

THE WINDMILL

2020 Community Development Block Grant Programs Now Open

One of the most popular programs in our region is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Cities program. This program provides large grants up to \$600,000 in some cases for community development projects. There are four programs in the annual competition this year, besides the quarterly Water/Sewer Fund. They are as follows:

- **Downtown Revitalization Fund** – improves private (non-public) building facades and related work of deteriorated buildings
- **Community Facilities and Services Fund** – builds, rehabilitates, or expands buildings for essential community facilities, such as childcare centers, special needs facilities, and others
- **Housing Fund** – supports various housing projects
- **Sustainable Communities Fund** – supports unique and innovative projects that impact historic properties, green infrastructure (including storm water), and other sustainability projects

There are significant changes to the programs this year, especially related to the Housing Fund. This program will no longer offer full rehabilitation of single-family homes. Instead, five new programs are created: upper story housing, exterior improvements to single-family homes, energy system improvements to single-family homes, architectural barrier improvements (handicap accessibility) to single-family homes, and homebuyer (down payment) assistance funds. Most of them have open window due dates but we need to start on the applications this spring.

We will be sending out a “CDBG Alert” blast to targeted communities in the coming weeks to inform them of the details of these programs. Please contact Jeremy, Joel, or Stu for more details about CDBG.

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A View From the First Tee



I will take this opportunity to wish you a Happy St. Patrick's Day!

As I indicated last month, on March 25th the Board of Directors will hold SICOG's 46th annual meeting. We have prepared our Annual Report and will make it available on our website: www.sicog.com following the annual meeting. Also, look for it in your email or regular mailbox shortly after posting on the website.

The State of Iowa, through the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA), receives millions of dollars each year from the U.S. Department of HUD to invest in projects that benefit Low/Moderate Income (LMI) persons in Iowa communities. As a condition of receiving this funding, the State must present a consolidated plan to HUD every 5 years. The planning process (data collection and input) for the 2020-2024 consolidated plan has been completed. What that means is there are new rules for the CDBG program and it's various uses. See the related article on the front page of this newsletter for details of the program changes.

I have had several articles about the Council of Governments' initiative "Homes For Iowa." Good news - the first house constructed by inmates of Newton Correctional Facility, as part of a rehabilitation program working in tandem to address the state's affordable housing needs, was finally shipped last week. See the related article.

Here is a side note: on February 13, 2020, I celebrated my 40 years working for the great people of southern Iowa. Since it was a Thursday, I brought in some fancy cupcakes and cookies. Since I have thoroughly enjoyed my work here at SICOG, they were decorated with red hearts. I thought that was appropriate.

I would like to thank the members of the SICOG County Boards, the SICOG Project Board and the SICOG Executive Board for all of their hard work, dedication and commitment to this area over the past year. In next month's newsletter, I will report on the election of officers for the new year. I look forward to working with all individuals to create new and needed programs for the benefit of the area.

Your SICOG staff was swamped with requests for funding during the month of February with nearly 20 applications requesting over a million dollars in funding for very needed projects. We will continue to provide the excellent services we have in the past.

Finally I want to highlight that the USDA is making grants available under the [Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant Program](#) These grants help rural communities with limited resources and staff access USDA funding for essential community facilities. See the related article.

A personal side note: wedding plans are coming together nicely. I have a new suit that I am thinking I might not wear because I look so good and do not want to take away from the bride.



As always, if there is anything I can do, please

let me know.

Our phone number is 641.782.8491.

Remember, we are working for you.



Timothy Ostroski



SICOG Executive Board Meeting of March 3, 2020

Chairman Christensen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. with the following members present: Birt, Christensen, Davidson, Lesan, McCann, Minnick, Riley, Trickey, and Twombly. Staff present: Ostroski and Brimm.

Twombly made a motion to approve the agenda. Davidson seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried. Davidson made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2020 meeting. Minnick seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Riley made a motion to approve the financial reports for the month of January. Lesan seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Trickey made a motion to approve and file the audit report. McCann seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Davidson made a motion to approve and file the Form 990. McCann seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Trickey made a motion to approve submitting the EDA application for continued planning funds. Davidson seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Other items discussed included: Partnership Program, CEDS, Annual Project Board Meetings, Annual Meeting, Building Renovations, Grant Report, Budget – New Contracts, Health Insurance, D & O Insurance, and State Legislature.

McCann made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:34 p.m. Twombly seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried. Minutes Submitted by Brimm

2020 Draft CEDS

The 2020 SICOG Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is now available for public review and comment. You may view the CEDS at:

<http://www.sicog.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Draft-CEDS-Document.pdf>

The purpose of this document is to provide a capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic entities (individuals, firms, industries), helps to create a positive environment for regional economic prosperity. The SICOG region are all member governments within the counties of Adair, Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union. Please direct all comments and questions to Stu Burzette by email burzette@sicog.com or by phone 641-782-8491 by March 25, 2020. Thank you.



Events Calendar

March 10, 2020

RPA / 14 ATURA Policy Board Meeting, 1:00 p.m., Jamie's Coffee Mill & Deli, Mount Ayr

March 25

Annual Legislative Breakfast, Des Moines

March 25

SICOG Annual Meeting, 1:00 p.m.



ATURA Transportation Planning

SICOG serves as transportation planning staff to the five-county ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation Region (Adams, Adair, Taylor, Ringgold and Union Counties)

The next meeting of the RPA-14/ATURA Policy Board will be held on Tuesday, March 10th at Jamie's Coffee Mill and Deli in Mount Ayr. A Public Hearing will be held at 1:30 pm regarding the adoption of the RPA-14/ATURA Final FY2021-2026 Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). The agenda also includes the City of Corning's request for \$120,000 in TAP funding for a trail project. The public is invited to attend and provide comments.

Contact Stu Burzette by email burzette@sicog.com or by phone 641-782-8491 for additional information.

USDA Announces Technical Assistance and Training Grant Funds Available

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced that USDA has grants available through the [Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant Program](#)

The Agency will make grants to public bodies and private nonprofit corporations to **provide associations technical assistance and/or training with respect to essential community facilities programs**. Funds may be used to help rural communities identify financial resources, improve community facilities management functions, and prepare reports, survey and applications.

Grant funds are limited and are awarded through a competitive process. The maximum award is \$150,000. Contact your [local RD office](#) for more information and application deadlines.

The USDA has also made \$7.5 million in technical assistance and training grants available for disaster recovery to help rural communities continue their recovery from the devastating effects of hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, floods and other natural disasters. Eligible projects must be in a rural area of 20,000 or less where FEMA provided a notice declaring a major disaster. USDA does not provide funding directly to individuals under this program.

Contact your [nearest USDA office](#) for more information and application deadlines.

2020 SICOG Partnerships

PLATINUM (\$2,500)

- City of Osceola
- Clarke County Development Corporation

DIAMOND (\$1,500)

- First National Bank of Afton & Creston
- Iowa State Savings Bank of Corning, Creston, Diagonal & Lenox
- Lenox Municipal Utilities

GOLD (\$1,000)

- Garden & Associates, Ltd. of Creston & Oskaloosa

SILVER (\$500)

- American State Bank of Lamoni, Osceola & Winterset
- Corning Municipal Utilities
- First National Bank of Osceola
- Gilbert True Value of Leon & Osceola
- Greater Regional Medical Center of Creston
- JEO Consulting Group of Ankeny
- Michael Foods of Lenox
- North Stone Apartments & Corkrean Construction of Winterset
- PCSB Bank in Clarinda, Corning, Creston, Lenox & Mount Ayr

BRONZE (\$250)

- Adams Community Economic Development Corporation
- Akin Building Centers of Corning & Creston
- City State Bank of Mount Ayr
- Clarke County Hospital
- Clarke Electric Cooperative of Osceola
- Community Development Corporation of Greenfield
- Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Orient, St. Charles & Winterset
- FNB Bank of Fontanelle & Greenfield
- Great Western Bank of Creston
- Lenox Development Corporation
- Ringgold County Development Corporation
- Saylor Realty, LLC of Osceola
- Snyder & Associates, Inc. of Ankeny and Atlantic
- Southwestern Community College
- TS Bank of Corning
- Union State Bank of Greenfield
- Union State Bank of Winterset

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Upcoming SICOG Annual Meeting



The Board of Directors will be holding SICOG's 46th Annual Meeting on Wednesday, March 25, at 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the SICOG office in Creston. City and County Officials and project board members are welcome to attend.

BUILD Grants Provide Capital for Major Street and Bridge Projects

Local governments and related subdivisions of government are eligible for grants from \$1 to \$25 million to complete major unique transportation projects. Non-federal funds must fund at least 20% of the project. This grant has funded several rural projects in Iowa in the past five to ten years. Eligible projects for BUILD Transportation grants are surface transportation capital projects that include, but are not limited to: highway, bridge, or other road projects; public transportation projects; passenger and freight rail transportation projects; and intermodal projects. Various kinds of transportation planning activities are also eligible. Projects in Opportunity Zones receive special consideration. Final applications are due May 18th. If you have a unique or innovative project idea, please contact SICOG by April 1st to discuss if this grant may be of benefit to you.

Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines Offers Housing Funds

If your community needs quality affordable housing, the FHLB's Affordable Housing program is worth exploring and SICOG has extensive experience with it. The program offers grants to member banks, which includes most of the banks in the region, to be re-granted to "sponsors," which are local governments and non-profits and potentially some private developers who build, rehab, or support local housing. Housing impacted must be "affordable," but this does not necessarily mean low-income housing. Projects may include but are not limited to giving forgivable loans to homeowners to make home repairs, building new homes, financing housing projects of various kinds, renovating apartment buildings, converting old schools or upper story areas to housing, and more. The Federal Home Loan Bank offers technical assistance from now through the end of April so please contact SICOG very soon if you are interested in a housing project of about any kind. We'll walk you through the grant and its requirements and give you an honest appraisal of application success. Final applications are due June 1st.

Homes For Iowa Delivers First House

The first house assembled by inmates of the Newton Correctional Facility as part of a rehabilitation program collaborating to address the state's affordable housing needs was shipped last week. Trucks hauled the handmade home on wheels to its new foundation in Jefferson. Homes For Iowa is a project which officially launched last summer. Inmates of the Newton Correctional Facility are tasked with building homes for Iowans valued between \$100,000 to \$120,000 and in the process are offered skill sets to be used outside of prison to re-integrate into a community and hopefully reduce repeat offenders.

As a concept, Homes For Iowa essentially works two-fold by helping two sets of populations at once. The homes created from this project can be shipped all across the state, especially in areas where there is a shortage of affordable homes for families in need. Inmates are able to focus on constructive work and they like learning skills they can use and put into practice in the real world. The program is expected to be scaled up as time goes on, allowing even more people to participate.



Approaching Grant Opportunities

The following are deadlines for popular grants our members and associated organizations should consider. **The SICOG due date is a date when the applicant should have all relevant information to SICOG to finish the application on time.** SICOG has the staff and experience to assist our communities in submitting the best possible applications for these funds. **There are many other sources, so if you have a project, please contact us.**

Source/Program	Funding Uses	SICOG Due Date
Keep Iowa Beautiful Beautification Grant	Beautification programs – vegetation planting, painting and general landscaping; public nuisance abatement; litter prevention and recycling education, implementation, public awareness (Eligible: Cities and non-profits under 5,000 population)	March 15
Keep Iowa Beautiful Build With Bags program	Grants that award up to \$2,000 toward the purchase and installation of recycled material benches, containers, and the like for parks, open spaces and school playgrounds. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	March 15
AARP Livable Communities Community Challenge	Grants for temporary demonstrations, permanent improvements, and innovative programming that make an area more livable. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	March 20 (see article)
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (nearly \$4,000,000 Iowa allocation)	Hazard mitigation plans and projects, including tornado safe rooms, building and utility retrofits, minor flood control projects, elevations and relocations of buildings in flood hazard areas and storm water management projects (Eligible: local governments and some nonprofits)	April 1
Iowa Arts Project Grant	1:1 matched grants for the creation and preservation of new artwork, development of an arts experience, or formation of an arts education program (Eligible: local governments, schools, artists, nonprofits)	April 1
Iowa Capacity Building Grant	Small grants support the general operations of cultural and arts programs. (Eligible: nonprofit arts and cultural organizations with limited budgets)	April 1
Iowa Cultural Heritage Project Grant	Supports community projects that creates jobs for Iowans and provides access to a cultural heritage experience (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	April 1
Iowa Great Places Designation	Designation because the community has or is working on notable cultural and tourism efforts. This is for new designation only, for future grant opportunities. Those grants open in autumn. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	April 1
Iowa Cultural and Entertainment District Designation	This designation recognizes well-identified, walkable, mixed-use, compact areas of a city or county in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor. To be designated, it must already be an area where arts and cultural activities thrive. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, for-profits)	April 1
Iowa Historical Resource Development Program	Larger grants to preserve, conserve, interpret, enhance, and educate the public about Iowa's historical assets. Categories: documentary collections, historic preservation and museums. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, for-profits, individuals)	April 1
Iowa Country School Grant Program	Small grants to assist in the preservation, maintenance, interpretation, and educational activities of one-room or two-room country schools. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, for-profits, individuals)	April 1
USDA Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Grant	Awarded to providers of assistance to communities and organizations working on USDA Community Facility projects. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	April 1
Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines Affordable Housing Program	Housing subsidies, development, and rehabilitation for owners and renters. (Eligible: local governments and nonprofits in partnership with FHLB member banks)	April 1 (see article)
BUILD Grant	Major transportation projects that transform communities, such as “complete streets,” major bridge improvements, and similar projects. (Eligible: local governments)	April 1 (see article)
2020 CDBG Programs	This includes all the Community Development Block Grant programs except the Water/Sewer Fund, which is quarterly. CDBG also funds downtown façade grants, housing grants, community facilities grants, and storm water grants. (Eligible: local governments)	April 15 (see article)
Wellmark Foundation Small MATCH Grant	Grant funds for wellness, fitness, recreation, and access to healthy foods. Funds programs and capital projects that improve health and wellness. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits)	May 1
Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)	Tourism, recreation, and entertainment capital projects, such as museums, libraries, swimming pools, trails, large recreational areas, amphitheaters, etc. (Eligible: local governments, nonprofits, some private entities)	May 1
USDA Households Water Well Grant Program	Funds grants to organizations that create RLFs to lend to private property owners who need to build wells on farms and other areas where potable water is unavailable. (Eligible: non-profits)	May 1 (tentative)
CDBG Water and Sewer Program	Water and wastewater capital improvements: plants, mains, lagoons, pumps, towers, etc. (Eligible: local governments)	May 15 (next quarterly round)

As always, SICOG provides this un-exhaustive list of grants to generate ideas about possible projects and provide funding guidance. Grant funding sources are increasingly interested in creative solutions to problems and many are willing to support not only construction, but also operations. If your community has a problem that outside funding might address, please contact your SICOG office. We would be glad to help and can attend a local meeting at no cost to our members discuss the project or idea.

From the Planner's Desk...

Send Your Planning & Zoning Staff / Commission to the Planning & Zoning Workshop

Once again this spring, Iowa State University Extension offers the Introduction to Planning and Zoning for Local Officials workshop. This is a great one-night deep immersion into the basic features and concepts of zoning, land use planning, and other land use regulations. For a few hours of your time, your community will be better equipped to plan and regulate development as well as encourage the right kind of development to your city and county. SICOG staff have attended this program in previous years and strongly recommend all cities and counties that have or may soon create zoning, subdivision regulations, nuisance regulations, and other ordinances of this nature to attend, especially if your community has not done so in the past three years. Zoning and land use law changes and new court cases bring new policies to the field. New trends, such as the rapid growth of wind turbines, also complicate planning and zoning. The workshop also offers certification credits for the Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association and the Iowa League of Cities.

The closest workshop in our region will be held in Ankeny on March 24th. To learn more or register, visit: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/intro-planning-and-zoning-workshops> There is a \$55 fee, which includes a meal and workshop materials and resources you can use in the future. To encourage full participation, there is a discount for a group of five or more at \$45 each.

AARP Livable Communities Challenge Grant

AARP has issued a 2020 funding round of Livable Communities Challenge Grants for local governments and various kinds of non-profits to make communities more livable and exciting for all ages. No project is too big or too small. The grants will support permanent physical improvements to the community, temporary demonstrations that lead to long-term change, and new, innovative programming or services. The grant focuses on five priority areas:

- Increasing civic engagement with innovative and tangible projects that bring residents and local leaders together to address challenges and facilitate a greater sense of community inclusion and diversity. (Although this category is targeted to local governments, nonprofit organizations can apply for and receive a grant in this category provided they demonstrate that they are working with local governments to solicit and include residents' insights about the project or to help solve a pressing challenge.)
- Create vibrant public places that improve open spaces, parks and access to other amenities.
- Deliver a range of transportation and mobility options that increase connectivity, walkability, bikeability, wayfinding, access to transportation options and roadway improvements.
- Support the availability of a range of housing that increases accessible and affordable housing options.
- Demonstrate the tangible value of "Smart Cities" with programs that engage residents in accessing, understanding and using data, and participating in decision-making to increase the quality of life for all.
- Other community improvements. In addition to the five areas of focus, AARP wants to hear about local needs and new, innovative ideas for addressing them.



Grants can range from a few hundred dollars for smaller, short-term activities to several thousand or tens of thousands of dollars for larger projects. Grant applications are due April 1st. This grant may be a very unique opportunity for your community to try something new. Contact SICOG very soon if you wish for our assistance.

Southern Iowa Council of Governments Executive Board

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SICOG is a non-profit organization that provides and coordinates community and economic development services primarily through the delivery of planning services, technical program assistance, grant writing and administration to assist local governments and others in their efforts to improve the social and economic well-being of its eight county service area.

SOUTHERN IOWA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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