

Community Matters Now



A monthly publication of COVID-19 resources for Iowans from Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development

COMMUNITY MATTERS NOW—MORE THAN EVER!

The COVID-19 pandemic is testing Iowans' resilience. While the virus is likely to peak later in rural states such as Iowa and receive less attention, the economy has been brought to a halt in all parts of the nation suddenly and with equal force.

Bringing back economic activity, rebuilding social ties, and maintaining the efficiency and responsiveness of local governments will demand from everyone more than "business as usual."

The goals of the Community and Economic Development (CED) program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach have always been to foster thriving, resilient Iowa communities and economies. Our efforts matter now more than ever. For

this reason, we are temporarily shifting our quarterly newsletter, *Community Matters*, to a shorter format delivered monthly. *Community Matters Now* will highlight CED's efforts to respond to these challenging times.

We are working to adapt our existing programs and tools to the current reality of lives lived at home, and to research and develop new ways to assist Iowa's local governments, businesses, and organizations as you adapt to the "new normal" of life post-pandemic.

We want you to be aware of our efforts; more importantly, we want you to reach out to us for assistance when you read about things we are doing that may be of

benefit to you. In addition to *Community Matters Now* we have established a webpage where you will always be able to access information about our offerings (<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/CED-COVID-19-resources>).

We are here to play a vital role in solving today's problems and preparing Iowa's communities for a thriving future. Let us know how we can help you!

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

2020 IS THE TIME TO BE COUNTED!

On April 1, 2020, "Census Day," the 2020 U.S. Census was officially launched. The census is done every 10 years to count every person and housing unit in the United States.

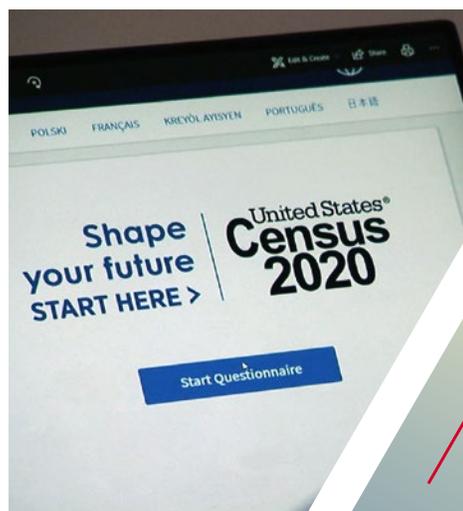
During the COVID-19 pandemic, there are both short- and long-term implications for everyone living in the United States to complete the census as soon as possible.

In the short term, with social distancing in place indefinitely, completing the census either online or by mail is the safest way to

By Sandra Burke | Assistant Scientist III

ensure that you are counted, rather than having a census employee visiting your home.

In the long term, the census benefits you and your community because it determines the funding level for many public services, grants, and community



ONLINE RESOURCES

[PANDEMIC CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS](#)

[CARES ACT AND SBA PROGRAMS FAQs](#)

[REGISTRATION FOR INTROTO VIRTUAL INTROTO PLANNING AND ZONING WORKSHOPS](#)

[SMALL BUSINESS BEST PRACTICES FROM THE IOWA RETAIL INITIATIVE](#)

[REGISTRATION FOR VIRTUAL MUNICIPAL PROFESSIONALS INSTITUTE AND ACADEMY](#)

[TRAVEL-MAGGEDON SURVIVAL TIPS FOR TOURISM DESTINATIONS](#)

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2020 Census from P01

support so that Iowa and your community get their fair share of federal funding for hospitals and health care; fire and police departments, schools, education, and daycare; roads, highways, and public transportation; housing assistance; medicaid and child health programs; and job training programs.

In the context of the current pandemic, adequate funding for all of these services—especially those related to health care, education, housing, and jobs—is critical to maintaining the health, safety, and well-being of all Iowans.

How to Respond

Almost all households will receive their Census invitation in the mail. Include everyone in your household when you

respond and be sure to count your children and infants. You will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone and in a wide range of languages. Accessibility services make it easy for persons with vision, hearing, or other disabilities to respond. It is your civic duty to take part and completing the census is mandatory.

Your Census Response is Safe

The Census Bureau uses your information **only** for statistical purposes. Your personal information is kept **confidential**. Your responses are compiled with other homes to produce statistics which never identify your home or any person in your home. The Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information and the data collection process is designed with layers of security to keep your information

safe and secure. By law, your responses cannot be used against you. The Census Bureau will **NEVER** ask for social security numbers, bank or credit card numbers, money or donations, or anything on behalf of a political party.

The Census will **NOT** ask about citizenship or immigration status.

Resources and Fact Sheets

Census information on the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach [Indicators Portal](https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/Indicators/Census/) (<https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/Indicators/Census/>)

[U.S. Census Bureau](https://2020census.gov/en.html) (<https://2020census.gov/en.html>)

For more information contact Sandra Burke at 515-294-9307 or sburke@iastate.edu.

INTRO TO PLANNING AND ZONING WORKSHOPS RESUME IN A VIRTUAL FORMAT

By Sandra Oberbroeckling / Extension Program Specialist

In an effort to continue to offer programming to local government officials during the COVID-19 pandemic, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development has resumed the previously canceled Introduction to Planning and Zoning Workshops in a virtual format.

The workshops will be offered via Adobe Connect and will be limited to 25 participants to start, so those interested in “attending” a workshop should register as soon as possible.

The dates and times for these workshops are:

- Thursday, April 23, 5:00–8:30 pm
- Tuesday, April 28, 1:00–4:30 pm
- Thursday, April 30, 5:00–8:30 pm
- Saturday, May 2, 1:00–4:30 pm

Additional workshops may be added in the future based on demand.

Participation will require a computer with a strong internet connection, but all interaction will take place through chat and interactive questions on the screen. No microphone or camera are necessary for participation. The registration fee is \$25 per person.

Participants are asked to register at least one week in advance of their session so CED staff will have time to mail workbooks, allowing people to follow along and take notes throughout the presentation.

The Introduction to Planning and Zoning for Local Officials workshop is a three-hour session designed to introduce the basic principles of land use planning and development management to elected

officials, planning and zoning officials, and board of adjustment members without formal training in the subjects.

Using case scenarios in a highly-interactive format, the workshop highlights issues frequently faced in the land use process, such as the roles and responsibilities of the planning and zoning commission, the board of adjustment, and the elected council and board of supervisors. It also will highlight legal issues frequently faced by local officials, such as variances, special uses, nonconforming uses, spot zoning, hearing procedures, and conflicts of interest.

For registration questions please contact ISU Registration Services at 515-294-6222 or registrations@iastate.edu. For questions regarding the workshops, contact Eric Christianson at 515-231-6513 or ejchr@iastate.edu.

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Gary Taylor 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:

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ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH JOINS ALLIANCE TO PROVIDE SMALL BUSINESSES COVID-19 SUPPORT

By Kameron Middlebrooks / Minority Business Coordinator

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and other organizations are joining ranks to uplift the small business community throughout the entire state by starting the Iowa Small Business Relief Fund. The other organizations in the alliance are The Director's Council, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit, League of United Latin American Citizens - Iowa (LULAC Iowa), One Voice, DREAM Iowa, and Iowa Community Capital.

This initiative started with \$50,000 in seed money. Then came the alliance of organizations that, in practice, are dedicated to strengthening small businesses in Iowa.

"At Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, we believe in the power of entrepreneurs and the value they bring to our communities. We are committed to supporting small businesses through research based training and technical assistance to ensure we emerge from this crisis, strong," said Gary Taylor, program director, ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development

The Iowa Small Business Relief Fund aims to target small businesses with 1–7

employees, granting them dollars ranging from \$500–\$3,500. These grants will cover business related expenses including, but not limited to, rent, utilities, insurance, delivery services, and technology. While the state and the federal government have allotted some resources towards small businesses, we are coming to the realization that those resources are simply not enough.

The latest SBA data states there are more than 50,000 businesses employing 1–20 employees, statewide. Small businesses not only provide jobs for more than 50% of the Iowa workforce and more than 64% of the workforce nationwide, but over the last decade small businesses have demonstrated a proven track record of substantial and consistent economic contributions.

"Our business owners are the backbone of our economy. It's important that we help them weather the storm. Neither the business owners nor the community can afford to allow our small businesses to fall by the wayside. This alliance of organizations is a meaningful step towards helping small businesses and that includes our farmers. More than 40,000 of our farms in the state of Iowa are run by one



to four individuals," said Deidre DeJear, a member of the alliance.

The Iowa Small Business Relief Fund seeks to ensure no Iowa small business is left out. This group welcomes additional community partners and is also accepting contributions to build the fund to addressing the ongoing needs of small businesses during this time. Within the first week of the operation, the fund received an additional \$25,000 from Veridian Credit Union. [Contributions are accepted online](https://www.empowermoney.org/smallbusinessrelief) (https://www.empowermoney.org/smallbusinessrelief).

[Applications opened on April 10 and can be completed via the website](https://www.empowermoney.org/smallbusinessrelief) (https://www.empowermoney.org/smallbusinessrelief).

MIDWEST PLANNING BLUZ EXPANDS COVERAGE TO ALL THINGS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING

By Susan Erickson / Program Coordinator

Timely information about local governments and housing needs?

Coming right up!

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development has a large team of experts in the topics of local government and housing, and they have devised a new way to bring you timely information.

The Midwest Planning BLUZ blog has been around for many years, sharing expert insight on topics relating to planning and zoning law. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BLUZ blog has expanded to cover timely topics that relate to local government and housing concerns.

Our experts on matters relating to housing and local governments are now writing

regular blog posts to help our audiences through new challenges in our lives. Recent posts include *Options for Internet Access in Rental Housing, Business and Industry Resources and information Relevant to COVID-19*, and *Suspension of Bank Foreclosures during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency*.

Staff members who are writing for the Midwest Planning BLUZ blog include:

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[Check the BLUZ](https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ/) frequently for more helpful information as we navigate this national crisis together (https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ/).

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