



May 2022

East Central Iowa Council of Governments

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Disaster Recovery Funds to Be Spent in Linn and Benton Counties



The State of Iowa was awarded \$57.5 million in Federal Disaster Recovery Funds as a result of the August 10, 2020 derecho storm. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) is currently taking public comment on a draft plan for these funds. The State intends to use 80 percent of the funds (over \$47 million) in Linn County and 20

percent (over \$16 million) in Benton, Marshall, and Tama Counties. The draft plan proposes a majority of these funds be used to create or rehabilitate housing, with additional portions going toward tree replacement and generator purchases for critical facilities.

A virtual public hearing will be held on Thursday, May 26 at 6:00 p.m. The Draft Action Plan, information about the hearing, and opportunity to provide comments are all available on the IEDA [website](http://www.ieda.org). Contact Housing & Community Development Director Tracey Achenbach (tracey.achenbach@ecicog.org) or Grant Specialist Paula Mitchell (paula.mitchell@ecicog.org) if you have questions or potential projects in Linn and Benton Counties.

Take a Tour of Iowa Watershed Approach Projects!

On June 14, the Iowa Watershed Approach (IWA) is hosting a bus tour of projects in Benton County. Elected officials and media

representatives are encouraged to attend and celebrate IWA's successes. The tour will begin at 11:45 at Kacena Farms in Vinton with a panel discussion and catered lunch, concluding at 4:30. Event organizers include: IEDA, Iowa Flood Center, ISU, WHKS & Co., and local Middle Cedar River Watershed stakeholders. ECICOG provides CDBG administration for the Middle Cedar Watershed.



The IWA was funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2016 to reduce flooding and improve water quality throughout the state. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Grant Programs at HUD is planning to join the tour. Register for the event [here](#) or learn more about the IWA [here](#). Contact ECICOG Environmental Services Director Jennifer Fencil at Jennifer.fencil@ecicog.org with questions.

Johnson County Purchasing Flood-Prone Properties



Johnson County was awarded grant funding to purchase three repetitive loss properties in partnership with Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management and FEMA through the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program. These properties repeatedly suffer from flooding due to their location in the Iowa

River floodway. ECICOG wrote the County's application and is administering the grant. From appraisal to removal, ECICOG is working with homeowners while managing services, contracts, proposals, and grant timelines. Purchase offers are currently being written, thanks in part to additional funding to assist with a fair purchase price in the current housing market.

To qualify for Hazard Mitigation Assistance funding, a county, city, or school district must have a project included in a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan. If you have a potentially qualified project or questions about your county's hazard mitigation plan, contact Environmental Specialist Alicia Presto at alicia.presto@ecicog.org.

Calling All Commuters and Employers: CorridorRides Can Save You Money!

Gas prices, maintenance costs, insurance premiums – commuters are seeing the cost of their drive increasing across the board. ECICOG has two ways to help relieve

commuting costs: the 380 Express and the VanPool program. The 380 Express bus runs Monday through Friday, with six stops in Cedar Rapids, Coralville, and Iowa City to provide an alternative for I-380 commuters. [Learn more here.](#)

The CorridorRides Vanpool program is another option – a simple, sustainable and cost-effective method of commuting to work. Vehicles are provided for groups of 7-15 commuters to ride together at a reduced rate.

These vehicles come with maintenance packages, paid insurance costs, and roadside assistance. In March, ECICOG announced that new VanPool groups formed by September 2022 will receive two months free! Two companies are in the process of forming CorridorRides VanPools, making nearly a dozen commuters' lives easier.



If you are a commuter or if you employ commuters, the VanPool program can help you! [View the webinar recording here](#) or contact Transit Administrator Brock Grenis at brock.grenis@ecicog.org to learn more about the VanPool program.

City of Coggon Adds Urban Agricultural District



ECICOG recently partnered with the City of Coggon to amend their zoning ordinance. The City is adding an urban agricultural district, an appropriate use of land not yet incorporated into urban uses (housing and commercial buildings). The district's requirements are more conducive to farming operations while maintaining compatibility with neighboring urban development – e.g. allowing larger

accessory buildings but restricting livestock. This is consistent with Iowa Smart Planning Principles, which call for the protection, preservation, and restoration of agricultural land. The City of Coggon also added an updated zoning map which is easier to read and includes the urban agricultural district.

Contact Community Development Specialist Tom Gruis at tom.gruis@ecicog.org to learn how to make your city code more useful for staff, elected officials, and residents.

**Celebrate Your Community and Submit to the
#lowansUnite Video Contest**

Iowa communities are invited to participate in the #IowansUnite video contest by the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Finance Authority. Cities, municipalities, and economic development organizations are encouraged to submit videos celebrating the importance of small businesses within their community. Videos must be a minute or less, feature local residents, and incorporate elements of the community such as storefronts, landmarks, or main street districts.



[Click here](#) to read submission instructions and video guidelines. Videos will be accepted May 16 through June 21. The winning community will receive a custom mural designed and installed by Iowa-based artist Ben Schuh.

Funding Opportunities

ECICOG staff are available to help with a wide variety of grants. Visit [the Contact Us page](#) on our website to see our staff list or contact Communications Specialist Brittany Rempe at brittany.rempe@ecicog.org.



Destination Iowa

Applications accepted until funds expended

Iowa saw record use of outdoor amenities such as state and county parks over the last two years, but a decrease in visitor spending and hospitality employment. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)'s program Destination Iowa is a \$100 million investment in attracting visitors and new residents to the state. Intended to bolster quality of life in Iowa's communities, the new effort will provide grants for shovel-ready attraction projects. Cities, counties, nonprofits, and other organizations can apply, and applications will be accepted through the calendar year or until the funds are expended. Learn more at the [IEDA website](#).

Meet In Iowa

Applications reviewed upon receipt

Receive a one-time reimbursement of eligible hard costs for your organization's 2022 meeting, conference, festival, sporting, or other event through the Meet In Iowa program from the IEDA and Iowa Tourism Office. The goal of the program is to attract, retain, and expand in-person overnight events. Event organizers can receive up to \$25,000 in reimbursement for costs associated with meetings between May 1 and December 31, 2022. Learn more about eligible costs at the [Meet In Iowa website](#).





**National Trust for
Historic Preservation®**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

National Trust Preservation Funds

Due June 1

Grants from National Trust Preservation Funds (NTPF) are intended to encourage preservation at the local level by providing seed money for preservation

projects. These grants help stimulate public discussion, enable local groups to gain required technical expertise, introduce the public to preservation concepts and techniques, and encourage financial participation by the private sector. Visit the [National Trust For Historic Preservation website](#) to find additional information.

Enhance Iowa Sports Tourism

Due June 1

The new Enhance Iowa Sports Tourism program provides financial assistance for projects that market or promote sporting events in Iowa. The sporting events can be at professional, collegiate, and amateur levels, and the promotional or marketing activities can occur for up to two years. Cities, counties, economic development organizations, and other not-for-profit organizations can apply. The program will cover up to 50% of eligible promotion costs, including advertising, payment to vendors, equipment rentals, and more. Visit the [IEDA website](#) for more details about the program and how to apply.



Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund

Due June 1

Working through many partners in Iowa, the Living Roadway Trust Fund supports integrated roadside vegetation management and educates the public on the benefits, use, and care of roadside vegetation, including native plants. Counties and cities are eligible.

Learn more about the application process at the [Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund website](#).

State Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program

Due July 1

This program provides tax benefits to developers to provide housing in Iowa communities, focusing especially on those projects using abandoned, empty, or dilapidated properties. There is a total of \$25 million available, with \$15 million set aside for small communities in Benton, Iowa, Jones, and Washington Counties. There is an additional developer tax initiative up to \$150,000 in value. Visit [the IEDA website](#) for eligible project types and program requirements.



CDBG - Water & Sewer

Due July 1

The program is funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) with the goal of providing economic opportunities for people, especially those of low- and moderate income. Funds awarded through this annual competitive program assist cities and counties with projects such as sanitary sewer system improvements, water system improvements, water and wastewater treatment facility projects, storm sewer projects related to sanitary sewer system improvements and rural water connections. Visit the [IEDA website](#) for more details on fund amounts and qualifications.

Solid Waste Alternative Program

Due July 1



The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) works to reduce the amount of waste landfilled in Iowa through the Solid Waste Alternative Program (SWAP). SWAP provides financial assistance toward source reduction, recycling, and education projects such as installing waste reduction equipment, developing educational materials, or purchasing recycled content products. Additional information about eligibility can be found at the [Iowa DNR website](#).

State Recreational Trails Program

Due July 1

The state recreational trails program (SRT) provides funds to establish recreational trails throughout Iowa for the use and enjoyment of the public. Federal, state, or local agencies can apply to fund the acquisition, construction, or improvement of public trails. Visit the [Iowa Department of Transportation \(DOT\) website](#) for more information. Contact Transportation Director Mary Rump at <https://mary.rump@ecicog.org> with questions about the SRT program.



Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning

Opens July 1, Due September 15

The Community Visioning Program assists Iowa communities of 10,000 or fewer with surface transportation improvements such as providing pedestrian or bicycle facilities, beautifying routes, preserving historic sites, or converting unused rail corridors to trails. The program takes communities from identifying their surface transportation needs and developing a community vision to initiating project development. Communities that lack planning resources within the city government are prioritized. Learn more at the [Community Visioning website](#).

Theisen's More for You Community Grants

Opens July 15, Due August 31

The Theisen's More For You grant program is intended to directly serve the basic needs of families and children. Programs that assist basic health needs, children's needs, educational programming, food security, or youth services will be prioritized. To date, Theisen's has awarded over \$3 million to their communities. Any community within 60 miles of a Theisen's store is eligible to apply. [Click here](#) to find applications and more details about the program.



Traffic Safety Improvement Program

Due August 15

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT)'s Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP) provides funds for roadway safety improvements, traffic control devices, research, studies, or public information initiatives. Cities and counties can submit applications for up to \$500,000 per project. Learn more on the [DOT's website](#) or contact Mary Rump at <https://mary.rump@ecicog.org>.

REAP City Parks and Open Spaces

Due August 15

This program's intent is to protect open spaces, in turn enhancing Iowa residents' quality of life, supporting

economic development efforts, and taking precautions to care for the environment. The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) City Parks and Open Spaces funds are typically used for parkland expansion and multi-purpose recreation developments. Because these grants do not require a local match, the program is competitive. Visit [the REAP website](#) or contact Environmental Services Director Jen Fencil at jennifer.fencil@ecicog.org to learn more.



FEMA

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

Due December 23

As part of the Presidential disaster declaration from December 2021's severe storms, the State of Iowa will receive FEMA disaster funding under the Hazard

Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The State is accepting Notice of Interests (NOIs) for projects that will reduce or eliminate losses from future natural disasters. These include but are not limited to:

- Property acquisition/elevation, electric utility hardening, detention basins, warning sirens
- Elevate/protect wastewater lift stations, backup generators
- Tornado safe rooms, small flood barriers

Projects must be included in a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan. Full grant applications are due by December 23, 2022. Contact Alicia Presto at alicia.presto@ecicog.org for information about the NOI process.

Planning Further Ahead?

[Access to Healthy Foods Wellmark Grant](#)

Due September 21

[Rural Child Care Market Study Program](#)

Due December 1

[Rural Innovation Grant Program](#)

Due December 1

[Rural Return Grant Program](#)

Due December 1

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