

# The Iowa County magazine



June 2023  
The National Association of  
Counties





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# The Iowa County

June 2023 \* Volume 52, Number 6

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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.

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# Stronger Counties. Stronger Iowa. Stronger America.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is your association. We derive our strength from your participation and expertise. Our partnership with ISAC amplifies the Iowa county voice at the national level, and we appreciate ISAC's leadership.

We are stronger when counties are united through ISAC and NACo to overcome common obstacles and seize collective opportunities.

We make sure the county voice is heard and respected in the federal policymaking process. In all our federal policy initiatives, we are fact-based, county-focused intergovernmental partners, educating our state and federal officials on county roles and responsibilities.

We are focused on implementing major federal programs, advocating for our policy priorities at the federal level, and pursuing solutions to our most pressing challenges. This focus includes:

- Investing resources from the American Rescue Plan and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
- Expanding access to high-speed internet
- Securing county priorities in the 2023 Farm Bill
- Addressing the mental health and substance use crisis
- Enhancing housing affordability
- Improving our disaster response and resiliency

When I was sworn in as NACo's president, I introduced a new effort to strengthen our counties: RISE! Through this spotlight, we are elevating the county role in Resiliency, Inclusion, Solvency, and Empowerment.

We are highlighting resiliency for the future, promoting community inclusion, helping residents establish solvency through economic mobility opportunities, and empowering county leaders with educational resources and tools for informed decision-making. As we emerge from challenging times, let us seize the momentum and RISE!

We are grateful to those who already participate in NACo, and, if you don't participate, we invite you to get involved in our initiatives, our federal policy advocacy, our committees and task forces, and our programming.

NACo offers programs and peer networks for whatever your interests are as a county official – from community development to criminal justice, from energy to infrastructure, and from agriculture to technology.

NACo is your national, non-partisan association. We are NACo. Through our collaboration, talents, and innovation, we can continue to RISE together.



**Hon. Denise Winfrey**  
NACo President  
[naco.org](https://naco.org)

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# What You Gain by Engaging in Your National Association

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It is not about always knowing the answers. It is about knowing where to get them.

Enter ISAC and NACo. As a member of ISAC, you gain access to statewide leaders, best practices, reports, and other resources. Through NACo, you gain access to thousands of your peers nationwide, federal policy advocacy, proven practices, in-depth research, and other expansive resources. Through NACo conferences, webinars, and events, you receive opportunities to hear from and interact with experts and federal decision-makers on a variety of issues that directly impact counties and their residents.



**Kim Hall**  
NACo Director of Membership  
[naco.org](https://naco.org)

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NACo provides timely, fact-based, and easy-to-digest information you can count on: news and analysis on federal legislation and regulations; federal grant information; issues impacting counties; and more. This information saves you and your county time and effort, allowing you to pursue solutions quickly and directly. We cover dozens of issues relevant to county governments, including infrastructure, agriculture, broadband, public health, economic competitiveness, justice and public safety, and more.

County members determine the legislative priorities NACo pursues before the U.S. Congress, executive agencies and federal courts. A few highlights of NACo's 2023 focus areas include:

- Ensuring county priorities in the 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization
- Boosting advanced broadband deployment and accessibility while preserving local decision-making
- Promoting health reforms by addressing the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy and the passage of mental health, substance use, and criminal justice reform legislation
- Staving off unfunded mandates and safeguarding local decision-making in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other federal rulemaking
- Maintaining election integrity and strengthening election worker safety

In addition to our federal policy advocacy, NACo provides countless tools to support America's counties. Especially with all that we have faced over recent years, NACo helps our workforce by ensuring county employees have the resources they need for their mental health. We launched a special initiative to support the mental health of our 3.6 million county employees nationwide.

In partnership with the National Council on Mental Wellbeing, we unveiled our Mental Health First Aid program. This first-of-its-kind effort helps county employees identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among our peers, friends, and colleagues. This new, powerful offering can be a tremendous resource to enhance mental health and wellbeing. To learn more, visit [NACo.org/MHFA](https://NACo.org/MHFA).

NACo also supports the county workforce through the High Performance Leadership Academy and Enterprise Cybersecurity Leadership Academy. With a robust curriculum developed with Fortune 1000 executives, public sector leaders, world-renowned academics, and thought leaders, including the late General Colin Powell, this 12-week, online program equips participants with practical tools to build cohesive teams, improve communications, manage change, and ultimately achieve results for our residents. Since its inception in 2018, more than 8,000 county officials from 1,800 counties have enrolled, including 158 individuals from 59 Iowa counties. We encourage all counties to participate. More information can be found at [NACo.org/skills](https://NACo.org/skills).

America's counties are home to 16.5 million veterans, including nearly 200,000 veterans who reside in Iowa. County Veteran Service Officers help veterans access a wide range of federal benefits and are deeply invested in

# What You Gain by Engaging in Your National Association

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veterans' health and well-being. Counties often assist with pension and disability benefits, housing, employment and education, and mental health services that treat trauma and prevent suicide. In the week leading up to Veterans Day, NACo and the National Association of County Veteran Service Officers invite all Iowa counties to participate in Operation Green Light for Veterans. We encourage you to illuminate county government buildings in green November 6-12.

Now in its second year, Operation Green Light is designed to raise awareness about the unique challenges veterans face and the resources available to assist them and their families at the county, state, and federal levels. In addition to lighting county buildings, states, municipalities, residents, businesses, and community organizations are also encouraged to participate. To support counties in serving more veterans, especially in underserved and under-resourced rural areas, Operation Green Light will be an opportunity to urge our federal lawmakers to pass the bipartisan Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act. For more information, please visit [NACo.org/OperationGreenLight](https://NACo.org/OperationGreenLight).

We recently launched an effort designed to assist state associations and counties in leveraging opioid settlement dollars. NACo's Opioid Solutions Center is a comprehensive, web-based information hub that empowers local leaders to invest resources in effective treatment, recovery, prevention, and other public health practices that can save lives and address the underlying causes of substance use disorder. In addition to partnering with state associations, we have assembled a noteworthy national-level partnership with the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, the National Association of Attorneys General, and an esteemed collection of academic advisors. We encourage you to visit our robust center at [NACo.org/opioids](https://NACo.org/opioids).

How can you help elevate the voice of Iowa counties and stay abreast of the resources and tools available from NACo? You can start with any of these simple steps:

1. **Lend your voice to a NACo committee** – For one hour a month, you can elevate your county's issues, address challenges and learn about best and promising practices through NACo's 30 plus committees, caucuses and task forces. Currently, 58 individuals from 35 Iowa counties participate on a NACo committee. Learn more and apply by visiting [NACo.org/GetInvolved](https://NACo.org/GetInvolved).
2. **Show Up** – NACo's Legislative and Annual Conferences are the best ways to network with peers who are facing similar issues and hear from federal agency leaders and experts. Register today for our 2023 Annual Conference, July 21-24, in Travis County, Texas at [NACo.org/Annual](https://NACo.org/Annual).
3. **Sign up** – NACo webinars assist you by navigating topic-specific issues or providing vital updates on topics that matter to counties. Can't make the live webinar? You have 24/7 access to our on-demand pre-recorded sessions. Learn more about our virtual events at [NACo.org/Education](https://NACo.org/Education).
4. **Access** – Find reports on topics ranging from agriculture, veterans affairs, health, and so much more at [NACo.org/reports](https://NACo.org/reports).
5. **Register** – Equip frontline county government professionals with practical leadership skills through NACo's online 12-week High Performance Leadership Academy or Cybersecurity Leadership Academy by visiting [NACo.org/skills](https://NACo.org/skills).

Just as ISAC represents Iowa's 99 counties in West Des Moines, NACo represents all 3,069 counties in our nation's capital. Thanks to a strong relationship between ISAC and NACo, 83 counties in Iowa are members of NACo. We appreciate your membership and welcome the opportunity to speak with those who may consider joining.

Outlined above is just a sampling of what NACo has to offer. Please take a few minutes to explore our website at [NACo.org](https://NACo.org) and discover the treasure trove of tools and resources you have at your fingertips.

When we work together to build stronger counties, we build a stronger Iowa and a stronger America.

# NACo On the Frontlines to Support County Priorities in Washington, D.C.

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Since the start of 2023, NACo has achieved several significant legislative victories for counties across the United States. These accomplishments demonstrate the organization's commitment to empowering local communities and improving the lives of their residents. Among the notable wins are the passage of the FY 2023 omnibus package, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the introduction of the Restore the Partnership Act, and the establishment of the Former Local Elected Officials Caucus. Additionally, NACo has been actively advocating for disaster relief bills, including the Survivors Act. In addition to these legislative wins, NACo has also established several new programs and initiatives to teach our federal partners about the unique roles, responsibilities, operations, and policy priorities of county governments.



**Eryn Hurley**  
NACo Director of  
Government Affairs and  
Federal Fellowship Initiative  
[naco.org](https://naco.org)

The passage of the FY 2023 omnibus package marked a significant win for counties. Within this package, NACo successfully advocated for additional flexibility for counties to invest American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) dollars, a federal initiative aimed at assisting local governments. Through the Cornyn/Padilla amendment, counties can invest funds in a broad range of infrastructure and economic development projects, address impacts, and prepare for future natural disasters, enabling them to address specific community needs efficiently. This newfound flexibility empowers counties to allocate resources where they are most needed, ensuring better outcomes for their residents. NACo is working closely with the U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury) to develop new guidance for the Cornyn/Padilla amendment, which is expected to be released in early June 2023.

In addition to NACo's efforts to secure additional flexibility for Iowa counties and others across the country, we have also worked closely with Treasury to ensure all counties are able to submit their Project and Expenditure (P&E) Reports, including those counties with approved waivers due to natural disasters and other administrative technical issues. To date, there are only 104 counties remaining that need to submit a P&E Report.

Beyond ARPA, counties also welcomed the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). NACo's successful advocacy efforts resulted in the establishment of direct funding to counties through 42 different federal grant programs, enabling them to invest in clean transportation, energy generation, and deployment and electrification of commercial and residential buildings. Notably, IRA also establishes a new mechanism called direct pay for tax-exempt entities, including counties, to be able to directly access many of these incentives. The direct pay option provides a new pathway for counties to access the clean energy tax incentives in IRA that previously would have only been available to tax-paying entities, and therefore, puts counties on an even playing field with the private sector.

In addition to these legislative wins and continued engagement for the implementation of ARPA and IRA, NACo has launched several new initiatives to strengthen the intergovernmental partnership.

Launched in September 2022, which focuses on the importance and structure of America's intergovernmental system, with a specific emphasis on the roles, responsibilities, operations, and policy priorities of county governments across the country. As part of the initiative, NACo aims to educate members of Congress, Congressional staff, and federal policy officials about the roles and responsibilities of counties across the country. The first trip of the Initiative was held in Miami-Dade County, Florida, and the second was in Maricopa, Yavapai, and Coconino Counties, Arizona.

# NACo On the Frontlines to Support County Priorities in Washington, D.C.

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Another new initiative launched in February 2023 is NACo's Commission on Mental Health and Wellbeing. The Commission brings together county leaders from across the nation to take action to address the ever-growing mental health and substance use crisis from the county government perspective. Through this commission, NACo will elevate the critical role that counties play in providing high-quality, accessible mental health services, showcase county innovations and solutions, and outline the intergovernmental and public-private partnerships required to reimagine and strengthen our nation's mental health policies, programs, and practices.

As part of the Commission's mission, NACo is working to pass two bipartisan bills that have been introduced in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate – the Reentry Act and Due Process Continuity of Care Act – which revokes federal health benefits for adults and juveniles that are being housed in correctional institutions – making no distinction between individuals who are being detained in jails prior to conviction, versus individuals who have been adjudicated and sentenced to time in a jail or prison. Amending the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP) to allow individuals who are detained pre-trial to retain access to Medicaid and other federal health benefits will help break the cycle of recidivism exacerbated by untreated physical and mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Finally, recognizing the vital role that local elected officials play in promoting effective governance, NACo worked with a bipartisan group of lawmakers to re-introduce the Restore the Partnership Act, spearheaded by Representative Gerry Connolly (D-Va.) and Marc Molinaro (R-N.Y.). This legislation aims to strengthen the relationship between the federal government and local governments, ensuring effective collaboration and improved policy outcomes. Additionally, NACo successfully re-established the Former Local Elected Officials Caucus for the 118th Congress. The bipartisan Caucus is comprised of former county elected officials that have a unique perspective on the impact federal policies have on the ground. NACo is actively working with the Caucus with the ultimate goal of strengthening the intergovernmental partnership necessary to achieve results for our shared constituencies.

The above are just a few items NACo is tracking for Iowa counties and the rest of the nation's counties, parishes, and boroughs. We continued to oversee the implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provide feedback to Congressional leadership for the 2023 Farm Bill and urge passage of critical legislation for disaster relief, workforce development, housing, and broadband.



# How NACo Membership Empowers County IT Teams for Success

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has developed a strong technology presence that connects a multitude of technology leaders, including the CIO and executive leadership, as well as system analysts, infrastructure, security, and GIS professionals. What draws these individuals to NACo are the broad and relevant technology programs and services, summarized in the following paragraphs:

## Tech Xchange

The NACo County Tech Xchange is an online portal designed to connect county CIOs, IT directors, security officers, and other county IT leadership. Primarily, it's a network that allows members to have informative and productive interactions on federal, state, local, and corporate technology topics that result in constant progress and growth for participants. Provided through the program is access to weekly and monthly Information Technology communications that share national updates as well as NACo Technology Corporate partner resources, upcoming cutting-edge presentations, and crucial technology webinars. The Tech Xchange portal is a valuable resource that members have access to. Available on this portal is a litany of digital resources including templates, job descriptions, toolkits, and TechBriefs. New for 2023 are several Corporate Partner pilots on cyber security and low-code/no-code.



**Rita Reynolds**

NACo Chief Information Officer (CIO)

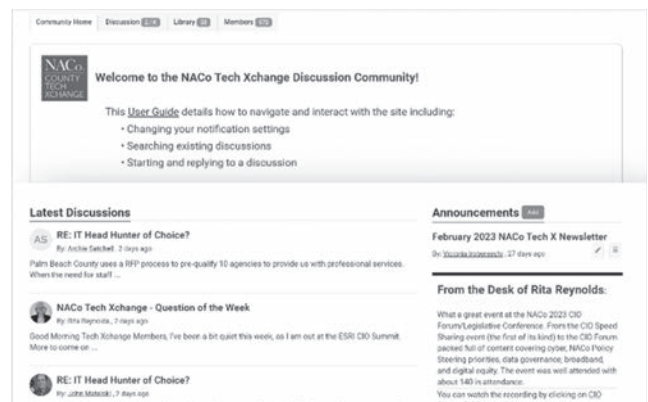


**Victoria Irobereachi**

Technology Network Administrative Assistant

## Cyber Simulations

The NACo Cyber Simulations are offered on a quarterly basis in partnership with the Professional Development Academy. NACo members participate not just in run-of-the-mill simulations, but experience an immersion into crucial cybersecurity information that realistically pulls participants into new insights! As an essential part of an organization's overall cybersecurity strategy, these cyber simulations provide counties a way to proactively test their security incident plans and identify and address potential vulnerabilities before they can be exploited by attackers. Within a sensational simulated online environment, organizations can improve their readiness to detect, prevent, and respond to cyber threats and attacks. For the remainder of 2023, the scenarios will focus on the Internet of Things (IoT), Ransomware, and Employee Management (Insider threat).



## TechKnow Series Webinars

New for 2023, NACo has introduced monthly deep dives into vast and varied technical discussions led by one or two counties. Tech Xchange members who have the unlimited subscription can engage in discussions on new technology products or topics such as ChatGPT or AI and get a better feel for industry insights through the eyes of other county IT leaders. Instead of just an online presentation, county IT peers share:

- Product demonstrations: The features and benefits of a potential new product or service;
- Training and education: Training staff and end users learn how to use a particular technology product or service – even offering first-hand experience use in the field; and
- Industry insights: Trends and best practices around implementing commercial off-the-shelf software.

# How NACo Membership Empowers County IT Teams for Success

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## TechBriefs

Another new feature for Tech Xchange Unlimited subscribers are the quarterly TechBriefs. These publications are concise and eye-catching documents that provide an overview of new technology, products, or solutions, and introduce new innovations to members. The information provided through NACo TechBriefs covers a range of topics from Cyber Insurance, Contract language, the rise of ChatGPT, and technology and privacy. The TechBrief format includes sections on the following topics.

- Problem statement
- History
- Feature and benefits
- How it works
- Implementation
- Challenges
- Recommended strategies
- County perspective

## Committee Opportunities

Rounding out the Tech Xchange are the multiple opportunities through committee membership where NACo members can make a difference. These include (IT Standing, Geographic Information System (GIS) Subcommittee, Telecommunications and Technology Committee as well as the (invite only) NACo Technology Advisory Council.) These committees come together to generate conversation and actions toward understanding the technology needed to support essential county functions. The critical role in delivering efficient and effective public services, including emergency services, healthcare, transportation, public safety, and the administrative functions that thread it all together rely on and derive from the minds and mindfulness of these committees. Discussion on strategizing ways to streamline operations, reduce extensive costs, and improve communication and collaboration across IT infrastructure, systems, and policies are a part of all of these committees. A full listing of NACo committees is available at [NACo.org](https://www.naco.org). Additional information for each committee follows:

- **NACo Information Technology Standing Committee** meets virtually the first week of each month. The IT Standing committee has two roles: one is to ensure that the organization's technology systems and processes align with the organization's overall goals and objectives; and two is to provide members with education, knowledge, and information on emerging technology trends and issues and to provide members with the opportunity to assist in building NACo strategies to address emerging issues whenever the need arises.
- **NACo GIS Subcommittee** gathers virtually four times a year and in-person at each of the two NACo conferences. Within the GIS Subcommittee, the discussion is more multi-faceted and focuses on system designs that capture, store, manipulate, analyze, and display spatial or geographic data. This type of technology is crucial for organizations that rely heavily on spatial data, such as local governments, utilities, and environmental agencies. The subcommittee discusses support and caution in the decision-making for a wide range of applications, offering insight into the rapid developments in this field, leading to informed planning for long-term use, emergency responses, transportation, and public healthcare. For the near future, this subcommittee will also be bringing into the conversations autonomous innovation.
- **NACo Telecommunications and Technology Committee** meets virtually on a monthly basis as well as in person at the NACo Conferences. The Committee focuses on all matters pertaining to telecommunications and technology policy, including, but not limited to: the county role as a telecommunications regulator, service provider, and consumer; cable services technology and implementation; information technology development and implementation; and information technology innovation, e-governance, and geo-spatial data collection and utilization.

## Emerging Issues

This year is leaving its mark on the world of technology. Earlier in 2023, was the carryover from 2022 and whether TikTok for government use was problematic. NACo provided guidance to counties. And now at the time of this writing, Generative AI and ChatGPT and derivatives are taking the world by firestorm. Generative AI is already demonstrating huge benefits for counties. As one county IT leader stated, "It gets you 70% of the way there, and

# How NACo Membership Empowers County IT Teams for Success

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you fill in the last 30%. It's definitely a productivity multiplier." While possessing a wealth of benefits, there are also risks and challenges that will need to be addressed as generative AI continues to evolve. NACo has issued a TechBrief on ChatGPT to its Tech Xchange members and has also provided initial thoughts in a recent [article](#). We will continue to evaluate the changing landscape and engage with county IT leaders to know how best to proceed in providing additional resources and representation for counties.



A considerable amount of work is being done to support counties in their technological growth and strategy development. Our commitment to providing NACo members with resources, education, and guidance remains unwavering, with the NACo Tech Xchange serving as a valuable tool for achieving this goal year-round. If you're interested in learning more about NACo's technology programs or committees, we encourage you to visit the County Tech Xchange or reach out to either Rita Reynolds, NACo CIO, at [rreynolds@naco.org](mailto:rreynolds@naco.org) or Kimberly Ransom at [kransom@naco.org](mailto:kransom@naco.org) for more information.



# To Be a Leader, Be a Learner

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Learning may not always come from those above you on the career ladder. Peers and direct reports may have valuable lessons to share — if you are open to them.

Effective leadership, like success in life, is as much a social journey as it is a learning journey. There is simply too much change happening for anyone to expect success without change. As Marc Varner, corporate VP and global CISO at Yum Brands, says, “If you are not in pursuit of continual improvement, you will soon find yourself extinct. Any great leader never ceases to learn.”

So, how do you learn throughout your career? Roland Cloutier, ADP’s chief security officer, said, “You learn by watching people and how they live out their sense of mission.” Steve Young, chief information security officer at Kellogg Co., said, “You learn from your peers.” Louie Ehrlich, former president of IT and chief information officer at Chevron, said simply, “Find a buddy.” And, from there, look for opportunities to access mentors, coaches and thought-leaders that will give you a depth and breadth of knowledge.

In life and in your career, success comes from your ability to learn continually. Whether you’re a vice president, director, or on the frontline, having a mentor and a path to bettering your leadership skills is critical. Don’t be afraid to ask someone you know to help coach you. You learn from being curious, and you learn from doing.

NACo is a believer in the importance of learning critical leadership skills and has collaborated with the Professional Development Academy and its community of industry leading CEOs, CISOs, acclaimed professors, coaches, and thought leaders such as General Colin Powell and Marshall Goldsmith to deliver the NACo High Performance Leadership Academy and NACo Enterprise Cybersecurity Leadership Academy.

These Leadership Academies have been designed to move frontline managers forward in their careers. These are affordable, state-of-the-art development programs that require no travel and are designed for busy county professionals and emerging leaders.

Thanks to a scholarship program NACo has created, the program is high-impact and financially accessible. NACo will provide a scholarship of \$1,000. Counties may enroll additional participants at the discounted rate of \$1,995 each.

If you’re focused on leadership, this is an opportunity you won’t want to pass up. You can enroll immediately for the August 2023 program. Reach out to Luke Afeman at 503.908.5381 or [lukea@pdaleadership.com](mailto:lukea@pdaleadership.com) to secure a spot for you and your team!

On the way up the ladder, your learning will come from a variety of leaders and influencers. Find those teachers and keep being curious, continually working to provide a critical business impact.



**Tim Rahschulte**  
CEO and Chief Learning Officer  
Professional Development Academy

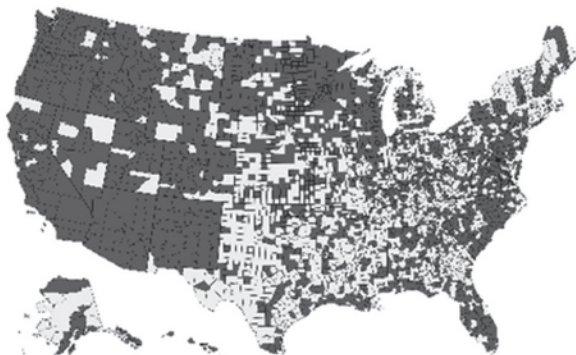
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The need for strong leadership skills is more important than ever as we adjust to shifting challenges in labor and the economy.

The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is an innovative, completely online, 12-week program created to equip frontline county government professionals with practical leadership skills to deliver results for counties and communities.

With a robust curriculum developed by the Professional Development Academy in partnership with Fortune 1000 executives, public sector leaders, world-renowned academics, and thought leaders, including General Colin Powell and Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, HPLA was designed specifically for the unique challenges and opportunities of serving in county government. It has been described by one graduate this way:

“I can say hands-down it was the best leadership training I’ve ever experienced. Want to know General Colin Powell’s 13 keys to leadership? He tells you. Want to know how to communicate and negotiate? He offers his secrets. Want to know how to best manage people? He drops stories that will give you confidence. And it’s not just him. Executives from across the country are invited in as coaches, too. It’s an incredible cast of experts.”



 **5,100+** Program Participants

 **1,690+** Counties & Associations

**\$ 5m+** In Scholarship Savings

**NACo is now offering a \$1,995 scholarship for the first enrollee from your county. That means, when you or another leader at the county enrolls, the cost is not \$2,995; it is \$1000.**

2023 Cohorts	Start Date	Graduation
August	7/31/2023	11/3/2023
September	9/18/23	12/22/2023

Please reach out to Luke Afeman at 503-908-5381 or [lukea@pdleadership.com](mailto:lukea@pdleadership.com) with any enrollment questions.

# 2023 NACo Annual Conference

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NACo holds two large conferences each year. The Legislative Conference is in February in Washington, D.C., and the Annual Conference moves locations each July. This year's event is being held July 21-24 in Austin, Texas. Registration for the conference is currently open, and there is still plenty of time to book your trip.

There are countless reasons to attend the Annual Conference, but I'll focus on a few that overlap: 1. Education; 2. Networking; and 3. Participation in YOUR organization.

The conference agenda, which is available at [NACo.org](https://www.naco.org), is jam-packed with educational programming. It includes policy steering committee meetings, caucus meetings, educational sessions, tours, general sessions, and much more. The exhibit hall is also a great place to learn about services offered to counties by companies and other organizations. A lot of networking occurs in the exhibit hall as well. When attending any conference, some of the best education happens when you are talking with your counterparts from other states about shared experiences. Not only in the exhibit hall, the hallways, before and after meetings, but NACo does a great job of hosting networking events throughout the conference that offer the optimal atmosphere to meet and to learn from other county officials.

Participation by its members is of utmost importance to NACo. Members drive the organization, and it's through these conferences that a lot of the work gets done in setting policy and priorities. The Annual Business Meeting during which policies are approved and leadership is elected also occurs during the Annual Conference.

Each year Iowa has anywhere from around 10-20 county professionals attend each of the NACo conferences, but we'd like to see more of you join us. Austin would be a great place to start. If you have any questions, big or small, please reach out to me. We'll hope to see you there!



**Rachel Bennett**

ISAC Member Relations Manager  
[rbennett@iowacounties.org](mailto:rbennett@iowacounties.org)

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# Why Iowa Counties Should Be Involved with NACo

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Courtney Biere, the magazine's production and layout coordinator, asked us to write an article on the benefits of becoming a NACo member and why ISAC members should attend a NACo Conference.

When one of us was profiled in NACo's *County News* last year (It was Melvyn.), they asked why his county was a NACo member. His response was, "It's much better than the alternative." There are too many reasons and advantages for membership to put in one article. Each topic deserves its own write-up. We'll just mention a few.

**Agriculture and Rural Affairs:** Many Iowans are from farm backgrounds or from rural areas. NACo staff are deeply involved with rural issues, working closely with the Department of Agriculture. These include broadband, wastewater (think WOTUS), clean water, the Farm Bill, and many others.

**Transportation:** The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created funding for roads and bridges via several loans and grant opportunities. NACo has many resources to learn more about this. What Iowa county supervisor isn't interested in the condition of their county roads and bridges? Supervisors aren't the only ones interested, but we know who holds the purse strings and who has to make the tough budget decisions.

**Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs:** Here is a story. One of Melvyn's supervisors was complaining about the economy and inflation affecting county budgets. Melvyn asked the supervisor, "Would you rather be at the table or on the menu? Maybe you should go to a NACo conference and get involved in affecting federal legislation." The supervisor did go. He didn't regret it one bit. "There is so much to learn," he reported to Melvyn.

Those are just three of NACo's 10 policy area steering committees. The others are: Community, Economy, and Workforce Development; Environment, Energy, and Land Use; Health, Human Services, and Education; Justice and Public Safety; Public Lands; and Telecommunications and Technology. We are both members of the Finance, Pensions, and Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee and its Elections Subcommittee. Are there any auditor/election commissioners reading this interested in federal election legislation? We bet so.

Not only does NACo facilitate these 10 policy committees that propose federal legislation, it supports other committees such as Arts and Culture, Healthy Counties Initiative, Veteran Affairs, and the Rural Action Caucus, among others that may interest you.

We understand that budget constraints may not allow you to go to a conference. That doesn't mean you can't still get involved and participate. Since the pandemic forced us to meet electronically, committees have been holding regular meetings online. These monthly updates keep you informed on federal happenings. Getting on a steering committee is as easy as emailing ISAC Executive Director Bill Peterson ([bpeterson@iowacounties.org](mailto:bpeterson@iowacounties.org)) and requesting an appointment.



**Melvyn Houser**  
Pottawattamie County Auditor



**Grant Veeder**  
Black Hawk County Auditor

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# Why Iowa Counties Should Be Involved with NACo

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Attending a conference in person, however, has added advantages. There is much more content than you would get on a Zoom call or webinar. There are so many workshops covering county-related topics that you might find yourself in a quandary deciding which ones to go to. And you will meet lots of interesting people who deal with the same issues that you deal with. Just like your county counterparts in Iowa, county people from around the country are wonderful, smart people who not only have great ideas of their own but who are interested in your great ideas. And, just like we have really fantastic staff at ISAC, NACo, too has really fantastic staff.

Do you have to take our word for it? Of course not. Here's a testimonial from Clay County Supervisor, Barry Anderson: "My auditor told me back when I first got elected, 'You are a policy setter. You need to be at ISAC and NACo. If you don't speak up, who will speak for us?' That stuck with me from day one." Anderson went on to say, "Another thing that just lights me up is when supervisors will say that you don't get anything out of NACo, and it's a waste of time and money. I can get something out of any conversation, any topic, but I want to learn. I want to bring new ideas back to Clay County. My feeling of NACo is that I attend to make myself better as well as bringing rural ideas to others. And, we do have some great ideas." Thanks, Barry.

Here's another testimonial from Ringgold County Auditor, Amanda Waske: "I had the opportunity to attend the NACo Legislative Conference for the first time this year. What an amazing experience! I was able to network with fellow public officials and gain new ideas to bring back to my county and affiliate. The presentations throughout the conference were truly invaluable. Even as a small Iowa county, I took something away from every session I attended. And the friendships I made, wow, I just cannot say enough good things about this conference. I highly encourage everyone to attend the Legislative Conference." Thanks, Amanda.



But maybe you're more of a dollars-and-cents kind of person, and you want to know, "How will NACo membership directly benefit my county and its constituents?" How about a program that collects debts owed to your county? How about a no-cost program offering prescription, medical, and dental discounts for uninsured and underinsured residents *and their pets*? How about influencing legislation so that over **\$65 billion** in federal aid is sent **directly** to counties?

You can google "NACo cost saving tools" to find more, but let's go back to the \$65 billion. When Congress and the President provided counties with funds to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the CARES Act of 2020, the aid was filtered through the states. Counties wondered why decisions about money spent locally couldn't be handled locally. County officials from all over the country expressed their dissatisfaction. And guess what? When Congress met to discuss further assistance to combat the widespread damage of the pandemic, NACo, which, instead of being on the menu, had a seat at the table of the negotiations over the new law, strongly advocated for the money meant for local governments to go directly to local governments. NACo was successful in that effort, to the tune of \$65.1 billion going to counties. Of that, \$7.5 billion went to counties under 50,000 population, like most counties in Iowa.

We don't need to explain to you what that money has been able to make possible in Iowa counties. But what we want you to think about is how it is that an organization like NACo can be successful in achieving such an accomplishment. It needs the input, the involvement, the passion, and the dues of counties large and small all over this broad land.

Do yourself a favor. Do your constituents a favor. Do your peers throughout the United States a favor. Get involved in the organization that benefits the nation's 3,069 counties. Get involved in NACo, the voice of America's counties.

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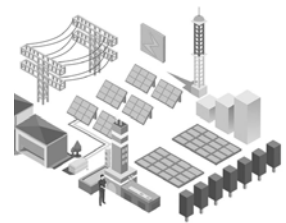
**What:** A survey about local communities' views and decisions on zoning for utility-scale solar energy systems, led by researchers at Iowa State University.

**Why:** Your participation will help improve our understanding of the important factors in local zoning practices regarding solar energy and the design of extension programs that best serve the needs of local communities.

**How:** To participate, scan the QR code or go to <https://go.iastate.edu/RLZ2I6>.

**Reward:** The survey takes about **15 minutes** to complete. And we offer an electronic gift card of **\$35** to thank you for taking the time to complete our questionnaire.

Solar energy holds great potential as part of Iowa's renewable energy portfolio. Land use and zoning related issues are critical and policies are being developed and intensely debated.



**Contact:** Hongli Feng ([hfeng@iastate.edu](mailto:hfeng@iastate.edu)), Elizabeth Hoffman ([bhoffman@iastate.edu](mailto:bhoffman@iastate.edu)), or Luke Seaberg ([seaberg@iastate.edu](mailto:seaberg@iastate.edu)) at Iowa State University.



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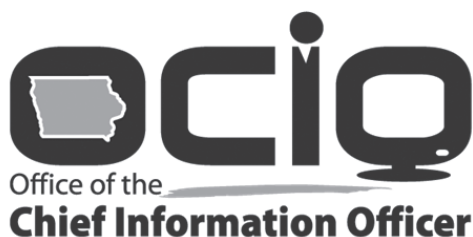
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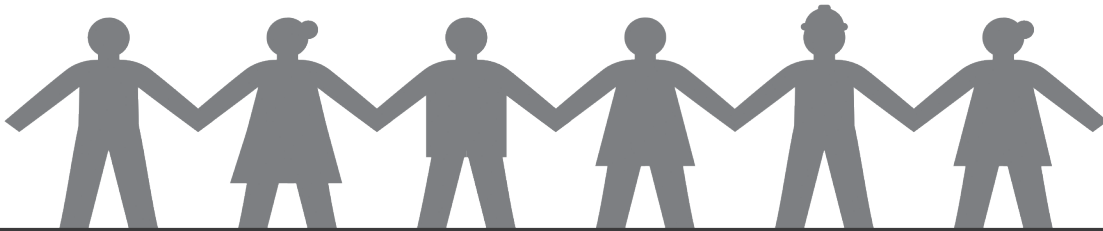


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## 2023 Calendar

### June 2023

- 15-16 Records Summer Conference  
(Burlington, Iowa)
- 20-23 ISACA Summer Conference  
(Hilton Garden Inn West Des Moines)
- 28 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(Virtual)

### July 2023

- 12 ISAC Education Foundation Golf Fundraiser  
(Toad Valley Golf Course, Pleasant Hill)
- 21-24 NACo Annual Conference  
(Travis County/Austin, Texas)

### August 2023

- 22 LPC Retreat  
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit  
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)
- 23-25 ISAC Annual Conference  
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit  
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

### September 2023

- 19-22 ISSDA Fall Jail School  
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 20-22 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat  
(Linn County, Iowa)

### October 2023

- 8-11 Assessors Fall Conference  
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

### November 2023

- 15 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

### December 2023

- 12-15 ISSDA Winter School  
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 13-15 77th Annual Iowa County Engineers Conference  
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit  
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

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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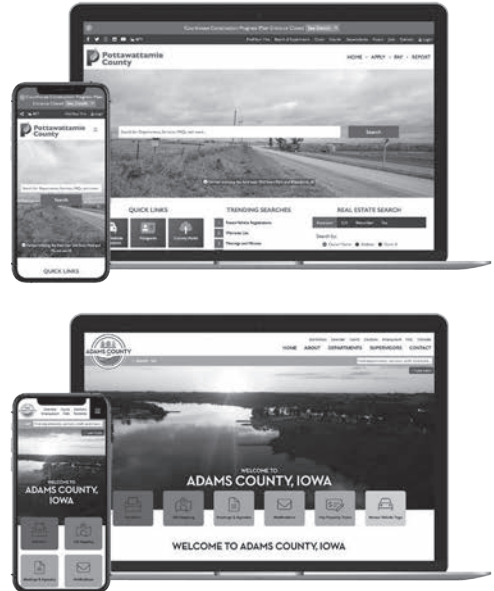
Rebecca Bissell  
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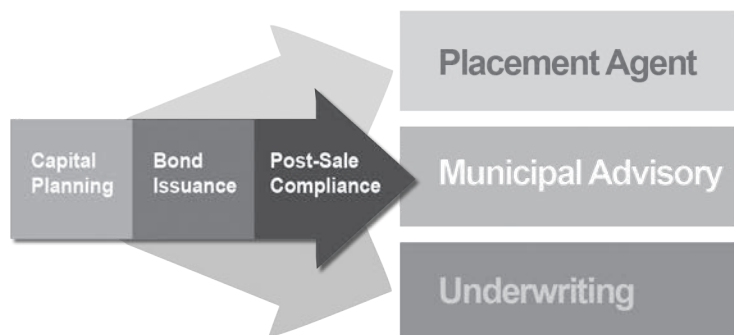


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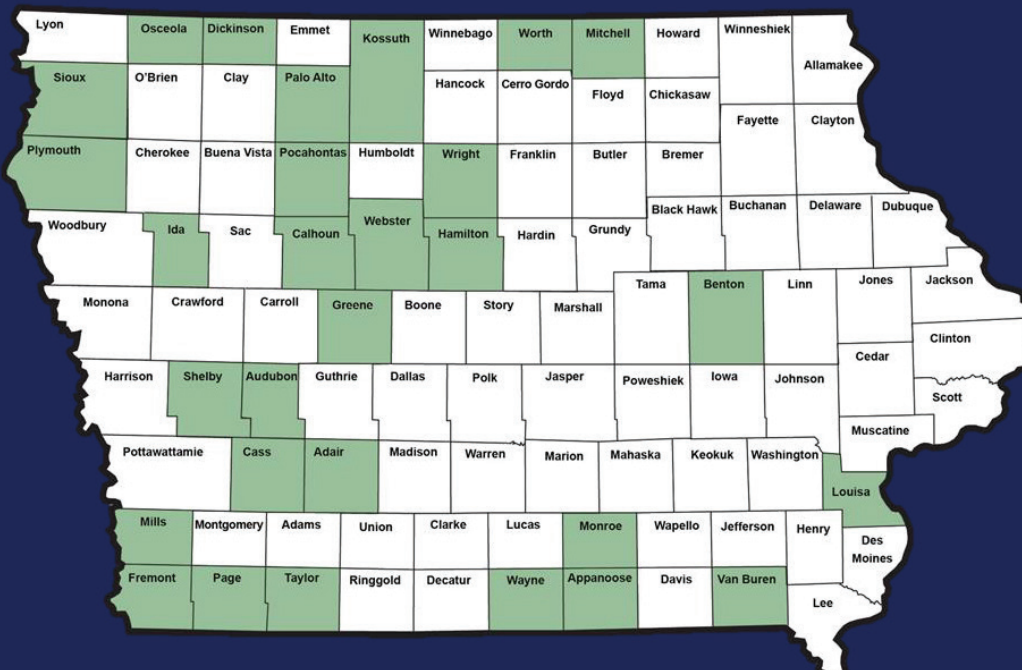
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