



NIACOG NEWS

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NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Sept - Oct 2019

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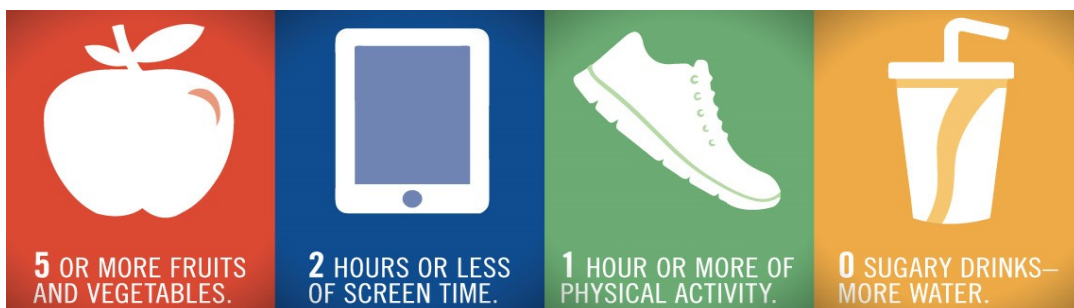
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CONGRATS MASON CITY AND HAMPTON!

NIACOG and the Iowa Association of Councils of Governments are continuing to partner with the Healthiest State Initiative and Iowa Department of Public Health to bring the 5-2-1-0: Healthy Choices Count message to communities throughout Iowa. The Mason City community, in its second year with 5-2-1-0, has been awarded \$8,000 to use directly towards projects. The Hampton community, in its first year, has been awarded \$24,500.

The 5-2-1-0 message and funds target the overall community, healthcare sites, childcares/daycares, K-12, out-of-school programs, and workplaces. Community partners within Mason City and Hampton include the following: chambers of commerce, Franklin County Extension, Healthy Harvest of North Iowa, Main Street Mason City, city governments, churches, MercyOne, dental offices, Visit Mason City, public school districts, county public health departments, La Luz Hispana, service organizations, young professional groups, and several others.



Funded projects that promote 5-2-1-0 message fall under the following actions: strengthening individual knowledge and skills; promoting community education; educating providers; fostering coalitions and networks; changing organizational practices; modifying physical spaces and natural settings; and informing policy and legislation. By combining the message with these actions throughout a community, children and families are empowered to live healthy with fun and easy opportunities supporting nutrition and active lifestyles. This is especially necessary with Iowa facing continually increasing rates of obesity and diabetes .

If you are not currently in a 5-2-1-0 funded community, NIACOG highly recommend you still use the message. Free 5-2-1-0 brochures and posters can be ordered by any individual or organization in Iowa at <http://www.iowahealthieststate.com/resources/individuals/5210/order-form/>. If you are interested in additional 5-2-1-0 resources and information, contact Matt O'Brien at the NIACOG office.

CONGRATS, SCOTT!



Congratulations to Region 2 Transit System's driver, Scott Kitner for being awarded 2019 Driver of the Year. Scott received the award at Iowa Public Transit Association's Annual Meeting and Roadeo being held at the Iowa Speedway in Newton, Iowa in June .

Scott was nominated by Teresa Collins, Region 2 Transit System Operations Manager. In the nomination, she wrote: "Scott started with Region 2 as a part time driver in July 2014. His very first day on his own I received a call from a passenger who wanted me to know how wonderful, friendly, and helpful our new driver is. Scott has been fulltime for a year now and continues to be one of THE most efficient, helpful, motivated, safety conscience, friendly, absolutely drama-free employees I've ever had the pleasure to work with. Thank you for going above and beyond every single day Scott, it is such a pleasure working with you."

VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources Wildland Fire Program, working with the U.S. Forest Service, has grant money available for Iowa's rural fire departments to help battle wildfires.



The grant, due Oct. 15, offers funding assistance for wildfire suppression equipment, slide in units, hoses, nozzles, adapters, portable tanks and pumps, personal protective equipment and communications equipment. Additionally, this grant al-

lows for special requests from fire departments with special needs tied directly to wildfire suppression.

The grant provides 50 percent reimbursement for wildland fire equipment with a maximum reimbursement grant of \$3,500 per department.

The grant application package and Wildland Fire Report form are available at www.iowadnr.gov/fire.

Fire departments should submit a Wildland Fire Report whenever they respond to a wildland fire or provide assistance to a prescribed or controlled wildland fire. Departments actively returning these reports can receive priority points in the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant application scoring process.

FEDERAL RECREATION TRAILS PROGRAM

Website: https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/Federal-and-State-Recreational-Trails

Note: If you are working from a previously prepared application, be sure to update to the new format and questions before submitting.

Email Deadline: 5:00 pm on October 1, 2019

IOWA'S CLEAN AIR ATTAINMENT (ICAAP) PROGRAM

Website: https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/Grant-Programs/Iowa-Clean-Air-Attainment-Program-ICAAP

Email Deadline: 5:00 pm on October 1, 2019

STATEWIDE IOWA'S TAP PROGRAM

Website: https://iowadot.gov/systems_planning/grant-programs/transportation-alternatives

Email Deadline: 5:00 pm on October 1, 2019

Contact Chris Diggins at the NIACOG Office with any questions in regards to the three grant applications above.

DAM MITIGATION & WATER TRAIL ENHANCEMENT

The Iowa Legislature appropriated funds for fiscal year 2019 for the development of dam mitigation and water trail projects. A portion of the funds (\$200,483 for this fiscal year) are available competitively for dam mitigation cost-share grants. Dam owners and other eligible entities are encouraged to apply for cost-share assistance for projects that reduce recreational hazards and enhance aquatic species connectivity. The dam mitigation grant application deadline is October 4, 2019.

Dam Grant Application Form (Click for Word doc.)

Dam Grant Application Form (Click for PDF)

The water trail enhancement grant application qualification deadline is September 30 and application deadline is November 29. More information can be found at the link below:

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/Things-to-Do/Canoeing-Kayaking>

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Improving downtown buildings can make a huge impact on the vitality and appearance of our communities. Two programs being funded through the Community Development Block Grant program are designed to target downtowns including the Downtown Revitalization (DTR) Program and the Upper Story Rental Housing Program. The DTR program is featured in this article, and the Upper Story program will be featured in the next newsletter after the program has been made official.

The Downtown Revitalization Program provides funding to renovate downtown buildings. Funds are primarily focused on building fronts (facades), but can now also be used for building sides and roof with some limitations. This program has been around for a few years, but was not usable for smaller cities until recently. Now, smaller communities can prepare joint applications that accumulate a larger number of façades to qualify for the program. Unique to this grant program, the competition is fairly limited and most applications are awarded funds.

\$300,000 to \$500,000 is awarded by this program per grant award (based upon cumulative population of all cities participating). Matching dollars are required from the city(ies) and/or property owners. A 36% match is preferred, and, while the rules do not preclude a lower match, a lower match would reduce the application's score by 1 or more points and reduce the likelihood of receiving an award by at least some degree.

Cities and property owners jointly decide which properties will receive assistance, but the selected buildings must currently be in fair to poor exterior condition and must not have residential usage (apartments) on their first floor.

Buildings must be pre-selected for participation with preliminary design work completed by an architect and preliminary commitments signed by property owners. Typically, 12 to 16 buildings are included in the grant application, and single cities or multiple smaller cities can apply to accumulate a higher number of buildings and higher grant amount. A somewhat smaller number of facades is allowed for cities of less than 1,000 population.

Although the next grant deadline is not expected until June of 2020, now is the time to consider whether your community needs downtown renovation. The advance work for these applications is extensive and includes (in part): communications with properties owners to determine which properties will participate, design work for each participating facade, inventory of downtown building conditions, determining eligibility for the national register for all properties in the area, securing partnerships with other cities (if desired), securing local match resources, and preparing other paperwork. NIACOG can help coordinate this process for interested cities, but considerable time is needed to complete these tasks.

After funds are awarded for your project, considerable time is also needed to: prepare final designs for façade improvements, publish the environmental review, bid out the construction work, etc. Since matching funds are due from property owners prior to construction, this delay provides some additional time for owners to arrange for their cost share. For this coming grant cycle, physical construction work is expected to begin in 2021 and be completed in 2023.

Please contact Myrtle Nelson at NIACOG for further information.



Calendar of Events

September

2nd	Labor Day - Office Closed	
9th	NIACOG Brd. Mtg.	Bennigan's Grill, CL @ 7 pm
20th	City Clerk's Assoc. Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 9 am

October

9th	Hazmat	NIACOG Office @ 1 pm
9th	Trans. Policy Brd. Mtg.	NIACOG Office @ 2:30 pm
14th	NIACOG Exec. Cmte.	NIACOG Office @ 12 pm



COMMUNITY CATALYST PROGRAM WORKSHOP

The Iowa Economic Development Authority invites you to attend a workshop on the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program. The workshops will be offered in the five locations around the state and each session will include a thorough description of the program, deadlines for pre-applications and an explanation of the formal application process. The closest workshop to the NIACOG region is in Ackley:

September 16, 2019
Ackley 1 - 3 p.m.
Ackley Civic Center — 640
Main Street

Register here:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/CommunityCatalyst

Find out more about the program at iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/catalyst or contact Matt O'Brien at NIACOG with questions.

APPLICATION PROCESS: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

1. Identify a geographical area in the “heart” of downtown containing building facades fronting a major street that you wish to improve. A relatively smaller area is more advantageous than a larger one.
2. Contact private property owners within the area to ascertain if they would be interested in financially participating in a State funded program that, along with the city, would pay the majority of costs of improving their building facades, (typically 70 - 80%).
3. Survey each structure in the chosen “target area” to determine if enough visible physical blight exists to meet HUD’s national slum & blight objective. (At least 25% of all buildings must be judged as being in fair or poor condition to qualify for DTR funding). IEDA will provide survey forms for this task on iowa-grants.gov. Document building conditions both in writing and by photographs.
4. Draw up a project area map showing all property locations and conditions, (excellent, good, fair or poor), and all structures being proposed as program participants. Need a minimum of 8 buildings/addresses to ask for \$500,000; minimum of 6 for less than max.
5. Inform general public of the proposed program and involve them in the process.
6. Have City Council pass a resolution declaring a locally blighted area as per Chapter 403 of Iowa State Code.
7. Report on all previous, but relatively recent, (within about 5 years), activities undertaken in the community to further downtown revitalization.
8. Develop a plan for overall downtown revitalization that can continue after the grant monies have been expended.
9. Engage the services of an architect for purposes of preparing realistic cost estimates and an overall project budget, meeting Iowa Green Streets criteria, and developing a scope of work with alternatives and building renderings that address identified slum & blight conditions.
10. Determine if a historical survey of the target area will be needed.
11. Determine if the city council is willing to support the project in all respects and contribute perhaps up to 25% of total costs from local funds.
12. Return to property owners with an Owner Commitment Letter, including financial share. Provide complete disclosure to owners on federal regulations, easement agreement, design, scope of work, etc.
13. Gather written verification of commitment of all funding sources.
14. Gather documentation of citizen participation and public support.
15. Develop a project administrative plan outlining all responsibilities for implementation of the project. Name the program administrative entity and a program manager.
16. Double check all budget figures for consistency, (account for all sources and uses).

