

NIAACOG NEWS

Vol. 25 No. 4

NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Aug. – Sept. 2014

GRANTS TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY TREES



Trees reduce our energy costs by shading buildings, slowing down winds and reducing heat loss. They also help improve air quality and reduce flooding by intercepting storm water. For this reason the Department of Natural Resources is encouraging communities to use two grant programs to increase the number of healthy local trees.

Trees For Kids offers hands-on educational opportunities for Iowa youth by planting trees on school grounds and other public places. The grant pays up to \$5,000 in tree and mulch cost, and provides educational tree planting demonstrations to participants.

Iowa communities with populations over 5,000 can apply for Sustainable Community Forestry grants. Selected communities will get intensive training on tree identification, health, planting and maintenance, as well as a complete street tree inventory, canopy cover analysis and an urban tree management plan.

For further details and grant applications, go to www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/Forestry/UrbanForestry.aspx. The deadline to apply is September 1.

MOVING IOWA FORWARD

The Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Department of Transportation are hosting the fifth annual Moving Iowa Forward Conference on Tuesday, Oct. 21 in Des Moines.

The conference will highlight how transportation and economic development are working together to make Iowa a better place to do business. Dr. Marc Levinson is the key note speaker for the conference.

For registration details, please go to www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/transportation

HAZARD MITIGATION FUNDS AVAILABLE

The State of Iowa will receive FEMA disaster funding under the *Hazard Mitigation Grant Program* (HMGP) as part of Presidential disaster declaration DR-4181-IA (July 14, 2014) as a result of severe storms, tornados, straight-line winds and flooding that occurred in our State this summer.

Project Types

The State is making available HMGP funds for those eligible hazard mitigation project types that will reduce or eliminate losses from future natural disasters, including but not limited to:

- Construction of tornado safe rooms (Multi-functional community or school safe room projects are highly encouraged)
- Acquisition, structural relocation or elevation of buildings located in a special flood hazard area
- Structural and non-structural retrofitting of existing public buildings, facilities, or utilities to protect against wind, ice, or flood hazards
- Minor structural hazard control or protection projects such as storm water management (e.g., culverts, floodgates, retention basins)
- Localized flood control projects, such as floodwall systems, that are designed specifically to protect critical facilities and do not constitute a section of a larger flood control system
- Development of multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans and plan updates

Eligible Applicant

Potentially eligible applicants include:

- State agencies and local governments
- Federally recognized Indian tribal governments, including State-recognized Indian tribes, and authorized tribal organizations
- Private nonprofit (PNP) organizations or institutions that operate a PNP facility as defined in the 44 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 206.221(e).

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) requires a FEMA approved local hazard mitigation plan prior to FEMA awarding HMGP project funds. **Funding will be limited to sub-applicants with an approved local hazard mitigation plan at time of award.**

Applicants with proposed projects located in a FEMA-identified Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) are eligible for funding only if the jurisdiction in which the project is located is participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). There is no NFIP participation requirement for projects located outside of the SFHA.

Funding & Cost Share

This is a cost share grant program which means that awarded grants will be funded as follows:

- Federal (FEMA) share of total eligible costs – 75% maximum
- Non Federal share of total eligible costs – 25%
 - State of Iowa – 10% (typical)
 - Local – 15%

Iowa Code 455B.262A [effective 6-30-2011]; State participation in funding financial assistance (10% State cost share) for a flood related disaster requires participation in the NFIP for a city or county with an effective FEMA published flood insurance map that identifies a SFHA. To determine NFIP participation please visit: <http://www.fema.gov/fema/csb.shtm>

Notice of Interest (NOI) & Application Process

Applicants must complete and email the appropriate (project specific) NOI form using the format provided to hsemd.mitigation@iowa.gov. The NOI forms can be found using the following links: <http://www.iowahomelandsecurity.org/grants/HMA.html> or <http://homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/index.html>

NOI's will be accepted on a continuous basis or until otherwise notified.

The State hazard mitigation staff will review NOIs using basic eligibility criteria for HMGP projects outlined in 44 CFR 206.434 (c), project type and level of interest in relation to acceptance of a greater local cost share. Invitations to complete a full HMGP project application will be sent to qualifying sub-applicants for both new NOI's and previously submitted NOI's where limited funding was available. Invitation letters will identify a State Mitigation Project Officer who will work directly with the applicant. This Project Officer will contact the applicant to discuss the proposed project, the application requirements, and be available to provide technical assistance during the application development process if needed.

For additional information or questions, feel free to contact Matt O'Brien at **641-423-0491, ext. 14** or mobrien@niacog.org

FLOYD COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

NIACOG staff is currently preparing the Floyd County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan update. The current plan will expire on April 20, 2015. After that date, a jurisdiction within Floyd County will not be eligible for HMGP disaster funding unless it has participated in the plan update.

If your jurisdiction is within Floyd County and you have not yet scheduled an update meeting, please contact Matt O'Brien at 641-423-0491, ext. 14 or mobrien@niacog.org as soon as possible.



Train Derailment near Charles City in May 2013

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS APPROVED BY FEMA

The initial Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans for Franklin (4/14/14), Hancock (5/2/14), and Mitchell (4/28/14) counties have been recently approved by FEMA. The plans will expire 5 years from the FEMA approval dates. Preparation of an updated plan usually begins 1 to 2 years before expiration of the initial plan.

If you have any questions or comments please contact Matt O'Brien at **641-423-0491, ext. 14** or mobrien@niacog.org

WHAT IS A COG?

By Marybeth Foster, Iowa Association of Regional Councils Executive Director

In 1968, Governor Harold Hughes established multi-county regions or Councils of Government (COGs) by signing an executive order. In the time since, COG boundaries have been determined by local governments and later codified by the Iowa Legislature. Individual COGs were then incorporated by local governments. For more than 45 years, COGs have served Iowa's regions by writing and administering grants, completing plans, managing programs and providing efficient services to local governments and businesses.

COGs are membership driven organizations that are part public service provider and part tax-exempt entrepreneur. Constantly looking to identify needs and fulfill them, COGs must stay abreast of trends, topics and issues affecting Iowa Communities.

COGs do not levy property taxes, but are funded with a variety of sources. Membership dues from local governments form the first and most important revenue source. Other revenue comes from grant administration, special planning projects, planning grants from the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) and U.S. Economic Development Administration, or from operating programs like revolving loan funds, housing trust funds, workforce development offices, public transit or waste exchange projects.

As intergovernmental entities, this is a unique funding model which relies on diverse partnerships and collaboration at a regional, state, and federal level. These diverse funding sources are what make COGs efficient in providing services and stewardship to public funds. COGs reduce the amount of local government funds required to implement needed services.

COGs have partners at all levels in order to deliver needed services. Strengthening partnerships with federal and state organizations as well as local industries, banks, chambers of commerce, economic developers and Regent universities are critical to delivering effective services to Iowa communities.

Recent statewide partnerships include airport zoning ordinance updates with funding from the IDOT and rental inspection program of units funded by Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) with funding from Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Iowa Department of Public Health has also sought to use statewide COG network through planning and implementation of healthy community initiatives.

Iowa COGs serve as Regional Planning Affiliations (RPAs) under a partnership with IDOT. COGs plan for and program federal transportation funds within their regions including recreational trails and other enhancements, street and road projects, public transit projects and bridges. In this role, COGs are also crucial transportation planning project partners,

connecting private and public entities with IDOT grant programs, information and staff.

Housing services are a specialty for many COGs. Grant writing for housing rehabilitation is standard. In some cases, COGs may manage a regional housing trust fund, or provide down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers or housing rehabilitation. Regional multi-family grants through IEDA are also done through COGs.

In general, COGs work in the following areas: community planning, grant writing and administration, transportation planning and funding, housing, revolving loans for businesses, economic development, GIS, and public transportation. The total impact of COGs statewide is significant. In the last five years, COGs have:

- Created and retained 5,800 jobs through startup and expansion loans
- Programmed \$915 million in federal transportation funding for 1,200 projects
- Rehabilitated 2,300 homes
- Financed 445 homes
- Managed \$215 million in water and sewer infrastructure projects.

HOME PROGRAM

Two Home Investment Partnership (HOME) funded projects have been completed in the NIAOCG region. Both projects were for rental housing new construction.

Common Ground Duplexes, LLC, received a \$548,500 HOME award to construct 4 twin homes in Osage (Oak Court Rentals Project), and Liberty Ridge, LLC, received a \$280,000 HOME award to construct 2 twin homes in Riceville (Liberty Ridge Rentals Project). Both projects have achieved full lease-up and the close-out of their HOME contracts are now underway.

NIACOG staff assisted both of these HOME recipients earlier in administering their HOME program contracts and congratulates both on adding to the supply of decent affordable rental housing to lower income households in their respective market areas.

The HOME program is the largest HUD federal block grant program available exclusively to create affordable housing. Eligible applicants in the HOME program include incorporated cities, counties, for-profit corporations or partnerships, non-profit 501(c) organizations, and Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). Eligible activities include rental housing new construction, rental housing rehabilitation, home ownership assistance.

For more information, please contact Steve Wendt at the NIACOG Office.



North Iowa Area Council of Governments
 525 6th Street SW
 Mason City, IA 50401-5058
 641-423-0491 fax: 641-423-1637
 www.niacog.org

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
 Mason City, Iowa
 50401
 Permit No. 22

Return Service
Requested

Place Mailing Label Here

Calendar of Events

August

- 11th – NIACOG Executive Committee,**
NIACOG Office, 12:00 pm
- 26th – CDBG Application Workshop,**
Ankeny

September

- 1st – Labor Day, NIACOG Office Closed**
- 8th – NIACOG Board Meeting,**
Bennigan’s Grill, Clear Lake, 7:00 pm
- 19th – City Clerks Meeting,**
NIACOG Office, 9:30 am

NIACOG STAFF 641-423-0491		
Joe Myhre	Executive Director	Ext. 11
Kevin Kramer	Transit Administrator	Ext. 17
Jodi Wyborny	Administrative Assistant	Ext. 10
Chris Diggins	Local Assistance Director	Ext. 15
Steve Wendt	Community Dev. Planner	Ext. 13
Todd Hull	Maintenance Supervisor	Ext. 24
Teresa Collins	Operations Manager	Ext. 22
Kris Urdahl	Fiscal Officer	Ext. 12
Myrtle Nelson	Senior Planner	Ext. 16
Matt O’Brien	Planner	Ext. 14
Laurel Clement	Planner	Ext. 27
Jennifer Butler	Planner	Ext. 18
Dana Heimbuch	Community Dev. Planner	Ext. 28
Email – first letter of first name followed by last name @niacog.org (i.e. jmyhre@niacog.org)		

CALL FOR 2015 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROJECTS

Now is the time to begin preparing new projects for the 2015 application cycle in the fall. Authorized under the Housing and Community Development Act, the main goal of the CDBG program is to “develop viable communities, principally for persons of low and moderate incomes.” In Iowa, the CDBG program can be used to fund eligible activities, including public facilities such as water and sewer facilities and community buildings; housing rehabilitation; economic development and job training. As part of preparing for these projects, NIACOG can assist cities with securing an engineering firm to outline the project, complete application requirements, and administer the project if awarded.

Cities interested should contact Chris Diggins at **641-423-0491, ext. 15**, or cdiggins@niacog.org for community infrastructure projects or Steve Wendt at **641-423-0491, ext. 13**, or swendt@niacog.org for housing related information.