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# The Iowa County

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### ISAC's Mission:

To promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa.

### ISAC's Vision:

To be the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.

# feature - great HR

## Getting to Great in Human Resources (HR)

A successful local government – indeed, a successful civil society - is built on R-E-S-P-E-C-T for one another, dialogue rather than constant discord, listening thoughtfully rather than loud screaming, and searching for consensus on the best course of action. This can mean making progress even if personal ego does not always come out on top! It means having long-term visions of what could be and requiring innovative and thoughtful approaches to achieving these goals cost-effectively.

Local government is closest to the people whose lives are touched by the agencies action or inaction. It is the agent “on the ground” for delivering services effectively and performing with honor. It is also the place we are most likely to be able to change through grass roots political processes.

In this very complicated and sometimes hard to understand society we have inherited and further compounded by our own behaviors, we need great local government more than ever before. This is especially true when nature and our fellow humans have created serious trouble for us. Local government must be at its best when things are at their worst.

However, there cannot be great county, city, or school district governance without great HR. Without great Human Resources management practices the liabilities of a local government will grow continuously. The best employees will leave and the poorest behavior and weakest performance will dominate the reputation of the agency.

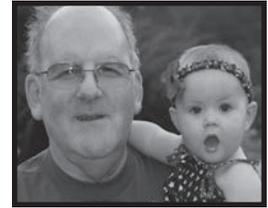
In this brief article the HR Doctor offers a few suggestions to provoke thought and actions to enhance local government HR.

Know first that HR does not only mean the department or division with the sign on the front door that reads “Human Resources.” In fact, every manager is an HR manager. You cannot be a successful engineer, sheriff, finance director, fire-rescue chief, school principal – or frankly any position in local government - without also understanding how HR liabilities can jump out at you and how you can act to mitigate, prevent, and enhance service.

The connection between great outcomes and great HR skills extends far beyond the borders of the government offices. Being a loving spouse, helping your children grow and develop, coming to be regarded as a great neighbor and community volunteer – these are all outcomes which require the sensitiv-

By: *Phil Rosenberg*

The HR Doctor



ity and practiced actions of human resources. In other words HR is, as Hawkeye Pierce once said on the great TV program M\*A\*S\*H, “... like the dictionary. It has all the other words and it!”

So, what does a local government need to make HR great? How can staff members take responsibility for having a great HR program? Here are the major requirements. Note that these requirements do not cost gigantic amounts of money. They are not complicated. They do require commitment, a sense of personal and professional responsibility, and accountability – no small challenge in our society and in organizations that crave excuse making and shifting or avoiding direct responsibility in many cases. A sense of humor helps too!

1. R-E-S-P-E-C-T is the foundation of great HR. Identifying who is affected by HR activities (i.e., who are the stakeholders?) is the start of improvements in this key area. Stakeholders in a government HR function include, for example, citizens who may apply for a job. This means designing the entire recruiting and selecting system based around respect for the customers’ time and expectations. An efficient system will utilize, but not overly depend on technology. It will ask every employee involved in recruiting and selecting to remember clearly the days when they too were unemployed or applying for their first job. They need to remember their own hopes and dreams as they applied for a promotion and imagined how that new job might allow them to finally get health insurance for their family or for their first home. They must, in short, treat others as they wanted to be treated themselves. The process has to be much more human than it often has and as free from annoying bureaucratic processes as possible.

Reviewing and enhancing the processes of recruiting and selecting represents a great first step in enhancing HR organization-wide. This can be done quite simply – conduct a facilitated workshop on process improvement involving the staff of the HR function as well as key users.

Within one day (yes, really one day!) the outcome can be the identification of process improvement opportunities and prioritizing those opportunities. Within a day thereafter (yes, again, within only one day!) an HR Business Plan can be drafted with specific accountability laid out for the achievement of milestones in the process improvement. This “how many by when” business plan can be presented to the elected

officials and the internal leaders of the organization for review and approval. Once that happens, HR process improvement is officially underway!

2. Every manager is not only an HR manager but also, unfortunately or not, a security manager. A thorough security review in the organization is very much a part of HR improvement. Once again, this is not a subject only for the HR department, but for every manager and every employee. In a great many private and public organizations, the security function has migrated from the law enforcement department or public works to HR. Security is no longer a matter of locks and keys, gates and fences, guard stations and ID cards. It goes way beyond that and enters the arena of “human logistics.” That is, understanding the interaction between human behavior and physical security activities. It involves behavioral assessments of applicants as well as developing rapid response “HR ER” capabilities within the organization. In the majority of cases, all of this can be managed and developed with internal resources. Certainly there is a strong role in security for law enforcement but generally law enforcement’s role is often reactive. That is, an incident is in progress or has already happened. The police, sheriff’s deputies, fire-rescue, etc. are called to the scene to apply their formidable skills to mitigate the damage which has already been done. As a former intelligence officer with experience in encountering terrorist behavior as well as a huge number of unfortunate incidents of employee behavior such as workplace violence, sexual harassment, accident and even employee death responses, the HR Doctor knows the great value of a Critical Incident Response Manager. Much more is needed to strengthen security at work and in the community than the ready and responsive law enforcement group. Once again, this area of process improvement can begin with something on the order of a brief – one day (again!) facilitated review of how well the organization is prepared for the most likely examples of security problems – whether the result of poor behavior, mechanical failure or natural disaster. Thereafter, it is a matter of assignment of responsibilities and development of and an application of our new friend, the “How Many? By when?” program management philosophy.

3. Every current policy in the organization that touches on human resources needs to be reviewed and, as necessary, enhanced or created in the first place where a policy does not exist. A classic example is the job descriptions. Keeping these documents up-to-date may seem like an annoying bureaucratic requirement. There may well be hundreds of these things! However, the reality is that a job description is a core document to hold people accountable and for the county or city to be able to defend itself against legal challenges. Unfortunately, the sense that job description maintenance is a low priority and frankly just annoying, leads to limited or no resources being devoted to this form of maintenance. It is really a form of infrastructure maintenance.

Sooner or later the staff will wake up to realize that the last time the job descriptions were reviewed was prior to the Spanish-American War. Job requirements and “essential functions” are no longer valid or cannot be meaningfully used by defense attorneys to support the organization. On the other hand, plaintiff lawyers orbiting around the local government parking lots looking for business will smile broadly at the thought of an HR system dating from the 19th century in a 21st-century world. The same is true of reviewing the organization’s policies on acute liabilities, such as nondiscrimination, behavioral propriety, anti-bullying, and ensuring that disabled employees have the opportunity and the accountability shared by everyone else. Policy review is a spectacular subject for internal work and does not require the use of outside consultant resources, except perhaps for the initial determination of what work needs to be done, how to get it done, and how to measure progress.

4. The final item to be mentioned in this extremely brief summary is the importance of training and employee development. Helping all employees realize that they are essential to the agency’s success does not happen by itself. Nor does it happen if employees are dragged kicking and screaming into a 19 hour seminar with 4000 PowerPoint slides full only of words in tiny fonts. Short, compelling and meaningful training activities are required. Most can be developed in-house by members of the very competent staff which I know exists in organizations throughout the country. Sometimes presentation skills will require an outside facilitator or trainer but this need not be and should not be an ongoing huge line item in the budget. It is also possible to work well and cost-effectively with local resources such as universities and state colleges. The training needs begin with top management. If top management is not convinced that compelling training is a requirement for anything else to be improved, there is an even more fundamental problem in the organization that sooner or later will require more elected official time and lawyer bills to pay.

The elected officials and the top administrators need to understand and “sign on” to the idea that you can’t hold people accountable for policies or behaviors that they don’t know about. Instead, training excellence will result in a “take excuses away” approach to increasing accountability that will improve behavior and performance in the workforce. It will guide considerations about which employee should be promoted or recognized in positive ways. Frankly, it will also make it easier to effectively take corrective action or disciplinary action if necessary when failures occur.

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# feature - what is HR?

## What is Human Resources?

What is HR? I have never really asked myself that question. When I was offered the Accounting Manager position with ISAC, I thought it would be mostly accounting. However, since the finance team administers the ISAC employee benefits, I feel that we are the HR department for ISAC, too. On a county level, unless there is an HR department, the auditor usually fills this void.

So is HR the individual or department that administers the employee benefits? In a way, yes, but HR is more than that. Just as a county needs financial and IT resources to operate, the county must have good human resources as well. According to Wikipedia “Human resources is the set of individuals who make up the workforce of an organization, business sector, or economy.” In order to keep our most valuable resource, we must manage those resources, just as we manage our financial resources. When we think of HR, we are really thinking in terms of Human Resource Management (HRM).

So, what is HRM, and what does it entail? According to Wikipedia, “Human resource management (HRM, or simply HR) is a function in organizations designed to maximize employee performance in service of an employer’s strategic objectives.” Human resource management entails many different areas, such as; policies and procedures, employee benefits and administration, hiring and firing, training and development, performance administration and legal issues.

Let’s look a little further into these areas; starting with policies and procedures. The most basic HR policies are found in the employee handbook. This is probably the single most important aspect of HR. A good employee handbook will document the various employment laws being followed, the benefits offered and administered by the county, what procedures are followed upon termination of employment, the procedures for employee evaluation, and the list goes on. The handbook must be updated continually as laws and benefits change. Keeping up on all of the laws and regulations should be a collaborative effort between all departments including the county attorney. See more on next page.

Employee benefits and administration is another key aspect to HR, and would be things such as health insurance, vacation/sick leave/FMLA, and IPERS retirement, just to name a few. With each of these benefits comes a long list of rules and regulations to follow. Take the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for instance. The requirements set forth in ACA is a case in point that multiple

*By: Brad Holtan*

ISAC Finance and Administration  
Manager



departments must collaborate in order to comply with the rules and regulations. The department heads must track all non-full time employees for purposes of whether or not to offer the employee insurance. The county could be penalized if insurance is not offered to employees who work 30 or more hours. The auditor’s office or HR department must track who was offered insurance, who took the insurance, and when the employee was covered. The auditor’s office must also track who has insurance so that the correct premiums are taken out of the employee’s paycheck. ACA also has multiple rules regarding proper notices that must be distributed to the employees upon hire, annually, and upon termination. The county attorney should, at the very least, keep the department heads apprised of these policies and ensure they are being distributed at the correct time.

Another big area of HR is hiring of individuals. This can be a complicated area for an HR individual, let alone someone who isn’t trained in HR. There are many laws and regulations that must be followed when hiring an individual, such as workplace safety laws, employee discrimination laws, family medical leave act, etc. County HR should be aware of all of the employment laws that must be addressed with a new hire, or at least considered during the hiring process. Failure to do so, could result in an employment lawsuit.

Now that the individual has been hired, the employee is subject to annual employee evaluations. The department heads must perform these employee evaluations with the utmost care. If the employee evaluation is less than positive, the department head must document the issues. These employee evaluations could play a key role in whether a fired employee can receive unemployment benefits.

As you can see, HRM (Human Resource Management) is not an easy task. Regardless if a county has an HR department or just relies on the auditor, HRM should not and cannot fall to that department or individual. HRM is too complicated and covers too many areas for one department or individual to be well-informed on their own. All departments must collaborate in order to have an employee handbook that covers all of the updated laws and regulations. The departments must also collaborate to ensure that all laws and regulations are followed and proper notices are distributed to employees of the county. Failure to do so, could open the county up to potential lawsuits.

## Five Handbook Policies to Customize for Your County

By: *Katherine A.B. Beenken*  
Ahlers & Cooney, P.C.



Employee handbooks or policy manuals are a comprehensive collection of how the county will address various employment issues. Handbooks signal the county's expectations – and consequences for failing to meet those expectations – as well as the rules, policies, and benefits available to employees. The challenge of maintaining an effective handbook is keeping current with the changing law and with the changing needs of the county.

Handbooks are a tool for counties to not just comply with existing law, but to provide a roadmap for county officials and department heads to follow when personnel situations arise. Consistently applying handbook policy can protect the county against charges of arbitrary or unfair treatment. Although we recommend counties annually review handbook policies for compliance with existing law, we suggest counties also periodically review handbooks to address policies that can be customized to meet the county's needs and goals and to address personnel situations unique to that county.

### 1. Customizing Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Policy

FMLA applies to all public agencies, regardless of size. At the heart of the law is job-protected leave for employees meeting certain conditions. FMLA leave policies can advise employees and those administering the leave about the requirements for notification, documentation, and how the county measures the FMLA leave. The county can mandate employees take available paid leave concurrent with FMLA time. The policy can describe when the county will designate leave as FMLA qualifying, as well as the effect on the employee's benefits, including health insurance, when an employee is on FMLA leave. Policies can describe return to work and fitness for duty expectations, as well as treatment of employees requesting intermittent leave. Stating through policy how a situation will be administered provides employees with notice of what to expect, can cut down on abuse of leave, and can protect the county from allegations that a given employee requesting leave was unfairly treated.

### 2. Application and Resume Dishonesty

Employee handbooks can explicitly state the consequences for employees who provide false, inaccurate, or incomplete information during the hiring process. These policies can state that if the dishonesty is discovered during the hiring process, the employee will not be eligible for employment; and if the dishonesty is discovered after the employee is hired, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination. Explicitly stating these consequences can bolster a county's position if a

disciplined or terminated employee later claims the adverse employment action was the result of a discriminatory or other illegal action, rather than the employee's own dishonest conduct.

### 3. Workplace Privacy and Searches

Workplace privacy policies should clearly state that all equipment and supplies provided by the county must be used for county business and may be subject to inspection by the county at any time. The policies can describe the electronic property which the county may monitor or search at any time. Telephones, voicemail boxes, email accounts, search history, and even network usage could be addressed in an effort to cut down on inappropriate streaming that slows the network for others, and on network use that could subject the county to the potential for cyberattacks. Should the need for a workplace investigation arise, the handbook should require employees to fully cooperate with the investigation and warn that employees will be disciplined for impeding, obstructing, or failing to cooperate with an inquiry or investigation by the county.

### 4. Social Media

Social media policies are challenging. In general, employees maintain their First Amendment free speech rights when posting comments online. However, social media policies can define expectations for posting on official county social media accounts, including authorized use, prohibited content, and account security. Policies can address prohibitions on posting on personal accounts while at work, prohibition on posting photos of certain county locations, and prohibitions on engaging in libelous, defamatory, obscene, or maliciously false statements directed at the county, county officials, employees, or members of the public with whom the employee interacts while on duty. Policies should further extend prohibitions on harassing conduct to online posts and notify employees that violating other county rules through social media may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

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## feature - in-house HR

### In-House Human Resources

The ability to outsource Human Resource functions can be an appealing up-front, tangible, cost-savings measure; however, organizations should first consider the intangible benefits of maintaining an in-house Human Resources department that would be lost. To understand the impact of Human Resources on the entirety of an organizations' operations, you must first understand the evolution of Human Resources over the last two decades.

The focus of Human Resources has shifted from a strict focus on compliance to one of becoming a partner in strategic planning. Many large, forward-thinking private sector organizations have appointed a Chief Human Resources Officer that has a seat at the table with other decision-making executives. These business savvy entities have realized that Human Resource professionals have insight to their largest asset, human capital, and can help drive both strategy and results. This is because effective Human Resources professionals will first spend time understanding the organization and its culture, mission and work flow; building strong relationships with key-players; and finally, identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities affecting the organization based on that knowledge. When empowered to act strategically instead of transactionally, Human Resource professionals are actually supporting the leaders that run the organization. Although Human Resources is tradition-

*By: Erin Freeman, CPM, PHR*

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ally thought of as a non-revenue generating service, smart leaders see how the support of good Human Resources professionals can directly impact both revenue and the quality of products and/or services provided.

While a large amount of time in Human Resources is still spent on routine non-strategic transactional duties, there can also be a benefit to retaining those functions in-house. A fundamental knowledge of organizational policies and procedures, as well as a knowledge of past-practices, produces a better result for the organization and its employees. While any HR outsourcing firm can manage payroll or benefit administration, for example, the employer loses some control and flexibility over how those functions are managed. Even more potentially damaging to culture and morale is the outsourcing of highly personal functions such as recruitment and employee relations because those functions rely heavily on trusted relationships with middle and upper management within an organization. In-house Human Resource professionals are integrated into the culture and are entrusted to act in the best interest of the organization and its employees whereas for-profit HR outsourcing firms hold a greater interest in their bottom line.

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## feature - handbook policies

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### 5. Travel and Use of Motor Vehicles

Counties may reimburse travel in an employee's personal vehicle at a mileage rate set by the board of supervisors. Rules about how employees claim mileage, including appropriate documentation and deadlines for requesting reimbursement will ease administration of the policy and cut down on surprising requests. To clarify which employees have permission to use their own vehicle for business purposes, we recommend a written policy requiring advanced written approval from a department head, and proof of automotive insurance and a valid driver's license. The policy should require employees to immediately report revocation, suspension, or expiration of their license to the county. Policies can also discuss passengers permitted while

on duty, a prohibition on texting or even making/receiving calls while driving, and rules regarding travel outside of the county.

This list is by no means an exhaustive collection of all recommended policies to customize in an employee handbook. Rather, the policies selected for this article are those identified by counties as the types of policies most helpful to reference during difficult personnel matters; including requests for leave, discipline, and accounting concerns. Counties are encouraged to work with legal counsel to annually update employee handbooks to ensure compliance with the current law, as well as to periodically review handbooks that can be customized to meet specific county needs and to bolster human resources management when difficult personnel matters arise.

## feature - in-house HR

Continued from page 8.

Human Resource professionals relieve administrative burden from middle and upper management by allowing them to focus on their respective area of expertise. It would be redundant and unrealistic to require all managers to acquire and maintain a basic level of competence in all facets of Human Resource management. Like many professions, Human Resources is ever-changing to keep up with workplace and workforce demographic and generational trends. Furthermore, having a dedicated individual in the organization to facilitate conflict resolution ensures steadfast principles of fair and consistent practices are applied which generates more trust within the workforce. Due to a lack of opportunities for face-to-face relationship building, it is human nature to be more skeptical of outside consultants whose intentions and motivations are perceived to be unknown.

The more complex the work environment the more it is necessary to retain in-house Human Resource management because an outside HR firm would need to invest a considerable amount of time, and therefore money, ensuring their representatives are trained to do the job correctly. Likewise, both new and rapidly growing organizations benefit from in-house Human Resource management because the lack of formal structure and/or a continuously evolving environment fails to provide adequate parameters for the HR outsourcing firm to effectively operate.

A healthy professional relationship between management and union officials can be critical to resolving, even preventing,

workplace grievances. The day-to-day interaction between Human Resources and the union can provide valuable insight to the possible items on the table for upcoming contract negotiations. Human Resource professionals help prepare for union negotiations by adopting a bargaining strategy based on first-hand knowledge of previous grievances, ongoing contract language disputes, and even possibly understanding the underlying concerns of the union members to expedite conversation to the real issues at hand. Additionally, replacing direct managers with Human Resource professionals at the bargaining table may alleviate the tension between those parties allowing them to return to work with their relationship intact. Because Human Resources in general is perceived to be a neutral party representing both the employer and the employee, removing direct managers from the bargaining table also removes emotions and internal politics from the process which yields a more productive and collaborative process.

While it is possible to pick and choose select areas of Human Resources to be outsourced, to realize the full potential of the department you must take a holistic approach to Human Resources Management including talent acquisition, compensation and benefits, policy development, workplace safety, performance management, learning and development, process improvement, workflow management, and conflict resolution because each of these components are interrelated and directly or indirectly impact employee morale, productivity and retention. If nothing else, retaining an in-house Human Resource department communicates to employees how important they are to the organization.

## feature - great HR

Continued from page 5.

The recipe above represents four major areas to improve HR. Of course, there are more. HR improvement is not as simple as it may seem. Creating an HR ER, for example, can be done quickly and effectively. However, it must be done in ways which instill confidence in the employees who are involved. It must involve having available resources to make all this work effectively.

The four key ingredients in this recipe represent “big HR.” They are strategic and have organization-wide impacts. Unfortunately, organizations which are not living in this century spend most of their money and focus on “little HR.” They process paper and count paper clips. The focus is on insuring that every period is placed on the piece of paper properly and all 5,000 procedures are rigorously adhered to. Even little HR often gets minimum support in an organization. Certainly, the best, the brightest, and the most innovative HR staff members don’t want to work in a place which is essentially a giant fil-

ing cabinet. Soon after their employment they will come to recognize this and begin planning for their honorable exit to a place that better appreciates the value of their profession and their personal skills.

A final note: Employees who are skilled, knowledgeable, and respectful of each other and of the citizens they serve, and who support the vision held by their leaders will propel a local government to better success than it has ever had before and a better ability to defend itself against the evils of our “age of liability.”

Your mission, dear readers, is to go forth and make HR spectacular in the organization! Know that you don’t have to spend a lot of money or double staff size to make all of this happen.

Phil Rosenberg  
The HR Doctor  
[www.hrdr.net](http://www.hrdr.net)

# feature - outsourcing HR

## Why Should You Outsource Human Resources Functions

Human Resource functions have grown immeasurably more complex since the late 1970s. There are so many factors to consider with new requirements and regulations that challenge employers every day. Counties typically run pretty lean with limited personnel and find themselves in a position they can't possibly keep up with relating to compliance issues from federal and state regulators.

In a world where everyone is trying to cut costs and pinch pennies, beware of the risks involved by relying on your limited personnel that are wearing so many hats. You are potentially only one lawsuit away from major hardships.

Typically, the county auditor is faced with doing the HR related duties in addition to their other daily duties. However, you can't expect one person to be the subject matter expert in so many complicated topics such as: Affordable Care Act; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), employee assistance programs/counseling programs; employee relocation packages; Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA); flexible spending account administration; Health Care Programs Consolidated Omnibus Benefits Reconciliation Act (COBRA); payroll administration; pension benefits administration; retirement benefit administration plans/401(k), 403(b), simple IRA, ROTH IRA, SEP plans, profit sharing plans, defined benefit plans, 409A, non-qualified deferred compensation plans, IPERS, talent acquisition/interviewing, hiring, background checks, on-boarding, new hire paperwork, training, off-boarding/exit interviews, worker's compensation, and employee disciplinary action/terminations/unemployment hearings.

According to a survey conducted by The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), an increasing number of small businesses are outsourcing their HR functions. SHRM states the top 10 reasons companies turn to an external HR expert are: 1. Save money and reduce operating expenses 2. Control legal risk and improve compliance 3. Gain greater HR expertise 4. Streamline HR functions 5. Offer services the organization could not otherwise provide 6. Allow the company to focus on its core business 7. Reduce the number of HR staff and related expenses 8. Improve service delivery 9. Allow HR staff to put more emphasis on strategy 10. Make up for the lack of in-house expertise.

By: *Nan Boland*

President,  
HireQuality Solutions |  
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Iowa Employment Conference



There are many pieces to the HR puzzle. We break it down into five key components and offer consultants to cover these pieces: HR administration; human capital; training and development; health and benefits, and emotional intelligence and team building.

**Human Resource Administration:** On/off-boarding; new employee orientation; terminations; employee relations; handbook design; policy/procedure writing; revising and implementation; performance management; harassment claims; HR forms; HR compliance audits/reviews; applicant tracking systems; time and attendance systems; and labor contract administration .

**Human Capital:** Employee recruiting; interviewing, placement and employee counseling; orchestrating optimal employee health plans; employee rewards and incentive programs; talent acquisition and management; employee retention, talent management and development; employee compliance; career coaching; morale and teambuilding programs; and behavioral interview skills and recruitment process outsources.

**Training and Development:** Leadership/supervisory; sexual harassment; workplace violence; conflict resolution; diversity; stress management; communication styles; OSHA/COBRA/HSAs/FMLA/FLSA/ADA; labor contract/contract negotiations; safety compliance; moral and teambuilding programs; unemployment claims; workers' compensation administration; I-9 compliance; coaching/counseling compliance; and regulations/laws.

**Health and Benefits:** Retirement benefit administration plans; 401(k); 403(b); simple IRA; ROTH IRA; SEP plans; profit sharing plans; defined benefit plans; 409A; non-qualified deferred compensation plans; COBRA/FMLA/ADA/Affordable Care Act; insurance selection; and implementation and administration.

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## HIPAA Dos and Don'ts

By: *Beth Manley*

ISAC HIPAA Compliance Officer



The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was enacted to ensure the privacy and security of protected health information (PHI). HIPAA is comprised of a few different rules. Two of them are the Privacy Rule and Security Rule. The Privacy Rule requires appropriate safeguards to protect the privacy of PHI, and sets limits and conditions on the uses and disclosures that may be made of such information without patient authorization. The Security Rule establishes standards and safeguards to protect electronic PHI that is created, received, used or maintained by a covered entity. Counties and regions must comply with both rules.

You've probably heard a lot about the hefty fines that come with not complying with HIPAA. The fines range from \$100 to \$1.5 million for violations of an identical requirement or prohibition. Multiple violations have been as high as \$4.3 million (Cignet Health of Prince George's County, Maryland, 2011). Ultimately, all employees are responsible for compliance with HIPAA.

Your county or region can be held liable for what YOU do, even if your county or region is in compliance with all of the rules and regulations. Your county or region might not be required to pay a civil monetary penalty (CMP) if they are compliant with HIPAA, but they may still be required to provide credit monitoring and identity protection services for the individual's whose PHI was breached. These are added costs that can be prevented if certain precautions are taken. You can ensure that you are not the cause of the breach.

Here are some scenarios where simple employee error was responsible for a breach of PHI. An employee at Oregon's Health CO-OP downloaded PHI from 14,000 individuals onto an unencrypted laptop and that laptop was subsequently stolen from his unattended, locked car. Ventura County Health Care Agency discovered a backpack at an elementary school containing documents for 1,339 patients after it was stolen from an employee's car. A Massachusetts General Hospital employee sent an unencrypted email containing PHI of 648 individuals to an incorrect email address. None of the covered entities listed had to pay CMPs because the necessary safeguards were in place. However, the employees involved were properly sanctioned and the covered entities were still required to provide services such as credit monitoring and identity theft protection services for those whose PHI was breached. More examples can be found on the HIPAA "Wall of Shame" at [https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/breach/breach\\_report.jsf](https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/breach/breach_report.jsf).

Here are several dos and don'ts to help you keep your county and region compliant with HIPAA and to prevent breaches of PHI:

### Do

- Implement HIPAA policies and procedures (there are sample policies on ISAC's website)
- Understand your specific policies and procedures
- Train office staff on the HIPAA requirements that are specific to their job descriptions
- Keep all PHI secure (in locked rooms/file cabinets or secure electronic devices)
- Password protect all your devices (computer, tablet, phone, etc.)
- Encrypt your electronic devices
- Only use encrypted email when emailing PHI
- Change your password regularly
- Use secure passwords, as required by your policies and procedures (numbers, symbols, capital letters)
- Keep all software up to date
- Log out of every website/login/application
- Join the ISAC HIPAA Program ☺

### Don't

- Reuse passwords
- Share passwords
- Download programs from unknown publishers
- Install add-ons from websites you don't trust
- Open emails from unknown senders
- Transmit PHI by unsecured electronic means (full names, DOB, SS#, etc.)
- Save your password on the computer (even when prompted)
- Leave PHI on any printer or other public space
- Dispose of electronic devices in the trash, including thumb drives (instead, turn it into your IT department or compliance officer for disposal)
- Look up PHI without needing to do so for your job

### ISAC HIPAA Program

ISAC offers a HIPAA Program to its members that includes many benefits, such as annual trainings and up to five hours of consultation on HIPAA questions. HIPAA can be difficult to understand, especially when it comes to its application to different offices within a county and the HIPAA Program can help answer your questions. There is a yearly fee to be a part of the ISAC HIPAA Program and returning members receive a discounted price.

Please let me know if you have any questions or want to join the ISAC HIPAA Program. I'd be happy to talk with you. Contact me at [bmanley@iowacounties.org](mailto:bmanley@iowacounties.org) or 515.244.7181.

# feature - cybersecurity training

## Cyber Security Training for a Better Tomorrow

There is saying in cyber security that says that the three most important steps you can take to secure your computers and networks are: 1. Train Users; 2. Train Users; and 3. Train Users.

As the attendees at the Smart Connections conference in April determined, the more you plan/train for a cyber event, the better you will respond. You may not be able to stop it from happening, but how you respond will determine your ongoing costs.

At the end of the day if you are relying solely on technology to protect your county's network, the human element will eventually defeat the technology safeguards. The sad part of this is that the threat may be from the outside, but this threat will enter through a door that will be opened from the inside.

Today's criminally-laced emails are so devious that there are times that even those trained to spot them will almost fall for them. These emails are tough to spot and hard to keep out of your inbox. One side of your brain is saying it's great to hear from your aunt, or boy my credit card company's systems are so sensitive to fraud they sent me an email to get more information about recent activities on my card.

The regular training it takes to develop this crucial skill is free. It is this skill that keeps the most experienced of us from opening the email or clicking a link. This training isn't technical. It is more about building a logic pattern in the brain that misfires when everything appears to be fine. It's that little voice that says that something is askew.

To build these defense logic patterns, every county should have regular training of staff that reinforces this logic. The direct costs of not having these trainings are significant (fines and remediation costs) not to mention the public's loss of confidence.

Fortunately the counties have access to a wealth of free training and materials. I'm going to mention only a few in this article. Visiting any site mentioned here will provide you with additional links to even more free resources.

### Securing the Human

The state of Iowa has purchased on-line information security awareness training for use by state and local governments. The training was purchased using grant funding so counties may enroll staff in the training at no charge. This is top flight training at no cost (other than time) for your county.

By: *Robin Harlow*

ISAC Research and Innovation Manager



You will need to send the first name, last name and email address for each person you wish to enroll to Alison Radl, [Alison.Radl@iowa.gov](mailto:Alison.Radl@iowa.gov), and she will set them up. Once completed, participants will receive certificates.

Even if your county has completed the training in the past, it is important to review the content from year to year to make sure you take advantage of updates.

You can visit: <https://secureonline.iowa.gov/security-awareness-training> to access additional resources, including videos and downloadable documents.

### Stop|Think|Connect

This link, <http://stopthinkconnect.org/>, will take you to a program that is a coalition of private companies, non-profits and government organizations where the leadership is provided by the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) and the Anti-Phishing Working Group (APWG).

This website is directed at a non-technical audience. This site is an embarrassment of riches when it comes to free resources. With this site, I would go directly to the "General Tips & Advice" link under the "Tips & Advice" tab on the home page. This page not only provides you with tips and advice, it gives you the ability to print off a tip sheet of all the information on the page. This can then be distributed to your county staff. Though the tip sheet is designed for more of a personal habit reminder, it has been proven that those people that practice good personal online habits carry them over to into their offices.

Before leaving the site, visit the video section under the "Campaigns" tab on the home page. This section contains several short videos that would work well in a staff meeting. They are entertaining and well produced.

### Center for Internet Security

The Center for Internet Security (CIS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the cybersecurity readiness and response among public and private sector entities. CIS helps organizations adopt key best practices to achieve immediate and effective defenses against cyber attacks.

Continues on page 13.

# feature - cybersecurity training

Continued from page 12.

The publication tab on their site will give you access to a cyber incident checklist, daily tips, newsletters, and cyber security guides.

CIS is home to the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC). This link, <https://msisac.cisecurity.org/documents/one.pdf>, will take you to the information on becoming a member of MS-ISAC (again, no charge!). Becoming a member will give you access to a treasure trove of information.

I would consider MS-ISAC's *Cyber Security: A Non-Technical Guide* (<https://msisac.cisecurity.org/resources/documents/getting-started-guide.pdf>) a must read for all those in county leadership.

As the title indicates, the guide is written for a non-technical audience and provides the reader with:

- A starting point for cyber-security objectives.
- An explanation why cyber-security is important.
- A guide on what one should do to be cyber-secure.
- A task quick reference checklist.
- A glossary of terms again written to be understandable.

As a county leader, if you set the expectations for being personally cyber-secure to your staff, they will respond. If you reinforce these expectations through regular training and the use of free material, you will be building a team that will not only be resistant to attacks, but more resilient WHEN an attack occurs.

# feature - outsourcing HR

Continued from page 10.

**Emotional Intelligence and Team Building:** Personality testing; team building; ability assessments; social competencies; team capabilities; change catalyst/initiating; managing change; leadership; conflict resolution; bond building; collaboration/cooperation; leveraging diversity; and people development.

In addition to taking advantage of the knowledge and expertise of an HR Consultant, there are many benefits as to why you should consider using an HR Consultant: outside perspective, minimize risk, develop policies and procedures, alleviate staff stress, cost-effective, save time, and confidentiality issues. An

outside HR consultant can set the ground work and defense of a law suit. Most counties do not have anyone on staff that has the ability or experience to do this.

Counties need to consider the costs of inefficient HR. Did you know that the average cost of an employment liability lawsuit has risen 26% in the past three years? The two areas that leave most employers liable are discrimination and unfair pay practices. The costs of defending an employment liability lawsuit costs anywhere from \$50,000 to \$250,000, and that's just the legal fees.



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# feature - ISAC salary survey tool

## ISAC Salary Survey Tool

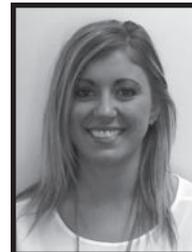
Conducting a salary survey can be beneficial and useful in many ways, such as for a comparison tool and an idea of salaries/benefits to give when hiring new employees. Paying people fairly and appropriately is an important part of business: if employees aren't paid what other employees in that same position at a different business are paid, they may look for a better offer; if employees are paid too much in a position, the company itself will struggle to make profit. This also goes hand-in-hand with offering appropriate benefits and retirement options. Reviewing salary surveys can help solve these problems that may arise in the work environment.

Looking specifically at the ISAC Salary Survey, county officials can use it to compare their salary and benefits to other county officials in their position, and the compensation boards can use it to determine reasonable salaries and to make sure they're offering rational benefits.

To be more precise on what is included in the ISAC Salary Survey, you can first note that all 99 Iowa Counties are asked to voluntarily fill this survey out by the beginning of each fiscal year. The positions included are the elected officials (attorney, auditor, recorder, sheriff, supervisor, and treasurer), and the non-elected officials (assessor, assistant to board, budget director, buildings and grounds, conservation director, CPC administrator, E-911 coordinator, economic development coordinator, emergency management, engineer, environmental health, general assistance, GIS coordinator, human resources, information technology, planning and zoning, public health, and veterans affairs). Not only does the survey provide salaries for these positions, it also shows the benefits offered and given in each county for health, life, disability, dental, and vision. It includes retiree and deferred compensation information. The consumer price index for all urban consumers is also specified. Another thing to keep in mind when making comparisons are the number of employees in a position for each county, which is also included in the survey.

Using this tool is fairly simple. You can find the Salary Survey on the ISAC website at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org) under the Member Resources tab. When arriving to this page, you can first filter by a specific county or all counties and also by fiscal year. You then can filter by a specific position or all positions, by a specific benefit, and you can view the consumer price index numbers. Under "Employment Salary Surveys" you can view the number of part-time and full-time employees in

By: *Kristin Comstock*  
ISAC Financial  
Administrative Assistant



a position for each county. There is also an option to view these numbers in PDF or Excel format.

I have spoken to a couple auditors who are (in majority of the counties) the ones responsible for completing the survey and received some feedback on what they found beneficial from this tool. Amy Sathoff from Emmet County noted, "We utilize it yearly, and our Compensation Board actually requests it to be part of their packet. It is an invaluable tool in their decision making process." Grant Veeder from Black Hawk County has stated it is "a very convenient tool providing a large amount of useful comparative information. It not only shows county officials where they rank with their peers, it can give county boards a realistic idea of expected salaries when they're looking to hire certain employees."

Now that you (hopefully) know a little more about what you can find from the ISAC Salary Survey, what it is, where it is located, and how to maneuver to find the information you're looking for, please utilize this tool! If you have any questions, please contact me at [kcomstock@iowacounties.org](mailto:kcomstock@iowacounties.org) or 515.244.7181. I am always happy to help. I would also like to note that as you make your way to the survey and begin navigating, I would love to hear some feedback on ways we can improve this tool. We have created it for your use and want it to be a beneficial and helpful resource for you.

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## IPERS Investment Board Update

The IPERS Investment Board is made up of 11 members; seven are voting members, and four are nonvoting members. By law, three of the voting members must not be members of IPERS, one member must be an employee of a school district, area education agency or merged area, one member must be a public employee who is not an employee of one of those education categories, and one member must be a retiree of the IPERS system. The Board also includes the State Treasurer as a voting member as well as two state senators and two state representatives as nonvoting members. Since being appointed to the Board in 2013, I have served as one of the seven voting members who is a public employee outside of the education system. My appointment was made by Governor Branstad and confirmed by the State Senate for a six-year term.

The Investment Board does not make specific investments. Rather, we establish policies, establish asset allocations and hire professional investment advisors to carry out our policies. We review performance of the managers and monitor the balance of our asset allocations.

The total market value of the IPERS Trust fund at the end of 2015 was 27.6 billion dollars. Although our funded ratio is near 85%, that still leaves an “unfunded actuarial liability” of almost \$5.5 billion. Because Iowa is committed to fully funding our pension system, the Legislature has now established our contribution rate above the threshold that would otherwise simply sustain the system. In fact, our actuarial contribution rate (for regular members) would be 14.17% of the member’s salary. Since our actual contribution rate is now at 14.88%, each public employee in Iowa contributes .71% of their salary to recover from that \$5.5 billion shortfall. This recovery plan is designed to completely fund the system in future years and provide stability in contribution rates.

Since 70% of the benefits and expenses paid by the fund come from investment earnings, it is important to provide active management of the fund in diverse sectors of the economy to meet our target revenue. As of December 31, 2015 our fund has 24.1% of our reserves invested in domestic equities, 15.8% in non-US equities, 28.1% in fixed income investments, 11.6% in private equity, 8.4% in real estate assets, 4.9% credit opportunities/bonds, 4.6% inflation protected securities and other smaller cash and asset investments.

*By: Wayne Walter*

IPERS Investment Board Member  
Winneshiek County Treasurer



Historically, many pension plans have had a relatively simple investment plan. Many plans would place 60% of their investments in stocks and 40% in bonds. Given the current interest and earnings climate, pension plans must be willing to consider other investments to meet earnings goals. IPERS is considering a variety of strategies that include middle market lending, direct lending, liquid absolute return investments, and short strategies. Of course, any changes we make will be based on potential risk compared to expected returns. Managing “active risk” has become an essential part of meeting IPERS’ benefit obligations.

More than 300,000 Iowa residents, or one of every in 10 Iowans, are members of IPERS, either as active employees, non-active employees or as retirees receiving benefits. Members regularly tell me the importance of the safety and security of their retirement system. Our Board understands this and will continue to work to keep IPERS among the strongest pension plans in the country. Even though our funded status ranks very high among our country’s public pension plans, we have made plans to make it better, and in fact, reach a fully funded status.

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# ISAC brief

## Nominations Now Being Accepted!

Since 2010 during the Fall School General Session ISAC has annually honored one individual as an ISAC Golden Eagle. The ISAC Golden Eagle was created to recognize and honor individuals who have provided extraordinary public service to county government through ISAC and/or NACo.

Golden Eagle Honorees are selected from nominations submitted to the ISAC Golden Eagle Committee, which consists of board and staff members. The committee will then submit its recommendations to the ISAC Board for approval. The ISAC Golden Eagle honoree(s) will be recognized during the ISAC Fall School of Instruction General Session.

Those eligible for induction include:

- Current or former elected and appointed county officials
- Business or civic leaders
- ISAC Preferred Vendors
- Persons providing assistance to counties as trainers, consultants or advisors
- Former members of ISAC staff

\*Current ISAC board members and staff are not eligible.

Honorees will be selected on the basis of their service rendered to county government through ISAC and/or NACo. Such service may include:

- Leadership in ISAC and ISAC-affiliated boards
- Service to NACo
- Service on state or national boards or commissions
- Service to counties in training, education and development of local leadership

*By: Rachel Bennett*

ISAC Communications and Marketing Manager



- Advocacy for counties and good local government
- Assistance and support to counties

Past honorees include:

2010 – Jane Halliburton, former Story County Supervisor and ISAC board member

2011 – Kim Reynolds, Lt. Governor and former Clarke County Treasurer

2012 – J. Patrick White, ret. Johnson County Attorney and ISAC Past President

2013 – Mike Wentzien, Supervisors Lobbyist

2014 – Richard Heidloff, former Lyon County Treasurer

2015 – Sue Vande Kamp, former Story County Recorder

To nominate qualified individuals to be honored as ISAC Golden Eagles, please complete the form on the next page and return it to:

Iowa State Association of Counties  
Attn: ISAC Golden Eagle  
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190  
West Des Moines, IA 50266

A form can also be found on the following page or on the ISAC website, [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org).

Please return submissions before July 22, 2016. A golden eagle is not guaranteed to be honored annually. If you have any questions regarding the ISAC Golden Eagle, please contact Rachel Bennett at 515.244.7181 or [rbennett@iowacounties.org](mailto:rbennett@iowacounties.org).

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# ISAC Golden Eagle Nomination Form

---

The Iowa State Association of County recognizes individuals who have provided extraordinary public service to county government through ISAC and/or NACo as ISAC Golden Eagles.

**Individual Nominated:**

**Position:**

**Brief Biography:**

In your view, what has this person done to provide extraordinary service to ISAC and/or NACo? Why do you feel this person should be an ISAC Golden Eagle honoree?

**Nominated by:**

Forward this form to:  
Iowa State Association of Counties  
Attn: ISAC Golden Eagle  
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190  
West Des Moines, IA 50266

*\*Please return submission prior to July 22, 2016.*

# ISAC brief

## Spring School General Session Summary - March 10, 2016

The 2016 ISAC Spring School of Instruction General Session was called to order by President Joan McCalmant at the Downtown Des Moines Marriott.

Deb Roberts, Floyd County Recorder, gave the invocation, and President McCalmant led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Following introductions of the ISAC Executive Committee and the remainder of the ISAC Board of Directors, Bill Peterson, ISAC Executive Director, gave conference announcements.

Bill Peterson presented the FY 2017 ISAC Budget to the membership including an explanation of the budget process and a general overview of the budget that included a proposed increase in dues and fall conference registrations. The recommended budget was accepted unanimously by the membership.

Sallie Clark, NACo President and El Paso County, CO Commissioner, explained the current work that NACo is doing, the benefits of membership, and showed a short video.

Lonny Pulkrabek, Johnson County Sheriff, presented the 2016 ICIT and ISAC scholarships.

A \$1,000 ICIT Scholarship was awarded to Harrison Helgevold from Wright County.

The \$2,500 ISAC scholarship winners were awarded by district and presented with a certificate by President McCalmant. The District 1 winner was Nate Bishop from Jasper County. The District 2 winner was Krista Moellers from Fayette County. The District 3 winner was Lily Friedrichsen from O'Brien County. The District 4 winner was John Clark from Page County. The District 5 winner was Micaela Folkerts from Lucas County. The District 6 winner was Alexander Stephens from Linn County.

Lonny announced that this year's Golf Scholarship Fundraiser will be held on August 31, 2016 at the Toad Valley Golf Course in Pleasant Hill.

President McCalmant adjourned the meeting.

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## ISAC Excellence in Action Award Nomination Form

The ISAC Excellence in Action Award program is a competitive awards program that seeks to identify and recognize innovative county government employees, programs, and ISAC affiliates. Please encourage all county departments to apply.

### CRITERIA

- Programs nominated must be **innovative** and do one or more of the following:
  - Offer a new service to county residents, fill gaps in the availability of existing services, or tap new revenue sources.
  - Improve the administration or enhance the cost effectiveness of an existing county government program.
  - Upgrade the working conditions or level of training for county employees.
  - Enhance the level of citizen participation in, or the understanding of, government programs.
  - Provide information that facilitates effective public policy making.
  - Promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in addressing shared problems.
  - Provide a model from which other counties or affiliates may learn.
- Nominated individual must demonstrate exemplary service to citizens, staff or stakeholders.

### JUDGING

CoSTAR will rate each application based on the following attributes: creativity, innovation, cost savings, replication, leadership, increased efficiency, cooperation with others, and perseverance.

### GUIDELINES

- Nominated programs must have become operational after January 1, 2015.
- Individual nominations should reflect the individual actions of the last 24 months.
- Nominations should be made using the application form below.
- A narrative of the county program or individual's actions must be included. Please limit to three pages.

### AWARD PRESENTATION

Awards will be presented at the 2016 ISAC Fall School of Instruction held on November 30 – December 2, in Des Moines. Winners will receive a special ribbon to be worn on their name badge. Winners will be recognized on the ISAC website and in a news release sent to statewide media. When appropriate, an ISAC staff member will also attend the board of supervisors meeting to present the award.

### QUESTIONS

Contact Robin Harlow, ISAC's Innovation and Research Manager at 515.369.7006 or [rharlow@iowacounties.org](mailto:rharlow@iowacounties.org).

### NOMINATION FORM

- Attach a narrative of the county improvement/project/program/individual (three-page limit).
- Return all nominations by **July 1, 2016 (postmarked date)** to:  
Iowa State Association of Counties  
Attn: Robin Harlow  
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190  
West Des Moines, IA 50266.
- OR email your application form (containing all the information on the form below) to Robin Harlow.

*Please fill out each field completely.*

Please indicate nomination type: Individual \_\_\_ Program \_\_\_

Name of individual/program: \_\_\_\_\_ County or affiliate: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of nominator: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Nominator's email: \_\_\_\_\_

# SAVE THE DATE!

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Look for them in the June issue of the  
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# 2016 calendar

## May 2016

17-20 Treasurer's Summer School  
(Arrowood Resort & Conference Center,  
Okoboji)

## June 2016

15-17 ICIT Midyear Conference  
(West Des Moines Marriott)  
21-23 Records Summer School  
(Honey Creek Resort, Moravia)

## July 2016

7 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)  
13-15 ISACA Summer School Conference  
(West Des Moines Sheraton)  
22-25 NACo Annual Conference  
(Long Beach, CA)

## August 2016

25-26 ISAC LPC Retreat  
(Hotel Renovo, Urbandale)  
31 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser  
(Toad Valley Golf Course, Pleasant Hill)

## September 2016

13-14 CM&MHDS Annual Conference  
(West Des Moines Sheraton)  
18-21 ISSDA Jail School  
(Holiday Inn Airport)  
21-23 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat  
(Linn County)  
29 ISAC LPC Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

## October 2016

27-28 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

## November 2016

30-2 ISAC Fall School of Instruction  
(Veteran's Memorial Community Choice  
Credit Union Convention Center, Des  
Moines)

## December 2016

4-7 ISSDA Winter School  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)  
6-8 ICEA Annual Conference  
(Scheman Building, Ames)  
14 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC calendar, please contact Kelsey Sebern at [ksebern@iowacounties.org](mailto:ksebern@iowacounties.org).

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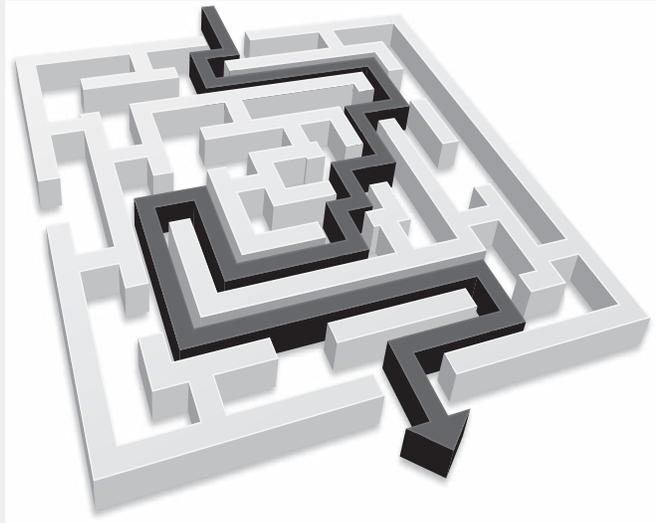
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A black and white photograph of four cupcakes. One cupcake is placed on a white, ornate pedestal stand. The other three cupcakes are on a light-colored wooden surface in the foreground. The cupcake on the stand is the largest and has a very thick, overflowing amount of white frosting. The other three are smaller and have a more standard amount of frosting. The background is plain white.

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