

Community Matters Now



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

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAMS SHARE THEIR TOP FIVE 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

As 2022 comes to a close, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development's five knowledge teams have compiled their "top five" accomplishments this year.

Civic Engagement and Equity Team

1. New Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programming

CED's DEI program menu expanded in 2022 with the addition of the [Intercultural Developmental Inventory®](#). This year, 83 leaders from four organizations participated in this research-based, intercultural competence program. In addition, team members became certified to conduct the national extension program, Coming Together for Racial Understanding (CTRU), which will be offered in 2023.

2. Navigating Difference® Cultural Competence Training

In 2022, 78 people completed [Navigating Difference®](#). This educational program helps participants understand the five cultural competencies to communicate more effectively with diverse cultures, including people of a different age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, gender, etc.

3. Leading Communities Reboot

Team members made notable updates to CED's place-based leadership program, [Leading Communities](#). Leading Communities is designed to promote community engagement and increase capacity among community members for addressing common issues and problems.

4. Marketing Hometown America

In 2022, 37 ISU Extension and Outreach staff and partners representing 36 counties became certified in [Marketing Hometown America](#). This national extension program equips rural communities with

the tools to retain high quality of life and market the value of rural places for new residents and businesses.

5. Goal Setting, Strategic Planning, and Facilitation

The team employed CED's [facilitation services](#)—which include strategic planning, vision and mission workshops, action planning, and focus groups—to guide organizations through many projects.

Clients in 2022 included Alliant Energy, Wayland Child Care Organization, National 4-H, St. Luke Lutheran Home Skilled Nursing Home in Spencer, and more.

Community and Business Development Team

1. Interpretive Guide Training and Certification Program

CED's [Interpretive Guide Training and Certification](#) program is the first in the nation to provide training plus individual coaching sessions at work sites, incorporating applied learning directly into the workplace. More than 250 individuals have completed guide training/certification.

2. Grocery Store Toolkit

Team members made much progress on CED's Grocery Store Toolkit, which is



CED specialist Mary Weinand leads a planning session with members of the Wayland Child Care Organization.

expected to launch during winter 2023. The toolkit—which CED is creating in collaboration with the Small Business Development Center, ISU Extension and Outreach, and other agencies—will be a guide on pertinent steps necessary to start a Latinx grocery store.

3. Unlocking the Secrets of Social Media

The [Iowa Retail Initiative \(IRI\)](#) released [Unlocking the Secrets of Social Media for Retailers](#). This program was developed for Extension and Outreach county offices to provide direct outreach to local retailers, chambers of commerce, economic developers, or other business champions, helping them think creatively about engaging and growing their customer base

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ONLINE RESOURCES

[INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY®](#)

[UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR RETAILERS](#)

[DATA SCIENCE FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM](#)

[GRANT WRITING WORKSHOPS](#)

GREETINGS FROM OUR NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Greetings! I am thrilled to be joining Iowa State University's Community and Economic Development (CED) Extension and Outreach team as the Program Director and the College of Design as an Associate Dean. I come to this position with a range of perspectives from my childhood on an Iowa farm, my campus days as an ISU student, and my architectural career, to my stint on the East Coast, parenthood, and service at the City of Des Moines. All these experiences build my enthusiasm for the work we do and the undertakings that are ahead of us.

As you read in this issue about the work that CED did with organizations and communities across Iowa in 2022, quality

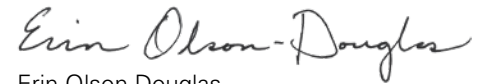
of life is a common thread. As I learn the ropes here, I continue to delight in the array of work we do to bolster the day-to-day livability in our state's communities and the important groundwork we help lay for Iowa communities to thrive in the future. From me, you can expect these important programs to continue with an effort to understand impacts, so that we can deliver our future programming as effectively as possible.

Ultimately, we work for you! Communities and organizations throughout the state are our audience. If you have questions or ideas about any of the programs noted in this issue or how we can help your community improve its quality of life, let us know. Each

of the efforts highlighted were accomplished through community efforts, often initiated by champions.

I have many who came before me and worked around me to thank for this opportunity. No great work in a community happens alone.

Cheers to all of you and your communities as we embark on new adventures in 2023!



Erin Olson-Douglas
Program Director, Iowa State University
Extension and Outreach Community and
Economic Development

ERIN OLSON-DOUGLAS JOINS COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UNIT AS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

By Sandra Oberbroeckling | Program Specialist

On November 8, 2022, Erin Olson-Douglas began her tenure as program director of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's Community and Economic Development (CED) unit. In addition to leading CED, Olson-Douglas serves as the associate dean for extension and outreach in the ISU College of Design.

Olson-Douglas comes to ISU from the City of Des Moines, where she had worked since 2008, most recently as the director of development services. During her tenure, the City of Des Moines significantly expanded downtown housing, approximately 10% of which was affordable for residents earning less than the area's median income.

"I am proud of the vibrancy that we were able to foster in downtown Des Moines," she said. "An important aspect of that vibrancy is due to the flourishing downtown housing market."

Olson-Douglas's concern about housing corresponds to her experience as a parent of three children and the need for families to

have access to quality, affordable housing. She also sees the importance of housing in attracting businesses to a community.

"Businesses and companies will not choose to locate nor grow in a community unless they are confident that they can attract the workforce they need," she said. "To me, desirable housing options in a community is a key to successful communities and to fostering Iowa's workforce."

A native Iowan who grew up on a farm near Adel, Olson-Douglas earned a Bachelor of Architect with distinction from ISU, followed by a Master of Architecture from Harvard University. Before joining the staff for the City of Des Moines, she worked in private practice as well as taught studio courses for ISU's Department of Architecture.

"I had the opportunity to teach first-year core studio," said Olson-Douglas. "It really solidified my decision to go to grad school."

Teaching also offered Olson-Douglas a chance to explore broad design ideas,

something that occurs less often in private practice. Because of the energy that exists in design studio courses, she is interested in being able to work in both professional and academic environments.



While she will not be teaching in her new role at ISU, the ability to work at a statewide scale through both the College of Design and CED is appealing to Olson-Douglas.

"I love work in the community and economic development areas and this position's responsibility to utilize research to educate on these topics at the service of communities across the state is tremendously interesting and exciting to me," she said. "It's an opportunity to help my home state."

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: Erin Olson-Douglas, Himar Hernández, Lisa Bates, Susan Erickson, and Sandra Oberbroeckling

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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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2022 Highlights continued from P01

through social media. Those interested in this resource can contact their local county office for more details.

4. Arts Engagement

[Community engagement through the arts](#) continued to thrive in 2022. For instance, in Elma, the Public Library worked with the community to install a new Little Lending Library in a public park. In addition, Jennifer Drinkwater, associate professor and arts engagement specialist, is creating a new “pop-up” toolkit for creating fun, temporary experiences in communities.

5. Scaling Up Specialty Crop Processing Toolkit

As part of a transdisciplinary team from ISU and colleagues from Iowa Valley RC&D, CED helped develop the [Scaling Up Specialty Crop Processing Toolkit](#), which provides an overview of criteria including food safety, business development, and logistics. The toolkit is available as free download in three languages—English, Spanish, and Swahili—on the ISU Extension Store.

Local Government and Housing

1. Rural Housing

Readiness Assessment (RHRA)

People from more than 60 Iowa communities attended the first annual [RHRA](#) workshop held in April 2022 in conjunction with the Iowa Rural Development (IRD) Summit. Along with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), a panel of representatives from RHRA communities shared how their plans have been developed and implemented since completing the program, and CED specialists provided information on a variety of rural housing issues.

2. Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy (MPI/MPA)

July 2022 marked the 47th annual Iowa [MPI/MPA](#), which provides training and instruction on which Iowa municipal professionals rely for successful operation of their cities. MPI/MPA staff continued to employ best practices to keep attendees engaged, including 44 courses, multiple concurrent live classes, hundreds of class documents, and embedded communication platforms.

3. Iowa Government Finance Initiative (IGFI)

[IGFI](#) keeps Iowans informed with data-driven reports that allow cities and counties to track financial indicators over a five-year period. In 2022, 110 city and 47 county reports were downloaded, providing descriptions of current state-level legislation that impacts local government finance, demographic changes, and changes in revenues and spending.

4. Grant Writing 201

In 2022, CED launched [Grant Writing 201](#) for experienced grant writers as a follow-up to Grant Writing 101, CED’s workshop for beginners. Grant Writing 201 participants are asked to bring grant application materials to work on during the workshop. Those interested in Grant Writing 201 can contact their county extension office.

5. Mayor’s Institute on City Design (MICD)

The ISU College of Design, ISU Extension and Outreach, hosted a session of the MICD July 27–29 in Des Moines, where mayors presented projects from their communities and received feedback from other mayors and a resource team of design and development professionals. The interchanges sparked debate, generated new ideas, and inspired creative thinking.

Data and Technology Team

1. Retail Trade Reports

Retail Trade Analysis reports published by the Iowa Community Indicators Program are being updated and converted for online use. These new publications will be ready in 2023.

2. Interactive Data Features

Using the online data-analysis platform Tableau, the team will release new state, county, and city data throughout 2023. New features will allow users to interact with the data, select overlays, and view trend data. The team will also be updating the publication pages and categorizing and tagging reports so they can be searched.

3. American Community Survey (ACS) Data Release

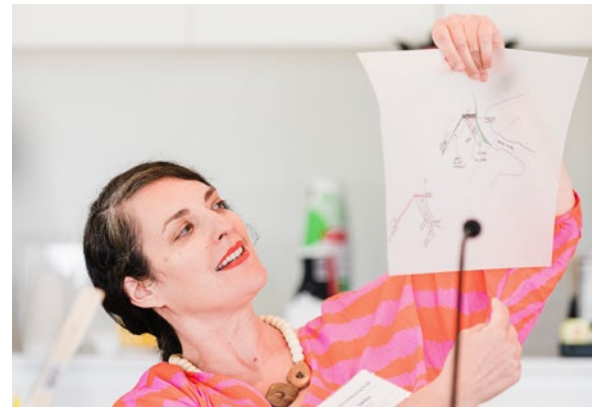
The Census Bureau released the most current ACS data on December 8, and the [Data for Decision Makers \(DDM\)](#) series is being updated to incorporate these new data.

4. GIS Task Sheets

Several new [task sheets](#) covering topics such as ArcGIS Pro, R, and QGIS have been published to the Extension Store, with more to be added in 2023. All new task sheets are published as accessible documents and many other previously published PDFs have been remediated to accommodate screen reader technology.

5. Data Science for Public Good (DSPG) Young Scholars Program

Nine undergraduate and three graduate students completed six data-analysis projects as part of the 2022 [DSPG Young Scholars program](#). The program is currently inviting ISU faculty, state and county



Lisa Switkin, senior principal at James Corner Field Operations in New York, studies a drawing during the MICD in Des Moines. Photo by Jake Sternquist.

agencies, nonprofits, and communities to submit applications for the 2023 summer program. Those interested in the 2023 program can apply online on the [DSPG Young Scholars website](#) (<https://dspg.iastate.edu/how-apply-projects>).

Community Food Systems Team

1. Equity Discussions

To improve members’ understanding of racial equity, the team read and discussed books on the topic, such as *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee and *The Trouble with White Women: A Counterhistory of Feminism* by Kyla Schuller.

2. Team Building

This year the team incorporated bi-weekly meetings with rotating facilitators to enhancing connections and fostering better understanding each other’s work.

3. Local Food Festival

The team and other partners have conducted Local Food Festival annually at ISU since 2015, and 2022 marked the post-pandemic return of the event. Approximately 100 participants sampled a variety of local products, such as honey, baked goods, ice cream, and fresh produce, from approximately 24 vendors.

4. Farm to School and Early Care Education (F2SECE) Conference

The F2SECE team helps convene this annual conference and hosted it virtually in 2022. More than 150 people registered for the conference in 2022 and more than 300 have visited the website to view at least one session.

5. Community Food Systems Annual Event

The Community Food Systems Event returned to an in-person format in 2022, with 74 attendees and 30 presenters. The event featured plenaries on the Farm to Table Task Force and importance of local foods in Iowa and an update on resilient food systems.

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Extension and Outreach

Community and Economic Development

2321 North Loop Drive, Suite 121

Ames, IA 50010-8218

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