
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2025

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2024



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

University of Northern Iowa — Economic Development — Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund

Purpose and History

The Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund (SWJCF) appropriation to the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) began in FY 2014 and is for ongoing economic development efforts related to the Metal Casting Center, the Institute for Decision Making, the MyEntreNet online entrepreneur resource (now called Iowa SourceLink), Advance Iowa, and the UNI Family Business Center. These programs are part of UNI's Business and Community Services Division. The purpose of the SWJCF appropriation is to support Iowa businesses and communities, with an emphasis on entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Metal Casting Center (MCC): The MCC now includes the Foundry 4.0 Center and provides foundry research, applied technology, and technical business assistance directly to the foundry industry. The MCC links UNI research and resources to private sector applications. The MCC has 3D printing facilities and technical resources in additive manufacturing. Foundry 4.0 facilities on the UNI campus and at TechWorks in Waterloo lead innovations for the foundry industry in 3D printing, sensors, Internet of Things (IoT), and investment casting technologies.

Institute for Decision Making (IDM): Established in 1987, the IDM guides organizations and community-based groups in making decisions and taking organized action toward economic and community development results. The IDM serves and advises economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, convention and visitor bureaus, community planning organizations, regional workforce groups, regional entrepreneur programs, and other similar groups. Priorities for IDM programming include guiding regional and statewide workforce initiatives and supporting economic developers with statewide Manufacturing 4.0 initiatives.

MyEntreNet Program/Iowa SourceLink: MyEntreNet is an entrepreneurship development system consisting of an online social network and free web resources, coupled with collaboratively delivered services for entrepreneurs in Iowa. In 2009, MyEntreNet became a statewide interactive community offering live webinars, peer learning, and other business services. The MyEntreNet team partners with the Iowa Economic Development Authority to offer online resources via [Iowa SourceLink](#). A component of the MyEntreNet Program and Iowa SourceLink is the Business Concierge service, designed to provide secondary research and on-demand business information to answer clients' business questions via email or online chat and over the phone. Another service of Iowa SourceLink is the Business License Information Center, which provides small businesses with licensing information and support in conjunction with the Secretary of State.

More Information

University of Northern Iowa: www.uni.edu

Business and Community Services: www.bcs.uni.edu

Metal Casting Center (MCC): www.mcc.uni.edu

Institute for Decision Making (IDM): www.bcs.uni.edu/idm

Advance Iowa: cbgi.uni.edu/advance-iowa

UNI Family Business Center: unifamilybusinesscenter.com

LSA Staff Contact: Evan Johnson (515.281.6301) evan.johnson@legis.iowa.gov

Advance Iowa: UNI's former Center for Business Growth and Innovation was integrated under the umbrella of Advance Iowa in 2021. These centers serve entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized business owners throughout the State. The primary goals are business transition and employee ownership. This includes work to support employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) in Iowa and other forms of employee ownership, with a focus on rural regions of Iowa. Advance Iowa also has a number of peer working groups across the State and assists small businesses with strategic direction.

Family Business Center (FBC): In 2021, The Family Business Center was formally recognized by the Iowa Board of Regents as a center. Family business programming was delivered for three years to determine the level of need and interest across Iowa. The FBC focuses on issues for family businesses, including governance, communication, and transition. Programming includes a breakfast series for family businesses, an annual conference, peer groups, platforms for direct family-to-family interaction and other support.

Funding

The UNI Economic Development Programs received an annual General Fund appropriation to support general operations until FY 2014. Beginning with FY 2014, the appropriation was moved to the SWJCF. These programs operate with various levels of support from other funds. UNI economic development programs are required to focus expenditures on projects that will provide economic stimulus in Iowa and emphasize providing services to Iowa-based companies. All programs pursue grants and contracts, foundation support, federal funds, fees for services, and other sources of revenue.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapter [268](#)

Budget Unit Number

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