



Community Action Plan

November 2025



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INTRODUCTION

The Red Oak Community Heart & Soul Community Action Plan is built from the voices and values of our residents. Over the past two years, hundreds of community members shared stories, ideas, and hopes for Red Oak's future. From this input, more than 700 action ideas were gathered and refined into six key themes that reflect what matters most to our community.

This plan marks the shift from listening to action. It is a guide for residents, organizations, businesses, and local leaders to work together toward shared goals in areas such as community roots, economic development, recreation and entertainment, schools, public safety, and government.

More than a document, the plan is a roadmap for strengthening Red Oak's future, grounded in our shared values and powered by the commitment of our community.



RED OAK
THE *Heart* OF SOUTHWEST IOWA

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-05

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF RED OAK'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY HEART & SOUL PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the City of Red Oak is a beautiful community to live in with a long history of being welcoming to all, and now sees participation in the Community Heart & Soul program as an opportunity for an even stronger future for its economy and its residents; and

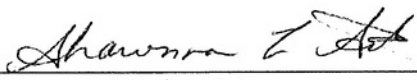
WHEREAS, Community Heart & Soul is a grassroots community wide vision and strategic planning process that seeks to engage all people representative of viewpoints from all across the community; and

WHEREAS, Community Heart & Soul encourages identification of topics, issues and eventually projects, that bring together like-minded passionate, active, and committed individuals who truly want to contribute to our community by aspiring more pride in issues they care about; and

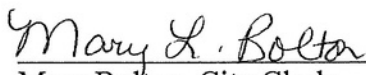
WHEREAS, Community Heart & Soul encourages youth, adults, families and businesses to come together with an overall shared vision to create unity, philanthropy and volunteerism to help build a leadership base to move the community forward;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Red Oak City Council fully supports participation in the Community Heart & Soul program and encourages its residents and businesses to endorse and engage in the program.

PASSED AND APPROVED, this 22nd day of February, 2022.


Shawna Silvius, Mayor

Attest:


Mary Bolton, City Clerk

CORE TEAM MEMBERS & COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Red Oak Community Heart & Soul Core Team Members

Michelle Franks, Community Heart & Soul Coach
Samantha Willams, Project Coordinator
L. Dee Mueller, Project Coordinator (April 2023 - October 2023)
Cynthia Bangston
Beau Boeye
Evon Carlson
Tim Fridolph
Karen Blue
Joey Norris
Janis Bowden
Maggie McQuown
Robina Courtney

Community Volunteers Who Helped the Core Team Complete the Community Heart & Soul Process

Phillip Lamb	Elizabeth Wearin	Dan Wetzel
Brian Bills	Larry Brandstetter	Terri Hoskinson
Carrie Shalters	Faye Brandstetter	Jim Hoskinson
Randall Wilson	Adriana St. Lezin	Ron Carlson
Jenny Horner	Matt St. Lezin	Allison Webb
Kathi Most	Connie MacDonald	Bonnie Norris
Robin Connolly	Katie Gresham	Tracy Vannausdle
James Norris	Jim Cisar	Lee Wollenhaupt
Anna Boeye	Patsy Norris	Marguerite Hughes
Angie McKee	Julie Rubey	Ashley Soat
Shawna Silvius	Clint Rubey	Nancy Evans
Allison Adams		Dan Crouse

TIMELINE



PHASE 1 SUMMARY

MAY 2022 - MARCH 2024



Completed Work:

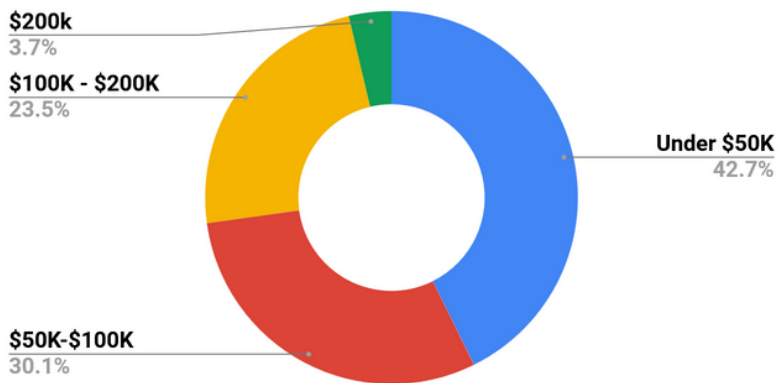
- A dedicated Core Team of volunteers was formed.
- Defined community goals & messaging.
- Identified community networks & demographics.
- Launched the Heart & Soul Initiative.

RED OAK COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

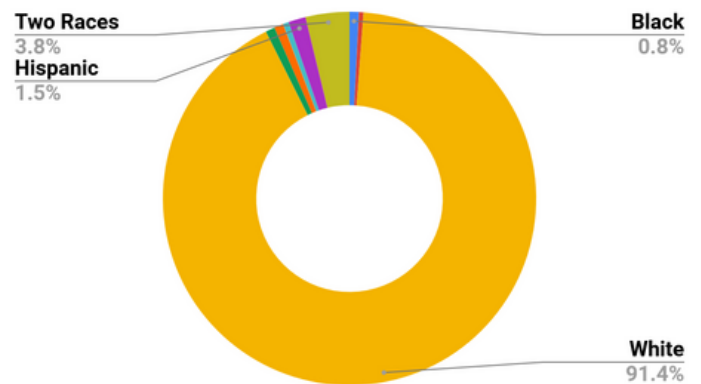
DEMOGRAPHICS

Population: 6,906

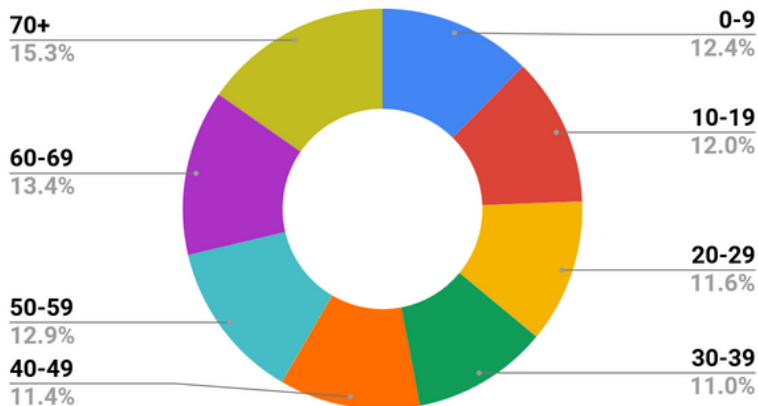
Household Income



Race



Age



Gender



PHASE 2 SUMMARY

MARCH 2024 - DECEMBER 2024



Completed Work:

- Gathered community stories and surveys.
- Analyzed data and identified themes.
- Created Heart & Soul Statements that reflect what matters most to the community.

PHASE 2 DATA

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

PROJECTS

OUTCOME

Phase 2 Survey

608 surveys were collected from community members.

Phase 2 Story Gathering

97 stories were gathered from community members.

Youth Pizza & Board Game Night

Survey responses and interviews were gathered from Red Oak High School students and teachers.

2024 Senior Breakfast

Over three dozen Red Oak High School seniors participated in the Phase 2 Survey.

Industry Treat Days

Received survey responses from community members at the following industries: Parker, Fresco, Clarios, Greenbrier, and Red Oak Greenhouse.

2024 National Night Out

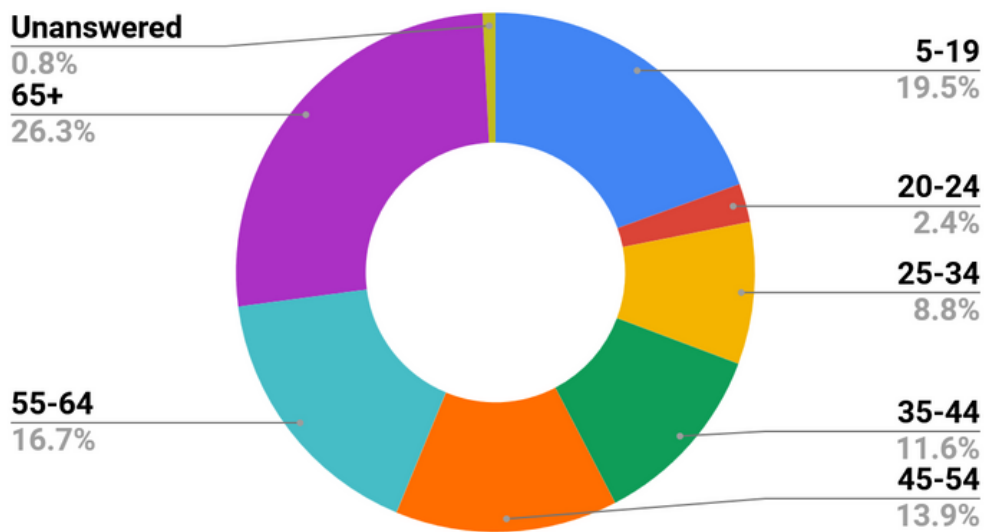
Over 120 survey responses and a dozen stories were gathered from community members.



PHASE 2 DATA

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

Age



608

**Survey
Responses**

97

**Stories from
Residents**

555

**Volunteer
Hours**

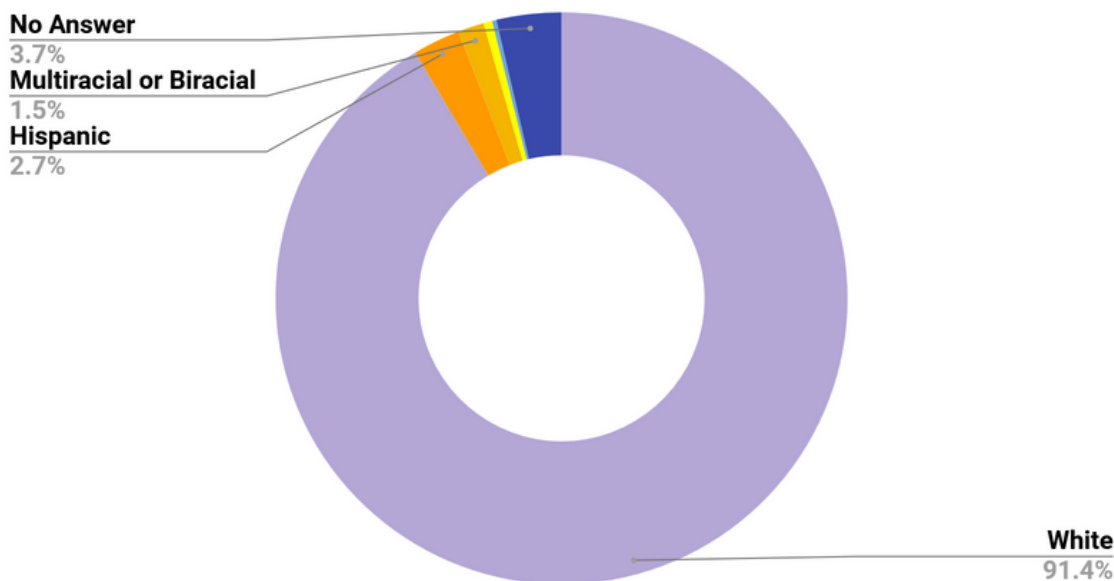
1,634

**Statements
Reviewed**

783

Action Ideas

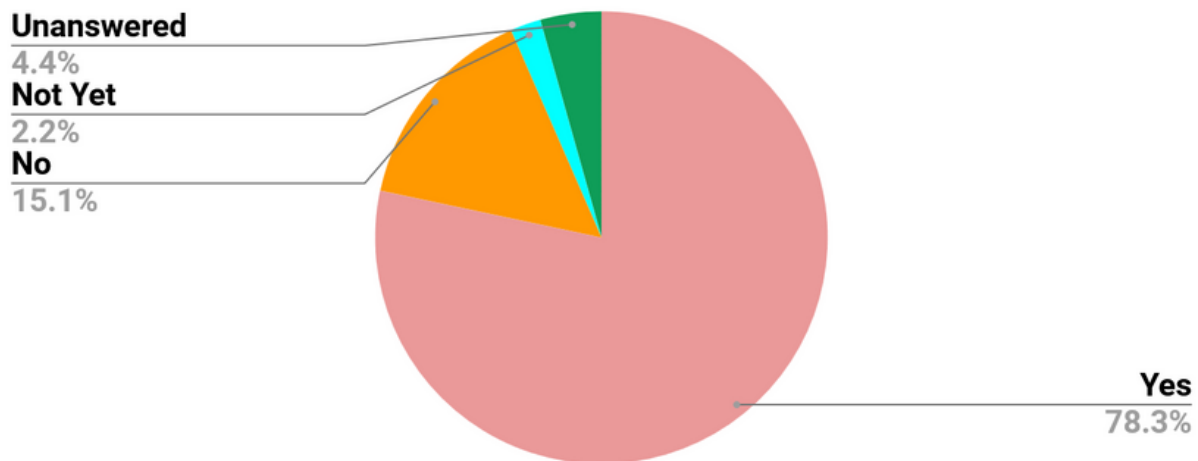
Race



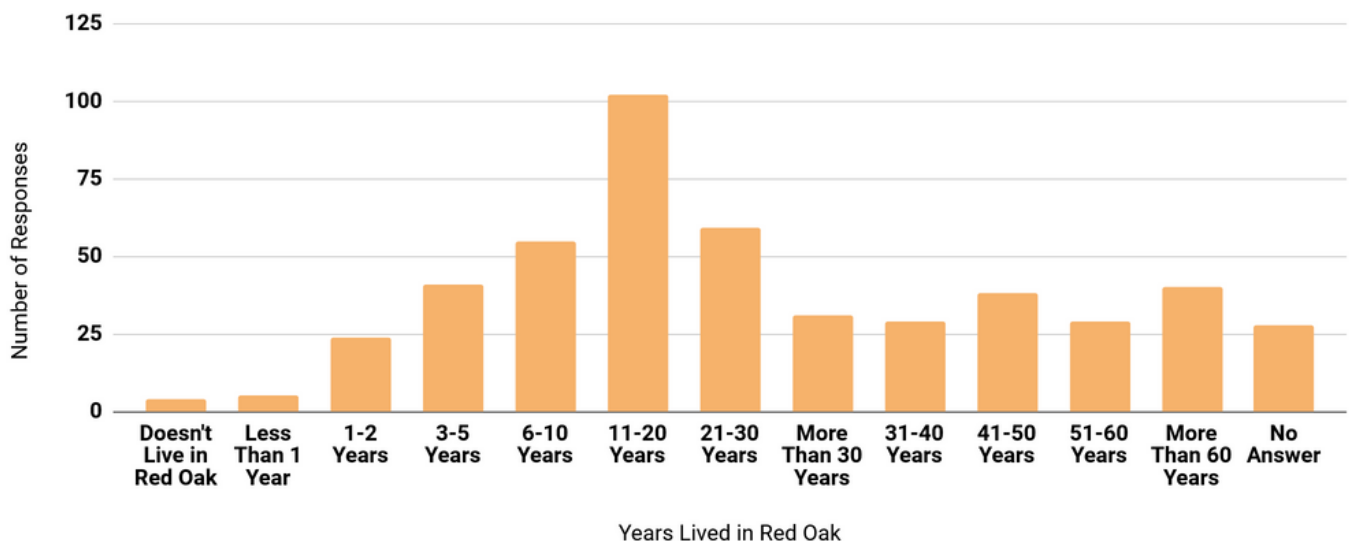
PHASE 2 DATA

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

Are you a Resident of the Red Oak School District?



Years Lived in Red Oak



HEART & SOUL STATEMENTS



Public Safety

We feel fortunate to have an excellent healthcare community, full-time fire department, and responsive sheriff and police departments as we continue to find answers to challenges that affect our area.



Economic Development

We take immense pride in the transformative steps we're taking to shape a vibrant and prosperous future for the economy of Red Oak.



Schools

We enjoy the traditions, activities, and opportunities that strengthen our school and community connection.



Recreation & Entertainment

Red Oak boasts outstanding recreational facilities, family-friendly activities, and vibrant celebrations offering countless opportunities to immerse yourself in our rich history, heritage, and fine arts.



Community Roots

We love the small town feel of our welcoming and friendly community which provides a safe space, rich traditions, historic and state of the art amenities and opportunities to work together.



Government

We actively champion dynamic city leadership and future-thinking initiatives to enhance and improve our city's infrastructure.

PHASE 3 SUMMARY

JANUARY 2025 - OCTOBER 2025



Completed Work:

- Promoted Heart & Soul Statements.
- Met with officials, local nonprofits, and stakeholders.
- Prioritized action ideas.
- Drafted the Community Action Plan.

PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

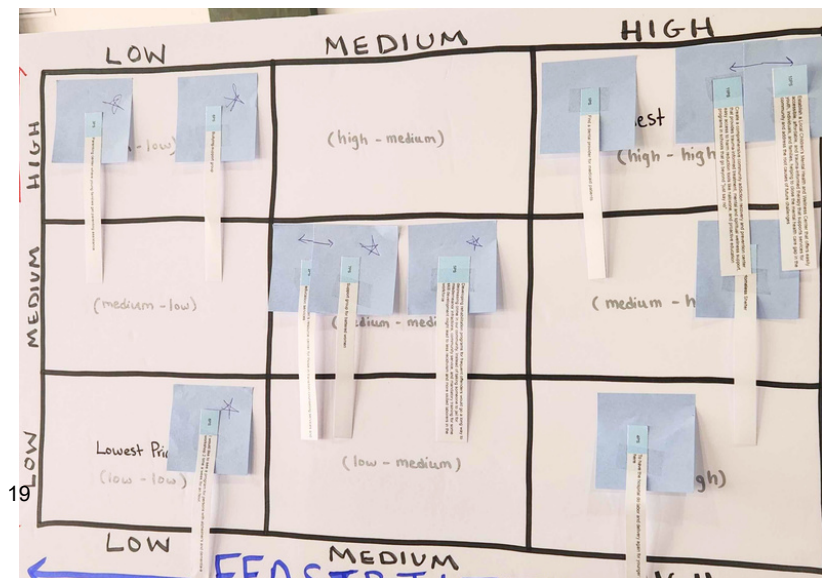


Public Safety

- **Find a dental provider for medicaid patients.**
- **Develop rehabilitation program(s) for frequent offenders.** Instead of taking someone to jail for misdemeanor infractions, provide community service and mandatory training for skill development.
- **Establish a bullying support group.**
- **Establish a support group for battered women.**
- **Establish a program for individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia.**
A workshop two times a week for an hour.



CONTACT US IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAD OR SUPPORT AN ACTION IDEA. SEE PAGE 26.



PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?



Economic Development

- **Form a contact committee like the Industrial Foundation.**
- **Secure more funding for and develop more childcare facilities.**
- **Establish a cozy, welcoming coffee shop in Red Oak** that stays open into the evening and serves as a vibrant gathering space offering a unique community hub that attracts visitors, encourages local spending, and enhances the town's appeal to new residents.
- **Launch a business incubator in an empty downtown storefront** to support local entrepreneurs and pilot projects with a focus on innovation and mentorship.
- **Implement a comprehensive housing strategy** that expands access to affordable entry-level homes, downtown, upper-story apartments, infill tiny homes, townhouses, and everything in between.
- **Tourism strategy for Red Oak** that includes creating large-scale attractions and a vibrant downtown with regular events and activities positioning the town as a must-visit destination where people come to explore, dine, stay, and potentially settle.



CONTACT US IF YOU WOULD
LIKE TO LEAD OR SUPPORT AN
ACTION IDEA. SEE PAGE 26.



PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

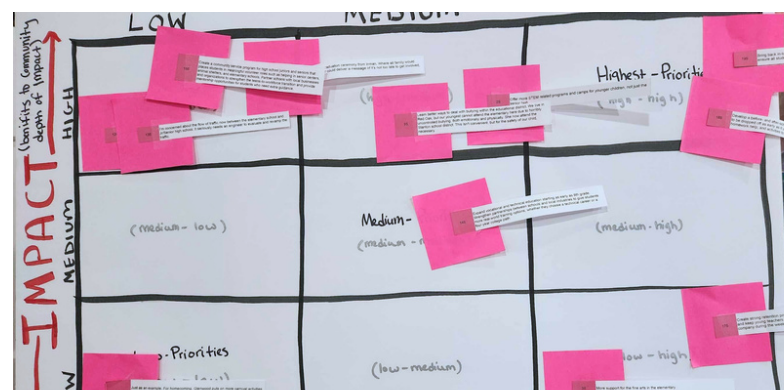


Schools

- **Create a community service program for high school juniors and seniors** that places students in meaningful volunteer roles such as helping in senior centers, animal shelters, and elementary schools. Partner schools with local businesses and organizations to strengthen the teens-to-workforce transition and provide mentorship opportunities for students who need extra guidance.
- **Offer more STEM related programs and camps** for younger children, not just the senior high.
- **Have the fire department come and spray the kids (rainfall style, not blasting them with a hydro-cannon)** after working hard at track and field day in the spring.
- **Install flashing lights for crosswalks during pick up and drop off.** It's such a safety issue.
- **Conduct a traffic study to evaluate and fix the flow of traffic** between the elementary school and Jr/Senior high school.



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PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

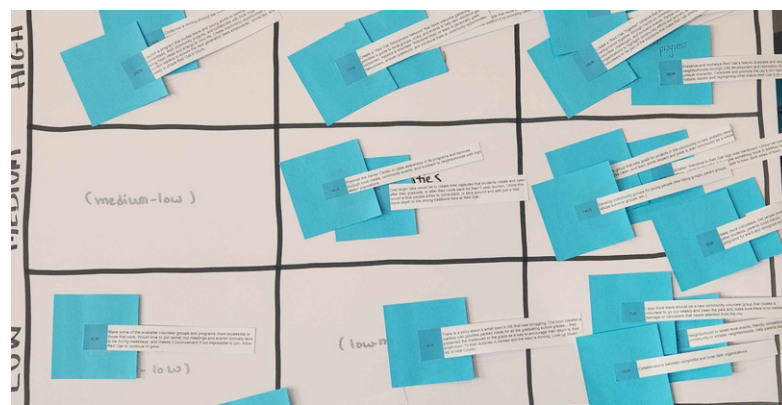


Community Roots

- **Form a LGBTQ support group.**
- **Establish neighborhood groups that focus on cleaning up & fixing up properties/whole blocks.**
- **Christmas is coming around the corner, we need more options to be able to donate food to those in need.** It would be great to see more food drives here before thanksgiving also.
- **Preserve and revitalize Red Oak's historic business and residential neighborhoods** through infill development and restoration that respects their unique character. Celebrate and promote the city's rich history by expanding the historic district and highlighting what makes Red Oak truly special.
- **Develop a centralized Red Oak volunteer hub**, an online and in-person resource that shares current opportunities, coordinates efforts across organizations, and connects residents with causes that need support most.



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PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

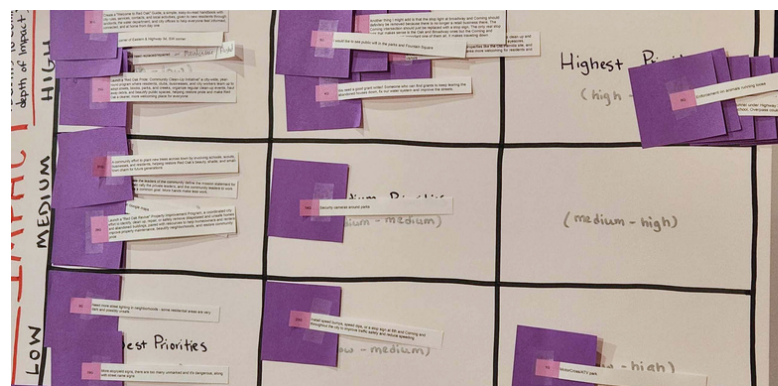


Government

- **Create an animal shelter that provides a safe haven for homeless animals** while striving to end pet homelessness through education, community, and adoption.
- **Build a pedestrian crossing for Highway 34** between residential areas north of the highway and the schools south of the highway.
- **Establish a metal recycling center.**
- **Launch a "Red Oak Pride: Community Clean-Up Initiative"** a city-wide, year-round program where residents, clubs, businesses, and city workers team up to adopt streets, blocks, parks, and creeks, organize regular clean-up events, haul away debris, and beautify public spaces, helping restore pride and make Red Oak a cleaner, more welcoming place for everyone.
- **Create a "Welcome to Red Oak" Guide**, a simple, easy-to-read handbook with city rules, services, contacts, and local activities, given to new residents through landlords, the water department, and city offices to help everyone feel informed, connected, and at home from day one.



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PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

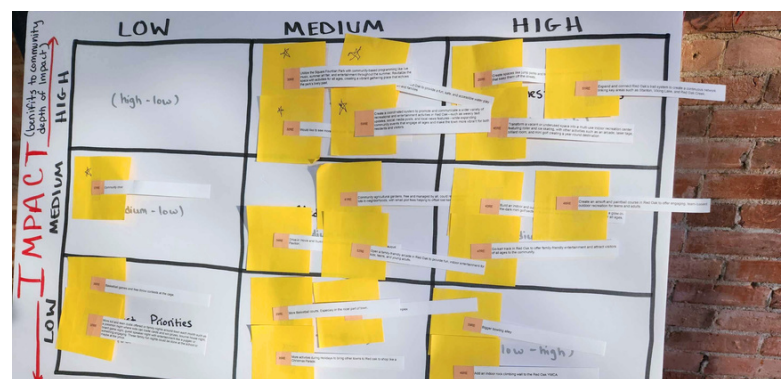


Recreation & Entertainment

- Organize a “Jazz on Green” type event.
- Organize a community choir.
- Organize family bike rides.
- Promote existing and advocate for additional soccer fields.
- Enable free participation in tennis games or tournaments.
- Create a coordinated system to promote and communicate a wider variety of recreational and entertainment activities in Red Oak such as weekly text updates, social media posts, and local news features while expanding community events that engage all ages and make the town more vibrant for both residents and visitors.
- Utilize the Fountain Square Park with community-based programming like live music, summer art fair, and entertainment throughout the summer. Revitalize the space with activities for all ages, creating a vibrant gathering place that echoes the park’s lively past.



CONTACT US IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAD OR SUPPORT AN ACTION IDEA. SEE PAGE 26.



PRIORITIZED ACTION IDEAS

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?



Recreation & Entertainment

- **Organize kickball tournaments.**
- **Promote existing kayaking events.**
- **Organize adult education classes to continue education such as IT classes.**
- **Build a splash pad in Red Oak** to provide a fun, safe, and accessible water play area for children and families.
- **Create a downtown senior center**—potentially in the old Masonic Building, that offers social gatherings, games, books, and communal meals to foster connection, recreation, and support for Red Oak’s aging population.
- **Organize alcohol-free events in Red Oak** to create inclusive, family-friendly spaces for socializing, entertainment, and community connection.
- **Introduce more outdoor games and activities in Red Oak’s parks and public spaces** to encourage community engagement, physical activity, and for all ages.



CONTACT US IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEAD OR SUPPORT AN ACTION IDEA. SEE PAGE 26.



WHAT'S IN PROGRESS

& COMMUNITY PARTNERS INVOLVED



Boomgars purchased the old Kmart building and will open in fall 2025.



Red Oak Heart & Soul has organized community members to plan details for a downtown innovation center.



The City has received the Brownfield grant to clean up the No Frills location.



Red Oak Area Partnership has been formed to oversee funding for housing projects and more childcare options.



The Agora: Coffeehaus & Event Venue will be opening to the public by the end of 2025 in downtown Red Oak.



The Red Oak High School's FORGE program connects students with community organization projects and internship opportunities.



The City, MAPA, and SWIPCO are reviewing traffic and road safety concerns in Red Oak for planning grant funds.



WHAT'S IN PROGRESS

& COMMUNITY PARTNERS INVOLVED



Red Oak Heart & Soul has organized community members to create and plan beautifying projects for public spaces and neighborhoods.



Red Oak Community Heart & Soul is working on the details to create a volunteer and nonprofit information hub on their website.



The Historical Commission Board is working on a study for a potential residential historical district in the East Hill residential neighborhood.



A Community Action Plan was released by Red Oak Community Heart & Soul to bring the community together to build a better future for Red Oak.



The City is working on the details for a motocross/ATV park in the 2028-2030 time frame.



The City has been replacing and repairing fire hydrants.



The City is looking to hire an enforcement officer that will help with animal control.



WHAT'S IN PROGRESS

& COMMUNITY PARTNERS INVOLVED



The City has created an Animal Welfare Ad Hoc Committee.



The City is hosting semi-annual waste collection events.



Parks located in Red Oak have been added and/or updated on Google Maps by Beau Boeye.



The City is working on details to create a “Welcome to Red Oak” guide.



A YMCA day membership for kids and families is sponsored by the Red Oak Public Library.



The YMCA has formed a Corn Hole Tournament that began in 2025.



Painting mural projects are in progress with ROAD/SW IA Art Council.



A community choir was organized by the United Methodist Church.



The iJAG class and the Nishnabotna Water Defenders held a clean up event at Dutton Park and the Red Oak Creek. The group is working on details for future clean up events.

PHASE 4 SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 2025 & BEYOND



In Progress:

- Adopted the Heart & Soul Statements.
- Finalized the Community Action Plan.
- Develop implementation strategies.
- Establish monitoring systems.

NEXT STEPS FOR RED OAK HEART & SOUL

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

Red Oak Community Heart & Soul has created a stewardship group, Red Oak Soul Stewards, that will assume responsibility to implement, coordinate, and monitor the progress of each action idea. Existing resources, costs, and a time frame will be established for each action idea with the Lead Solution Partner(s) and Supporting Partner(s). Updates will be maintained on a quarterly bases.

STAY CONNECTED & INFORMED

Stay connected and informed with Red Oak Heart & Soul by following our updates on social media and visiting our website. These platforms share the latest news, upcoming events, and opportunities to get involved as we continue working together to strengthen our community. Your voice and participation help shape Red Oak's future. **Stay engaged and be part of the conversation!**

STAY INVOLVED

We need your help! Your talent and passion keep our community strong and thriving. Whether you're interested in volunteering, donating, or helping to bring action ideas to life, there's a place for you to make a difference. If any of these ideas inspire you, reach out to us, and we'll connect you with the right people to get started. Thank you!





CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: coordinator@roheartsoul.com

Website: roheartsoul.org

Facebook & Instagram: @roheartsoul

YouTube: [@RedOakHeartSoul](https://www.youtube.com/@RedOakHeartSoul)

City of Red Oak's Website: city.redoakiowa.com

Thank you!

This wouldn't be possible without our donors!

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 Dream Forge™



Cynthia Bangston
Chris Johnson
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Audie Rainey
Julie & Clint Rubey
Calvin & Peggy Brown
Brian Bills

We continue to collect donations for our mission to improve Red Oak's future. Your contributions make a significant impact on our ability to serve and uplift our community!

Donations can be sent to:

Red Oak Community Heart & Soul
PO Box 606, Red Oak, IA 51566



June 27, 2022

Community Heart & Soul SEED Grant Application Reviewers:

It is with eager optimism I submit this letter of support on behalf of the Montgomery County Family Success Network (aka Child Abuse Council) for the Community Heart and Soul engagement and planning process for Red Oak Iowa. As an organization providing countywide support for healthy families and children, our organization has considered hosting Community Heart & Soul in the past as a way of proactively addressing tremendous issues facing our children, women and families in Red Oak, Villisca and our county.

This program is a proactive approach and model to bring together and engage people from across all sectors of the community to have viable and real conversations to discuss key issues of childhood trauma, mental health, abuse and neglect long-term impacts that not only impair our children and families, but also our community and current/future workforce. The correlation between childhood trauma and workforce barriers and issues have been proven to be directly related. This topic is not going to get better until community leadership understands the direct correlation and the economic and social impacts not addressing these issues causes.

The City of Red Oak Iowa is being proactive to support the Community Heart and Soul program and is taking a leadership role working with the CH&S steering committee and other civic and social organizations like MCFSN. We eagerly support this program and look forward to addressing key issues, but also finding ways to proactively inform the community, bring together mentoring and transformational programs and initiatives to change the future lives of our children, families, businesses, community and overall economy.

Below are the MCFSN mission and goals of the organization. Additionally, our project priorities for 2022 include:

- Hard launch of Community Heart and Soul initiative – what is our role.
- Bringing The Lisa Project – a child abuse assimilation exhibit during National Night Out to Red Oak.
- Consider sponsoring the Dating Matters program for Jr/ Sr Highschoolers to focus on awareness of negative relationship patterns and early intervention.
Coordinate our project efforts with the Live Well Montgomery County program and track success over the course of a few years. Opportunities include having one-on-one conversations with experts/influencers in their own space to define community needs and develop thoughtful / sustainable programs.
- Desire to further engage the school district and groups such as Project Harmony to better compile resource listings and reach target audience.

As you can see, the work we support and plan to address in 2022 and beyond will be highly related to the conversations that will come from participating in CH&S. The Family Success Network enthusiastically supports this initiative for Red Oak. Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,

Shawwna L. Silvius, Past President/Board Director

MISSION:

To promote programs and public policies which strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect

GOALS OF THE ORGANIZATION:

- Promote services that are preventative in nature
- Educate professionals about strengthening families, abuse prevention and related issues
- Encourage healthy family relationships and activities
- Advocate for public policy that encourages alternatives to violence, and supports cooperation and problem solving
- Collaborate and network with other human service agencies within the country to promote programs and public policies which strengthen families and prevent child abuse

Red Oak Heritage Foundation
PO Box 258
Red Oak, IA 51566

To Whom It May Concern:

For almost 30 years the Red Oak Heritage Foundation has been committed to funding community projects to help build the legacy of Red Oak. We have partnered with many community organizations for community betterment projects, to help local facilities in recreation and the arts and to provide scholarships.

The Red Oak Community Heart & Soul program was presented to our Board of Directors recently. The Board unanimously approved becoming the fiscal partner for this program. Red Oak Community Heart & Soul complements our belief that the foundation for a better tomorrow must be laid today.

The Red Oak Heritage Foundation supports Red Oak Community Heart & Soul, the process and as a fiscal partner.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Bloom".

Dennis Bloom
President

REFERENCE LINKS

Complete Data Sets

The complete data for the 783 action ideas will be available on Wednesday, November 19th, 2025.

Red Oak's Nonprofit, Charitable, and Civic Organizations Directory



[Local nonprofit, charitable, and civic organization contact list for over 70 organizations can be accessed here.](#) To keep contact information current, Red Oak Community Heart & Soul updates the directory on the first and sixth month each year.

Comprehensive Plan Reports



[The Red Oak 2025 Comprehensive Plan can be accessed here.](#)



[The Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan 2024 can be accessed here.](#)