

NIACOG NEWS

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NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Sept.- Oct. 2017

CDBG WORKSHOP SCHEDULED



The Iowa Economic Development Authority recently announced dates for CDBG workshops. The CDBG application workshop for those cities and counties applying for 2018 grant awards will be held on September 7, 2017. For additional information, please contact the NIACOG office.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (TAP) FUNDING

The RPA 2 TAP Committee had solicited TAP funding applications back in February and had received only one (1) application for funds this year. The applicant was the Cerro Gordo County Conservation Department to extend the Prairie Lands Trail that stretches from the southwest corner of Mason City to the City of Belmond in Wright County. This is the third application for this project and each application extends the trail a little further from where the previous two projects end to the town of Swaledale.

The application this year was accepted only on a contingent basis as the entire TAP program was undergoing massive changes that were not yet known at the time of application. When the RPA got word of the new process, Program Guidance developed and proceeded with that direction with the Cerro Gordo application in hand. Unfortunately, what had been settled on has now been determined not to meet the Federal Regulations and IDOT must start over with the TAP process. The TAP process is very cumbersome and takes much time to get a project programed, but these types of projects require a good deal of planning to be successful anyway.



RPA 2 has handled many TAP projects in the past and the projects can be seen throughout the Region. RPA 2 and NIACOG hope clearer direction that is acceptable to the federal staff will soon be provided so that we can proceed with the Prairie Lands as well as other projects that are on the horizon.

As always, do not hesitate to contact the NIACOG office with questions on a potential TAP project.

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NEW FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR HOUSING PROJECTS – SMALL CITIES TAX CREDITS

If you are interested in doing a housing project (redevelopment of an old building or new construction), new funding is available that may be of interest to you. The new program is a 'set aside' extension of the existing Workforce Housing Tax Incentive Program. The program provides (transferable) tax credits of up to 20% of rehabilitation cost with a \$30,000 maximum tax credit per unit. The limit in the regular program has been 10%, so the funding is doubled for these set aside funds. This program also provides a rebate of all state retail sales tax paid for the housing rehab project.

The program comes with some urgency in that the tax credit funding is being snatched up very quickly to the extent that the State is now allocating 2021 funding even though the program has only been available since July. Projects are funded on a first come/first served basis, so acting quickly will be essential to receiving funds within the next 5 years.

Please note that a match is required from the local government of \$1,000 per unit, but, if so desired, can be provided to the city as a pass through. Please note that the funding is available throughout our entire region (city/rural).

The program requires a minimum number of dwelling units per project based upon the type of development:

- Single-Family: 2 or more dwelling units minimum
- Multi-Family: 3 or more dwelling units (apartments) minimum
- Upper Story (downtown multi-use): 2 or more dwelling units minimum

Administrative rules for the new program are not in place as yet, but the state is using the bill that created the small cities set aside program to coordinate the program (Senate File 488: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/LGE/87/SF488.pdf>). Under the new 'small cities' authorization, a housing needs assessment is NOT required, redevelopment can also occur in a greenfield sites (previously undeveloped), only 2 dwelling units are required for single-family projects, and the average dwelling unit cost is increased to \$215,000. Much of the rules for

the original Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program still apply and are available at: www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/chapter/03-01-2017.261.48.pdf.

The application for funds is available in the 'Funding Opportunity' section of 'IowaGrants' at <https://www.iowagrants.gov/getGranteeOpportunities.do>.

Contact the NIACOG office for additional information.

EMERGENCY WATER ASSISTANCE GRANT



Communities of 10,000 residents or less that need help preparing or recovering from an emergency that threatens the availability of safe, reliable drinking water can apply for funding through the Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant program. Events that qualify as emergencies are the following: drought or flood; tornado; disease outbreak; and chemical spill, leak or seepage. Funds may be used to construct waterline extensions, repair breaks or leaks in existing water distribution lines, and address related maintenance necessary to replenish the water supply. Additionally, funds may be used to construct a water source, intake or treatment facility.

Applications for this program are accepted year round through the local USDA Rural Development office. If you desire to submit an application or have any questions, contact Doug Moss, the USDA Rural Development Area Director, at 319.352.1715 ext. 4 or doug.moss@ia.usda.gov. Additional information can be found here: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/emergency-community-water-assistance-grants>

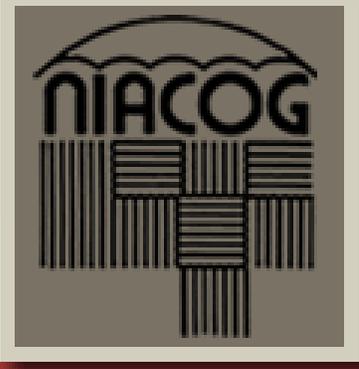
Calendar of Events

September

4th	Labor Day - Office Closed	
11th	NIACOG Board Meeting	Bennigan's Grill, Clear Lake @ 7:00 pm
15th	City Clerk's Association Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 9:30 am

October

10th	NIACOG Exec. Cmte. Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 12:00 pm
11th	Hazmat Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 1:00 pm
11th	Transportation Policy Brd. Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 2:30 pm



LOCAL UPDATE OF CENSUS ADDRESSES OPERATION

The Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA) is a voluntary decennial census operation. LUCA is the only opportunity prior to the 2020 Census for local governments to review and update the U.S. Census Bureau's residential address list for their jurisdiction. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census.

Although the primary purpose of the decennial census is to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, census data is used to:

- Distribute federal funds for over 1,000 programs to local governments.
- Provide statistical support for grant applications that fund necessary community and regional improvements and enhancements.
- Help your community plan for future needs.

If your city lacks the resources to participate in LUCA, contact the NIACOG Office in order to arrange for us to conduct your address review. Additional information can be found here: <https://www.census.gov/geo/partnerships/luca.html>

2017 IEDA/CDBG HOUSING REHABILITATION AWARDS

In late June of this year, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) announced conditional grant awards through its CDBG Iowa Housing



Fund for Program Year 2017. The CDBG Housing Fund, officially known as the CDBG Residential Housing Sustainability Program, provides funding from the U.S. Department of

HUD in order to expand or retain the supply of decent and affordable housing for low and very low-income households in Iowa through single family owner-occupied rehabilitation programs. Two cities in the NIACOG region were given conditional awards by the IEDA in order help fund such programs. The City of Grafton and the City of Manly both received conditional awards of \$237,500 for the rehabilitation of at least 6 homes in each city. NIACOG staff assisted both Cities in the preparation and submission of their grant applications. The final award letters and grant contracts will not be issued until the IEDA receives an official funding allocation agreement from HUD.

NIACOG is providing administrative and technical assistance to both Cities in carrying out their rehabilitation programs. Last month, the environmental review process was completed for both Cities, as the request for release of funds for both grants was cleared by the IEDA. The official release of funds will occur when both cities receive their official award letters from the IEDA and the grant contracts are signed. At that point NIACOG will start the technical services/onsite assistance for both Cities including the updating of all homeowner applications, which are already on hand. As part of the application process last fall, both Cities held full application intakes, in order to address the more stringent timeliness and readiness standards now required by HUD and the IEDA. All applications received in both Cities were processed and ranked by NIACOG at that time.

Once these applications are updated, the first 3 projects in each community will be selected. NIACOG hopes to start the contractor bid procurement process for the first 3 projects in each community late this year or early next year, depending on how soon the IEDA can give the official release of funds. NIACOG looks forward to working with both Cities as they move ahead in implementing their respective housing rehabilitation programs.

RLF FUNDS AVAILABLE



NIACOG has funds available in its Revolving Loan Fund. If you know of a company in your area that is looking to expand and create new jobs, they may be eligible for funding through the NIACOG RLF program. This a great gap financing tool for companies trying to finance an expansion plan. Funding is limited to a maximum loan amount of \$115,000 at 3% interest. Applicants must be from the NIACOG eight-county region and endorsed by the local economic development corporation. For more information, please contact the NIACOG office.



HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE



FEMA

FEMA has announced the Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant program for FY 2017, which includes Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA). The HMA grant program will provide funds to states, territories, Indian tribal governments, and communities for hazard mitigation planning and mitigation projects prior to a disaster event. Funding amounts are based on Congressional appropriation.

Projects submitted for consideration must be consistent with the goals and objectives identified in Iowa's State Hazard Mitigation Plan and local mitigation plan for the jurisdiction in which the activity is located. The FMA grant provides an excellent opportunity for communities to initiate mitigation projects that provide protection against natural hazards. Eligible mitigation project activities include (but not limited to):

- Mitigation Planning consistent with 44 CFR Part 201 (only for flood hazard)
- Property Acquisition and Structural Demolition and Relocation (for NFIP insured properties)
- Structural Elevation (for NFIP insured properties)
- Dry Flood Proofing (for NFIP insured properties)
- Minor Localized Flood Reduction

Projects (should benefit NFIP insured properties)

- Non-structural Retrofitting of Existing Buildings and Facilities (for NFIP insured properties)
- Mitigation Reconstruction (for NFIP insured properties)

The HMA FY 2015 Hazard Mitigation Assistance program guidance provides critical information about eligibility, the National Evaluation Process, and other key aspects of each program. FEMA has changed program guidance. The guidance can be found at: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance>

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) and not withdrawn or suspended.

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
- Local share of total eligible costs – 25%

FEMA has established the application deadline for States to submit their application by November 14, 2017. In order to meet FEMA's deadline, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) must receive local sub-applications by October 13, 2017.



GRANTS AVAILABLE TO RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has grant money available for Iowa's rural fire departments to battle wildfires. Grants provide 50 percent reimbursement for wildland fire equipment with a maximum reimbursement of \$3,500 per department. The grants help pay for wildfire suppression equipment, slide in units, hoses, nozzles, adapters, portable tanks and pumps, personal protective equipment and communications equipment.

Departments that return a report whenever they respond to a wildland fire receive priority points in the Volunteer Fire Assistance grant scoring process. Applications are due October 15. Complete details can be found at the link below:

www.iowadnr.gov/fire.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Congratulations to the Cerro Gordo County Board of Supervisors on their successful CDBG Communities Facilities and Services (CF&S) application on behalf of the North Iowa Transition Center (NITC).

NITC's project is called Crisis Stabilization Residential Services (CSRS). CSRS are short-term services provided in facility-based settings of no more than 16 beds. The proposed project is for ten (10) beds. The goal of CSRS is to stabilize and reintegrate the individual back into the community. Crisis stabilization residential services are designed for voluntary individuals who need a safe, secure environment less intensive and restrictive than an inpatient psychiatric hospital. Crisis stabilization residential services can serve two distinct areas of need for individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis: 1) providing a the safe, secure clinically supportive environment, as noted above, when the person is assessed as not needing a locked psychiatric inpatient hospital setting, and 2) providing a transitional or "step-down" setting for persons who were admitted to an inpatient psychiatric hospital unit and who have since stabilized to the point that inpatient hospitalization is no longer necessary, but the person is still in need of a safe, secure environment for further stabilization before returning home.

NIACOG was very happy to be involved in this project with NITC and Cerro Gordo County. NIACOG provided guidance through the CDBG CF&S application process and wrote the successful application.

The CDBG application process, whether a CF&S, such as the above described application, Water/Sewer (W/S), Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation or Downtown

Façade (DTR) project, is very competitive and requires persons knowledgeable and experienced with the State of Iowa CDBG program.

NIACOG has been very successful in its CDBG assistance with cities and counties this year. The above described project was one of only four (4) projects funded under the CF&S program that saw seven (7) applications submitted. The NITC project also received the highest award amount of those awarded funds at \$600,000. Other successful CF&S included a storm sewer project, a daycare project, the CSRS project and an emergency & transitional housing with intake rooms for assault victims.

In the Water/Sewer (W/S) fund, as has been announced in previous newsletters, NIACOG staff have written successful W/S applications for the cities of Sheffield and Klemme. Of the forty (40) applications submitted at the time of the application workshop, twenty-one (21) awards had been made. NIACOG assisted projects in the Region have received two (2) of those awards for \$800,000, total. That's nearly 10% of the awards and funding to the entire state.

On the housing rehabilitation side, NIACOG staff, has also been very successful, again with getting two (2) of twenty (20) total awards across the State.

While the Housing Rehabilitation and CF&S funding applications are still only taken once per year, The W/S Fund, as has been mentioned in previous newsletters, is now a quarterly funding application process. This enables those communities that have planned and prepared for their projects to submit the funding application in a timely manner, instead of having to wait a year for the next application opportunity as under the old process.



Happy Labor

Day!!



Happy Fall!!

