

Community Matters



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

PROJECT ADDRESSES LOCAL FOOD ACCESS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES *By Lisa Bates / Community Development Specialist*

Many people take access to healthy foods for granted because they can simply hop in the car and drive to the nearest Hy-Vee or Fareway to meet their needs. However, this is often not the case for those who live in rural communities.

Because of retail consolidation, declining populations, and infrastructure costs, local grocery stores in rural communities are closing and residents are feeling the effects. This is especially true for vulnerable populations—such as the elderly and those living below the poverty line—that find access to healthy foods challenging because of the cost and availability of transportation to the nearest grocery store.

In addition to providing access to healthy foods, local, independently-owned grocery stores in rural communities contribute to residents' well-being and quality of life by supporting economic vitality and promoting civic pride.

In an effort to support independently-owned grocery stores in the rural Heartland, the Iowa State University

Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) program partnered with the Kansas State University (KSU) Center for Engagement and Community Development and the University of Minnesota Extension (UME) Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships to develop the proposal "Food Access and

Independent Grocers: Strengthening Food Security in Underserved Communities." The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCD) funded the proposal with a planning grant of \$22,012.

The goal of the proposal is to compile existing resources that support independently-owned groceries as sites



Local retail businesses are the lifeblood of many small communities in Iowa.

of food security, social centers, and economic opportunity from the three land-grant university partners, review them, and identify gaps where development of additional resources is needed. From there, the partner institutions will develop a joint curriculum for working with independently-owned grocers that could be shared throughout the Heartland.

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Local grocers provide community residents with access to fresh, healthy foods.

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HOW WE WORK / CED KNOWLEDGE TEAMS

The Community and Economic Development program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is focused on addressing five critical issues facing Iowa's communities: housing, changing demographics, local economies, the built environment, and civic engagement and leadership capacity. Our unit consists of six specialized knowledge teams that develop and deliver programs, develop networks and build coalitions, and provide professional development for team members.



EQUITY, INCLUSION AND RESPECT

The Team for Promoting Equity, Inclusion, and Respect in Communities identifies and focuses on diverse communities to eliminate systemic barriers to success. Team members have expertise in capacity building, participatory processes, advocacy, facilitation, awareness, and support systems, which they apply to implement cultural competency training, build capacity for the underserved, strengthen coalitions and networks, and deepen diversity of thought and experience.



LOCAL ECONOMIES

The Local Economies Team strengthens communities and their local economies by teaching best practices and providing hands-on assistance to retailers and entrepreneurs. Team members have expertise in small and minority-owned business financial planning, customer service, store design and layout, and entrepreneurship, which they apply to promote small-business development and expansion for retailers and entrepreneurs, with an emphasis on those in the tourism, agritourism, grocery, and local-foods sectors.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The Civic Engagement and Leadership Team works with other knowledge teams to enhance community leadership structures and broaden community engagement. Its members have expertise in citizen engagement processes, coalition building, and leadership dynamics, which they apply to develop programs for identifying, training, and connecting established and aspiring organizations and people in both the public and private sectors.



ART AND DESIGN APPLICATIONS

The Art and Design Applications Team harnesses the power of design thinking to address place-based issues facing Iowa's communities. Team members have expertise in the disciplinary knowledge and processes of landscape architecture, architecture, interior design, community planning, art, and historic preservation, which they apply to promote energy efficiency, green building and design, community health and well-being, local food systems, and community building through art.



LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The Local Governments and Nonprofits Team collaborates with local governments and nonprofit organizations to develop the leadership skills and knowledge needed to generate policies, procedures, and planning for the betterment of Iowa's communities and regions. The team has expertise in data collection and interpretation; local government budgeting, administration, and law; and board strategic planning, visioning, and facilitation, which it applies to foster professionalism, build capacity, improve efficiencies, and emphasize sustainable practices and outcomes in the public and nonprofit sectors.



DATA AND TECHNOLOGY

The Data and Technology Team provides support to other knowledge teams. The team has expertise in demographic analysis; GIS; data collection, wrangling, repurposing, and education; needs analysis; indicators; evaluation; data systems; human-computer interaction (HCI); mobile technologies; data collection (quantitative, qualitative, non-traditional, survey analysis); data quality assessment; and the ability to repurpose data, which they apply to identify, discover, visualize, analyze and interpret community conditions and trends, and assess programmatic impacts.

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MARKETING HOMETOWN AMERICA STUDY CIRCLES SPARK COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS, ACTION PLANS FOR NEW RESIDENT ATTRACTION

By Abbie Gaffey / Community Development Specialist

Six communities are starting the Marketing Hometown America program this winter to discuss what makes their community special, why those unique assets might be attractive to new residents, and how to let potential residents know their towns are vibrant places to live.

Marketing Hometown America is a research-based extension program offered in Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota. The purpose of the program is to help communities address rural depopulation and the resulting loss of economic vitality caused by years of demographic change.

The communities of Hawarden, Paullina, Sheldon, Hartley, Sanborn, Sutherland and Boone have had community leaders trained in facilitation skills to lead a four-week Study Circles program. Each week, teams of 8–10 residents representing groups such as young families, the school district, local government, businesses, long-term residents, and nonprofits work through another section of the Study Circles.

The first week of Study Circles examines the many ways people end up living where they do. Whether it was a job, proximity to family, the affordability of housing, or a slower pace of life, people had reasons they consciously chose to stay. The session also focuses on what community values are important to quality of life and what social connections help develop a sense of community. The next session uses community economic and demographic statistical data to measure how the community rates on nine indicators of quality of life. Session three builds on the nine quality-of-life indicators by identifying specific ways to market the community's unique assets. The last session identifies which new residents may be attracted to the relocate to the community and explores how to target that market, crafting a message to reach that market and identifying the places to communicate that message.

After everyone has completed their Study Circles process, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach field specialists bring all the groups together and lead the participants through an action planning process to jointly create a marketing plan for the community. The action

planning process also discusses how to use the marketing plan to generate broader community support for implementation projects.

Some of the kinds of projects that might come from the Marketing Hometown America program include updated community websites with information new residents are looking for about the quality of the school system, recreational opportunities, available housing, major employers, and community attractions. Other projects might include welcoming committees for new residents, outreach programs to recent college graduates or past alumni of the local school system, marketing of opportunities to purchase an existing business, or information on buildings available where new businesses can be started.

Two communities, Mapleton and Mondamin, piloted the Marketing Hometown America program in 2018 as part of a grant from the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. For Mapleton, additional new housing, expanded broadband, and a Lifelong Learning Hub were top priorities. Marie Whiteing, a retired school teacher, led the Marketing Hometown America process in Mapleton. She reports that the town is moving forward on their ideas and met with a housing developer in January.

"We are slowly making progress and are working on the Lifelong Learning Hub in Mapleton. We are getting a new superintendent of schools and we intend to make this priority known to him. All in all, it is my opinion that we are moving, not as fast as we wish, but nevertheless in a forward motion and that feels good," Whiteing said.

Mondamin identified an updated community website, development of a nuisance housing ordinance to make existing housing opportunities more attractive to new residents, community signage, and the creation of opportunities for more youth involvement in community



Through the Marketing Hometown America process, Mapleton identified new housing, expanded broadband, and a Lifelong Learning Hub as top priorities.

affairs. Harrison County Development Corporation executive director Renea Anderson reports that a nuisance abatement workshop was held and they are coordinating with the Southwest Iowa Planning Council for assistance. They are also submitting three grants for community signage projects.

[Communities who may be interested in learning more about offering the Marketing Hometown America program in their towns can visit the program webpage \(https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/marketing-hometown-america\)](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/marketing-hometown-america). Interested communities can also call Abbie Gaffey, community development specialist, 712-539-1169, or by email at agaffey@iastate.edu.

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Once a curriculum is developed, the partner institutions will develop a second grant proposal that will support the development and evaluation of the grocer curriculum and its dissemination to other land-grant universities.

Work began in October 2018 with an introductory meeting of representatives from the three partner institutions. In November, the research team began a series of virtual meetings to share information about each institution's programming and to prepare a literature review to aid in preparing the second grant proposal. After the virtual meetings are completed, in spring 2019 the research team will convene in Ames for a three-day planning session with the following objectives:

Prioritize identified resource gaps and assess the ability to address them.

Discuss how current materials and those to be developed could be combined in one extended curriculum offered by the three institutions.

Identify methods for delivering current and potential offerings to other North Central Region Extension professionals.

Visit grocers to ground-truth the ideas by speaking to owners.

Allocate duties to complete the second grant proposal draft.

ISU Extension CED's contribution to this project will be extensive, because CED specialists have already been working with independent grocers for a number of years.

CED's Iowa Retail Initiative (IRI) has been working with Latino grocers in Iowa in an advisory capacity since 2014, providing assistance to more than 20 stores across the state, including procuring sales-tax permits, liquor licenses, and building permits; consulting on interior design and inventory management; and building relationships with chambers of commerce and city administration.

CED has also implemented a statewide healthy corner store initiative, sponsored by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

This project included training on produce handling, product placement within stores, and assistance in promoting produce through advertising specials, coupons, and in-store food demonstrations.

Through this engagement with store owners and clientele, CED specialists discovered that lack of variety of produce in Latino-owned groceries is due to barriers to acquisition, lack of knowledge of techniques to prolong preservation, and time and regulatory constraints in processing fresh produce into convenient and time-saving forms for customers (such as pre-cut vegetables, homemade salsa, and grab-and-go healthy snack options). Store owners have expressed the desire to carry more fresh produce because of higher profit margins, however they are weary of taking the financial risk because of the aforementioned distribution challenges.

The team anticipates submitting the second grant proposal in November 2019.

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS PROGRAM OFFERS TWO CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

By Courtney Long, / Program Coordinator, Community Food Systems

Local and regional food systems are growing rapidly throughout the country, and consumer trends toward consumption of local foods has increased significantly. These trends have led to the need for extension professionals and food system practitioners to understand the breadth and depth of food systems development.

In 2014, in an effort to understand food systems development, the Iowa State University Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture funded the creation of the Community Food Systems (CFS) program.

The program began under the leadership of the Community Design Lab (CDL) at ISU as the Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit, and has since transitioned to an extension program housed in the Community and Economic Development and Agriculture and Natural Resource units of ISU Extension and Outreach.

CFS is a multi-year, multi-phased program that helps communities develop and design their local and regional food systems. The program still directly partners with CDL for design assistance. To date, seven communities have participated in the full three-year process and more than

30 projects have been designed and are in various stages of implementation.

In 2017, CFS received a grant from the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center in ISU's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to develop and pilot two national certification programs for food system practitioners: Local Food Leader certification and Community Food Systems certification.

The Local Food Leader training program is intended for beginning local food practitioners, although it is open for anyone who is interested in food systems development and collaboration. The program teaches several foundational competencies critical to a successful involvement in community food systems development.

This certification is divided into two parts. The first is an in-person, day-long workshop that covers working in food systems, facilitation and capacity building, equity as a foundation to food systems, evaluation, and professional development. The second portion of the certification is conducted through online modules. The online modules offer an intensive

curriculum that includes community food systems overview, methods of engagement and leadership, equity and inclusion, creating teams and tools for success, and evaluation.

Community Food Systems Program certification is intended for intermediate levels of local food practitioners who are interested in the development of their community food system. The training is offered as a two-day workshop followed by online modules.

The in-person portion includes an overview of the CFS program, coalition development, creative methods for engagement, and creating a community food systems assessment through mapping and public input sessions. Day two of the training includes determining priority projects, project management, design thinking, program evaluation, best practices and resources.

Following the two-day workshop, individuals participate in four online modules to complete certification. The online modules dive deeper into design thinking, economic impact, project

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FIVE STEPS TO EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE: STEP THREE: MAKE IT EFFICIENT

By Diane van Wyngarden / Community Development Specialist

Previous issues of the *Community Matters* newsletter highlighted the first two steps a business must take to provide excellent service to its customers.

In volume 10, issue 1, we highlighted the first step of excellent customer service: Make it Your Own, and in volume 10, issue 2, we presented step two, Make It Personal.

Step three is Make it EFFICIENT.

I knew they were coming and was prepared for the worst. I had agreed to teach a 7:00 a.m. customer service workshop, then learned that a gas station was sending six front-line staff.

Convenience store employees are among the most-recruited participants for customer service workshops because they unknowingly create a traveler's first impression of a community, good or bad. Their actions can persuade a traveler to stay in town, or quickly leave. However, these particular employees were coming because their boss said their attendance was mandatory. Audiences who are required to attend mandatory, early-morning workshops are typically belligerent—sulky, at best.

Surprisingly, the Oskaloosa Jiffy employees arrived with dispositions matching the sunrise, and they selected front row seats. They eagerly engaged in

discussions throughout the workshop, and emerged as leaders of creative ideas for Step Three: Make it Efficient. They shared how they personally assist customers who have disabilities, and how raising convenience to a new level produces regular customers. Their enthusiasm toward serving their customers was genuine, and it was impressive.

I stopped at Jiffy in Oskaloosa after the workshop, because I had to meet their boss. Rhonda Hockey has managed Jiffy for 17 years, and customer service is her mission. Many of her employees have no prior experience working with the public when they begin, or prior knowledge of customer service basics. Rhonda trains her staff, and then continues as coach. Rhonda tells her staff to put “a smile in their voice,” and posts large reminder cards behind the counter, including “greet each customer as they come in the door.” It was a weekday afternoon, but business was brisk at Jiffy. I watched Rhonda's staff hustle to serve customers as quickly as possible.

Convenience stores epitomize efficiency. Oskaloosa's Jiffy is not the largest, nor the newest convenience store in town. They do not serve pizza, donuts, or sandwiches. Their product is listening to their customers, making their services as efficient as possible, and personally assisting whenever they can.

How do you make it efficient? Time is money. Customers want transactions handled quickly and accurately. Staff should know answers to frequently asked questions, and be able to handle customer needs without referring them to someone else. Apologize if a customer had to wait, even if only a minute.

How can you impress your customers by demonstrating that their time is valuable?

Watch for the next customer service steps in future newsletter issues.

1. Make it YOUR OWN
2. Make it PERSONAL
3. Make it EFFICIENT
4. Make it SATISFYING
5. Make it MEMORABLE

[See more information about our Customer Service Workshops \(www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/customer-service\)](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/customer-service).

Upcoming Customer Service and Community Tourism Strategies workshops:

- Harlan (Shelby County): April 9
- Fort Dodge: April 16

GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM TO OFFER COURSE ON QGIS

By Bailey Hanson / CED Systems Analyst

Geographic information systems (GIS) have become an essential planning tool for communities. However, smaller communities may not have the resources available to purchase GIS software.

A solution to this problem for smaller communities is QGIS, a free and open source geographic information platform. First released in 2009, QGIS is compatible with Linux, Unix, Mac OSX, Windows and Android and allows users to create, edit, visualize, analyze, and publish geospatial information.

To help community leaders who want to use this less expensive GIS option, the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Geospatial Technology Program will be offering a one-day Essentials of

QGIS 3.x workshop. The workshop is open to anyone who is interested in learning about QGIS and the cost is \$80 per person. The first offering will be on April 25 in Ames. Those with questions about the QGIS course should contact Bailey Hanson at bahanson@iastate.edu.

In addition to QGIS workshops, the Geospatial Technology Program continues to offer the two-day Essentials of ArcGIS 10.6 course. [Additional information is available on the Geospatial Technology Program website \(www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/gis/courses\)](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/gis/courses). Those with questions about the ArcGIS course should contact Bailey Hanson at bahanson@iastate.edu or Nora Ladjahasan at naiding@iastate.edu.

The 2019 GIS workshop schedule is as follows:

- April 11–12: The Essentials of ArcGIS
- April 25: The Essentials of QGIS
- August 22–23: The Essentials of ArcGIS
- October 10–11: The Essentials of ArcGIS

[Registration for the GIS workshops has moved to an all online system and can be accessed at our website \(www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/gis/courses\)](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/gis/courses).

Those with questions regarding the online registration process, the website, or payment, contact registrations@iastate.edu.

HENRY AND LEE COUNTIES BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY WITH LEADING COMMUNITIES

By Brian Perry / Community Development Specialist

During Iowa State University Vice President for Extension and Outreach John Lawrence's 2018 statewide listening sessions, local leadership was often identified by Iowans as an issue impacting the ability of a region to thrive. This was followed by the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative which, in its initial recommendations, listed leadership as one of three key themes. In summary, it will take strong local leadership to create sustainable Iowa communities.

To assist Iowa communities in building their leadership capacity, ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development created a new community leadership program. Leading Communities: A Place-based Leadership Program is designed to help residents develop, increase, and sustain the local leadership efforts that are necessary to address community issues. A highly interactive and hands-on program, Leading Communities is taught over six sessions with each session covering a key competency for promoting community leadership and engagement:

- Understanding your community
- Identifying local issues and opportunities
- Making community decisions
- Building social capital for community development
- Working together effectively
- Making it happen—mobilizing resources for community action

This fall, Lee and Henry Counties have jump-started their process of building community leadership capacity. Both counties are currently involved in the Leading Communities program, which is being delivered by CED specialists Eric Christianson, Himar Hernández, Shelley Oltmans, Brian Perry and Jon Wolseth. To date, participants have completed three of the six sessions and are already seeing their communities from new perspectives.

"The importance of putting the community into response planning and pre-identifying community assets helps reflect on your position in the community in a broader perspective." – Henry County participant.

"I enjoyed the community leadership 'big picture' exercise. It was interesting to listen to my group and all the different opinions and perspectives. There were things discussed at the group level that I wouldn't have considered." – Lee County participant.

In Session One, participants learned about community- or place-based leadership development and how it differs from individual leadership development skills. Using the ISU Extension and Outreach Indicators Portal, they also developed a better understanding of their communities.

Finally, participants began developing a map or inventory of the assets and strengths of their towns that can be used for addressing local issues.

"There is more of a need for quantitative data than most people seem to realize or utilize. Today we learned how we could use these resources more efficiently." —Lee County participant.



The Leading Communities curriculum is highly interactive and hands-on.

"We should allow the data to speak for itself and not make any assumptions from what we don't know. It helps to identify areas of need, concern, and ways to course correct them." —Henry County participant. The asset maps were put to immediate use in Henry County.

Participants worked in small and large groups in Session Two, using a thought-provoking and entertaining root-cause analysis process to identify community issues, reframe concerns as opportunities to begin the process of identifying possible solutions, and understand what kind of issues can and cannot be addressed at the community level.

In Session Three, participants in both counties began collaborative processes of developing visions of what they would like



CED specialist Himar Hernández facilitates Leading Communities for participants in Henry County.

VP FOR EXTENSION AND OUTREACH OFFERS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TO COUNTIES TO PARTICIPATE IN LEADING COMMUNITIES

By Brian Perry / Community Development Specialist

Counties interested in boosting their local leadership capacity now have the opportunity to do so at a reduced cost thanks to Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

The initiative, sponsored by ISU Extension and Outreach vice president John Lawrence, is in response to listening sessions conducted in 2018 throughout the state, during which local leadership emerged as a key factor affecting communities' ability to thrive.

Leading Communities: A Place-based Leadership Program is an Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) program designed to help residents develop, increase, and sustain the local leadership efforts that are necessary to address community issues. The research based instructional materials are organized so that participants will learn core competencies and skills associated with community leadership to meet the particular needs of their communities ([see article on page 6](#)).

The program is taught in six sessions, each lasting three hours. Sessions are designed to provide participants with skills to bring community members together to create change for the good of the community. Educational materials are learner centered and structured to create a more collaborative learning environment that actively involves participants in the learning process. Program evaluation strategies are embedded into each session.

Benefits to communities and county extension offices of participating in Leading Communities include:

- Increasing the visibility of county extension offices
- Connecting county offices to diverse stakeholders and strengthening Extension's presence in community networks
- Building a better understanding of local issues for thoughtful local decision making
- Building local capacity for enhancing quality of life and community development

- Motivating community members to be more involved in their communities and Extension

Taught by CED specialists, the standard fee for program delivery is \$8,000 for six sessions. Fees cover travel, materials, and the other costs of program delivery. A partial grant of \$2,000 is available from the Office of the Vice President for Extension and Outreach under the following conditions:

- Counties will apply to CED for these funds by completing an application form (see below for questions or application).
- The County Extension Council will match a \$2,000 stipend from the Vice President of Extension and Outreach with an equal or greater contribution.
- The county director (other equivalent position) and at least one County Extension Council member will participate in the program.
- The county director will assist CED and local partners in the participant application and program planning processes (for example, recruiting, logistics, reminders, set up) and continue to participate in or contribute to local community networks after the conclusion of the program.

Leading Communities is a new program but ISU Extension and Outreach is already seeing results. As one participant from Lee County stated "Leading Communities was excellent! There were many learning tools provided and I worked with a great team on a community project."

For more information or to receive an application contact Brian Perry at bmperry@iastate.edu or 501-772-8988.



Participants identify and rank opportunities during the Leading Communities process.

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their communities to look like in the future. Most commented on the importance of knowing a destination before planning how to get there.

"I enjoyed turning concerns into opportunities. It was challenging, making me think about ways to be part of a solution rather than complain about a problem!" —Lee County participant.

"I loved learning techniques on facilitation. I thought the different ways given can help in the workplace and everyday life." — Henry County participant.

After three sessions of Leading Communities, participants have learned how to identify and begin working on community issues and to start the planning process for improvement. During the next three sessions, participants will learn more about the social relationships and processes necessary for bringing residents together for the good of their communities. CED is excited about playing an important role in engaging Iowans in enhancing and sustaining strong leadership in their communities. In the next issue of *Community Matters*, we will report back as Henry and Lee Counties progress through the last half of Leading Communities.

For more information on the Leading Communities program contact Brian Perry at bmperry@iastate.edu.

SARA SHONROCK BRINGS HOUSING EXPERTISE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMING

By Sandra Oberbroeckling / Extension Program Specialist

For more than 40 years, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Office of State and Local Government Programs (OSLGP) has partnered with the Iowa League of Cities to offer the Municipal Professionals Institute (MPI) to city clerks, administrators, and finance officers from throughout the state of Iowa.

The partnership has continued to evolve over the years; highlights include the development of the Municipal Professionals Academy (MPA), which provides additional continuing education, and the creation of a shared director position with OSLGP and the League in order to increase programming and expand MPI/MPAs overall reach. For more than seven years, that position was held by Cindy Kendall, who retired at the end of October 2018.

The latest evolution in the collaboration between ISU Extension and Outreach and the League of Cities in the appointment of Sara Shonrock as MPI/MPA director in January 2019. Shonrock brings a different skill set to the position, with a background in community development and housing.

The timing for this change couldn't be better: on July 18, 2018, by executive order, Governor Kim Reynolds created the Investing in Rural Iowa Task Force to address the rural housing shortage in Iowa.

"I think [my knowledge of housing and financing] will be able to be incorporated into assisting people with local

government. When they are looking for information on [housing] issues, I'll really have that background and that knowledge," Shonrock said.

Prior to coming to ISU, Shonrock worked as a community development coordinator for the City of Plymouth, Minnesota, where she worked extensively on housing issues, assisting with the city's comprehensive housing plan and administering the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. From 2014 to 2016, she worked for the State of Minnesota Housing Finance Agency as a program manager, providing budget analysis and recommendations for an \$8.6 million state-funded program.

An Ames native, Shonrock earned her undergraduate in liberal studies from ISU in 2006. She earned a master of public policy from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities in December 2014.

"When I moved to Minnesota, I was working for a local real estate company," she said. "I started getting interested in some of the development stuff that was going on with my real estate agents and realized that it was maybe more the public sector that was interesting to me, and trying to figure out how development worked from the public side."

Her interest in housing developed from spending time helping her father, who worked as a contractor in Ames.



"I had always been around housing, and it sort of morphed into working with policy and working with lower-income housing. That was where I started to get into working with state grants and loans and federal grants, and learning all of the programs that have to do with community development housing issues," she said.

Shonrock was attracted to the position with ISU because not only did it allow her to move back to her hometown, but it offers new opportunities.

"It [is] this perfect mix...it [is] a really good stepping stone to be able to use new skills and being able to do new things," she said.

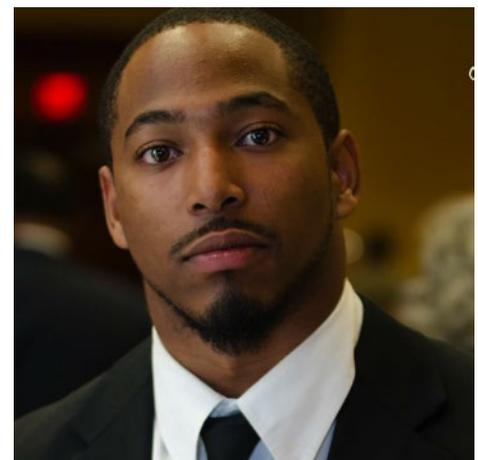
MIDDLEBROOKS RECEIVES 'HIDDEN FIGURE' AWARD DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

On Monday, February 25, Kameron Middlebrooks, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach community development specialist, received one of four "Hidden Figure" awards as part of Wells Fargo's Annual Black History Month Celebration Day at the Iowa State Capitol.

Middlebrooks, who is also president of the Des Moines NAACP branch, works with African and African-American small businesses and nonprofits, building strategic partnerships and helping identify areas of collaboration that can help businesses and organizations thrive in Iowa's urban communities.

According to Jerrica Marshall, diversity and inclusion chair at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Middlebrooks was selected because he is "someone who has been making a major impact in our community." He was nominated and selected by the Iowa House of Representatives "as a new, up-and-coming leader."

The event featured comments from Governor Kim Reynolds, Black Caucus members, and the Speaker of the Iowa House. Representatives from various nonprofit and community organizations geared toward supporting the black and African emigrant communities across the state were also in attendance.



ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH eACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVE PROVIDES ACCESS FOR ALL

By Sandra Oberbroeckling / Extension Program Specialist

More and more people get the information they need from the internet, whether via computer, tablet, or smartphone. Virtually gone are the days when a client goes to their county extension office to pick up that brochure on how to eradicate gypsy moths.

Some individuals in search of information online have a cognitive or physical disability. In fact, 11.3% of Iowans reported having a disability, according to a 2018 report by the State Data Center of Iowa and the Office of Persons with Disabilities.

In small print on all Iowa State University Extension and Outreach educational materials is a nondiscrimination statement informing the public that ISU Extension and Outreach "...does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, pregnancy, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or status as a US veteran, or other protected classes."

In the spirit of this statement, ISU Extension and Outreach is currently working to make digital content accessible to all. Digital accessibility refers to the

inclusive practice of removing barriers that prevent interaction with, or access to digital content by people with disabilities.

"ISU Extension and Outreach is committed to equal opportunity and equal access to our programs and activities for all Iowans. We're working on this eAccessibility Initiative to make sure our digital materials can be easily navigated and understood by everyone, including those who have visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive disabilities. We want everyone to be able to benefit from the educational resources available from our websites, mobile apps, and electronic documents," said John Lawrence, vice president for ISU Extension and Outreach.

ISU Extension and Outreach delivers educational materials digitally in a variety of ways, including websites, Learning Management Systems (software that allows users to create, manage and deliver eLearning courses), publications, PDF files, PowerPoint presentations, MS Word documents, webinars and live events, and videos. Annual downloads from the online Extension Store alone exceed 2 million.

To manage the incredible volume of material to be made accessible, the ISU Extension and Outreach eAccessibility Initiative is divided into four phases, including training individuals who submit publications to the online Extension Store, training individuals who generate online content using InDesign and/or Adobe Acrobat software, training for all Extension and Outreach employees, and remediation of past materials that are shared online.

In addition to being "the right thing to do," The ISU Extension and Outreach eAccessibility Initiative follows the Iowa Board of Regents policy on accessibility, as well as ISU's strategic plan goal to "enhance and cultivate the ISU Experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued by the university and each other."

Furthermore, three federal statutes combine to require that all electronic information distributed by colleges and universities be accessible to persons with disabilities: Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1990, and the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

The ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development program has been participating in eAccessibility and we are proud to note that this newsletter is accessible to all.

continued from P04

management, and community food systems assessment.

The certification programs pilot began in February 2018, with Local Food Leader certification training in North Carolina and Texas and Community Food Systems certification training in North Carolina, Kentucky, Texas, and Georgia. A total of 92 people attended one or both of the trainings in 2018.

[More information about the CFS program is available on the website \(https://www.extension.iastate.edu/localfoods/community-food-systems-program/\).](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/localfoods/community-food-systems-program/)

Those interested in either the Local Food Leader certification or Community Food Systems Program certification can contact Kaley Hohenshell at 515-745-2401 or kaleyh@iastate.edu.

CIVIL RIGHTS SYMPOSIUM TO BE HELD IN DES MOINES

By Kameron Middlebrooks / Community Development Specialist

On March 20, 2019, the Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Commission will hold its 33rd annual symposium. Last year's symposium, "Blueprint to Building Community," had 700 attendees from across Iowa, making it the largest audience and impact in the symposium's 32-year history.

The theme for the 33rd Annual Des Moines Civil and Human Rights Symposium is "Move Passion to Progress." This theme highlights the symposium goal of helping people move beyond emotions towards tangible, substantive community progress. At the symposium, attendees will learn:

- Where they are starting from on their progress journey,
- How to map a route to their destination,
- How to go the distance despite hurdles and challenges, and

- How to pass the baton to future generations and fellow teammates.

To achieve progress, communities must move with the proper toolkit and mindset. The symposium is organized into four tracks addressing progress based on that belief: Economic Progress, Political Progress, Social Progress, and Judicial Progress.

The symposium will feature national speakers Richard Edmond Vargas (subject of the CNN documentary, The Feminist in Cell Block Y), and Linda Sarsour (cofounder of the Women's March) to motivate attendees to move beyond just being passionate and moving their communities towards progress.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach community development specialist Kameron Middlebrooks is the chair of the Des Moines Human Rights Commission.

EXTENSION CED NOW OFFERING DATA LITERACY WORKSHOPS

By Sandra Burke / Assistant Scientist III

In recent years, more and more information and news come to communities, leaders, and consumers in the form of numeric or graphic data. It is essential that Iowa's communities, leaders, and residents be able to use these data to make educated and wise decisions on critical issues and policies.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) is now offering data literacy workshops to help Iowans learn the skills needed to understand, visualize, interpret, and practice with data relevant to communities, organizations, and counties.

The data literacy workshops can include a wide variety of topics, reviews of the data included in the *Data for Decision Makers* profiles, or an in-depth look at selected measures, indicators, and trends.

The workshops can also provide participants with knowledge and skills to discuss data and bridge to applications and decision making with the data.

The specific topics and modules to be included in any given workshop will be decided in conjunction with the client group and their interests and preferences and will be two to three hours in length.

Topics and modules will be highly interactive with activities and group discussions to engage and enhance learning and understanding by the participants. Examples of topics and modules include:

- "Walk-through" ISU Extension's Data for Decision Makers: county, city, legislative districts
- "Walk-through" the Health Data for Decision Makers: county health profile reports
- Examine trends and compare and contrast among counties and cities
- Making and interpreting graphs and other visuals
- Mapping concepts along with access to ISU Extension's Indicators Portal mapping capabilities
- Using and understanding the American Community Survey
- Using and understanding concepts such as sampling for surveys, margins of error, mean and median
- Indicators and trends for race and Hispanic origin
- Indicators and measures for income and poverty, adjustment for inflation
- Population trends including age, income, households, immigration, and English-language learners
- The data behind the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings and Road Maps

Groups or communities interested in these workshops can contact Sandra Burke at 515-294-9307 or scburke@iastate.edu.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR INTRO TO PLANNING AND ZONING WORKSHOPS

As land use issues and the techniques used to address them become more complex, it is critical that local officials and community leaders understand the local planning and zoning process.

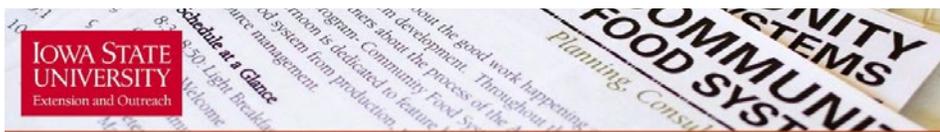
Introduction to Planning and Zoning for Local Officials is a three-hour workshop designed to introduce the basic principles of land use planning and development management to elected officials, planning and zoning officials, and board of adjustment members without formal training in the subjects. Using case scenarios in a highly-interactive format, the workshop highlights issues frequently faced in the land use process.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development offers the workshop annually in several locations across the state. Locations change from year-to-year so that city and county officials are able to attend a location near them at least once every two years. The 2019 dates and locations are:

- April 16: Fort Dodge
- April 18: Waterloo
- April 23: Johnston
- April 25: Council Bluffs
- May 2: Dubuque
- May 9: Fairfield
- May 14: Davenport

All workshops begin with registration and a light supper at 5:30 p.m. The program begins at 6:00 p.m. and concludes by 8:45 p.m. Registration is \$65 per individual, or \$55 per person if a city or county registers five or more officials to attend. The fee covers the workshop instruction, workshop materials, and supper.

[Registrations are taken online. For more information and to register visit the blog \(http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ\)](http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ) and click on the "Intro to Planning and Zoning" tab at the top of the page. Those with questions regarding the workshops can contact Eric Christianson at 515-231-6513 or ejchr@iastate.edu.



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EXTENSION CED CONTINUES TO OFFER INNOVATIVE SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT METHODS

By Victor Oyervides and Steve Adams / Community Development Specialists

Small business development is one of the many services provided by the Local Economies team in the Community and Economic Development (CED) program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

In 2018, CED specialists were recognized by the university, earning an ISU Extension and Outreach award for powerful partnerships for the Shop Healthy Iowa Initiative and a university-wide award for achievement in economic development for their work with Latino business owners and entrepreneurs (see volume 10, issues 1 and 2 of this newsletter for more information).

Rather than rest on their laurels, CED specialists continue to pursue innovative ways to help small businesses and entrepreneurs realize their goals.

For example, eight specialists formed the Small Business Development for Immigrants team, in which they collaborate on a case-by-case basis with immigrant business owners and entrepreneurs.

Five members of the team are bilingual in English/Spanish and have worked extensively in Latino communities statewide, and one team member specializes in African and African-American business and nonprofit assistance.

The team is comprised of Himar Hernández (Ottumwa), Jill Sokness (Sioux City), Jon Wolseth (Ames), Kameron Middlebrooks (Des Moines), Lisa Bates (Ames), Scott Timm (Decorah), Steve Adams (Red Oak), and Victor Oyervides (Ames and Muscatine).

The first successful collaborative activity of this team was CED presence at the 11th Annual Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit on November 17, 2018, at the Des Moines Area Community College Campus in Ankeny.

The Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit aims to strengthen immigrant businesses of all backgrounds through professional resources and fostering mutual collaboration. More than 900 entrepreneurs gathered to network and learn small business skills.

Another business development project is the recently rebooted Iowa Retail



CED specialist Victor Oyervides engages with entrepreneurs during the Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit at the Des Moines Area Community College Campus in Ankeny.

Initiative (IRI), which CED is piloting in the town of Lennox and in Wright County, led by extension specialist Lisa Bates and program coordinator Susan Erickson. In January, Adams, Oyervides, and Wolseth joined Bates and Erickson in conducting an IRI Champions workshop in Lennox. The Champions workshop provides training and resources to community decision makers and retail supporters, such as chambers of commerce and economic development organizations (volume 10, issue 2 of this newsletter provides more information about the IRI project).

The latest endeavor by CED specialists Adams and Oyervides is the production of a guidebook for the Business Model Canvas, a strategic management tool created by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs.

At its most basic level, it is a canvas divided into nine individual rectangles representing the building blocks of all small business and nonprofit: 1. Customer Segments, 2. Value Propositions, 3. Channels, 4. Customer Relationships, 5. Revenue Streams, 6. Key Resources, 7. Key Activities, 8. Key Partnerships, and 9. Cost Structure.

On the Business Model Canvas, an entrepreneur will organize, analyze, adjust, and implement premises on a feasible

business concept. The nine building blocks will guide a person on the pathway to understanding how their business concept will create value for value in return (money).

Adams and Oyervides chose to use the Business Model Canvas because it is a simplified, visual, open-source tool that is a user-friendly, hands-on, and step-by-step guide. The canvas can be printed out on a large surface so groups of people can jointly start sketching and discussing business-model elements with Post-it notes or board markers.

It is a hands-on tool that fosters understanding, discussion, creativity, and analysis. Engage the tool once, and you will be enticed to continue utilizing on all different business ideas or management projects.

Adams, Middlebrooks and Oyervides facilitated a train-the-trainer workshop in January for eight of their CED colleagues.

Organizations or businesses interested in learning how their team can utilize the Business Model Canvas can contact Steve Adams at 712-309-1830 or stadams@iastate.edu, or Victor Oyervides at 319-321-9623 or oyervide@iastate.edu.

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