



# NORTH CENTRAL REGION COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXTENSION IMPACT REPORT 2025



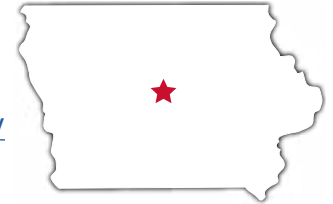
IOWA STATE  
UNIVERSITY



# IOWA

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach

Location: Ames, Iowa  
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/>



## IMPACT INDICATORS

**67,150**



**EDUCATIONAL  
CONTACTS**

**11,200**



Participants completed  
**SKILL DEVELOPMENT  
TRAINING**



**\$27.5  
MILLION**

**GRANTS & RESOURCES  
generated by communities**

Educational Contacts	67,150
Number of community or organizational plans/policies developed	65
Number of community or organizational plans/policies adopted or implemented	67
Number of volunteer hours for community generated work	3,100
Dollar value of organization and/or community-generated volunteer hours based on Independent Sector hr value	\$107,849
Dollar value of grants and resources leveraged/generated by communities	\$27,500,000
Number of participants completing skill development training programs offered through Community Development Extension	11,200
Dollar value of grants and other resources received by Community Development programs	\$776,000
Number of Community Development full-time equivalents (FTEs) — i.e., FTEs funded by Extension specifically for Community Development Extension programming.	30

\* for Rural Housing Readiness Assessment (RHRA) program only.

## IMPACT STATEMENTS

### ■ Iowa's Municipal Professionals Institute: Bridging the Knowledge Gap in Rural Iowa

The role of a city clerk or municipal professional is a crucial position in local government, yet it is increasingly demanding. In many of Iowa's rural communities, high staff turnover is a persistent challenge. When a seasoned clerk leaves, they often take decades of institutional knowledge with them.

The [Iowa Municipal Professionals Institute](#) (MPI) serves as an essential onboarding training for these local leaders. Designed to be accessible and comprehensive, the MPI offers approximately 30 unique courses annually through a hybrid model — utilizing two virtual sessions (February and October) and one intensive in-person session in Ames, Iowa each summer. The curriculum is meticulously designed to cover the full spectrum of municipal duty, from mastering the general ledger and auditing to understanding parliamentary procedures and risk management.

In 2025, the program demonstrated its immense reach by training 260 individuals, representing 98 out of Iowa's 99 counties. This near-total state coverage ensures that whether a community is a large metro or a small rural town, its leaders have access to the same high-quality, expert instruction.

The results from the 2025 cycle underscore the program's effectiveness:

- **Concept Mastery:** Participants achieved a 95% pass rate on all end-of-course assessments
- **Knowledge Shift:** The data shows a dramatic shift in confidence; on average, 62% of attendees transitioned from having "no knowledge" to feeling fully "knowledgeable" about their specific course subjects.
- **Professional Advancement:** 24% of attendees (61 participants) successfully earned their Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) designation through the Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association (IMFOA). And roughly 50% of those became certified reported receiving a salary increase or a contract extension.\*

By investing in these professionals, Iowa communities are improving the delivery of government services and enhancing the way local governments assist local residents.

\* Note: certification requires multiple criteria over a period of time; it is not expected that all participants become certified in a single year.



### ■ 2025 Planning & Zoning Program

Local land use decisions shape the future of every Iowa community — determining where homes are built, how businesses grow, and which natural resources are protected. Yet most local officials step into their roles with little or no formal education or training in the fundamentals of planning or zoning.

The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach [Planning & Zoning \(P&Z\) program](#) is designed and implemented to respond directly to this gap. This program provides a low cost, objective, and accessible introduction to the principles and practices of land use planning, zoning, and subdivision regulation. Participants learn the fundamentals of comprehensive planning, the structure and purpose of zoning ordinances, and the roles and responsibilities of local officials, including planning commissions, zoning boards of adjustment, zoning administrators, and elected representatives.



In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025, the P&Z program was offered ten times across ten Iowa counties, reaching 397 local officials. Participants represented communities of all sizes — rural towns, growing suburbs, and regional hubs — all seeking clarity, consistency, and confidence in their land use decision making.

Evaluation results of FFY 2025 participants demonstrate the program's strong impact:

- 89% of FFY 2025 participants improved their knowledge by at least one full point on a scale of 1-5 on average across all 14 P&Z concepts surveyed.
- Every topic area showed significant gains, with the largest improvements in:
  - Conflict of interest scenarios
  - Special/conditional use permits
  - Zoning amendments
- 60 participants reported having taken the P&Z training previously, returned to learn something new or reinforce their understanding.
  - Surveys indicated that over half of participants who had taken the training before could identify a specific change or action they had taken in their community or in their role because of the previous training session.