

Community Matters Now



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

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HOSTS RURAL HOUSING READINESS ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

By Mark Reinig | Community Development Specialist

Nearly 90 people representing more than 60 communities participated in a Rural Housing Readiness Assessment (RHRA) workshop sponsored by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED). The workshop, which was held at Reiman Gardens in Ames on April 11, 2022, featured four sessions on rural housing issues.

Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) representatives Liesl Siebert, Nichole Hansen, and Jim Thompson kicked off the half-day workshop with an overview of the many state programs geared toward housing in Iowa.

The IEDA presentation was followed by a panel of representatives from the towns of Knoxville, Manning, Newton, and Keokuk, all past participants in the RHRA program. Panelists shared how their plans were developed and implemented, focusing on their experiences and successes.

The remaining three sessions were presented by CED specialists. Abbie Gaffey and Sara Shonrock presented on financing fundamentals, including how to develop local financing and being your own developer to bring additional multi-family housing to your community. The session "Development of a Rental Inspections Program," presented by Luke Seaberg and Lindsay Henderson, provided an overview of rental inspection programs, case study results from Iowa communities, and a description of a new program currently under development, the Rental Inspection Program Readiness Assessment (RIPRA).

CED specialists Omar Padilla and Scott Timm conducted the final session, which was an overview of housing



CED specialists Scott Timm and Omar Padilla present a session on rehabilitation of housing stock.

rehabilitation programming and the availability of financing through local match for state and federal sources, along with an overview of Iowa Finance Authority programs for housing rehabilitation and success stories, with an emphasis on preserving existing housing stock.

The RHRA Workshop was held in conjunction with the Iowa Rural Development (IRD) Summit, with many attendees participating in both events. A similar schedule will be followed in April 2023 with the RHRA Workshop preceding the IRD summit.

[RHRA](#) is financed by IEDA in partnership with the ISU Extension and Outreach CED program. IEDA program funding empowers communities to assess the current development environment and enact changes resulting in the creation of policies and procedures attractive to potential developers. The program is administered by IEDA's [Center for Rural Revitalization](#) in consultation with the [Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative Task Forces](#) and ISU Extension and Outreach. Funding is based on annual availability. Grant amounts are \$10,000 with a cash match of \$5,000. The new grant-funding cycle opened on July 1, 2022.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH INDICATORS PROGRAM](#)

[RURAL HOUSING READINESS ASSESSMENT](#)

[GOAL SETTING, STRATEGIC PLANNING, AND FACILITATION](#)

[GRANT WRITING WORKSHOPS](#)

GREETINGS FROM OUR GUEST EDITORS

It gives us great pleasure to serve as guest editors for this issue of *Community Matters Now*, which is dedicated to the work that ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) does for local governments in Iowa.

Local governments continue to be an important stakeholder group for CED. Our local government and housing team offers an array of programming on different aspects of local governance to Iowa's 941 cities and 99 counties.

Planning and zoning, public finance, goal setting and strategic planning, the Iowa Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy, housing needs assessments, and grant writing are major areas to which our

faculty and staff have devoted their time and efforts. This issue highlights just a sample of the local government and housing team's recent efforts.

In April 2022, CED specialists conducted the first Rural Housing Readiness Assessment (RHRA) in conjunction with the Iowa Rural Development Summit. This summer, CED and the ISU College of Design collaborated with the City of Des Moines to host the Mayors Institute on City Design. In September 2022, CED specialists will conduct a Grant Writing 201 workshop, which was piloted during the past year and builds on our popular Grant Writing 101 workshop. Finally, readers can learn about the many resources available through our

ongoing collaboration with the Iowa League of Cities.



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Community and Economic Development &
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CED PARTNERS WITH STATEWIDE ORGANIZATIONS TO OFFER EDUCATION & RESOURCES ON PUBLIC FINANCE

By Biswa Das, Associate Professor and Erin Mullenix, Data Analyst

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development's (CED) local government and housing team, in collaboration with the ISU Extension and Outreach Indicators Program, the [Iowa League of Cities](#), and the [Iowa State Association of Counties](#) (ISAC), publishes a variety of resources on public finance for Iowa's local governments.

Publications available through the Iowa Government Finance Initiative (IGFI) are just some of the fruits of CED's longstanding partnership with the League and ISAC. IGFI provides data-driven reports that allow all cities and counties in Iowa to track their financial indicators over a five-year period. Utilizing annual financial report (AFR) data, these customized reports provide a detailed description of current state-level legislation that impacts local government finance, demographic changes, and changes in revenues and spending. By tracking financial trends at the community level, local officials can better understand city and county financial situations. They can also

get a sense of their financial performance relative to that of peer communities.

The Iowa League of Cities provides several resources to assist its membership, such as General Fund Revenue and Expenditures reports, which show the breakdown of revenue sources and expenditures by individual city and makes comparisons to peer communities by population (and statewide average). The Outstanding Debt Obligation reports by individual city show the breakdown of the categories of debt and project types in which cities invest and makes comparisons to peer communities using population data (and statewide average). Finally, the Taxable Valuation Trends by individual city show the taxable valuation (the base used to generate property-tax revenue) trends over time.

In addition to providing resources, CED and League specialists conduct workshops and training sessions throughout the year, such as the Local Government Webinar Series, budget workshops, and the Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy.

Online Resources

The ISU Extension and Outreach Indicators Program offers several [publications](#) for download, including *Data for Decision Makers*, IGFI fiscal conditions reports, and more (<https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/Indicators/Publications/>)

Below are links to select Iowa League of Cities publications. Many other resources and issue-specific information is also available from the League.

- [League Budget Special Report](https://iowaleague.org/publications/budget-special-report/) (<https://iowaleague.org/publications/budget-special-report/>)
- [League Property Tax Levies Special Report](https://iowaleague.org/wp-content/uploads/LevyRateReport2018.pdf) (<https://iowaleague.org/wp-content/uploads/LevyRateReport2018.pdf>)
- [League Assessment Process Info Sheet](https://iowaleague.org/wp-content/uploads/PropertyTaxAssessment.pdf) (<https://iowaleague.org/wp-content/uploads/PropertyTaxAssessment.pdf>)
- [City Clerks & Finance Officers Handbook](https://iowaleague.org/publications/city-clerk-finance-officers-handbook/) (<https://iowaleague.org/publications/city-clerk-finance-officers-handbook/>)

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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:

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ISU COLLEGE OF DESIGN, CITY OF DES MOINES CO-HOST MAYOR'S INSTITUTE ON CITY DESIGN

By Julie Aberg Robison, CED Program Manager, and Heather Sauer, ISU College of Design Communications Specialist

The Iowa State University College of Design, with support from the Office of the Vice President for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, hosted a session of the Mayors' Institute on City Design (MICD) July 27–29 in Des Moines. MICD is a leadership initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The institute holds multiple workshops throughout the country each year to help mayors find solutions to the most critical planning and design challenges facing their cities. Sessions were organized around case-study projects: each mayor presented a project from their community and received feedback from other mayors and a resource team of multidisciplinary design and development professionals. The interchanges sparked debate, generated new ideas and inspired creative thinking.

MICD Des Moines 2022 included mayors from seven communities:

- Frank Cownie, Des Moines (host)
- Robin Mouton, Beaumont, Texas
- Lacey Beaty, Beaverton, Oregon
- Aaron Brockett, Boulder, Colorado
- Rob Green, Cedar Falls
- Scott Conger, Jackson, Tennessee
- Wayne Messam, Miramar, Florida

Resource team members included:

- Steven Lewis, urban design principal, ZGF Architects, Los Angeles
- Paul Mankins, principal, Substance Architecture, Des Moines

- Luis Rico-Gutierrez, dean and professor, ISU College of Design, Ames
- Ciara Schlichting, director of operations, Toole Design, Minneapolis
- Lisa Tziona Switkin, senior principal, Field Operations, New York City
- Donald Young, founder and principal, D.R. Young Associates, San Rafael, California

Julie Robison, ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development specialist, and Carl Rogers, chair of the ISU College of Design's Department of Landscape Architecture, served as co-project managers and had the opportunity to travel to the participating cities in advance of the MICD session to help identify and develop the case studies.

The event began with a City of Des Moines-led tour highlighting public-private partnerships and the role of the riverfront in revitalization. The mayors brought projects related to riverfront revitalization and development, transit-oriented development, food-hub development, and mixed-use development and community engagement.

The MICD workshop allowed ISU to bring in top design talent from across the United States and Iowa and create an opportunity for selected mayors to engage in problem solving around complex community planning and design issues.

Rob Green, mayor of Cedar Falls, speaking of his experience after the session,



Luis Rico-Gutierrez, dean and professor, ISU College of Design, presents during the MICD in Des Moines. Photo by Jake Sternquist.

said "This is a fantastic experience for any mayor seeking to develop a major new community project. The tools and perspectives provided in the institute are invaluable."

While this MICD Des Moines 2022 session was national in scope, the team hopes, as part of the land-grant university's extension and outreach mission, to disseminate lessons learned to Iowa-based mayors and communities plans for Iowa-based sessions as a follow-on activity to bring Iowa mayors and Iowa-based design experts together to address most compelling community design challenges facing Iowa cities.

ADVANCED-LEVEL GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP NOW AVAILABLE

By Jane Nolan Goeken | Community Development Specialist

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach now offers training for experienced grant writers who want to hone their skills. Developed by ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) staff, Grant Writing 201 is a follow-up to CED's popular Grant Writing 101, which is a workshop for beginners.

CED specialists designed the Grant Writing 201 workshop in response to interest expressed for advanced-level training. The target audience for Grant Writing 201 is experienced grant writers and/or individuals who previously participated in a Grant Writing 101 workshop presented by CED staff.

CED staff piloted two Grant Writing 201 workshops one in Greene County in November 2021, and one in Webster County in May 2022. A third workshop, sponsored

by the ISU Extension and Outreach offices in Dallas, Polk, and Story Counties, is scheduled for September 27 at the Dallas County Extension and Outreach office in Adel.

Grant Writing 201 participants are asked to bring application materials for a grant program of interest, along with a laptop, iPad, or other tablet device. Topics addressed during the four-hour workshop include documenting need, methodology, logic models, evaluation, and budgets. Participants are encouraged to work on sections of their own grant applications during the workshop as those sections are discussed.

CED specialists do not recommend scheduling Grant Writing 201 as a stand-alone program. Rather, county Extension and Outreach offices and other organizations should schedule the more advanced

workshop shortly after hosting a Grant Writing 101 session.

The sponsorship fee for a Grant Writing 201 workshop is \$1,500. In addition to identifying when and where the workshop will be presented, the sponsor of the workshop can decide whether/how much to charge participants to recoup part or all the sponsorship fee. The sponsorship fee for a Grant Writing 101 workshop is \$750.

For more information about the workshop, contact Goeken at jngoeken@iastate.edu or 712-240-2504, or Lindsay Henderson at lindsayh@iastate.edu or 515-835-6605. Those interested in participating in the Grant Writing 201 workshop on September 27 can [register online](https://go.iastate.edu/RC6DV8) (<https://go.iastate.edu/RC6DV8>).

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

As technology continues to evolve, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is launching a statewide survey that will help us deliver the research-based education and resources you want, in ways that fit you best. And as a friend of extension, your voice is an important one.

Your responses will tell us about the technology you prefer, the topics you want to learn more about, and the issues that are important to you. What we learn will help us improve on the way lowans access, receive, and engage with extension education. Please take a few minutes and complete the survey at extension.iastate.edu/survey, and share with others—those we know and those we may not have reached yet. Thank you!

