



Year in Review 2021 - 2022



From the Executive Director

The hallmark of FY22 was identification of the Iowa Extension Council Association Action Plan, the guidepost that will direct the work of the association for the next three years. The action plan has one goal: to enhance the engagement of local extension councils.

For the next three years, the action plan will be the basis of every decision the board of directors makes. It will inform all board activities from funding decisions to event plans to the selection of presentation topics for both our extension council conference and our training offerings throughout the year.

I encourage you to take a look at the IECA Action Plan included on the back page of this publication. IECA wants to meet your needs both as a council and as an individual council member. Contact your region's IECA board member to let them know what your needs are. We'll work to find solutions.

We look forward to providing new opportunities for you in the next three years.

Jennifer Vit, Executive Director
Iowa Extension Council Association

2021-2022 Board of Directors

- Region 1 - Ryan Freese, O'Brien
- Region 2 - Roberta Hersom, Palo Alto
- Region 3 - Mary Greiman, Hancock
- Region 4 - Linda Schluter, 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 - Bruce Clark, Black Hawk
- Region 11 - Sara Pinckney, Jones
- Region 12 - Kelly Jared, Delaware
- Region 13 - Gwen Hanson, Shelby
- Region 14 - Kim Rinker, Boone
- Regions 15-16-17 - Melissa McEnany, Story
- Region 18 - Dr. Joy Prothero, Mahaska
- Region 19 - Brent Ness, Iowa
- Region 20 - Michael Ryan, Scott
- Region 21 - Connie Casson, West Pottawattamie
- Region 22 - Jamie Thompson, Mills
- Region 23 - Jamie David, Taylor
- Region 24 - Mark Davitt, Warren
- Region 25 - Alyson Palmer, Lucas
- Region 26 - Chrissy Westercamp, Van Buren
- Region 27 - Paul Gieselman, Louisa

Action Plan Developed to Guide IECA into the Future



During the pandemic, a few IECA board members began thinking about how IECA could best meet the needs of extension council members. Fast forward through some brainstorming and decision-making and the desire to create an action plan (a strategic plan) was pursued.

Through support from the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach County Services unit, the IECA Board of Directors met in November of 2021 for a day-long action planning session facilitated by Nancy Franz PhD., a retired

ISU Extension and Outreach staffperson.

The board wrestled with the question of “*Imagine we have full engaged county extension councils; what should IECA do by 2025 to enhance this engagement?*” At the end of the process, the board identified an action plan consisting of goals, anticipated outcomes, and strategies that will guide the board and committees.

The action plan strives to increase participation at IECA events, increase awareness and use of benefits, clarify roles, increase networking, and enhance our online resources. The IECA Board of Directors will continue to provide resources and education to make the job of an extension council member easier. The goal of the action plan is to improve the effectiveness of local councils and thereby creating a stronger Iowa.

Watch for more information about the strategies IECA is implementing in order to achieve our goals. As we move through the next three years of the plan, please reach out to your region’s board member if you have suggestions or needs of how IECA can increase the effectiveness of your extension council.

Councils Helped through Access to Legal Services

Of the member benefits offered to counties from IECA, the access to the legal services of Whitfield & Eddy Law is among the most valuable. Iowa Extension Council Association members receive one hour of legal services every six months (Jan-June and July-Dec) as a benefit of IECA membership. In FY22 alone, Whitfield & Eddy provided over 200 hours of legal service to county extension councils.

Whitfield & Eddy attorney Kay Oskvig, the primary contact that works with extension councils, also shared her expertise through four training opportunities. Oskvig presented two sessions at the Extension Council Conference in March in Ames, presented at the Southeast Area Human Resources Professional Development Day in May, and presented a zoom training in July about personnel committees and personnel records.



Extension Council and 4-H Members Engage with Leaders at Legislative Insider

The Iowa Extension Council Association partnered with Iowa 4-H to host the Iowa Legislative Insider in February.

This was an opportunity for both extension council and 4-H members and 4-H’ers to make connections with Iowa legislators and educate them about the programs Iowa State University Extension and Outreach provides in their communities.

Iowa Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg addressed attendees and shared ways that ISU Extension and Outreach recovery initiatives meshed with State of Iowa efforts. 4-H members learned about the legislative process.



Training Opportunities Enhanced for Council Members and Staff

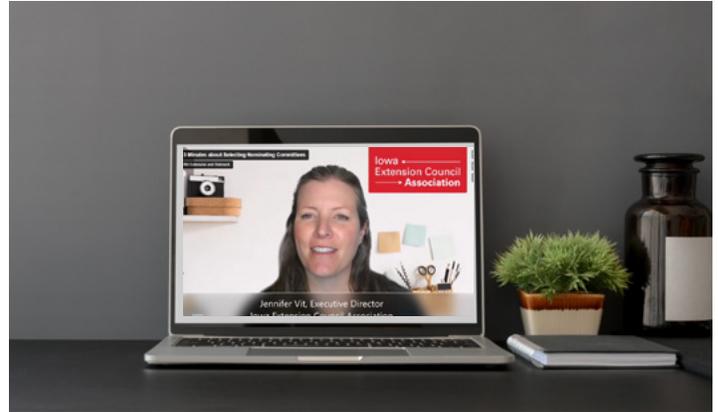
Being an extension council member encompasses a wide range of duties, along with the need for knowledge to help you accomplish your responsibilities. IECA has been working to build up a library of resources for council members to help meet this need.

This past year we launched a new 3-Minutes Video series. These videos contain brief, focused information that can be viewed at a council meeting or on your phone or tablet when you have a quick break in the day. To date, this series has focused on timely topics - such as background screening, the extension budget cycle and council nominating committees - in a more consumable format for busy council members.

IECA has also prioritized providing interactive opportunities to increase your knowledge as a council member. We were pleased to be able to offer the following webinars this past year in the evening hours to allow council members to view the live presentations and ask questions of the presenters:

- *Best Practices for Personnel Committees and Personnel Records*
- *Behavior & Rule Management for Fairs and Events*
- *Serving All Iowans*

Understanding that not all council members can be available during the live webinars, they have all been



recorded and are available to council members to view at their own convenience. This year IECA has also been able to offer some training opportunities for regional and county extension employees.

Four trainings about background screening processes were provided to help staff members better understand the need for background screening, the policies surrounding background screens, and the various roles and responsibilities assigned to different personnel.

Additionally, IECA Executive Director Jennifer Vit co-presented a Creating a Positive Work Environment workshop at the Extension Council Conference with Asst. Vice President for Extension and Outreach Andrea Nelson.

Have ideas for training? Drop them in the virtual suggestion box at iaextensioncouncils.org.

Find training resources at
iaextensioncouncils.org/council-training



Council Conference Delivers Quality Education and Engagement

The 2022 Extension Council Conference, *Meaningful Connections*, was held in Ames on March 5. Council members and staff enjoyed engaging with one another face-to-face for the first time since the pandemic.

Conference content included general sessions with an extension and outreach update and a discussion of the upcoming update of the Memorandum of Understanding. Sixteen breakout sessions were offered on topics ranging from Iowa Public Meetings law to creating partnerships in 4-H, engaging diversity in extension work, and county audits and financial controls.

Evaluations for the conference were very positive, "I've learned something at every conference. Getting to spend time with council members learning and getting to know each other better was really nice," said one participant.

All breakout sessions were recorded and can be found on the IECA website under the Council Training tab.

Iowa Extension Council Association Action Plan 2022-2025

THE QUESTION

Imagine we have fully engaged County Extension Councils, what should IECA do by 2025 to enhance this engagement?

GOAL

IECA has a broad set of benefits that are well-used by counties to improve services to their constituents.

GOAL

More council member involvement in IECA to improve county council effectiveness

GOAL

Improve effectiveness of local councils

OUTCOME

Increase participation at IECA events

OUTCOME

Increase awareness and use of IECA benefits

OUTCOME

Increase member benefits offerings

OUTCOME

Increase role clarity in county council membership

OUTCOME

Increase networking opportunities between counties

OUTCOME

Increase usage of online resources

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OUTCOMES

Extension Council Conference

- ✓ More time to network
- ✓ Visual cues to spark connection
 - Virtual hybrid options
 - Incentives: benefits vs door prizes

Legislative Day

- ✓ Ensure all IECA board members have a clear vision and details about legislative day
- ✓ More emails to council members
- ✓ Develop talking points for board members to share

Board Members Connecting with Council Members

- Talking points for board members to use when meetings with councils—focused topics

Awareness/Usage of Benefits

- ✓ 3-Minute video: Discussion of Benefits
 - Share success stories/promos with highlights of how our benefits help serve the needs of councils
 - Promote IECA staff

Identify New Benefits of Membership

- ✓ Needs assessment to identify council needs
 - Ask council members directly about their needs and solicit success stories of benefit usage

Networking for Councils

- Regional meetings
- Suggested agendas for regional meetings developed

Improve Council Role Clarity

- ✓ 3-minute video on importance of the nominating committee
 - 3-minute video on council member role
 - Provide links to resources

Enhance Online Resources for Council Members

- Include links to website on all online resources
- Partner with regional directors to train councils on resources available on the IECA website

✓ = strategies that have been employed

