

Community Matters Now



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

DSPG YOUNG SCHOLARS USE DATA TO SOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITY PROBLEMS *By Christopher Seeger | Professor and Extension Landscape Architect*

Iowa State University [Data Science for the Public Good \(DSPG\) Young Scholars Program](https://dspg.iastate.edu) (<https://dspg.iastate.edu>) is in full swing as nine student interns and three graduate fellows learn to apply data science skills to solve local community problems through the identification and discovery of datasets that can be used to better analyze, visualize, and understand the problems and their potential solutions.

The DSPG began May 26 and will run through August 7. The program is led by a coalition of five land-grant universities in three states: Iowa State University, Oregon State University, Virginia Tech, University of Virginia, and Virginia State University. The ISU team is led by Cass Dorius, associate professor of human development and family studies; Shawn Dorius, associate professor of sociology; Todd Abraham, assistant director of data and analytics, Iowa Integrated Data System; Heike Hofmann, professor in charge of data science; Adisak Sukul, associate teaching professor of computer science; and Christopher Seeger, professor and extension specialist in geospatial technologies.

While the ISU DSPG team had planned initially to meet face-to-face throughout the summer and to work with six community projects, COVID-19 required a change of projects, online instruction, and a shift to a virtual office. A typical day for ISU's program starts with a virtual coffee group meeting each morning to see how everyone is doing and review the plans and schedule for the day. Students then spend the rest of the morning meeting with one of their two project teams and attending online instructional workshops. The shift to an all online program brought about the opportunity and necessity to integrate teaching across



all the universities with various faculty presenting areas of data science expertise. Noon hours often include an online brown-bag guest lecture and afternoons are reserved for additional training and project work. The ISU teams are currently involved in three projects working with ISU Extension and Outreach and three projects with the Iowa Department of Public Health:

- Extension Indicators 1 – develop and evaluate composite indicators to assess county-level scales of economic and human capital to support the work of extension and outreach professionals.

- Extension Indicators 2 – develop and evaluate composite indicators to assess county-level scales of social and natural capital to support the work of extension and outreach professionals.
- Extension Hotline – analyze Extension Hotline's data and develop tools to support automation of system reports.
- Systems of care in Iowa – quantify and map community health resources and formal systems of care infrastructure in Iowa communities.
- Substance use recovery – identify the substance use recovery infrastructure in Iowa, conduct a spatial analysis of these resources, and develop visualizations and datasets that communicate information about the recovery infrastructure.
- Alcohol use in Iowa – identify the demographic and spatial characteristics of alcohol abuse in Iowa to identify the at-risk population in Iowa.

Students will complete the program August 7 and will provide project presentations in both poster and web formats during a multistate symposium. Plans are currently underway to provide the program again in 2021.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

[PANDEMIC CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS](#)

[COVID-19 HEALTH AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS](#)

[NONPROFIT FUNDRAISING DURING AND AFTER COVID-19](#)

[BUILDING TEAM CAPACITY DURING COVID-19](#)

[BUSINESS MODEL PLANNING AFTER COVID-19 DISRUPTION](#)

[ASSESSING AND SELECTING BUSINESS SYSTEMS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19](#)

EXTENSION CED FINDS OPPORTUNITY IN TIME OF CRISIS

Crisis can be opportunity, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. The Community and Economic Development program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach continues to adapt to current challenges.

In a short matter of months our staff have studied up on ways to translate our educational programming, facilitation, and engagement skills into a virtual environment while maintaining human connection and quality. This means setting aside resistance to operating in new ways and diving into diverse media arenas to reach Iowans.

From our small business team developing podcasts and webinars to mastering virtual collaboration platforms such as Mural and Miro, we have reached outside of our comfort zone to add additional tools to our toolbox. There is promise in building connection and collaboration with virtual platforms. Expanding how we work relies on flexibility and embracing change demonstrates resilience.

We are not alone in this. Share with us on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/ISUExtensionCED) (<http://www.facebook.com/ISUExtensionCED>), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ISUExtensionCED) (@ISUExtensionCED), or [LinkedIn](http://www.linkedin.com/company/isu-extension-ced) (<http://www.linkedin.com/company/isu-extension-ced>) how you have risen to the challenge,

changed the normal way of doing things, and continue to connect with community.

This issue of *Community Matters Now* explores some of what we've been learning. It's a call for ongoing skill development and highlights the importance of making informed, data-driven decisions. We're here for you, today and always. Let's take this opportunity and make the best of it.

Jon Wolseth
Interim Associate Program Director

Himar Hernández
Assistant Program Director

ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH TO OFFER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT WEBINARS

By Victor Oyervides | Retail Specialist

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach's Business Development team will soon be offering business development webinars for small Iowa businesses as they continue to cope with the economic situation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Created in 2019, the Business Development team is a collaboration among ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED), the Farm, Food and Enterprise Development (FFED) program and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

The webinars are the second phase of the Business Development team's response to COVID-19. In April 2020, the team took the first step in responding to the pandemic by developing, recording, and launching 25 podcasts for small business in both English and Spanish. The podcast, titled *Back to Business Iowa*, is available on the [Farm, Food and Enterprise Development website](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/farm-food-enterprise-development).

The first three classes to be offered as webinars are the "Business Plan Accelerator," "Introduction to the Business Model Canvas," and "Advanced Business Model Canvas."

CED retail specialist Victor Oyervides is leading the development of the Introduction to Business Model Canvas and Advanced Business Model Canvas courses based on Strategyzer.com. The Business Model Canvas is a strategic management tool created by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs.

The Introduction to Business Model Canvas consists of the following sections:

- Introduction to Business Model Canvas (BMC)
- Key Ground Rules for application of BMC
- Customer Segments of the BMC
- Value Propositions of the BMC
- Value Proposition Canvas

- Introduction to the Value Proposition Canvas
- Customer Profile
- Value Map
- Fit

On the topic of hosting and facilitating online webinars within Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, several tools are being implemented including: Adobe Connect, Google Docs, Zoom, Miro, Mural, Canvas and Moodle. The Business Development team is testing and evaluating the different options, and a final tool or mix of tools will soon be determined. The cost, module setup, and scheduling are also forthcoming. Once final details are ironed out, registration invites will be shared through SBDC, CED and FFED sites, newsletters, and social media.

For more information or questions contact Brian Tapp, FFED Enterprise Development program coordinator, at btapp@iastate.edu or Himar Hernandez, CED assistant program director, at himarh@iastate.edu.

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PRODUCTIVE VIRTUAL MEETINGS ARE POSSIBLE!

By Aimee Viniard-Weideman | Community Development Specialist

Effective leaders know that well-thought-out decisions require the input of many voices and perspectives. Engaging your community in important discussions can be challenging even when we are in the same room together, much less in a virtual meeting room.

During the last several months, we've been learning that effective virtual meetings are not only possible, but highly effective! Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) specialists have been working with communities and organizations to design and facilitate strategic planning, just-in-time action planning, and public engagement processes in virtual settings.

Like everyone, we have been learning which technology tools work best, creative ways to engage people in discussions, and helpful tips and tools we can share with our partners so they can run effective meetings.

A few of the virtual planning sessions we have designed and facilitated for regional, state, and local groups include:

Just-in-time Action Planning

- Short-term planning for the next 3–12 months
- Teams work together to assess and redefine their focus and priorities; clearly



defining actions, roles, responsibilities and time line

Strategic Planning

- Longer-term planning for the next 12–18 months
- Helps the group create a shared practical vision, name the barriers keeping them from that vision, identify new directions and strategies to propel them forward, and create and commit to a focused implementation plan

Goal Setting

- Focuses on local community and economic development and the impacts of COVID-19
- Participants consider past accomplishments, current issues and trends, ongoing commitments, and new or emerging priorities and initiatives

Community Conversations

Creates a setting for meaningful and facilitated discussions

- Allows participants to share and broaden perspectives, revealing existing consensus; creates shared meaning/sense making in complex situations

For more information about designing and facilitating virtual meetings, contact Aimee Viniard-Weideman at aimeevw@iastate.edu.

DSPG Youth Scholars continued from P01

The DSPG Young Scholars is funded in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The DSPG program supports our shared goal of promoting rural prosperity by addressing the USDA's Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan and NIFA's research, education, and extension goals for training, workforce development, and evidence-based decision-making. The program also addresses the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Economic Mobility and Opportunity team's goal of creating and advancing community strategies to make data-driven decisions, particularly among rural places.

VIRTUAL MEETING TIP #1: START WITH AN ENGAGING QUESTION

By Aimee Viniard-Weideman | Community Development Specialist

In-home offices, online classes, meetings with your colleagues in a virtual room, they are all a part of our new normal. We are doing it, but we may not all be doing it well—yet!

How many times have you or someone on your team been distracted or disengaged in an online meeting? Perhaps you were reading emails, working on another project, even doing some online shopping?

With a little planning and effort, it is possible to have engaging meetings that keep participants active and focused. To help improve your next online meeting, try using these tips:

Start with a Question

How you start sets the tone for the rest of the meeting. So, start your meeting with a

question that gives each person a chance to speak. The question could be personal and reflective: "What made you smile this week?" "What is one thing you are doing to care for yourself?" "What gives you hope during this time?" Or your question could relate to the meeting topic: "What is one idea you've had since we last met?"

If your group is too large to have everyone speak in the full group, you can:

- Send them into breakout rooms so everyone has a chance to speak in the smaller groups; then bring them back to the large group and ask for a few brief comments before moving on with your agenda
- Ask everyone to write their response in the chat box or on a shared document that all can see and access

Keep Asking Questions, and Listen

After you have made sure everyone had a chance to speak or write their answer at the start of the meeting, continue to invite active participation during your meeting by:

- Building discussion time into the agenda and sharing the agenda with participants
- Asking reflective questions such as "What are the strengths of this idea?" "What could improve this idea?"
- Keeping track of who has responded on a participant list, so you call on people who have not spoken

Watch *Community Matters Now* for additional tips on leading virtual meetings that matter!

For more information about virtual meeting training or facilitation, contact Aimee Viniard-Weideman at aimeevw@iastate.edu.

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