The Extension and Outreach Indicators Portal:
What It Is
How It Will Help You
How To Use It
Sandra Burke, Bailey Hanson, and Christopher Seeger

The Indicators Portal: What It Is

www.indicators.extension.iastate.edu

The Extension and Outreach Indicators Portal is a “one-stop shop” website for finding, visualizing, and mapping data. The site provides data on many topic and subject areas; Data for Decision Makers county and area profiles; access to city and county government finance data (Iowa Government Finance Initiative (IGFI)); tools for designing graphs and maps; reports on data trends and topics of interest; and educational materials on data measures and their use (Figure 1).

The goal of the Indicators Portal is to make it easier to find, use, visualize, and understand data and information. Data on the portal can be updated as soon as new items are released from agencies so users can have the latest information. The Indicators Portal is funded by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. It is available to Iowa State University faculty, staff, students, and the general public.

Step 1: Website
The first step is to go to the website (www.indicators.extension.iastate.edu) using an internet browser.

Step 2: Login
In order to have full access to all the features of the Indicators Portal, you must login to the web site. In the upper right corner of the web page, click on the word “Login” (Figure 2). If you have an Iowa

Figure 1. What you can find on the Indicators Portal

- Data on many Topic and Subject Areas
- Data for Decision Makers County and Area Profiles
- Access to City and County Government Finance Data (IGFI)
- Tools for Designing Graphs and Maps
- Reports on Data Trends and Topics of Interest
- Educational Materials on Data Measures and their Use

Figure 2.
The Indicators Portal: How To Use It

State University Net-ID, you may login using your usual Net-ID and password (Figure 3). If you do not have an Iowa State University Net-ID you may still use the Indicators Portal but you must first register and create a guest account. When you create the guest account, you will provide an email contact and password that you will use for access to the Indicators Portal (Figure 3). Just to note, the Data for Decision Makers profiles and most reports and publications can be accessed even if not logged in.

**Step 3: Choose Geography Settings**

After you have logged in, the home page will now have a drop-down menu button, “Account Settings,” in the upper right corner (Figure 4). Before you can see any data or graphics, you **must choose at least one** geography selection. Click on “Account Settings” and the drop-down menu will show three “Geography Filters.” Each filter will be a geography set. Click on a pencil icon to begin your geography choices (Figure 5).

There are several settings to make for your geography choices (Figure 6). For now, these examples have the Geography Type set to “County” and “State” to “Iowa” (Data for cities and states will be available in the future). Under the “County” drop-down, select one county from the list that will be the primary or main county of interest for this geography set (Example Linn County). The primary county will always appear among the choices on graphs. Next, choose the kind of comparisons you want to make for the primary county using the “Compare To” drop-down (Figure 6). Among the comparison choices are:
Neighbors, Custom List, ISU Extension Regions, Regional Councils of Government, Agricultural Statistical Districts, and Rural-Urban Continuum Codes. The “Neighbors” comparison is preset so that all counties contiguous to the primary county will be included in graphs. The “Custom List” comparison allows the user to select up to six counties in addition to the primary county to be used in the graphs. The “Extension Regions” comparison is preset to include the counties in the ISU Extension and Outreach Region of the primary county. In a similar fashion, the “Agricultural Statistics Districts” and “Regional Councils of Government” are preset to include the counties of those region types that are included with the primary county. “Rural-Urban Continuum Codes” offers an additional type of comparison. All counties in the U.S. have been classified based on population size, metropolitan status, and closeness to a metropolitan region. Using this comparison for the graphs will give the counties in Iowa that have the same rural-urban code as the primary county.

An additional feature for settings is the ability to type in an identifying “Filter Name” for the geography set. Once you have chosen the geography settings for a filter, click on “Save Filter” to keep your choices and then close the filter drop down (Figure 7). These filter choices will be saved in your account even if you logout and come back at a later time. Once you have saved a geography filter, the items will show in a pop-up if you hover your pointer over the words “Geography Filter” or the identifying name you have given to the geography filter in the Account Settings menu (Figure 8).
Step 4: Choose Indicators
An Indicators drop-down menu at the top of the page shows the broad, general categories of indicators, data, and topics that are available in the portal (Figure 9). Clicking on any one of the topics gives a detailed list of indicator items for that category, such as Population and Demographics (Figure 10) and Income and Poverty (Figure 11). Other data, such as households and families, education, and housing are included and more topics will be added in the future.

Step 5: Indicators and Visuals
To begin accessing the information for any indicator, simply click on the item. When you click on an item, you will then see a page with an “Overview” that describes the indicator, the dates for which it is available, its source, and links to other information and resources regarding that indicator (Figure 12). At the top of the overview page there will be some additional links for visuals. These may include such items as “Bar Graph,” “Pie Graph,” “Map,” or “Grouped Bar Graph” (Figure 12). The specific visuals will vary depending on the indicator, but the links will lead you to the various visual features of the Indicators Portal. Now you are ready to begin with data, graphs, and maps.

Graphs
Graphs are one of most frequently used visualization tools. The Indicators Portal can automatically generate bar and pie graphs for the indicator and geographic set you have chosen. Simply click on the “Bar Graph” or “Pie Graph” link near the top of the overview page (Figure 12) and the graph will generate automatically. As examples, bar and pie graphs of total population for a set of neighboring...
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The Indicators Portal: How It Will Help You - Graphs

Figure 12.
Total Population

The 2010 Decennial Census data provide, except where specifically noted, counts of the resident population of the United States. The U.S. resident population includes everyone whose usual place of residence was in the 50 states and the District of Columbia at the time of the 2010 Decennial Census. The 2010 Decennial Census contains the 100 percent data complete from the questions asked of all people and about every housing unit.

The Decennial Census in the United States has been conducted in years ending in “0” since 1790, as required by the U.S. Constitution, ArtICLES 1; Section 2. The first censuses counted the population as well as asking about age and sex. Through the decades, the census evolved to include questions about race and ethnicity, households and families, housing, and a wide range of other types of information. An examination of the questions asked during each census reveals how changes in our nation's understanding of how our society has developed and changed.

The Decennial Census compiles data for numerous geographic levels including the U.S. as a whole, states, counties, and incorporated places. Although Decennial Census data for some of Iowa’s counties began in 1840, it was not until the Decennial Census of 1880 that counts were available for all 99 of Iowa’s counties.

Figure 14.

Data on race and Hispanic Origin are available on the portal. Individual race groups can be shown (Figure 15) but a “Grouped Bar Graph” for minorities is also available (Figure 16). The graphs show, for example, that although Story County has more than double the population of Marshall County (Figure 13), there are many more persons of Hispanic Origin in Marshall County than in Story County (Figure 16). Asians are the largest minority group in Story County. Details regarding racial and ethnic descriptions are available on the portal in the overview sections.

Also note, Hispanic or Latino Origin is an ethnic category and those persons can be of any race.

Population by age group is available (Figure 17). This example shows Story County’s large component in the 18-24 age range. There are detailed age groups for youth that also can be shown by race and Hispanic Origin (Figure 18). For example, Marshall County has more Hispanic youth age 5-9 than any other minority group of that age (Figure 18).

Population pyramids are visual graphs that show the age-sex composition of a population. The Indicators Portal can generate population pyramids that are accessed through the population and demographics menu (Figure 10). In the population pyramid, data for females are on the right and that for males are on the left. The bars (except at the top) represent 5-year age groups. Each bar
shows the percent that each age-sex group is of the total population. The portal has population pyramids for total populations as well as by race and Hispanic Origin. These examples illustrate visually the distinct differences between the White, Not Hispanic group and the Hispanic Origin group in Marshall County. The pop-ups show that 2.4% of the White, Not Hispanic population are females age 0 - 4. For Hispanics, those age females make up nearly 7.1% of the Hispanic population (Figures 19, 20).
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**Figure 21. American Community Survey (ACS)**

- Comprehensive set of socioeconomic characteristics
- A large, continuous, monthly, sample survey of housing units (households)
- characteristics of population and housing (not counts)
- estimates of characteristics, some uncertainty
- Where we get social, economic, and detailed housing information

**American Community Survey**

Beyond basic demographics, the Indicators Portal also contains a wide range of socioeconomic data (Figures 9, 11). Much of these socioeconomic data now come from the American Community Survey (ACS) developed by the U.S. Census Bureau during the last decade. The ACS program is a continuous, on-going, monthly, sample survey of households carried out across the U.S. For any given geographic region, the ACS data from an entire period of months or years are pooled and weighted to produce the estimates of the population characteristics that are reported (Figure 21).

Among the features of the ACS data that are especially important to users are the period estimates and the margins of error (Figures 22 - 23). There are two time intervals used for pooling the data: one year and five years. One-year estimates include 12 months of data and five-year estimates have 60 months pooled together. Because one-year estimates are available only for geographic regions with at least 65,000 people, the Indicators Portal at the present time only reports the five-year estimates set so that all geographic regions in Iowa can be included.

Because the ACS data are based on samples of the population, there is some level of uncertainty or sampling error associated with an estimate. The Census Bureau provides, for each estimate, a margin of error (MOE) that helps to assess the amount of sampling error and the reliability associated with the estimate. The MOE is reported as +/- a numerical value that should be added to or subtracted from the point estimate value and which give the upper and lower bounds of a 90% confidence interval around the estimate. Use the state level estimate.

**Figure 22. American Community Survey**

- **Period Estimates** – 2015 is most recent year of data
  - 1 year (pooled 12 months) 2006 onward to 2015
  - 5 year (pooled 60 months) 2011-2015

- **Margins of Error (MOE)**
  - Because from a sample, uncertainty
  - Estimate +/- margin of error (90% confidence interval)
  - smaller or larger
  - Always report margins of error

**Figure 23.**

The MOE is reported as

- +/- a numerical value
- added to or subtracted from the point estimate value
- upper and lower bounds of a 90% confidence interval around the estimate
- range within which the true value of the estimate is expected to be with a level of confidence of 90%

If MOE is half the size of the estimate, then uncertainty is too large to use the estimate. Use the state level estimate.
lower bounds of a 90% confidence interval around the estimate. The interval represents the range within which the true value of the estimate is expected to be with a level of confidence of 90%. Margins of error for ACS estimates should always be included when reporting ACS estimate values (Figure 23).

For bar charts in the portal that use ACS data, the MOE is shown as a vertical line at the point estimate. The length of the line above and below the estimate line shows the amount to be added or subtracted from the estimate for the margin of error (Figure 24). Hovering the pointer over the bar will show the estimate value and the MOE. The example shows that the median household income in Dallas County is more than double the median household income in Decatur County. For the counties shown, the margins of error are all relatively small (Figure 24).

A smaller MOE relative to the size of the estimate represents a more precise estimate. As MOEs become relatively larger, the less confidence there is that the point estimate is close to the true population value. In some cases, especially for small geographic areas or subgroup populations, margins of error can be relatively large suggesting that the estimate is unreliable and should be used only with caution or not at all (Figure 25).

The Census Bureau suggests using the Coefficient of Variation (CV), a measure of the relative amount of sampling error associated with a sampling estimate, as a way to assess the usability of an estimate (Figures 24 - 26; formula, Figure 26). In many cases, the Indicators Portal will automatically generate the CV.

**Figure 24. Median Household Income**

**Figure 25. Median Family Income - Black or African American Alone Householder**

**Figure 26. Coefficient of Variation (CV):**

Relative amount of sampling error associated with a sample estimate

- \( CV = (\text{Standard Error/Estimate}) \times 100\% \) or
- \( CV = ((\text{MOE}/1.645) / \text{Estimate}) \times 100\% \)

high reliability = CV <= 12% - 15%
medium reliability = CV 15% - 30%
low reliability = CV > 30% - 40% Think about not using
for an estimate from ACS data. Hovering the pointer over the bar will show not only the estimate and the MOE but the CV as well in the pop-up (Figures 24, 25).

The smaller the CV, the higher the relative reliability of the estimate. Although there are varying recommendations for evaluating the CV for an estimate, a CV that is below 12% - 15% would indicate an estimate that would be highly reliable. If the CV ranges upwards to around 30%, that estimate would be considered moderately reliable.

Maps
A key feature of the Indicators Portal is mapping. The portal can automatically generate statewide maps with county data for most indicators (Figure 27). The maps are accessed by the link “Map” near the top of the overview page. The map will divide the county-level data into five categories with a legend and shading shown on the bottom right. As with other visuals, hovering the pointer over a county will give a pop-up with the county name and the value of the data. The pop-up feature makes it very easy to do county-to-county comparisons with simply moving the pointer among counties and viewing the data values. The examples of pop-ups for Hispanic Population (Figure 28), show wide ranges among the counties in the number of Hispanics. Buena Vista County, a relatively small, rural county has nearly as many Hispanics as does metropolitan Black Hawk County. Map examples included here show Bachelor’s Degree (Figure 29) and Per Capita Income (Figure 30). All of these items are accessible starting with the “Indicators” menu (Figure 9).
Data Tools: Custom Maps with Your Own Data

The Indicators Portal gives you the tools to make custom maps with your own data. You access this feature from the home page by clicking on “Data Tools” at the top of the page or on “Customizable Maps” in the right column (Figure 31). The next screen shows four mapping choices: county, state, zip code, and Extension Region. For each map type, the portal provides an Excel template file that has the geographic names and numeric codes. Add your own data values to the template and then start the upload process by clicking on the applicable “Map Tool” link (Figure 32).

Social Media Sharing

On graph and map pages, links are provided to give quick access to sharing the visual on social media sites. The upper right corner of the visuals page will show links for Facebook, Twitter, and a Short URL (Figures 29 - 30, 33). The Facebook and Twitter share buttons share the URL specifically with those social media platforms. The Facebook share button opens Facebook in a new window with the URL to the indicator you are viewing with the option to include any supplementary information about the link you are sharing. Similarly, the Twitter share button opens Twitter in a new window with a short URL to the indicator you are viewing and the title for the indicator. The Short URL button generates a short URL for the current page you are viewing which you can copy and share with others. This URL will take anyone, whether they are logged in or not, to the same indicator with the same geography setting you are viewing.

You can share the URL anyway you’d like (email, Facebook, twitter, etc.).
Data for Decision Makers

A key feature of the Indicators Portal is access to county and regional data profiles, “Data for Decision Makers.” These profiles provide frequently used, key indicators for Iowa’s counties, Iowa’s Senate and House Districts, ISU Extension Regions, as well as 4-H and Youth profiles. The Data for Decision Makers are accessed from the home page as well as from the “Programs” and “Publications” drop-down menus (Figure 34). From the next screen, choose the county or other region from the text or the map (Figure 35). You will then be taken to a map and drop-down from which you can click on the specific county, district, or region of interest (Figure 36). If you are NOT logged in with an ISU Net-ID, a pdf file with the report will automatically generate. It is recommended to print from the pdf file rather than from a web browser.

If you are ISU Extension staff and you have logged in with your ISU Net-ID, for most of the profiles you will next see a contact edit screen for the county or region you have chosen (Figure 37). The usual listed contacts are the Regional Director and the County Office contact, but you will be able to edit and customize the information. Then click on “Make PDF” and a pdf file with the profile will generate. Printing is best from the pdf file rather than from a web browser.

The first page of the county profile shows population counts for the county along with those for the all the communities within the county. (Figure 38, Johnson County example). Population change is shown as well. The second page shows basic demographic data for age,
race, Hispanic Origin, households, families, and education (Figure 39, Delaware County example). A population pyramid for the county is included. The third and fourth pages have socioeconomic data that include household, family, and per capita income; housing characteristics; occupation; employment; earnings; and poverty level (Figures 40-43, examples for Decatur, Johnson, and Buchanan Counties). Most of the tables include Iowa’s equivalent state level data for easy comparison. Data that come from the American Community Survey give the MOE as well. As new data for these indicators are released from the various agencies, the profiles are updated to provide the latest information.

The Data for Decision Makers for Iowa’s Senate and House Districts provide a range of topics and data that are very similar to the information in the county reports. The profiles for ISU’s Extension Regions are shorter and provide demographic data but not socioeconomic topics. Overall, these reports provide some of the most frequently used and requested data items and topics and the Data for Decision Makers provides them in a concise format.

The 4-H and Youth profiles are somewhat different in that much of the data provided comes from school district enrollment and student characteristics. The profile includes enrollment by race and ethnicity, student eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals, and enrollment of English Language Learners. State level data is provided for comparison but several time periods are included to see trends over time (Figures 44-45, Crawford County examples).
Figure 40.
Decatur County

Median Household and Per Capita Income, 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>3,144</td>
<td>+/- 125</td>
<td>1,236,409</td>
<td>+/- 3,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $14,999</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>+/- 2.0%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>+/- 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 To $34,999</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>+/- 2.3%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>+/- 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 To $49,999</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>+/- 2.2%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>+/- 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 To $99,999</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>+/- 2.0%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>+/- 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 Or More</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>+/- 1.8%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>+/- 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$38,560</td>
<td>+/- $2,684</td>
<td>$53,183</td>
<td>+/- $313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income</td>
<td>$51,322</td>
<td>+/- $3,453</td>
<td>$67,466</td>
<td>+/- $363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$19,493</td>
<td>+/- $879</td>
<td>$27,950</td>
<td>+/- $166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 41.
Johnson County

Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>57,997</td>
<td>+/- 264</td>
<td>1,354,264</td>
<td>+/- 658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>+/- 0.8%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>+/- 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>+/- 0.8%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>+/- 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>55,426</td>
<td>+/- 540</td>
<td>1,236,409</td>
<td>+/- 3,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>+/- 1.1%</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>+/- 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>+/- 1.1%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>+/- 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Rent</td>
<td>$870</td>
<td>+/- 19</td>
<td>$697</td>
<td>+/- 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Value</td>
<td>$193,600</td>
<td>+/- $3,800</td>
<td>$129,200</td>
<td>+/- $700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Occupied Units, Median gross rent of renter-occupied units

Figure 42.
Decatur County

Individuals and Families Below Poverty Level, 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>7,489</td>
<td>+/-173</td>
<td>2,992,774</td>
<td>+/-921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below poverty</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>+/-0.2%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>+/-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 and under</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>+/-6.5%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>+/-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 64</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>+/-3.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>+/-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>+/-4.1%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>+/-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Families</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>+/-3.1%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>+/-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with children</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>+/-5.8%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>+/-0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married Couple</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>+/-3.3%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>+/-1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with children</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>+/-6.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>+/-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female HH</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>+/-8.8%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>+/-1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with children</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>+/-12.6%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>+/-1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* for whom poverty status is determined, **female householder, no husband present, ***MOE is high, use state estimate.

Figure 43.
Buchanan County

Median Employment Earnings, 2011-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>MOE*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 16+</td>
<td>11,212</td>
<td>+/- 228</td>
<td>1,749,160</td>
<td>+/- 3,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Earnings</td>
<td>$32,652</td>
<td>+/- $1,150</td>
<td>$30,541</td>
<td>+/- $111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>$25,329</td>
<td>+/- $1,863</td>
<td>$24,510</td>
<td>+/- $203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>$39,954</td>
<td>+/- $1,961</td>
<td>$36,816</td>
<td>+/- $193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, full time</td>
<td>$35,096</td>
<td>+/- $1,162</td>
<td>$36,602</td>
<td>+/- $202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, full time</td>
<td>$46,610</td>
<td>+/- $2,428</td>
<td>$46,721</td>
<td>+/- $202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* with earnings, **year round

Figure 44.
Crawford County

Percent ELL by Total Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>*Total Enroll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>*Total Enroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>*Total Enroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>*Total Enroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>*Total Enroll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total Enrollable
The Indicators Portal: How It Will Help You - Government Finance (IGFI)

Iowa Government Finance Initiative (IGFI)
The Indicators Portal provides access to local government finance annual reports and data developed by the Iowa Government Finance initiative (IGFI). The IGFI is a program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach that, in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Management, is collecting, analyzing, and presenting local government financial data in a format that will be helpful to local governments to better understand their fiscal situation and performance. The IGFI reports are developed based on annual data reporting requirements of city and county governments. Although some cities have been submitting reports for up to six years, many have submitted during just the last three fiscal years. They are now required to submit annual data and information. The IGFI reports are accessed on the Indicators Portal through the “Programs” link at the top of the portal pages (Figure 46). The “Iowa Government Finance Initiative” link goes to another website specifically for IGFI: http://igfi.extension.iastate.edu/

At this site the reports are accessed through the “City Reports” or the “County Reports” link (Figure 47). Choose a city or county from the drop-down menus, click on “Download Report” and the report is generated in a pdf file (Figure 48).

Each report has these sections:

- Legislative Updates
- Indicators
  — Socioeconomic Conditions
  — Revenue
  — Expenditures
- Implications and Discussion
Examples of information from the Iowa Falls, Iowa FY2015 report are: Total Revenue Per Capita (Figure 49), Property Tax Per Capita (Figure 50), along with Per Capita Public Safety Expenditures (Figure 51). The IGFI program will be developing additional research and educational components that can provide support to local government officials and employees.

**Reports, Publications, Webinars**

In addition to what has already been discussed, the Indicators Portal gives access to other reports, publications, and webinars on a wide range of topics. Using the “Publications” link at the top of the pages will take you to the listing of reports, webinars and other materials (Figure 52).

Recent reports on demographic trends include population estimates, race and Hispanic origin, English language learners, and youth and diversity. Economic reports include income trends for counties, wealth transfer, along with farm income and women in agriculture. Equity Indicators are in a series of reports for nine selected metropolitan counties. These give data and trends for income, poverty, families, food stamps, labor force, education, housing, and transportation.

Retail trade analysis for cities and counties is available through links on the Indicators Portal. These reports examine local retail sales trends and include total taxable retail sales, number of reporting firms, and per capita retail sales. Local employment and wage trends are also reviewed. The Portal has links to the Iowa Small Towns Project. This is a study of small towns in Iowa that has been done in 1994, 2004, and 2014. The focus is on assessment of local services,
amenities, social conditions, and perceptions of local quality of life. The Indicators Portal links to reports that profile the community findings.

The Indicators Portal provides guidelines, reports, and training webinars on understanding and using various types of data. Among these are guides on using the Portal, the American Community Survey, margins of error, and various income and poverty measures.

As a final word, the Indicators Portal is a work in progress. Updated data and information are added as they becomes available so that reports reflect the newest and most current data. New topics and reports will be added as well. From time to time, some aspects of the web pages may be revised as more efficient and user friendly layouts are designed. Let us know of data or feature suggestions you may have to improve the site and make your use easier.

References and Notes:
1 Information on the data access portal project being carried out by Communities and Economic Development Extension and Outreach at Iowa State University can be obtained at: http://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/

2 The Indicators Portal works best with Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. If you are using Internet Explorer but are having difficulties or aren’t seeing any graphics, you may need to switch to one of the other web browsers.


Sandra Charvat Burke
181 Heady Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-1070
515-294-9307
scburke@iastate.edu
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Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Indicators Portal: www.indicators.extension.iastate.edu

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