

**ESS/Iowa Land Records**

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To: Iowa County Recorders and Staff

From: Kathy Jurries, Calhoun County Recorder  
ICRA 2021 President

Travis Case, Grundy County Recorder  
ICRA Past President

Re: Recording Services Cost Study

Fellow Recorders,

Thanks to everyone who participated in Part 2 of the recording services cost study. Last year we asked every county to keep track of the amount of staff time that was dedicated to recording services during the month of October. We were pleased to report that 94 counties participated in this effort. We also asked every county to report the wages associated with those staff positions. Again, we are pleased to report that 68 counties responded to this request. (It's not too late to respond!) Again, thank you!

It's now time to move forward with **Part 3 of the study**, and that is to actually document the direct costs associated with providing recording services.

**Direct Recording Services Costs.** In addition to staff time, each recording office has other expenses which are directly associated with providing recording services. These direct expenses may include the cost of land records management software, maintenance costs, equipment, and imaging. Each county may have a different combination of these expenses, and these expenses may vary from month-to-month or year-to-year. This is okay. The data is intended to be a snapshot of a particular period of time, and across the 99 counties the average costs should be representative of the typical annual direct costs for recording services.

For the purposes of this study, we are asking each county to provide cost information for Fiscal Year 2020 – the period beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020.

A brief description of the expenses which should be included in the documentation of Direct Recording Services Costs is provided in Attachment A.

The Iowa Land Records staff will be hosting a webinar to provide further instructions and to answer any questions you may have. This webinar will occur on Thursday, February 4 at 2:00 PM. The webinar link is: <https://entma.adobeconnect.com/icrawebinar/>. Watch for more information soon. You can listen through your computer, and you can ask questions via chat. Teleconference services will not be available for this meeting – computer devices only. However, the session will be recorded, and you will be able to view it on demand.

## Attachment A

Below is a description of each type of direct recording service cost which should be included.

1. Land Records Management Systems (LRMS) Cost – Base License and Service Fees. The desired information is the annual cost for the use of the software and related systems for recording, indexing, cashiering, imaging, archiving real estate documents. Ideally, this annual amount will be segregated from other system costs which do not relate to recording and land records management.

What was the amount paid to your land records management vendor for the base software license and service fees in fiscal year 2020?

If your agreement with the LRMS vendor was for multiple years, what was the term of the agreement and what was the total amount to be paid to the vendor for the full term? (This can be used to establish an annualized cost by dividing by the term of the agreement, if necessary.)

2. Imaging Services – Your office may license separate software and systems for scanning, labeling and archiving images of recorded documents.

What was the amount paid to your document imaging vendor for the base software license and service fees in fiscal year 2020?

If your agreement with the imaging vendor was for multiple years, what was the term of the agreement and what was the total amount to be paid to the vendor for the full term? (This can be used to establish an annualized cost by dividing by the term of the agreement, if necessary.)

3. Supplemental LRMS Technical Support and Services Cost – Any agreement with a Land Records Management System vendor might include provisions for fees for technical or support services not covered in the base agreement. Maintenance or repair services may have included labor, and possibly the purchase of replacement parts – expenses for parts should be included, when applicable.

What amount, if any, was paid to the Land Records Management System vendor in fiscal year 2020 for any supplemental technical or support services?

4. Outside Technical or Support Services – Your office may have received technical or support services from a third-party vendor (not your primary LRMS vendor(s)), to maintain or repair software of equipment used for recording and land records management functions. Maintenance or repair services may have included labor, and possibly the purchase of replacement parts – expenses for parts should be included, when applicable.

What amount, if any, was paid to third-party vendors in fiscal year 2020 to maintain or repair software of equipment used for recording and land records management functions?

5. LRMS Equipment – Your office may have purchased new or refurbished equipment used to perform recording and land records management functions. This may include desktop computers, laptops, printers, scanners and peripheral equipment such as label printers.

How much was expended for equipment purchased for LRMS functions in fiscal year 2020.

6. Back File Imaging Projects – Your office may have engaged an imaging vendor to scan and index older records for the purposes of adding the information and images to your land records management system.

What amount, if any, was expended for back file imaging services in fiscal year 2020?

7. Other Direct LRMS Expenses – Your office may have expended funds for other services or products not specified above relating to recording and land records management functions.

What amount, if any, was expended for other products or services relating to land records management functions in fiscal year 2020? Please specify the products or services.

## Attachment A

NOTE: EXCLUDE OVERHEAD EXPENSES. Do NOT attempt to include general overhead expenses such as utilities, rent (if applicable to your office), telephone, or Internet services. There was some consideration given to this topic, but it was determined that the study would not include these costs. This study is limited to Direct Recording Services Costs and staffing costs.

NOTE: Recording Services includes all land records management functions. When considering what to include as a Direct Recording Services Cost, keep in mind that for the purposes of this study recording services includes indexing, proofing, copying, scanning, customer service, records management, research, etc. Please also include services associated with the recording of military records.