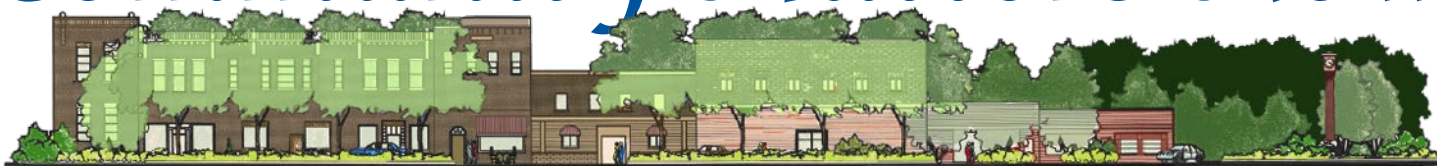


Community Matters Now



A bi-monthly publication for Iowa leaders from Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development

ART & DESIGN PUBLICATIONS OFFER GUIDANCE ON CREATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

POW: A Plan of Work Template for Creative Community Projects

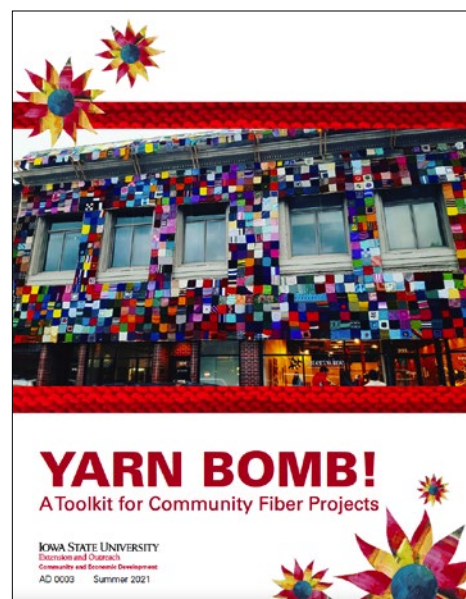
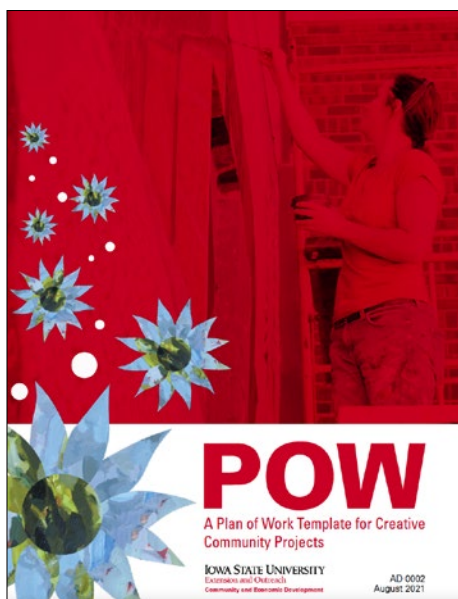
Written by community arts specialist Jennifer Drinkwater, [this publication](#) presents a step-by-step approach to systematically build a project, program, or event from the ground up. This free, fillable template is tailored for creative community projects and events (digital and in real life) but can be used in any capacity.

People often don't know what they don't know, which can be paralyzing when starting something new. This POW will prompt users to have necessary conversations with themselves, their collaborators, and their community, such as: "What are we really trying to do here? Why does it matter? What is our timeline/budget/materials? Who's doing what by when? How do we know if this has been a successful effort?"

Creating a POW can lead to goal clarity, better engagement and follow-through, and a much more effective outcome. In other words, it helps users manage the tasks needed to be accomplished to get the job done.

Yarn Bomb! A Toolkit for Community Fiber Projects

Community arts specialist Jennifer Drinkwater created [Yarn Bomb! A Toolkit for Community Fiber Projects](#), after completing "Intertwine," a community yarn bomb project in downtown Ames consisting of thousands of one-by-one-foot squares knitted or crocheted by hundreds of volunteers. This free guide offers an introduction to the nuts and bolts of community yarn bombing and provides suggestions for strengthening one's community's goodwill in the process.



The toolkit includes:

- Descriptions of yarn bombs
- Community benefits of yarn bombs
- An overview of material and site needs
- Examples of fun community engagement strategies
- A sample budget
- Some potential funding strategies

- Basic evaluation methods
- Project examples from across the country

Above all, this toolkit aims to show that community art is much more than the product itself: the art-making process can aid in building bridges between diverse groups and help build stronger communities.

MORE CED PUBLICATIONS

[SCALING UP SPECIALTY CROP PROCESSING TOOLKIT](#)

[SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE FOR RETAILERS](#)

[SENTIMENT SURVEY ON CURRENT CONDITIONS FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN IOWA](#)

[ASSEMBLING A HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE](#)

[RURAL HOUSING READINESS ASSESSMENT PROCESS](#)

[OPEN MEETINGS AND RECORDS LAW](#)

EXTENSION STORE HAS A WEALTH OF ONLINE RESOURCES

Each of Iowa's 99 counties has a local Extension office where residents can access the resources of ISU Extension and Outreach. It's great to have these local offices available. But did you know ISU Extension and Outreach also has an online publications store (the Extension Store) where you can access publications and multimedia on many topics?

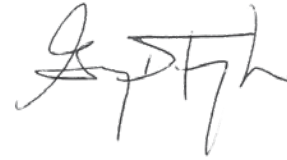
From family finance to farm management and everything in between, you can find a wealth of information in the Extension Store. Information in the store is largely available for download, so you can access the information you want and need, immediately.

Our CED faculty and staff contribute publications to the Extension Store, providing information that is helpful to Iowans working in community and economic development.

In this issue you'll find toolkits about writing a community project-based plan of work, how to pull off a yarn bombing project, and a toolkit (available in three languages!) about processing specialty crops. You'll also find fact sheets related to the Rural Housing Readiness Assessment and housing needs, social media tips for retailers, a new study of perceptions of current conditions for housing

development, and many more. (You can find links to some of them in the box on page 1.)

Check out the Extension Store—there's something there for everyone.



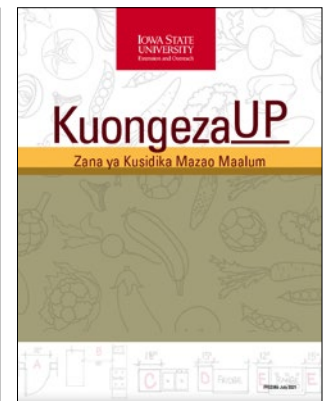
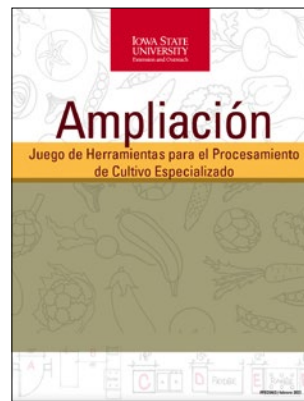
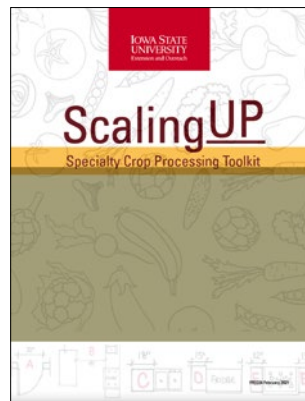
Gary Taylor
Program Director, Iowa State University
Extension and Outreach Community and
Economic Development

TOOLKIT OFFERS GUIDANCE TO FOOD BUSINESSES INTERESTED IN PROCESSING SPECIALTY CROPS

The *Scaling Up Specialty Crop Processing Toolkit*, available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Swahili](#), provides an overview of criteria for food businesses interested in processing specialty crops through value-added processing opportunities such as product development, commercial kitchens, increasing scales, and more.

The toolkit includes four areas of interest based on research. The first three focus on specific business needs: food safety, business development, and logistics, with the last focusing on community development process of visioning and strategic planning.

A transdisciplinary team from Iowa State University, as well as colleagues from Iowa Valley RC&D, developed this toolkit to inform a variety of food businesses, interested entrepreneurs, and extension agents on specific practices for scaling up specialty crop processing. An online survey was created and sent to potential partners to gather detailed information



about food-based businesses. The survey was open for six months and resulted in 10 responses and 15 site visits and interviews.

Interviews and site visits were conducted with a variety of food-based businesses including shared-use kitchens, farms, food hubs, farm stands, processors, grocers, restaurants, community and event centers, and entrepreneurs looking to start up their own food processing business. The team

focused on locally owned businesses and intentionally collaborated with local businesses within the supply chain to determine critical needs.

This toolkit expands on the initial [Shared-Use Kitchen Planning Toolkit](#) (<https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/entities/publication/f3d3307a-20b2-42c4-b885-8c966dfc83ae>) developed by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture in 2014.

CONTACT INFO

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
Community and Economic Development
2321 North Loop Drive, Suite 121, Ames, IA 50010-8218
515-294-8397
Fax 515-294-1354
www.extension.iastate.edu/communities

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Editorial Board: Gary Taylor, Himar Hernández, Lisa Bates, Susan Erickson, and Sandra Oberbroeckling

Community Matters Now is published monthly for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development staff and their clients. Comments, questions, and suggestions regarding the content of this newsletter should be directed to:

Sandra Oberbroeckling, editor
ISU Extension and Outreach
Community and Economic Development
2321 North Loop Drive, Suite 121
Ames, IA 50010
515-294-3721
soberbr@iastate.edu

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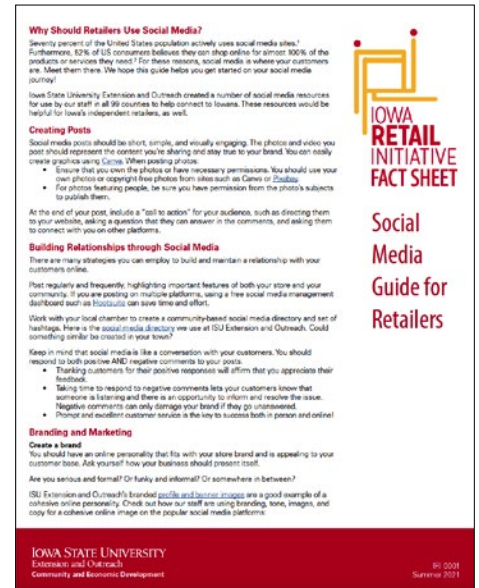
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT'S IOWA RETAIL INITIATIVE SHARES SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR RETAILERS

The Iowa Retail Initiative's fact sheet, "Social Media Guide for Retailers," provides basic information for retailers who want to engage and grow their customer base through social media. Included are tips for creating social media posts, building relationships, branding and marketing, and building audience.

This fact sheet is also just one part of a new Community and Economic Development (CED) program available through Iowa State University Extension and Outreach county offices. "Unlocking the Secrets of Social Media for Retailers" focuses on the basics of social media especially for retailers who have not yet used social media effectively in their marketing and customer engagement. Participants may include local retailers,

business champions, chambers of commerce, economic developers, and Main Street Iowa offices. During the program, participants learn how to get started in social media and why social media is important for local business success. They also discuss ways that social media can be used at a community, county, and regional scale. Participants engage with each other to imagine ways they can incorporate these ideas in their own downtown settings.

Retailers, chamber of commerce directors, or economic development directors interested in bringing this program to your community should contact Lisa Bates, interim assistant director of CED, at lbates@iastate.edu.



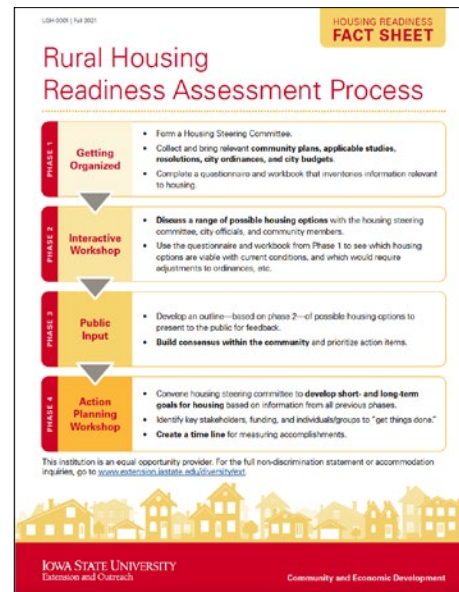
FACT SHEETS AND ANNUAL SENTIMENT SURVEY ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS AND ISSUES IN IOWA

Housing Needs Fact Sheets

In 2018, the Community and Economic Development (CED) unit of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach created the Rural Housing Readiness Assessment (RHRA), a tool that helps communities self-assess their housing needs and guides them in the decision-making process when addressing those needs.

It guides communities in considering options that ensure existing and potential residents can find safe, secure, and quality housing that meets their needs and fits within their budgets. The RHRA helps communities know what kinds of housing-related information they should gather and review to make informed decisions. The assessment checklists aid in the creation of local housing policy that is appropriate for the needs and desires of a community.

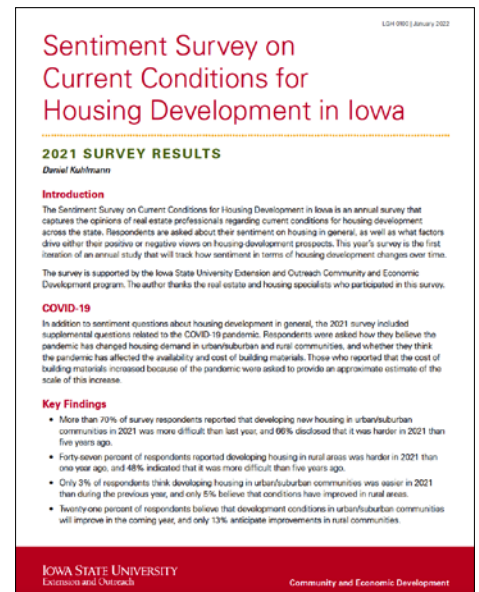
In fall 2021, CED specialists developed a series of fact sheets that supplement RHRA, providing additional information to communities facing housing issues. Topics range from a description of the RHRA process and forming a housing steering committee to low-income housing credits and tax increment financing. The series also contains guidance on open meetings and records law, updating city ordinances, and property acquisition. The fact sheets are available for free download on the [CED website](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/rural-housing-readiness-) (<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/rural-housing-readiness->



assessment) as well as on the [Extension Store](https://store.extension.iastate.edu/) (<https://store.extension.iastate.edu/>).

The Sentiment Survey on Current Conditions for Housing Development in Iowa

[This publication](#) presents the results of an annual survey that captures the opinions of real estate professionals regarding current conditions for housing development across the state. Respondents are asked about their sentiment on housing in general, as well as what factors drive either their positive or negative views on housing-



development prospects. Conducted in 2021 by Daniel Kuhlmann, assistant professor of community and regional planning and extension housing specialist, the survey also addresses the perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on housing development in both urban/suburban and rural areas.

This year's survey is the first iteration of an annual study that will track how sentiment in terms of housing development changes over time.

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2321 North Loop Drive, Suite 121
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