# IOWA LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE 2025

Hosted By:

IOWA RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Partner Organizations:

LEADERSHIP IOWA
THE COURSE FOR OUR STATE

GOVERNOR'S EMPOWER RURAL IOWA INITIATIVE

October 28-29, 2025

**Kent Campus Center, Simpson College**
701 N C St, Indianola, IA 50125

https://2025leadershipexchange.eventbrite.com

# Welcome!

**Welcome to the 2025 Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp!**

We're so glad you're here—whether you're a seasoned facilitator, a first-time attendee, or somewhere in between, welcome to this bold space for sharing, learning, and growing Iowa's next generation of leaders.

Leadership is both an art and a practice. It's not just about the title or the stage—it's about showing up, stepping in, and helping others rise. That's exactly what this year's Exchange is about: creating space for connection, reflection, and action. Over the next two days, you'll dig into what it means to lead at the community level, build bridges across generations, and spark new approaches to sustaining and growing leadership programs in Iowa.

**Leading Together: Why This Matters Now**

The Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp were born out of a simple truth: strong communities need strong leaders, and those leaders need support. Through this convening, the Iowa Rural Development Council and our partners aim to cultivate a deeper bench of local champions—people who are passionate about lifting others, solving problems, and investing in their hometowns.

From mentorship models and alumni engagement strategies to succession planning and emotionally intelligent leadership, this year's sessions are designed to meet you where you are—and challenge you to think bigger. You'll hear from innovators, program directors, community builders, and the everyday leaders who make it all happen. It's not just about sharing best practices—it's about building a leadership culture that sticks.



**Your Role in the Movement**

This isn't your typical conference—and that's on purpose. We invite you to participate like a leader: ask questions, share your story, join conversations, and lean into moments that spark your curiosity. Whether you're here to develop a new program, refine an existing one, or explore how to grow leaders in your own community, your presence is essential. We are better because you're here.

Leadership doesn't happen in isolation—and neither does change. So let's build together, learn from one another, and strengthen the roots of leadership across Iowa.

Thanks for being here.

With gratitude,

*The Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp Planning Team*

# The Locations

## Kent Campus Center: Simpson College

We're thrilled to host this year's Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp at the Kent Campus Center on the beautiful Simpson College campus in Indianola. For the first time ever, the Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp is being held at Simpson College's Kent Campus Center in Indianola, Iowa! Located just 20 minutes south of Des Moines, this welcoming campus setting offers the perfect environment for collaboration, reflection, and leadership growth. We're excited to gather in a space designed to inspire connection and spark new ideas.




## West Hill Brewing Company




We're excited to wind down day one of the Leadership Exchange with a reception at West Hill Brewing Company, a locally loved brewery in the heart of Indianola's Main Street District. Just a few blocks from Simpson College, West Hill offers a laid-back, welcoming atmosphere that is community-rooted and built for connection. Whether you're a craft beer fan or simply looking to relax and recharge, the reception at West Hill is the perfect opportunity to continue conversations, make new connections, and enjoy a taste of Indianola's local flavor.

# Keynote Speakers & Featured Guests



## Sinikka Waugh, PMP

**Your Clear Next Step**

Sinikka is the founder of Your Clear Next Step, a training and coaching firm focused on making workdays better. With over 20 years of experience in project management, business analysis, and leadership development, she's known for her practical, energetic approach.

Sinikka has helped thousands of professionals across industries lead with empathy and effectiveness. She lives in Indianola, Iowa, with her husband and daughters.



Lexi Marek Beeler

**LMB Consulting**



Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer

**State of Iowa**

# Tuesday, October 28th

**1:00p - 1:50p**

## Opening Session: Why Leadership Development Matters

**South Hubbell Hall** - Welcome: ***Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer***
Speakers: ***Stacy Besch***, Owner, ICM Seminars and ***Jessi McQuerrey***, Iowa Ambassador, Association of Leadership Programs

**1:50 - 2:00p**

## Quick Break & Move to Breakout Rooms

**2:00 - 3:00p**

## Break-Out Sessions - Round 1

**North Hubbell Hall:** Pass the Baton: Building a Volunteer Leadership Succession Pipeline 
**Carse Classroom 173/174:** Grow Together: Mentorship & Coaching Models that Work 
**South Hubbell Hall:** Regulating the Heat: Navigating Emotionally Charged Conversations 
**Student Senate Board Room:** Beyond Graduation: Keeping Alumni in the Leadership Loop 
**Willis Art Gallery:** Flop to Fuel: Leadership Lessons from What Didn't Work 

**3:00 - 3:15p**

## Quick Break & Move to Breakout Rooms

**3:15 - 4:15p**

## Break-Out Sessions - Round 2 (Encore!)

**Repeat of Round 1**

**4:40 - 6:30p**

## Evening Reception | West Hill Brewery

Join us for casual conversation, craft beer, and community.

**6:30p**

## Dinner on Your Own

 Presentation  Discussion  Leadership Program  General

# Wednesday, October 29th

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|---|---|
| 7:30 - 8:30a | **Networking Breakfast**<br>**South Hubbell Hall:** Full Breakfast |
| 8:30 - 10:15a | **Morning Keynote: Empowering Changemakers, One Day at a Time**<br>**South Hubbell Hall** - Welcome: ***Jenae Sikkink***, Greater Des Moines Partnership<br>Speaker: ***Sinikka Waugh***, Your Clear Next Step |
| 10:15 - 10:30a | **Quick Break & Move to Breakout Rooms** |
| 10:30 - 11:15a | **Break-Out Sessions - Round 3**<br>**Matthew Simpson Room:** State of the State: What Iowa Needs from Its Next Leaders<br>**North Hubbell Hall:** Glamorizing the Business Side of Leadership Programs<br>**South Hubbell Hall:** Quiet Power: Local Leaders Making Loud Impact<br>**Great Hall:** Smarter, Not Harder: Leveraging AI for Community Leadership Programming<br>**Willis Art Gallery:** Co-Creating Greatness Even When There's (di)Stress |
| 11:15 - 11:30a | **Quick Break & Move to Breakout Rooms** |
| 11:30a - 12:15p | **Break-Out Sessions - Round 4 (Encore!)**<br>**Repeat of Round 3** |
| 12:15 - 1:45p | **Lunch & Learn: How to Get More Time in Your Day**<br>**South Hubbell Hall:** ***Lexi Marek Beeler***, LMB Consulting |
| 2:00 - 3:00p | **Big Ideas Showcase: Steal This Idea!**<br>**South Hubbell Hall:** 8 leaders. 8 ideas. 60 minutes of inspiration. |
| 3:00 - 3:30p | **Closing Reflection: *Final Thoughts with Sinikka*** |

Presentation  Discussion  Leadership Program  General

# Breakout Sessions

## Tuesday, October 28

### *Pass the Baton: Building a Volunteer Leadership Succession Pipeline*

**North Hubbell Hall** 

- **Sarah Thompson**, Economic Development Coordinator, Johnson County
- **Michelle Raymer**, Deputy Director Volunteer Engagement, Volunteer Iowa

This interactive workshop explores succession planning for leadership volunteer roles with a dual focus: developing people and strengthening the systems that support them. Participants will dive into engagement strategies, role design, and scalable processes for sustainable transitions—leaving with practical tools to reinforce both the pipeline and the framework that keeps it flowing.

### *Grow Together: Mentorship & Coaching Models that Work*

**Carse Classroom 173/174** 

- **Paul Leavenworth**, Director, The Center for Mentoring, Coaching & Leadership Development, Grand View University

The best leaders don't go it alone. In this session, Paul Leavenworth will share insights from Grand View University's mentoring programs and explore how coaching and mentorship can support leadership development at all levels—from youth to seasoned professionals.

### *Regulating the Heat: Navigating Emotionally Charged Conversations*

**South Hubbell Hall** 

- **Sarah Noll Wilson**, President & CEO of Sarah Noll Wilson, Inc.

Hard conversations are inevitable—but with the right tools, they can become turning points. Renowned facilitator Sarah Noll Wilson will guide attendees through proven strategies for managing emotionally charged situations with confidence, empathy, and clarity.

 Presentation  Discussion  Leadership Program  General

# Breakout Sessions

## Tuesday, October 28

### *Beyond Graduation: Keeping Alumni in the Leadership Loop*

**Student Senate Board Room** 

- **Hollie Tometich**, Executive Director, Ottumwa Leadership Academy and
- **Carla Eysink, IOM**, Owner, Compass Strategies, LLC

Leadership doesn't end at the ceremony. This session will explore creative and practical ways to keep alumni connected, motivated, and engaged long after their program ends. Hollie Tometich and Jenae Sikkink will share real-world strategies for cultivating long-term relationships that strengthen your leadership network.

### *Flop to Fuel: Leadership Lessons from What Didn't Work*

**Willis Art Gallery** 

- **Mindy Stalker**, Executive Director, Union County Development Association & Lead UC/Lead UC Youth
- **James Hoelscher**, Associate Director, University of Northern Iowa - Institute for Decision Making

Every leader has a story of a project that didn't go as planned. In this candid conversation, Mindy Stalker and James Hoelscher will lead a discussion on honest reflections of failure—and more importantly, what was learned. Walk away with insight, humor, and renewed permission to try bold ideas.

 Presentation  Discussion  Leadership Program  General

# Breakout Sessions

## Wednesday, October 29

### State of the State: What Iowa Needs from Its Next Leaders

**Matthew Simpson Room**

**Mary Lynn Adams**, Community Development Specialist, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach

What do communities across Iowa say they need from their current and future leaders? Hear key findings from the 2024–2025 Leadership Statewide Needs Assessment, presented by Lynn Adams (ISUEO), and join a discussion on how your organization can respond, adapt, and lead into the future.

### *Glamorizing the Business Side of Leadership Programs*

**North Hubbell Hall**

- **Rebecca Sullens Buchanan**, Program Director , Leadership for 5 Seasons, Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance
- **Amy Jennings**, Executive Director, Lead DSM
- **Jill Nelson**, Vice President, Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance

Leadership programs are often built on passion—but sustained through systems. This panel will cover how to manage the behind-the-scenes essentials like budgets, reporting, marketing, and fundraising. Hear from leadership directors who've found creative ways to balance mission and sustainability.

### *Quiet Power: Local Leaders Making Loud Impact*

**South Hubbell Hall**

Moderator: **Bill Menner**, Executive Director, Iowa Rural Development Council

- **Shelby Smith**, Entrepreneur, Collins
- **Matt McDevitt**, Assistant Vice President, Raccoon Valley Bank, Perry
- **Christina Moffatt**, Certified Business Advisor | Entrepreneur | Consultant | Growth Strategist

Some of the most transformative leaders don't have formal titles—they just get things done. This session will spotlight real-world examples of community members who stepped up and made meaningful change. Leave inspired with ideas you can take back to your own neighborhood.

Presentation Discussion Leadership Program General

# Breakout Sessions

## Wednesday, October 29

### *Smarter, Not Harder: Leveraging AI for Community Leadership Programming*

**Great Hall**  

- **Ryan Shenefelt**, Innovation & Education Lead, de Novo Marketing

AI isn't just for tech companies—it can help local leaders save time, uncover insights, and make more strategic decisions. Join Ryan Shenefelt of de Novo Marketing for a practical look at how AI tools can be used to fast-track planning, communication, and impact.

### *Co-Creating Greatness Even When There's (di)Stress*

**Willis Art Gallery**  

- **Sinikka Waugh**, Founder, Your Clear Next Step

When tensions rise and stress levels climb, how do great leaders keep showing up—and lifting others up along the way? In this powerful session, Sinikka Waugh explores the art of radical self-management as the foundation for leading well under pressure. Learn how to regulate your mindset, model resilience, and co-create a positive culture even in the toughest moments.

 Presentation  Discussion  Leadership Program  General

# IRDC Sponsors

## PRESENTING

GOVERNOR'S EMPOWER RURAL IOWA INITIATIVE

WCLI WARREN COUNTY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
A WARREN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION INITIATIVE

## LOCAL

WEST HILL Brewing Co. INDIANOLA, IA

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business solutions

## BRONZE

DMACC | Iowa Bankers Association | Iowa American Water
Origin Homes | UNI Institute for Decision Making | Caseys
Greater Des Moines Partnership

# Speakers



**Lynn Adams**

Lynn Adams is a Community Development Specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, serving southwest Iowa communities from her base in Red Oak. She leads the Leading Communities program and delivers a variety of workshops focused on leadership development, strategic planning, and inclusive community engagement. With a background in civic leadership and nonprofit support, Lynn helps local leaders build the skills, systems, and relationships needed to drive meaningful change. Her work empowers individuals and organizations to strengthen their communities from within.



**Lexi Marek Beeler**

Lexi Marek Beeler grew up on her family's 6th-generation diversified livestock and grain farm in Riverside, Iowa. She started showing pigs at a young age and, along with her three sisters, competed at local, state, and national shows. This early involvement sparked her passion for the agriculture industry. A graduate of Iowa State University, Lexi's professional journey includes roles at a start-up, a state government agency, and a for-profit corporation. She now owns her own business, LMB Consulting, where she provides fractional marketing services, specializing in social media strategy for agricultural companies. Lexi focuses on creating impactful digital and event experiences tailored to the unique needs of ag businesses. Recently, she moved back to her family farm in Iowa with her husband, Charlie, and their son, Oliver.



**Stacy Besch**

Stacy Besch is a business entrepreneur, professional speaker, and Community Leadership Developer based in Algona, Iowa. Through her work with ICM Seminars, Stacy has dedicated nearly 30 years to empowering individuals and communities through high-impact leadership programming and training. She is passionate about equipping local leaders with the tools, confidence, and perspective needed to drive meaningful change—especially in rural and small-town contexts. In addition to her work with leadership programs across Iowa, Stacy is a committed advocate for social causes, including raising awareness around human trafficking. Her work blends practical skill-building with a deep commitment to purpose-driven leadership.



**Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer**

Chris Gearhart Cournoyer is the 48th Lieutenant Governor of Iowa, appointed by Governor Kim Reynolds in December 2024. Previously, she represented Clinton, Jackson, and Scott counties in the Iowa Senate, where she led technology policy and consumer data protection efforts. With a background in technology and artificial intelligence, she worked at Andersen Consulting before launching her own web development business. A former school board president and STEM advocate, she remains engaged in education as a robotics and coding teacher. Lt. Governor Cournoyer is also a former reserve sheriff's deputy, active community volunteer, and proud mother of four.

# Speakers



**Carla Eysink, IOM**

Eysink is the owner of Compass Strategies, LLC, a consulting firm that empowers innovative decision making through integrated research, planning, fundraising, marketing, and organizational excellence. With nearly 30 years' experience as a county economic development professional, she led training for the Leadership Red Rock program. Eysink is a graduate of Leadership Newton and Leadership Iowa. She received her undergraduate in marketing from Wartburg College and graduate studies in nonprofit management at the American University in Washington, D.C. Her training also includes certifications such as IOM, True Colors trainer, FastTrac entrepreneur coach and Economic Gardening. Eysink and her husband live in Pella where they enjoy hosting parties and following local high school sports.



**James Hoelscher**

As Associate Director for IDM, James provides consultation to rural/urban community and economic development organizations undertaking strategic planning related to entrepreneurship, business retention, industry recruitment, community-wide planning, marketing, tourism, and organizational structure. He coordinates UNI's Economic Development Administration University Center and is the Director of the Heartland Economic Development Course. James is a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD), is a member of the International Economic Development Council, and holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy. He serves on the executive committees of the Professional Developers of Iowa and Iowa Rural Development Council, as well as a taskforce member of the Iowa Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative.




**Amy Jennings**

Amy Jennings is the Executive Director of Lead DSM, where she leads programs like the Community Leadership Program, Youth Leadership Initiative, and Community Connect. She is passionate about developing inclusive leaders and building civic capacity across Greater Des Moines. Amy is a recipient of the Preceptor Award from the Association of Leadership Programs and has been recognized for her commitment to equity in leadership development. She believes leadership is a learned capacity and works to bridge community awareness and action to build civic capacity for all.



**Dr. Paul Leavenworth**

Dr. Paul Leavenworth is the Director of the Center for Mentoring, Coaching, and Leadership Development at Grand View University and founder of The Convergence Group. With decades of experience in leadership training, he equips individuals and organizations to lead with purpose and leave lasting impact. Paul holds an Ed.D. in Counseling and is a published author known for his discovery-based approach to mentoring and leadership development.

# Speakers



**Bill Menner**

Bill Menner is the founder of The Bill Menner Group, a consulting firm focused on community development, rural partnerships and economic vitality. His work includes contract executive leadership of the Iowa Rural Development Council, and has included clients such as USDA Rural Development, the Iowa Rural Health Association and the Iowa Housing Partnership. Prior to the creation of his company, Menner served as Iowa's state director of USDA Rural Development. In that position, he oversaw an organization providing support for housing, community facility, energy and businesses across rural Iowa. He has also worked as economic development director in Poweshiek County and started his career as a public radio reporter in Ohio and Iowa. Menner is an active volunteer. He is immediate-past-president of Partners for Rural America and serves on the Grinnell Area Arts Council board of directors. .



**Matt McDevitt**

Matt McDevitt is the Assistant Vice President and Commercial Loan Officer at Raccoon Valley Bank in Perry, Iowa, where he supports local businesses and agricultural enterprises through tailored lending solutions. Deeply invested in his community, Matt serves as Secretary of Nudgers, Inc., a grassroots nonprofit focused on preserving Perry's historic buildings and revitalizing the downtown core through restoration and affordable housing development. He is also the Past President of Perry Economic Development and a proud Leadership Iowa alum (Class of 2020–21), reflecting his ongoing commitment to strengthening rural communities through economic opportunity, collaboration, and civic leadership.



**Jessi McQuerrey**

Jessi McQuerrey is the Community Development Officer at Community State Bank, where she works to strengthen connections between people, programs, and places through community-driven strategies. She also serves as the Iowa Ambassador for the Association of Leadership Programs, supporting leadership initiatives across the state and beyond. Previously, Jessi led the Iowa Association of Business and Industry Foundation's statewide leadership programs, including Leadership Iowa, Leadership Iowa University, and Business Horizons. With more than a decade of experience in leadership development, she is passionate about cultivating inclusive, resilient leaders and helping organizations design meaningful experiences that drive long-term impact.

# Speakers



**Christina Moffatt**

Christina Moffatt is a passionate advocate for small businesses and a strategic growth leader with a diverse background in entrepreneurship and business development. She gained national attention as a runner-up on The Food Network's Cupcake Wars, all while privately navigating personal challenges. That experience fueled her dedication to helping other entrepreneurs succeed. Christina owned and operated Crème Cupcake + Dessert for 12 years before selling in 2022. Under her leadership, Crème served celebrities, politicians, and locals alike, earning accolades such as DSM Top List Best Bakery and Cityview's Best Dessert. During the pandemic, she fostered resilience and unity within her team—affectionately known as the "Crème Crew"—creating an inclusive culture where ideas and profits were shared. In addition to entrepreneurship, Christina has held key leadership roles, including Regional Director for the Mid Iowa SBDC and Director of Small Business Development at the Greater Des Moines Partnership. She now focuses on customer growth strategy within a Fortune 500 company in the financial industry. A graduate of DMACC, Iowa State University, and the University of Toledo Certified Business Advisor Program, Christina also actively serves on local boards and community initiatives. Christina's greatest joy is time with her son, Evan, especially traveling and exploring new cuisines together.



**Jill Nelson, IOM**

Jill Nelson is the Vice President and Community Engagement Director at the Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance, and a long-time architect of local leadership programming. Since 2014, she has stewarded initiatives like Leadership Fort Dodge and Junior Leadership Fort Dodge, developing generations of local leaders who positively shape business, civic life, and public service in the region. Promoted to vice president in late 2024, Jill continues to connect community development, leadership learning, and civic engagement as cornerstones of regional growth.



**Michelle Raymer, CVA**

Michelle Raymer is the Deputy Director of Volunteer Service at Volunteer Iowa, where she supports communities, nonprofits, and government agencies in amplifying their impact through strategic volunteer engagement. She is also a trainer and coach for Service Enterprise, the national organizational accreditation in volunteer engagement. With over 15 years of experience in national service, nonprofit program development, and volunteer engagement, Michelle is a recognized leader in the field. She is a past president of the national Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement (AL!VE) and is actively involved in her community as a volunteer. Michelle is a graduate of Central College and holds her MPA from Drake University. Passionate about increasing social capital and nonprofit capacity building, she loves exploring volunteerism research, the intersections of behavioral science and volunteering, building community through volunteerism, and involving senior leaders and funders in strategic volunteer engagement. Connect with Michelle to collaborate on any of these topics.

# Speakers



**Ryan Shenefelt**

Ryan Shenefelt is the Innovation and Education Lead at de Novo Marketing, where he helps organizations navigate emerging technologies and leverage data-driven tools to enhance marketing, engagement, and community impact. With a background in economic development, tourism, and digital strategy, Ryan brings a unique blend of creativity and technical insight to his work. He's passionate about making cutting-edge tools like AI more approachable and actionable—especially for rural communities and small teams. Ryan is a frequent presenter and trainer on topics ranging from brand building to smart data use, with a focus on practical application over buzzwords.



**Shelby Smith**

Shelby Smith is a serial entrepreneur and small-town advocate based in Collins, Iowa, where she owns and operates multiple businesses that anchor and energize the local community. From organizing strength competitions to running Main Street storefronts, Shelby blends creativity and grit to fuel rural revitalization in hands-on ways. She's also the creator and host of the "Building in a Small Town" podcast, where she challenges narratives about rural life and uplifts the voices of small-town changemakers. Shelby's work reflects a bold, no-nonsense approach to leadership—grounded in place, built on action, and unapologetically real.



**Mindy Stalker**

Mindy Stalker serves as the Executive Director of the Union County Development Association and is actively involved in a diverse range of projects and events that celebrate the communities within Union County. In addition to the more traditional aspects of economic development, she is passionate about leadership development, creative placemaking efforts, building a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem and continuing to help connect workforce education partnerships. Professionally, Mindy serves on the Professional Developers of Iowa Executive Board, the Heartland Economic Development Executive Board and is an advisor on the Institute for Decision Making Advisory Council. Locally, she is a member of the Small Business Development Center Advisory Council, The Greater Connections Childhood Development Board, The Union County Food Coalition, Crestland Betterment Foundation and The Union County Fair Board. Beyond her formal roles, Mindy is the race director for The Greater 8 and 5K and co-director of Creston, CWC, a women's group focused on the betterment of Creston and Union County.



**Rebecca Sullens Buchanan**

Rebecca Sullens is the Program Manager for Leadership for Five Seasons at the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, where she oversees leadership programs that cultivate civic and business leaders across the region. With a background in higher education and career development, she brings a strategic and inclusive approach to building Eastern Iowa's leadership pipeline. Rebecca is passionate about helping individuals grow their impact while strengthening their communities.

# Speakers



**Sarah Thompson**

Sarah Thompson grew up in rural central Iowa and has worked in economic development since 2007, beginning in the Main Street world with roles in Story City and Lansing. After returning to her hometown of Radcliffe, she led economic development for Hamilton County SEED before launching her own consulting business, Rural Revitalization LLC, in 2018. Sarah has since worked with rural communities across Iowa and served on the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa "Invest" task force from 2018 to 2023. She now serves as Economic Development Coordinator for Johnson County's Planning, Development, and Sustainability Department, where she supports rural communities and unincorporated areas. Sarah is passionate about community leadership, entrepreneurship, and public speaking—and also co-hosts a YouTube channel, Destination Diaries, in her spare time.



**Hollie Tometich**

Hollie Tometich is the Vice President of Community Leadership of the Ottumwa Leadership Academy, where she launched and has since led community-focused leadership development programming. A Gallup-Certified CliftonStrengths Coach and a John Maxwell Certified Speaker, Trainer, and Coach, she also holds a Diversity & Inclusion certificate from Cornell University. Hollie has over two decades of experience in leadership, strategic planning, marketing, and public speaking, with prior roles spanning health care programming, public relations, and chamber leadership. Beyond her local impact, she serves as Secretary on the 2025 Board of Directors for the Association of Leadership Programs.



**Sinikka Waugh**

Sinikka Waugh spends her days helping people have better workdays so that together we can co-create better communities. Trainer, coach, business leader, and difference maker, she has helped over 57,000 people solve problems and get things done while building lasting positive relationships with those around them. Her clients value her down-to-earth, "try this now" approach and her default enthusiasm. Sinikka holds a BA from Central College, an MA from the University of Iowa, and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) through the Project Management Institute (PMI).



**Sarah Noll Wilson**

Sarah is an Executive Coach, Keynote Speaker, and bestselling author of *Don't Feed the Elephants*. With over 15 years of experience in leadership development, she has worked with more than 500 organizations and thousands of leaders globally to transform workplace cultures, strengthen relationships, and build high-performing teams. A trusted voice in leadership, Sarah is a contributor to Harvard Business Review and Forbes, and her expertise has been featured in BBC Radio, The Washington Post, Business Insider, and The New York Post. She also hosts Conversations on Conversations, a podcast with listeners in over 80 countries. Sarah holds a Master's Degree in Leadership Development from Drake University and multiple professional certifications in coaching and communication frameworks. Believing that theory is great, but tools are better, she equips leaders with practical, evidence-based strategies to navigate challenges with clarity and confidence. When she isn't empowering leaders to create thriving teams, Sarah is a passionate advocate for mental health awareness, enjoys playing games with her husband, Nick, baking focaccia bread, and cuddling with their fur baby, Sally.

# Planning Committee



**Chair**
Liesl Seabert, CEcD, AICP
UNI Institute for
Decision Making



**Vice Chair**
Himar Hernandez
ISU Extension & Outreach



Stacy Besch
ICM Seminars



Robin Bostrom
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Development Authority



Rachel Gocken
Warren County Economic
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Jessi McQuerrey
Community State Bank



Bill Menner
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John Palmer
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Academy



Mark Reinig
ISU Extension & Outreach



Jenae Sikkink
Greater Des Moines
Partnership



Mindy Stalker
Union County
Development Association



Jim Thompson
Iowa Economic
Development Authority



Sarah Thompson
Johnson County



Sacha Wise
Empower Rural Iowa

# thank you

**Thank you for being part of the 2025 Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp!**

We're grateful for your presence, your ideas, and your commitment to growing leadership across Iowa. Stay in touch—we'll be sharing highlights, resources, and new opportunities throughout the year. More exciting things are on the horizon... and we can't wait to connect again soon.

## Save the Date!

**October 27–28, 2026 | Pella, Iowa**

We're headed to Pella in 2026—and you won't want to miss it. Known for its vibrant downtown, strong civic pride, and innovative local leadership, Pella will provide the perfect backdrop for the next chapter of our Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp.

Join us as we continue to grow Iowa's leadership network with bold ideas, hands-on learning, and space to reflect, connect, and recharge. Whether you're launching a new program, refining an existing one, or simply looking for fresh inspiration—you'll find it here.

More details coming in early 2026. For now, mark your calendar and plan to be part of this one-of-a-kind leadership experience!




Interested in planning next year's event?

Join the Leadership Exchange & Bootcamp Committee!

Contact Bill Menner for more information - director@iowardc.org