

Speakers



Justin M. Axelrod is Iowa's Local Taxpayer Advocate. Prior to being Iowa's Local Taxpayer Advocate, Justin was a practicing tax attorney with a large Florida law firm.

Kimberley Baer is an attorney in Des Moines, Iowa with a general practice law firm. She is a trial lawyer with over 22 years of experience. She formerly practiced law in Chicago with SkaddenArps, one of the world's largest law firms. Ms. Baer is devoted to providing solid practical and quality legal advice. She practices in personal injury, medical malpractice, business and family law.



With 25-plus years of international sales, marketing, and logistics in the private sector, **Tony Braida** helps small- to mid-sized companies broaden their overseas markets. Apart from his position with Bankers Trust, Tony serves on several local boards with international reach, including the International Traders of Iowa, Iowa International Center, as well as co-chairing the Greater Des Moines Partnership's International Council.

Michelle Bartusek is the director of Business Education & Resources. Small business ownership has been a significant part of Michelle's life in many different capacities. Michelle completed her Bachelor of Science in Family Services at Iowa State University. After graduating, she harnessed her own entrepreneurial spirit, first operating a medical transcription business for 10 years (1996-2006), then becoming an IRS-certified tax preparer. She is now on the Board of Directors for Polk County Health Services. Of her 10 years' experience with tax preparation and planning, she has spent four years at The Iowa Center, allowing the organization to meet clients where they are and provide them one of its essential services.



Patricia Cook is the Director of the Des Moines U.S. Export Assistance Center. Mrs. Cook has been in the Des Moines office for 8 years and has assisted businesses to export manufactured goods, agricultural equipment, processed foods, medical devices, technical and educational services, and all other types of Made in Iowa goods. She joined the US Commercial Service, U.S. Department of Commerce office in 2008. She had a job rotation during the summer of 2010 at the U.S. Consulate in Osaka, Japan, where she was assigned as the Principal Trade Officer of the U.S. Department of Commerce for the U.S. Embassy.

Rudy Fors, Team Manager and Relationship Manager, has been with U.S. Bank since 2010. His responsibilities include overseeing the business banking operations in the Des Moines Market. He has over 15 years of business and commercial banking experience. He has been a multiple Pinnacle Winner within U.S. Bank and was awarded 2015 "Banker of the Year". Rudy is involved in United Way, American Cancer Society and works with the Greater Des Moines Partnership among other community activities. Rudy attended his undergrad at Saint Louis University where he completed Flight School and received a Business in Science - Finance degree. He has an M.B.A in Finance from Colorado State University and attended the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Madison - Wisconsin.



Alex Kornya has been working at Iowa Legal Aid since 2008, and became the assistant litigation director in 2014. As a staff attorney, he had an extensive litigation career with a focus in consumer protection, housing, and tax. As assistant litigation director, Alex is involved in developing strategic advocacy for low-income and other vulnerable Iowans.



Brenda LaMarche is the Founder and President of BRL HR Consulting LLC, the Corridor's premier Human Resources Consulting and Outsourcing firm. She has a BBA in Human Resources & Industrial Relations from the University of Iowa and is certified as a Professional in Human Resources through both the Society of Human Resources Managers and Human Resources Certification Institute. Brenda has more than 25 years of human resources, benefit administration and payroll experience for firms of all sizes, industries and types.

Amelia Lobo has extensive experience working with businesses and non-profits. She has extensive experience teaching marketing principles to small businesses. At this time, she is a member of Grinnell College's fundraising and stewardship group. She helps strengthen ties between Grinnell and its alums and raise money to support Grinnell's mission and long-term vision. Amelia is bilingual (English/Spanish) and has an MBA. She has been a member of the IES family since 2012.



Abhineu Mathema specializes in export/import documentary credit, collections and standby letters of credit. She received her Bachelors in International Studies and Management from Luther College, Decorah. While completing her undergraduate, she worked with International Trade Center, ICNC/SBA in Chicago, IL. Abhineu is also fluent in Hindi and Nepali.

Don Nguyen is the Firm's legal counsel. Don is a member of the Iowa Bar and Supreme Court and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Iowa since 2007. Don has obtained his Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree from the Southern California Institute of Law and also holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Iowa State University. Don provides legal counsel and guidance to the Public and Private Corporations and Nonprofits and also advises finance and corporate development regarding mergers and acquisitions and other transactional matters. He is a dog lover and an avid fisherman.



Luis Ordeñana-Choez works at Community CPA as an accountant in the Iowa City office. He specializes in working with our Latino community clients. He received his degree in Business Administration and Management at Kirkwood Community College in 2008. He accumulatively worked in the field of insurance and tax for the next 8 years before joining the team. Luis is from Ecuador and is fluent in Spanish.