

Community Matters Now



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

BRINGING IOWA'S STORIES TO LIFE: STATEWIDE GUIDE TRAINING WORKSHOP ENROLLING NOW *By Diane Van Wyngarden | Tourism Specialist*

Every Iowa community has a unique culture, and every culture has exceptional stories. Communities can bring those stories to life—if they have the training and tools to do it well.

Tour guides and volunteers will have the opportunity to hone their skills at the 2023

statewide Guide Training Workshop. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) designed this training especially for those who lead guided programs at Iowa's diverse attractions—including parks and conservation areas, museums, downtown walking tours, historic sites, agritourism, wineries and industry tours—as well as city leaders who provide community tours to prospective new residents.

CED tourism specialist Diane Van Wyngarden will conduct the one-day workshop on April 18 in the community of Earlham, located in northern Madison County. Participants will learn practical tips and techniques in two key areas:

- How to create and deliver dynamic public program.
- How to refine your personal presentation skills and engage your audiences.

Individuals who complete this workshop have the optional opportunity to receive Professional Guide Certification from ISU Extension and Outreach at a reduced additional fee.

This interpretive guide training is the first in the nation to provide onsite coaching and certification sessions at individual programming locations, incorporating applied learning directly into the settings of Iowa's stories. Improved visitor experiences strengthen local economies by attracting more customers who keep coming back. To date, more than 300 Iowans have completed this training and are telling the stories of 72 Iowa communities.

Funding for this program is provided through a collaborative partnership among ISU Extension and Outreach, Central Iowa Tourism, the Iowa Arts Council/Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The deadline to pre-registration is April 4. The \$10 workshop fee includes the course workbook, workshop sessions, and lunch and refreshments. Participants can register [online](https://go.iastate.edu/GV1XEU) (<https://go.iastate.edu/GV1XEU>). For more information, contact Central Iowa Tourism at 515-571-3855 or ann@iowatourism.com.



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The QR code to the left provides direct link to the form.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY®](#)

[IOWA RETAIL TRADE ANALYSIS REPORTS](#)

[RURAL HOUSING READINESS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM](#)

[PROFESSIONAL GUIDE TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION](#)

IOWA ARTS COUNCIL
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

GREETINGS FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

This edition of *Community Matters Now* seems to exemplify my journey into Community and Economic Development (CED) work for Iowa State Extension and Outreach. Approaching the four-month mark as the CED program director, I have come to understand that our pursuits are deep, broad, and meaningful.

We are broadening our knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to better meet you and your community (or organization or workplace) where you are as you see needs, opportunities, or simply observe changes in the place where you live, work, and play. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)® adds to a broad set of DEI programs our Civic Engagement and Equity team delivers that range in content, focus and length from half-day sessions to three-day courses.

We are enhancing the abilities of communities in our state to share the stories

of their unique places by teaming up with the Iowa Arts Council, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, National Endowment for the Arts, and Central Iowa Tourism to offer a Guide Training workshop in April.

We are deepening the understanding of local housing issues by expanding the number of communities with which we work to create localized housing assessments. We have revamped the process of delivering our Rural Housing Readiness Assessments (RHRA), using the expertise gained from working with more than 30 communities to streamline delivery, making it more efficient and effective for participants as they navigate a thorough understanding of housing challenges and opportunities in their communities.

Finally, our Indicators Program recently released *Iowa Retail Trade Analysis* reports for each community across the state. These reports utilize data to provide a current picture of retail performance and trends

in a community's retail sector, thereby deepening the understanding of local retail dynamics in that are helpful to decision-makers and businesses large and small.

The combination of the work described in this issue are but a snapshot of the range of our work, but exemplifies progress on some of our most challenging issues in Iowa's communities. For us, this is meaningful work; we hope you agree! If you find inspiration or application for any of these stories, reach out to us. We would love to share more and, potentially, work with you to further broaden and deepen our experiences with your community!



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

COMMUNITIES KICK OFF THE RURAL HOUSING READINESS ASSESSMENT PROCESS

By Mark Reinig | Community Development Specialist

Five communities—Decorah, Elkader, Eldora, Fairfield, and Shellsburg—received funding this year from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) to participate in the Rural Housing Readiness Assessment (RHRA) program. After the initial funding cycle, additional funding was made available and Humboldt applied, making it the sixth community in the 2023 cycle.

The communities each received a \$10,000 grant and are required to contribute a \$5,000 cash match. One-third of the \$15,000 funds the cost of ISU Extension and Outreach facilitating the RHRA process, with the remaining two thirds available for implementation after the facilitation process is complete.

Fairfield had an opportunity to react quickly to housing opportunities and has already begun the engagement portion of the RHRA

process, working with CED staff to address immediate needs within the community.

The remaining five communities kicked off their RHRA programs with a virtual orientation workshop on February 16, during which Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg welcomed the community representatives and expressed his excitement that their communities have taken the initiative to address the housing challenges facing rural Iowa. CED specialists explained the duties of the local housing committee in the RHRA process, the importance of the RHRA workbook as a tool for better understanding their communities, and the importance of gathering input through a community survey. Liesl Seabert, IEDA's Rural Community Revitalization program manager, reviewed the requirements of the IEDA and ISU contracts, including the time lines and reports and drawdown documents required.

The communities then met individually with their respective CED specialists.

The 2023 communities will be progressing through the RHRA process during spring and summer, beginning with the RHRA workbook assessment and the community survey, both of which will be conducted within the first six weeks.

Over the last three years, 31 communities have gone through the RHRA process. Of those, 20 communities have closed contracts and 11 communities have received RHRA reports from CED and are in the implementation stage until June 2023. Implementation dollars have been used for a variety of purposes, including design plans, consultant fees for code updates, interns for additional housing research, work on dilapidated homes, and neighborhood clean-up to improve curb appeal.

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, Courtney Long, Bre Miller, 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 UNIT OFFERS NEW INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY PROGRAM

By Himar Hernández | Assistant Program Director

Since the 1990s, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) and other organizations have been working with communities, organizations, and companies in Iowa to better understand and adapt to demographic changes. The focus has been on understanding the numbers and the cultures that are reshaping our state. CED specialists have answered these needs in the past by providing education on different cultures and by sharing best practices in community development.

This work has not gone unnoticed; both Iowa and CED have earned national attention and recognition for being a model of inclusiveness and community engagement. Respected media outlets such as The Wall Street Journal and NBC have praised and validated Iowa's way of welcoming and celebrating diversity.

To better support its clients' needs in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), CED has added a new program that will provide education and coaching to its customers in the area of cultural competency.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)® is the world's premier cross-cultural assessment program. IDI® is used by thousands of individuals and organizations to build intercultural competence to achieve both international and domestic diversity and inclusion goals and outcomes. In contrast to many "personal-characteristic" instruments, IDI® is a cross-culturally

valid, reliable, and generalizable measure of intercultural competence along the validated intercultural development continuum. In addition, research has shown that IDI® has high predictive validity to both bottom-line, cross-cultural outcomes in organizations and intercultural goal-accomplishments in education.

In March 2022, members of CED's civic engagement and equity team became certified to deliver IDI® and to date have conducted the program for 111 people from five organizations, including a private foundation's board of directors, community leadership academy participants, and an Iowa company that recently has expanded internationally.

The objectives of IDI® are:

1. Helping participants and organizations understand the importance of cultural competency.
2. Assessing participant's levels of cultural competency and helping them learn the skills needed to be able to be part of their own organization's DEI goals in a confidential way.
3. Assessing the organization's levels of cultural competency and setting measurable goals for growth that will translate into higher efficiency and better communication.
4. Developing an action plan with measurable goals to advance the organization's DEI growth.



Communities and organizations interested in learning more about IDI® can contact Himar Hernández at himarh@iastate.edu or 641-799-6681.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 2023 RURAL HOUSING CONFERENCE

By Mark Reinig | Community Development Specialist

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development and the Iowa Economic Development Authority will be hosting the second annual Rural Housing Readiness Assessment Conference on April 10, 2023, at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center in Ames.

The aim of the conference is to complement and enhance the Rural Housing Readiness Assessment (RHRA) process through a combination of workshops, keynote speakers, and a range of networking opportunities designed to encourage attendees to share ideas for improving housing quality, access, and affordability in their communities.

Ninety people from more than 60 Iowa communities attended the first annual RHRA workshop held in April 2022 in conjunction with the Iowa Rural Development Council's (IRDC) Summit. This year, the RHRA conference will be held the day before the IRDC Summit scheduled for April 11–12, with many attendees participating in both events.

The RHRA Conference is a free event. Those interested in attending can register [online](https://tinyurl.com/5aehrxyv) (<https://tinyurl.com/5aehrxyv>).

NEW IOWA RETAIL TRADE ANALYSIS REPORTS NOW AVAILABLE

By Sandra Oberbroeckling | Program Specialist

The ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development Data and Technology team recently redesigned the *Iowa Retail Trade Analysis* reports for cities and counties and migrated them to the Extension and Outreach Indicators Program data portal.

The process and platform for producing the reports has been modernized, which substantially reduces the time required to prepare them. In addition, new data are incorporated continuously as they become available instead of on an annual basis, providing users with more up-to-date information about retail conditions in their

communities. Finally, because the reports are integrated with the systems used for the *Data for Decision Makers* reports and other CED data team products, the team can develop new ways to use and display the retail data outside the Retail Trade Analysis reports.

The new reports describe taxable sales trends through fiscal year 2021 and are available for download on the [Indicators Program website](https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu) under "Programs" (<https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu>) or directly on the [Retail Analysis page](https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/Indicators/Retail/) (<https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/Indicators/Retail/>).

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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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