



# REBUILD IOWA OFFICE TRANSITION STRATEGY

DECEMBER 2010



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## LETTER FROM THE RIO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dec. 29, 2010

Governor Culver, Lt. Governor Judge and Members of the Iowa Legislature:

In an effort to address the historic weather disasters of 2008, the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) was established by Executive Order. In 2009, the Iowa General Assembly unanimously supported House File 64, formally establishing the RIO as a temporary agency through a sunset date of June 30, 2011 and requiring the RIO to complete a transition plan by Jan. 1, 2011. This report fulfills that requirement.

In July 2008, the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) created task forces to address issues such as housing, agriculture, infrastructure, economic and workforce development, and hazard mitigation and floodplain management. Hundreds of meetings with local and national experts, stakeholders and impacted Iowans established priorities and next steps to rebuild a safer, stronger and better prepared Iowa. These discussions led to the RIAC's 45- and 120-day reports, the latter of which has driven the RIO's goals, objectives and day-to-date activities and helped inform other disaster recovery partners.

The *RIAC 120-Day Report* included 12 overarching recommendations which laid out a vision for Iowa's long-term disaster recovery. These same recommendations guide this transition strategy. This document lists the State's accomplishments and remaining needs in achieving these recommendations and how continuing recovery efforts may be integrated into other state agency programs and services.

The transition strategy was largely created by recovery partners who have worked with the RIO to find solutions for continued improvement toward a sound recovery. This input has been invaluable for both ongoing recovery activities and the development of this strategy. Examples of such input forums include:

- In May 2009, local, state and federal partners gathered for an Iowa Recovery Analysis Workshop to look at best practices and lessons learned in order to make needed adjustments to the current recovery process and help inform future recovery.
- In July 2009, Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council members held a Road Ahead Workshop to use the information collected in May and discuss how to implement those lessons learned.
- In June 2010, the RIO coordinated Iowa's first-ever Long-Term Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise. This exercise and subsequent meetings of this group of local, state and federal partners (from public, private and non-profit sectors) led to the creation of the Iowa Disaster Recovery Framework included in this strategy.
- In 2010, the legislature called for the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force to provide recommendations on comprehensive smart planning by November 2010. This group's recommendations (including public input through five sessions, surveys and other meetings) are included in this strategy.
- The legislature also called for a Business Disaster Case Management Task Force, largely made up of private sector recovery partners and disaster-affected business representatives. This group's recommendations are also included in this strategy.
- The RIO and DHS convened a group of case management stakeholders in the Iowa Disaster Case Management Advisory Committee. The committee's recommendations are included in this strategy.
- A special meeting of the RIAC to review the draft Transition Strategy in December 2010.

While this report was due to you by Jan. 1, 2011, it should be considered a living document that will change throughout the final six months of the office. We look forward to further discussion with state leaders and will adapt the strategy accordingly to ensure continuity of Iowa's statewide recovery efforts.

Respectfully,



Lt. Gen. Ron Dardis  
Rebuild Iowa Office Executive Director

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The closing of the RIO does not mean that the recovery process is complete for Iowa families and communities. The recovery process will continue for many years to come, and the *Rebuild Iowa Transition Strategy* has been drafted to provide a comprehensive set of recommended action steps to help the state complete long-term recovery efforts while better preparing the state for future disasters.

This report begins with a review of the twelve major Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) recommendations which have guided RIO's work, followed by a summary of the major accomplishments toward each recommendation. Complete, detailed information on all the work that has been accomplished toward the RIAC recommendations can be found in the RIO's Quarterly Reports. The identification of remaining needs and issues serves as the basis for the transition strategy.

The remaining needs have been grouped into three overarching transition objectives:

- Continuity of 2008 recovery and better preparedness for future disaster recovery efforts.
- Support integrated, local and regional comprehensive planning.
- Better coordinate floodplain and watershed management.

Each objective is critical to carrying out the mission of rebuilding a safer, stronger and better prepared Iowa, and each requires that vital state resources continue to be dedicated to this important mission. The following outlines the action steps necessary to achieve a successful transition and recovery.

***Objective 1: Ensure continuity of 2008 recovery and ensure improved preparedness for future disaster recovery.***

The State should adopt the *Iowa Disaster Recovery Framework* created by Iowa's recovery partners. This framework calls for staffing at the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division dedicated to long-term disaster recovery efforts. The framework also calls for a coordinating council and sub-groups to ensure participation from all levels of public and private recovery partners as well as training, dedicated disaster funding, support for local emergency management and improved records retention.

***Objective 2: Guide and support integrated, local and regional comprehensive planning.***

The State should implement the recommendations of the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force as they are critical to mitigating future disaster damage while also improving the economic strength of Iowa's communities. The actions outlined in the transition strategy incorporate the Task Force recommendations slated for the first year of the five-year implementation timeline. These actions include establishing incentives for local planning, establishing a process for regional planning, creating an educational program, facilitating a forum for state investment coordination, and identifying a state entity to coordinate and support these efforts.

The complete Task Force recommendations, including the suggested five-year implementation timeline, can be found on the RIO Web site and is listed in the "Resources" section of this report.

***Objective 3: Improve floodplain and watershed management to mitigate future disaster damage.***

The state should commit to a vision of Iowa's future that includes sustainable urban and rural land use best practices. Steps to realize this vision include providing necessary resources to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to establish and provide leadership to an interagency and multi-jurisdictional watershed management program. To affect long-term change and mitigate damages from future floods, results of state-wide watershed studies will need to be incorporated into local and regional comprehensive land use plans. It is also recommended that state leaders continue to discuss the recommendations provided by the Water Resources Coordinating Council prior to the 2009 legislative session. Adoption of these recommendations is important to improving how the state approaches its watersheds and floodplains and mitigate future disaster impacts.

## RIAC RECOMMENDATIONS: ACCOMPLISHMENTS & REMAINING NEEDS

Each of the 12 Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) recommendations are listed below, followed by a brief summary of major accomplishments achieved through collaborative efforts with local, state, federal, private and nonprofit partners. Remaining needs and issues that have not yet been adequately addressed are then identified. These needs and issues relate directly to and inform the transition strategy presented in the next section of the report. The action steps outlined in the transition strategy are designed to ensure that remaining needs and issues are effectively addressed and ongoing recovery activities seamlessly continue after the RIO closes.

### **Recommendation 1: Provide advice and support to individuals and families seeking assistance.**

#### *Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Created and implemented the Disaster Case Management programs for the 2008 and 2010 disasters.
- Coordinated individual assistance resources through local Long-Term Recovery Committees.
- Created and implemented the Iowa Unmet Needs Disaster Assistance Program used for both the 2008 and 2010 disasters.
- Passed HF 2422, which created a framework for statewide Disaster Case Management.
- Established an inter-agency Individual Disaster Case Management Advisory Committee to provide input and assistance to plan a system and infrastructure to maintain and improve case management through disaster and non-disaster times.
- Provided constituent services for disaster-impacted Iowans.

#### *Remaining Needs and Issues*

- The Individual Disaster Case Management Advisory Committee is developing a Disaster Case Management Framework for the state of Iowa that will determine:
  - long-term sustainability of and funding mechanisms for disaster case management capacity and systems;
  - responsible coordinating entity during disaster and non-disaster times; and
  - triggers to expand case management services as needed.
- This framework needs to be implemented and an evaluation completed to ensure that all Iowans affected by disasters can recover adequately from future disasters. An evaluation component was added to the 2010 Disaster Case Management Services program.

### **Recommendation 2: Place a high priority on ensuring availability of adequate, affordable housing.**

#### *Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Coordinated two housing conferences for state and local staff administering housing and buyout programs to discuss issues and develop solutions related to repair, rehabilitation, acquisition and demolition processes and programs.
- Convened a Housing Task Force and provided staff assistance to discuss and resolve housing program issues and policies.
- Worked with federal, state, and local entities to:
  - meet temporary housing needs;
  - develop and secure funding for programs for housing rehabilitation and repair;
  - secure funding to provide Down Payment Assistance (DPA) and Replacement Housing Assistance (RPA);
  - promote the construction of new housing to replace and improve upon what was lost; and
  - identify roadblocks and resolve issues related to voluntary property acquisition program and demolition

*Remaining Needs and Issues*

- The voluntary acquisition of flood-damaged properties will not be completed prior to June 2011. The state will need to continue to monitor, track and report progress on acquisition and demolition until every identified property has been acquired and every housing unit has been repaired.
- There continues to be a need for new, affordable single-family and multiple-family housing units to replace units lost due to the natural disasters of 2008. The state will need to continue to assess the remaining housing issues created by the 2008 disaster and provide programs that address the need.
- A Housing Needs Assessment conducted by Iowa State University in eight flood-impacted communities will be released in 2011 and will provide a framework for assessing housing needs in 2011 and beyond.
- The state needs a means to provide housing-dedicated disaster funding in the future.

**Recommendation 3: Provide incentives for Iowa's struggling small businesses, microenterprises and non-profits.***Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Provided state funding to business owners affected by the disaster quickly and with fewer restrictions than federal funds.
- Created unique programs for steam conversion, commercial rent, equipment, loan interest, relocation costs, flood insurance and other purposes.
- Established a program to employ local business case managers to advocate and assist affected businesses, helping those businesses recover and more easily access and apply for business recovery programs.
- Facilitated partnership with Small Business Development Centers to help businesses restructure SBA recovery loans.
- Facilitated the HF 2422 Business Disaster Case Management Task Force and assisted in the development of recommendations to better support future business disaster recovery efforts.

*Remaining Needs and Issues*

- Continued communication is needed between affected businesses and partnering state agencies to identify recovery needs.
- After the Dec. 31, 2010, business program application deadline, the remaining unallocated dollars should be assessed to determine availability for additional funding opportunities.
- The state needs to establish a process to provide business-specific recovery funding after future disasters.

**Recommendation 4: Lead in planning, establishing expectations statewide and securing funding for infrastructure repair, rebuilding and construction.***Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Advocated for and received statewide infrastructure recovery funding for repairs, rebuilding, new construction and mitigation using state, FEMA, CDBG, and EDA funds.

*Remaining Needs and Issues*

- Much progress has been made in new infrastructure programs, however, these work as a reimbursement and are not paid until construction is complete. Continued monitoring and reporting of the rebuilding process is needed.
- Infrastructure is the state's largest remaining unmet need. More funding is needed to fill this gap and complete Iowa's rebuilding process.
- The state needs a means to provide infrastructure disaster funding after future disasters.

**Recommendation 5: Identify, create and sustain funding options and provide flexibility for local and state governments.**

*Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- The RIO partnered with FEMA's Emergency Support Function (ESF) #14 to connect local leadership with resources for development of long-term recovery plans, reports and implementation strategies. Resources were collected and outlined in a Community Recovery Toolbox.
- RIO Community Liaisons were placed in the field to work directly with impacted communities, providing a vital link for RIO's coordination and advocacy capabilities.
- Legislation was passed to provide flexibility in funding for local government entities impacted by disasters.
- Legislation was passed to provide direct funding to communities for disaster recovery purposes.

*Remaining Needs and Issues*

- The State should set aside funding for future disaster recovery efforts.
- Investment should be made in disaster mitigation efforts.
- Technical assistance for local governments and state agencies concerning disaster preparedness and response issues related to records retention is necessary.
- A coordination point for recovery efforts is needed in state government to ensure the state is prepared for future disaster recovery.

**Recommendation 6: Invest in local emergency management agencies to achieve the baseline capacity needed.**

*Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Legislation was passed that improves emergency management policy in Iowa, including clarifying disaster volunteer immunity, incorporating local emergency management commissions as participating governments in the statewide mutual aid compact and including hazard mitigation into the elements that should be considered by cities and counties when preparing a comprehensive development plan.
- The Iowa Emergency Management Association (IEMA) developed a plan on how best to support and fund local emergency management agencies so all counties meet minimal capacity and grant eligibility criteria.

*Remaining Needs and Issues*

- It is critical that local emergency management agencies have the staff and financial resources to fulfill their statutory and other required obligations, and to effectively coordinate their county's emergency management functions. To improve consistency of services statewide, State funding and a required local minimum contribution in exchange for baseline emergency management services is needed.
- Local emergency managers currently have the authority to request state Individual Assistance funding in smaller disasters that are not declared presidential emergencies. A companion fund for Public Assistance would improve recovery in smaller disasters.

**Recommendation 7 & 8: Ensure policy and programs sustain community identity quality of life and cultural heritage and develop guidance and support for integrated, regional planning.**

*Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Leveraged community recovery plans and strategies through a partnership with FEMA, EPA, USDA-Rural Development and other agencies to provide Smart Growth technical assistance to six communities.



- Partnered with the EPA, FEMA and numerous local organizations to produce a report to the White House Council on Environmental Quality identifying barriers and incentives to incorporating climate change science and associated adaptation strategies within hazard mitigation and other community planning processes.
- Proposed and advocated for the passage of the Iowa Smart Planning Bill (SF 2389) and coordinated the work of the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force called for in this bill.
- Awarded 38 grants totaling \$1 million to support the development of forward-thinking comprehensive plans that support recovery and foster economic development.
- Supported legislation that improved the State Historical Society's ability to provide small grants for historic properties impacted by natural disasters and allocated a portion of Iowa's annual state historic tax credits to disaster recovery projects.

#### *Remaining Needs and Issues*

- The state lacks an integrated, statewide planning system. The Iowa Smart Planning Bill was an important start; however, more work is needed to ensure effective implementation of this bill and subsequent recommendations.
- Additional resources are needed to provide technical assistance to local governments and state agencies concerning disaster preparedness and response issues related to records retention. This issue has not yet been addressed, and the state continues to store important public records in floodplains, leaving them vulnerable to damage and the state facing additional costs when records must be moved due to the threat of flooding.

**Recommendation 9 &10: Move policy forward and lead the discussion with regional and local interests on floodplain and watershed management and complete floodplain mapping for the entire state using state-of-the-art technology.**

#### *Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Created the Iowa Flood Center at the University of Iowa.
- Began work on the Iowa-Cedar Rivers Basin Interagency Watershed Study.
- Established the Iowa Silver Jackets Flood Risk Management Team to provide intergovernmental partnerships that will result in comprehensive and sustainable solutions to state flood hazards.
- Created the Iowa Floodplain and Stormwater Management Association to provide education and training to floodplain managers on floodplain management best practices.
- Supported the development and advocacy of Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC) policy, programs and funding recommendations.
- Secured funding to resource five of the WRCC recommendations related to watershed demonstration projects and flood risk education.
- Leveraged funding for development of new floodplain maps for all 99 counties by Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Flood Center based on LiDAR technology to be completed in the year 2014.

#### *Remaining Needs and Issues*

- The state needs an organized, interagency watershed management program with a vision and goals that support sustainable development, economic progress, protected natural resources and flood mitigation.
- The state's Water Resources Coordinating Council (WRCC) needs a greater level of support to carry out their charge of developing an integrated approach to water resource management.
- Comprehensive studies are needed in all of Iowa's major river basins.
- To better address regional concerns, watershed goals and strategies need to be integrated into local and regional comprehensive plans.

- The state should continue to move policy forward to improve local and regional floodplain and watershed management.

**Recommendation 11: Formalize the Rebuild Iowa Office and associated responsibilities related to the 2008 disaster recovery.**

*Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Established the Rebuild Iowa Office in code.
- Held Iowa's first "Long-Term Disaster Recovery Table-Top Exercise" to create a framework for future recovery efforts.

*Remaining Needs and Issues*

- The *Iowa Disaster Recovery Framework* should be adopted to ensure the lessons learned from 2008 carry on and to position the state to better recover from future disasters.

**Recommendation 12: Promote and support communications and outreach initiatives to educate and support Iowans as they recover and plan for future disasters.**

*Accomplishments through Collaborative Efforts*

- Established the Rebuild Iowa Office as the central clearinghouse for all statewide disaster recovery information and ensured accurate information was distributed about the state's recovery efforts.
- Provided regular updates on programs and disaster funding to increase awareness of disaster progress and related issues.
- Organized flood forums, flood seminars, programs, workshops and resource events in communities across the state to bring recovery program experts directly to affected Iowans.
- Handled constituent issues and used that information to make program improvements or provide necessary public messages.
- Conducted multiple surveys to allow Iowans further input in the recovery process.

*Remaining Needs and Issues*

- Regular funding updates on the disaster recovery efforts are critical to the transparency of the recovery effort and should continue until recovery funds are exhausted.
- The RIO listserv should be maintained so that Iowans currently receiving recovery updates via e-mail can continue to receive recovery correspondence.
- A central point of contact is needed to handle recovery-related constituent issues efficiently and effectively and use that information to make program improvements or provide necessary public messages.
- The state should continue to provide a clearinghouse of information for those impacted by and interested in Iowa's disaster recovery.

## TRANSITION STRATEGY

### **Objective 1: Ensure continuity of 2008 recovery and ensure improved preparedness for future disaster recovery.**

One of the most critical questions in this transition is how to ensure that recovery policies, procedures and processes implemented during the 2008 disaster recovery are captured and maintained for future disasters. In July 2010, the RIO and HSEMD conducted the *Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise*. This was the second recovery-focused exercise in the nation and the first in Iowa. The purpose of the exercise was to design a lasting framework for coordination of long-term disaster recovery efforts. From that exercise, the *Iowa Disaster Recovery Framework* (IDRF) was built.

The IDRF complements the HSEMD Iowa Disaster Recovery Plan and is consistent with the National Disaster Recovery Framework so it can work seamlessly with other partners and resources. It provides a means to engage stakeholders such as individual Iowans, local governments, and businesses, voluntary, faith-based and community organizations as well as state and federal agencies to identify and resolve recovery challenges both before and after disaster events. It applies to all future hazards and disasters, recovery partners, and recovery activities. The IDRF must however, be reviewed annually to remain effective and current. The framework provides a flexible structure to coordinate and manage long-term disaster recovery efforts, including:

- Identification of long-term recovery issues;
- Continuous, ongoing prioritization and goal-setting;
- Identification of gaps, duplications and timelines in programs and funding;
- Development of policies and procedures, prior to disbursement, that ensures timely, effective, and transparent use of funds in recovery;
- Implementation of a communication strategy to ensure accountability, transparency and effective real-time information sharing for state-wide recovery; and
- Recommendation of state and federal policy.

To ensure continuity of recovery and the better preparedness for future disasters, we recommend that the State of Iowa achieve Objective 1 by adopting the nine elements of this framework during the 2011 legislative session.

1. *Establish and fund the Office of Disaster Recovery Coordination (ODRC) within the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division.*

The State of Iowa should establish an Office of Disaster Recovery Coordination (ODRC) to coordinate long-term disaster recovery planning efforts. ODRC would serve as the main point of contact for long-term recovery coordination in all disasters. Responsibilities during non-disaster times include recovery planning activities throughout the state, leading efforts to establish a shared data system, advocating for changes to federal and state recovery policy, updating and exercising the IDRF and coordinating recovery training activities with all partners. Expanded activities during a disaster and its recovery are outlined, including the potential need for additional staff for leadership, communications, intergovernmental relations, recovery support function coordination, planning, community outreach and other needs.

Regular duties of the ODRC would be to:

- Staff the Iowa Recovery Coordinating Council and Recovery Support Function planning activities.
- Lead efforts to establish a shared data system for disaster-related impact assessments and case management.
- Put plans and agreements in place with federal, state and local agencies and organizations for data-sharing.
- Stay current with, and advocate for changes to, federal and state recovery policy.

- Coordinate with HSEMD to update and exercise the Iowa Disaster Recovery Plan, Part C of the Iowa Comprehensive Plan.
- Coordinate recovery training with all partners.
- Work closely with community partners to ensure they have a voice in the planning process and assist in community planning efforts.
- Research and implement best practices in disaster recovery, including those of other states and countries.

During a major disaster and its recovery, as the ODRC is asked to take on more responsibility, the Governor should appoint a cabinet-level Executive Director to oversee the office's expanded duties and staffing, including the following:

- Ensure that recovery planning begins during the response phase of disaster events by participating in the efforts of the State Emergency Operations Center.
- Ensure that impact assessments are completed to assist in determining resource needs during recovery.
- Coordinate the activities of the Iowa Recovery Coordinating Council and the Recovery Support Functions.
- Ensure the timely provision of disaster case management services.
- Work to build local capacity for disaster recovery, especially the local delivery of individual assistance programming.
- Provide pertinent recovery-related information to the Governor.
- Coordinate and support work of the Disaster Recovery Advisory Commission once established by the Governor, including implementation of policy recommendations.
- Ensure inclusiveness and transparency in the state recovery process.
- Identify recovery priorities and needs for the Governor to address through the Disaster Recovery Fund (once established).
- Coordinate statewide disaster recovery communications efforts to ensure consistency and accuracy of messaging.
- Provide up-to-date information on state and federal recovery-related laws, policies and programs to the Governor, legislature and other recovery partners.
- Track and report recovery funding and progress to ensure transparency and effectiveness.
- Communicate recovery priorities to local, state and federal stakeholders and supporters.
- Work with affected communities to engage in community-specific, long-term disaster recovery planning and serve as a point of contact for recovery issues.
- Work closely with community partners to ensure they have a voice in the recovery process.
- Advocate for changes to federal and state recovery policy.
- Coordinate state and federal funding streams for recovery efforts.
- Identify issues and communicate solutions for gaps in assistance programs and duplications of benefit.
- Establish benchmarks for recovery and communicate necessary adjustments to meet those benchmarks.

2. *Utilize federal funding to ensure 2008 continuity of recovery.*

In addition to the duties above, the state should provide limited staff positions (potentially from federal recovery funding sources) for at least another year within this office to specifically focus on 2008 recovery. Duties would include:

- Communication regarding recovery programs and progress including tracking and reporting progress.
- Coordinating with agencies administering recovery programs, including identifying roadblocks, resolving issues and monitoring and addressing remaining unmet needs.

- Serving as a central point of contact for impacted communities, individuals, businesses and other stakeholders in recovery.
- Continuing to advocate for recovery priorities including remaining infrastructure needs such as the Cedar Rapids flood protection system.

3. *Institutionalize Disaster Case Management coordination in the Office of Disaster Recovery Coordination.*

Resources need to be allocated to the Office of Disaster Recovery Coordination to ensure the capacity to manage and coordinate individual disaster assistance programs. This should include funding for a permanent position to coordinate a disaster case management program, developing and strengthening the network of agencies that provide federal needs assistance, establishing state-funded unmet needs disaster assistance and collaborating with federal, state and local agencies to ensure the highest level of coordination. This position would be responsible for implementing the disaster case management framework and would continue the Individual Disaster Case Management Advisory Committee to ensure collaboration from all levels of federal, state, local and community agencies. In addition, this position would lead development of a statewide database tracking various individual assistance disaster programs. The database can then be shared with non-governmental agencies providing service as well as government agencies.

4. *Establish the Iowa Recovery Coordinating Council (IRCC) and Recovery Support Functions (RSFs).* The state should establish an Iowa Recovery Coordinating Council (IRCC) to work with the ODRC to achieve multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency communication, coordination and information sharing. The IRCC would be comprised of agency directors or other designees, including:

*State:*

- Chair: Iowa Department of Public Defense
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
- Iowa Department of Economic Development
- Iowa Department of Human Services
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa Finance Authority
- Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division
- Iowa Workforce Development

*Local/NGO:*

- Iowa Association of Regional Councils
- Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council
- Iowa Emergency Management Association
- Iowa League of Cities
- Iowa State Association of Counties
- Private Business Representative

The IRCC would work to improve the state's recovery capabilities through pre-disaster preparations, planning and coordination. During disaster recovery, the group would work to implement a state disaster recovery plan and ensure a smooth recovery. The IRCC would also facilitate the identification, coordination, communication and delivery of state and federal assistance and resources needed to supplement recovery efforts. Other agencies at the local, state and federal

level could participate in the Recovery Support Function (RSF) work groups and may be asked to participate in meetings and projects as needed. The IRCC may be used to address issues that could affect multiple RSFs and would be responsible for helping coordinate the overall recovery process.

This group would meet at least twice a year during non-disaster times and would assist the ODRC in its activities, including updating the state Recovery Plan as laws, regulations and resources change, thus ensuring the state is prepared to quickly escalate recovery efforts after large-scale disasters. Members of the IRCC should be included in exercising the state's Recovery Plan annually. During major disasters, the IRCC would assist the ODRC in developing recovery strategies for the state including goals and metrics to establish early direction and priorities. The group would then meet more frequently as determined by the Chair to create solutions for disaster recovery issues and coordinate all resources to provide for an effective recovery.

Each participating agency should assign one consistent designee to participate in the Recovery Coordinating Council. Designees could be Directors and/or leadership, but do not have to be. Designees should be able to speak on behalf of their agency, make recovery-related decisions, receive recovery training and participate in recovery exercises. Participation in the IRCC and related activities should be included in their job description. While the IRCC is state-specific and does not include federal members, partners from federal agencies could be invited to participate in meetings and are a part of the Recovery Support Functions.

#### *Goals of the IRCC*

**Recovery Coordination and Communication** – The main mission of the IRCC is to ensure that those involved in recovery maintain open lines of communication and coordinate efforts. The group will discuss planning opportunities, policy changes and roadblocks that impact a variety of agencies to ensure the most effective and efficient service delivery possible.

**Data Sharing** – Real-time data sharing, including disaster damage assessments and case management information, is critical to a successful disaster recovery. A shared system would allow for a common calculation of disaster damage, loss and location. It would also help identify unmet needs, gaps in service and duplication of assistance. A shared system would help streamline assistance programs, providing efficient and timely services to Iowans impacted by disasters. Utilization of a shared database would also allow disaster-affected individuals to utilize a one-time application process to access multiple sources of assistance, saving them time and frustration.

Through the IRCC, the ODRC should work to develop a database that could be used to share recovery information among vetted and appropriate federal, state, local and non-profit partners. Such a system would include security measures to protect the privacy of applicant information. The database should be designed for the eventual inclusion of federal agencies. Federal, state and local agencies need to work together to determine what information can be shared, when it can be shared and how it can be shared to ensure reduced barriers and the privacy of those affected.

**Recommend Policy Changes** – The IRCC discussions will serve as a consistent process for evaluating Iowa's disaster recovery system and recommending changes to the disaster recovery system at both the state and federal level. In particular, an improved federal recovery system including recovery-designed programs and policies are critical to the success of any state's full disaster recovery.

Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) would assist the ODRC and IRCC by facilitating stakeholder participation and intergovernmental and public/private partnerships. Representatives from local, state and federal agencies and NGOs are organized into six RSFs:

- Community Planning and Capacity Building
- Economic and Cultural Development
- Health, Social, Community and Education Services
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Agriculture and Environmental Services

Participating local, state and federal agencies and NGOs may appoint a representative to each appropriate RSF. RSF representatives do not need to be full-time disaster recovery staff. During non-disaster times, their duties may include attending occasional RSF meetings, training, and annual exercises of the framework and updating materials and information within their agency related to disaster recovery. During disaster recovery, these groups will work even more closely together to coordinate recovery information, programs and communications at a programmatic and operational level and may be called upon to provide temporary staff support to the ODRC. For agencies on both the IRCC and RSFs, designees can be the same staff members or an additional staff member within the agency depending on the level of participation needed and the agencies resources. Some agencies are included in more than one RSF and in that case may want to assign different staff members to each.

Each RSF has one agency designated as the “Lead Agency.” This agency’s designee is responsible for helping to coordinate RSF activities and meeting with the assistance of ODRC staff. This designation does not mean that this agency has more influence over the recovery activities of that RSF, simply that they will help to serve a coordinating function. Frequency of meetings and activities of each RSF will be determined by assignments from the IRCC, discussed RSF priorities and other goals that may be established in each RSF category by state leadership.

Some primary tasks of the RSFs in non-disaster times include:

- Strengthening partnerships between federal, state and local governments, communities and other organizations with the emphasis on promoting recovery leadership at the community level.
- Working toward a standardized system of data collection and sharing among recovery partners.
- Tracking changes in laws, programs and funding sources at the federal level that could affect Iowa’s future recovery efforts.
- Participating in training and annual exercising of the recovery framework to ensure the framework is current and relevant.

Some primary tasks of the RSFs during a disaster recovery include:

- Implementing the state recovery plan when developed by a Disaster Recovery Advisory Commission.
- Strengthening partnerships among federal, state and local governments and communities with the emphasis on promoting recovery leadership at the community level.
- Coordinating recovery activities and information-sharing among the participating individual partner agencies and organizations.
- Ensuring transparency in the recovery effort.
- Participating in a coordinated statewide disaster recovery messaging structure to ensure consistency, accuracy and timeliness.
- Coordinating and supporting community-level disaster impact and recovery needs assessments.
- Identifying funding and technical assistance to meet recovery needs and maximize effectiveness of this assistance through proper sequencing and leveraging.
- Informing communities of available assistance programs, including eligibility requirements, compliance requirements and known limitations due to funding gaps or regulatory restrictions.

- Identifying issues and ideas for improving recovery efforts and programs.
- Facilitating resolution of recovery bottlenecks and challenges.
- Advising state leadership of recovery obstacles stemming from state and federal policies, programs and processes.
- Providing technical assistance for setting up state and local recovery organizations.

5. *Codify framework escalation*

During catastrophic disaster recovery efforts, the Governor and/or General Assembly may choose to escalate the framework. In determining when escalation is needed, leaders should consult with the Chair of the Iowa Recovery Coordinating Council, HSEMD and ODRC staff. The following factors should be considered in determining escalation:

- Sufficiency of existing state and local resources and staffing
- Geographic distribution of impacts
- Magnitude of population displacement and economic impacts
- Opportunities for major policy changes and decisions

*Disaster Recovery Advisory Commission*

The Disaster Recovery Advisory Commission (DRAC) would be a non-partisan group appointed by the Governor and made up of Iowans from a variety of sectors, backgrounds and regions. Similar to the role of the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission created in 2008, this group would provide leadership, vision and creativity to address, identify and prioritize the short- and long-term issues of the recovery. In a major disaster, DRAC may be activated and assigned specific responsibilities and reporting requirements. The ODRC would provide support to the DRAC's activities.

Unlike the Iowa Recovery Coordinating Council, this group would be made up of citizen members who can help to provide input and overall strategic direction in a major disaster. The IRCC would continue to serve its coordination function and the DRAC would be a temporary addition to recovery to provide vision and public input.

The DRAC would also lead efforts to solicit public input in order to recommend policy that facilitates long-term recovery. They would also work to develop a long-term recovery plan to submit to the Governor and General Assembly. The plan would detail priority areas of recovery focus and recommend strategies for resolution. It is this plan that may provide direction to the ODRC and the IRCC to guide disaster recovery efforts and decision-making during a major disaster recovery.

*Temporary Office Expansion*

The Governor and General Assembly may direct resources to provide for temporary expansion of the ODRC to address long-term recovery needs. This expansion may include:

- Delegation of authority and responsibility for leading and coordinating long-term recovery efforts with direct reporting to the Office of the Governor.
- Appointment of temporary office leadership.
- Temporary increased staffing of the ODRC. This may include staff drawn from existing state agencies and/or other temporary staff to help the ODRC fulfill its responsibilities.

De-escalation of the ODRC and its return to a pre-disaster state will depend on funding and progress toward implementation of the recovery plan. Transitioning the ODRC to pre-disaster state will be accomplished with consultation of the Iowa Recovery Council, the Governor, and the General Assembly. Documentation of impacts, programs, policies and best practices is a critical part of de-escalation and should be organized and coordinated throughout the process.



6. *Support disaster recovery training*

Another outcome of the Tabletop Exercise was the need for formal disaster recovery training. In response to this need, the Rebuild Iowa Office has developed *The Disaster Recovery Management Course*. This course has been reviewed by HSEMD and it is recommended that Iowa's Department of Administrative Services offer it as either a (one day) classroom-based course or offered as an independent course throughout the state. If future disasters require additional recovery programs to be rolled out, this course provides an overview of programs utilized in the 2008 disaster recovery and more. The course is appropriate for state employees, non-profit employees, volunteers, emergency managers, community leaders, county, city/state officials, department heads, committee chairs, Chamber of Commerce members, private sector business leaders, first responders and any others involved in recovery.

7. *Create a Disaster Recovery Fund*

In order to ensure that state resources are available to supplement any federal resources in a major disaster, the state should establish a disaster recovery fund, separate from the general fund and the Iowa Economic Emergency Fund, which the Executive Council can access in presidentially-declared disaster. Funds would be used to provide assistance in:

- business recovery
- housing needs
- individual unmet needs
- infrastructure recovery, including historic preservation needs

These funds should be used only when federal assistance under the Stafford Act is not available or does not adequately meet the needs of the citizens of the State in the disaster area.

Since most of Iowa's disasters are not federally declared and therefore receive no federal assistance, the state should also establish a \$3.5 million public assistance program available in the state to assist communities with recovery from smaller disasters. This would be similar to the existing state individual assistance program and be administered by the Office of Disaster Recovery Coordination.

8. *Support Local Emergency Management*

Local Emergency Management Coordinators and Commissions play a critical role in disaster response and recovery. Statewide, there is a lack of consistency in the amount of planning they undertake and their ability to handle disasters. Part of this inconsistency relates to inadequate funding for this important role. Currently, no state resources are used for this system. Local emergency management is funded with a combination of local funds and federal grants. We recommend that a Local Emergency Management Fund be established at the state level. Commissions funded through this state appropriation would need to be considered in good standing with Homeland Security and Emergency Management in completing their duties as outlined in Iowa Code Chapter 29C.

9. *Improve vital records retention*

The State Archives of Iowa at the Department of Cultural Affairs should implement the Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records (IPER) Project of the Council of State Archivists. It was recognized during 2008 flooding and tornado disasters that many local government records were vulnerable to disaster and officials did not know how to properly deal with flood-damaged records. This program would assist with preparedness and response. In order to achieve this, DCA needs funding and authorization for a staff coordinator.

In addition, the state needs to lead by example. The Department of Administrative Services should work with DCA on a review of the location of all vital state records. This review should result in a report with recommendations for relocating vulnerable records, such as those stored within floodplains, and a timeline for implementation.

**Objective 2: Guide and support integrated, local and regional comprehensive planning.**

Until passage of Smart Planning legislation in 2010, the Iowa Code included no guidance, incentives or mandates for local planning. In fact, Iowa was one of a very small number of states that did not explicitly list in code the elements that should or must be included in a local comprehensive plan. Progress was made toward this objective in 2010 when Senate File 2389 (SF 2389) was signed into law. Division VII, the Iowa Smart Planning Bill, included three primary components:

- Articulates 10 Iowa Smart Planning Principles that must be considered and may be applied by local governments and state agencies during deliberation of all appropriate planning, zoning, development, and resource management decisions.
- Provides comprehensive planning guidance for cities and counties, including 13 suggested elements.
- Establishes the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force, charged with making recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on the following:
  - Integrating the Iowa Smart Planning Principles into appropriate state policies and programs
  - Determining an effective and efficient coordination and information sharing system to support local and regional planning
  - Suggesting appropriate technical and financial incentives to support local and regional planning
  - Developing a framework for regional planning

The Task Force submitted its first report to the Governor and General Assembly on Nov. 15, 2010, outlining recommendations aimed at supporting and encouraging sustainable, comprehensive, integrated planning at the local, regional, and state levels. This report included an implementation timeline that spans the next five years. First-year action items are included in the transition strategy. The Task Force is scheduled to dissolve on Dec. 31, 2012

To achieve Objective 2, the following five elements of the Task Force's report should be acted on during the 2011 legislative session to ensure effective implementation of the Iowa Smart Planning Bill:

*1. Identify a state entity charged with administering smart planning support and a statewide geographic information system*

Task Force Recommendation 1.1 called on the state to establish an Office of Planning and Geographic Information Systems and an associated Coordinating Council. The purpose of this Office is to better coordinate state investments, administer financial and technical assistance for local planning, implement a statewide geographic information systems (GIS) clearinghouse, and provide technical assistance and training for GIS data management. The Office would also provide training to other state agencies regarding effective integration of the Iowa Smart Planning Principles. Ideally, these functions would be housed in an independent office; however, recognizing budgetary and other constraints, it is recommended that these functions be housed within an existing agency, such as the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

*2. Establish a funding source for a Local Planning Grant Program and expand local financing options for planning*

The Iowa Smart Planning: Local Comprehensive Planning Grant Program, established during the summer of 2010 utilizing disaster recovery Community Development Block Grant funds (through the

Department of Housing and Urban Development), made available one-time funds to support the development of local and multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plans. The program received requests far in excess of available funds and showed that a relatively modest amount of state funds can incentivize a significant number of communities to undertake smart planning.

The state should establish a sustainable funding source that would provide grants on an annual basis to support, in part, the development of local comprehensive plans. Such plans should incorporate the Iowa Smart Planning Principles and follow state guidance concerning local comprehensive plans. Such a fund should be administered by the state planning entity. The state should also consider allowing other innovative local funding options for smart plan development and implementation at the local level.

3. *Create a Smart Planning Education Program and Toolbox*

Smart planning educational programming should be developed and provided to professional planners, elected officials and other interested persons. The programming should focus on the benefits of smart planning for communities, defining what smart planning means in terms of plan elements and implementation, and should reflect the Iowa Smart Planning Principles. A smart planning toolbox is an important part of this programming and may include model plans and ordinances, best practices and lessons learned, and a clearinghouse of grant and technical assistance opportunities. The programming should be housed at the state planning entity and developed and provided in collaboration with the Iowa League of Cities, Iowa State Association of Counties, Iowa Association of Regional Councils and the regents' universities.

4. *Establish administrative rules and processes for regional planning*

Consistent with RIAC recommendation #8, the Task Force recommended that integrated, comprehensive regional plans be developed by each council of governments (COG) in Iowa and that these plans are updated every five years. Administrative rules and processes need to be established for this purpose. The regional plans should incorporate the Iowa Smart Planning Principles and follow the state's local comprehensive planning guidance. The plans should also integrate applicable watershed goals and strategies developed within each major river basin and region and outline a process for cooperation, collaboration, and decision-making between member governments for multi-jurisdictional projects and programs. COGs will also need to establish plan review committees for the purpose of reviewing local comprehensive plans for consistency with regional plans and providing non-binding comments, as well as to review and qualify local plans as smart plans on behalf of the state; qualification as a smart plan will entitle such communities with "additional consideration" for state grant programs. A regional planning and implementation entity needs to be identified or established for the Central Iowa region.

5. *Make the definition of "Local Comprehensive Plan" uniform throughout Iowa code*

All references to "general plan" should be struck in State Code Chapter 403 (Urban Renewal) and replaced with "comprehensive plan" as defined in Chapter 18B.1. Chapters 354 (Platting – Division and Subdivision of Land) and 368 (City Development) should also reference the definition of "comprehensive plan" as outlined in Chapter 18B.1.

**Objective 3: Improve floodplain and watershed management to mitigate future disaster damage**

Many factors contribute to the causes and severity of flooding, yet few decisions have as big an impact on soil and water as how we use our land. Multiple reports, recommendations, studies, conferences and books indicate that water quantity and quality, soil conditions and land use issues are tightly intertwined. Interagency and multijurisdictional action is required to find and implement the best long-term and sustainable solutions to support economic development while mitigating future losses due to flooding.

To maintain Iowa's strong agricultural economy and provide safe, healthy, desirable communities well into the future, Iowa must adopt more sustainable development and agricultural practices, stormwater management standards and other measures that protect our floodplains and waterways. Recognizing that floodplains are a part of the total watershed area, the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force recommended the development of state-wide interagency and multi-jurisdictional watershed plans that identify critical issues, opportunities and goals must be integrated into local and regional comprehensive land use plans to help minimize bad decisions and lead to enhanced natural resources and more desirable communities for future generations.

To achieve Objective 3, the state should adopt the following recommendations of the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force and Water Resources Coordinating Council:

1. *Establish the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as the lead agency responsible for coordination of an interagency watershed management program*  
Partner agencies may include the Iowa Flood Center, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).
2. *Provide sufficient staff resources to the DNR to lead and coordinate watershed management efforts to:*
  - Complete an intensive strategic review of watershed planning and implementation involving significant watershed-related partners from federal, state, and local agencies, non-governmental organizations and institutions. Such a review would, at a minimum, identify a collective vision for watershed programs, inventory existing watershed programs, highlight gaps and duplications of existing programs, and establish steps necessary to realize the collective vision for watershed planning and implementation.
  - Develop goals and strategies for each of Iowa's six major river basins and three major river regions.
  - Hire five additional basin coordinators to lead planning efforts, coordinate across political boundaries and translate technical information.
  - Establish a process to share watershed information with community planners, Councils of Governments (COGs) and local governments for integration of watershed goals and strategies into local and regional comprehensive land use plans.
  - Coordinate closely with the Office of Planning and Geographic Information Systems (proposed under Iowa Smart Planning Task Force Recommendations).
  - Organize and staff the WRCC including organizing meetings and working to carry out their recommendations.
3. *Adopt and fund the following policy strategies during the 2011 legislative session as recommended by the WRCC and others:*
  - Establish and adopt minimum statewide stormwater standards. The standards must limit water runoff, reduce potential future flood damage, assess the effects of stream channelization and improve watershed management in terms of both water quality and water quantity.
  - Require any construction or substantial modification of critical facilities such as hospitals, jails and emergency operation centers be designed to ensure the facility could operate or safely cease operating during the occurrence of a 0.2 percent (500-year) flood event.
  - Conduct a hydrological tiling study to determine the impact of tile drained fields on infiltration, surface runoff and flooding and to evaluate the feasibility of seasonal retention of water as a drainage management strategy.
  - Create an incentive program that rewards communities that exceed the minimum State and National Flood Insurance Program requirements with an increased State contribution toward the

- local cost match following flood-related Federal disaster declarations.
- Better inform the consumer about flood risk by including information about property location within a floodplain in real estate disclosure statements, and requiring insurance companies to clearly inform consumers that flood damage and water backup damage is not covered by property and casualty insurance coverage and identify how and where that coverage is available.

## CONCLUSION

Since the floods, storms and tornadoes of 2008, Iowa has solidified its position as a national leader in disaster response and recovery. Other states have looked to Iowa as a model for a successful long-term disaster recovery framework. We must take care to ensure Iowa's continued recovery success beyond the transition. It is imperative that those impacted by 2008 disasters continue to receive important support, assistance and information. It is also critical that the lessons learned since 2008 be captured and institutionalized so that the state is ready for the next major disaster.

Iowa must learn from its continued flooding and take bold steps to minimize the damage that will result in inevitable future disasters. The State can make decisions now that lessen the burden in the future. While mitigation requires an upfront investment, the long-term savings will far exceed the costs of rebuilding yet again. Greater recovery coordination capacity, robust community and regional planning, and more effective watershed management is the best way to achieve the objectives in this transition strategy and foster a safer, more resilient Iowa.

This strategy is a living document. The Rebuild Iowa Office looks forward to working with recovery partners and state leaders between now and June 30, 2011, to further discuss and implement the recommendations outlined.

## RESOURCES

### **Iowa Disaster Recovery Framework**

[http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-11\\_Iowa\\_Disaster\\_Recovery\\_Framework.pdf](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-11_Iowa_Disaster_Recovery_Framework.pdf)

### **Smart Planning Task Force Recommendations**

[http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-11\\_Smart\\_Planning\\_Task\\_Force\\_Report.pdf](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-11_Smart_Planning_Task_Force_Report.pdf)

### **Business Disaster Case Management Task Force Recommendations**

[http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-11\\_Business\\_Disaster\\_Case\\_Management\\_Report.pdf](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-11_Business_Disaster_Case_Management_Report.pdf)

### **National Disaster Recovery Framework**

[http://www.fema.gov/pdf/recoveryframework/omb\\_ndrf.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/recoveryframework/omb_ndrf.pdf)

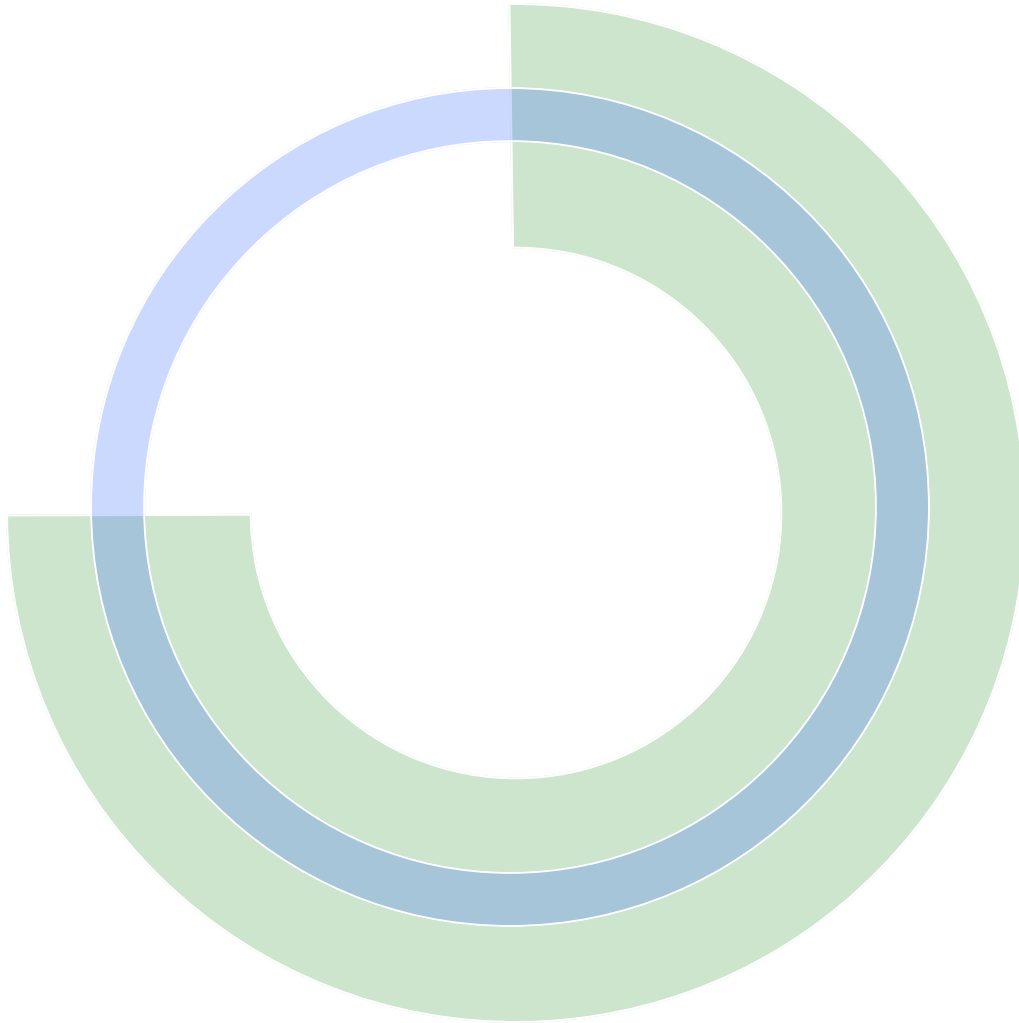
### **Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise After Action Report / Improvement Plan**

[http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-08\\_HSEEP\\_AAR-IP\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/2010-08_HSEEP_AAR-IP_FINAL.pdf)

### **Iowa Recommendations for Federal Policy Change from the 2008 Disasters**

[http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/RIO\\_Federal\\_Recommendations.pdf](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/resources/reports/RIO_Federal_Recommendations.pdf)





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