

Overview

Future Ready Iowa promotes the reality that Iowans need postsecondary education and training to meet the state's workforce demands and economic development needs, and to provide each Iowan with a living wage. While there are many adults currently in the workforce eligible to upgrade their education and skills, K-12 schools possess access to the greatest number of entrants into the talent pipeline needed to meet the goal that 70% of Iowans have education or training beyond high school. Postsecondary readiness is a promise all K-12 schools should make to the greater than 90% of Iowa high school seniors who graduate each year. This is supported by the AEA Compact which states that *"every child who graduates from an Iowa pre-k-12 public or non-public accredited school will be prepared for success in postsecondary studies, a career, and citizenship."* In addition, the Compact states *"a postsecondary readiness goal will be established that most accurately identifies and tracks postsecondary success."*

The statewide AEA system can best accomplish this goal through the creation of a statewide partnership and resource center to improve postsecondary readiness and education attainment, with a focus on closing attainment gaps that exist for those populations traditionally underrepresented in higher education, including first generation college students, students from low socioeconomic households, racial and ethnic minorities, and students with disabilities. This newly established entity is AEA PREP (Postsecondary Readiness & Equity Partnership), and is focused on building equitable capacity throughout Iowa among AEAs, and in turn, PK-12 schools.

AEA PREP's primary functions

- the collection and distribution of timely and relevant postsecondary readiness data to PK-12 districts including the creation of a statewide postsecondary data dashboard with district-specific data;
- the development of a statewide network of postsecondary readiness leads in each AEA with specialized training in leading and implementing postsecondary readiness initiatives and programs;
- a resource center for K-12 educators to improve postsecondary readiness, including the latest research, evidence-based practice, webinars, presentations, and other relevant materials.

AEA PREP will centralize and streamline the data collection and follow-up district professional development/support needed to improve equitable student postsecondary readiness outcomes. In addition, AEA PREP is supported by a Director, Data Analyst, and others who share responsibility for oversight of the data collection, data warehouse, dashboards, professional development, and training of an equitable, statewide professional network of postsecondary readiness leads in each AEA.