IOWA EXTENSION COUNCIL ASSOCIATION
YEAR IN REVIEW

2022-2023

Engaging Councils Key Goal for FY23

IECA sought opportunities for councils to provide input, voice their needs, learn from one another, and tell their stories.

As a result of working on our IECA Action Plan for 2022-2025, the activities of the association focused on providing opportunities for council members to engage more fully in their role with ISU Extension and Outreach.

In the fall, IECA launched a member benefits survey to learn more about the current benefits that are valued by councils, new benefits they may be interested in, and their concerns. Survey results will inform IECA's work as we continue to work to serve the needs of councils.

IECA ensured that Extension council members played a key role in crafting an updated memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Iowa State University and extension districts. They were also represented on the Vice President for Extension and Outreach search committee.

The association also helped facilitate council members engaging with one another through both virtual and in-person trainings offered this year. We continue to look for opportunities to help councils share ideas with one another and with Extension and Outreach administration. This cross-pollination of ideas helps improve our systems to better meet the needs of Iowans.

The legislative breakfast in March was an opportunity for council members to share Extension and Outreach's impacts with legislators, helping them to understand the public value of our work.

Read on for more details of these council engagement activites.

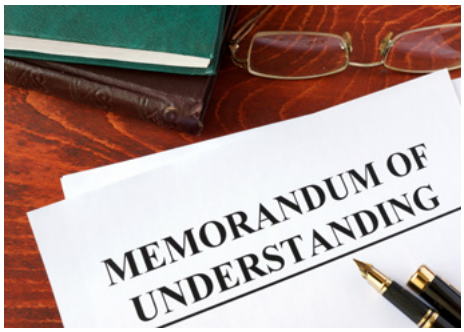
2022-2023 Board of Directors

Region 1 - Ryan Freese, O'Brien
Region 2 - Roberta Hersom, Palo Alto
Region 3 - Mary Greiman, Hancock
Region 4 - Sterling Young, Cerro Gordo
Region 5 - Sara Neuzil, Winneshiek
Region 6 - Al Ralston, Woodbury
Region 7 - Mollie Scott, Sac
Region 8 - Le Ann Lawler, Webster
Region 9 - Tyler Heeren, Marshall
Region 10 & 28 - Bruce Clark, Black Hawk
Region 11 - Megan Fagle, Linn
Region 12 - Kelly Jared, Delaware
Region 13 - Gwen Hanson, Shelby
Region 14 - Kim Rinker, Boone
Regions 15-16-17 - Kasey Peters, Polk
Region 18 - Dr. Joy Prothero, Mahaska
Region 19 - Jenny Lichty, Johnson
Region 20 - Tom Monroe, Scott
Region 21 - Connie Casson, West Pottawattamie
Region 22 - Jamie Thompson, Mills
Region 23 - Dan Lamgo, Adams
Region 24 - Mark Davitt, Warren
Region 25 - Phillip Masters, Lucas
Region 26 - Chrissy Westercamp, Van Buren
Region 27 - Paul Gieselman, Louisa

www.iaextensioncouncils.org

Memorandum of Understanding Renewed

Extension councils were well-represented on the Memorandum of Understanding Renewal Committee.



Over the course of six months, the MOU Renewal Committee reviewed the previous agreement and recommended changes for the new MOU which is effective July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026. The revised MOU clarifies the roles of councils, the regional director, and the Model 3 county director. Items of note in the new MOU are an updated Shared Services Support Fee structure and supervision responsibilities. IECA board members Jamie Thompson (Mills Co.) and Tom Monroe (Scott Co.) served on the committee as well as council members Mary Beth DeWall, Lori Donahoe, Dennis Goering, and Paige Grandgeorge.

IECA Member Benefits Survey Yields Insight

In the fall of 2022, IECA asked each county extension council to take a few minutes out of their meeting to answer questions related to which IECA membership benefits they value and what ideas they might have for additional benefits that the association could provide. Additionally, IECA asked them to reflect upon their significant impacts from the last year, the challenges they face, and why they were motivated to serve on the extension council.

Overall, we found that councils appreciate the benefits that IECA offers. They had some ideas for group purchasing and a few additional ideas for potential new benefits that IECA might be able to offer. The board of directors will be looking at both of these questions to see where we can continue our service to council members.

Council members shared their successes from the last year. A sense of pride is evident in their accomplishments. Similarly, reading their list of challenges can also elicit strong emotions. Some of their challenges are beyond the scope of what IECA is able to impact, but others inspire the to work with Extension and Outreach administration to find solutions.

View the benefits survey reports at www.iaextensioncouncils.org/benefits-membership.

Councils Continue to Benefit from Legal Counsel

Extension Districts continue to encounter issues that are exclusive to the complex roles that extension councils balance.

During this fiscal year alone, IECA provided the member benefit of complimentary legal services to 33 counties navigating tricky situations ranging from personnel issues to real estate to partnership agreements. Whitfield and Eddy suggested changes and approved the final draft Memorandum of Understanding between extension districts and Iowa State University.

Whitfield and Eddy attorney Kay Oskvig provided a free webinar Best Practices for Personnel Committees and Personnel Records and also presented a breakout

session at the March 2023 Extension Council Conference overviewing the most common issues facing extension districts.

The hourly rate for legal services increased from $205 to $250 per hour this year.

IECA Shares Best Practices

IECA strives to keep councils informed of their legal obligations as well as protect their best interests in policy development. Best practices were shared in the following trainings. Most are recorded and can be found on the IECA website under the *Council Training* tab.

Best Practices for Personnel Committees and Personnel Records

Kay Oskvig, Whitfield & Eddy Law outlined the requirements for personnel records and shared ways that personnel committees can handle the most common issues and needs.

What Every Council Member Needs to know about 4-H

In a 2-part series, Jen Hargrove, State 4-H Program Specialist provided an overview of the two most common youth programs (4-H clubs and K-12 outreach) and how extension councils can support the youth development efforts in their county.

Extension Council Conference

Over 130 council members and staff attended this year's conference, which was was held virtually on two evenings. Each session included a keynote address, an optional networking opportunity, and breakout sessions. The fifteen breakout sessions are recorded and posted on the IECA website.

> I apprecated the ability to learn from other council members and hear what they are doing.
>
> - Council Conference Attendee

The Next Step in Civil Rights: Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity

Regenea Hurte, ISU Extension and Outreach administration; shared how councils and extension district staff can reach underserved audiences and reach all Iowans.

New Council Orientation

Held following the 2022 council elections, the orienation provided a targeted overview of extension council member responsibilities.

Fiscal Training for Council Chairs and Treasurers

Sixty council members attended fiscal training at six sites across the state. They discussed extension district finances and the specific duties of a treasurer or council chair. Hands-on exercises helped attendees read monthly financial reports, determine budget health, and review vouchers. Sessions were hosted by IECA Executive Director Jennifer Vit and taught by regional directors, directors of field operations, and Assistant Vice President Andrea Welchans.

Councils Represented in VP Search Process

After the announcement of Vice President for Extension and Outreach John Lawrence's retirement, ISU leaders quickly assembled a search committee to find our next vice president.

IECA board member Bruce Clark (Black Hawk Co.) and council member Rich Degner (Polk Co.) reviewed candidate resumes, participated in interviews, and recommended their first choice to Provost Jonathan Wickert.

Executive Director Jennifer Vit and other council members took part in the on-campus interview for each finalist with an exclusive interview to gauge each candidate's compatibility to represent council needs.

We appreciate the extra effort of our council members to find the right person to lead ISU Extension and Outreach. Jason Henderson was named the new vice president for extension and outreach and began his term in April 2023.

Employee Assistance Program

97	386	8%
counties	employees	usage rate*

* This is double the state average

Finances

The association is in a good financial position. The IECA board adopted a balanced budget allocating dollars to legislative efforts, education and training, legal services, and communication. The July 1, 2022, membership dues increase has allowed the association to keep up with increased legal service expenses. The board will continue to monitor the strong financial base to provide valuable benefits to IECA members.

Below is a summary of IECA's Income and Expenses for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23).

Category Description		7/1/2022-6/30/23
INCOME		
Membership Dues	$	33,240.00
EAP Payment	$	9,575.00
Extension Council Conf.	$	-
TOTAL INCOME	**$**	**42,815.00**
EXPENSES		
General		
Bank Charges	$	22.65
Copies		435.55
Misc.		125.00
Office Supplies		100.97
Postage		291.54
Travel		5,287.98
Insurance		-
Meeting Supplies		70.98
Meeting Rooms		754.81
TOTAL General	**$**	**7,089.48**
Comm. & Networking		
Communications		848.12
Marketing/Promotions		37.04
TOTAL Comm & Networking	**$**	**885.16**
Human Resources & Member Services		
Council Conference	$	3,452.09
Council Training		-
EAP		8,985.60
Legal Services		14,295.00
Member Support		-
TOTAL Human Resources & Member Services	**$**	**26,732.69**
Finance, Policy, & Legislation		
Legislative Contacts	$	887.48
TOTAL Finance, Policy, & Legislation	**$**	**887.48**
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$**	**35,594.81**
OVERALL TOTAL	**$**	**7,220.19**

Legislative Breakfast Highlights Accomplishments and Funding

Extension council members and staff met with legislators at the Capitol in March

The 2023 Iowa legislative session had a few issues that affected extension districts, most notably changes in property tax calculations. IECA monitored the proposed legislation and shared the impacts with county extension councils.

IECA transitioned our legislative efforts this year by hosting a legislative breakfast at the Capitol during the Iowa legislative session. Over the past several years, the board of directors noted that there was minimal direct impact for extension councils at past legislative events that partnered with Iowa 4-H. The IECA Finance/Policy/Legislation Committee developed a foundational event that capitalized on our 100-county campus to invite legislators to the February 15 breakfast. Extension council members across the state were asked to personally invite their legislator(s). At the breakfast, approximately 60 senators and representatives were presented with stakeholder reports and financial data for each county in their legislative district. Of course the hot coffee and breakfast burritos were a big hit as well! The goal of this first breakfast was to make connections, familiarize attendees with Extension and Outreach, and begin to lay the groundwork to educate about how Extension and Outreach is funded. Plans are already underway for a breakfast at the Capitol in February 2024.