



Government's Partner in
Achieving Results
Mollie Anderson, Director

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Customer Focus is a bi-monthly update for Iowa state government agencies from the Department of Administrative Services. For more information about DAS, please visit our website at <http://das.iowa.gov/>.

This issue's contributors: Greg Fay, Leslie Grefe, Cindy Houlson, Sheryl Jensen, Vicki Luptowski, Deb Madison-Levi, John Nash, Jim Pierson, Laura Riordan, Robbie Stoecker, Ashley Super, Mark Uhrin, Bill West.

Contact the editor at Laura.Riordan@iowa.gov. We encourage your feedback.

Customer Focus

A service update newsletter for valued DAS customers

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 5

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2007

2008 benefits enrollment & change period

Fall is in the air – the leaves are beginning to change, at times you can feel a slight nip in the air, the days are getting shorter ... and it's time for the annual benefits enrollment and change period. This is the time of year when DAS provides you with an opportunity to elect or change your benefits for 2008.

The 2008 enrollment and change period will be October 26 through November 26, 2007.

Once again, the State is providing a comprehensive benefits package that allows you to choose the best coverage that meets your needs and those of your family. Following are a few highlights of the changes for 2008.

Dental Insurance Open Enrollment. You have an opportunity to enroll yourself and eligible family members in dental coverage during this enrollment and change period.

Life Insurance Changes. Beginning in 2008, some employees' basic life insurance will increase from \$10,000 to \$20,000. In addition, for these same employees the amount of supplemental life insurance they can purchase increases to \$50,000 from \$40,000. There will also be a change in the insurance carrier. The Hartford Life Insurance Company will be the life and long-term

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DAS aids incident-response at Capitol, Lucas Building

DAS staff had a couple of busy days as we worked through two back-to-back incidents on the Capitol Complex August 23 and 24.

On Thursday, August 23, DAS electrician Rob Fulton noticed an unusual noise

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Electrical switchgear equipment in the sub-basement of the Capitol

NOTICE

The State Capitol will be closed on October 20

Replacement of electrical equipment necessitates closure

The State Capitol building will be closed for the day on Saturday, October 20, 2007, due to the replacement of high voltage electrical equipment.

Depending on the progress of work on October 20, additional Saturday closings may be necessary. Every effort will be made to complete the work on October 20. Notice regarding additional closings will be provided, if necessary.

For more information, please contact [Deb Madison-Levi](mailto:Deb.Madison-Levi@iowa.gov) at 515-281-7056.

Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Updates

DAS is in the process of closing out FY2007 and implementing FY2008 Affirmative Action Plans. At the end of each fiscal year we review each agencies progress meeting their hiring goals for that year, establish a new baseline for the following year, set new goals, and establish plans for meeting the new goals. DAS will compile the year-end progress for each agency and publish our annual *Affirmative Action in Iowa, An Annual Review of Affirmative Action in the Executive Branch of State Government* report for the Governor and the Legislature. Since our hiring practices have been audited by a consultant hired on behalf of the Hiring Practices Work Group, we will reflect their recommen-

dations in our 2007 annual report and will document any resulting program changes with the results of those changes being reflected in the FY2008 report.

In addition, we have updated our Equal Employment/Affirmative action policy to reflect the change in Iowa law prohibiting adverse employment decisions based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Our EEO/AA Policy is our guiding policy document not only for Affirmative action but other civil rights issues.

For more information about affirmative action and equal employment opportunity, please visit <http://das.hre.iowa.gov/eo-aa.html>.

Customer Service Center improvements

As part of the on-going efforts to improve customer service, the DAS Customer Service Center has rolled out a new software tool which will improve responsiveness for internal and external DAS customers. The software, Hewlett Packard's Service Desk, automates infrastructure management processes to control quality and delivery of critical business services, such as responses to heating and cooling issues, and other building maintenance reports. This program has been in use at the Information Technology help desk for about a year.

Now the customer service employees will be able to more timely dispatch support requests to DAS staff, and information in the system will be able to be shared for improved communications and the ability to check the status of a request. Customer service agents will be able to easily monitor all open requests in a single view, and customers will receive automated e-mail notifications to inform them when a request has been registered in their name and when the request has been completed.

To contact the DAS Customer Service Center please call 515-242-5120 or e-mail cust.serv@iowa.gov.

2008 benefits enrollment & change period (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

disability insurance provider beginning January 1, 2008.

Life Insurance Open Enrollment. If you are currently enrolled in supplemental life insurance, you will need to re-enroll during the enrollment and change period. You can choose to remain at your current level of coverage or you can increase or decrease the amount of your life insurance.

If you do not have supplemental life insurance, you can enroll in supplemental life insurance without providing evidence of insurability.

Because you don't have to provide evidence of insurability during the enrollment and change period, this is great opportunity to provide financial protection for your family. Once the enrollment and change period is over, you will be able to enroll in or increase the amount of supplemental

life insurance but you will have to provide evidence of insurability, and The Hartford will have to approve any increase in coverage before the coverage becomes effective.

Flexible Savings Accounts (FSA). This is the one time in the year that you can enroll in the flexible spending account program. If you pay for health and dependent care expenses on a regular basis, flexible spending accounts provide a way to save money on these expenses. There are two different FSA accounts.

⇒ Health Care Flexible Spending Account

⇒ Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account

Contributions are made to one or both of the FSAs with before-tax dollars (dollars not subject to state, federal and FICA taxes). Eligible expenses are paid out-of-pocket and

then reimbursed with the before-tax dollars.

FSA Improvements. Beginning in 2008, the FSA plan has been improved. You can now elect up to \$3,000 for your health care FSA and you have 14½ months to incur eligible expenses for your dependent care FSA.

If you wish to contribute to either of the FSAs, you must make a new election each year during the enrollment and change period. You must make a separate election for the Health FSA and the Dependent Care FSA.

As you see from the above highlights, there are many exciting benefits in store for the next plan year. Over the upcoming weeks, additional information will be available about the 2008 enrollment and change period.

Construction at the Capitol

Many Capitol restoration projects are underway again. As you may have noticed, the Capitol's east exterior stairs are in the process of being restored. Some items in that project include replacement of the brownstone balustrades, resetting of the existing granite stair treads and granite handrails, installation of a high voltage electrical vault under the stairs replete with new high voltage equipment (replacing existing high voltage equipment in the basement), reconstruction of the curved ADA entrance sidewalk with a snow melt system and new lighting on the stairs.

In preparation of the Iowa Presiden-

tial Caucus coverage, the upper portion of the Capitol's rotunda is also undergoing a sizable restoration project. In keeping with the original design, wall surfaces are being repainted to their original colors, the statues and busts surrounding the upper rotunda will receive aluminum leaf and the seven row band of "wheat sheafs" running around the entire perimeter of the rotunda will be gilded in gold leaf. The eight murals (semi-circular paintings just above the rotunda's main cornice) are being very carefully restored as well. The Capitol's fire suppression and door security system are expanding to cover the four circular

stairways adjacent to the rotunda.

Repairs related to the 12/24/04 water damage are underway on the 3rd floor behind the House of Representative chamber and in the House of Representative's Chief Clerk's Office on second floor. Over the last 2 1/2 years the water-damaged plaster has consistently been monitored for proper moisture content. As soon as an area does become dry enough, it is repaired. Additional water damage repairs will start soon at the north end of the 1st floor corridor and run through October 12.

Wellness at Work

Have you visited the Wellness website lately? Located within the DAS Benefits site at www.das.hre.iowa.gov/benefits/benefit_pages/well_index.html, the site provides information about general fitness, nutrition, recreational opportunities, smoking cessation and weight management. There's also a page devoted to fitness center discounts. Currently, 34 fitness centers located in 25 different cities and towns throughout Iowa offer discounts to employees of the State of Iowa.

Don't see your area listed? The Wellness Program is always happy to hear from employees who are willing to act as a liaison to bring discount offers to the attention of the Wellness Coordinator. If you or any of your employees know of a center that will offer state-employee discounts, please have an authorized representative of the fitness center contact the Wellness Coordinator through the "Contact Us" link on the Wellness website.

National 'Save For Retirement' Week — October 21-27, 2007

The U.S. House and Senate have passed a resolution establishing the week of October 21, 2007 as **National Save for Retirement Week**. The State of Iowa supports this resolution and urges you to stop and consider your responsibility to save and plan for retirement.

All State of Iowa employees must prepare themselves for future income needs. It may be necessary to supplement your pension and social security benefits in order to maintain your desired lifestyle in retirement. By taking advantage of supplemental retirement savings programs such as the Retirement Investors' Club (the State's deferred compensation plan) you automatically save a portion of your income for use in retirement.

Watch for more information regarding National Save for Retirement Week. We encourage you to take part in planning for your future today.

Enrollment and changes in the Retirement Investors' Club are available at any time. There are no vesting requirements and your payroll deductions and investment earnings are available at any age without penalties once you terminate from State employment. Learn more about your supplemental retirement savings plan by visiting our website at <http://das.hre.iowa.gov/ric.html> or by calling Robbie Stoecker at 515-242-6846.

Cell phone & rechargeable battery recycling program

DAS is participating in the "call2recycle" program for cell phones and rechargeable batteries. All state employees are invited to drop off their cell phones and rechargeable batteries at the designated box located at the Customer Service Center on Level A of the Hoover Building. If it is rechargeable, it is recyclable! When you see one of the abbreviations NI-Cd, NI-MH, LI-ion, or PB+ imprinted on a battery pack, it means the battery can be recycled. Remember all cell phones can be recycled with or without a battery. Each battery or cell phone should be sealed in a bag (provided) and deposited in the collection box.



Significant increase seen in spam mail

In the March/April edition of *Customer Focus* (page 2) there was an article on the substantial increase in spam and other unwanted e-mail hitting state government. The article included a prediction that spam would increase during 2007. That prediction has proven all too accurate.

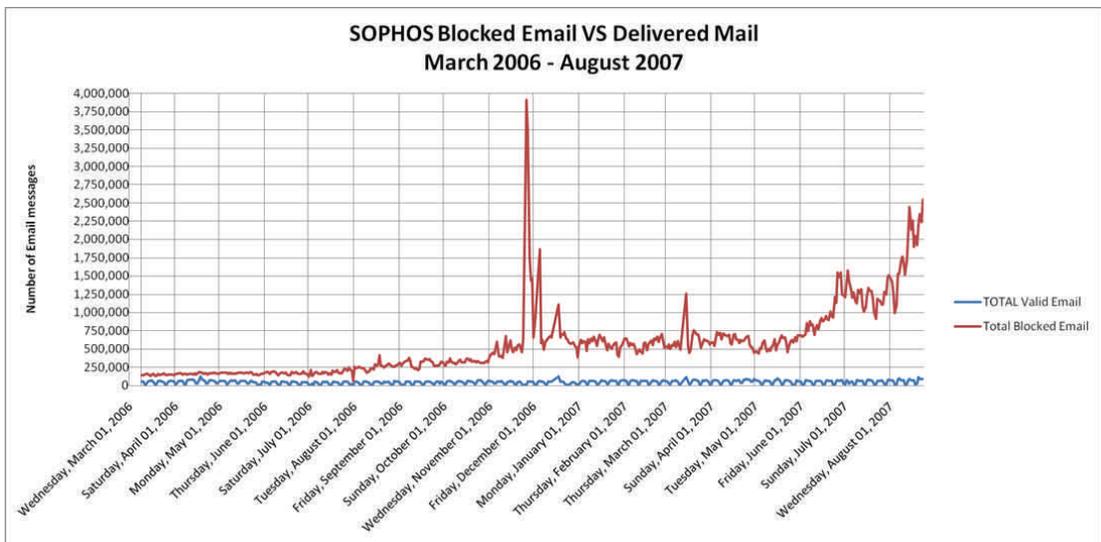
A comparison of statistics from the Sophos anti-spam/anti-virus product provided by the DAS-ITE Messaging Team shows that 20 million total messages were processed during January 2007, but in August 2007 that number had grown to 60 million. The number of blocked messages, those that were spam, contained viruses or were otherwise not wanted, rose from 17.8 million (87%) to almost 57 million (95%). But, the number of "good" messages only increased from 2.6 million to 3.1 million (please see the graph). That might

suggest that the Sophos product is doing a better job keeping the bad stuff out. On the other hand, many users are seeing a lot more spam make it to your mailboxes. So, what is really going on?

No product can stop everything. We are in a mini "arms race" with the bad guys. When our defenses improve, they find a new way to attack. When a way of thwarting that attack is put in place, they come up with another technique and it goes back and forth. Yes, the vast majority of spam is being stopped, but the volume has

grown so much that the trickle of bad e-mails that get through can, at times, appear to be a flood.

We continue to share the bad messages that get through with Sophos and they continue to update their product, but there doesn't appear to be a resolution any time soon for the onslaught of spam. Many of us were annoyed with the amount of spam that ended up in our e-mail in August, but try to imagine what it would have been like if the other 57 million messages had gotten through!



Computer, wireless & other discounts for state employees

Last month we told you how state employees can save on personal purchases of office supplies by using the state's contract at OfficeMax when they shop. This month we want to make sure state employees are aware of the employee purchasing programs offered by a number of computer companies and wireless providers. See the chart below for the savings that are offered and how to get them!

Vendor name	Discount description	Process to obtain discount	Vendor contact information
Apple Computers	4% to 17% off select Apple products and accessories (Contract #A63306)	Government Employee Purchase Program (EPP) website: www.apple.com/eppstore/slg or call 1-800-MY-APPLE. Please request your State and Local Government employee discount when calling Apple. Questions? Email: govepp@apple.com .	Rosemary Valenzuela Ph: 408.974.0076 Fax: 408.974-5068 Email: rvalenzuela@apple.com
AT&T (Cingular) Wireless	15% off the monthly recurring charges (Contract #CT1523)	(A website is under construction.) Visit retail stores statewide listed at www.cingular.com/find-a-store .	David Bart Ph: 612-670-3273 E-mail: david.bart@att.com ; or Chris Anderson Ph: 515-252-8401 E-mail: christopher.anderson.2@att.com
Dell Computers	State of Iowa employees and family members receive a 2%-12% discount off Dell list prices on Dimension desktops and Inspiron Notebooks (Contract #A63307)	Visit www.dell.com/iowaep to place orders online. To order by phone, call 800-695-8133 (opt 2) for assistance with their purchase. Be sure to mention Member ID: SS41681156.	Employee Purchase Program sales, customer care, and technical support team at 800-695-8133.
Hewlett Packard Computers	Consumer products (no Commercial) handhelds, digital cameras, desktops, notebooks, LCD/Plasma TVs (Contract #A63309)	HP Employee Purchase Program (EPP) online store at: http://government.hp.com/forms/form2004.asp?cid=188&agencyid=39&state=IA	Aaron Bennis Office: 515-440-1268 E-mail: aaron.j.bennis@hp.com
T-Mobile	Cell phones, PDA's Blackberries, laptop cards, discounted handset pricing with new service, waived activation fees, and 15% off the monthly bill (Contract #CT1523)	Contact Business Direct at 866 464 8662; reference the State of Iowa (promo code 6275TMOFAV) or use website (under construction). Not available at any store locations.	Pat Ponzio Ph: 952 833 4001 E-mail: patrick.ponzio@t-mobile.com
U.S. Cellular	Equipment discounts, waived activation fee at time of activation (\$35 value), waived upgrade fee at time of upgrade (\$15 value); month of free service at time of new activation (24-month contract required) (Contract #CT1993)	Order through business channel contacts Mike Leo or James Lininger. Retail locations will not be able to honor this offer.	Mike Leo E-mail: michael.leo@uscellular.com Ph: 515-971-0391; or James Lininger E-mail: james.lininger@uscellular.com Ph: 515-402-5020
Verizon Wireless	18% off on account plans of \$34.99 or higher (Contract #CT1523)	Go to www.verizonwireless.com/discounts . Input your work email address. Within a few minutes you will receive an e-mail message from Verizon Wireless that provides a link and further instructions.	Jeff Pritchard, 515-321-2010 jeff.pritchard@verizonwireless.com ; or Benjamin Yetter, 515-418-7391, benjamin.yetter@verizonwireless.com ; or Amyann Pearson, 515-371-3710; Amyann.Pearson@verizonwireless.com
Xerox	Printers (same as State Contract) (Contract #A74403)	Xerox Direct website at http://www.direct.xerox.com/direct/index.cfm?vcid=%27%29NOKU%3CHplusS%40%22%2Ccarriage_return&maxid=wsc or by calling 1-800-439-9341, opt 1.	Benny Tarwater, 800-439-9341 (opt 1); or Mike Wilkes, 636-386-2433, michael.wilkes@xerox.com

DAS aids incident-response on Complex (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

when he and contractors were working in the Capitol's sub-basement around 9 a.m. to do preparation work for a planned shut-down of the Wallace Building's power that evening. "It sounded like bacon frying," said Fulton, "and that's never a good thing." DAS employees who had been in the sub-basement earlier that morning reported hearing no unusual noises at that time, indicating the problem just developed that morning.

The cause of the noise was the malfunction of equipment in one of the electrical switchgear cabinets, causing an electric arc. That particular cabinet provides power to the Capitol and Wallace Building. Power to the switchgear in the basement – and subsequently the power to the Capitol and Wallace Building – was shut down and the Capitol was immediately evacuated. Later, when it was determined that it would take several hours to repair the problem, the Wallace Building was also evacuated because a building should not

be occupied if the air handling system is shut down for an extended length of time.

The switchgear was repaired and after testing, power was restored to the Capitol and Wallace Building by Thursday evening. The switchgear equipment that malfunctioned had been scheduled for replacement this fall as part of the electrical distribution system renovation project.

Lucas Building

Early Friday morning, DAS employees discovered waste water that had backed up into the basement of the Lucas Building. The air-handling system for that building was promptly shut down and occupants already in the building evacuated, while Post 16 stationed officers around the building to prevent entry into the building. State and city officials assessed the situation. GSE Custodial with the assistances of ServiceMaster was on site to provide clean-up services, which would take almost all day. The area was disinfected multiple times before occupants returned

to the building on Monday. Luckily, the worst damage was reserved to just a couple of storage rooms.

On both days DAS worked with the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division, the Department of Public Safety and Post 16, and the Governor's Office to manage the events. All of the affected agencies and department heads were very responsive and helpful as we worked through each issue. DAS would like to thank all of these agencies, as well as our own staff, for their excellent response and hard work.

Human Resources staff were on hand both days to help answer questions about employees and time reporting in light of the circumstances, but if any agencies or employees have questions they should contact [Mary Ann Hills](#) at 515-281-6603.

After-incident meetings are being conducted for both of these events. If agencies or individuals have any feedback they are encouraged to contact [Mollie Anderson](#) at 515-281-5360 or [Dave Johnston](#) with HLSEM at 515-725-3295.

DAS Safety Office creating a safer Capitol Complex

Every day is full of challenges in the Department of Administrative Services' Safety Office. And every challenge is an opportunity to make the Capitol Complex a safer and healthier place to work or visit. The past year has provided many opportunities for change in the existing health and safety program. Some of those changes are driven from within the safety office due to changes within Iowa Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, National Fire Protection Agency and other regulations that affect DAS policies, procedures, or written safety programs.

Other changes are driven by employees who report safety concerns. These are the best opportunities; creating change before an accident or incident occurs to an employee or visitor. Safety concerns are reported several different ways to the DAS Safety Office.

The DAS Customer Service Desk relays the safety concerns they receive during the day. (Customer Service Desk phone number: 242-5120.) Supervisors, managers, and employees also contact the Safety Office to report the safety concerns they observe or receive throughout the day. Contractors and visitors periodically report near misses or potential hazards that they note while on the Capitol Complex.

Safety concerns run the gamut. They can be as simple as a report that a rug is creating a trip hazard and as complicated as coordinating indoor air testing to determine if any contaminants or mold spores are in the air. No matter how simple or complicated the safety concern appears, the condition needs to be reported to the Safety Office at 281-0181 or email Cynthia.houlson@iowa.gov. With everyone's help, DAS can continue to assure that the Capitol Complex is as healthy and safe as possible for both employees and visitors.

For employee safety information, please visit <http://das.gse.iowa.gov/safety/index.html>.

News in Brief

Latest Customer Survey Results In

DAS has transitioned from a quarterly to a semi-annual survey of our customers. Thanks to all who participated in the most recent one, which covered January — June 2007. You can review the results on our website at http://das.iowa.gov/about_DAS/customer_survey.html.

Another Successful Vehicle Auction

The latest auction of state vehicles was held August 25, 2007. 126 vehicles being retired from the state fleet were sold for a combined total of \$391,000. The proceeds from vehicle auctions are deposited into the Vehicle Replacement Fund, commonly called the Depreciation account. The monies are used to offset the cost of new vehicles.

House at 1022 Des Moines Street to be demolished

Additional recovery and demolition will begin Monday, September 10, 2007, on the house located at 1022 Des Moines Street. The demolition process will take approximately two weeks. Effective Monday, September 10, 2007, we ask that no cars park on the street surrounding the house.

Upgrading the Income Offset application

The State Accounting and Information Technology enterprises of DAS are working to significantly upgrade the Income Offset Program. This program is available to state agencies, cities, counties, schools and utility companies and allows the state to recover monies owed to

those entities by withholding those amounts from payments to be made to a person or company owing monies. The revised web application will provide better user accessibility and functionality to customers, will automate many of the manual processes currently performed, and will provide customers with more control over their accounts. The state's Authentication and Authorization service (A&A) will be utilized to authenticate users to the system. The new application will allow customers to go online and make changes such as adding or removing offsets, or editing existing offsets. This process was previously performed by the submission of files to a mainframe application. By utilizing online changes, the new application will process updates immediately, improving on the current process where files were updated on a weekly basis. In addition, files that are submitted will be processed nightly, allowing for timelier processing of offset requests and providing customers with immediate access to up-to-date information.

New Tape Backup System

The new robotic tape library for the Hoover data center was placed into production for mainframe tape processing on August 19. The implementation included moving over 1,000 physical tapes. Tapes are used for back-up of information.

Meeting Dates to Remember

Customer Councils

General Services

Friday, September 14, 9-11 a.m.

Friday, October 12, 9-11 a.m.

Hoover Level A, Conf. Rm. 7

Human Resources

October 3 meeting cancelled

1/3

September 13 meeting cancelled

Thursday, October 11, 1:30-3 p.m.

Hoover Bldg, Level B, Conf. Rms 2&3

Technology

Tuesday, September 11, 1-3 p.m.

Tuesday, October 9, 1-3 p.m.

Hoover Bldg, Level A, Conf. Rm. 7

For Customer Council information:
http://das.iowa.gov/customer_councils/index.html or contact [Laura Riordan](#) at 515-242-5038.



Technology Governance Board

Thursday, September 13, 3-5 p.m.

Hoover Bldg, Level A, Conf. Rm. 7&8



Vertical Infrastructure Committee

Thursday, Sept. 13, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Luster Heights Camp near Harper's Ferry

Thursday, Oct. 11, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Tentative Location: DPS Building



Capitol Planning Commission

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Dept. of Public Safety Bldg, Rm. 125



Do you look for funding through grants?
 Do you organize and prepare proposals grants?
 Are you responsible for managing projects that have been awarded grants?

Whether you're a beginning grant writer who's just getting started or a seasoned pro ready to move to the next level, Performance & Development Solutions offers a three-part grant training series.

Grant Seeking

Proactive Grant Seeking - build your ideas, then research prospective grantors to match their grant interests with your ideas.

- Grant basics and resources
- Defining your problem and finding solutions
- Designing and organizing a fundable project

Understanding the values of the grantor

Dates Offered: 9/7/07 and 4/4/08

Grant Writing

Create urgency - write a proposal that conveys why your project is needed, presenting a clear, concise, compelling picture of the current situation and the gap that exists.

- Six approaches to assessing and documenting needs
- Organizing proposal development

20 reasons grants fail

Dates Offered: 9/28/07 and 4/25/08

Grant Management

You got the grant! What do you do next?!? - How project directors, principal investigators, project leaders, team leaders, or project administrators should manage a funded project.

- Expectations of the grantor
- Grant manager responsibilities

Federal and outside regulations

Dates Offered: 10/19/07 and 5/16/08

The cost for each workshop is \$60 per participant.

All workshops take place from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm at the Hoover State Office Building in Des Moines.

To enroll, please submit a completed PDS course registration form to your agency's training liaison.



Performance & Development Solutions

Iowa Department of Administrative Services ♦ Human Resources Enterprise

Address: 1305 E. Walnut, Des Moines IA 50319 Phone: (515) 725-2051 Email: pds@iowa.gov

Website: <http://www.das.hre.iowa.gov/LearnAtPDS/>