

NIACOG NEWS

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NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Oct. - Nov. 2016

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ASSISTANCE TO FIRE- FIGHTERS GRANT



FEMA

The Department of Homeland Security has announced the availability of funding for the FY 2016 Assistance to Firefighters Grant. The application period will open on October 11 and closes on November 18, 2016 at 4:00 PM CST.

Fire departments, fire districts and non-affiliated EMS transport organizations are eligible to apply for the competitive program. Previous grant recipients are eligible to apply again. There are two categories of funding for this program. The funding categories are as follows:



- **Operations and Safety:** Eligible activities include: training, equipment, personal protective equipment, wellness and fitness, and fire station modifications.
- **Vehicle Acquisition:** Acquiring additional fire-fighting or EMS vehicles,

including apparatus, or refurbishing apparatus currently owned.

Grantee Responsibilities Include:

- Provide at least a 5% local match for jurisdictions of 20,000 residents or fewer and 10% for over 20,000 residents.
- System for Award Management (SAM) Registration.
- Register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database (if awarded).
- Comply with requirements of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Report to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

For additional information, visit the AFG website at www.fema.gov/firegrants.

Staff at the North Iowa Area Council of Governments can assist departments in our region with writing and submitting grant applications. This service is provided at a nominal fee of \$300.

If your department is interested in submitting an application or you have questions regarding this program, please contact Matt at the NIACOG Office.



FOREST CITY AWARDED \$10,000 FOR HEALTHY IOWANS AWARD

NIACOG was recently notified that they have been selected by the Iowa Department of Health



(IDPH) to facilitate development of physical activity and nutrition strategies through the Healthy Iowans Program for Forest City. A financial award of \$10,000 is available to assist in the implementation of projects selected by Forest city community members. A steering committee of interested citizens will collaborate to determine just how these funds will be spent.

NIACOG has previously been involved in Healthy Iowans projects in Northwood, Lake Mills and Charles City and looks forward to working with the Forest City residents over the coming months. Projects developed through these coalitions have included purchase and installation of new school playground equipment, development of a Safe Routes to School Plan, repair of a trail bridge, support for healthy snack options at school concession stands, Farmers Market advertising and activities, purchase of GPS equipment for geocaching, funding of senior physical fitness classes, and purchase and installation of outdoor physical education equipment. Many of these projects included collaborations between groups that realized they shared common goals but who might not otherwise have worked together on a project.

Anyone from the Forest City area interested in wellness activities, supporting physical activity, and healthy eating is invited to participate. Contact Matt O'Brien at the NIACOG office 641.423.0491 or mobrien@niacog.org for additional information or to find out more about joining this process or serving on the steering committee.

WATER/SEWER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT CHANGES

Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) has implemented changes for the

2017 Community Development Block Grant application cycle that apply only to water and sewer projects. Applications will now be submitted quarterly: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. A maximum of 25 applications will be accepted per quarter, with funds available each quarter. If all the funds are not used, they will be rolled over to the next quarter. Unsuccessful applications are allowed to re-submit the next quarter, and no new public hearing is necessary.

If a project requires a DNR permit, sewer projects need an approved facility plan letter submitted and water projects must have an approved preliminary engineering plan letter submitted.

In addition, if DNR SRF is the local match, the project must be on the approved IUPD. If USDA-RD is the local match, a USDA letter of conditions will be submitted with the application.

Please contact Chris Diggins at the NIACOG office at cdiggins@niacog.org with any questions or to start on an application. Now is not too early to start.

DERELICT BUILDING ASSESSMENTS

Almost all of NIACOG's cities have abandoned and/or highly deteriorated former commercial buildings in downtown or



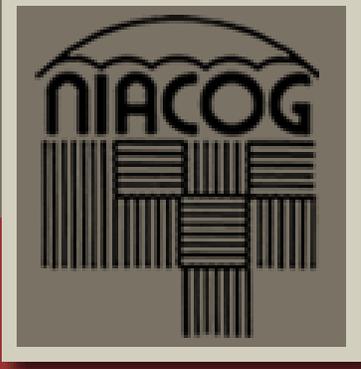
other areas of town. In many cases, the municipality is unwilling to do anything about it due to the concern over environmental hazards such as asbestos. This year the Iowa DNR is offering a unique program, for cities with a population of less than 5,000, to receive a grant to complete environmental and structural engineering assessments. These grants can fund the full or partial cost of an asbestos inspection and report, a structural engineering assessment, or other environmental assessments, so the municipality will know what to expect when proceeding with potential renovation or demolition of a building. If you have questions or would like assistance with an application, please call the NIACOG office.

APPLY FOR SPECIAL ROUND OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUNDING

Historic photographs, manuscripts, newspapers and vital records document Iowa's past. To help Iowans care for them, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs has launched a special round of historical resource project grants. The special round of grants comes in the documentary collections category of the Historical Resource Development Program, which provides matching grants to preserve, conserve, interpret and educate the public about historical resources.

Local governments, nonprofits, individuals, businesses and tribes can submit applications online through Oct. 3 at www.iowahistory.slideroom.com. For complete guidelines, go to <https://iowaculture.gov/about-us/about/grants/historical-resource-development-program>.





2016 BUDGET, EXAMINATIONS & ACCOUNTING FOR MUNICIPALITIES

If you have not been able to attend training specifically designed for city budgets, the new examination requirements, or fund accounting this is the training for you. Or maybe it's been a while and you want to make sure you're doing it right!

This hands on training will aide in accurately completing required financial reports and implementing proper internal control procedures. Limited staff and resources make taking off work and traveling difficult so ISU Extension is taking the training on the road. "2016 On-the-Road: Budgeting, Examinations & Accounting for Municipalities" has been designed to provide hands on trainings convenient for those who are new, part time or have other daytime obligations. Topics covered include the value of a chart of accounts; understanding fund accounting and how budgets, financial reports and regular reconciliations can lead to good audits and examinations that are required by state law.

The training sessions closest to our region are on Tuesday, October 4th from 2:00 – 8:30 p.m. in Iowa Falls, or Thursday, October 27th from 2:00 – 8:30 p.m. in Cherokee. A meal is included in the \$65 registration fee.

For more information please contact Cindy Kendall at (515)294-1844 or to register online, please go to <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/OSLGP/OTR>

TOURISM IN IOWA GENERATED \$8 BILLION IN EXPENDITURES

August 30, 2016 (*Des Moines*) — Tourism-related expenditures in Iowa in 2015 totaled \$8.06 billion, according to a new study from the U.S. Travel Association. This marks the second consecutive year expenditures have topped the \$8 billion mark.



Additional data from "The Economic Impact of Travel on Iowa Counties" shows travel-generated state tax receipts at a record \$466.7 million, a 25 percent increase over 2014. Tourism in Iowa also supported 67,400 jobs, comprising 4.2 percent of total state non-farm employment in 2015.

"Lower gas prices in 2015 helped draw in more travelers who significantly increased their spending on lodging, restaurants, shopping and entertainment," said Shawna Lode, manager of the Iowa Tourism Office.

"We also saw user sessions on traveliowa.com set a record at almost 1.3 million. Requests for our travel guide were up almost 20 percent. Both of those are good indicators of people making plans to travel Iowa," Lode said.

The Iowa Tourism Office is part of the Iowa Economic Development Authority. For more information about Iowa tourism, visit traveliowa.com, call 800.345.IOWA or stop at any Iowa Welcome Center.

HEALTHIEST STATE INITIATIVE



On October 5th, the Healthiest State Initiative is hosting their Annual Walk. Help them achieve their goal of having an organized walk in all 99 counties! To register online, visit: www.iowahealthieststate.com

STEP IT UP IOWANS!!

Calendar of Events

October

- 10th – NIACOG Executive Committee – NIACOG Office, 12:00 PM
- 12th – Hazmat – NIACOG Office, 1:00 PM
- 12th – Transportation Policy Board – NIACOG Office, 2:30 PM

November

- 8th – Election Day
- 11th – Veterans Day – Office Closed
- 18th – City Clerk's Association Meeting – NIACOG Office, 9:30 AM
- 24th-25th – Thanksgiving Holiday – Office Closed



THANKSGIVING!



WORKFORCE HOUSING TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

Lately, cities and economic development staff are often asking, “What grants are available for developing multiple housing units or homes for our workforce that do not require low-income occupants?”

The best answer to that question is now ‘tax incentives’, including the Workforce Housing Tax Incentive Program (WHTIC) and the Historic Tax Credit Program (historic buildings only). This article will focus on the Workforce program. The Workforce Housing Tax Incentive Program has two components:

Up to \$15,000 per home/unit in the form of an investment tax credit. The credit can be no more than 10% of the investment directly related to the construction or rehabilitation of the housing. The tax credit is based on the new investment used for the first \$150,000 of value for each home or unit. This tax credit is earned when the home or unit is certified for occupancy. Please note that with this option, the developer must front all of the costs and then be reimbursed when filing income tax or selling the credits to someone else (less a fee charged by the buyer). The credits can be used over multiple years until depleted (up to 5 years).

Refund of state sales (6%), service and/or use taxes paid during construction. (Very roughly estimated at \$6,000 per home/unit for the state sales tax.)

The Workforce Housing Tax Incentive Program (WHTIP) has taken the place of the former Housing Enterprise Zone program.

Eligibility

To be eligible for WHTIP the project must meet the following requirements.

- The project site(s) must meet one of four criteria:
 - Housing development located on a grayfield (formerly used site), brownfield site, or possibly infill lots – IEDA must agree with infill status.
 - Repair or rehabilitation of dilapidated

housing stock (must have been vacant for at least 6 months)

- Upper story housing development
 - New construction in a greenfield (a site that is on the edge of the city and has never been built upon) - A Housing Needs Assessment is required for greenfield development sites, and it must prove a need for workforce housing.
 - The developer must build or rehabilitate at least four (4) single-family homes or at least one (1) multi-family building containing three or more units or at least two upper story units.
 - Total project costs may not exceed \$200,000 per unit for new construction or \$250,000 per unit for historic rehabilitation.
 - Total program benefits are limited to a maximum of \$1 million per recipient.
 - The housing project must be completed within three years (36 months) of award.
 - IEDA must approve the developer’s application for Workforce Housing Tax Credit prior to project initiation (no construction work).
- The City must provide a resolution in support of the project and a minimum of \$1,000 per housing unit as a match (cash or land).

Process

Although the program has no specific deadline, applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis with a 3-day window to make requested application corrections. About 50% of applications are approved. (Denied applicants can re-apply.) Once the application is added to the waitlist (‘registered’), the developer has 3 years to complete the project.

The actual amount of the credit is determined after project completion when the amount of the actual new investment can be documented.

The State is unable to issue an award letter for the credits until the respective fiscal year of the tax credits begins. The 2017 credits have been allocated; the state is now allocating fiscal year 2018 tax credits.

Follow Up

Contact Myrtle (641-423-0491 x16 or mnelson@niacog.org) with questions.

BID NOTICE PUBLICATION CHANGES

Cities procuring services are no longer required to publish bid notices in the local media as of July 1. New legislation requires governmental entities post notice in three separate online locations no less than 13 and no more than 45 days before bids are due.

Notices must be posted in a relevant contractor plan room service with statewide circulation, a relevant construction lead generating service with statewide circulation, and an Internet site sponsored by either a governmental entity or a statewide association that represents the governmental entity. To satisfy the first two requirements, cities may work with a plan room service to ensure that the required bid information is posted correctly. Additional information on plan room services can be found online at:

www.iowaleague.org/members/pages/projectplansspecifications.aspx

In addition, to help cities comply with posting in a construction plan room and lead generating service, Master Builder of Iowa hosts The Construction Update Network, www.mbionline.com

The third requirement may be satisfied by posting their notice on the Iowa League of Cities website classified section.