

Iowa Innovation Council: Where It All Starts

The [Iowa Innovation Council](#) (IIC) is poised and ready to help make some very big things happen in the state.

The 29-member council advises the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) on policies that will enhance innovation and entrepreneurship in targeted industries: bioscience, advanced manufacturing and information technology.

The IIC, formed in 2010 by the state legislature, is a business-led group tasked by the legislature to develop strategies and long-term plans to make sure Iowa stays competitive in the global business economy. “Prior to establishing the council, we had three separate industry councils. The business leaders recognized we needed a better plan to support emerging technologies and accelerate innovation in Iowa. We decided it was time to form one council and the idea for the IIC was launched,” said IIC board chair Ted Crosbie.

The IIC achieves this by creating partnerships between government, industry and higher learning institutions to develop strategies to help existing innovation companies and form new ones. Of the council’s 29 members, 20 must be actively involved in the management of a company in one of the state’s targeted industries.

One of the IIC’s current priorities is creating the Iowa Advanced Manufacturing Center (IAMC) based on recommendations developed by the IIC’s advanced manufacturing workgroup. The workgroup was formed to further develop the IAMC concept. In October 2014 the workgroup delivered its IAMC design recommendations, outlining a plan for the IAMC to serve as a Network Hub to connect Iowa manufacturers to local and national resources and expertise.

In addition to moving forward with the IAMC, the IIC is working to jumpstart similar efforts in both agbioscience and biomedical technology. A recent [biomedical workgroup roundtable](#) started the process to enable recommendations in biomedical technology platforms. A similar agbioscience workgroup roundtable was held in November 2014. The council’s bioscience workgroup will propose a strategy and action plan to guide key actions and investments, leading to competitive research and development, commercialization and the subsequent creation of high paying jobs.

Seeing the need to activate its strategies, the IIC recommended formation of the Iowa Innovation Corporation (IICorp) in 2011 to act as an innovation intermediary by aligning local technologies, assets, and resources to work together on advancing innovation. The IICorp serves as the action arm of the IIC, working to deploy the strategies and recommendations developed by the IIC. The Council’s pathways workgroup works closely with IICorp to provide guidance on implementation of these strategies.

“The public/private partnership between the IEDA, IIC and IICorp is key to driving innovation in Iowa” said Laura Stein, Vice President with the IICorp. “It connects the resources needed to increase innovation in Iowa’s economy and bring more innovative businesses to the state.”

For more information about the IIC, contact Gail Kotval, Iowa Innovation Council Liaison, at gail.kotval@iowa.gov