

# NIACOG NEWS

Vol. 29 No. 2 NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Mar-Apr 2018



## NIACOG STAFF

641.423.0491

Email– first letter of first name followed  
by last name @niacog.org (i.e.  
jmyhre@niacog.org)

**Joe Myhre — Ext. 11**  
Executive Director  
**Jodi Wyborny — Ext. 10**  
Administrative Assistant  
**Kris Urdahl — Ext. 12**  
Fiscal Officer

**Chris Diggins — Ext. 15**  
Local Assistance Director  
**Myrtle Nelson — Ext. 16**  
Senior Planner  
**Matt O'Brien — Ext. 14**  
Regional Planner  
**Steve Wendt — Ext. 13**  
Community Dev. Planner

**Kevin Kramer — Ext. 17**  
Transit Administrator  
**Teresa Collins — Ext. 22**  
Operations Manager  
**Todd Hull — Ext. 24**  
Maintenance Supervisor

## HANDICAPPED RAMP PROGRAM



In addition to home repairs, the NIACOG Housing Trust Fund has been providing assistance with handicapped accommodations in homes. In December 2017 we launched a new 'spin off' Handicapped Ramp Program in partnership with Habitat for Humanity of North Central Iowa. This program is available throughout the NIACOG region.

So, why did we create this program? In the past, after we installed ramps as a component of our home repair projects, we were being contacted within a few years (or months) by the homeowner's children/grandchildren to let us know that the homeowner no longer needed the ramp because they either went to a nursing home or died. We didn't have a means for reusing the ramps, so we suggested that they contact Habitat for Humanity in case they might be willing to remove it for them. Unfortunately, the ramps were difficult to move because of their heavy/long/bulky size, and they weren't easily adjustable for a future owner.

So, we looked into providing aluminum ramps. We found that aluminum ramps last virtually forever, are lightweight (easy to move), and are adjustable for varied heights. Unfortunately, they are also significantly more expensive than wood. So, we developed a partnership with Habitat for Humanity where we provide the funding for the physical cost of the ramp (around \$6,500), and they provide a dedicated team of three volunteers who install the ramps. When the current owner no longer needs the ramp, Habitat's team of volunteers moves the ramps to a new home.

The Kinney Lindstrom Foundation provided funds to purchase an enclosed trailer to store and transport the ramps, and Cerro Gordo County is providing space to store the trailer.

Habitat for Humanity is the official owner of the ramps and charges a monthly fee of no more than \$25 for use of the ramps to cover their installation and administration costs. To date, the physical cost of the ramps have been covered by the State Housing Trust Fund, United Way of North Central Iowa, Kinney Lindstrom Foundation and Thrivent.

If you or someone you know is in need of a permanent handicapped ramp, please contact Myrtle Nelson (641-423-0491 x16 or [mnelson@niacog.org](mailto:mnelson@niacog.org)) or Habitat for Humanity (641-424-8978 or [habitat.melissa@netconx.net](mailto:habitat.melissa@netconx.net)) to obtain an application.



## DERELICT BUILDING PROGRAM

The Derelict Building Program works with small communities and rural counties to help improve the attractiveness and appearance of their towns by providing financial assistance to address derelict commercial and public buildings. Any County or municipal government with a population of less than 5,000 residents are eligible for the program to address neglected structures that have sat vacant for at least 6 months. The Program's main focus is landfill diversion through the recycling and reuse of building materials and the elimination of hazards both inside and out posed by these empty structures. Established in 2011, the program has assisted 115 communities, diverted over 46,000 tons of materials and saved over \$1.5 million in landfill disposal costs.

Funding is still available to inspect and properly remove asbestos from abandoned commercial buildings. The funds allow eligible communities to investigate the amount of asbestos present in a building, determine the physical characteristics and stability of these structures by completing structural engineering assessments and abate identified asbestos. Up to \$50,000 is available for assistance and applications will be accepted until funds are expended.

FY19 application deadline is **April 4, 2018** for applicants who are seeking funding assistance with conducting asbestos inspections, asbestos abatement, structural engineering analysis, phase I and phase II site assessments, building deconstruction and building renovation expenses.

Please contact Scott Flagg, IDNR at 515-725-8318 or [Scott.Flagg@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Scott.Flagg@dnr.iowa.gov) to request an application for funding.

ASSISTANCE TYPE	REIMBURSEMENT	MAX. COST
<b>CERTIFIED ACM INSPECTION:</b> Certified asbestos inspectors will investigate derelict structures to determine the presence, prevalence and condition of asbestos.	100 %	—
<b>REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF ACM:</b> Certified asbestos removal contractors will properly remove, manage and dispose of ACM. A 50 percent cost share is required for costs exceeding \$10,000.	100 %	\$10,000
<b>STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING ANALYSIS:</b> Licensed structural engineers will inspect derelict structures to assess the overall structural condition of the building.	100 %	\$1,500
<b>PHASE I ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:</b> Review of known environmental records and land use information about the site and vicinity. Applicant is responsible for all costs exceeding \$3,000.	100 %	\$3,000
<b>PHASE II ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:</b> Actual soil, groundwater, and structural materials' sampling to confirm or deny if contamination is present. The need for this assessment is driven by the results of the Phase I Assessment. Applicant is responsible for costs exceeding \$5,000.	50 %	\$2,500
<b>BUILDING DECONSTRUCTION:</b> Dismantling of structures with the purpose of maximizing recycling and reuse of materials to minimize landfill disposal. Goal of 30 percent landfill diversion by weight.	50 %	\$50,000
<b>BUILDING RENOVATION:</b> Using waste minimization, reuse and recycling practices, including the use of salvaged or recycled content material during the renovation process. For offsetting costs related to removing materials for reuse, either at the site or offsite, or for recycling. The grant also compensates for the purchase and installation of reused or recycled materials that will be incorporated into the project.	50 %	\$50,000

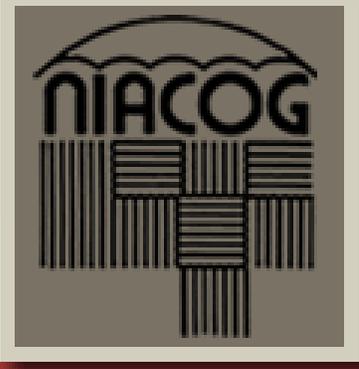
## Calendar of Events

### March

11th	Daylight Savings Time Begins	
12th	NoRISC Safety Training	8:30 am - 1:00 pm @ NIACOG Office
12th	NIACOG Brd. Mtg.	7:00 pm @ Bennigan's in CL
13th	NoRISC Safety Training	8:30 am - 1:00 pm @ NIACOG Office
16th	City Clerks Mtg.	9:30 am @ NIACOG Office
17th	St. Patrick's Day	
26th	NoRISC Safety Training	8:30 am - 1:00 pm @ NIACOG

### April

9th	Exec. Cmte. Mtg.	12:00 pm @ NIACOG Office
11th	HazMat Meeting	1:00 pm @ NIACOG Office
11th	Trans. Policy Brd. Mtg.	2:30 pm @ NIACOG Office



## USDA CHANGES TO THE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING REPAIR LOAN & GRANT PROGRAM



Committed to the future of rural communities.

The USDA recently announced some exciting changes to their USDA Rural Development's home repair loan and grant program, commonly referred to as the Section 504 Program. USDA Development's home repair program helps eligible households make essential improvements such as repairing or replacing storm doors, windows, steps, furnaces, water heater or roofs. Funds can also be used for insulation, electrical, plumbing, septic and water systems, and to provide accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities.

The USDA has changed the Section 504 Single Family Housing Repair Loan and Grant Program to determine affordability based on income and a repayment ratio instead of a monthly household budget. They have also streamlined the process to make the program faster and more efficient.

### Streamlined Changes:

- Applicants living in extreme poverty could be eligible for 100% grant assistance up to the allowable \$7,500 maximum lifetime limit for eligible project costs.
- Affordable loans at a fixed 1% interest rate. A minimum of \$1,000 loan, only \$4.60 per month or 15 cents per day.
- Qualified homeowners may receive a maximum loan of \$20,000 at a fixed 1% interest rate. Loans and grants may be combined for up to \$27,500 in total assistance.
- Very-low-income homeowners with a repayment ration between 30% to 46% may be eligible for a 50% loan and 50% grant.

- Grant recipients must be age 62 or older.

For more information, visit the USDA website: [www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants) . You may also call your local USDA office for assistance. Contact numbers for the 8 counties within the NIACOG region are as follows:

- Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Mitchell & Worth Counties, contact your regional office in Iowa Falls: 641-648-5181
- Hancock, Kossuth & Winnebago counties, contact your regional office in Humbolt: 515-332-4411

## 2017 CLERK/FINANCE OFFICERS HANDBOOK NOW AVAILABLE

The Iowa League of Cities publishes the City Clerk/Finance Officer's Handbook. The 2017 revision of this publication was launched in the Fall of 2017. All access to the online resources are now linked to the 2017 handbook purchase only.

This manual, available in both hard copy (\$40) and a downloadable version (\$20), includes critical items for those with clerk or finance officer duties. The handbook is updated every two years. However, certain chapters, such as report requirements, will be updated as information changes.

There are a limited number of sample agendas, resolutions and reports included in the appendix of the manual as downloadable files. An extensive list of contacts and Web sites are included to further direct the user to helpful information. All references to the appendix, glossary and Iowa Code Chapters can be accessed by hovering over the term or chapter to see a hand which takes the reader directly to the link with just a click of the mouse. The 2017 revision also includes short video clips on selected topics that will be helpful to the user.

## NORTH IOWA PLAN-IT

NIACOG coordinates an ad hoc group made up of city planners and related professionals from North Central Iowa. This group meets quarterly over lunch to discuss current planning activities, collaborate on specific efforts, and occasionally gain insight from a guest speaker. With an original membership of 8, in just a couple years the group has grown to 15 people.

If you are a city planner (or related professional) interested in participating with this group, please contact Myrtle Nelson to be included in the e-mail invitation list.



## INTRO TO PLANNING & ZONING WORKSHOP

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Extension and Outreach

The Introduction to Planning and Zoning for Local Officials workshop is a three-hour session designed to introduce the basic principles of land use planning and development management to elected officials, planning and zoning officials, and board of adjustment members without formal training in the subjects. Using case scenarios in a highly-interactive format, the workshop highlights issues frequently faced in the land use process, such as the roles and responsibilities of the planning and zoning commission, the board of adjustment, and the elected council and board of supervisors. It also will highlight legal issues frequently faced by local officials, such as variances, special uses, nonconforming uses, spot zoning, hearing procedures, and conflicts of interest.

All workshops begin with registration and a light supper at 5:30 p.m. The program begins at 6:00 p.m. and concludes by 8:45 p.m. The registration fee is \$65 per individual. This fee is reduced to \$55 per individual if a city or county registers 5 or more officials to attend. The fee covers the workshop instruction, workshop materials, and supper. The workshop has been pre-approved by the Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association and the Iowa League of Cities for credits toward certification. The location and date for the workshop in our area is below:

**April 3 – Clear Lake – Best Western  
Holiday Lodge, 2023 7th Ave**

To register for the event, create a user account and sign-in at the link below:

**[https://  
registration.extension.iastate.edu/  
emc00/PublicSignIn.aspx?  
&SessionID=ejkejpf9fhofbkflfa3  
&Lang=\\*](https://registration.extension.iastate.edu/emc00/PublicSignIn.aspx?&SessionID=ejkejpf9fhofbkflfa3&Lang=*)**

New board or commission members? ISU Extension will conduct a workshop tailored to your community's needs anytime throughout the year. Contact ISU Extension at (515) 231-6513 or [ejchr@iastate.edu](mailto:ejchr@iastate.edu) with questions or comments.

## TRUMP NOMINATES FTA ADMINISTRATOR



A former U.S. Congresswoman and current assistant director of Public Works for the City of Norfolk, Virginia has

been nominated to lead the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The White House announced that Thelma Drake had been nominated to be Federal Transit Administrator. The position oversees 3,000 transit agencies nationwide.

Drake has previously served as the director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation. Drake is also a former member of the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board. She served two terms in Congress representing parts of Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and the Eastern Shore, where she served on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Before that, Drake was in the Virginia House of Delegates, where she was on the Transportation Committee.

The FTA has not had a confirmed administrator since January 2014.

