



## CEDAR RAPIDS PURCHASING FOCUSED ON EQUITY

In 2010, the City of Cedar Rapids developed a purchasing program that created preferences within a certain percentage of the lowest bidding price for Linn County businesses to “buy local” and source their goods and services from local businesses. In an effort to deepen the commitment to the local businesses in the community and based on [feedback from local business owners](#), the Cedar Rapids City Council passed a resolution in 2017 authorizing an additional 2% allowance for disadvantaged businesses located within Linn County.

Diane Muench, purchasing services manager for the City of Cedar Rapids said that after the area flooding, the purchasing programs were “a way to help the businesses whose employees or the businesses themselves suffered damage from the flooding. It was a way to give them an extra boost.”

Originally, the disadvantaged business program was set-up to recognize businesses registered as disadvantaged in the federal government’s “System for Award Management” (SAM) database, which encompassed women-owned, minority-owned or veteran-owned businesses. The City hoped the program would generate more city business to disadvantaged businesses. When the preference program data was reviewed, between August 2017 and August 2019, only two companies had completed the small disadvantaged businesses paperwork.

“We knew there were a lot more companies out there that would be eligible, but only two had gone through and actually filled out the paperwork,” Muench said.

Around the same time, Muench was invited to participate in the City’s equity initiative underway to review City initiatives and programs for equitable practices. Her participation in the program prompted Muench to ask: Why aren’t we getting more people participating in the small disadvantaged business program?

Muench said the City asked itself, “The social equity pilot program was about removing barriers. How can we as a city remove the barriers to participate in this program for the additional 2% preference?”



After surveying purchasing peers from around the state, others with similar programs indicated they were using Iowa’s Targeted Small Business (TSB) program to identify disadvantaged businesses rather than the SAM database. The SAM paperwork was too extensive and turned people away from even registering as a disadvantaged business.

“I worked with my director and the equity team in presenting the change to the city council. Instead of using the SAM database, we could verify disadvantaged businesses through the TSB program. All they would need to do is indicate they registered as a TSB; we verify the registration, and they’re placed on a list to receive an additional 2% preference if they bid on a city contract.”

Changing the process to utilize the TSB database also made the background checks for eligible businesses easier for the City. Instead of printing lists of businesses registered in the SAM database, they easily verified real-time data on the TSB website. The TSB program also includes businesses owned by individuals with disabilities. Although the City didn’t originally include this demographic in the list of individuals eligible for its preference program, because the TSB program included this population, the City altered its program to include this group.

The council approved the change in August of 2019, and in 2019 a local business owner, Nina Brundell, who originally helped advocate to establish the City’s 2% preference program, won a City contract. Brundell’s contract was to provide uniform apparel to the City police and fire departments, including measuring and fitting all personnel, providing maintenance of patches and emblems applied to the uniforms representing years of service or rank and ongoing tailoring work.

## CEDAR RAPIDS PURCHASING FOCUSED ON EQUITY, CONTINUED

Kieck's has been a certified TSB since 2017 but hadn't previously registered under the City's system. Muench said that if the city had not moved from SAM to TSB, Kieck's would not have won the award.

"We hadn't held the police contract in the ten years I owned the store," Brundell explained. After winning the contract, Brundell has been able to quickly and easily respond to the City's requests for alterations, patch changes, etc.

The City's commitment to broadening and deepening its commitment to local business is important to Brundell who, like others in Cedar Rapids, chose to stay in the area after the floods of 2008 and who continue to deepen their commitment to the community.

"We have a brick and mortar store. We're paying city taxes. I employ six people or more. Programs like this help support the community and keeps city funds within our own community. We're the ones in the community, donating to non-profits, and helping build up our areas after the floods of 2008."

Other results created from the City's equity initiative include reviewing the city's transit system to ensure it is easier for high school and middle school students to ride the bus for activities from school to work, or from school activities to home. In the future, the City of Cedar Rapids plans to apply lessons learned from the equity pilot project to other areas of city management.

## HF 485 UPDATE

During the last legislative session, HF 485 was passed and signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds. This bill amended Iowa Code section 8A.311, granting the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) the authority to determine a procurement threshold amount by rule, not to exceed \$25,000, for direct purchasing from a certified Targeted Small Business (TSB), updating the prior code that set the amount at \$10,000 in code.

The code change went into effect July 1, 2019, but per the language in the bill, required a change in the Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) to establish the threshold. The IAC contains all administrative rules adopted by Iowa's state agencies. In the fall of 2019, DAS pursued an administrative code change to increase the direct purchasing threshold to \$25,000 through the rulemaking process. The rules were adopted in December 2019 and become effective February 5, 2020. To view a copy of the final Administrative Bulletin, in which the final adopted rules are filed, visit: [legis.iowa.gov/docs/aco/bulletin/01-01-2020.pdf](https://legis.iowa.gov/docs/aco/bulletin/01-01-2020.pdf)

## VENDOR ORIENTATIONS

Want to learn more about doing business with the State of Iowa or Iowa State University? Plan to attend an upcoming vendor orientation session.

### Iowa State University Procurement Services Vendor Orientation

January 8, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

February 11, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

March 12, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Learn how to do business with Iowa State, what they buy, the bid process, invoicing and payment and information available to vendors online. The Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) will also present information on its services to help Iowa businesses throughout the state in obtaining government contracts at the federal, state and local level. At the end of the session, purchasing agents from ISU, Department of Transportation and representatives from CIRAS will be available to answer questions.

Contact the ISU vendor desk at [quotedesk@iastate.edu](mailto:quotedesk@iastate.edu) to sign up. Include your company name, session date, and the names and email addresses of the attendees.

### FY 20 Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Central Procurement Vendor Orientation:

January 15, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

March 4, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

May 6, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Learn the basics of public procurement, what the state purchases, where to find solicitations, other procurement information and whom to contact. All sessions will be held at the Hoover Building, Level A, Procurement Conference Room, located at 1305 E. Walnut St., Des Moines, IA 50319. To register or learn more, email [purchasing.mailbox@iowa.gov](mailto:purchasing.mailbox@iowa.gov).

# NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE CERTIFIED TARGETED SMALL BUSINESS DIRECTORY

In the last quarter, 25 new businesses became Targeted Small Businesses. Please welcome the following to the [Targeted Small Business Directory](#):

[Affordable Asphalt Services, Sioux City](#)

[Neck of the Woods Christmas Trees, Le Mars](#)

[Always Moving Forward, LLC, North Liberty](#)

[Night Dive Co., Oelwein](#)

[Braxton's Construction, LLC, Dubuque](#)

[P&M Apparel, Polk City](#)

[C. True Designs, Cedar Rapids](#)

[Pop up Games, LLC, Indianola](#)

[D & B CCS, LLC, Ankeny](#)

[ReSet Consulting, LLC, Cedar Rapids](#)

[Dlux Solutions, LLC, Des Moines](#)

[Solbreez, LLC, Polk City](#)

[Fajen Consulting, West Des Moines](#)

[Spend to Give, LLC, Iowa City](#)

[Iowa Intelligence, West Des Moines](#)

[Studio 192 Company, Des Moines](#)

[Mad J Repair & Towing, Inc., Ankeny](#)

[Swaich Technologies, LLC, West Des Moines](#)

[Matouk Service, Windsor Heights](#)

[Symspace, LLC, Des Moines](#)

[Midwest Eco Systems, Ankeny](#)

[The Visual Element, LLC, Elgin](#)

[MPS Engineers dba Kingston Services, P.C., Des Moines](#)

[Tuned in Teachers, LLC, Windsor Heights](#)

[Native Growers, LLC dba Beautiful Land Products, Iowa City](#)

Remember to use the directory as a resource when marketing to other local businesses!

## WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT STATE PROCUREMENT?

- Visit the [DAS Central Procurement Website](#)
- Contact DAS Central Procurement Manager [Karl Wendt](#), 515.281.7073
- Review [How to do Business with the State of Iowa](#)
- Find out [What Does the State Buy?](#)
- Learn about state purchasing practices in Iowa's [Procurement Administrative Rules](#)
- Understand [TSB Procurement guidelines](#) for state buyers
- Register your business at the [Vendor Self Service Portal](#)
- Locate your [NIGP Commodity Codes](#) to receive solicitation notifications
- Review current [Bid Opportunities](#) open to all businesses

# IOWA LEGAL AID SERVICES



Iowa Legal Aid has a new project providing free legal services for low-income business owners, the Community Economic Development Project (CED). CED can help individuals start

a business, or if the business already exists, help with legal matters related to the business. Examples include assistance in drafting contracts, reviewing and negotiating contracts and leases, entity selection, entity formation, answering specific legal questions and providing advice on a variety of business-related matters.

Clients must meet eligibility requirements, including income restrictions and other considerations.

Another goal of the project is to complete Community Legal Education presentations for the public. Iowa Legal Aid can present on general business law topics or on a specific topic, if that's of interest to the group. Iowa Legal Aid can present in different languages.

There are three ways to apply for Iowa Legal Aid Services:

1. Walk into any of the 10 offices - open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (except Thursday afternoons). Bring paperwork regarding your business.
2. Call us 1.800.532.1275, Monday- Friday 9-11 a.m. or 1:30-3:30 p.m. (except Thursday afternoons)
3. Apply Online - Do not apply online if you have deadlines. [iowalegalaid.org/resource/applying-for-help-from-iowa-legal-aid](http://iowalegalaid.org/resource/applying-for-help-from-iowa-legal-aid)

For issues or questions, please contact Samantha Wagner, staff attorney for the CED Project, at [swagner@iowalaw.org](mailto:swagner@iowalaw.org).

## TARGETED SMALL BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

Des Moines-based specialty coffee company, **BLK & Bold**, is launching its specialty products in more than 200 Target stores, the [Des Moines Business Record reported](#). Owners Pernell Cezar and Jarrhod Johnson also note the company reinvested 5% of the company's profits into initiatives that support domestic at-risk youth.



Immigrant entrepreneur, Ying Sa owner of **Community CPA** in Des Moines, has published her first book "Appointment with Ying @ 8 a.m.; Starting up a Business" as noted by the [Des Moines Business Record](#). The book highlights Ying's journey as an immigrant who started her own business in Iowa.



In addition to owning Community CPA, Ying also helped found the Immigrant Entrepreneurship Conference, which is now held nationally.

Julia V. Dannen, owner of **D & S Services** in Mason City that offers accounting, payroll and tax assistance, was recently named a [Finalist for the Young Entrepreneur Of the Year](#) award, sponsored by the John Pappajohn Entrepreneur Center at NIACC.



Jenny Schmidt, owner of **JSchmidt Consulting** in West Des Moines was recently the featured presenter at the International Institute for Analytics' May 209 webinar, titled, "[So You've Hired a Data Scientist, Now What?](#)" The International Institute for Analytics is an independent research and advisory firm based in Portland, Oregon, that works with organizations to build strong and competitive analytics programs.



Brittney Haskins, owner of One Sweet Kitchen in Des Moines, was featured in Des Moines' "[Welcome Home](#)" magazine, which covered her history as a baker



**One Sweet Kitchen**

from a young-age and finally taking the leap to turning her passion for baking into a full-time business.

# PARTNER EVENTS

## **SWAG Networking Opportunity for Women Entrepreneurs**

***Date/Time: Jan. 14, 8:00 – 9:30 a.m.***

**Location: Maquoketa Chamber, 124 S. Main St., Maquoketa, IA 52060**

Pre-register for this event by contacting Jo Eckert at [jo.eckert@sba.gov](mailto:jo.eckert@sba.gov)

***Date/Time: Jan. 31, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.***

**Location: Washington Chamber, 205 W. Main St., Washington, IA 52353**

***Date/Time: Feb. 14, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.***

**Location: Southeastern Community College River Park Pl., 610 4th St., Ste. 209, Burlington, IA 52601**

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) hosts a monthly networking opportunity for women in Central Iowa entitled “SWAG” for “Stellar Women Achieving Greatness”.

SWAG offers women in business, or who are thinking about starting a business, the opportunity to meet, connect with and provide mutual support. Attendees will give a short elevator pitch and then share thoughts, ideas and suggestions with the rest of the group with the goal of making connections with others who have faced, or may be experiencing, similar issues in starting and growing a woman-owned small business in Iowa. Contact Jo Eckert with questions at [jo.eckert@sba.gov](mailto:jo.eckert@sba.gov).

## **Boots to Business Reboot**

***Date/Time: March 3, 8:30 – 4:00 p.m.***

**Location: ISU Hansen Ag. Student Learning Center, 2508 Mortenson Rd., Room 1104, Ames, IA 50011**

Boots to Business Reboot is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The course provides an overview of entrepreneurship and applicable business ownership fundamentals. Veterans of all eras, Active Duty Service members (including National Guard and Reserve) and spouses are eligible to participate. During Reboot, participants are introduced to the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to launch a business, including steps for developing business concepts, how to develop a business plan and information on SBA resources available to help. The program is facilitated by subject matter experts from the SBA and its extensive network of skilled business advisors.

Participants that complete an in-person B2B Reboot course can elect to further their study through one of many B2B online courses, offered at no cost to Service members, Veterans and military spouses. Those that have already attended an in-person B2B course, visit [sbavets.force.com](http://sbavets.force.com) to sign up for one of the online B2B follow-on courses.

For more information, contact Jo Eckert at [jo.eckert@sba.gov](mailto:jo.eckert@sba.gov)

## PARTNER EVENTS, CONTINUED

### **DreamBuilder Accelerated**

**Date/Time:** *February 3, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.*

*February 14, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.*

*Monday, March 2, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.*

**Location:** **The Iowa Center, 8345 University Blvd, Clive, IA 50325**

DreamBuilder Accelerated takes The Iowa Center's eight-week business planning class and condenses it to only four weeks. This course offers the potential for a complete business plan, online platform with in-person support, including opportunities for one-on-one coaching, presentations on everything from small business law to taxes to defining the "why" and meetings on three occasions for orientation, subject matter experts and business plan presentations.

Registration: [theiowacenter.org/calendar/events/event-566](http://theiowacenter.org/calendar/events/event-566)



### **Work for Yourself @ 50+: An AARP Workshop**

**Date/Time:** *January 14, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.*

**Location:** **The Iowa Center, 8345 University Blvd, Clive, IA 50325**

Work for Yourself@50+ is a comprehensive program to help participants learn about self-employment and make the right decisions. In this workshop, find step-by-step information on how to start a business and generate additional income, as well as get access to additional resources and mentors to help participants get started on the self-employment journey

Registration: [aarp.cvent.com/d/yhgsc8](http://aarp.cvent.com/d/yhgsc8)

### **FocusMe**

**Date/Time:** *Starts January 23, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Iowa Center*

**Location:** **Iowa Center, 8345 University Blvd, Clive, IA 50325**

FocusME provides a space for working women to support each other with connections and accountability as each sets her own professional and personal goals. New groups form every quarter and meet once per week for eight weeks. Each is led by a facilitator whose role is to organize the group around weekly themes and to push each participant to achieve what she sets forth.

As a participant, you will lean on each other, give advice, share connections and experiences, do business with each other if/when appropriate, be a source of support, referrals and networking, and spend time and emphasis on topics such as goal setting, pitching your ideas, prioritization and time management.

The cost to participate is \$99 and includes eight weeks of meetings.

Registration: [theiowacenter.org/calendar/events/event-567](http://theiowacenter.org/calendar/events/event-567)

### **DreamBuilder Live**

**Date/Time:** *Monday, March 30 - meets weekly for eight weeks from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.*

**Location:** **The Iowa Center, 8345 University Blvd, Clive, IA 50325**

During this eight-week course, participants will work to develop a business plan, have access to online material as well as group + one-on-one, in-person support, build a professional network, connect with others working toward the goal of business ownership and learn from guest mentors (including CPAs, attorneys, web developers and other small business owners).

Email [creiman@theiowacenter.org](mailto:creiman@theiowacenter.org) to register.

## PARTNER EVENTS, CONTINUED

### **First Friday Conversation with an Entrepreneur**

**Location:** The Iowa Center, 8345 University Blvd Ste. F, Clive IA 50325

### **February First Friday: Sabetha Mumm, Dance Visions**

**Date/Time:** February 7, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

### **March First Friday: Libby Trausch and Molly Lechtenberg, Breath. Physical Therapy and Wellness.**

**Date/Time:** March 6, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

On the first Friday of every month, hear savvy, successful business owners + entrepreneurs of Des Moines share their story. In a laid-back environment, participants will catch some words of wisdom from women + men who have been through it before—and maybe walk away with a new connection (or two).

Sessions are completely free, open to the public, and are held from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., with networking from 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. This First Friday will be held at the Iowa Center, 8345 University Blvd, Suite F, Clive, 50325. Seating is first come, first served. Lunch is not provided, though participants are encouraged to bring their own.

Registration: [theiowacenter.org/calendar/events/event-572](http://theiowacenter.org/calendar/events/event-572)

### **You are a Certified Targeted Small Business - What's Next?**

**Date/Time:** January 29, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

**Location:** Webinar



This webinar series is provided in partnership with Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and Targeted Small Business (TSB) program with the State of Iowa. This webinar is useful for companies that recently received TSB certification from the State of Iowa. The session will provide information on next steps and considerations to take advantage of the procurement opportunities for TSB's with the State of Iowa. Explore the structure of the state and independent buying agencies and review the types of products and services they buy, discuss in greater detail the procurement benefits to the program, how to best do business with the State as a vendor and TSB, as well as marketing best practices. Discuss additional procurement and preference programs for which TSBs may be eligible. This session is also suitable for companies eligible for TSB certification that would like to review the procurement processes and opportunities prior to pursuing certification. For questions, please contact Melissa Burant, [mmburant@iastate.edu](mailto:mmburant@iastate.edu).

Registration:

[eventbrite.com/e/you-are-a-certified-targeted-small-business-tsb-whats-next-webinar-registration-59907960322](http://eventbrite.com/e/you-are-a-certified-targeted-small-business-tsb-whats-next-webinar-registration-59907960322)

### **Subcontracting Webinar**

**Date/Time:** February 3, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Location:** Webinar

This online session will help attendees understand subcontracting opportunities and where these opportunities may be a better fit for some companies and industries, as well as a great initial way to build past performance. This session will also help companies understand subcontracting plans, provide some tactical processes to identify subcontracting opportunities, and provide an overview of how to effectively perform initial outreach for subcontracting marketing.

Registration: [eventbrite.com/e/subcontracting-webinar-registration-59959926755](http://eventbrite.com/e/subcontracting-webinar-registration-59959926755)

### **Preparing a Winning Proposal**

**Date/Time:** February 5, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Location:** Tero International, 1840 NW 118th St., Clive, IA

Success in government contracting requires convincing a government agency you are the best choice to fill any need. Doing so requires knowing how the system works, who to deal with, what the rules are, and how to cast yourself in the best light. CIRAS can help. In four different sessions scheduled for four different cities, learn everything from how to read and answer an RFP to tips for organizing a proposal and getting questions answered. Learn how to avoid some of the most common mistakes.

Registration: [eventbrite.com/e/preparing-a-winning-proposal-clive-registration-82827682829](http://eventbrite.com/e/preparing-a-winning-proposal-clive-registration-82827682829)

## PARTNER EVENTS, CONTINUED

### **Creating your Government Marketing Strategy**

**Date/Time:** February 11, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

**Location:** Webinar

This webinar will provide information on the overall value of initial and ongoing market research for companies pursuing government sales. Participants will discuss resources available for conducting market research and companies will receive a meaningful starting point for a one-on-one discussion with a counselor for specific market research assistance. This session will provide a framework for companies to locate and define its top targets and what they are buying and assist in marketing and pursuit of government customers. Prerequisite: Participation in GovCon 101 or completion of a one-on-one meeting with a CIRAS Government Contracting Specialist is recommended prior to attending. For questions, please contact Melissa Burant at [mmburant@iastate.edu](mailto:mmburant@iastate.edu).

Registration:

[eventbrite.com/e/creating-your-government-marketing-strategy-webinar-registration-60481047441](https://eventbrite.com/e/creating-your-government-marketing-strategy-webinar-registration-60481047441)

### **GovCon 101 Webinar**

**Date/Time:** February 19, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**Location:** Webinar

This webinar will provide an introduction to local, state and federal government contracting, and address the various factors to consider before entering this market. Discuss how the government market differs from the commercial market, the pros and cons of servicing this market, how the government buys, and all the various steps required in order to sell to the government. Questions may be sent to Samantha Ferm at [siferm@iastate.edu](mailto:siferm@iastate.edu).

Registration: [eventbrite.com/e/govcon-101-webinar-registration-63574876166](https://eventbrite.com/e/govcon-101-webinar-registration-63574876166)

### **Marketing to the Government**

**Date/Time:** March 18, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Location:** 906 6th St., Harlan, IA 51537

The first step toward winning government contracts is knowing what government customers are looking for and where they're currently spending money. Focused, insightful marketing helps companies understand its competitors and creates new opportunities for firms to engage, network and win government contracts. ISU Government Contracting Specialists with the CIRAS Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) have created this event to help Iowa businesses learn how to market to government agencies, thereby increasing the likelihood of winning government contracts. Participants in this event will discover how to: Identify potential markets and target customers using market research; utilize agency procurement histories to determine who buys what your company sells and how much; craft a quality capability statement, learn how to identify points of contact and establish agencies with government agencies, and develop a Government Marketing Plan. For questions, please contact Government Contracting Specialist Andy Alexander at [andyalex@iastate.edu](mailto:andyalex@iastate.edu).

Registration: [eventbrite.com/e/marketing-to-the-government-registration-81605758019](https://eventbrite.com/e/marketing-to-the-government-registration-81605758019)

### **Financial Breakfast and Learn Series**

**Date/Time:** January 27, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. *QuickBooks Q&A: You Bring the Questions*

**February 24, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. *What Does a Financial Statement Say About Your Business?***

**March 30, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. *Record Keeping: What, Why and How***

**Location:** CBIZ/SCC 610 N 4th Street, Riverpark Place, Burlington, Iowa 52601

Each one-hour session is free. Learn how to read financial statements to better manage a business. Learn what records to keep, why they're important to a business, and how good record keeping can benefit the business and future income tax returns.

Registration is required to ensure adequate seating and materials. Call 319.208.5375, toll-free 866.SCC.IOWA X5375, or online at [cbiziowa.com](http://cbiziowa.com).

