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Gov. Reynolds Announces Employer Innovation Fund and Child Care Challenge Funding Opportunities

DES MOINES - Today, Governor Reynolds announced two Future Ready Iowa grant opportunities for totaling \$1.2 million. The Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund is designed to expand opportunities for Iowans to earn post-secondary credentials leading to high-demand jobs and encourage Iowa employers, community leaders and others to collaborate to support regional workforce talent development.

The Child Care Challenge Fund is designed to encourage regional and community projects that will create increased child care slots in local communities by supporting the development, renovation or rehabilitation of child care facilities. The availability of quality, affordable child care for working Iowans has been a longstanding workforce challenge that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Applications for the funding opportunities must be submitted on IowaGrants.gov by Feb.12, 2021.

“When Iowans have access to quality child care, they can pursue training and employment opportunities in high-demand jobs in the state,” said Gov. Reynolds. “Let’s remove the obstacles to high-quality affordable child-care so Iowa families can nurture their kids while parents maintain the maximum freedom to enter and remain in the workforce. Tackling the child care crisis in Iowa not only expands opportunities for Iowa families but provides our employers with a steady and stable workforce.”

“Gov. Reynolds and the Iowa legislature have made a significant investment in Future Ready Iowa and these two grant opportunities will help communities around the state address local issues,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. “I know from the previous grant programs we have seen, that Iowans will create innovative projects that support their communities and will accelerate the rate of our economic recovery from the pandemic.”

Employer Innovation Fund:

- Employers, employer consortiums, nonprofits, and educational institutions can apply.
- Applicants can request funding up to \$50,000.

- The Employer Innovation Fund can match private dollars.
- The funds can be used to support credit and non-credit programs, along with wrap-around support programs such as childcare, transportation, books, equipment, internet access, and other innovative ways to help Iowans complete job training and education.
- More information about the Employer Innovation Fund can be found at:
www.futurereadyiowa.gov/innovation

Child Care Challenge Fund:

- Employers, nonprofits and employer consortiums can apply.
- Applicants can request funding up to \$100,000.
- The Child Care Challenge Fund can match private dollars and in-kind donations of labor and materials.
- The funds can be used for new construction of a childcare facility, rehabilitation of an existing structure as a child care facility or retrofitting and repurposing of an existing structure for use as a child care facility
- More Information about the Child Care Challenge Fund can be found at:
www.futurereadyiowa.gov/childcarechallenge

These funding opportunities support Future Ready Iowa's goal of having 70 percent of Iowans in the workforce with education and training beyond high school by 2025. Approximately 60 percent of Iowa's current workforce meets this education and training criteria. Visit www.FutureReadyIowa.gov for more information.

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