IOWA CITY **2020-2021**

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



NCLUSIVE

JUST

SUSTAINABLE

STRATEGIC PLAN IN PROGRESS...

The City Council's 2020-2021 Strategic Plan intends to foster a more inclusive, just and sustainable Iowa City by prioritizing the physical, mental and economic well-being of all residents.



City Council members are, from left:

Pauline Taylor, District A

Mazahir Salih, At-Large, Mayor Pro Tem

Bruce Teague, At-Large, Mayor

Laura Bergus, At-Large

John Thomas, District C

Susan Mims, District B

Janice Weiner, At-Large



The following report provides a brief, at-a-glance review of current programs, projects and initiatives that drive forward the Strategic Plan goals.

This Plan's goals include:

Advance Social Justice, Racial Equity, and Human Rights
Demonstrate Leadership in Climate Action
Strengthen Community Engagement and Intergovernmental Relations
Invest in Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Fiscal Reserves
Foster Healthy Neighborhoods and Affordable Housing Throughout the City
Enhance Community Mobility for All Residents
Promote an Inclusive and Resilient Economy Throughout the City

The City regularly posts these updates on its website at www.icgov.org/strategicplan.



Community Influences

lowa City response to major events in 2020 and beyond

The global COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact

the community in numerous ways. The community received frequent messaging from the City about mask use, public and private facility and service changes and updates on proclamations from Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds. Pandemic communication can be found on the City's website at www.icgov.org/coronavirus. Public facilities predominantly remained closed to walk in traffic but the City developed alternative methods of service and adjusted services available as viral case counts fluctuated. The City evaluated initial financial and economic impacts and with the exception of a few operations, short-term impacts have been mitigated. Regardless, long-standing effects on the City and greater community are projected to continue for some time and the City will need to continue to be responsive. Examples of such responsiveness to-date include newly developed COVID-19 relief programs that have helped residents, non-profits, and businesses with over \$1.5 million dollars in recovery funding.

After summer demonstrations demanding accelerated community policing and removing systemic racism throughout the community, City Council approved a 17-point resolution of actions. Progress on these items has continued and regularly reported at www.icgov.org/blm. Of note, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established, Community Police Review Board approved updates to several police General Orders, and a preliminary plan to restructure the police was presented to City Council by December 15, 2020. As pursuits to address the Resolution actions continue, staff from all City departments are integrating on-going efforts to increase equity within the organization and in the community. In fall, the City made Juneteenth an official City holiday for employees.

COVID-19 Relief Program Highlights

Through a combination of Federal funding and local funds, the City has enabled a variety of programs for community recovery and relief:

- Local partners administering \$823,500 direct assistance to low income household rent and utility support include Center for Worker Justice, Shelter House, and CommUnity Crisis Services
- Public Service CDBG-CV Federal funding for 19 local non-profits providing community members with homeless prevention and services, childcare services, mental health services, and/or food assistance totaled \$559,980
- Allocated \$140,000 for rental security deposit assistance
- Designated \$424,000 from CDBG-CV Federal funding to Small Business Assistance and provided accounting support with the lowa City Area Business Partnership to assist with applications





Advance Social Justice, Racial Equity and Human Rights

• Ensure City progress towards increasing diversity of staff in a manner that is reflective of community demographics

Updated informational materials about City jobs were shared with over 300 organizations and local contacts that support recruitment efforts for our community residents. Materials were translated into Spanish, French (Africa), Arabic, and Swahili.

Recruitment processes continue to be evaluated with a conscious effort to expand awareness and benefits of diversity. Actions already taken include discussion of DEI at all stages of recruitment and providing resources to all interview candidates to enhance their comfort and preparation.

Additionally, the City's 2019 Racial Equity Report Card showed improvement in increasing the diversity of current City employees. (See chart below)



	2015		2019		% CHANGE
TEMPORARY AND PERMA	NENT CITY EMPLOYEE DEMOGR	RAPHICS —			
	Total employees	1,008	Total employees	956	
	Black or African American American Indian and Alaska Native- Asian/Pacific Islander	32 3 17	White Black or African American American Indian and Alaska Native Asian/Pacific Islander Hispanic or Latinx	47 4 13	+46.9% +33.0% 24.0%
			Two or more races		

• Complete the phased effort to raise the minimum wage for temporary employees to \$15.00 per hour by July 1, 2021

Planning for the FY2022 Budget includes a wage increase for all hourly employees to a minimum of \$15.00 per hour, beginning in July 2021, with an estimated cost of \$416,000 between FY21 and FY22.

Wages have been incrementally increased by \$1.75/hour for the last two years, on the way to a minimum standard of \$15/hour.

>> Advance Social Justice, Racial Equity and Human Rights

 Continue emphasis on human rights-based training for City employees, boards and commissions, and the community

A City Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee has been meeting for several months, identifying ways that they can support human rights and equity training within the organization.

The Office of Equity and Human Rights has offered several community trainings since July, including Fair Housing, including a segment on assistance animals, and implicit bias training geared towards local property managers. An implicit bias training for Board and Commission members was held on Dec. 2. The City also offered a free screening of 'White Privilege 101: Getting in on the Conversation' in December and has sponsored various community training opportunities, including National Black Voter Day, the NAACP's 2020 Iowa Summit on Criminal Justice and Racial Disparities, and the upcoming January 9, 2021 Humanize My Hoodie Ally Experience, in partnership with the Iowa City Area Business Partnership.

At the end of July, over 60 City and County employees participated in a virtual Cultural Proficiency pilot training. Additionally, over 150 City employees participated in the United Way of Central East Iowa 21 Day Equity Challenge assembled by Dr. Eddie Moore. The Challenge offered daily experiential learning opportunities through reading, video, podcasts, virtual exercises, and self-reflection.

City Council dedicated \$1 million to Social Justice and Racial Equity initiatives in their June Resolution

• Continue partnerships with community organizations through the City's Social Justice and Racial Equity grant program

The Social Justice and Racial Equity grant program announced its application period in a press release on Dec. 1. The allocation for these grants is \$75,000.

Regular updates about Social Justice and Racial Equity activities, including quarterly reports and a monthly newsletter can be found at www.icov.org/sjre.

• Develop a coordinated effort across City departments to expand social and recreational programming for special populations

Although it has been exceptionally challenging to provide conventional programming, staff have found ways of engaging populations. For example, The Center continues to provide services and content to older adults. Departments have actively planned through the annual budget for expanded engagement opportunities in 2021.

>> Advance Social Justice, Racial Equity and Human Rights



• Establish priorities and ensure resources for increased access and translation of critical city messages

Critical materials continue to be translated and shared. The FY2022 budget includes funding for expansion of information translations in various departments.

Earlier in the year, the City developed public messaging in multiple languages about Coronavirus and the City's guidance on staying healthy.



Demonstrate Leadership in Climate Action

 Adopt and begin implementation of the Accelerating Iowa City's Climate Actions Report

Activity to fulfill objectives of the Report are underway and nearly all actions for initiation in 2020 are in progress. Planning for projects identified for initiation in 2021-2023 has started and was reported in early January 2021.

This year's City's annual Greenhouse Gas Inventory showed continued progress towards the goal of reducing overall carbon emissions however increases in emissions from transportation and energy used in buildings has continued to rise.



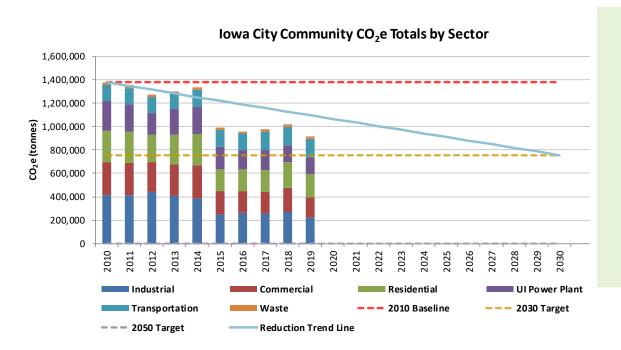
A 2020 Excellence in Energy Efficiency Design award winner, the new 85,257 ft public works complex uses less than half the energy as buildings of similar type and size.

>> Demonstrate Leadership in Climate Action

 Track and effectively communicate progress toward reaching the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) carbon emission reduction targets adopted locally by the City Council in 2019

Progress on the City's Climate Action goals are reported regularly on the City's website page: www.icgov.org/climateaction.

Additionally, the Climate Action Commission, formed in December 2019 has been meeting regularly and assisting with meeting goals and evaluating data. See more information at www.icgov.org/city-government/boards/climate-action-commission.



Data continues to trend towards meeting or exceeding the City's major goal of decreasing community carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 (yellow dotted line).



The Climate Action and Outreach Office issues a monthly Sustainability Newsletter that keeps community members informed of project progress, new programs, and community climate action successes.

Sign up at www.icgov.org/e-subscriptions.



Climate Action & Adaptation Plan 2020 ANNUAL UPDATE

With robust climate action goals set in August 2019, the creation of a Climate Action Commission, the adoption of accelerated climate actions earlier this year, and the addition of a Climate Action **Engagement Specialist** to the staff, the City has carried out a series of **climate actions** in the form of education, incentives, regulation, City policy, and specific projects in these key areas:

ADAPTATION

- ▶ The City planted prairies and native plants at its properties and some of its parks, promoting a diverse ecosystem.
- The City planted a total of 400 trees this last year, more than doubling the previous year's total, and launched Root for Trees to help fund trees on residential properties.
- ▶ The City awarded more than 200 Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) Grants last year.

BUILDINGS

- ► The City's housing rehab program continues to focus on energy efficiency, through projects like the solar panel installation on a Sandusky Street home, with low-interest loans and grants.
- ▶ Green lowa AmeriCorps continues to improve home energy efficiency by providing free energy audits and free weatherizations to community members.
- ▶ Applicants from three Iowa City urban renewal areas are eligible for up to a 50% match on energy efficiency **projects**, thanks to tax increment financing.
- ► The City's new **Public Works Facility** won an energy efficiency award for its many construction innovations.

WASTE **MANAGEMENT**

- lowa City and two partner cities in the Midwest received a grant to develop tools to assess and measure carbon drawdown efforts, such as increasing tree canopy and composting.
- ▶ More than 3,300 tons of material were recycled through the City's curbside organics program, a 50% increase from the previous year.

TRANSPORTATION

- The lowa City Area Transit Study shared a draft proposal in October 2020 for system improvements incorporating community input and best practices.
- A \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation will allow the City to purchase and/or lease new electric buses.
- ► The spring 2020 addition of an electric vehicle (EV) charging station in the Tower Place parking ramp increased the total number of public EV charging stations in City ramps to six.
- lowa City and five partner communities in eastern lowa received an Electric Vehicle Readiness Grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority to prepare a plan for the wider adoption of electric vehicles.
- ► The City revised its fleet policy to include provisions stating a preference for electric vehicle and alternative fuel equipment. The City's idling reduction policy outcomes are being tracked for future reporting.
- ► The City applied for Gold Status as a **Bicycle Friendly** Community from the League of American Bicyclists and will be notified if awarded in 2021.

LIFESTYLE

- lowa City held its first virtual Climate Festival in September 2020, where the City shared information about electric vehicles, meatless meals, and local green buildings.
- Five Iowa City businesses received Climate Action at Work Awards from the City in September 2020, when the program debuted.
- ► Community Climate Action Grants were awarded in spring 2020 to eight local entities.
- ▶ The City held its first **Climate Expo** in November 2019 to update the community on climate initiatives.





Strengthen Community Engagement and Intergovernmental Relations

 Pursue creative engagement techniques with a focus on reaching diverse populations and neighborhoods

In light of the pandemic, a little creativity was required for arranging six council listening posts on the subject of community policing. Groups ranging from 10-45 people safely spread out in parks and community gathering spaces to share comments with Council in early fall. A summary of this effort are noted in Documents and Resources at www.icgov.org/blm.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created in fall 2020, with the purpose of engaging the public in collection of testimony and public hearings and guiding the City on a path to restorative justice. See more on the Commission in Item 5 of the BLM Status Report www.icgov.org/blm.

Despite continued closure of the physical buildings, The Center and the lowa City Public Library have been very active in sharing content and engaging residents in activities through online platforms. Parks and Recreation was not able to host its annual Halloween festivities and opted instead for a very successful spooky double-feature drive-in movie event.

The Office of Equity and Human Rights presented a "Know Your Rights" training to youth in the Neighborhood Centers for Johnson County's G!World program.

The City offered free transit rides to polling places on Election Day 2020 via existing and special system routes.



>> Strengthen Community Engagement and Intergovernmental Relations



Work collaboratively with other local governments and strengthen ties with our state and federal elected delegation

City Council held a Work Session with the local elected State delegation on November 23, 2020 to review legislative priorities in the 2021 legislative session. Congratulations to the elected officials were sent shortly after the election results were finalized to strengthen communication between their office and the City.

Over the course of the pandemic, collaboration between entities has been essential. The Better Together collective has provided grants to small businesses and campaigned for adopting a health care worker. Teams of staff from each municipality, Johnson County Emergency Management Agency operations, area non-profits, health organizations, and state and federal elected officials have continued to communicate and coordinate supplies, actions, and messaging on a daily to weekly basis.



Initiate a redesign of the City's website

Staff is developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a firm to assist with the website update. Stakeholder feedback will be an integral part of the redesign process.



When Eastern Iowa experienced damages from the August derecho, multiple agencies banded together to manage and clean up after the storm. Johnson County and IDOT supported the City's street clearing with work crews and assistance from the utilities.



Invest in Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Fiscal Reserves

 Carefully prepare for significant financial challenges projected during the final years of State property tax reform mandates through FY 2024

Aaa Moody's Bond Rating

Maintained May 2020

The impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic will likely have extended community impacts and the upcoming FY2022 budget includes current considerations and forecasts near-term needs.

Council's legislative priorities include maintaining the State property tax backfill, which helps mitigate the full fiscal impact of property tax reforms.

• Consider establishing a cost of development framework that can help guide decisions on how best to accommodate future growth

A City Council Work Session must be scheduled to identify Council's preferred areas of focus and prepare for analysis.

\$15.77 FY 2021 Tax Levy Rate • Strive to continue to reduce the City's overall property tax rate

The City has reduced the overall property tax rate for the last nine years and presents another \$0.10 decrease in the FY2022 budget draft. See budget materials at www.icgov.org/budget.

• Evaluate Local Option Sales Tax and other alternative revenues that may be needed to achieve Iowa City's strategic objectives and reduce reliance on debt and property taxes

The upcoming FY2022 Budget will address the City's current financial outlook. Further discussion about alternative revenue sources has not been scheduled, although a LOST recommendation was included in the City Manager's preliminary plan to restructure lowa City policing.

>> Invest in Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Fiscal Reserves



 Develop a long-term plan to improve the pavement condition of City streets

The City has conducted a study to assist in the execution of a long-term plan to address pavement conditions. The plan draft will be discussed in 2021.



Example of 'Fair' pavement conditions in Iowa City

Upcoming Improvement Projects

Streets planned for rehabilitation include

2021

- Melrose Avenue
- Muscatine Avenue
- Benton Street
- Orchard Street
- · American Legion Road

Design Phase

- Rochester Avenue
- Gilbert Street Bridge Replacement
- Dodge Street Reconstruction
- Fairchild Street Reconstruction
- Park Road Reconstruction
- Taft Avenue Reconstruction

Initiate physical and financial planning efforts to modernize and expand critical public facilities

A facility reserve fund was started in FY2020 and annual contributions to this fund will enable the City to prepare for future facility improvements.

Funding for a recreation facility needs study and plan, as well as a facility needs and location study for the Police Department have been budgeted in FY2021. The Center is currently nearing completion on a space needs study and master plan that will guide the next few years of budgeted priorities.

At the end of 2020, the City closed on land purchases for the future sites of fire stations #3 and #5.



Foster Healthy Neighborhoods and Affordable Housing Throughout the City

 Identify new efforts to expand and adapt the City's affordable housing and neighborhood improvement strategies to meet long-term needs throughout the community

\$1 million budgeted for Affordable Housing initiatives in FY21 and proposed in FY22

One of the actions in the City's Resolution Resolution addressing the Black Lives Matter Movement and Systemic Racism calls for development of an updated Affordable Housing Plan that includes a variety of factors relating to housing and quality of life. In fall 2020, Council provided input about the upcoming process and aspects of the project. Active development of the new Plan will take place in 2021.

See the existing Affordable Housing Action Plan and related information at www.icgov.org/affordablehousing.

 Consider and adopt the South District form-based code and ensure it can be adapted to other parts of Iowa City

The South District form-based code, in its second draft and under review by City Staff, should be made available to the public soon. The code is being developed to be in a form that will allow future adoption in other areas of lowa City.



The City has made progress with its South District Homeownership Program, buying duplex properties without displacement of any residents, and selling the affordable homes to neighborhood residents. The first two duplex units sold in 2019 were outfitted with energy efficient fixtures and solar panels. Two recently remodeled duplex units are currently for sale and staff continues to look for additional opportunities to expand affordable homeownership in lowa City.

>> Foster Healthy Neighborhoods and Affordable Housing



• Continue implementation of the Parks Master Plan and complete an accompanying Recreational Facilities Master Plan

Playground and shelter construction at Wetherby, Willow Creek, Fair Meadows, Scott, and Lower City Park were substantially completed this year, adding exciting play equipment and new spaces to gather in the future. Additionally, ADA and pathway improvements at Happy Hollow, Court Hill, and Wetherby are completed, and a bocce game court is finishing installation at College Green.

Funding was included in the FY2021 Budget to conduct a recreation facility needs study in 2021.



The City continues to contribute financial and physical resources for engagement.

The proposed FY2022 Budget emphasizes funding for engagement and learning activities facilitated by various departments, including Parks and Recreation, The Center, Equity and Human Rights, Neighborhood and Development Services, Police Community Outreach, and Climate Action and Outreach.



A large mural project is being coordinated by the City's Public Art Advisory Committee and local Black artists for installation at the Capitol Street parking facility.

Draft proposals were shared with Council in December 2020 and await an additional public feedback process.

 Monitor and report biannually on building and rental permit trends in the former rental cap neighborhoods

Staff continue to monitor building and rental permit trends. The next report on rental permits will be included in the annual NDS report issued in early 2021.



Enhance Community Mobility for All Residents

• Continue implementation of the City's Bicycle Master Plan and pursue Gold Bicycle Friendly Community status from the League of American Bicyclists

The City made progress on bicycle facilities, installing buffered lanes on Burlington St from Madison to Riverside, bike lanes on Dodge Street from Burlington to Kirkwood, and bike lanes and sidepath along McCollister Blvd from S. Gilbert to S. Sycamore.

The City planned to submit an application to the League of American Bicyclists for Gold Bicycle Friendly Community status but opted to wait until after the pandemic and will apply in August 2021.



Planning is underway for Bike to Work Week in 2021, with involvement from community stakeholders. Additionally, activities featuring support for bicycling were funded by a 2020 Climate Action grant. Hopefully, as the pandemic comes to an end, the community will be able to take advantage of these fun experiences when the weather warms up.

Projects planned for 2021 - 2022

Designated Bike Lanes:

- Benton Street
- Southgate Avenue
- American Legion Road

4 to 3 conversion (adds bike lanes):

Keokuk Street

Bike Boulevards:

- Sandusky Avenue / Taylor Drive
- Bowery and Prentiss Streets
- 7th Avenue + route to SEJH
- Jefferson Street / Glendale Road / Heather Drive
- Hollywood, Sheridan, Walnut, Summit,
 S. Summit

Pedestrian Trail along Highway 6

>> Enhance Community Mobility for All Residents



 Complete the Iowa City Area Transit Study, pursue recommended changes, and evaluate implementation outcomes, to ensure community needs are met by system changes

The City has completed its transit study and presented recommendations to City Council in October 2020. The Preferred Alternative includes modified or consolidated routes with more frequent weekday service and increased weekend service, among other features.

Planning is underway for a summer 2021 implementation of system changes. Community members can seek more information and updates at www.icgov.org/project/iowa-city-area-transit-study.



RE · IMAGINE YOUR RIDE

 Ensure ease and safety of travel for residents and visitors through expansion of accessibility measures, improved connectivity, and use of adopted complete streets design standards

Fall 2020 saw connection of the long-awaited McCollister Blvd extension in southeast lowa City. Accessible paths were added into Wetherby Park, and additional accessibility improvements made to Happy Hollow, and Court Hill parks. Highway 1 Trail Extension was also completed. Plans for Rochester Avenue are in place and upon construction, adjacent sidewalks will be installed to help with connectivity along the collector street.

The City continues to contribute to the Johnson County Mobility Coordinator position. Although this role assists in connecting residents to transit, this effort includes a comprehensive plan for getting around town and walkability and access are essential.

Upcoming Connectivity

- Gilbert Ct. Sidewalk Infill
- Mid-block crossings on Muscatine Avenue between 1st Avenue and William Street
- **Rochester Avenue** Reconstruction
- **American Legion Road** Reconstruction with bike lanes
- **Benton Street resurfacing** with bike lanes



Promote an Inclusive and Resilient Economy Throughout the City

 Through collaboration with local partners, increase opportunities for marginalized and low-income populations to obtain access to skills training, good jobs and affordable childcare

City staff continue to participate in local efforts to support childcare initiatives and continues to provide funding to the regional Entrepreneurial Development Center, which assists with access to training for businesses, ultimately helping grow job opportunities in the corridor.

During the pandemic, the City has allocated \$559,980 in Community Development Block Grant-CV funds for operational funds to local nonprofits that provide homeless prevention and services, child care services, mental health services and/or food assistance through two funding rounds. The funds assisted 19 projects that address needs arising from the pandemic. The City also gave funding to establish multiple Nurturing Every Student Together Safely (NESTS) ventures throughout lowa City to assist with childcare and educational support.

The City's partnership with Kirkwood Community College to offer additional ESL courses slowed due to pandemic conditions but has added 100 seats to date. This program anticipates more progress after COVID-19 dissapates.

Stakeholder conversations are ongoing regarding potential for a Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District (SSMID) around Pepperwood Plaza.

 Encourage healthy, diverse, and sustainable economic activity throughout Iowa City, including taking steps to invigorate neighborhood commercial districts and create new small neighborhood commercial nodes

In fall 2020, City Council approved Code changes to help facilitate infill development and commercial reuse. Additional conversations about neighborhood commercial nodes must be scheduled.

Staff is also finalizing details for the Urban Revitalization Tax Exemption area, granting businesses a tax exemption on new value created. This program focuses on neighborhood and commercial areas along Highways 6 and 1 corridor. Mapping and owner data collection are complete and staff is preparing for the first legislative steps in early 2021.

>> Promote an Inclusive and Resilient Economy Throughout the City



• Effectively support growth and promotion of small locally-owned businesses, women and minority-owned businesses, and the local foods economy

The City planned for additional support to small businesses through the rollout of the Small Business Resource Program. The program offers loans between \$5,000 and \$10,000, with 0% interest for up to 5 years and must be matched with a business loan or cash on hand. Upon loan approval, applicants will be awarded up to \$5,000 in reimbursable grant funds for technical assistance and the program includes income eligibility requirements. Learn more about this program at www.icgov.org/financialassistance.

Future initiatives in support of the Black Lives Matter resolution will spur additional conversations and engagement with local businesses owned by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC). Staff is working with a group led by the Iowa City Area Business Partnership and ICAD to determine best efforts to support black and BIPOC-owned business. Three initiatives are under development, including a black business venture capital fund, mapping assets across the County that currently support entrepreneurship and developing and implementing a plan for business education and support services.

City Council provided a \$25,000 contribution to the Better Together BIPOC & Immigrant Business Grant Fund grant program. Grants in increments of \$1,000-2,500 were issued to 33 businesses with at least 50% ownership by BIPOC and immigrants in Johnson County.

BIPOC and immigrant-owned businesses were also prioritized in the City's COVID-19 Small Business Assistance program. The City of Iowa City established the program to support local, small businesses that sustained economic losses due to COVID-19. Eligible businesses can

receive funding to pay for expenses such as mortgage/rent, utilities, inventory, staff salaries or wages up to \$15,000 or a maximum of \$10,000 for businesses without employees. Applications were accepted through January 4, 2021.



The City continues to make progress on these goals and new information is frequently shared. Find more detailed information about each of these initiatives at www.icgov.org.