

## OUR MISSION.

Support economic prosperity in Iowa by advocating for broad-based employee ownership to expand local economies, create employee wealth, build strong workforce, strengthen business and promote vibrant communities.

# Employee Ownership

## WHO WE ARE.

The Iowa Center for Employee Ownership (IA-CEO) is the state's premier resource hub dedicated to promoting and expanding employee ownership across Iowa. As a central point of connection, we provide education, resources, and support for businesses interested in exploring employee ownership models, particularly Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP), Worker Cooperatives, and Employee Ownership Trusts (EOT). Our goal is to empower Iowa businesses, employees, and communities with the knowledge and tools to transition to, or strengthen, broad-based employee ownership.

## WHY IT MATTERS.

Employee ownership fosters economic resiliency with higher productivity, growth, and improved longevity for the business.

Workers realize better pay, benefits, increased wealth, and job satisfaction.

Positive impacts to communities with anchored businesses, increased local spending, enhanced civic engagement, stable jobs, and community wealth building.

Owners ready to transition their company have a feasible buyer, value goals reached, and a lasting legacy.

Economic opportunities are created for businesses and communities reducing financial disparities and fostering economic stability.

## WHAT IS EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP?

Employee ownership is a shared equity model where employees have an ownership stake in the company. These employees may or may not be involved in key management decisions. However, the shared interest in the company performance increases efficiencies to elevate financial success.

Employee ownership is a tool that assists with sustained business prosperity regardless of the company size. It works because employees directly correlate their vested interest into the company's profitability.

## IMPACTS

Led **27** expert-driven presentations and seminars about business continuity, succession planning, and employee ownership across Iowa, empowering **34** companies with actionable insights.

Our respected **Employee Ownership Conference** is held every October.

The **IA-CEO** is proud to be the **21st** state center in the Employee Ownership Expansion Network (EOX).

## IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP

There is a small business closure crisis. Over 75% of owners are planning to exit their companies in the next decade, according to the 2023 National Exit Planning Institute report. A problem arises, as the institute's statistics also show, about four in five business owners are unable to sell their business resulting in closures. The employees and community lose jobs, local dollars, and organizational support as well as owners being negatively impacted. Employee ownership is a secure option to keep the local business doors open across our state.

Employee ownership also helps mitigate one of the biggest challenges to large and small companies: persistent work-force shortage. Top talent is more readily attracted and retained as workers are drawn to its benefits.

## EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP STUDIES SHOW



**33%**

Higher Median  
Income from Wages



**92%**

Higher Median  
Household Wealth



**53%**

Longer Median  
Job Tenure

CREDIT: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP (NCEO)

## IA-CEO AREAS OF FOCUS

The IA-CEO focuses on three key areas to advance employee ownership: building awareness, providing education, and fostering collaboration. This foundational outreach enables us to provide training, resources, and technical assistance to support the successful transition of businesses to employee ownership models. As a result, companies remain anchored, employee wealth increases, and resilient communities are fostered.

**ACHIEVING  
MORE TOGETHER!**

## OUR TEAM

We believe that by expanding employee ownership, we can help secure the future of Iowa businesses, preserve jobs, and create wealth-building opportunities for workers, all while keeping local economies vibrant and competitive. IA-CEO educational programming, expert guidance, and available resources will assist businesses as they explore and implement employee ownership solutions.



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