its biomanufacturing capabilities.
  - Organized the fall CBB Conference and the spring Biocats Symposium.
  - Employed nearly 20 professional staff and 3 student employees.
  - Participated in the annual meeting of the Iowa Biotechnology Association.
  - Supported the IEDA Iowa Life Sciences Cluster Strategy project with consulting firm Oliver Wyman.
  - Provided product development consulting for 5 projects associated with UI faculty.
  - Manufactured commercial proteins for eleven companies, including two in Asia and two in Europe which resulted in approximately $2.7 million in revenues from the bioprocessing facility

- Hosted senior leaders from an existing client from Japan with the goal of expanding the partnership to include supporting technology transfer of the client's manufacturing platform to US biopharmaceutical start-up companies. These projects are currently expected to begin in FY27.

- **UI Research Foundation**

	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Disclosures	103	72	87	95	117
Licenses + options	41	45	28	31	25
Patent applications	193	182	126	143	133
Issued patents	81	66	76	103	49

Regents Innovation Funds Spent to Promote Economic Development in Iowa

- UI Research Park: $95,372 for BioVentures Center personnel, operating/general expenses
- UI Ventures and MADE: $1,055,077 for personnel, consultants, student interns, award and general expenses

The University of Iowa recognizes the important role it plays in the state's economic development ecosystem. The university is committed to improving the quality of life in Iowa through a sustainable cycle of research and creative activity leading to job and wealth creation in the State. Realization of these goals makes Iowa a healthier, more prosperous, and attractive place to live. The university will continue to ensure that Federal, State and philanthropic monies invested in research is leveraged to develop new economic opportunities for Iowans.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FY26 ANNUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER REPORT TO BOARD OF REGENTS, STATE OF IOWA

PRESENTED BY:

David Spalding
Vice President, Office of Economic Development and Industry Relations
October 1, 2026

Iowa State University
Annual Economic Development and Technology Transfer Report - FY2026

Iowa State University exemplifies the land-grant ideals of bringing science, technology, and human creativity into the Iowa economy and the world. In Iowa, Iowa State's Economic Development and Industry Relations (EDIR) team, in partnership with the Iowa State Vice President for Research and Iowa State Extension and Outreach, is focused on innovation and economic prosperity in all 99 Iowa counties.

Economic development is a top priority at Iowa State, and the university is proud of the impact it has on both the lives of its students and our state's economy. Iowa State's economic development programs, services, and initiatives contribute to the positive impact the university creates for Iowa businesses and the return on investment it generates for students, taxpayers, and society. The highly successful Innovation and Entrepreneurship Initiative has embedded innovation and entrepreneurship more deeply into our culture and curriculum across every college. This has amplified our work across campus, increased Iowa State's visibility nationally and internationally, and attracted new business to Iowa, from home-grown entrepreneurs and Iowa-based companies to global firms seeking talent, research partnerships, testing environments, and opportunities to grow.

Today, Iowa State's integrated innovation ecosystem spans entrepreneurship, technology commercialization, business assistance, applied research, workforce development, and corporate engagement. Together, these activities create pathways that move ideas from discovery to marketplace while supporting the growth and competitiveness of companies across Iowa and beyond.

Iowans can count on Iowa State to serve as a trusted resource, leveraging our strengths in innovation, science-based extension and outreach, research, and education. Our economic development, entrepreneurship, and innovation efforts continue to earn national and global recognition.
EDIR consists of the following key university economic development units that provide integrated and comprehensive business, technical, entrepreneurial, and educational services to Iowa State's clients and partners:

Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS)
Iowa State University Research Park (ISURP)
Office of Innovation Commercialization (OIC)
Iowa's Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)
Iowa State University John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC)

Financially, Iowa State University has a major impact on the Iowa economy. According to an independent economic impact analysis conducted for the Iowa Board of Regents, Iowa State generated a $6.0 billion impact on Iowa's economy. It showed that 60,000 jobs, or approximately one out of every

36 jobs in Iowa are supported by ISU. There was $2.1 billion in economic development and added income from ISU startups and businesses assisted by ISU EDIR entities. In addition, there was $300 million in added income for the Iowa economy generated by ISU research activities.

Iowa State University consistently ranks among the top research universities in the United States without a medical school. Our students benefit from studying at a major research institution where faculty operate at the leading edge of their disciplines and bring that knowledge directly into the classroom. Many of those same researchers collaborate with industry to solve real-world challenges and drive economic growth. Areas where we engage with companies include:

WORKFORCE: Iowa State graduated more than 8,000 students this past academic year and provides more graduates who remain in Iowa than any other university. We work closely with industry to meet workforce needs and achieve successful placement outcomes. Our teams partner with businesses to develop workforce pipeline programs, internships, experiential learning opportunities, industry engagement activities, and recruitment strategies that connect employers with students at every stage of their Iowa State experience. Many companies also utilize the Iowa State University Research Park as a hub for workforce development, innovation, and talent retention. We further support businesses through continuing education, professional development, certificates, boot camps, customized training, and executive education programs.

RESEARCH: Research is a driving force behind economic development at Iowa State. Our team-based engagement model helps businesses access a broad range of faculty expertise, facilities, students, and technical resources to address critical challenges and pursue new opportunities. Multiple companies have established innovation, research, and technology scouting operations at the Iowa State University Research Park to gain closer access to emerging technologies, startup activity, and university research. Chief Technology Officers embedded within Iowa State's strategic innovation platforms work across engagement teams to connect industry partners with relevant expertise, identify collaboration opportunities, and accelerate the translation of research into practical outcomes. Groups such as the Digital Ag Innovation Lab demonstrate how research can drive industry engagement and statewide impact. Through its focus on innovation, education, and service, the Lab has generated dozens of patents and technology transfer outcomes while supporting education and outreach efforts that reach all 99 Iowa counties, serving audiences ranging from producers and agribusinesses to educators and students.

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY: Through EDIR, Iowa State is helping Iowa lead in strategic growth sectors including advanced manufacturing, digital and precision agriculture, biotechnology and biomanufacturing, animal health, artificial intelligence, and rural vitality. By aligning world-class research, industry partnerships, entrepreneurial support, technology commercialization, and workforce development, Iowa State is creating an innovation ecosystem that benefits companies of all sizes, from startups to Fortune 500 corporations.

UPSKILL, RESKILL, CONTINUING EDUCATION: Iowa State provides tailored professional development, executive education, and workforce training programs that help employees and leaders develop new skills throughout their careers. These offerings range from executive and graduate education programs to technical bootcamps, certifications, and specialized industry training. Programs such as Digital Ag Innovation bootcamps, Planter University, custom education and laboratory skills certifications help meet workforce needs while extending Iowa State's expertise to professionals across Iowa and beyond.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: Iowa State provides companies with access to world-class facilities, equipment, and technical expertise through fee-for-service and collaborative engagement models. Industry partners can utilize specialized capabilities ranging from pilot-scale biomanufacturing and fermentation facilities to vehicle testing platforms, advanced analytical equipment, field testing sites, and scientific instrumentation. These resources help companies reduce risk, accelerate innovation, and bring new products to market more rapidly.

The strength of Iowa State's economic development model lies in its ability to connect ideas, people, and organizations. Entrepreneurs gain access to expertise and resources that help launch new ventures. Established companies engage with faculty, students, and research facilities to solve challenges and accelerate growth. Communities benefit from new jobs, investment, and opportunities that strengthen local economies. Students gain hands-on experiences that prepare them to become the next generation of innovators, leaders, and problem-solvers.

As Iowa's land-grant university, Iowa State remains committed to translating discovery into impact. Through collaboration with industry, government, investors, entrepreneurs, and communities, we are delivering the outcomes Iowans care about most: quality jobs, industry-ready graduates, stronger companies, new business creation, and research-driven innovation that grows Iowa's economy.
The result is an Iowa State University that not only educates students and advances knowledge but also serves as one of the state's most powerful engines for economic growth and innovation. Through EDIR and its partner organizations, Iowa State is connecting talent, research, entrepreneurship, and industry in ways that create measurable value for Iowa. Our work is helping companies start, grow, innovate, and compete; preparing the workforce that powers Iowa's future; and translating university discoveries into real-world solutions. From laboratory discovery to commercial deployment, from startup formation to global industry partnerships, Iowa State is delivering the outcomes Iowans care about most: good jobs, stronger communities, growing businesses, and a more prosperous Iowa in every one of the 99 counties.

A closer look at our EDIR organizations and partners:

The Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) helps Iowa businesses solve complex problems and stay one step ahead by providing expertise, connections, and the confidence to move forward. CIRAS works with businesses and industry across all 99 counties to enhance their performance through customized service offerings in executive strategy, growth, operational excellence, and workforce

CIRAS leverages a variety of federal funding programs with state and private resources and has staff and partners located across campus and across the state. Over the past five years, CIRAS and its partners have reported impact from companies totaling more than $2.7 billion and more than 29,200 jobs created or retained because of the assistance they received.

CIRAS FY26 HIGHLIGHTS: Last year, 1,695 businesses from 99 counties in the state received assistance on projects or attended educational workshops from CIRAS staff or partners.

CIRAS continued to lead AI deployment across industry in Iowa. More than 600 people attended CIRAS-led AI events last year, including the third annual AI Summit for Industry and a Tech Meets Trade series of workshops to help small construction businesses implement AI. In partnership with the ISU Translational AI Center (TrAC) and the University of Iowa's Iowa Initiative for Artificial Intelligence (IIAI), CIRAS launched a series of day-long trainings for industry: AI Literacy, AI Fluency, and AI Integration. These programs provide individuals across the state with foundational tools to apply AI in real world situations and are being deployed in partnership with Iowa's Community Colleges.

Kinetic Technologies in Algona partnered with CIRAS to design an efficient layout for its new 12,000-square-foot facility. Using data-driven analysis and 3D modeling, CIRAS helped improve production flow, safety, and flexibility. The project will create 12 new jobs, retain 14 positions, and save an estimated $104,000 annually while supporting $1.2 million in capital investment. "We really appreciate the work CIRAS has done; we now have a map for our new facility," said Betsy Barglof of Kinetic Technologies.

Blu Track, a maker of STEM-focused toy racetracks in Anamosa, partnered with CIRAS to strengthen its marketing strategy through targeted email, social media, and website improvements. CIRAS partnered with Double You Marketing and Running Robots to execute the plan, driving $210,000 in new sales and creating one job while retaining two. Blu Track has renewed its partnership for a third year. "We're very pleased with the great work from the team," said owner Amy Fuller.

DICA, a family-owned Urbandale manufacturer of outrigger pads and crane accessories, earned a $95,000 General Services Administration (GSA) contract with help from the CIRAS APEX Accelerator. CIRAS reviewed DICA's bid, clarified compliance requirements, and guided onboarding in the GSA vendor portal. "Working with CIRAS and Kelly Freel has been a game changer for us," said DICA's Kelly Koberg. "Their hands-on support made real progress possible." The contract expands DICA's federal presence and supports continued growth.

Valent BioSciences and Osage and Ajinimoto Health & Nutrition in Eddyville faced similar challenges: industrial byproducts that seemed valuable were being treated as waste. Through CIRAS' Technology Assistance Program, faculty members from ISU's agronomy and agricultural and biosystems engineering departments partnered with the businesses to conduct field trials to demonstrate the fertilizer values of these byproducts. "Working with Iowa State gave us credible, science-backed data

to move forward," said Paul Summer, associate director of new product development at Ajinomoto. "We've always known our byproduct had potential, but this partnership with Iowa State gave us the evidence to prove its value," said Dan Shirley, maintenance manager at Valent BioSciences. The two companies reported more than $1.2 million in financial impact from this work.

CIRAS continued to adopt supply chain services to meet the changing needs of industry. CIRAS provided regular on-demand tariff webinars to help industry make informed decisions in a rapidly changing environment. CIRAS also continued to adapt practices to help companies better understand their supply chain risks. Companies like Geater Machining and Manufacturing Co. in Independence say it's making a difference. "Through CIRAS, we have strengthened our supply chain and procurement process," said Buckley Necker, purchasing agent at Geater Machining and Manufacturing Co. "Both in-person and video presentations have helped us step up our game and stay out ahead of the ever-changing landscape that is supply chain. We look forward to continuing our work with CIRAS to develop new procedures and gain new insights about technologies and methods that are coming in the future."

Quadyster, a technology solutions company based in Bettendorf, reached a major milestone by achieving Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) Level 2, strengthening its ability to handle controlled unclassified information and compete for more federal contracts. Achieving CMMC Level 2 compliance requires extensive training, policy work, and technical changes. The company turned to CIRAS experts who partnered with Aspire Cyber to define the approach that worked for them and bring in the right support at the right time. "CIRAS provided invaluable early guidance that set us on the right path for the CMMC certification," said CBL Rao, chief operating officer of Quadyster. "Their encouragement and support, along with Aspire Cyber's expert training, were crucial to our success." The certification boosts Quadyster's credibility, strengthens its standing in the defense market, and supports long-term growth. "This certification moves us to the next level," said President Hari Banda.

Iowa State University Research Park (ISURP) is a nationally recognized innovation district that connects companies with Iowa State University's talent, research expertise, and innovation ecosystem. While ISURP provides high-quality office, laboratory, and innovation space, its greatest value lies in helping companies access university resources, workforce pipelines, applied research opportunities, and strategic partnerships that accelerate growth and economic impact.

Through a hands-on engagement model, ISURP serves as a gateway between industry and Iowa State University, supporting business growth while expanding opportunities for students, faculty, and research collaboration across key sectors including agriculture, advanced manufacturing, biosciences, and digital technologies.

ISURP FY26 HIGHLIGHTS: FY26 was a significant year for ISURP (its 39th year of operation), marked by achievements and milestones that further solidified its position as one of the nation's leading innovation campuses. ISURP continued to foster a dynamic environment that supports tenant

companies, researchers, students, and the broader community through a campus-wide, holistic engagement model.

ISURP was named the 2025 Distinguished Community of Innovation by the Association of University Research Parks (AURP). Staff attended AURP's international conference as an award winner and conference presenter. The award recognizes ecosystems that are driving research translation from concept to market, creating measurable impact, and actively engaging with higher education and research communities through funding, research involvement, and experiential learning opportunities for students.

Standout highlights for FY26 include unprecedented engagement in inbound lead generation from Iowa-based companies, ag tech companies, and international companies seeking a foothold in the North American market. These opportunities have created a robust pipeline of tenant prospects, new partnerships, and future growth. ISURP also experienced growth from within, as multiple current tenants outgrew their space and expanded into larger facilities. In parallel, ISURP launched construction on two new projects and continues to maintain a strong pipeline of future projects.

The 86,000-square-foot Alliant Energy Agriculture Innovation Lab opened in December 2024 and houses Iowa State University's Digital Agriculture Innovation Lab. Supported by a naming gift from Alliant Energy, the facility includes collaboration and teaching space that hosted more than 2,500 visitors during the first quarter of 2025 and has become a hub for industry engagement, research collaboration, and innovation in digital agriculture and emerging technologies.

The building has also become a platform for deeper industry engagement. It is strengthening ISURP's ability to host corporate partners, support applied research conversations, and connect Iowa State faculty, students, and companies around digital agriculture, automation, and emerging agricultural technologies. Construction has also started on a confidential industry-led project (the largest project in ISURP history) just south of the Alliant Energy Agriculture Innovation Lab, further reinforcing the demand for proximate, university-connected innovation space.

Major development activity continued across the campus in FY26, including opening the Strand Associates facility, a high-bay expansion to Research Park building 12 for Sukup and Bayer, the confidential industry-led project that represents the largest development in ISURP history, and the ongoing CyTown development in partnership with Iowa State University and Goldenrod Companies. Together, these projects support ISURP's live-work-play strategy and strengthen connections between industry, talent, and university resources.

The first housing starts in ISURP history, with additional amenities and first-floor retail, will create a true live-work-play environment on the ISURP campus and align with best practices for innovation campuses and research parks globally. Phase 1 is nearing completion, and the housing and retail

projects will add 125 units once finished. The FY26 construction pipeline remains strong, with approximately $70 million in construction projects underway and another approximately $270 million in projects in the pipeline with either FY25-FY26 starts or completions planned.

The BioMADE fermentation scale-up facility advanced significantly in FY26 with the groundbreaking of a new biomanufacturing facility at Iowa State University's BioCentury Research Farm. Developed through partnerships involving the Department of Defense, the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa State University, and ISURP, the facility will help address a national gap in scale-up fermentation capacity while supporting biomanufacturing growth and new agricultural value streams in Iowa.

ISURP's commitment to innovation and collaboration was also evident through events and programs hosted at the Research Park. This year, ISURP organized over 30 events, including workshops, seminars, and networking sessions, attracting thousands of participants. These events provided opportunities for knowledge exchange, skill development, tenant engagement, and partnership building.

Looking ahead, ISURP is working with Iowa State University and state partners to secure funding for a proposed biotechnology and manufacturing lab building. This proposed lab space is important to the next phase of ISURP growth because it would add specialized space for prospects that need more than traditional office or flex space and are seeking direct connection to Iowa State University's research strengths, technical expertise, and workforce pipeline.

A new lab building would help ISURP respond to market demand from companies working in biosciences, biomanufacturing, rural health, advanced manufacturing, and related technology areas. It would also give Iowa State University another tool for attracting prospects that want to locate in an innovation campus environment where industry, faculty, students, and state economic development partners can move from conversation to applied collaboration more efficiently.

ISURP continues to be a significant contributor to the local and state economy. Its tenant companies have collectively generated hundreds of millions of dollars in state revenue and created thousands of high-quality jobs. Just as importantly, the Research Park continues to serve as a front door for companies seeking access to Iowa State University's talent, research capacity, and partnership culture.

The Office of Innovation Commercialization (OIC) serves the Iowa State University community and the state of Iowa by commercializing intellectual property resulting from the research activities at ISU. Consisting of the Iowa State University Research Foundation (ISURF) and the Office of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer (OIPTT), OIC develops and executes appropriate protection and licensing strategies for both pre-partnered innovations (funded by industry-sponsored research agreements) and un-partnered technologies (primarily funded through federally sponsored research programs). Both established and startup companies benefit from licensing intellectual property rights

from ISURF by creating new products, decreasing manufacturing costs, improving revenue streams, and increasing market share.

OIC FY26 HIGHLIGHTS: Iowa State University researchers submitted 112 intellectual property disclosures (not including datasets) and ISURF filed 120 patent applications during fiscal 2026. In calendar year 2025, Iowa State was recognized for having 50 issued U.S. utility patents, ranking 45th of the top 100 U.S. universities and 73rd of the top 100 worldwide universities granted U.S. utility patents by the National Academy of Inventors.

In FY26, Iowa State was awarded 53 U.S. utility patents and an additional 16 patents from foreign countries for an overall total of 69. ISURF executed 88 license and option agreements for ISU technologies in FY26, 20 of which were with Iowa companies. ISURF currently has 98 license and option agreements which are yielding income. Iowa companies reported $11.1 million of revenues from ISU-licensed technologies in fiscal year 2026, and three startup companies were formed during that time period to commercialize ISU technologies. Global sales of licensed technologies exceeded $108 million. ISURF has been self-supported since 1992 through returns on its licensed technology portfolio; in addition, ISURF has returned nearly $9 million over the last ten years to Iowa State and the Ames National Laboratory to support further investments in the research enterprise. ISURF distributes royalty revenue in accordance with the Iowa State University royalty sharing policy to inventors.

The Office of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer negotiates and executes sponsored research agreements for ISU with industry partners and commodity groups, as well as non-disclosure agreements and material transfer agreements for Iowa State University. In FY26, OIPTT handled 845 agreements.

Iowa State University researchers have developed a method of producing carbon fibers from lignin, a waste product of the paper industry that is typically burned to recover its energy value. The carbon fibers produced by this method are of sufficient strength for terrestrial applications (i.e. non-aerospace) and require less energy to produce than conventional carbon fiber. The technology has recently been put under an agreement with a startup company looking to commercialize the technology domestically. They are actively seeking funds, including from SBIR, to rapidly build a pilot plant and provide samples to composite and agricultural companies seeking cheaper sources of carbon fiber.

Iowa State University researchers have partnered with a California company on a technology that could revolutionize home manufacturing. The technology addresses some of the operational challenges of 3D printing of homes by mixing dry components of the cement mix at the nozzle head of the printer rather than many yards away at a mixing site. This new design allows for the printing process to be paused more easily without purging the mix in the material handling equipment, decreasing waste and driving cost out of the process.

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC), administered by Iowa State University, comprises 15 regional centers that collectively serve all 99 counties in Iowa. These centers assist individuals launching new businesses and provide advisory services to existing small businesses across the state. Their support helps clients address management challenges, enhance operations, secure financing, and explore new opportunities. Iowa State University also directly operates two of these regional centers.

SBDC CY25 HIGHLIGHTS: In calendar year 2025, Iowa's Small Business Development Center supported 5,465 businesses across the state—reaching at least five unique clients in every single Iowa county. These businesses span a wide range of industries and stages of development.

SBDC delivers support through services such as business planning, customer discovery, financial analysis, cash flow projections, loan and capital request preparation, growth strategy development, marketing strategy, startup and export assistance, and market research. The 5,465 businesses supported this year generated:

- $82,979,858 in new capital across 628 capital events
- $126,362,805 in increased sales
- 1,195 jobs created
- 235 new business starts

2025 marked an important period of leadership transition for America's SBDC Iowa. From January through June, Alicia Smith, Associate State Director of Finance, served as Interim State Director, providing steady leadership and ensuring uninterrupted support for entrepreneurs across Iowa while maintaining continuity across the statewide network.

In July, Austin Strawhacker was named State Director after serving for six years as Associate State Director of Operations and Compliance. In that role, he helped lead statewide initiatives, innovation programs, and organizational operations, bringing extensive experience and knowledge of the Iowa SBDC network to his new position.

In December, Leah Pitts was named Associate State Director of Operations and Compliance. Leah has nine years of experience with America's SBDC Iowa, including four years as a student intern, and has served in various leadership and operational roles since 2021. She brings extensive institutional knowledge and operational expertise to the leadership team, strengthening the organization's capacity to support the statewide network and its continued growth.

The Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship (JPEC) serves entrepreneurs on campus and in the community, providing entrepreneurial opportunities, including a statewide tech startup incubator, student accelerator, statewide and local business plan and pitch competitions, and participates in university-wide academic programs in entrepreneurship ranging from a cross-campus minor to a PhD program in entrepreneurship. JPEC has locations at the ISU Research Park and on campus in the Student Innovation Center. Flagship programs include the Iowa State Startup Factory incubator, CYstarters student accelerator, and CyBIZ Lab student consulting program, among many other experiential programs.

JPEC FY26 HIGHLIGHTS: Iowa State was named the 9th ranked undergraduate entrepreneurship program in the nation in 2026 as rated by the Princeton Review and Entrepreneur Magazine. In 2026, the Pappajohh Center was awarded Excellence in Co-Curricular Innovation for its College-by-College Pitch Competition as recognized by the U.S. Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE).

The ISU Pappajohn Center touched more than 4,400 people through its programs, workshops, competitions, and student programs (not including academic courses). Student and faculty startups won more than $150,000 in national pitch competitions, and the Pappajohn Center awarded more than $30,000 in its 2026 College-by-College campus pitch competition. Center programs focus on pitching, business model canvas, food insecurity, innovation, and other topics. The Center also connects entrepreneurs to professional service providers. With a broad-reaching academic program and more than 100 courses with an entrepreneurship focus or component across all six undergraduate colleges, 36% of Iowa State's undergraduate student population enrolled in entrepreneurship courses in the past academic year. Many of these students participate in the Pappajohn Center's co-curricular programming opportunities or are involved in student organizations focused on entrepreneurship.

CyBIZ Lab, our interdisciplinary student consulting agency, served 35 companies plus facilitated 11 service-learning projects with non-profit organizations in partnership with the Ivy College of Business MBA program. CyBIZ Lab employed 32 unique students in 2026 and engaged 43 MBA students through 11 service-learning projects, providing excellent job preparedness experiences for 75 students. CyBIZ Lab provides the opportunity for cross-functional teams of undergraduate and graduate students to work on fee-based business and organizational projects. It also gives founders, entrepreneurs, and businesses a chance to solve a business problem, while working alongside student consultants. CyBIZ partners with ISU economic development to provide market validation services that support technical research faculty intending to commercialize their discoveries.

Iowa State Startup Factory is a startup incubator helping researchers and inventors develop a roadmap to realize the societal and economic impact of their high-tech innovations. In FY26, Iowa State Startup Factory served 16 companies. Since its inception in 2016, 173 companies have completed the program. The startups have self-reported $125.7 million in dilutive and non-dilutive funding raised since 2016. Program staff and Entrepreneurs-in-Residence provide individual mentoring support to companies as part of the ISU Venture Mentoring Service, an MIT-modeled program focused on team-based mentorship for startup founders and entrepreneurs.

When Iowa State Startup Factory companies complete the program, they are oftentimes not mature enough to seek external investment. Iowa Go-To-Market (G2M), a partnership between BioConnect Iowa, the Iowa State University Startup Factory, and VentureNet Iowa, provides follow-on support for Iowa entrepreneurs who are developing technology-driven innovative products or services and need additional support to increase their livelihood of commercial success. In 2025-26, G2M served 6

companies. Program staff and the G2M EIRs contributed close to 700 hours of individual mentoring to participating companies. To date, 28 G2M companies have reported $23,653,000 in funding raised.

CYstarters is an 11-week summer accelerator for Iowa State students or recent graduates to focus on their startup or business idea. In July, the summer accelerator completed its annual 11-week immersive training program for 16 student ventures (17 participants). Staff and professional service providers in the community contributed more than 250 hours of education and individual mentoring to program participants. An additional 60 professionals, alumni, and peer mentors volunteered time supporting the student ventures.

The Pappajohn Center's legislative funding for student entrepreneurs was dedicated to supporting students attending entrepreneurship conferences, participating in regional and national competitions, presenting in our campus-wide pitch competitions, and attending the Okoboji Entrepreneurship Institute. In 2025-26, Ojo Bolu competed at the CEO Global Pitch Competition and won first place and $8,000 out of 600 applicants. Five Iowa State entrepreneurs competed in the Global Student Entrepreneur Awards competition, with one student taking home the top prize valued at over $30,000 in cash and support for his business. Iowa State students placed first, second and third at the Midwest Entrepreneurship Conference; and an Iowa State student placed first in the Pappajohn Statewide Student Entrepreneurial Venture Competition. Over 300 students from across majors participated in the annual fall and spring pitch competitions.

We hosted the annual Jingle Mingle Holiday Market for student and alumni vendors held as part of Iowa State's Winterfest celebration. More than 1,700 people shopped at 49 student and alumni vendor exhibits set up on two floors of Beardshear Hall. Those responding to the post-event survey (50 percent of vendors) reported more than $11,000 in combined sales at the event.

Iowa State University Research closed the 2026 fiscal year with $487.9 million in total external funding, down 11.2% compared to the $549.3 million received in FY25. After attracting more than $300 million in external sponsored research funds each of the past three fiscal years, the institution brought in $254.6 million in FY26, down $75.3 million or 22.8% compared to the $329.9 million Iowa State received in FY25.

FY26 federal research funding – at $167.1 million – was down $73 million or 30.4% compared to FY25. Funding from non-federal sources was relatively steady – $87.5 million in FY26 compared to $89.8 million in FY25.

The federal funding landscape of evolving research priorities, agency staff reductions, and lower agency budgets has made this a period of disruption for most, if not all, land-grant and R1 research universities across the country. Iowa State research faculty and staff continue to pursue opportunities as demonstrated by 1,999 new research proposals (811 federal) submitted in FY26 – the most in the any of the past five fiscal years.

Federal Research Funding

The 2026 fiscal year was the first time since FY22 that Iowa State did not surpass $200 million in federal research funding.

Support from two of Iowa State's traditionally largest agency sponsors – the Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) – was down significantly in FY26. The decrease in DOE funding from $125.2 million in FY25 to $71.4 million in FY26 is largely due to two significant tranches of forward funding the Ames National Laboratory received in FY25 in support of the Critical Materials Innovation Hub and Ames Lab's participation in DOE's Minerals to Materials Supply Chain Facility (METALLIC) project, led by the National Energy Technology Laboratory.

Conversely, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS), increased their investment in Iowa State research this fiscal year. USDA issued awards totaling $30.6 million in FY26, up 24.7% from FY25, while the HHS investment of $17.9 million in FY26 was a slight increase of 1.8% compared to FY25.

Although not part of the 2026 fiscal year, developments in July 2026 could point to a return to more robust federal research funding in the 2027 fiscal year. On July 14, NSF introduced the Iowa State-led initiative, RuralSTAMINA, as one of 12 new Regional Innovation Engines. The collaboration between Iowa and Nebraska will receive $15 million in funding the first two years, and up to $160 million over 10 years if the private-public effort demonstrates progress toward its research milestones. Then, on July 22, DOE announced four Iowa State-led projects would receive awards as part of the agency's ambitious and sweeping Genesis Mission. Iowa State faculty are serving as co-PIs on four additional projects.

Non-federal research funding

Funding from industry and corporate sponsors (combined, U.S. and foreign) is one of the true bright spots in Iowa State external research funding in FY26. The university received $32.8 million, up 47.5% compared to FY25. Iowa State also experienced an uptick in commodity group funding in FY26. The nearly $6.7 million received was 4.9% more than the $6.4 million received in FY25.

Biosciences-Based Initiatives

Iowa State continues to build momentum across its Biosciences innovation ecosystems thanks to sustained support from the Iowa legislature and in partnership with BioConnect Iowa. The legislature allocated $2.96M for FY26 to support Iowa State's research and development efforts across three Biosciences platforms: Biobased Products (BP); Digital and Precision Agriculture (DPA); and Vaccines, Diagnostics, and Immunotherapeutics (VDI).

Each platform deploys state funds to expand opportunities in its focus area — from leveraging investments to secure federal research awards, to providing seed funding for university startups, to acquiring shared equipment that accelerates research and entrepreneurial growth. Key outcomes from the past 12 months include:

The BP platform advanced a major infrastructure project for Iowa, consummating a partnership between BioMADE, Iowa State University, the ISU Research Park, and the Iowa Economic Development Authority for the construction of a fermentation scale-up facility that will support biobased products commercialization. The facility will be located at the BioCentury Research Farm and will include one 10,000- and two 5,000-liter fermenters and associated downstream equipment. The project will offer critical de-risking and proof of scalability for companies evaluating a wide range of bioprocessing projects.

With the eight research project seed grants awarded in FY26, the BP platform has funded more than 50 different research projects led by 45 primary investigators, supporting 14 Iowa State startup companies, and partnering with 22 established Iowa-based companies.

The DPA platform leveraged previously seed-funded research and development to expand collaboration between Iowa State researchers and local AgTech companies, accelerating the commercialization of precision agriculture products and services across Iowa

In the first quarter of 2026, the DPA platform collaborated with other members of the Iowa State research community to host one of three national workshops focused on exploring how the U.S. could build a test bed strategy to speed the movement of new technologies from research labs into the marketplace. The workshops were convened to support the NSF Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships' (TIP) mission to accelerate American innovation and strengthen the nation's workforce.

The VDI platform awarded more than $500,000 in research seed grants in FY26. In total, the platform has supported more than 40 grants to accelerate new innovations and technological developments.

The VDI platform made a concerted effort to increase workforce development activities. Iowa State launched a graduate-level class focused on biotechnology and competency, and the CYVAX commercial development lab supported formal micro-credentialed training focused on commercially relevant topics such as potency assay development, bioreactors and fermentation, advanced cell culture techniques, and mRNA production.

The Iowa State Bioscience platforms were also critical in assisting Iowa State and its partners landing the NSF Engines award mentioned in the previous research section.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach spurs economic and workforce development across Iowa. Extension programs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Community and Economic Development, Health and Human Sciences, and 4-H Youth Development have prompted more than $46 million in statewide economic activity through securing contracts, donations, fees, grants, and mobilizing volunteers, resulting in more than 1 million educational exchanges and over 10,500 educational events with Iowans in the past year.

The Food Innovation and Business Hub reached nearly 4,000 entrepreneurs and food businesses through educational programs and provided specialized assistance to more than 1,000 companies.

Firms receiving assistance in previous years reported more than $46 million in economic impact from increased and retained sales, new products, cost savings, and job creation.

Extension provides vital workforce development training, enabling Iowans to gain continuing education and certification for success in the workplace. More than 10,300 educational contacts occurred via private pesticide applicator trainings in which participants improved their ability to safely use pesticides across Iowa's farm fields. More than 1,390 Iowa food service managers and employees participated in ServSafe® classes, gaining the knowledge they need to protect the public from foodborne illness. Over 115,700 childcare teachers and home providers participated in professional development, increasing their understanding of child development and behavior, early learning, nutrition, and health and safety practices. Extension's Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy improved the efficiency of municipal governments by training 363 municipal professionals in new laws, programs, and technology.

In the prior year, over 6,400 Iowa youth engaged in AI-focused programming, learning to use AI responsibly and engaging in real-world innovation. They'll be well equipped for success, whether they are headed to higher education or directly into the workforce. Iowa youth have earned top placings in national 4-H AI challenges each of the past two years.

When rural communities can address their housing concerns, more Iowans have access to safe, affordable places to live. Extension's Rural Housing Readiness Assessment program has empowered 71 communities to create actionable plans for improving their housing stock since 2020. Forty-three of the communities sparked an estimated $199 million in housing investments with planned housing development in these communities totaling an additional $160 million.

Profitable farms lead to vibrant local economies and thriving rural communities. Extension workshops are part of ISU Digital Ag Innovation Lab's Planter University, with more than 1,300 farmers and ag industry professionals learning to optimize technology and improve planter efficiency over the past 5 years. A sample of participants reported values of $10-$20 per acre gained from the 2026 workshops for an estimated economic impact topping $5.5 million, with more than $9.2 million cumulative impact for the program.

By saving money on tax preparation and accessing appropriate credits, Iowans with low or moderate income are better able to cover basic needs, pay debts, save for emergencies, or invest. Through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, extension educators trained and supported 149 community volunteers who provided free tax preparation to qualified individuals. With county extension administrative support, the volunteers served 3,698 Iowans, saving $737,040 on preparation fees. The volunteers also helped 612 of these Iowans access their Earned Income Tax Credits, resulting in an estimated benefit of more than $1.6 million to Iowa communities.

Summary of ISU Economic Development and Innovation Data	
a. Number of disclosures of intellectual property (excluding data sets)	112
b. Number of patent applications filed	120
c. Number of patents awarded: U.S. issued patents Foreign Patents Total issued patents	 53 16 69
d. Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional technologies: Total In Iowa	 88 20
e. Number of license and option agreements yielding income	98
f. Revenue to Iowa companies as a result of licensed technology (FY26)	$ 11.1M
g. Number of startup companies formed (through licensing activities) Total: In Iowa:	 3 2
h. Number of companies in research park and incubators Pre-incubator companies private University related	122 35 23
i. Number of new companies in research park and incubators New pre-incubator companies New university related	11 19 0
j. Number of employees in companies in research park and incubators	3,014
k. Royalties and license fee income	$3.3M
l. Total sponsored funding received How much of this is for research	$487.9M $254.6M
m. Corporate sponsored funding received for research and economic development In Iowa:	$73.5M $18.2M
n. Iowa appropriations for economic development Total: SBDC CIRAS ISU Research Park Regents Innovation Fund	 $3.473M $0.936M $1.365M $0.122M $1.050M
o. Licenses and options executed per $10 million research expenditures (2023 AUTM Survey)	0.3
p. Sales of licensed products by Iowa-based companies (FY26)	$11.1M

Regents Innovation Funding (RIF) supports both entrepreneurial infrastructure as well as faculty founders. Nearly half of the Economic Development & Industry Relations RIF funding supports the Innovation Acceleration Fund (IAF), a highly competitive program that awards grants up to $50,000 to ISU faculty working on marketable research discoveries across campus. A summary of this year's grant projects is provided below.

Summary of FY26 RIF Commercialization Program Projects		
Principal Investigator	FY26 IAF Commercialization Program Projects ($448,000 of $1,050,000 RIF Allocation) All projects required a 1:1 funding match	Award Amount
Anderson, Jared	3D Printed Polymers for Rare Earth Element Extraction and Recovery	$50,000
Ellis, Tim	Concept validation of SGBR-RAB system for aeration-less wastewater treatment	$32,938
Ferreira, Jose	Enhancing Corrosion Resistance of Zinc Oxalate Coatings via graphene Oxide Incorporation	$50,000
Lubberstedt, Thomas	Development of next generation haploid inducers in maize	$50,000
Lyte, Mark	Demonstration of Iowa State Probiotic Potential for the Companion Animal Market	$50,000
Nlebedim, Cajetan	Expanding the Impact of REMAFS Technology through Molten Salt Electrolysis for Rare Earth Metals	$50,000
Smith, Ryan	Direct use of Biocrude and biochar in dispatchable power and construction pavement	$50,000
Zhang, Jianqiang	Development and evaluation of a bivalent inactivated vaccine against avian metapneumovirus subtypes A and B	$50,000
Zhang, Qijing	Development of Protective vaccines against infectious coryza in poultry	$50,000

University of Northern Iowa
Annual Economic Development Report
FY2026

To: Board of Regents, State of Iowa | November 2026

University of Northern Iowa
Annual Economic Development Report – FY2026

Section 1. UNI's Economic Development Activities to Enhance Economic Growth in Iowa – Highlights and Summary

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) provided economic development assistance to all of Iowa's 99 counties for the 27th consecutive year. UNI's economic development outreach programs are housed in the Business and Community Services (BCS) division and work toward supporting UNI strategic goal 3, to "Empower Communities to Shape Their Future." Since 2000, BCS has engaged the entire university community in its outreach efforts, including faculty, staff, students, and alumni – all of whom play a critical role in Building a Better Iowa. Unique client interactions in FY2026 totaled 4,848, a record high for BCS outreach centers and programs.

Specific areas of service offered by UNI BCS include entrepreneurship, community and economic development, market research, environmental research and sustainability, metal casting, and manufacturing 4.0.

Some exceptional recognition and milestones from the past year include:

- Advance Iowa and the Iowa Center for Employee Ownership (IA-CEO) were invited by the Aspen Institute to serve a lead role in their national Employee Ownership Ideas Forum.
- UNI's Geoinformatics Training, Research, Education and Extension Center (GeoTREE) celebrated its 20th anniversary of serving businesses, government agencies and nonprofit organizations across Iowa.
- Karla Organist, senior project manager for the Institute for Decision Making (IDM), was elected to serve as president of the National Rural Economic Developers Association.
- Christy Ryken, director for Strategic Marketing Services (SMS), was elected to serve as chair of the Iowa Energy Center Board of Directors.
- Kathryn Gilbery, local food access coordinator for the Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE), and Patrick Luensmann, director of the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC), were selected for the Cedar Valley's 20 Under 40 Awards presented by The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier, the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa and the Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley.
- Liesl Seabert, program manager for IDM, was selected for the Des Moines Business Record's 40 Under 40 Awards.
- Joe Bolick, director of the Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC), was elected to serve as chair for the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable Board of Directors.

A Summary of key economic development program outcomes from UNI BCS in FY2026:

Overall Outcomes

- Provided services to clients in all 99 Iowa counties reaching a total of 4,848 unique businesses, communities, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities; and served over 56,000 additional unique visitors to IASourceLink.com.
- Reached more than 377,000 Iowans through BCS programs and projects.
- Engaged 248 faculty members and 215 students in the direct delivery of BCS client services, while another 3,560 students were reached by BCS programs.
- Leveraged each $1 invested by the State of Iowa with $5 in private grants, contracts, fees or federal funding.

Summarized Impacts on the Iowa Economy

- The Metal Casting Center (MCC) partnered with the Metallurgical Engineering Trade Apprenticeship & Learning (METAL) program led by The Composites Institute to increase exposure of advanced manufacturing career opportunities, particularly in the defense supply chain.
- IDM assisted the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative with the pilot of Iowa United First Aid, a system of trained first responders, in three counties.
- The Tallgrass Prairie Center (TPC) supported more than 420,000 acres of public roadsides through ecological integrated management services.
- The Irvine Prairie, a prairie-in-progress managed by TPC, increased plantings to 190 acres and improved visitor facilities.
- The FBC has now engaged 878 family-owned companies across the state with programming and guidance since its inception.
- The IWRC assisted 139 Iowa small businesses with detailed environmental assistance.
- Advance Iowa provided 53 Iowa companies with employee ownership assistance and growth strategy assistance.
- The CEEE Local Food Program assisted over 2,800 farmers, business, organizations and individuals to enhance Iowa's local and regional food systems.

Entrepreneurship, Business Development and Incubation

- The JPEC reached 3,477 attendees through nine webinars covering tax law changes, business licensing, strategic planning, and succession planning for Iowa small businesses.
- Advance Iowa assisted 53 Iowa companies and conducted 31 seminars or presentations related to succession planning and employee ownership throughout Iowa and nationally.
- The JPEC partnered with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) to serve 56,009 unique users seeking small business information through the IASourceLink (ISL) platform.
- Twenty-three peer group sessions for members of Iowa family businesses were provided through the FBC.
- Twelve student businesses were incubated in the UNI JPEC R.J. McElroy Student Business Incubator, and an additional 32 student businesses were provided with business coaching and support by JPEC staff.
- The UNI Small Business Development Center (SBDC) served 294 new clients.

Local Economic Development

- IDM provided strategic planning and comprehensive research assistance to 95 community partners, 11 additional regional groups, and 58 service providers and utility companies across Iowa.
- IDM collaborated with the Professional Developers of Iowa and the Iowa Economic Development Authority to create a professional development program for mid-career economic developers in Iowa.
- SMS and IDM helped two regional economic development groups complete wage and benefit surveys of their employers in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the compensation and employment landscape within their regions.
- IDM staff coordinated the Leadership Exchange and Leadership Bootcamp for Empower Rural Iowa and the Iowa Rural Development Council.
- The Heartland Economic Development Course, managed by IDM, trained nearly 70 economic developers.

Waste Reduction, Environmental Assistance, and Sustainability

- The Local Food Program (CEEE) served over 2,800 individuals providing technical assistance and education on local food systems.
- Cities and counties partnered with the CEEE's Resilient Iowa Communities on nine greenhouse gas and carbon sequestration initiatives.
- Native seeds for nearly 1,500 acres were distributed to 46 county secondary roads departments as part of the TPC's Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management project
- Support for native plantings was provided by the TPC to farmers, landowners and professionals in all of Iowa's 99 counties.
- The IWRC Iowa Green Brewery project supported 40 certified craft breweries across the state while expanding the program to surrounding states in partnership with the EPA.
- Provided one-to-one customized environmental technical assistance and on-site reviews through the IWRC to 139 Iowa small businesses. Energy efficiency visits were conducted by the IWRC for 17 small businesses.
- The GeoTREE Center developed a new LIDAR data dissemination application which is used across Iowa for the delivery of high-resolution cloud-native data products.

Advanced Manufacturing and Market Research

- Trained 323 military painters at six satellite training sites through the IWRC's STAR4D program.
- Served 15 Iowa and US foundries and supply chain companies with automation and Internet of Things (IoT) sensor technologies through the Foundry 4.0 Center.
- Completed Department of War (DOW) sponsored research on metal casting process control techniques to support the defense supply chain for sustainment parts.
- Hosted over 410 visitors at the MCC and Foundry 4.0 Center for demonstrations of Manufacturing 4.0 innovations and the digital twin.
- Four major seminars related to additive manufacturing and 4.0 technical solutions were provided for the metal casting and defense supply chain.
- Eighteen Iowa companies and organizations benefitted from market research and competitive intelligence by Strategic Marketing Services (SMS).

Section 2. Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property

FY 2026

	UNI
Number of disclosures of intellectual property	17
Number of patent applications filed	0
Number of patents awarded	1
Number of license and option agreements executed on institutional intellectual property	0
Number of license and option agreements yielding income	9
Revenue to Iowa companies as a result of licensed technologies	$3,500,000
Number of companies graduating from UNI incubators (in total)	265
Number of companies in research parks and incubators	12
Number of new companies in research parks and incubators	7
Number of employees in companies in research parks and incubators	19
Royalties/license fee income	$33,484
Total sponsored funding	$47,233,054
Corporate-sponsored funding for research and economic development and revenue generation	$1,902,110
Annual appropriations for economic development	$1,466,419
Regents Innovation Fund	$900,000

Section 3. Overview of UNI's Economic Development Programs

UNI outreach services and community and economic development activities are outlined in a table format on the following four pages. The format provides a brief overview of each program, its purpose, types of clients served, outcomes from the past year, and some aggregate outcomes. Together, the programs served 4,848 unique businesses and organizations in the past year and 56,009 individuals through the IASourceLink.com entrepreneurial development system and the Resource Ranger.

Section 3. Overview of UNI's Economic Development Programs (continued)

Services	FY26 Results	Cumulative Results
Advance Iowa (AI)		
Rural/urban consulting program focused on small- and medium-sized existing businesses to provide succession planning, strategic planning, training, peer round tables **Serves**: Small and medium enterprises	✓ 53 companies assisted, 44 with employee ownership. ✓ 31 seminars on succession planning, employee ownership, and business continuity. ✓ Hosted and supported 42 networking, educational and business assistance workshops/events.	✓ Project work with 276 SMEs, impacting 7,518 employees across the state in all quadrants and industries.
Family Business Center (FBC)		
Programs and services for Iowa family-owned businesses including business succession, next-generation leadership development, peer learning and events **Serves**: Small and medium-sized family-owned enterprises	✓ 195 companies assisted. ✓ Delivered 5-part seminar series for family-owned companies. ✓ Facilitated 23 peer group sessions. ✓ Hosted Annual Conference with 158 attendees. ✓ Hosted Annual Family Workshop with 77 attendees. ✓ Service to clients in 55 counties.	✓ Worked with 878 small- and mid-sized family-owned companies across the state in all industries.
Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE)		
Technical assistance, educational programs and leadership in residential energy efficiency services, local food systems, improving community food security and environmental health, and sustainability efforts for K-12 schools **Serves**: Iowa residents, nonprofit organizations, local governments, school districts, and counties	✓ CEEE environmental health staff organized 58 unique presentations across three initiatives highlighting the work of the program. Conservatively reached over 159,000 individuals. ✓ The UNI Local Food Program served over 2,800 individuals including UNI staff and students, farmers, gardeners, AmeriCorps Service Members and host sites, and community members. The program had over 190 partner businesses and organizations in 20 counties. ✓ The Veggie Voucher Program provided $20,925 in fresh	✓ Over the past 16 years Green Iowa AmeriCorps has provided energy efficiency services to 11,000 homes and educated 115,000 people. The program has completed more than 900 service projects alongside more than 450 community organizations and 30,000+ volunteers. ✓ Since its founding in 2015, the Nourish Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA Program has worked to eliminate poverty through food access initiatives across the state. And placed more

	vegetables to families in the Cedar Valley. ✓ Nourish Iowa AmeriCorps VISTA members supported 75 nonprofit food events.	than 65 VISTA members to host sites throughout Iowa. ✓ Since its start, Green Iowa AmeriCorps over 2,000 members will have contributed over 100,000 hours to serve Iowa communities
Geoinformatics Training, Research, Education and Extension Center (GeoTREE)		
Geospatial technologies, education, research and outreach activities for federal, state, local and tribal agencies **Serves**: Federal, state, local and tribal governmental agencies	✓ Developed high resolution land cover data for approximately 20% of Iowa for DNR. ✓ Developed new LIDAR data dissemination application used statewide for the delivery of high-resolution cloud-native data products for the State of Iowa ✓ Captured drone and ground-based 360° imagery for Iowa Water Trails and developed virtual tour	✓ Project work with public agencies, academic groups/departments and private companies. ✓ Development and delivery of many geospatial data and custom applications serving a variety of stakeholders across Iowa.
Institute for Decision Making (IDM)		
Hands-on community and economic development guidance and research **Serves**: Economic development organizations, chambers commerce, city councils, communities, utilities and others	✓ Assistance, training and research provided to 95 community organizations, 11 regional development groups, and 58 services providers and utilities ✓ Continued to assist the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa with the piloting of the Iowa United First Aid project in three Iowa counties ✓ Led the planning and coordination of the Leadership Exchange and Leadership Bootcamp for Empower Rural Iowa and the Iowa Rural Development Council ✓ Assisted the Professional Developers of Iowa, the Iowa	✓ Served more than 870 communities, counties and groups in all of Iowa's counties to date. ✓ Trained more than 1,565 economic development professionals through the Heartland Economic Development Course.

	Economic Development Authority, MidAmerican Energy and others develop a new professional development program for mid-career economic developers in Iowa	
Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC)		
Free, confidential, non-regulatory environmental and energy efficiency assistance for small businesses, public entities, food waste reduction, and education. **Serves**: Small businesses in Iowa; food waste generators; military and industrial painters	✓ Detailed one-on-one environmental assistance was provided to 139 Iowa small businesses, including 17 energy efficiency visits. ✓ Military painter training was conducted by IWRC staff at center facilities and at 6 satellite sites training a total of 323 painters.	✓ Provided detailed assistance or on-site review to 7,113 Iowa small businesses. ✓ Provided 5,715 certifications to military painters and DOW contractors.
John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) and **Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**		
Entrepreneurship education, business consulting & training, research, and capital investment programs serving entrepreneurs. **Serves**: Student entrepreneurs, faculty and staff, small and medium-sized businesses, entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial service providers	✓ JPEC served 5,099 individuals. ✓ 12 student businesses incubated and an additional 32 student businesses were supported. ✓ 9 webinars hosted 3,447 participants. ✓ ISL website accessed by 56,009 unique visitors. ✓ SBDC served 294 clients.	✓ The JPEC Student Business Incubator has provided space to more than 265 business owners since FY05. ✓ Since FY23, 4,572 students have learned about and crafted an elevator pitch through presentations by JPEC instructors. ✓ Since FY11, 79 businesses and nonprofits have had their projects completed by Entrepreneurial Strategy students. ✓ Since FY12, over 560,000 unique users have been served on the ISL platform. ✓ Contributed to the start of 128 businesses.

Metal Castings Center (MCC) and **Foundry 4.0 Center (F4C)**		
Metal casting technologies, applied research, testing, training and manufacturing 4.0 technologies **Serves**: Iowa casting users, foundries and foundry suppliers	✓ Provided technical assistance to 5 Iowa foundries and 10 additional foundries. ✓ Conducted DOW-sponsored research in metal casting and process control techniques. ✓ Delivered 4 seminars on additive manufacturing for metal casting in the Midwest. ✓ Provided 91 lab scale foundry kits for K-12 shop teachers, 19 of whom were in Iowa.	✓ Over 2,400 industry-funded projects have been completed to date and more than 105 clients assisted with additive manufacturing, industry 4.0 and/or cast metals technologies.
Strategic Marketing Services (SMS)		
Market research and analysis **Serves:** Businesses, entrepreneurs and nonprofit organizations	✓ Completed 17 market research projects with 18 organizations. ✓ Assisted many local Iowa community organizations including economic developers, utility organizations, higher education, and businesses. ✓ SMS has provided consulting services to 6 Iowa organizations, some of which have developed into FY26 projects. These organizations encompass academic institutional support, broadband services, home healthcare equipment, and medical device tracking technology.	✓ Since 1990, market research and analysis services have been provided to 354 Iowa companies.
Tallgrass Prairie Center (TPC)		
Coordination of county roadside managers, farmers and agricultural conservation professionals; native seed industry; educational materials on the tallgrass prairie ecosystem **Serves**: Iowa county governments, ag	✓ Distributed native seed for 46 county roadside departments totaling almost 1,500 acres (19,000 lbs. of seed). ✓ Provided technical support to landowners, farmers, and professionals in all 99 counties.	✓ More than 50,000 acres of Iowa counties rights-of-way have been planted to native vegetation. ✓ 65 Iowa counties and 28 cities use ecologically integrated management on 420,000 acres of public roadsides.

technical service providers/buyers, UNI and local educators, community, county conservation boards, and academic researchers	✓ Distributed prairie root banners and specimens to 20 schools and science museums. ✓ The Irvine Prairie was increased to 190, hosted 10 prairie walks and improved visitor facilities.	✓ Public and private land managers have access to an expanding inventory of Iowa-source seed including grasses, sedges, wildflowers, and shrubs blooming spring through fall. ✓ Research results influence conservation practices throughout the upper Midwest.

Section 4: Regents Innovation Funding Report

The UNI FY2026 Regents Innovation Funding (RIF) projects and outcomes partially supported by this fund are summarized in a separate annual report but also included in this annual economic development report.

Section 5: Collaborative Projects

Each year, UNI works closely with the other Regent institutions and state and federal agencies on collaborative projects. The following projects represent a sampling of these joint initiatives.

Advance Iowa / Center for Business Growth and Innovation – Partnerships Key to Success

- The IA-CEO Advisory and Executive Councils include leaders from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Association of Business & Industry, Iowa Finance Authority, Iowa Rural Development Council, Senator Grassley's office, Iowa's Lieutenant Governor's office, and UNI faculty, as well as strong representation from Iowa's business community leadership. This collaboration with state leaders provides essential guidance, insights, and support to help IA-CEO educate and guide companies on their journey toward employee ownership. Their expertise strengthens IA-CEO's mission to foster a thriving, equitable business landscape across the state.
- Advance Iowa and IASourceLink continued their collaborative outreach delivering strategic business education and accessible online support to Iowa's small- and mid-sized businesses. Advance Iowa's staff provided business growth and business transition webinars—offered both live and recorded—equipping business owners with practical tools for strategic planning, innovation, and succession readiness. IASourceLink amplified these efforts by connecting business owners to licensing guidance, funding pathways, and its statewide network of more than 1,000 support partners. Advance Iowa further supported Iowa small- and mid-sized businesses through the release of the Business Life Cycle Campaign and Magazine, which included a dossier style publication summarizing six months of business growth and business transition insights. The downloadable guide, made available through IASourceLink, helps business owners understand and navigate each phase of the business life cycle.

Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE) collaborated on projects with ISU and UI

- CEEE collaborated with the University of Iowa's Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination (CHEEC) on a drinking water sampling and education project.
- CEEE provided services — which included conducting energy audits, providing tree planting services and community garden installations —to Iowa municipalities including Waterloo, Cedar Falls and a variety of rural communities.
- In partnership with the ISU Extension Farm, Food and Enterprise Development program, CEEE planned and hosted the Iowa Farm & Food Conference, which focuses on community food systems.

The GeoTREE Center worked collaboratively with state agencies and multiple organizations

- The GeoTREE Center historically works with state agencies such as the Office of the State Archaeologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Economic Development Authority and

the Iowa Energy Center. It also works with local agencies such as the Waterloo Water Works and the City of Waterloo, nonprofits like the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa and Cedar Valley Arboretum and Botanical Gardens and has provided services to numerous private companies.

- The GeoTREE Center works collaboratively with various faculty, students, and staff from across the campus including academic departments such as History, Communications and Media, Earth Science, Biology, Wilson College of Business, and others, as well as groups on campus such as University Relations, Facilities Management, the Institute of Decision Making, and many others.
- In the last fiscal year, the GeoTREE Center worked on funded projects from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Black Hawk Soil and Conservation District, the City of Madison, WI, and the City of Waterloo Traffic Operations

UNI Family Business Center (FBC)

- The FBC partnered with IASourceLink, the Iowa Economic Development Authority and UNI's Advance Iowa program, bringing together the expertise of the FBC with the business audience of IASourceLink. FBC shared common steps in the succession planning process with small businesses across Iowa. This content was also recorded for future and repeat viewing.
- An FBC partnership with Western Iowa Advantage and Carroll County Growth Partnership provided a seminar for businesses in their region. The focus was on family business succession, including the challenges and opportunities facing multigenerational ownership in rural Iowa. Practical strategies were offered to help local leaders support long-term business stability in their communities.

Institute for Decision Making (IDM) collaborated with economic development partners

- IDM continued to partner with the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative (ERI) as the Iowa United First Aid (IUFA) project continues to be piloted in Calhoun, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. IUFA is a system of trained volunteer responders, deployed via cellphone-based technology, to provide first aid assistance to reduce response times and enhance EMS coverage in rural parts of the state. IDM assisted in the initial development of the program and over the past year focused on promotion of the program at state and national conferences. IDM's participation in meetings to consider vendor system with a custom-developed product involved collaboration with ERI/IEDA, Iowa Department of Management, and private technology vendors.
- IDM, in partnership with the Iowa Rural Development Council, Leadership Iowa, the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa State University Extension, Iowa Association of Business & Industry, and a several community leadership organizations, continued to expand the Iowa Leadership Exchange and Bootcamp, Iowa's premier professional development event for community leadership program coordinators, resource providers, and community leaders. The Exchange brings together participants from across the state to share best practices, strengthen leadership development programs, and build a stronger statewide network of leadership practitioners. IDM staff chaired the statewide planning and led its year-round development, including curriculum design, speaker recruitment, program coordination, event promotion, logistics, and facilitation. IDM team members also served as instructors and facilitators, equipping participants with practical tools, innovative ideas, and a deeper network that strengthens leadership development efforts across Iowa.

- IDM partnered with PDI, IEDA, the Iowa Area Development Group, MidAmerican Energy and several local and regional economic development organizations to develop PDI ConnectED, a professional development program designed to prepare and connect Iowa's next generation of economic development professionals. IDM helped build the program from the ground up, leading curriculum development, recruiting instructors, reviewing cohort applications, securing sponsors, and coordinating overall program implementation. The competency-based program combines classroom instruction, mentoring, and practical application while introducing participants to the statewide network of organizations, programs, and resources that support economic development in Iowa. In addition to helping design and launch the program, IDM staff serves as instructors and mentors for the program, helping participants build both the technical expertise and professional relationships needed to advance their careers and strengthen communities across the state.

Iowa Waste Reduction Center (IWRC) collaborated with state and national partners

- The IWRC collaborated with the Iowa DNR, Iowa State University, the Iowa Composting Council, Cedar Rapids Linn County Solid Waste Agency and SCS Engineers to develop and host a compost operator recertification program.
- The IWRC partnered with EPA Region 7, the Ozark Environmental and Water Resources Institute at Missouri State University, and the Pollution Prevention Institute at Kansas State University to expand the Iowa Green Brewery Certification to their respective states.
- The IWRC partnered with the IEDA to conduct energy efficiency audits at 12 rural grocery stores across the state to qualify the businesses to receive grant funding from IEDA for improvements.

John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (JPEC) collaborations benefit students and community

- The UNI JPEC collaborated with the statewide JPEC network to offer pitch competitions to students and Iowa ventures. Fifteen students pitched their businesses and students from Drake, NIACC, and UNI were awarded prizes to grow their business. In the Iowa Venture Competition, 52 Iowa companies applied and 12 pitched for $100,000 in prizes.
- 56,009 Iowans sought information and business assistance was provided through 2,247 direct interactions with Iowa business owners via IASourcelink referral services and the Resource Ranger. The IASourceLink program continues as a strong partnership between UNI and IEDA. This program aids with business-related issues and links Iowa’s businesses with support resources from around the state.
- The UNI JPEC facilitated a small business accelerator in partnership with the nonprofit 24/7 BLAC. The Vitality Accelerator curriculum focuses on the fundamentals of business structure, financials, operations and marketing for small to medium businesses. Two cohorts were hosted during the year with 8 graduates of the program.

Metal Casting Center (MCC) collaborates with regent institutions and technical organizations

- The MCC collaborated with the Steel Founders' Society of America to develop a new methodology to measure iron oxide content in foundry system sands. In partnership with the UNI Chemistry Department, MCC offered solutions to this historically difficult problem, and the methodology is being adopted by operating foundries across the country.
- The MCC joined other cast metals industry experts in a federal initiative, Casting Augmentation Tiger Team, funded by Deloitte. This effort seeks to develop solutions for systemic issues in the defense casting supply chain for maintenance and sustainable castings for the DOW.
- The MCC joined a national campaign launched by The Composites Institute to increase awareness of advanced manufacturing career opportunities. The Metallurgical Engineering Trade Apprenticeship & Learning (METAL) program is a network of 12 universities funded by the Office of the Secretary of War to expand workforce participation in the domestic manufacturing space through hands-on training programs.

Strategic Marketing Services (SMS) partners with Iowa organizations

- SMS collaborated with IDM to assist the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities and its members quantify the comprehensive economic footprint of the municipal utility industry in Iowa, covering electric, water, gas, and telecommunications services. The primary project objectives were to measure the industry's total contributions to the state's economy by collecting specific data on employment, operating revenues, and capital investments.
- SMS worked in collaboration with IDM to complete wage and benefit studies for the Cedar Valley and Iowa Lakes Regions. The studies provided a comprehensive analysis of the compensation and employment landscape in the two regions of Iowa. The primary project objectives for both studies were to benchmark starting and maximum wages, evaluate the prevalence of various fringe benefits, such as health insurance and retirement plans, and identify regional workforce trends and recruitment barriers. For the Cedar Valley study, SMS and IDM worked with Grow Cedar Valley and the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership, and for the Iowa Lakes study they partnered with the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation.

Tallgrass Prairie Center (TPC) Partners with Iowa universities and associations

- The TPC provided technical assistance on prairie reconstruction in collaboration with ISU Extension, Iowa State University STRIPS team, the Iowa Monarch Conservation Consortium, as well as private companies, agricultural landowners, and federal conservation agencies. Activities included field days, widespread distribution of native seed and a service providers list, and sponsorship of the Practical Farmers of Iowa annual conference. The TPC shared research results on factors affecting native seed prices, as well as seed mix design, roadside management, and monarch butterfly recovery.
- The TPC worked closely with the Iowa Department of Transportation and dozens of Iowa county governments to supply enough seed to plant more than 1,400 acres of Iowa county roadsides with native plants, and to co-host an annual conference of roadside managers. The TPC collaborated with native seed stakeholders, including native seed companies, the Iowa DOT, the Iowa Crop Improvement Association, and the USDA Plant Introduction Center to supply source-ID seed for roadside planting and other prairie restorations across the state.