Gov. Kim Reynolds said Tuesday a set of programs designed to encourage Iowans to pursue education and career training opportunities beyond high school is her "top priority" going into the next legislative session.

Among those programs she's championing is a new scholarship and grant program for Iowans who already have earned at least half the credits necessary for a bachelor's degree in a high-demand career field.

"This is the No. 1 priority of our administration," Reynolds said. "And you know, it's necessary. It's critical. As we travel the state and as we talk about the need for a skilled workforce, that's how we're going to continue to grow the economy and provide opportunities for Iowans."

She said the scholarship program would require new money from the state and from private investors as part of a public-private partnership.

Reynolds declined to say how much she expects the program will cost, though she indicated it's likely in the millions of dollars. She said she plans to wait to discuss costs until she releases her budget proposal later this year.

"We understand to accelerate the skilled workforce at a pace that we need to, it is going to require some new funding," she said. "And we're committed to doing our part to make sure that this is successful."

The scholarship program is the result of recommendations made by the Future Ready Iowa Alliance.

That group is tasked with finding ways to ensure 70 percent of Iowans receive education or training beyond high school by 2025. According to a press release from the governor's office, that means an additional 127,700 Iowans will need to earn post-secondary degrees or other credentials.

The group also made a number of other recommendations intended to align Iowa's existing workforce and career development programs and scale up those that they've found to be the most successful.

Sen. BillDotzler, the top Democrat on the Senate economic development budget subcommittee, was complimentary of the governor's goals. However, he was critical of the state's budget situation, which has led to funding cuts to numerous state agencies and programs.

"Iowa business leaders continually tell us that the number one problem facing our economy is a shortage of skilled workers," he said in a statement. "Unfortunately, the 2017 Republican budget cut many of the very efforts needed to accomplish the Alliance's goals. If they continue making such cuts, the state of Iowa will continue moving in the wrong direction."