



United Way  
of Story County

**Story County Transportation Collaboration  
Meeting Minutes  
January 18, 2023- 1:00 p.m. via Zoom**

**Present:** Shari Atwood (CyRide/AAMPO), Sharee Huffer (Aging Resources), Deb Schildroth (City of Ames), Kalen Petersen (RSVP), Linda Hagedorn (League of Women Voters), Butch Hansen (ISU Transportation Fleet), Nikki Fischer (Ames Chamber of Commerce), Chris Mondak (League of Women Voters), Lisa Heddens (Story County Board of Supervisors), Linda Van Holten (RSVP), Anneke Mundel (United Way of Story County)

- I. **Introductions**
- II. **Review October 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes** – Minutes were accepted as written.
- III. **Updates from Story County Board of Supervisors** - Heddens stated that she had a conversation with HIRTA, and they agreed that consistent outreach into rural areas is necessary before additional steps are taken. Heddens said that she will help distribute promotional materials (pens, notepads etc.) both in her capacity as Supervisor and also as Vice President of the HIRTA board. Heddens noted that HIRTA has developed an outreach plan, with locations selected for distribution of materials. They also plan to reach out to RSVP to see if any of the volunteer drivers might be willing to help distribute materials to these locations. Additionally, they plan to ensure that HIRTA information is included in rural Story County municipal information pages. HIRTA also plans to have a presence at farmers markets and beyond. Mundel asked if the county is still considering organizing a Transportation Commission, as had been recommended by the League of Women Voters (rural transportation study). Heddens said that this is currently on the back burner but may be considered if outreach does not increase ridership. Atwood wondered if the Story County transportation brochure might be distributed alongside the HIRTA materials. Hedden said she would connect with Atwood offline.
- IV. **[Transportation Brochure](#)** (live link) - Atwood stated that she received an update to RSVP's sponsors. Please review your section and send any additional updates to [satwood@cyride.com](mailto:satwood@cyride.com). The participants stated that the transportation brochure is one of the very positive outcomes of the collaboration. Numerous participants recommended that each collaboration member help with distribution of the brochure countrywide.
- V. **Future of Transportation Collaboration** - Mundel shared the [Story County Community Needs Assessment 2020](#). This assessment is conducted every five years, with Story County Public Health as the lead. It involved multiple waves of work: In Wave 1, a review of American Community Survey and key community partner data was conducted. Affordable transportation was noted as prominent in the data. In Wave 2, a countywide community survey was administered. 567 individuals completed the survey. Transportation was ranked 10 out of 11 for most important Health and Human service needs. In Wave 3, focus groups were held in rural communities which were underrepresented in some of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 data. One focus group was held in Zearing and another in Nevada. The planned Maxwell focus group was cancelled due to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this wave, transportation was ranked as the third most important Health and Human service need, with an emerging theme of poor public and private options. In Wave 4, a

Delphi expert panel was pulled together. The 13 individuals on the panel ranked the top health and human service needs. Transportation was not included on this list.

Mundel asked whether this data suggests that the Transportation Collaboration should change its mission and/or whether participants felt there was no longer a need for such a collaborative group. Fischer stated that transportation continues to be a key need in the community, as evidenced by transportation barriers of retraining program participants. She also noted that there are very few Uber and Lyft drivers in the county since the pandemic started. Hagedorn stated that transportation is interconnected with the 6 key priorities identified in the 2020 Community Needs Assessment. For example, how do individuals get to mental health appointments or to childcare without transportation availability? Petersen agreed. She stated that while some of the work has changed, there is still value in hearing from other providers on needs and possible areas of collaboration, etc.. Petersen also stated that the collaboration is attended by individuals who are knowledgeable about and involved in the community; as a result, it is a useful group with which to brainstorm. Atwood agreed that the collaboration remains relevant. She said that transportation access continues to be the biggest need, and CyRide is continually working to educate the large student population on the merits of bus riding. Atwood also stated that the area MPO values the input from the Transportation Collaboration as it develops its transportation plan every five years. Mondak wondered if the SCQLA group might want to reach out to providers and specifically inquire about transportation barriers. Atwood and Schildroth remembered the early days of the collaboration when the transportation brochure was distributed to call takers at CyRide to ensure that individuals would not cancel necessary appointments, so that seniors would be aware of various transportation options in the county (“Do You Have A Ride?” campaign), etc. Schildroth stated that she feels the Transportation Collaboration is a good one, with great opportunities for networking. She also noted that the City of Ames’ Climate Action Plan is working on educating the community on alternative forms of transportation (to single user vehicles), in their quest to reduce emissions.

As the result of this feedback, the collaboration worked on updating the mission statement to include a focus on educating the community about both needs and services. Mundel stated that she would wordsmith this statement and have it prepared for review and a vote at the next quarterly meeting.

## VI. Partner Updates:

- **United Way of Story County/Wheels for Work** – Mundel stated that in 2022, the program was able to award eight vehicles to hard working families, with two additional giveaways pending. They also received five vehicles that were scrapped, with funds going to help offset repairs on other donated vehicles. Mundel noted that this program continues to be life changing. One recipient this year testified, “I’ve gotta say that this program has certainly made a world of difference in my life. I’ve been able to make it to work every day at a very decent factory here in Ames.” This was a new job the recipient applied for after receiving the vehicle. Additionally, the recipient reported that, thanks to the vehicle, “My oldest daughter was able to play soccer this year and my son is in basketball at the moment.” The recipient also stated that the vehicle has made possible “the normal every day stuff like going to the store or even visiting friends and family. I am forever grateful, thank you.”
- **CyRide** - Atwood said that they are actively searching for and hiring bus drivers. She noted that CyRide offers CDL training (both for the permit and license) for any drivers they hire. CyRide also is utilizing a service titled Ease Service and currently piloting a new scheduling app.

- **Aging Resources** - Huffer stated that they are currently updating the transportation plan for their seven county service area. RSVP and HIRTA are involved in this process.
- **City of Ames** - Schildroth stated that the City is in the midst of their FY 24 budget process. February will bring informative departmental presentations. She also noted that the ASSET annual investment process is nearly complete, with the joint funders meeting on January 19 to vote on the funding recommendations. Each individual funder will then review the recommendations and vote whether or not to accept. Finally, Schildroth noted that Community Conversation #3 on mental health is coming up at the Ames Public Library on January 26. The topic is resiliency. (See attached press release.)
- **Central Iowa RSVP** - Petersen noted her thanks to both Aging Resources and ASSET for their funding support. She stated that they have seen an increase in the number of new applications, especially in rural eastern Story County. As a result, they are working to add to their driver pool. They also are considering partnering with HIRTA. Petersen also shared that RSVP continues to offer a grocery delivery service by referral only (primarily from Heartland and RSVP); she said that 10 seniors are consistently using this service to obtain groceries.
- **Ames Chamber of Commerce** - Fischer stated that Ames Chamber continues to offer its Retraining Program with Story County and DMACC. CDL is one certificate they offer. Seven students are currently in the CDL course, with three having advanced to the driving portion. Fischer stated that the students would be meeting with Atwood / CyRide staff about employment possibilities shortly.
- **League of Women Voters** - Hagedorn shared that the State of Community event will be held at CityChurch on January 27 at 11 am. Provost Wickert, Mayor Haila, Supervisor Faisal, DMACC president Denson, Ames Superintendent Lawson, and VP of MGMC Deardorff will be on hand. She stated that the event is free, although individuals requesting Hickory Park lunch should advance order and pay \$10 at the door.
- **ISU Transportation** - Hansen stated that with life settling into a bit of normalcy “post” pandemic, he would like to get more involved with the Transportation Collaboration again. He also shared that Kathy Wellick has left the department.

**2023 Meeting Dates:** April 12, July 12, October 11 (*Zoom format until otherwise announced*)



Ames Ford Lincoln and United Way of Story County partner to bring reliable transportation to those in need. Ames Ford Lincoln accepts donated vehicles, completes a safety inspection and any necessary repairs, then donates the vehicle to a family selected by the Wheels for Work committee.

## RECEIVE A VEHICLE

To apply to receive a vehicle, the applicant must meet all of the following qualifications:

- Live in Story County
- Have a child 18 or under and/or a child in K-12 school living in your home
- Under 150% of poverty (guidelines can be found at [aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines))
- Have the ability to budget for vehicle maintenance, fuel, and car insurance
- Employed or full-time student
- Have a valid Iowa driver's license
- In the last two years, do not have an OWI, conviction of driving with a suspended or revoked license, conviction of failure to restrain a child, or conviction of more than 2 moving violations (Felony crimes of a violent, sexual, or drug-related nature and dates of conviction must be noted on the application as well)
- Household does not own a running vehicle (In order to receive a vehicle from the Wheels for Work program, you cannot have any vehicles in your home. Any parked cars will need to be junked/sold and a receipt shown to staff)

## To apply to receive a vehicle, please contact one of our intake agencies:

ACCESS (current clients only) - [josh@assaultcarecenter.org](mailto:josh@assaultcarecenter.org)

Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance - 515-296-1449 - [navigator@gnea.org](mailto:navigator@gnea.org)

Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA) - 515-956-3333 - [jodie.linse@micaonline.org](mailto:jodie.linse@micaonline.org)

Story County Community Services - 515-663-2941 - [cflack@storycountyiowa.org](mailto:cflack@storycountyiowa.org)

The Salvation Army - 515-233-3567 - [kathy.pinkerton@usc.salvationarmy.org](mailto:kathy.pinkerton@usc.salvationarmy.org)

## DONATE A VEHICLE

For more information about making a tax deductible donation of your vehicle to the program, please contact Nick or Casey with Ames Ford Lincoln at 515-233-1913.



United Way  
of Story County





# PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Susan Gwiasda, Public Relations Officer, [susan.gwiasda@cityofames.org](mailto:susan.gwiasda@cityofames.org), 515.239.5204  
Deb Schildroth, Assistant City Manager, [deb.schildroth@cityofames.org](mailto:deb.schildroth@cityofames.org), 515.239.5202  
Julie Saxton, Mental Health Advocate, [julie.saxton@cityofames.org](mailto:julie.saxton@cityofames.org), 515.239.5463

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Jan. 12, 2023*

## Community Conversation on Mental Health Resiliency is Jan. 26

AMES, Iowa – In a partnership with local mental health organizations and the Ames Community School District, the City of Ames is hosting a “Community Conversation about Mental Health Resiliency” to explore what defines resiliency, why both adults and youth struggle with it, and to offer some tips and techniques to build up resiliency. The event will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 26, at Ames Community School District Board Room, 2005 24<sup>th</sup> St.

Lyndsey Fennelly, ISU Women’s Basketball legend and mental health advocate, will open the event by sharing a personal resiliency story. Presentations from representatives from Eyerly Ball Community Mental Health, Central Iowa Psychological Services, Ames Community Schools, and Ames Police Department, along with a question-and-answer session, will follow.

This event supports Ames City Council’s goal to identify opportunities to improve mental and physical wellness together with community partners and is the third in a series of mental health Community Conversations planned over the next several months. These events are free and open to the public.



-more-

**Future Community Conversations, all from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Ames Public Library, 515 Douglas Ave.:**

- March 7, 2023: “Drug Use/Abuse”
- April 4, 2023: “Civility in Conversations”
- May 2, 2023: “Navigating Mental Health/Substance Use Systems”

Watch for updates and view the Community Conversation video archives at [www.cityofames.org/living/mental-health-initiative](http://www.cityofames.org/living/mental-health-initiative)

###

# FREE RETRAINING PROGRAMS

Free to all residents in Story County 18+ with a diploma or GED  
Classes take place at Ames or Boone DMACC Campus

## Class List

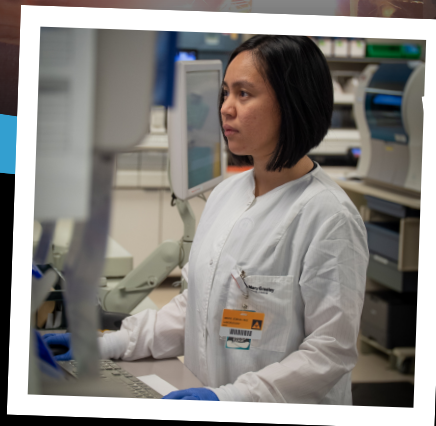
- Manufacturing
- Welding
- CNA/Basic and Advanced
- Construction
- Healthcare Patient Services
- Maintenance Tech/Electrician
- CDL training
- Phlebotomy
- IT Help Desk
- Advanced PLC

## How long are classes?

Classes are 5-15 weeks depending on the course.

## Why Should I Sign Up?

This FREE Retraining Program provides an opportunity to master new skills and technology that will set you apart in the workforce. You get real-world experience and can earn a certification and begin your new career adventure in weeks.



## Steps

- Step 1 - apply with the WTA application (Workforce Training Academy) >>>  
Step 2 - you will be contacted by DMACC



## Benefits

- **Transportation assistance** - Gas card each week you attend a class
- **Childcare assistance** - determined on a case by case basis
- **Cash Stipend** - \$150 half way through the class, \$150 at the end of class, \$300 after working in a job in Story County for 30 days (\$600 total)

Contact: Nikki Fisher,  
Director of Workforce & Diversity  
Ames Chamber of Commerce

✉ [nikki@ameschamber.com](mailto:nikki@ameschamber.com)  
☎ 515-232-2310

The Story County Retraining Program is Presented by:

