



# Iowa Helping Community Policy Group

*Advancing federal and state policies that value and support those in the helping communities – paid and unpaid – in their vital roles.*

May 4, 2021

Dear Member of the Iowa General Assembly:

As representatives of the Iowa Helping Community Policy Group, a volunteer, nonpartisan group working to advance policies that value and support those in the helping professions, we thank you for your service to Iowa.

We recognize the General Assembly is moving to adjourn and will be doing so even before much of the funding coming from the American Rescue Plan Act becomes available to Iowa. While the federal government is making major investments in child care and community and public health services through this Act, effective use in Iowa requires a planful and transparent process that draws upon the expertise of those in the field now providing those essential services and the people they serve.

Further, should aspects of the President's American Family Plan Act related to child care and preschool be enacted, more than \$3.5 billion in increased federal funding could be coming to Iowa over the next decade to expand child care and preschool and improve the compensation of those who provide direct early care and education. Should aspects of the President's American Jobs Act related to caregivers be enacted, more than \$3.5 billion over the next ten years in increased federal funding could be coming to Iowa to expand the caregiving work force serving seniors and persons with disabilities in home-based settings and through an expanded role for home and community-based services under Medicaid.

Making effective use of these funds requires building upon Iowa's current investments and administrative structures and integrating them with Iowa's current universal pre-school program, its child care subsidy program, and its provision of home and community based services overall and directly through Medicaid.

The Iowa General Assembly can play a key oversight and leadership role in this work, working with the executive branch and ensuring a transparent and inclusive process for deploying federal funding to meet Iowa needs.

We encourage you to take action to establish legislative direction and oversight specifically focused upon Iowa's caregiving and early childhood workforce.

**We are attaching below language to do so to incorporate into appropriations bills or other final legislative actions.** We also support action on HCR8 and have sent a similar letter to Executive branch officials with whom we have met.

We look forward to continuing to share our views of those in the helping communities with you.

Sincerely,

Tammy Nyden  
Charles Bruner  
Bob Welsh  
Sheila Hansen  
Di Findley  
Denise Rathman

Attachment:

### Additions to Appropriations Bills Related to Iowa's Helping Community

The following are three proposed amendments for appropriations bills developed, designed to support state government to use new federal COVID-19 rescue funds and infrastructure funds to most effectively support Iowa's helping community.

1. This paragraph directs the establishment of a working group (like IWD's Child Care Task Force) to focus its attention specifically on provisions in federal law that provide new funding for those in caregiving occupations.

*It is the intent of the General Assembly that [designated department – e.g. Iowa Department of Human Services/Public Health, Iowa Workforce Development, etc.], coordinating with other state agencies, establish a work group to maximize the use of federal funding to expand the direct care workforce that is made available through the CARES Act of 2020, the CARES Act of 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This working group shall review additional federal funding to support human infrastructure to expand the direct care workforce to meet demand, improve worker compensation, provide training and support, and ensure their rights as essential workers, and provide recommendations on Iowa's deployment and administration of such funding. The work group shall include representatives from this frontline workforce and the people they serve. It is further the intent of the General Assembly, from funding available, that the work group conduct at least one public hearing in an urban county and in a rural county in each of the state's Congressional districts to receive testimony and stories from frontline caregivers and the people they serve, inviting Iowa's Congressional delegation and state legislators to participate as responders.*

2. This paragraph directs Iowa Workforce Development to conduct a study of Iowa's direct care workforce as a core part of Iowa's workforce and economy.

*It is the intent of the General Assembly that Iowa Workforce Development conduct a study of the Iowa direct care workforce as a component of Iowa's current and future workforce and contributor to Iowa's economy and report its findings to the General Assembly by January 15, 2022. This study shall include examination of the Iowa direct care workforce and its size, current compensation, expected growth in need, needs for training, impact upon the ability of others in the workforce to fulfill their employment needs, contributions of the workforce to Iowa's employment and the*

*economy, and impact on the Iowa economy of increasing the compensation provided to that workforce.*

3. This paragraph directs the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, subject to available federal funding that can be deployed for this purpose, to implement the provisions set out in House File 692.

*It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals make use of any funding made available through the CARES Act of 2020, the CARES Act of 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, or other federal funding coming to Iowa that can be used for this purpose, to implement the provisions in House File 692 in supporting Iowa's direct care workers.*