



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

PROJECT NAME: Iowa Law Manual for Local Public Agency Road Departments

PROJECT NUMBER: TR-833

PROJECT FUNDING PROGRAM: Iowa Highway Research Board

PROJECTED END DATE: June 2025

PROJECT CHAMPION:

Lee Bjerke, Iowa County Engineers Association
lee.bjerke@iceasb.org

PROJECT MANAGER:

Vanessa Goetz, Iowa DOT
vanessa.goetz@iowadot.us

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Shean Fletchall, Iowa Department of Justice
shean.fletchall@iowadot.us

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Updating an Iowa law manual for local road departments

It's a challenge for district engineers and county road department managers to keep up with all the Iowa laws that apply to their daily jobs. District and county staff invest considerable time identifying applicable laws and finding the best approach to resolve issues that arise from detours, closures, and other routine events. Time-consuming subjects that local engineers commonly need to research range from construction and maintenance liability to right of way, interstate bridges, and rural subdivisions.

This project will create a comprehensive, updated reference document that local road department managers can use to identify which Iowa law code sections and case law apply to county and district projects. An existing legal guide

from 1995 covers these topics but is decades out of date. An updated, modernized version will save time for local staff and agency legal resources that are often stretched thin.

Existing law and court decisions will be compiled and organized so they are easy to access. The outcome of the project will be a digital document with embedded links that will enable engineers to quickly locate the pertinent code. This resource will streamline the process of resolving legal issues, whether engineers read and apply the code themselves or get input from the appropriate counsel. The project team will structure the guide like other reference manuals that Iowa engineers use so that it will not require a lot of training to implement.

The format will also lend itself to annual updates, making it easier to keep current than previous versions.

"This reference guide will be valuable to all Iowa district and county agencies trying to navigate the legal complexities of local road projects," said Lee Bjerke, secondary roads research engineer at Iowa County Engineers Association.

The research is expected to conclude in June 2025.

To learn more about this project and subscribe to updates, visit [Idea #3429](#).

IOWA DOT RESEARCH

iowadot.gov/research
ideas.iowadot.gov