

**ESS Standards Meeting
Web Conference
July 17, 2025**

Attendance

ESS Standards Subcommittee

Carolyn Siebrecht, Linn County Recorder
Cathy Voith, Calhoun County Recorder
Samantha Boothby, Cherokee County Recorder

Naomi Ellis, Marion County Recorder
Jayne Schultz, Winneshiek County Recorder
Katie Carlton, Union County Recorder

Other Participants

Jamie Stargell, Adams County Recorder
ReNae Arnold, Dallas County Recorder
Ann Ditsworth, Dickinson County Recorder
Nancy Booten, Lee County Recorder
Stacie Herridge, Story County Recorder

Dawn Froese, Linn County Recorder Staff
Cortney Hayler, Linn County Recorder Staff
Teresa Sackett, Linn County Recorder Staff
Anthony Bengston, Certified Title of Buchanan
Danielle Michalski, Abstract Associates of Iowa

ESS ILR Staff

Phil Dunshee, Iowa Land Records
Lisa Long, Iowa Land Records
Samantha McMahon, Iowa Land Records

Corrie Strasser, Iowa Land Records
Kristen Delany-Cole, Iowa Land Records

Welcome

A meeting of the ESS Standards Subcommittee was held via web conference.

April Meeting Summary

The Subcommittee reviewed the April 17, 2025, meeting summary. Katie Carlton made a motion to approve the meeting summary. Jayne Schultz seconded, and the motion was approved.

New Standards Subcommittee Chair Selected

The Subcommittee reviewed the role of the Standards Subcommittee Chair and introduced members interested in the role. As a result of the discussion, there was a consensus to establish a Chair and a Vice Chair. The ESS Policies and Procedures do not specify the roles or requirements of a Chair or Vice Chair.

Katie Carlton moved to designate Carolyn Siebrecht (Linn County) as the Chair and Cathy Voith (Calhoun) as the Vice Chair of the ESS Standards Subcommittee. Naomi Ellis seconded. The motion was approved.

Communications Update

The Iowa Land Records Annual Report for the period of July 2024 through June 2025 was shared with the Subcommittee. The report was sent to county recorders electronically and to the boards of supervisors through ISAC email communications. Recordors were encouraged to share the report with their respective county supervisors.

Contracts & Agreements

The Project Manager provided background and an update on the "On Demand" (OD) payment system. Since 2023, Linn County has used the ESS online payment system for boat and ATV renewals. Linn County has requested that another online service be enabled to accept electronic

payments; Easy Air, an application for environmental permits.

The integration, in this case, is different, because it uses an application developed by a third-party vendor. The Subcommittee reviewed the current 28E agreement between ESS and Linn County, as well as information about the Easy Air Program. The Subcommittee discussed questions about integrating with a private vendor, and the capacity of the ESS development team to complete the integration at this time given other priorities. No action was requested.

Potential Application Development

An overview of two potential development projects was presented. One project would create a property notification system to enable users to monitor recording activity associated with names. The other project would create a new “Back the Blue” shielding reform to protect law enforcement and court officers who may be endangered in some way. ESS solicited cost estimates from designated software development vendors, We Write Code and Lean Techniques.

If either project moves forward, any work authorizations would be presented to the ESS Coordinating Committee for approval prior to the initiation of any software development. Questions regarding the logistics of a notification system, such as alternatives to email and the potential for hiring a new developer were discussed. No action was requested. The topic will likely be discussed at a future meeting of the ESS Coordinating Committee.

Policies and Procedures

It was reported that an updated version of the ESS Policies and Procedures had been published. The new version includes the recent changes to the ESS Terms of Service concerning usernames and processes when accounts are closed due to inactivity. Action on those policies was finalized by the ESS Coordinating Committee at their meeting on May 15, 2025.

Working Group Update

A new workgroup was established by the Iowa County Recorders Association Executive Board to review the ESS 28E agreement and the ESS Policies and Procedures. While the ESS Standards Subcommittee continues to meet quarterly, this new workgroup provides recorders with another avenue to share their perspectives and ideas. Any suggestions provided by the workgroup would be presented to the ESS Standards Subcommittee and the ESS Coordinating Committee for review. The workgroup is comprised of two recorders from each association district and is being coordinated by Jamie Stargell, Adams County Recorder.

County Project Assessment Cost Sharing Program

The Project Manager reviewed the definitions, formula, and history of the Cost Sharing Program since its creation in 2014. The program is codified as Chapter 9 of the ESS Policies and Procedures. The Subcommittee discussed the purpose of the Cost Sharing Program, which is to share the cost of maintenance fees paid to local land record management system service providers for their integration services with ESS. The service providers are expected to:

- Facilitate the transfer of records from county systems to Iowa Land Records, and
- Facilitate the recording of electronic documents through the ESS E-Submission service

Since the inception of the county land record information system, local service providers have been compensated for their integration work. In the beginning the governing committees decided to compensate the service providers equally by county, and that methodology has been maintained over the years with some form of annual cost of living or inflationary adjustment. It was noted that the governing committees had considered alternative forms for compensating service providers and calculating the cost sharing amounts at various times. No substantive changes have been made except for the addition of a standard dollar amount to the cost sharing credit, or the use of federal COLA formulas to be used as the basis for service provider fee increases.

The Subcommittee reviewed potential changes in the Cost Sharing program if the base recording fee increase is approved in the 2026 legislative session. If sufficient additional funds are provided for ESS

operations, it is generally expected that ESS will assume all responsibility for maintenance costs for integration with Iowa Land Records. If that occurs, then the Cost Sharing Program will be discontinued.

Data and Information Standards Update

The Subcommittee reviewed and discussed a draft amendment to Chapter 2 of the ESS Policies and Procedures. This part of the Policies and Procedures defines the standards for the exchange of data and information between counties and the Iowa Land Records system. The context for the proposed change is the creation of the new application programming interfaces (APIs) for electronic recording and the transfer of data from county systems to Iowa Land Records. The policies need to be updated to correspond to these important changes.

Another context for the updated policy is the possibility that a local land record management system (service provider) might opt out of a service agreement with Iowa Land Records system, or the possibility that a county might opt out of the Electronic Services System 28E agreement. In either case, counties might still be required to participate in the statewide land record database or the statewide electronic recording service. The Subcommittee discussed how the service provider or county would conform to the standards established by the statewide system.

One proposed solution may be to publish the standards in a form that does not require the adoption of a contract by a service provider or in a form that is independent of a county's membership in the Electronic Services System 28E agreement. The proposed amendment would require ESS to publish a Scope and Specifications document which would apply to all counties and all local land record management service providers.

The draft amendments to Chapter 2 have been provided to the ICRA working group which is reviewing the 28E agreement and the ESS Policies and Procedures. The ESS Standards Subcommittee members were also asked to review the draft policy changes. The Project Manager affirmed that all service providers have been informed of the scope of work and specifications within the Iowa Land Records system. The information is contained in the current agreements with local service providers and is included in the online documentation for the E-Submission and County Upload application programming interfaces (APIs).

Cathy Voith moved to defer action on the proposed amendments to Chapter 2 of the ESS Policies and Procedures until the ICRA working group has had the opportunity to review and discuss them. Carolyn Siebrecht seconded, and the motion was approved.

Point of Sale Voids and Refunds

The Subcommittee was asked to review Section 1.5(11) of the Policies and Procedures concerning void and refund actions in the ESS point-of-sale (POS) payment system. Counties have been reminded that refunds should not be issued on the Point of Sale (POS) devices. This is because any refund would be paid by ESS and not the individual county. Instead, counties should VOID transactions when necessary by 5:45 p.m. each business day. If this does happen, a policy to issue a \$25 handling fee for each monthly invoice submitted to a county (for repayment) could be enforced.

To date, no county has been charged this fee, but recorders are encouraged to review payment details with their teams to avoid potential penalties. The Subcommittee was also informed of new signs being created for county offices to assist with communications about payment types accepted on card readers, including contactless payments.

ILR Applications E-Submission and Search

The Project Manager provided information to the Subcommittee about several topics relating to the ILR E-Submission and County Upload/Search software applications.

Alternative E-Submission Interface

Currently, ILR provides a web interface for county recorders to review documents submitted through the E-Submission service for recording. This provides a simple interface to view document images and a minimum amount of information (document type, one party name and if applicable transaction value, number of parcels, number of additional transactions and exemptions).

House File 1031 requires the creation of an alternative interface which might allow a recorder to review and act on a document from within their local land record management system. This will require substantive development work and resources, but it is possible to do. Some have asked for alternatives to the current E-Submission service, and this is one possibility. It was noted this provision of HF 1031 should be reviewed thoroughly.

Data Elements Requirements

ILR will be actively asking local land record management service providers to begin the switch to the new county upload API which facilitates the transfer of images and information from the county to ILR. This is a substantive update to technology, and is intended to serve counties, their local service providers and ILR for years to come. ILR will be using this opportunity to communicate with counties about the indexing data elements which should be mapped and transferred to ILR. A draft table of data element requirements for service providers was shared with the Subcommittee for review and discussion. The table is intended to more clearly communicate what data, if present in the local system, is expected to be transferred to the ILR system. It is hoped that this will contribute to more consistency among counties with respect to data accessibility and searchability. Information about this process will be updated at future meetings.

Notary Information

ILR recently received information that a local land record management system service provider may be activating indexing data elements relating to notaries. Indexing notary information could become a more common practice as a component of fraud detection systems. The ILR data schemas already provide the infrastructure for archiving notary information, because they have been a part of the PRIA standards upon which ILR is based. However, those data elements are inactive, because the information has generally not been present in county indexing systems. If counties begin to index this information, then it could be made accessible through ILR as well. The likely data elements to be indexed might be as follows.

- Notary commission number.
- Notary expiration date.
- The state in which the commission was granted.
- The name of the notary.

Another group of possible future data elements that could be more consistently indexed are consideration amounts. Data elements for mortgage loan amounts, property sale amounts and lien amounts are present in the schemas, but they are currently not activated.

No action on these topics was requested but could be discussed again in the future.

Legislative Update

The Subcommittee reviewed House File 1031 as it passed the House in 2025. The Project Manager informed the Subcommittee that the bill could undergo changes related to fees. If so, it would be possible to make other changes and improvements to the bill. A list of bill sections which could be refined, improved or perfected was provided to the Subcommittee for review. No action was requested.

Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned. The next regular meeting of the ESS Standards Subcommittee is tentatively scheduled for October 23, 2025.