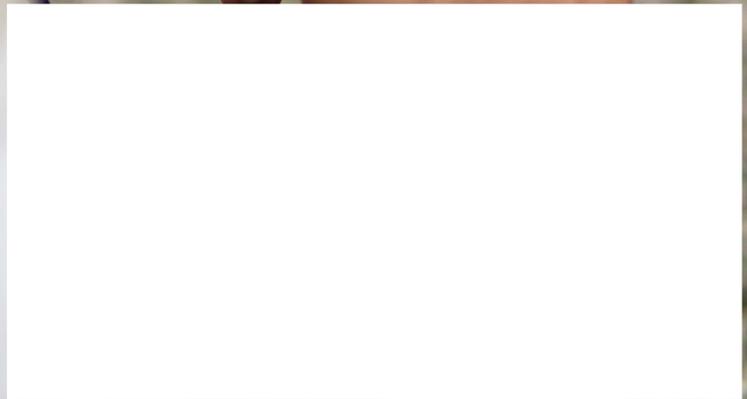


The Iowa County Magazine



March 2026
The Road Ahead for
County Technology
ADA Title II Digital
Accessibility Rule



YOU'RE ALMOST DONE WITH A
LANDSCAPING PROJECT. YOU'VE ONLY
GOT **5 YARDS OF ROCK** TO PUT IN 3 BEDS.
BUT THE NEWBIE **ACCIDENTALLY TORE A**
HYDRAULIC HOSE, LEAVING YOU WITH 5
YARDS OF ROCK TO SHOVEL BY HAND.
THAT'S WHEN YOU **CALL YOUR ZIEGLER**
REP. HE LINES UP YOUR REPAIR BY 2 PM
SO YOU CAN **COMPLETE THE**
PROJECT ON TIME.

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THE  DEALER

GET IT DONE AT ZIEGLERCAT.COM

The Iowa County

March 2026 * Volume 55, Number 3

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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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The Road Ahead: Your County's Technology Journey

Imagine setting out on a road trip with a map in hand, ready for adventure, only to find that the scenic highway you were enjoying suddenly transitions into an expensive toll-road, or worse yet, a dead end with no alternate route marked. These kinds of surprises and disappointments seem all too common in this day and age, especially when it comes to technology. The map is constantly shifting. New and exciting destinations appear beyond every horizon, along with countless potholes, roadblocks, and traffic jams. Even roads we travel on a regular basis change over time — for better or worse. Change is never-ending, but having an experienced guide beside you, someone who knows the terrain and can adapt to its changes, makes all the difference. While the journey's end may always be just out of reach, the right companion ensures you never have to face the unknown alone, making the road ahead manageable.



Eric Guth
ISAC Technology Services
Program Manager
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In 2026, counties are dealing with major challenges, such as governance of artificial intelligence tools, meeting website accessibility requirements, and addressing ongoing cyber threats. Technology is evolving faster today than at any point in modern history, and the pace is only accelerating. For Iowa's counties, this shift creates both opportunity and pressure. Internal systems and processes must adapt to address new challenges and needs, usually without extra staff or resources.

The ISAC Technology Service Bureau (TSB) is on a mission: to be a guide for Iowa counties as they navigate technology needs and issues. While our full suite of services is still evolving, TSB is preparing to assist counties with several emerging technology issues that demand county attention and action.

Artificial Intelligence: Promise, Risk, and the Need for Governance

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming both our work and personal lives. From citizen engagement, assisting staff with drafting documents, summarizing information, or automating repetitive tasks, AI presents many opportunities and challenges for counties.

However, these benefits come with risks:

- Misuse of generative AI tools
- Exposure of sensitive data
- Inaccurate or fabricated outputs (“hallucinations”)
- Lack of established AI policies or guardrails

To help counties adopt AI safely and effectively, TSB is compiling and developing example AI policies to help counties adapt to this change. Counties should not feel pressured to use AI in every way possible, but having a policy in place to provide guidance to county staff on appropriate or inappropriate uses is essential in this era of AI chatbots and assistants. TSB is here to advocate for your needs and help you build a responsible, manageable approach.

Cybersecurity Awareness Training: Strengthening County Defenses

Cybersecurity threats are constantly evolving, and human error remains one of the leading causes of security breaches. Effective cybersecurity awareness training equips county staff to identify risks, avoid common pitfalls such as phishing emails, and respond appropriately to suspicious activity. By promoting a culture of vigilance, counties can greatly reduce their exposure to cyber threats and improve their overall security posture.

The Road Ahead: Your County's Technology Journey

Counties reap many benefits from effective training:

- Staff are better equipped to identify and avoid cyber risks and scams
- Reduced likelihood of successful cyberattacks and data breaches
- Improved overall security posture for the county
- Creation of a proactive and vigilant workplace culture

TSB is ready to assist counties in developing robust cybersecurity awareness training programs that ensure county technology users at all levels receive engaging, relevant, and easy-to-understand content. Many counties have implemented cybersecurity awareness training programs — has yours?

Counties are encouraged to make regular cybersecurity awareness training a fundamental part of their cybersecurity strategies. TSB will provide guidance and support to help counties select and deploy effective training tools tailored to their unique needs.

Accessibility Requirements: WCAG Compliance Is Coming

In 2024, the federal government updated the ADA rules to require state and local governments, including counties, to make their websites and online services accessible to people with disabilities. This rule sets a clear standard—known by the technical name of “WCAG 2.1 Level AA”—and makes digital accessibility a legal requirement, not just a best practice. Because of this, counties likely will need to make real changes to websites, documents, videos, and online tools over the next few years to meet the law.

Counties should begin preparing now:

- Create an inventory of online websites and resources
- Seek out accessibility readiness assessments
- Obtain training for staff who create web content or documents
- Require built-in accessibility when procuring new public-facing technology

Email Security, Phishing Trends, and Threat Intelligence

Email continues to be a common entry point for cyberattacks against county government. Iowa counties are seeing:

- Highly targeted spear phishing
- Invoice and payroll fraud attempts
- Malware hidden in shared cloud documents
- AI-generated phishing emails that look increasingly authentic

TSB is working to expand threat intelligence sharing across counties and provide guidance on email protection tools, user training, and incident response practices. A single well-crafted phishing email can impact operations for weeks or more — awareness and preparation are essential.

M365: Underused Tools That Can Transform County Work

Many counties already have access to powerful Microsoft 365 applications, but only use a small fraction of the tools and features available. Services like OneDrive, SharePoint, Calendar sharing, Bookings, and Teams tools can dramatically improve efficiency, especially for small teams.

And with new AI capabilities emerging across the platform, including Microsoft Copilot, counties may find themselves with powerful tools even before policies, training, or expectations are in place.

The Road Ahead: Your County's Technology Journey

TSB can help counties evaluate:

- What tools they already own
- What helpful features are being underutilized
- What training staff need to work more efficiently
- Opportunities to modernize workflows without increasing cost

We Want to Hear From You

As we continue developing TSB services, **your input will shape our priorities**. Counties across Iowa are facing many challenges, from managing cybersecurity requirements, navigating vendor contracts, and supporting daily technology needs of staff.

What technology challenges are you facing today?

Where could statewide technology advocacy or shared technology services make the biggest difference?

Please share your feedback by clicking on the link or scanning the QR code below: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=H0Dmhf3Xwk-y_9pFLa9QeMZEnXAJwrFLqkv8IKk_nmhUQVpMSVRDWINYNVQyVDczRVZEMVA4MzVLNi4u



Your insights will help ensure that TSB delivers the tools, guidance, and support Iowa counties need to thrive in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

Opioid Settlement Funds Become Second Chance in Iowa Counties

Inside a community library, a vending machine hums softly and dispenses a small box. The box is neither soda nor snack, but naloxone, commonly known as Narcan, the nasal spray opioid reversal drug. This won't satisfy your hunger or quench your thirst, but it provides something far more valuable at no cost to the public: time. Time for an ambulance to arrive, time to take another breath, time to get into recovery, or time for a family member or friend to have a second chance at life.



Sam Jarvis
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The Board of Supervisors in Johnson County have taken careful steps to assess and understand their community's opioid use situation. The challenge takes recognizing that each community is different, knowing the resources you have (and don't), and identifying the agencies that have a heavier burden in their role with saving and changing lives. The opioid settlement funding received feels like the 'once in a lifetime' funding source that was the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), but far narrower. The list provided in Exhibit E reads long, but after review, many recognize there isn't much wiggle room, so it's time to get creative.

Through months of meetings, tough conversations about money, guidance from the county attorney, and input from community members, nonprofit agencies, healthcare, law enforcement, and EMS, Johnson County carved a path forward. Johnson County Public Health collected the initial data that would inform several aspects of conversation and planning, and the Board's financial and grant management team established parameters for a fair and thoughtful process.

But before reaching this milestone, one aspect of this funding was clear: we can implement critical life saving measures now. A two-pronged approach would be necessary, one to immediately save lives and the other to look upstream where we can make the most impact. Getting Narcan in the right hands at the right time had to be first. A broad, community-wide project for Narcan access would also likely remove duplicate requests for funding and allow for bulk purchasing.

Over time, Narcan has become more accessible through programs at the state health department and the FDA's approval for over-the-counter access. In spite of this, accessibility, cost, training, and location can still be barriers. Our harm reduction vending machine project reviewed data on fatal overdoses, foot traffic patterns, and geographic distribution, then sought neutral host sites where fear of stigma would be reduced.



The reception in our community has been profound. People are recognizing that this isn't just an issue in any one community or age group — this epidemic has touched the lives of many. We are seeing community-wide education take hold; more folks now understand what Narcan is and what it is used for. Several of our machines are located at libraries — amazing places to learn, work, or relax, and often some of the very few locations in a community where someone can go without being required to buy anything. Others are in locations with high traffic and good exposure to the public.

Another key offering that has increased the machines' success are gun locks donated by our Veteran Affairs Medical Center; they're the second-most stocked item. If you want to follow along and read more about the work being done in Johnson County, head to: <https://johnson-county-opioid-response-johnsoncounty.hub.arcgis.com/>. A special thanks to our public health partners at Linn County Public Health and the Polk County Health Department who paved the way for much of this work in our state. We were able to stand on their shoulders and now, in turn, hope that this helps others see this as an opportunity as well.

The ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule

What Iowa Counties Need to Know—and How to Prepare

County governments are digital service providers. From board agendas and election information to public health notices, job postings, emergency alerts, and online payments, counties increasingly rely on websites and digital tools to deliver services to the public.

In April 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) finalized the **Title II Digital Accessibility Rule**, clarifying what the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has required for years: state and local governments must ensure their digital services are accessible to people with disabilities. For counties, this rule is not about perfection or remediating everything ever posted online. It is about effective communication, thoughtful planning, and long-term management—ensuring residents with disabilities can access county information and services equitably.

GREAT PLAINS



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What Is the Title II Digital Accessibility Rule?

Title II of the ADA applies to state and local governments, including counties. The DOJ’s final rule makes explicit that Title II obligations extend to:

- County websites
- Online services and forms
- Digital documents (PDFs, Word files, PowerPoint presentations)
- Mobile apps and web-based tools

To measure accessibility, the rule adopts **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA** as the technical standard. If a county provides information or services digitally, people with disabilities must be able to use them with substantially equivalent ease and effectiveness.

Title II Digital Accessibility Compliance Deadlines

The DOJ rule includes phased compliance deadlines based on population size.

Table 1. Title II Digital Accessibility Compliance Deadlines for Counties

County Population Size	Compliance Deadline
Counties serving 50,000 or more people	April 24, 2026
Counties serving fewer than 50,000 people	April 26, 2027

These deadlines are based on the population served by the county. After the applicable compliance date, counties must continue to ensure that their web content and mobile apps meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA. The deadlines apply to new and updated digital content, including websites, documents, forms, and online services.

Why This Matters for Counties

Counties serve residents at critical moments, including:

- Paying taxes or fees
- Registering to vote or reviewing election materials
- Accessing court information
- Applying for benefits or employment
- Receiving emergency or public health updates

For people with disabilities, inaccessible digital content can mean missed deadlines, lost services, legal consequences, or safety risks. The ADA frames this as **effective communication**, not simply technical compliance. The focus is whether residents can obtain information independently, accurately, and on time, regardless of disability.

The ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule

How People with Disabilities Access County Digital Content

Residents with disabilities may use:

- Screen readers that convert text into speech or braille
- Keyboard navigation instead of a mouse
- Screen magnification or zoom
- Voice control software
- Captions and transcripts for audio and video
- Plain language to support comprehension, especially during stressful situations

These tools rely on structure, not visual appearance. Headings, labels, link text, document titles, and reading order determine whether assistive technology can navigate content effectively. Accessibility begins with how content is created, not just how it looks.

What WCAG Means for Counties

WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) is an international standard developed by the World Wide Web Consortium. While WCAG includes technical success criteria, its purpose is practical: ensuring digital content is **perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust**.

The Title II rule requires **WCAG 2.1 Level AA**, which represents the point where digital content becomes usable for most people with disabilities. WCAG should be viewed as a baseline, not a ceiling. Counties may meet the standard and still need to respond if a resident cannot access information.

WCAG in Practice: The Stitch-In Nine

Rather than thinking about WCAG as dozens of technical checkpoints, counties may find it more useful to think about accessibility as **nine practical elements that should be stitched into everyday digital content creation**.

These elements apply across webpages, documents, forms, and media—and together support compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA. This approach reflects how county work actually happens: many people creating content across departments and vendors.

Table 2. The Stitch-In Nine for County Digital Content

Stitch-In Element	What This Means in Practice	Common County Examples
File Identification	Clear document titles, correct language, descriptive file names	Agendas, reports, forms
Writing	Plain language, short sentences, acronyms spelled out	Notices, policies, election info
Structure	Built-in headings, lists, and tables	Web pages, Word docs, PDFs
Color	Sufficient contrast; color not the only cue	Alerts, charts, calendars
Images	Alt text for informative images; decorative images marked decorative	Photos, maps, icons
Links	Descriptive link text and file types identified	“Download Budget (PDF)”
Media	Captions, transcripts, audio descriptions when needed	Recorded meetings
Navigation	Keyboard access; logical reading order	Menus, search, pages, PowerPoints
Forms	Labeled fields, clear instructions, helpful errors	Applications, registrations

The ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule

What Counts as Web Content?

A key clarification in the Title II rule is what qualifies as **web content**.

If content is posted on or linked from a county website, it is considered web content. This includes:

- PDFs and Word documents
- Board agendas and packets
- Forms and applications
- Videos and recorded meetings
- Third-party tools accessed through the site

If residents use it to access county services, it must be accessible.

Third-Party Tools and County Responsibility

Counties often rely on third-party platforms for:

- Online payments
- Scheduling systems
- Calendars
- Registration or ticketing tools

Under the Title II rule, **third-party tools embedded in or accessed through a county website are considered county web content**. Vendors may assist with accessibility, but responsibility remains with the county. Procurement language and vendor coordination are important parts of compliance planning.

Exceptions and What They Do Not Mean

The rule recognizes that counties manage large volumes of legacy content. Certain content may be exempt from proactive remediation, including:

- Archived content created before the compliance date
- Preexisting documents posted before the compliance date
- Individualized, password-protected documents

Even when content is exempt from proactive fixes, **counties must still provide effective communication**. If a resident with a disability requests access, the information must be provided in an accessible format or through another effective method.

A Practical Path Forward for Counties

Step 1: Evaluation — Identify high-traffic pages, time-sensitive content, and interactive tools. Automated tools help, but human review remains essential.

Step 2: Prioritization — Counties are not expected to fix everything at once. Prioritize core services, content required for public participation, and frequently updated pages. Accessibility is about fixing the right things first.

Step 3: Coordination — Digital accessibility is a shared responsibility. Successful counties designate a coordinator or team, clarify staff roles, and coordinate across IT, communications, clerks, HR, and ADA staff

Step 4: Long-Term Management — Accessibility is ongoing. With compliance deadlines approaching, counties that begin training staff and adjusting workflows now will be better positioned to meet requirements without last-minute remediation.

The ADA Title II Digital Accessibility Rule

Training and Support for Iowa Counties

The **Great Plains ADA Center** provides training, technical assistance, and resources to help counties understand and implement ADA requirements, including digital accessibility and the Title II Digital Accessibility Rule.

Counties can access:

- Free and low-cost training opportunities
- Practical guidance for staff who create digital content
- Ongoing technical assistance and consultation

Access Training and Resources

Scan the QR code or use the short link to view a downloadable PDF of training opportunities, upcoming events, and curated digital accessibility resources.

Descriptive Link: [Core Digital Accessibility Resource List \(PDF\)](#)

Short URL: <https://bit.ly/3OheKMI>

QR Code:



Upcoming training opportunities include:

- Virtual ADA Coordinator Symposium — **May 4–6, 2026**
- National ADA Symposium (Phoenix, AZ) — **July 19–22, 2026**

Moving Forward

The Title II Digital Accessibility Rule reinforces what counties already value: access, transparency, and public service. By embedding accessibility into everyday workflows—one document, one webpage, one decision at a time—counties can meet their legal obligations while ensuring all residents can participate fully in civic life.

For technical assistance or training related to the ADA, please contact the Great Plains ADA Center:

- **Phone:** 1-800-949-4232
- **Email:** adacenter@missouri.edu
- **Website:** gpadacenter.org

2026 ISAC Golden Eagle Nominations Now Being Accepted

Since 2010, ISAC has honored individuals as ISAC Golden Eagles during the Annual Conference General Session. 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, that consists of ISAC Board of Directors and staff members. The Committee will then submit its recommendation to the ISAC Board for approval. The ISAC Golden Eagle honoree(s) will be recognized during the 2026 ISAC Annual Conference 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; and/or former members of ISAC staff. *Current ISAC Board members and staff are not eligible.

Honorees will be selected based on 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; advocacy for counties and good local government; and assistance and support to counties.

Past honorees include:

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

2011 – Governor Kim Reynolds, former Clarke County Treasurer

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

2013 – Mike Wentzien, former Supervisors Lobbyist

2014 – Richard Heidloff, former Lyon County Treasurer and ISAC Past President

2015 – Sue Vande Kamp, former Story County Recorder

2016 – Linda Langston, former Linn County Supervisor and NACo Past President

2017 – Wayne Clinton, former Story County Supervisor and ISAC Board member

2018 – Harlan Hansen, former Humboldt County Supervisor and ISAC Past President

2019 – Marge Pitts, former Clay County Auditor and ISAC Past President

2020 – No Golden Eagle

2021 – Lonny Pulkrabek, former Johnson County Sheriff and ISAC Past President

2022 – Melvyn Houser, former Pottawattamie County Auditor and ISAC Past President

2023 – Joan McCalmant, former Linn County Recorder and ISAC Past President

2024 – Burlin Matthews, former Clay County Supervisor and ISAC Past President

2025 – Grant Veeder, former Black Hawk County Auditor, ISAC Past President, and NACo Board Representative

To nominate qualified individuals to be honored as an ISAC Golden Eagle, please complete the form that's available on our website, <https://www.iowacounties.org/about/golden-eagle/>, and return it to: Iowa State Association of Counties, Attn: ISAC Golden Eagle, 5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190, West Des Moines, IA 50266 or cbiere@iowacounties.org.

Please return submissions before May 22, 2026. A Golden Eagle is not guaranteed to be honored annually. If you have any questions regarding the ISAC Golden Eagle, please direct them to cbiere@iowacounties.org or 515.244.7181.



2026 Calendar

March 2026

- 11 ISAC Legislative Reception
(Hilton Des Moines Downtown)
- 12-13 ISAC Spring Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

April 2026

- 1 SEAT Continuing Education
(Crossroads Event Center, Fort Dodge)
- 8 SEAT Continuing Education
(Hilton Garden Inn, Cedar Rapids)
- 8-9 Public Health Conference of Iowa
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 28-5/1 ISSDA Spring Civil School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

May 2026

- 5-8 NACo Western Interstate Region Conference
(Maui County, Hawaii)
- 6-8 IEMA Annual Conference
(Camp Okoboji, Wahpeton)
- 12-15 Treasurers May School
(Isle of Capri Hotel & Conference Center, Bettendorf)
- 20-22 CoZo Spring Conference
(Central College, Pella)
- 31-6/5 Veterans Affairs National Conference
(Reno, NV)

June 2026

- 1-5 ITAG Conference
(Prairie Meadows, Altoona)
- 7-11 ICAA Spring Conference
(Okoboji, IA)

- 17 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser
(Toad Valley Golf Course, Pleasant Hill)
- 18 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 23-26 ISACA Summer Conference
(Okoboji, IA)
- 24-26 ICRA Summer School
(Hilton Garden Inn, Council Bluffs)

July 2026

- 8 ICEA Golf Outing
(Veenker Memorial Golf Course, Ames)
- 9 ICEA Mid-Year Meeting
(Gateway Hotel, Ames)
- 15-17 ICA Summer Seminar
(Hotel Fort Des Moines)
- 17-20 NACo Annual Conference and Exposition
(Orleans Parish, New Orleans, LA)

August 2026

- 9-14 NCRAAO Conference
(Dickinson, ND)
- 19-21 ISAC Annual 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.

2026 ISAC Preferred Vendors

Endorsed Elite Preferred Vendors

County Risk Management Services, Inc.
representing IMWCA
Assured Partners

Elite Preferred Vendors

Community State Bank
Murphy Tractor and Equipment Co.

Endorsed Platinum Preferred Vendor

Iowa Communities Assurance Pool (ICAP)
Iowa Public Agency Investment Trust
(IPAIT)

Platinum Preferred Vendors

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D.A. Davidson Companies
Delta Dental

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ICOG
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ReGov
Schneider Geospatial
Tyler Technologies

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ISG
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Piper Sandler
Purple Wave Auction, Inc.
RSM
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No. 1

In Iowa by par amount & number of transactions for the past five years*

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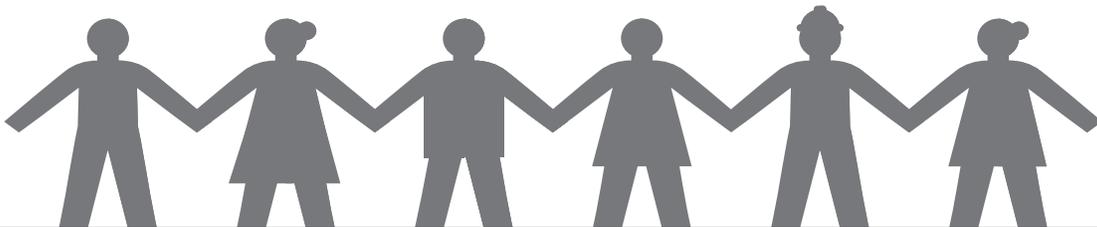
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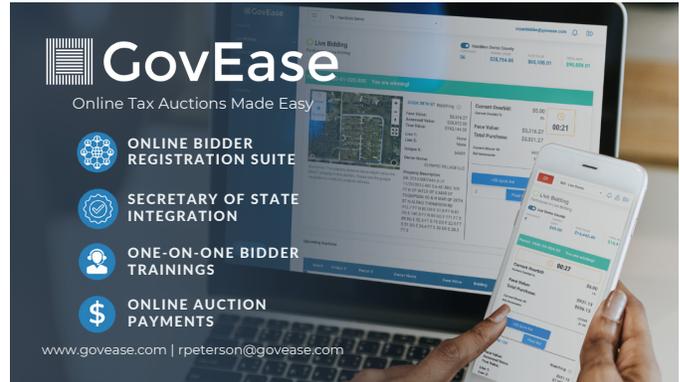
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Waterloo Fiber System — City of Waterloo
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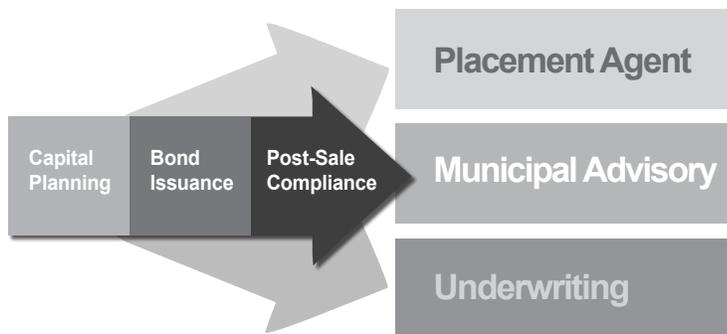
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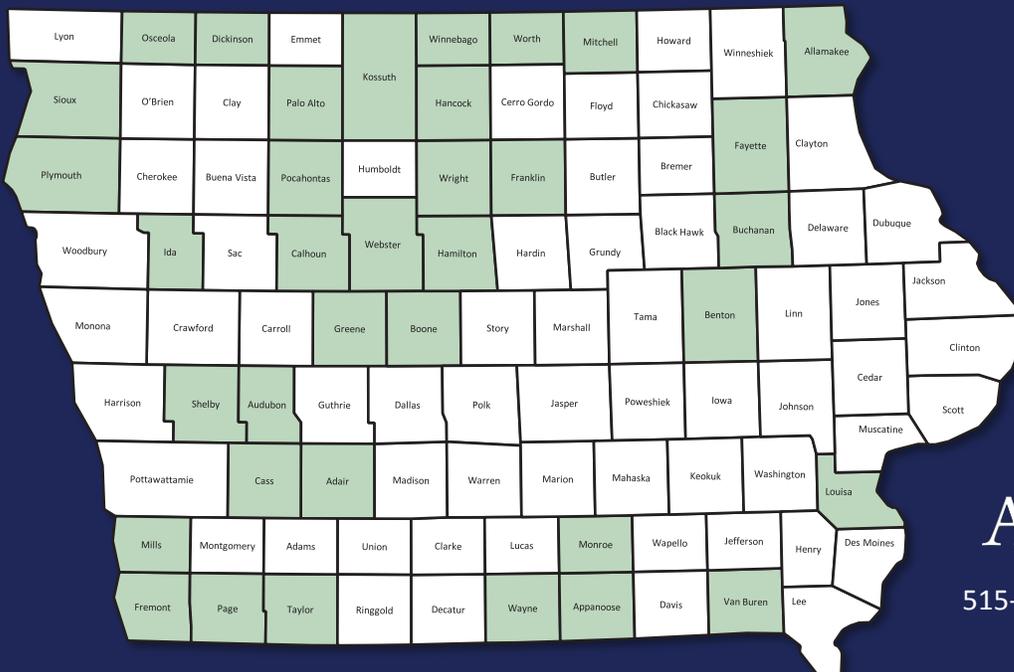
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