



Partnerships with Businesses

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1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy to establish standards and guidance to assist private enterprises and public entities and to advise them as to the type of partnerships that Iowa County is willing to engage in.

2. ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:

This policy applies to partnerships with “for profit” non-governmental businesses.

3. POLICY:

Iowa County desires and expects to engage in partnerships. The public tax dollar is strained more and more and there is a need to utilize partnerships to assist with the development of tax base, expanded services, or to create a more efficient use of County dollars.

Partnerships are hereby defined as “minor” or “major”.

Minor partnerships are relationships that may be created, funded, or supported with existing manpower or budgeted dollars. A minor partnership would also avoid the need for County Board approval. For example; Iowa County may decide to partner with a local restaurant for the sponsorship of a County employee picnic. Said relationship would be considered minor, as it would not incur unbudgeted costs, nor would the relationship need to be elevated to County Board level.

A Major partnership would include relationships that the County Administrator is directly involved and will likely demand \$25,000 or more in staff time or financial contributions. These partnerships must be approved by the County Board.

Iowa County annually budgets dollars for the purchase of certain services and equipment. Because these purchases are in the annual budget, transparency already exists and the County Board of Supervisors has reviewed and approved the budgeted use of those dollars.

Iowa County hereby establishes the following guidelines to aid and assist staff in creating those “major” partnerships:

- A. Everything must be in writing via Memorandums of Understanding, Contracts, or Agreements. The terms of the relationship must be spelled out directly and concisely to ensure that members of the general public understand what has happened or is expected to happen under the partnership. Corporation Counsel or outside legal counsel involvement is at the discretion of the County Administrator.
- B. The Iowa County Administrator represents the Iowa County Board in negotiations and shall work diligently to ensure the best relationship/partnership development

- occurs. Once the final draft is completed, the County Administrator will take the proposal to the Executive Committee for feedback and revisions before getting the ultimate decision from the County Board.
- C. Any partnership agreement must provide Iowa County with more than what we could produce on our own without the partnership. The partnership shall be developed with the purpose of benefitting Iowa County. The private gains benefitted from the partnership are secondary and ancillary to the purpose of the agreement.
 - D. Iowa County is open to providing funding incentives, but any agreement must spell out all incentives (funding or otherwise) completely and include a conclusion or end date for the relationship. Initial funding is preferable to ongoing funding agreements. Iowa County wants to encourage prosperity without developing relationships dependent on County resources.
 - a. Financing. Should a partner benefit from County financing, the County must have a security equal to said financing. This may come via a letter of credit, mortgage, or collateral. No agreement will be finalized if the County's financing is not secured.
 - b. Any incentives or financial contributions to a project must be proportional to the County's benefit from the project.
 - E. Confidentiality. Occasionally a proposed partner will ask the County Administrator to sign a confidentiality statement. The County Administrator is hereby assured that if such a statement is required that the County Board will honor that pledge and not force the disclosure of confidential information unless otherwise required by law. When final documents are presented to the Iowa County Board, it must be assumed that confidentiality is no longer possible. Partners of Iowa County need to know that as a local government, Iowa County votes in public and takes the position that the public has a right to know decisions made by elected officials.
 - F. Iowa County will not purchase a privately held business or a portion of a business.
 - G. Conflict of Interest. Anyone engaging in a minor or major partnership on behalf of Iowa County must ensure they are not committing an Ethics Code violation. See Iowa County Ethics Code, Ethics Commission, and Wisconsin State Statutes to ensure compliance.

4. REFERENCES:

Policy 406 Code of Ethics
Iowa County Ordinance 701 Code of Ethics

5. PROCEDURES:

- A. Any entity interested in a partnership should contact the County Administrator to discuss their proposal. The County Administrator may also contact prospective partners in order to further the county's goals and efficient use of county resources.
- B. The County Administrator may delegate a prospective partner to any member of his/her management staff for development of agreements or for investigative work. If a potential "relationship" is delegated to a department head, the County Administrator must express support for the "minor" relationship before any partnership agreements are approved or signed. A "major" relationship may not be approved by anyone but the County Board.