

**2014 Entry Form**  
(Complete one for each entry.)

Fill out the entry name *exactly* as you want it listed in the program.

**Entry Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**HFA** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submission Contact** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Qualified Entries must be received by **Tuesday, July 1, 2014**.

For more information about Qualified Entries, [click here to access the 2014 Entry Rules](#).

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page.

HFA \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Name \_\_\_\_\_

Communications	Homeownership	Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Report <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Materials and Newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Empowering New Buyers <input type="checkbox"/> Home Improvement and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production	<input type="checkbox"/> Multifamily Management <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production	<input type="checkbox"/> Combating Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Housing for Persons with Special Needs
Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<input type="checkbox"/> State Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO



### Scope

Michele Meadors was attempting to move to Iowa from Nebraska after rehabilitation treatment from a car accident that left her in a wheelchair. Michele's search for an apartment in Iowa took her **seventeen trips** from Nebraska.

Michele found apartments online that advertised that they were "fully-accessible", however soon after she arrived to each apartment she found that they were not accessible at all – she once even learned this by getting trapped in a restroom before finding a suitable apartment that fit her needs.

This story is not unique – finding a vacant rental unit that fits their needs is a serious challenge for many Iowa renters, especially for persons with disabilities.

### Solution

The Iowa Finance Authority contracted with Socialserve.com in 2014 to develop IowaHousingSearch.org, a free statewide rental housing locator with detailed and up-to-date unit information including more than forty accessibility feature fields. Michele, now Miss. Wheelchair Iowa, is the site's biggest advocate.

In addition to Michele, the Iowa Finance Authority formed allegiances with other organizations to participate in the Iowa HousingSearch.org advisory committee that meets regularly. Some of these partners include:

- Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Public Housing Authorities
- American Red Cross
- U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Field Office
- And many others

### Setting the Bar

While an online housing locator is not unique – our approach and the results garnered to date have exceeded every expectation.

The Iowa Finance Authority Board and leadership team formed a strong commitment to ensure the success of IowaHousingSearch.org. We formed a small internal committee and charged them with ensuring that the new site received ample media attention and promotion through events and trainings for our various partner groups.



This committee arranged an unprecedented total of **60** trainings, tradeshow appearances and other unique opportunities resulting in the direct training of approximately **5,000** professional partners as well as more than a dozen media stories resulting in significant coverage.

More housing, economic development and emergency management professionals as well as disability advocates and service providers have been trained than any other state [Socialserve.com](http://Socialserve.com) serves. This can easily be attributed to targeted, consistent marketing and outreach, spearheaded by IFA and supported by [Socialserve.com](http://Socialserve.com)

**Results:**

By having a dedicated IowaHousingSearch.org team within the Iowa Finance Authority and putting key partnerships in place, including the one with Michele Meadors, Miss. Wheelchair Iowa, we were able to spur more listings than any of the thirty-five other states with whom Socialserve.com has partnered during our launch period. The costs of outreach were limited as we took advantage of free opportunities and held trainings at public locations.

Seven months after the launch:

- 34,884 units listed representing 11% of Iowa's rental housing inventory
- Almost half of the units on the site – over 16,000 - have at least one accessible feature selected
- 518 landlords represented with listings
- More than 65,000 searches for rental housing
- More than 332,000 unique page views
- More than 3,000 searches a week
- 175,912 units have indicated a willingness to serve persons with special needs

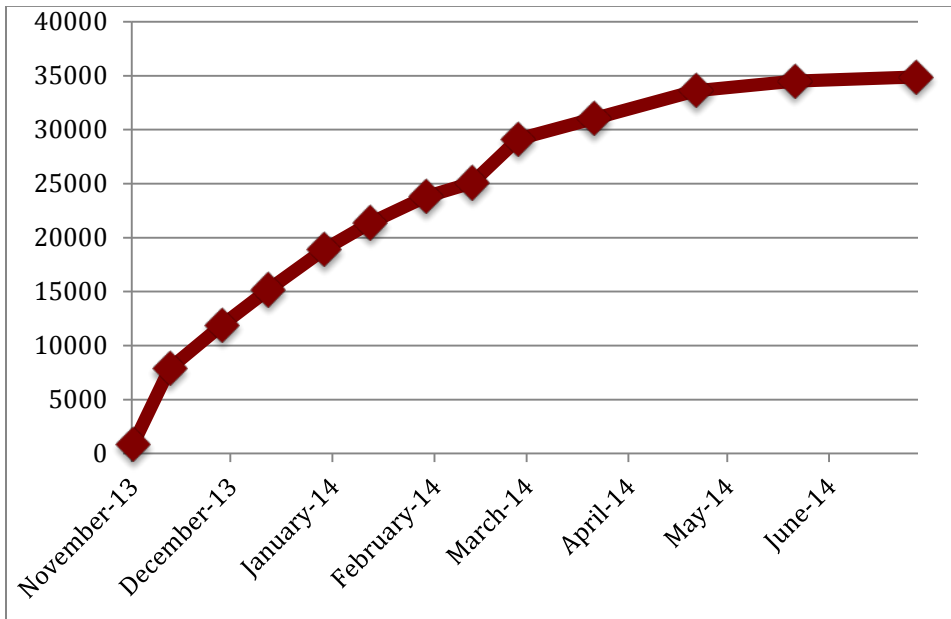


## By the Numbers

### *Total Units and Searches*

From the launch through June, the total housing inventory listed on the system grew rapidly to nearly **35,000 housing units**. This puts Iowa on pace to be one of the largest housing locator sites in the country!

Of these units, the average number of vacancies has remained at less than 10% of total inventory.



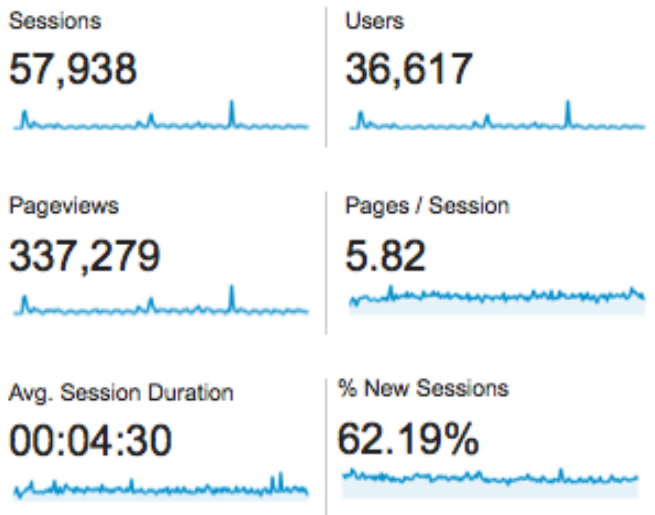


## By the Numbers

### *Total Units and Searches*

The number of visitors and searches on the system remains impressive as well. Since January, thousands of visitors have viewed well over 300,000 pages on IowaHousingSearch.org!

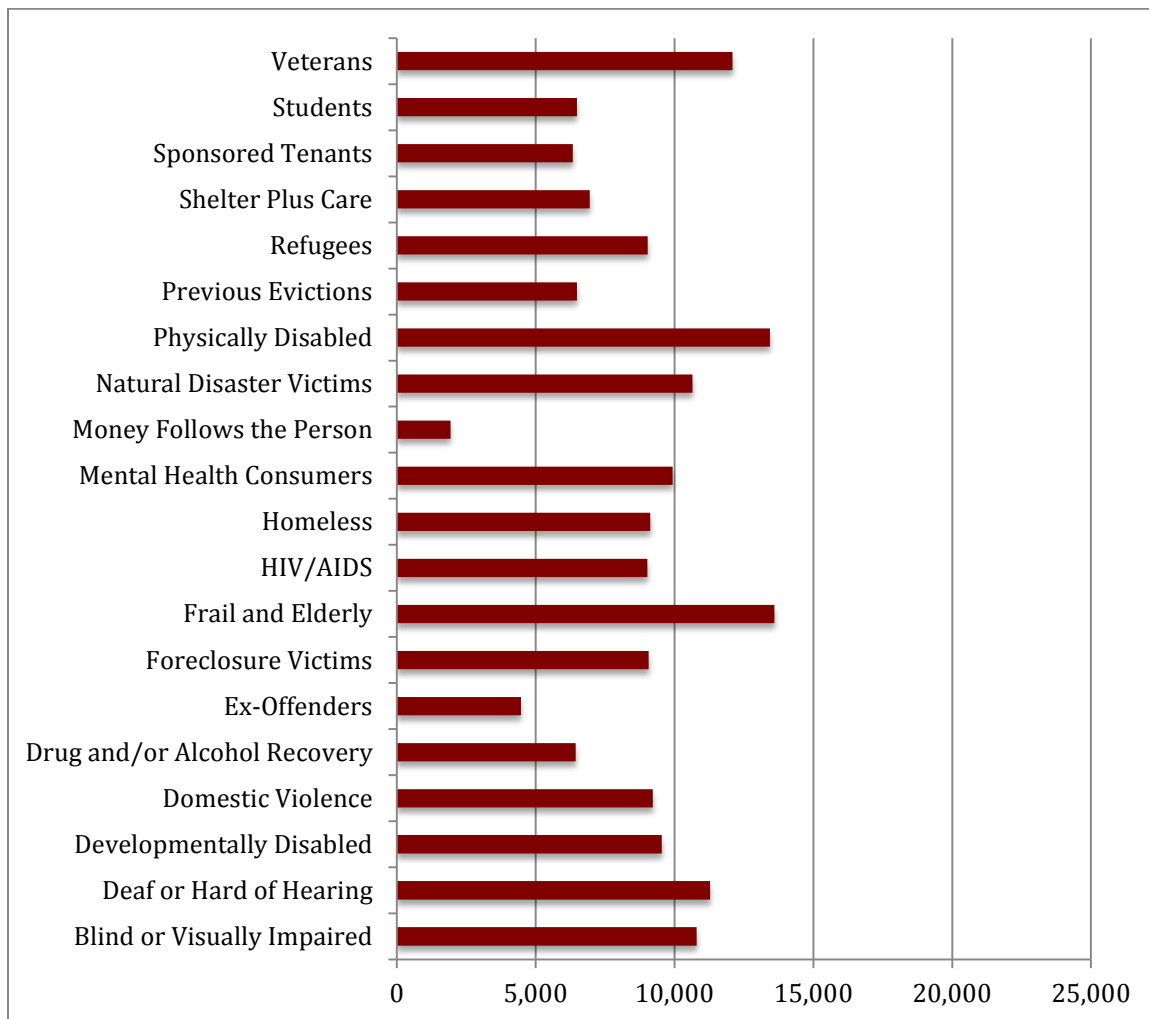
### Website Traffic January 2014 – June 2014





## Serving Individuals Facing Housing Barriers

The ability to identify affordable units is key for many individuals facing housing barriers. IowaHousingSearch.org solves this critical information gap through a Service Provider/Restricted Access Portal that allows approved case managers to search for these listings that are privately indicated by the landlords during the listing process. Landlords across the state have expressed a willingness to help serve these families and individuals.





## **Agencies linking to IowaHousingSearch.org**

When agencies place links on their websites to IowaHousingSearch.org, it increases awareness and access as well as improves search engine presence and optimizes web visibility. The following is a sample of the many organizations that have placed links on their site:

- Aging Resources of Central Iowa
- City of Cedar Rapids
- City of Growie
- City of Waverly
- City of Wilton
- Des Moines University
- Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority
- Food Bank Iowa
- Fort Dodge Growth Alliance
- Iowa City Housing Authority
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Iowa Finance Authority
- Iowa Workforce Development
- Kossuth County Economic Development Department
- Landlords of Linn County
- Lotis Realty
- North Iowa Regional Housing Authority
- Palo Alto County Economic Development Corporation
- Polk County Housing Trust Fund
- Story County
- Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission
- And more!



## Promotional Events and Trainings

Nov. 13: First advisory committee meeting

Dec. 6: Cedar Rapids news conference (landlord announcement- site launching soon)

Dec 11: Mason City news conference (landlord announcement – site launching soon)

Dec. 16 Davenport news conference (landlord announcement – site launching soon)

Jan 7: Public launch news conference, Des Moines

Jan. 17: IaREIA/Iowa Landlord Association Conference, Des Moines

Jan. 21: Emergency Management Personnel training

Jan. 28: Economic Developers training

Jan. 29: Emergency Management Personnel training

Feb. 4: Advisory committee meeting

Feb. 11: Disability Advocate training

Feb 12: Social service provider training

Feb. 13: Landlords of Linn County Presentation/various media interviews

Feb. 19: Polk County Housing Continuum Training

Feb. 19: Iowa Area Development Group Presentation

Feb. 25: Greater Iowa City Landlord Association Training

March 3: Iowa Human Rights staff training

March 5: Grow Siouxland Taskforce Housing Committee and Taskforce Presentation



## **Promotional Events & Trainings (cont'd)**

March 13-13: Brain Injury Alliance Iowa Conference, West Des Moines

March 18: IowaHousingSearch.org Training, Sioux City

March 19: Human Rights Symposium, Des Moines

March 25: Training, Davenport

March 27: Training, Mason City

March 28: Kossuth/Palo Alto County Economic Development Training

April 2: Iowa Mortgage Association Conference, Coralville

April 8: Iowa Workforce Development Staff Training, Des Moines

April 10: Special Populations Portal Training – Webinar

April 10: Money Smart Week IowaHousingSearch Presentation, Des Moines Library

April 11: General training – Des Moines

April 15: General training – Cedar Rapids

April 15: Veteran's Career Fair, Cedar Rapids

April 15: Northeast Iowa Landlords, Manchester

April 11: IowaHousingSearch.org Training, Des Moines

April 15: IowaHousingSearch.org Training, Cedar Rapids

April 17 Special Populations Portal Webinar (2)

April 21: Iowa Finance Authority Open House, Des Moines

April 22: Polk County Housing Trust Fund Landlord Breakfast

April 23: News conference, Waterloo

April 23: Training, Waverly

## Promotional Events & Trainings (cont'd)

April 24: Affordable Housing Management Association Iowa-Nebraska Conference

April 25: Interview on the Davenport "The Cities" tv program

April 25: Special Populations Portal Webinar

April 28: Special Populations Portal Training, Des Moines (In-person training with socialserve.com staff!)

April 28: General Training, Des Moines (In-person training with socialserve.com staff!)

April 29: General Training, Ames (In-person training with socialserve.com staff!)  
General Training, Ames

April 29: General training, Marshalltown (In-person training with socialserve.com staff!)

April 30: IFA staff training, Des Moines

April 29-May 2: Annual NAHRO Conference, Des Moines

May 1: Iowa SMART Conference

May 6-7: Storm Lake Landlord Trainings (4 sessions with 200 landlords)

May 9: Forest City Economic Development

May 15: Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council – 1 hour presentation, focused on disaster

May 31: CelebrAsian Festival, Des Moines

June 2: Iowa Department of Human Rights Presentation

June 6: Sioux City Economic Development Conference

June 20: Iowa Community Action Association Training

June 24: Social Service Provider Training

June 26: Social Service Provider Training



## **Advisory Board**

Affordable Housing Network  
Aging and Disability Resource Center  
Community Housing Initiatives  
Crisis Intervention Service  
East Central Regional Housing Authority  
Easter Seals  
Family Crisis Centers of Northwest Iowa  
HOME Inc.  
Hubbell Realty Company  
HUD, Des Moines  
Iowa Association of REALTORS®  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management  
Iowa Landlord Association  
Iowa Workforce Development  
Landlords of Iowa  
Ms. Wheelchair Iowa  
Money Follows the Person  
Olmstead Taskforce  
Operation Threshold  
Polk County Housing Trust Fund  
Red Cross  
Shelter House  
USDA Rural Development



**IowaHousingSearch.org**

*Iowa's free rental housing locator*

# IowaHousingSearch.org

## Capturing the Media's Attention

# Constant Contact

- Constant Contact template
  - Targeted Communications
  - Emergency Management
  - Social Service Providers
  - Disability Advocates
  - Economic Development
  - Landlords & Property Managers
  - Active Housing Tax Credit Projects & Section 8 Properties
  - All IFA Contacts, as appropriate



## Reminder: IowaHousingSearch.org Webinar

Thank you for your interest in the [IowaHousingSearch.org](http://IowaHousingSearch.org) [web site](#), a new service that allows for greater access to real-time Iowa rental information.

We appreciate your registration for the training opportunity for disability advocate organizations, and look forward to sharing about this valuable resource.

Reminder:

- Tuesday, February 11  
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.  
[Register](#)  
**Closed Captioning** is available for this webinar. Please access this service directly before the webinar begins by clicking [here](#).
- **Note:** The Closed Captioning link will need to be opened separately from Go To Webinar, and both will need to be up throughout the duration of the training, in order to use the service.

For further questions, or to request an additional or individual training, please contact [Emily Torbio](#), 515.725.4886.

# Planning Ahead

- Example:  
Landlord Assn. Meeting,  
Cedar Rapids (eve)



To make the most of our time, pitched:  
*Linn County Celebrates Statewide Lead  
in Listings*



Resulting Coverage:  
KWWL-TV Interview and Feature Story  
KCRG-TV Interview at Landlord Meeting  
KFXA-TV Live Interview at 7 a.m. next morning



# Before the Public Launch

- Press Release and Event
  - Des Moines
- Media Tour
  - Other Major Media Markets
    - Cedar Rapids
    - Davenport
    - Mason City
    - Waterloo

# The Details

- Coordinate date/time/location with local partners for the news conference
  - Whenever possible, hold at a property listed on the site and have it pulled up on the project - a win-win, with PR for them!
- Finalize the agenda
- Send the Media Advisory 1-2 Days Before the Event



# The Details

- Speaker Invitees:
  - Property Management representative
  - Local Landlord Association representative
  - Local Disaster Recovery representative
  - Local Disability Advocacy Organization representative
  - Local Advisory Committee Representative
- Invitees to Attend:
  - All contacts in the region

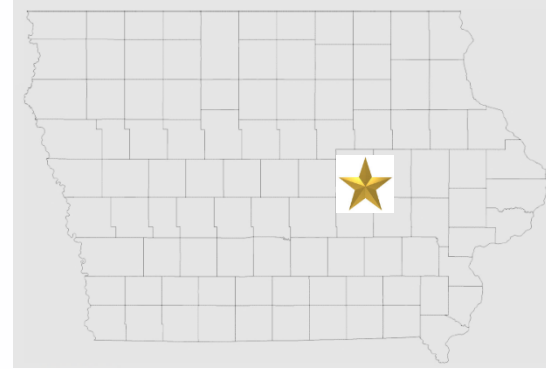
# The Details

- Send reminder advisory the day of the event
- Call local media the morning of the event, to ensure receipt of advisory & to confirm attendance at the event
- Send news release after event & give to media in attendance

# Tips & Tricks

- Know the Media Market
  - Do they have a morning show with live interviews?
  - Target beat reporters
- Schedule other meetings/interviews in the area

# Before the Launch: Cedar Rapids



Friday, December 6  
Irving Point | Cedar Rapids  
(Property Listed on IHS)

15,000 rental units listed



Targeted Message: New Service to Link Renters  
with Available Units

Local Participants: Iowa City Apartment Association,  
Irving Point, Olmstead Task Force



# Before the Launch: Mason City

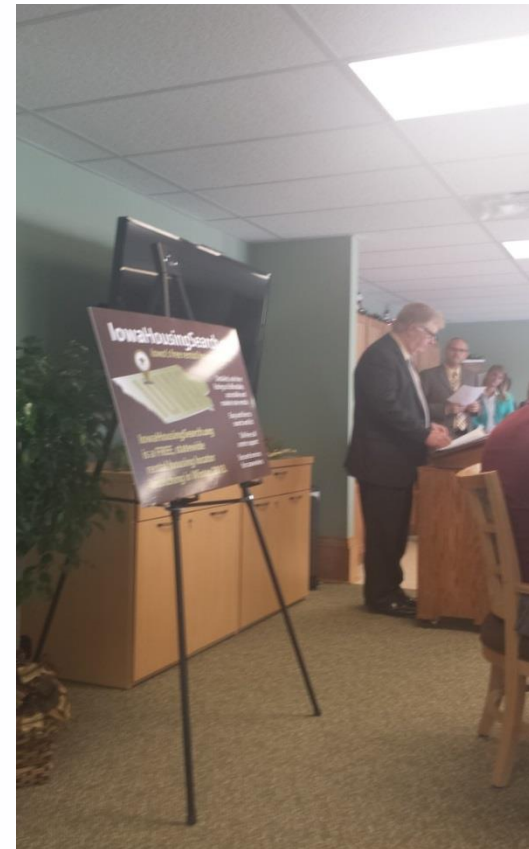
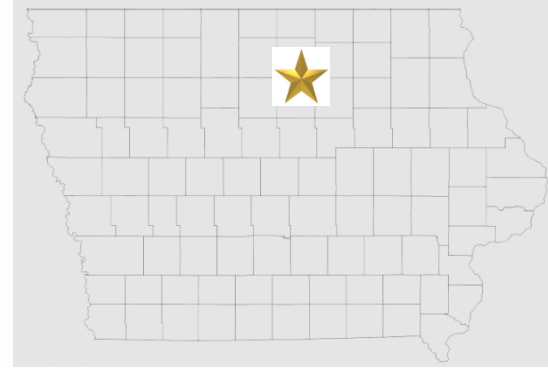
Wednesday, December 11  
Legacy Manor | Mason City  
(In Conjunction with Grand Opening  
of Legacy Manor)

Targeted Message: New Service to  
Link Renters with Available Units

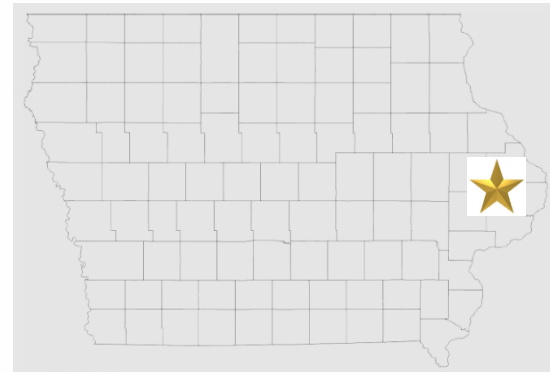
Local Participants: Legacy Manor

Potential for over 5,500 rental units in  
Cerro Gordo County

**globegazette.com**



# Before the Launch: Davenport



Monday, December 16  
River Walk Lofts | Davenport  
1,100 rental units in Scott County

Targeted Message: New Service to Link  
Renters with Available Units

Local Participants: Landlords of Davenport, River Walk Lofts



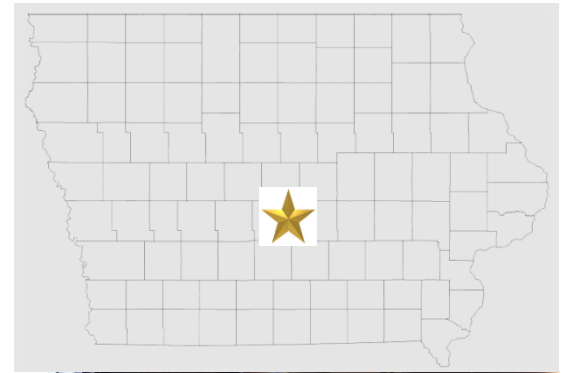


# Public Launch!

Tuesday, January 7

Riverpoint Lofts | Des Moines

# Des Moines



Local Partners: Hubbell Realty, Olmstead Taskforce, Emergency Management

20,000 rental units listed  
250 Iowa landlords



DesMoinesRegister.com

RADIO IOWA

ottumwacourier.com

press-citizen.com

KWWL.com

We've got you covered.



freewsp.com



IOWA PUBLIC RADIO.  
NEWS | CLASSICAL | STUDIO ONE



IOWA FINANCE  
AUTHORITY

# Additional Media Coverage

- Garnered through events

