

REQUEST for LETTERS of INTEREST

TITLE: Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) Partnership with the University of Iowa for the 2020-21 Academic Year

ISSUE DATE: July 1, 2019

SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: September 1, 2019

Do you have great ideas to improve your community, but not enough time and resources?

Imagine 100+ creative, passionate, and dedicated University of Iowa students and faculty working to make a difference in your community. That's exactly what we've been doing in cities across Iowa through the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) program, a special partnership of the University of Iowa's Office of Outreach and Engagement (OO&E).

Your community could be our next partner.

What is the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC)?

Located in the Provost's Office of Outreach and Engagement at the University of Iowa, the Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC) is a campus-wide effort to enhance the capacity of rural and urban communities in Iowa to address the environmental, equity, economic, and cultural issues they face today and to help them plan for a sustainable future.

Through enhanced community partnerships, IISC invests University of Iowa faculty and student time to increase the capacity of Iowa communities to accomplish meaningful projects. By taking students out of the classroom and into communities to complete real-world projects, IISC accomplishes two university-wide goals: building up communities across the state and transforming teaching and learning at the University of Iowa.

How does IISC work?

The University of Iowa partners with one Iowa community each academic year for the IISC partnership. The special partnership involves UI students, faculty, and staff working alongside leaders and residents in your community to complete **15 to 20 community-based projects**. Because IISC works with students and faculty across a wide range of disciplines, projects can range from **Engineering to Planning to Marketing & Branding**, just to name a few. You tell us about the issues and opportunities in your community, and we find the campus partners best suited to accomplish shared goals.

OO&E staff work with IISC communities throughout the entire process:

- we help you identify and develop local projects, bringing together numerous community-based organizations
- we provide a framework and process for managing the partnership
- we serve as a bridge between community and campus partners, ensuring strong communication
- we support projects with administrative assistance, logistics, advising, and promotion
- we help produce high-quality final deliverables

Collaboration and Co-creation are essential to successful partnerships. Communities contribute to the partnership with their time and a relatively small financial contribution that helps cover project-related expenses. **Community Project Leads** partner with student teams and provide local knowledge, guidance, and expertise. Communities do not pay for the student and faculty time, which can add up to about **20,000 hours of work** over the course of the year. Fees vary based on the type of project, but communities can expect to pay, on average, about \$1,000 per project.

Please note that IISC is not the exclusive way to work with the University of Iowa. Visit our website (<https://outreach.uiowa.edu>) for more details about IISC, the Office of Outreach and Engagement, and other UI programs.

How can you be an IISC community partner?

We have updated our process to make it easier for communities to become IISC partners. We've replaced the time-consuming Request for Proposals (RFP) application process by asking communities to first submit a **Letter of Interest (LOI)**. We have also moved up our timeline, and added more support for communities invited to submit a full proposal.

The full process, including guidelines for submitting a Letter of Interest for the IISC partnership, is explained below.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants may consist of a municipality, a county government, councils of governments, or a collection of communities with similar characteristics, such as economic or cultural districts, or a transportation corridor. Previous community partners of IISC may apply.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

LOIs should be about 2-3 pages, plus letters of support (cover sheets are not included in the page count). Information in the LOI must include the information outlined below:

1) Contact information

- Community or Organization Name
- Primary Contact Name/Title
- Primary Contact Phone Number
- Primary Contact E-mail

2) Community Narrative

- Describe a **significant accomplishment** in your community. What originally inspired the activity and what were key factors to the successful outcome?
- Describe **something that you hope to accomplish** in you community. This might be a major challenge facing the community, or a special project you have in mind.
- How would a partnership with the University of Iowa help your community? Why do you think your community would be a good fit for IISC?

3) Local Partners

Successful IISC partnerships bring together multiple community-based organizations to work on the initiative, which also ensures that the community has the capacity to work with 150-200 students and faculty and to support 15-20 projects across multiple disciplines. Provide a list of community based organizations that you believe would likely sign on to be part of the initiative.

Examples of community-based organizations might include: local governments, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, main street organizations, conservation departments, schools and colleges, emergency management departments, public health departments, arts councils, non-profits, and so on.

4) Letters of Support

Include a minimum of three (3) letters of support. One letter of support must come from a top elected official (e.g. mayor) or top executive (e.g. city administrator).

LOIs must be sent electronically to travis-kraus@uiowa.edu by September 1st, 2019.

SELECTION PROCESS

July 1st, 2019	Request for Letters of Interest (LOIs) is released.
September 1st, 2019	LOIs are due electronically.
Mid-September 2019	LOIs are reviewed by Office of Outreach and Engagement (OO&E) staff and the IISC Advisory Board.
October 1st, 2019	Selected communities (no more than 3) are notified of invitation to complete the full IISC proposal.
Oct/Nov 2019	OO&E staff will conduct on-site workshops with communities working on the full IISC proposal. The goal of these workshops will focus on identifying and developing meaningful projects.
February 1st, 2020	Full IISC proposals are due.
March 1st, 2020	IISC Community Partner is selected for the 2020-21 academic year.
March-July 2020	OO&E staff, community partners, and faculty partners collaborate to develop and refine projects.
August 2020	Fall classes begin.

QUESTIONS?

All questions concerning this Request for Letters of Interest or the IISC partnership should be directed to **Travis Kraus, IISC Program Director**, at 319.335.2798 or travis-kraus@uiowa.edu.