



# Partnering with iJAG for Student Success



# iJAG Mission

## Mission

iJAG ensures a future Iowa where youth are resilient and well-prepared with skills, purpose, and opportunities. Through collaborative partnerships and innovative approaches, we bridge the gap between education and employment to build strong communities and unlock the potential of **Every Student, No Matter What!**

## Vision

Empowering Iowa's youth to succeed, thrive, and become future-ready leaders.

## Culture of Care

At iJAG, we create a culture that prioritizes the well-being, growth, and development of each stakeholder and the communities we serve.





# iJAG Facts

## Growth and Expansion

- June 2022 – 97 programs served 4,442 students
- June 2023 – 152 programs served 6,992 students
- June 2024 – 174 programs served 8,238 students
- January 2025 – **179** programs serving **9,172** students
- **74** communities in **50** counties served
- **96%** graduation rate
- **77%** Full-time employment
- **20%** increase in business engagement
- Programs tailored to meet the needs of rural, suburban, and urban schools
- Partnerships with schools, businesses, and community organizations to provide work-based learning opportunities
- **Innovative approach for 25 years**
  - Career readiness
  - Leadership development plans
  - Employability skills
  - Civic and community service opportunities
  - **Student-Led Organizations (SLOs)**
  - Individualized development plans
  - Post-graduation 1 year follow-up support
  - Work-based learning



A woman with long black braids, wearing a white t-shirt and a black cardigan, is speaking in an art gallery. Two large abstract paintings with vibrant colors like purple, blue, yellow, and green are visible in the background. A white text box with yellow accents is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

# Kira Canada

Past President, State & National Career Associations



Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates

# The JAG Advantage



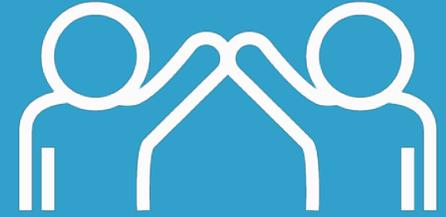
# PBL

## Project-Based Learning

### Competencies

We deliver individualized guidance to students to help them achieve mastery of 37+ core competencies related to:

- Career education
- Job attainment
- Soft skills
- Professional development
- Leadership training



### Relevance

- Mentoring
- Networking
- Worksite tours
- Job shadows



### Relationships

- Employer-partnered projects
- Industry exploration
- Mentorships
- Resume and cover letter writing
- Mock interviews

### Student-centered learning

- Real-world projects with future professional application
- Demonstrates knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation
- 4 levers of learning:
  - Knowledge of students
  - Cognitive demand
  - Literacy
  - Shared power



### Rigor

- Apprenticeships
- Internships
- Industry credentials
- On-the-job training

# Employer engagement framework

**Exploration**

**Exposure**

**Experience**

**GOAL**

**We open the door to jobs and industries.**

Examples include:

- In-classroom speakers
- Career fairs
- Onsite job tours
- Career assessments
- Career pathway education

**We partner with employers to help students take the first step in discovering a career of interest.**

Examples include:

- Interactive business tour
- Job shadowing
- Interviews with industry professionals
- Industry event attendance
- Virtual webinar

**We engage students with hands-on learning experiences within their career of interest.**

Examples include:

- Earn-to-learn
- Hands-on training
- Apprenticeships or internships, short-term employment
- Career and technical pathway with work experience

**We secure one or more of the following before graduation:**

- Academic certification or accreditation
- Advanced or continued education
- Confirmed employment



# Student selection process



## Students that need:

- To build resiliency
- To identify and develop strengths
- A personalized pathway



## Students that want:

- To be pushed outside of their comfort zone
- To discover their passion and purpose



## Students that benefit from:

- Project-based learning
- Student influence
- Learning what they want and how they want (voice and choice)

# STUDENT EVENTS



## Leadership Development Conference (LDC)

- Over 1,000 students
- LDC is an annual opportunity for students to participate in breakout sessions, workshops, and hands-on training. Activities strengthen their leadership skills and equip students to make an impact on their peers, in their schools, and within their communities.



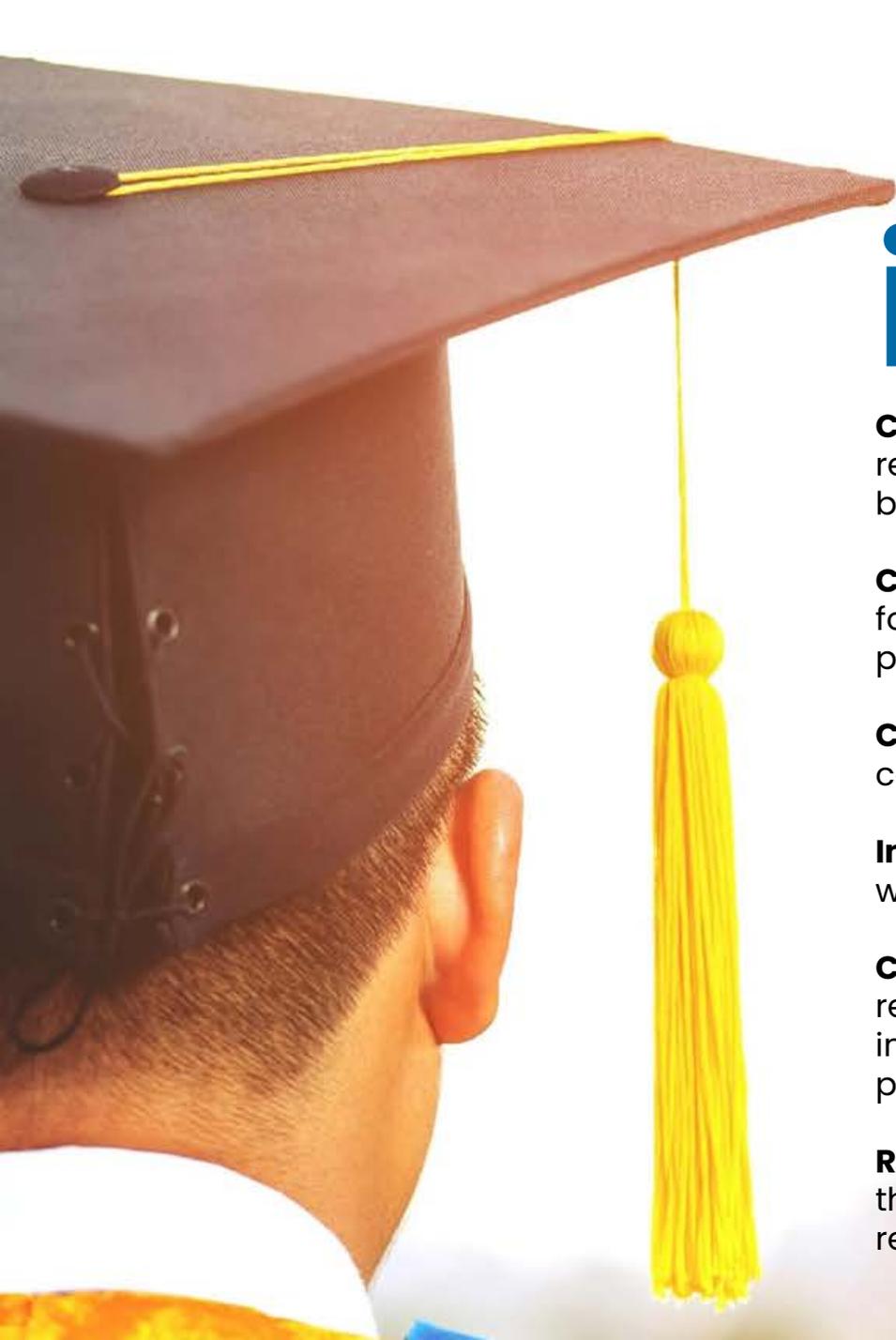
## Career Development Conference (CDC)

- Over 600 students
- CDC is an annual opportunity for iJAG students in 11th and 12th grade to participate in competitive events to showcase the competencies and skills they have developed in the classroom. Competitive events include prepared speaking, mock interviews, business plan presentations, financial literacy, and more.



## Skills Development Conference (SDC)

- Over 400 students
- SDC is an annual opportunity for iJAG students in 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grade to participate in competitive events to showcase their competencies and skills as well as participate in a community service project.



# PORTRAIT OF AN iJAG Graduate

**Career and Workforce Readiness:** Gain employability skills that lead to being future ready by identifying industry pathways that align to their strengths and talents to help bring them into the workforce and create sustainable careers and generational impact.

**Communication:** Communicates with a purpose and intent in a variety of modes and formats through effective reading, writing, listening, and public speaking (in a professional and constructive way).

**Critical Thinking:** Exhibits the ability to reason through and weigh evidence to make complex decisions and identify where changes are needed and take appropriate action.

**Innovation:** Generates, invests in, and shares ideas and solutions that will help shape the way professionalism looks now and in the future.

**Civic and Social Contributor:** Understands, embraces, and participates in open dialogue regarding various issues that impact them, their community, workforce needs, and an inclusive world. Empowering change through community service projects and participation in local events.

**Resilient Leaders:** Overcome obstacles and recognizes the need to continue growth through perseverance. Gain leadership skills that are transferable to the workplace regardless of pathway.



# Lexi Vazquez

GMG Senior

Vice President, iJAG State Career Association





# Gracelyn Peak

GMG Junior  
Vice President-Elect,  
iJAG State Career Association



# Success Stories

## Experiences through iJAG:

- CPR and OSHA certification - obtained and paid for by iJAG
- Obtained work-based learning college course credit
- Secured a part-time job at Iowa Veterans Home
- Currently enrolled taking CNA classes
- Career Fairs, College Fairs, STEM Festival, Build My Future
- Day in a Life of a Nurse
- AI Challenge, High School Healthcare Competition, Anatomy Challenge

*“iJAG helped me in so many ways, such as giving me the push to get a job at Iowa Veterans Home and helped me do things that I would have never even done in the first place.”-Cora Hall, GMG student*

# Success Stories

## Opportunities through iJAG:

- KCCI to see behind-the-scenes operations.
- Competed and won a social media competition against four other schools.
- Elected as the Social Media Manager for the class.

## Work-based learning and skill development provided:

- Hands-on learning in social media management and marketing.
- Deeper understanding of professional environments.
- Enhanced future-readiness
- Built confidence in leadership and teamwork.
- Recognized the value of exploring career interests through real-world experiences.



*“I was put into a class called iJAG which I am very thankful for.”*

– Aubree Runner,  
GMG student



*Colton Hauser,*  
GMG student

# Success Stories

## Opportunities through iJAG:

- Attended multiple career events to identify interests and set goals.
- Gained exposure to potential career paths, such as becoming a DNR officer or a powerlineman.
- Excelled in hands-on activities, building practical and technical skills.
- Enhanced teamwork abilities through collaborative projects and experiences.
- Maintained a strong work ethic, contributing to academic and personal success.
- Real-world experiences and mentorship to prepare for life after high school.

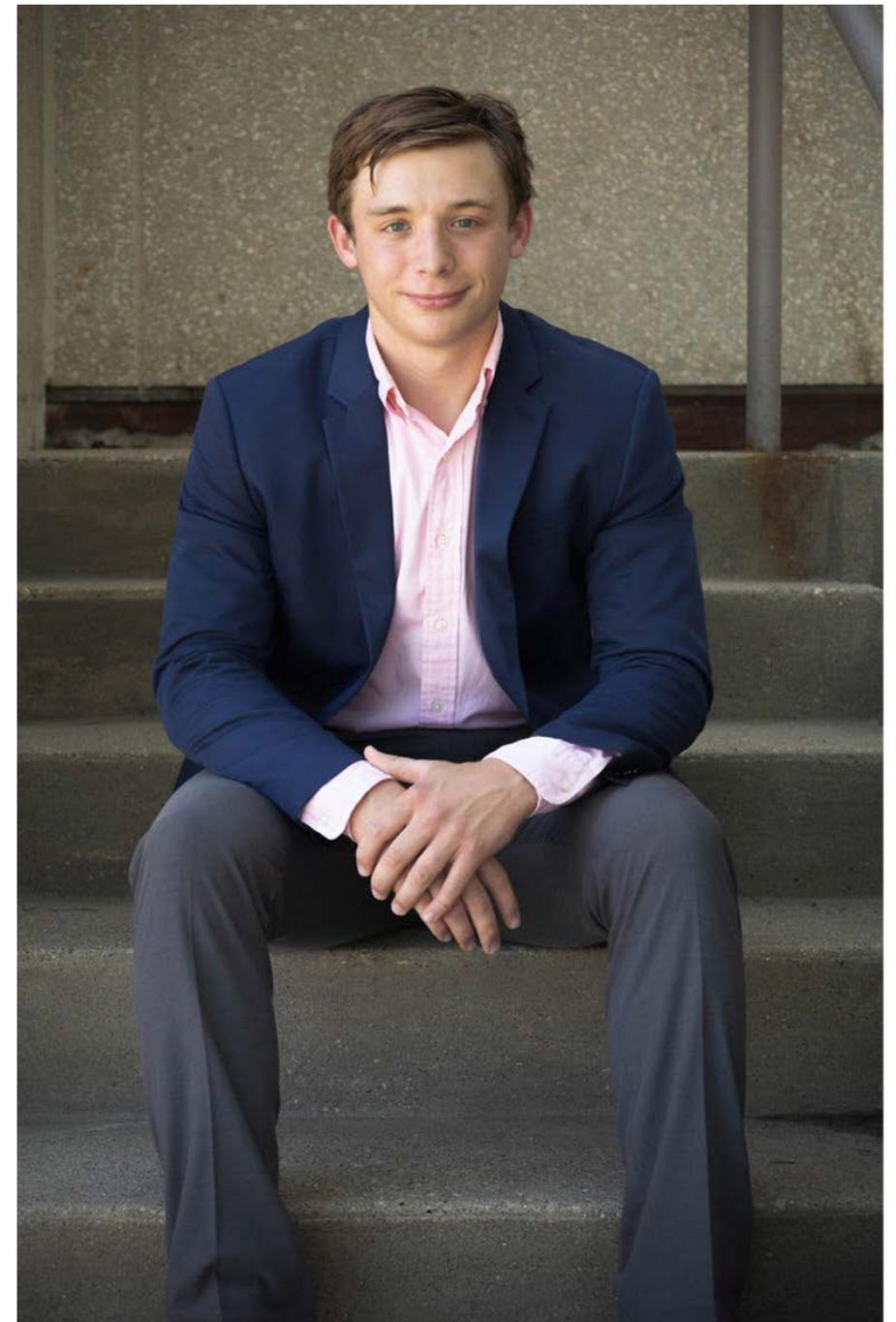
*“Being part of iJAG is an incredible tool that has allowed a kid from a small town to achieve an incredible amount of success, which I don’t think would be possible without iJAG.”*

– Thomas Tremel

## Success Stories

### Work-based learning opportunities:

- Completed two finance-related internships during summer 2023 with iJAG and Principal Financial Group.
- Gained independence and self-sufficiency by adapting to a new environment.
- Learned to create and manage a routine, use public transportation, shop for groceries, and live in an unfamiliar city.
- Served as a special speaker during the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new CTE Regional Learning Center in Woodbine.





# Success Stories

- Facilitated career exploration through career fairs and networking opportunities in the construction field.
- Offered hands-on experience in home construction.
- iJAG and IGNITE helped Landon see the real-world impact of addressing the housing crisis.

*“Without IGNITE and iJAG, I wouldn’t have been as successful in my first semester.” – Landon Fitchhorn*

# \$500,000 INCREASE

currently at \$9.6million  
would increase total state  
appropriation to \$10.1million

## Retention

- Specialists salaries to be competitive
  - Increasing wages increase retention effect for sustainability in programming
- Expanding partnership with K-12 capacity
- Increasing benefits and pay for all staff to be competitive across the state

## Expansion/Growth Goals by June 30, 2026

- 15 new programs for a total of 219 Iowa programs
- Focusing on
  - 11/12 programs for WBL
  - 7/8 programs for career exploration
  - Rural areas

**What  
questions  
can we  
answer?**

