

**Iowa Workforce  
Development****For Immediate Release****Date:** September 27, 2023**Contact: Jesse Dougherty** (515) 725-5487  
communications@iwd.iowa.gov

**Iowa K-12 teachers, students invited to sign up for statewide ‘Design Challenge’  
Initiative to drive interest in careers in architecture, construction and engineering**

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Education today announced the second round of the Build Iowa’s Future Design Challenge, a unique opportunity for K-12 students to create innovative projects, connect to careers and compete for up to \$1,000 in prizes for their schools. Community Colleges for Iowa, Master Builders of Iowa (MBI) and Pella Corporation are sponsoring the challenge awards.

The Iowa Clearinghouse for Work-Based Learning and the Home Builders Association of Iowa (HBA of Iowa) are hosting the challenge to provide a framework for professional project development as well as resources for participating schools, including activities and videos about careers in building trades and information about how the challenge aligns with Iowa’s K-12 math and science standards.

“The Build Iowa’s Future Design Challenge is a great opportunity to unleash new creativity, helping Iowa students connect what they learn in the classroom to the workplace while exploring careers in the trades and other fields,” said Beth Townsend, Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development. “We want all students, regardless of where they reside in the state, to have opportunities that develop innovation, problem solving and teamwork as well as awareness of the many great jobs available right here in Iowa.”

“Every student should have access to multiple pathways to post-secondary success,” said Iowa Department of Education Director McKenzie Snow. “Experiential learning opportunities like the Build Iowa’s Future Design Challenge empower students to leverage math and science in real-world scenarios, while cultivating their creativity and problem-solving skills. We are excited to see students across Iowa applying their knowledge and exploring these in-demand careers.”

“With approximately 7.5 million construction jobs projected nationwide by 2026, and ongoing industry expansion, we want students to explore those opportunities for great-paying jobs. This project makes that introduction in a creative way,” said HBA of Iowa Executive Officer Jay Iverson. “Our members are excited to see what students are able to come up with.”

“The Governor’s STEM Advisory Council is always on the lookout for strengthening our partnership with allies of like mission and goals,” said Jeff Weld, executive director of the Governor’s STEM Advisory Council within the Iowa Department of Education. “The design challenge is a perfect match in that regard and we’re honored to support the event.”

**Who can participate:**

Elementary and middle school students can participate in the **Iowa Home Design Challenge** by constructing a model home using toy plastic construction bricks, wood blocks or other materials of their choice. High school students can participate in the **Iowa Dream and Design Challenge**, which involves conceptualizing and designing a project that could improve the quality of life in their community. High school students will seek feedback on the project’s feasibility from people who would be impacted, and create a design based on their findings. Construction is not a requirement of this opportunity, but great engagement by communities may encourage high school students to take the project further.

**Application process:**

Teachers are invited to submit a form letter of intent to participate on the [Clearinghouse website](#) by Friday, Oct. 20, 2023. Submission of the form letter by the deadline is required. In early May 2024, three awards – \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second place and \$300 for third place – will be made to schools in each of the K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands for projects scored and selected by reviewers. Outstanding designs may be shared on Clearinghouse and HBA of Iowa websites and through other publications and events.

[A flyer can be found at this link.](https://clearinghouse.futurereadyiowa.gov/challenge) Learn more about the design challenge:  
<https://clearinghouse.futurereadyiowa.gov/challenge>

###

An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities.  
[www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov](http://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov) • <https://www.iowaworks.gov>