

STATE OF IOWA RESPONSE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE AND NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE HEADQUARTERS

SUMMARY

Iowa is a natural choice for the new headquarters of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). USDA is looking to improve its ability to attract and retain qualified staff; position important research, education and decision-making resources closer to stakeholders; and deliver savings to taxpayers. Iowa offers all these attributes and more for ERS and NIFA, which have missions closely aligned with the pursuits of business and industry, higher education and individual aspirations across our state.

Renowned agriculture leaders George Washington Carver, Henry A. Wallace and Norman Borlaug all had strong ties to Iowa. In fact, Iowa holds the World Food Prize Laureate Award Ceremony and Borlaug Dialogues annually. For more than 30 years, scientists from around the world have traveled to Iowa to receive the “Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture.”

Iowa is rooted in its rich farming history, with 85 percent of its land used for agriculture. Today, Iowa is home to exciting and cutting-edge innovation that helps feed and fuel the world. For example, Iowa seed companies were granted 221 patents in 2015 alone. Last year, Iowa State University (ISU) ranked among the top 100 worldwide universities granted U.S. utility patents. Iowa farmers adopt precision agriculture technology at a rate nearly 20 percent higher than the national average. Iowa is No. 1 nationally in corn, hog, egg and ethanol production, No. 2 in soybean

production, red meat production, cash receipts from agriculture and overall agriculture exports, and generates the second-largest supply of biomass in the country.



IOWA RANKS FIRST IN
CORN, EGG & PORK
PRODUCTION
-USDA

Iowa has the highest college graduation rate of any state in the Midwest and annually graduates hundreds of work-place ready students with relevant degrees. In the 2016-2017 school year, Iowa higher education institutions delivered nearly 900 degrees in agriculture-related fields, 319 degrees in economics and about 500 degrees in mathematics and statistics. There are more than 5,300 students enrolled in agriculture and related degree programs at ISU in 2018 – the third-largest undergraduate student body among the nation’s agricultural colleges.

In addition to this future workforce pipeline, Iowa already has the highest concentration of social and community service managers (e.g., grant administrators) in the Midwest, the second-highest concentration of actuaries (e.g., statistical analysts) and the second-most soil and plant scientists. Iowa’s employees are consistently recognized for being skilled, hardworking and efficient. In 2018, *Chief Executive* ranked Iowa No. 1 for workforce quality.

Workforce talent, business facilities and personal quality of life are more accessible in Iowa when compared with much of the rest of the country. Payroll budgets for the types of skilled professionals employed by ERS and NIFA in Washington, D.C. would employ about 27 percent more staff in Iowa. Iowa's cost of living is 8 percent less than the national average (62 percent higher in D.C.). Iowans enjoy affordable housing, healthcare, hobbies, utilities and transportation – all reasons why Iowa was named the No. 1 state by *U.S. News & World Report* earlier this year.

Not only does Iowa have sites meeting all the outlined selection criteria, but Iowa is also best positioned to help USDA ensure its programs are delivered “efficiently, effectively, and with integrity and focus on customer service,” per Secretary Perdue's stated goals for the department.

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA

Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County are unlike anywhere else. City life is abundant in Council Bluffs – evidenced by our restaurants, hotels and shopping plazas. However, a mere minutes-drive east, city life gives way to rolling hills, scenic prairie and scattered ponds. With a unique blend of city and country life, Council Bluffs has something to offer everyone's interests, from water sports on Lake Manawa, to trying new local restaurants or enjoying a favorite band at Stir Concert Cove.

Council Bluffs has deep roots in agriculture and lies in the Heartland along the Missouri River, providing easy access and connectivity to both workforce and USDA's customer base. With agriculture as a foundation, the Council Bluffs metro area developed a thriving and growing business community with multiple options for the ERS and NIFA headquarters.

Council Bluffs is in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and home to a population of 970,000 people in three Iowa counties and five Nebraska counties. This MSA, with a labor force of 510,000 and a 70 percent participation rate, is well positioned to provide the intellectual capacity and human capital USDA needs.

CONSORTIUM

Advance Southwest Iowa Corporation (ASWIC) is a full-service economic development organization covering Pottawattamie County, Iowa. ASWIC is also a member of the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partnership - a two-state, six-county regional economic development consortium.

The consortium specializes in working with new-growth projects, as well as existing industry, to provide resources necessary to be successful in the region. The consortium's proven public/private partnership includes the following organizations, stakeholders and leaders: the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), City of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, local utility partners, key stakeholders, as well as local and state elected officials. The consortium has been named No. 1 by *Site Selection magazine* for securing the greatest number of projects in a market of its size for the last three years.

ASWIC takes pride in being a one-stop-shop for economic development services in Southwest Iowa. The team of professionals at ASWIC work hard on behalf of prospects to provide the resources businesses needed to locate and/or expand in the region. Intimate knowledge of the region, combined with collaborative partnerships and access to an abundance of resources, equate to the support USDA needs to relocate the NIFA and ERS headquarters to southwest Iowa.

SITE CRITERIA

Transportation Logistics

Council Bluffs has a ring of interstate highways and trails serving the region. Commuting is stress-free, whether it's a 19-minute-or-less drive or a quick ride on one of the metro's easily accessed public transportation routes. Connectivity to the rest of the world is seamless. Eppley Airfield in Omaha, NE (OMA) is a 20-minute drive from the proposed sites and provides both domestic and international service. OMA offers direct flights to more than 28 major cities across the country, including Washington, D.C., New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Atlanta. This ease of travel within the area improves productivity, reduces downtime, increases time spent with family and improves the overall quality of life for residents.

Workforce

There is a robust future workforce pipeline in the Council Bluffs region with 140,000 students enrolled in one of 36, two- and four-year colleges and universities. These institutions graduate more than 23,000 students annually – 35 percent with skill sets relevant to positions at NIFA and ERS. In addition, the convenient location and urban, yet laid-back lifestyle Council Bluffs offers frequently attracts regional university talent, including graduates from Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and the University of Minnesota.

The Council Bluffs region employs 164,000 employees with skill sets related to those at ERS and NIFA, but these workers make 31 percent less when compared to employees in Washington, D.C. The Council Bluffs workforce is educated and productive, with 15 fewer worker turnovers per every 1,000 people than in Washington, D.C., which results in improved performance and savings on hiring and training.

In short, the Council Bluffs area offers:

- 36 two- and four-year colleges and universities with 140,000 students enrolled
- Access to a robust pipeline of graduates within a 60-mile radius, and more from regional universities, including land grant institutions
- Above average high school and college graduation rates
- Access to an existing skilled and productive workforce, making 31 percent less than in Washington, D.C. for similar work
- Lower worker turnover rates, 15 fewer per 1,000 than in Washington, D.C.

Community/Quality of Life

Council Bluffs is along the Loess Hills National Scenic Byway, extending from South Dakota, through Iowa, to Missouri. The breathtaking hills formed during the last Ice Age and are the highest of its kind outside of China. The Hitchcock Nature Center provides the best place to take in and appreciate the wonder. In addition to natural beauty, Council Bluffs has an extensive public art scene. Large-scale sculptures are found outside of the convention center and downtown. Striking pieces along the bridges are a clear indicator of city limits, including an interactive light show at Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park.

The Union Pacific Railroad Museum calls Council Bluffs home thanks to the city being "Mile 0" of the transcontinental railroad. The museum features state-of-the-art exhibits and immersive designs. Council Bluffs is home to another piece of railroad history, the General Dodge House — a National Historic Landmark in honor of General Grenville M. Dodge, a renowned railroad builder.

One of Council Bluffs' newest amenities is Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park. The park boasts five acres of lawn space, amphitheater-style seating and a breathtaking view of the Missouri River from the rooftop deck of the park's pavilion. The park also

provides access to the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge – a remarkable 3,000-foot path that crosses the Missouri River, connecting Iowa and Nebraska.

Recreation is a big deal in Council Bluffs. Two years ago, the Iowa West Field House opened as a 100,000-square-foot facility with the ability to offer eight basketball or 12 volleyball courts at the flip of a switch. In late 2019, the 50,400-square-foot Hoff Family Arts & Culture Center will open, providing a home to the American Midwest Ballet, the Kanesville Symphony and others. The city's new 73,000-square-foot YMCA opened in 2017.

Belonging to a metro area with nearly one million residents provides Council Bluffs with a variety of wonderful entertainment options, such as regular visits by major concert tours. Beyond concerts, the metro has spectacular tour productions from Broadway. Proximity to the metro's universities, as well as being the annual host of the NCAA Men's College World Series makes college sporting events popular amongst locals.

Capital and Operating Costs

There are three sites in Council Bluffs that meet the logistic, workforce, community/quality of life and operating cost criteria required for the USDA NIFA and ERS headquarters projects.

Information Technology Infrastructure

With multiple lit and dark fiber routes, the Council Bluffs area is an emerging data center hub that has been ranked No. 1 by Livability for "Beyond Silicon Valley's Up and Coming Tech Hot Spots." In addition, the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), located six miles west, provides cybersecurity programming at its Peter Kiewit College of Information Science and Technology. UNO is known as a "Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance" by the National Security Agency (NSA). Given Offutt Air Force Base is 13 miles to the south, and the Federal Bureau of

Investigation's Omaha Field Office, this region has a burgeoning pool of contractors and employers familiar with U.S. government cybersecurity and information technology requirements.

The three proposed sites offer competitive lease rates at \$21 per square foot, triple net (property taxes, building insurance and maintenance) for Class A annual office space. In addition, construction costs in Council Bluffs are slightly below the national average compared to Washington, D.C., which is 12 percent higher. Locating the USDA NIFA and ERS headquarters in Council Bluffs will substantially reduce operating costs based on the current differential in lease rates when compared to current annual average lease rates in Washington, D.C. of \$34 per square foot. Additional operating cost savings will be realized in utility costs. Iowa boasts the lowest industrial electricity prices in the Midwest and obtains a larger percentage of its energy from renewable sources than any other state.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Experienced and well-established developers have been identified for all three of the proposed sites.

River's Edge

River's Edge is a 21-acre, mixed-use development located on the Missouri River at 4200 River's Edge Parkway, Council Bluffs. The site is east of Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park and boasts a beautiful view. All infrastructure is in place, with a 65,000 square-foot Class A office building, a 700-plus capacity parking deck and 240 pedestal-style apartment and town home units currently under construction. In addition, two condo towers are planned for future development, and there are two pad sites available for office use.

River's Edge would be an exceptional campus setting for both the NIFA and ERS headquarters facilities. River's Edge offers numerous amenities, including access to

affordable housing – both in the development, as well as in the city of Council Bluffs – direct connection to public transportation and an extensive regional trails system, walking access to Omaha's central business district via the Bob Kerrey pedestrian bridge, plus an abundance of additional lifestyle and retail options within a short bike or car ride.

The City of Council Bluffs owns the pad sites with master developer Noddle Companies and has “first right” for future development at River’s Edge.

Iowa Western Community College (IWCC)

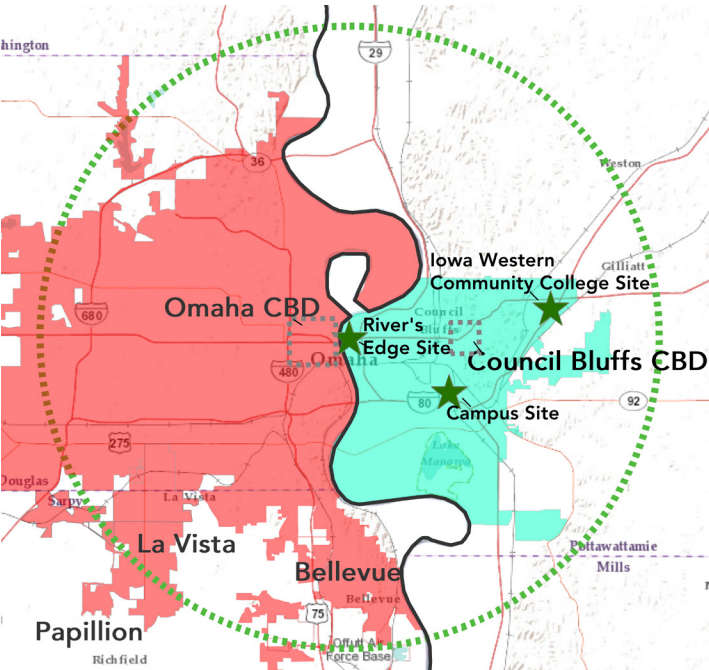
The 110-acre IWCC site is located directly east of the City of Council Bluffs and the picturesque Iowa Western Community College campus. The IWCC site provides direct access and an easy commute via Interstate I-80, U.S. Hwy. 6 and numerous other city streets leading directly to the campus. The site lies within five to 10-minutes of all the region’s lifestyle and retail amenities.

The IWCC campus has undergone a substantial, state-of-the art transformation over the past 20 years, providing many new conveniences for its 7,000 students. IWCC owns the site and is looking for exceptional companies to complement the progress on campus. This site would be a true campus setting for USDA’s NIFA and ERS headquarters facilities, offering direct access to the IWCC pipeline of students and graduates. There are approximately 98-acres available for development by Lockwood Development. All infrastructure is either already in, or being extended to the site, to accommodate a new Black Hills Energy corporate office and training facility.

Campus Site

This 36-acre site is centrally located on the edge of the Council Bluffs entertainment district. With easy commute patterns via Interstate I-80 and interior city roads, this site provides access to all lifestyle and retail amenities within a short drive. The site presents a built-to-suit campus environment. The site is privately owned and currently brokered by Heartland Properties, with all infrastructure in place. The developer for this site would be Lockwood Development.

MAP



Demographics & Community Characteristics ¹		
	10-Mile Radius from Site	Labor Shed: Omaha-Council Bluffs-Fremont, NE-IA CSA
Population ²		
Population	640,634	970,023
Pop. Ann. Avg. Growth	n/a	1.1%
Demographics		
Median Age	35.0	35.3
Racial/Ethnic Minority Pop. Share	31.9%	24.9%
Economic		
Labor Force Participation Rate	69.6%	70.6%
Labor Force (nsa) ³	n/a	510,054
Civilian Employment (nsa) ³	n/a	494,327
Unemployment Rate (nsa) ³	n/a	3.1%
Avg. Wage (Private & Government) ⁴	n/a	\$48,603
Avg. Commute (minutes)	19.0	20.1
Educational Attainment		
% with High School degree & above	89.2%	91.4%
% with Bachelor's Degree & above	33.3%	36.3%
Housing		
Median House Value	\$143,201	\$150,300