

ESS Coordinating Meeting January 13, 2026

ESS Coordinating Committee Members

| | |
|---|---|
| Travis Case, Grundy County Recorder | Jamie Stargell, Adams County Recorder |
| Jolynn Goodchild, Plymouth County Recorder | David Erickson, Dentons Davis Brown |
| Kisha Martin, Ringgold County Recorder | Dillon Malone, Iowa Title Guaranty |
| Natalie Steffener, Des Moines County Recorder | Jesse Huisman, Grundy County IT/ GIS Director |
| Melissa Bahnsen, Cedar County Recorder | |
| Julie Haggerty, Polk County Recorder | |

Other Participants

| | |
|--|--|
| ReNae Arnold, Dallas County Recorder | Patty Hinners, Scott County Recorder Staff |
| Stacie Herridge, Story County Recorder | Brent Calvert, American Abstract & Title Co. |
| Lisa Kent, Wapello County Recorder | Michelle Hall, Jasper County Deputy Recorder |
| Phil Dunshee, Iowa Land Records | Samantha McMahon, Iowa Land Records |
| Lisa Long, Iowa Land Records | Kristen Delaney-Cole, Iowa Land Records |

Welcome

A virtual meeting of the ESS Coordinating Committee was held via web conference. Vice Chair Julie Haggerty called the meeting to order.

ESS Coordinating Committee Summary

The summary of the ESS Coordinating Committee on November 13, 2025, was reviewed.

Travis Case made a motion to approve the meeting summary. Natalie Steffener seconded. The motion was approved.

2026 ESS Election of Officers and Terms of Office

The positions of ESS Coordinating Committee Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary were discussed and nominations were accepted.

- Chair –Melissa Bahnsen nominated Jamie Stargell to be the ESS Coordinating Committee Chair. The motion was seconded by Travis Case and approved.
- Travis Case was nominated by Julie Haggerty to be the Vice Chair of the ESS Coordinating Committee. The motion was seconded by Jamie Stargell and approved.
- Natalie Steffener was nominated by Julie Haggerty to continue as Secretary/Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Travis Case and approved.

ESS Committee Meetings

The Committee Chair, Jamie Stargell, discussed the possibility of an additional ESS meeting in March to be held in conjunction with the 2026 ISAC Spring Conference. No action was taken.

Contacts and Agreements

Employment of Software Developer

The Project Manager provided an update on candidates interviewed for the vacant Application Developer and Support Coordinator position. A conditional offer was made to Connor Linn, pending the Committee's approval. A formal approval to proceed with the hire was requested.

Melissa Bahnsen moved to authorize the hiring of Connor Linn to fill the Application Developer and Support Coordinator position. Julie Haggerty seconded and the motion was approved.

ILR Website Update and Contract with Visionary

In November, the Committee authorized the use of funds from the Software Development and Equipment Reserve to work with a website development provider to update the Iowa Land Records public-facing web pages. The Communications Coordinator and Project Manager provided an update on the Request For Proposal process, and the Evaluation Committee's recommendation.

Since the November ESS Coordinating Committee meeting, ESS staff and the Evaluation Committee hosted a virtual question-and-answer session with three web development providers to address submitted questions and to review the established evaluation criteria. The Evaluation Committee reviewed and scored each proposal, advancing the top two providers to the interview stage. After conducting interviews and completing a final round of scoring, the Evaluation Committee unanimously recommended selecting Visionary as the preferred website development partner. A contract and scope of work with Visionary was presented to the Committee for review and approval.

Julie Haggerty moved to approve the website development provider contract with Visionary. Travis Case seconded and the motion and it was approved.

The Committee discussed how additional insights and analytics on the ILR website could be helpful in better understanding how people use the website. The Communications Coordinator reported that part of the website refresh project aims to improve usage insights and reporting. The Committee will be updated on the project as it proceeds. The targeted period of completion is June, 2026.

Recommendation for Notification System Planning

The Project Manager outlined two potential paths for offering a property notification system to 28E member counties. One option would be to support counties that choose to implement notification services through their local service providers that may offer notification products. While ESS could potentially assist with initial setup efforts, this approach would likely require ongoing financial commitments at the county level. The second option discussed was the development of a statewide notification system administered through Iowa Land Records. This approach would leverage the existing ILR search infrastructure to serve multiple counties through a single platform, reducing the need for individual counties to fund or manage a notification system.

The Committee discussed that a centralized system could offer cost efficiencies for participating counties and provide a foundation for future enhancements tied to other data and information. Committee members expressed concerns about county budget cuts and emphasized the value of exploring a statewide solution that does not rely on separate county funding or resources.

Julie Haggerty moved to authorize Iowa Land Records to develop a project plan and budget for a notification system through ILR. Jolynn Goodchild seconded the motion and it was approved.

The Project Manager expressed the intent to have a project plan and budget ready for consideration at the February 19 quarterly ESS Coordinating Committee meeting.

Other Project Updates

Cost Sharing Credits and Maintenance

The Project Manager reported on E-Submission trends for 2025 and changes to the cost sharing credits and maintenance agreement for the 88 participating counties. Overall, E-Submission has grown from 67.23% in 2024 to 71.39% in 2025. Last year saw an unexpected increase in E-Submissions that brought in a total of 383,004 documents recorded electronically, slightly below the 2021 total of 410,596. The County E-Submission ratios and proposed cost sharing credit amounts had been calculated, and it was noted that ESS staff were ready to prepare and issue invoices to the counties.

ESS Finance and Operational Practices Policy Update

The Committee reviewed proposed policy updates developed for the ESS Finance Subcommittee. The updates were reviewed by the Subcommittee at their January 8 meeting. Policy suggestions included electing ESS Coordinating Committee officers in January of each year, designating the ESS Secretary/Treasurer and ICRA Treasurer as standing members of the Finance Subcommittee, setting term limits, and other procedural changes. It was reported that the Finance Subcommittee had decided to continue with their review and to seek additional input from ESS members.

ESS Director Search

The Committee was informed that the committee established to search for a new ESS director/project manager had received more than 150 applications and that preparations were being made to conduct virtual interviews with the most promising candidates.

ESS Office Relocation Update

The Committee received an update regarding the search to locate a different office space for ESS operations. The search is being focused on Clive, Waukee, West Des Moines, Urbandale, and Johnston, as staff are predominantly located in the western suburbs of Des Moines. Other office considerations include access to a conference room, enclosed offices for management and customer service, appropriate technology configurations, restroom access, and other integrated building services.

Additional information is expected for the February 19 ESS Coordinating Committee meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned. The next regular meeting of the ESS Coordinating Committee is scheduled for February 19, 2026.