

## Geography Matters

Geography isn't just an academic subject, it's a serious discipline with multibillion dollar implications for businesses and governments. Choosing sites, targeting market segments, planning distribution networks, responding to emergencies, or redrawing country boundaries — all of these problems involve questions of geography.

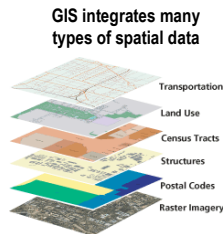
- [www.gis.com](http://www.gis.com)

## What is GIS?

A *Geographic Information System (GIS)* is a technology that is used to view and analyze data from a geographic perspective. The technology is a piece of an organization's overall information system framework. It provides very powerful tools for data manipulation, analysis, and visualization.

GIS is an enterprise technology— meaning that it cuts across organizations by integrating and organizing information and workflows. It can be as simple as one computer manipulating spatial information and maps or as complex as a network of GIS users sharing information and processes across the Internet.

A GIS has been defined as a “*system of computer hardware, software, procedures, standards, geographic data, and personnel for the capture, storage, maintenance, manipulation, analysis and display of all forms of spatial information*”.



## BENEFITS OF A STATEWIDE GIS COORDINATOR

- Will work cooperatively with the Iowa Geographic Information Council (IGIC) and its constituent stakeholders in the development and implementation of a statewide business and strategic plan for the implementation and coordination of geospatial activities.
- Foster collaboration amongst members of Iowa's diverse geospatial community.
- Potentially provide developmental or technical services in identified areas of need.
- One central point of contact that has the ability and knowledge to explain and quantify the costs and benefits of an enterprise GIS.
- Champion for geospatial activities.
- Point of contact and administration for grant funding initiatives.
- Staff for statewide coordination council.
- Promote existing initiatives and develop new directions.
- Represent Iowa in the larger national geospatial community and the National States Geographic Information Council.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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**IGIC**

**Iowa Geographic Information Council**

**Iowa Needs a State GIS Coordinator**

*Providing Vision and Leadership for Iowa's Geospatial Community*

# Iowa Needs a State GIS Coordinator

## WHAT IS A GIS COORDINATOR?

A GIS Coordinator orchestrates activities necessary to acquire, process, distribute, use, maintain and preserve geospatial data. A state GIS coordinator must have an extensive working knowledge of GIS databases and software uses across the state. The coordinator is someone who realizes the importance of geospatial data holdings and manages geospatial projects. This includes coordination between the various divisions of state government as well as between local governments and state agencies. GIS coordinator responsibilities include aiding both GIS users and non-users in the development and application of geospatial technologies. It is also the responsibility of the coordinator to provide the correct information and assistance to support geographic information needs. This includes facilitating dialog, planning and meetings to promote geospatial data sharing, applications and technologies.

## IOWA NEEDS A STATE GIS COORDINATOR

Millions of dollars in federal grants and initiatives are spent every year on GIS. Iowa often is not able to take advantage of these opportunities because there has been no central coordinating GIS person to support and leverage grant programs for Iowa.



<http://igic.gis.iastate.edu>

## IOWA NEEDS A STATE GIS COORDINATOR

The *Iowa Geographic Information Council* (IGIC) was established by Executive Order 65 (see the IGIC website for details). Currently, all IGIC members are volunteers working in a GIS sector; such as federal, state, county and city government, regional and metropolitan planning, universities and private colleges, community colleges, and GIS users in the private sector. IGIC does NOT have any full-time personnel, authority to implement actions, a funding source, or oversight of its policies and actions. With the lack of support staff, IGIC does not have the ability to initiate large scale projects, pursue alternative funding methods, or to conduct adequate outreach to the GIS user community on such issues as data discovery, standards, and education.

**Its been estimated that 80 percent of all government data is spatial; the data is about something that IS somewhere or that HAPPENED somewhere.** As society quickly moves to embrace geo-enabled information (cell phones, websites, navigation systems in cars) the need for a spatial information coordinator is increasingly more important. Without effective statewide geospatial coordination, a duplication of effort is taking place at many levels of government throughout Iowa. Duplication leads to inefficiencies in government and cost taxpayers more money than necessary.

A state GIS Coordinator would assist in publicizing, organizing, and conducting training at all levels of GIS education. Data discovery, statewide standards recommendations and implementation of IGIC's strategic and business plans are also of high importance. Every state adjacent to Iowa has a statewide GIS Coordinator. An Iowa GIS Coordinator would have the vision and the mandate to lead Iowa's geospatial community.

## A CASE FOR A STATE GIS COORDINATOR



The National State Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) is an organization of States committed to efficient and effective government through the prudent adoption of geospatial information technologies.

As part of the *Fifty State Initiative*, NSGIC published the following nine criteria that its members believe are essential for effective statewide coordination of geospatial information technologies.

- 1. A full-time, paid coordinator position is designated and has the authority to implement the state's business and strategic plans.**
- A clearly defined authority exists for statewide coordinator of geospatial information technologies and data production.
- 3. The statewide coordination office has a formal relationship with the state's Chief Information Officer (or similar office).**
- A champion (politician or executive decision-maker) is aware and involved in the process of coordination.
- Responsibilities for developing the National Spatial Data Infrastructure and a State Clearinghouse are assigned.
- The ability exists to work and coordinate with local governments, academia, and the private sector.
- Sustainable funding sources exist to meet projected needs.
- 8. Coordinators have the authority to enter into contracts and become capable of receiving and expending funds.**
- The Federal government works through the statewide coordinating authority.

The Fifty States Initiative Action Plan lays out several implementation steps to establish a more formal statewide coordination council and emphasizes strategic and business planning with specifically targeted implementation grants, performance measures and incentives.