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## E-GOVERNMENT POLICY RESEARCH FOR IOWA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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**Proposed Funding by:** The IOWAccess Council (IAC), Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC), Iowa State University/PPAP (Public Policy & Administration Program)

**Principal Investigators:** Dr. Yu-Che Chen, Dr. Kurt Thurmaier,  
Public Policy & Administration Program, Iowa State University

### PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

This project evaluates the demand and supply of online transactions with local governments (cities and counties) in Iowa.

The *demand component* aims to assist Iowa's local governments in:

- Gauging *current* and *future* demands for eGovernment services of citizens and businesses
- Identifying their preferences for user charges and payment methods
- Developing policy guidance to help the IOWAccess Council and Iowa's local governments to channel resources to high-impact eGovernment projects and develop financing mechanisms for sustaining the development of those projects.

The *supply component* aims to gauge

- The capacity of Iowa's cities and counties to deliver e-services demanded by citizens and businesses
- The interest of cities and counties in collaborating to deliver online services through shared:
  - Local government information technology
  - Websites hosted by the League or ISAC
  - State-local partnerships (e.g. state-local treasurers project).

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project will generate policy reports on the provision and financing of eGovernment services to meet the demands of both citizens and businesses in Iowa's cities and counties.

The Iowa State University eGovernment research team is responsible for developing policy guidance via *three complementary research activities*:

- Research on existing programs in Iowa and other states to provide a holistic view of developmental, institutional, and financial considerations by Iowa's cities and counties and the IOWAccess Council for eGovernment projects for local governments
- Surveys and interviews that gauge demands for city and county eGovernment services by both citizens and businesses with special attention to demographic factors, Internet access, business types, and whether communities are rural or urban.
- Survey of city and county officials to determine their capacity for online transactions and e-democracy features, and their willingness to use various collaborative mechanisms to supply online transactions in place of building their own e-government architecture.

The main deliverables are three management reports supported by the aforementioned complementary research activities. The three reports will discuss:

- Citizen and business needs for eGovernment services
- Preferences of citizens and businesses for financing mechanisms of eGovernment services
- Policy guidance on prioritizing eGovernment projects and on choosing among financing schemes for those projects
- Capacity of local governments to supply online transactions for citizens and businesses
- Willingness of local governments to collaborate to supply online transactions through various collaborative mechanisms.

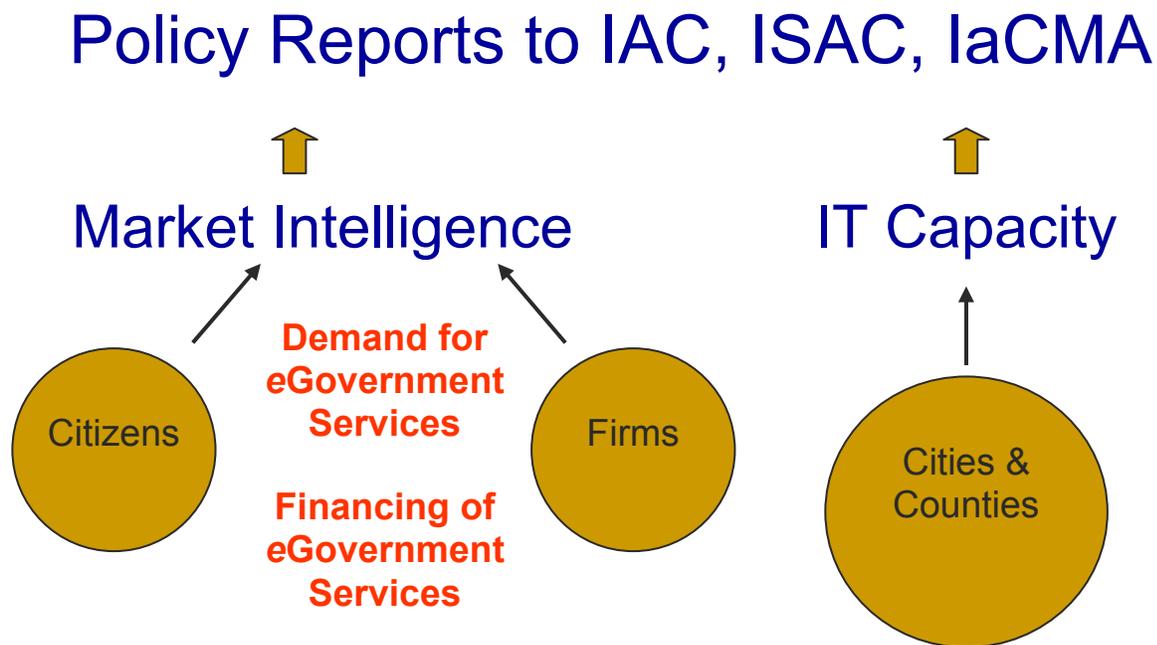
**PROJECT DURATION AND DELIVERABLES:**

The project duration is fiscal year 2007. The timeline and deliverables are presented in the table below.

Phase 1 (July 2006 – December 2006) Deliverables: Conduct Surveys	Phase 2 (Jan. 2007 – June 2007) Deliverables: Analyze Surveys
<p><b>Summer 2006</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Conduct policy and archival research on current and future use of eGovernment services</li> <li>* Conduct research on financing eGovernment services at the local government level</li> <li>* Develop and administer city/county survey of IT capacity</li> <li>* Modify state level survey instruments to local government transactions</li> <li>* Conduct surveys of the needs of citizens and businesses for online services and business and citizen preferences for financing online transactions with local governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Analyze surveys of business, citizens, and IT capacity</li> <li>* Identify important areas of online services</li> <li>* Produce management report on online service demands by businesses and preferences for financing transactions</li> <li>* Produce management report on online service demands by citizens and preferences for financing transactions</li> <li>* Produce management report comparing demands of citizens and businesses for online transactions with local governments and preferences for financing online transactions, including a proposing a financing model</li> <li>* Produce management report on IT capacity of cities and counties and models of potential IT supply collaboration.</li> </ul>

This project parallels the successful study of citizen and business demand for online services with state agencies, funded by the IowaAccess Council in FY04-05. It adds the additional component of a separate survey funded by ISAC and ISU/PPAP to determine the capacity of cities and counties to deliver online services demanded by firms and citizens. The city survey will target county seats, which are expected to be in the best position to collaborate with counties for services. The project has been endorsed by the Iowa City/County Management Association (IaCMA) at the annual membership meeting, which should increase survey response rates from cities. The scope of the project is presented in figure 1.

**Figure 1. City and County e-Government Project Scope**



**PROJECT FUNDING**

The estimated total project cost is \$140,487, including all survey costs and analysis costs. The budget is shared between the IOWAccess Council, Iowa State University/PPAP, and the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC). The demand component of citizen and business surveys will be funded by the IOWAccess Council using the budget template from the state-level policy study, approximately \$127,970 or 91 percent of the total project cost.

	Phase I (07-12/2006)	Phase II (01/07-06/2007)	Total
<b>Total Project Costs: Business, Citizen, and Local Government Surveys</b>	<b>\$ 63,569</b>	<b>\$ 73,495</b>	<b>\$ 140,487</b>
<i>of which:</i> <b>IOWAccess Council Funding</b>	\$ 54,475	\$ 73,495	\$ 127,970
<b>ISAC &amp; ISU/PPAP Funding</b>	\$ 12,517		<b>\$12,517</b>

The supply component analyzing the IT capacity of cities and counties will be funded by ISAC and ISU, at approximately \$12,517 or 9 percent of the total project cost.

**Budget for Local Government IT Capacity Survey**

**Iowa State University, Public Policy & Administration Program**

SALARY & BENEFITS (in-kind contribution)

MPA Graduate Student (Summer, 3 months: 100% time) **\$8,363**

**Iowa State Association of Counties**

SURVEY

1st Mailing Postage & Paper \$2,448

2nd Mailing Postage & Paper \$1,606

Miscellaneous Costs \$100

**\$4,154**

**TOTAL COSTS: IT CAPACITY SURVEY** **\$ 12,517**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

Kurt Thurmaier and Yu-Che Chen are on the faculty of the Public Policy & Administration Program at Iowa State University. Their research interests include state and local budgeting and finance and e-government services. Previous contract research with the IOWAccess Council includes the *eGovernment Policy Study* regarding the demand by firms and citizens for online transactions with state agencies. They also developed and continue to manage the *28E Project* to convert 28E records into an online searchable database accessible through the website of the Secretary of State (a project co-sponsored by the League, IaCMA, and ISAC). Previous work with the League and ISAC also includes the *Olive Tree Project* to develop models of interlocal collaboration between cities and counties in Iowa (with Rick Morse).

These projects have produced several management reports for the IOWAccess Council, a website with numerous 28E management reports and data analysis accessible by city and county officials, and several scholarly publications. The searchable 28E dataset website is entering the testing phase and should be accessible to local and state officials soon.