

NIACOG Executive Director, Myrtle Nelson (middle), with Jeff Brinkley (left) and Barry Thomas (right) from BCAT Consulting



NIACOG NEWS

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IOWA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION APPROVES PURCHASE OF 78 NEW TRANSIT VEHICLES

The Iowa Transportation Commission approved more than \$7 million in funding for 78 new public transit vehicles that will replace vehicles past their useful life. Funds are granted through the Federal Transit Administration's Grants for Bus and Bus Facilities Formula Program as well as the Federal Highway Administration's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.

Vehicle replacement projects were approved for 21 different public transit systems. Region 2 Transit will be replacing twenty buses with assistance from this funding this funding.

Public transit is vital to enhancing the mobility of Iowans, getting them where they need to go. Iowa supports public transit service in all 99 counties.

CALENDAR

July

- **5th** – Holiday - Office Closed
- **14th** – Haz-Mat meeting - NIACOG Office/Zoom @ 1 pm
- **14th** - Transportation Policy Board Mtg.—NIACOG Office/Zoom @ 2:30 pm

August

- **12th** - NIACOG Exec. Board Mtg., - NIACOG Office - 12 pm



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

COMMUNITIES CAN TAKE ACTION NOW TO SECURE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS

Although Cities have until December 31, 2024 to incur cost covered by the American Rescue Plan Act funding, they can now start the process to request their allocation of pandemic relief funds from the State of Iowa. These are the funds allocated by Congress via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The following sections walk through the three step process for cities to request the funding.

Step 1: Obtain a DUNS number and request SAMS number.

Prior to submitting the request, the city must have a valid DUNS number. The League has indicated that, while a SAMS number is not required to submit a request for funds, it will ultimately be needed later; therefore, the League recommends getting the City's SAMS number as soon to relieve the administrative burden of having to do it later. Below are links to establish and verify the required numbers.

- [Ensure/Verify DUNS Number \(click here\)](#)
- [Establish SAMS Number \(click here\)](#)

Step 2: Prepare two (2) forms.

Once the municipality has verified or is in the process of establishing the above referenced DUNS and SAMS numbers, **two forms** must be submitted to the state. **Click on the words below** to obtain the two forms (fillable pdf's), which include: 1) Award Terms & Conditions Agreement and 2) Assurance of Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

- [Award Terms & Conditions \(click here\)](#)
- [Assurance of Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 \(click here\)](#)

Step 3: Email both forms to the State.

After completing the two forms, email them to the State of Iowa at ARPCity@iowa.gov. Put your city's name in the subject line. (An official request form has not been developed yet.) After all requirements are met, the State will send funds directly to city bank accounts in two allocations that will be one year apart.

Iowa League of Cities - Resources

The League has done a fantastic job of assembling resources available for reference on their website, which can be reached [here](#). We encourage cities to continue to monitor the League's ARPA resource page for updated information. NIACOG will continue to monitor updates regarding the American Rescue Plan Act and will forward relevant information to our region.

Contact NIACOG's Executive Director Myrtle Nelson at mnelson@niacog.org for more information about obtaining or using ARPA funds. Check out the next page for more information about potential uses for the funds.

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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING FOR CITIES & COUNTIES

With significant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, many cities and counties are asking for more specific details about potential uses for the funds. The Government Finance Officers Association has compiled a PowerPoint presentation ([click here for ARPA GFOA report](#)) that nicely details the uses as presented in the voluminous American Rescue Plan Act; the Eligible Uses section starts on page 13. For a more detailed listing of water and sewer project examples, please check out these detailed lists.

- [Water \(click here\)](#)
- [Sewer \(click here\)](#)

When considering which considering which kind of project(s) to pursue, the federal requirements that come with the federal funding should also be considered. Although not clearly delineated yet, one example of expected federal requirement for construction-related projects is the minimum wage standards for construction workers and related reporting (a.k.a. Davis-Bacon Act). These rules will likely increase the cost of the project, so you may want to avoid including federal funding in a project that significantly exceeds the amount of federal funds. Additionally, your city/county may be wise to avoid projects that are so small that the additional rules are not worth the hassle.

If your city or county chooses a construction-related project, an agency experienced in federal grant administration, like NIACOG, may be needed to help navigate the federal requirements. Please contact Myrtle Nelson at NIACOG to request assistance.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND RECIPIENTS

BCAT Consulting - BCAT is an established business that is going to expand its operations to help more police departments nationwide. BCAT is working with those interested in the police force, by helping interested persons with online assessments and consultation. BCAT is going to be working with police academies and local police forces to establish their clientele. NIACOG is excited to be able to help this business in their nationwide efforts.

Armstrong, LLC - Armstrong LLC is a business that is established but needed a little boost. Charlie Armstrong will be working with NIACOG to complete projects in the housing trust fund and home rehabilitation programs. We are excited to have Charlie working with us!



Easy2Show also received a loan from NIACOG to further develop its software for on-line contest entries and tracking for fairs and other venues

NIACOG may be applying for more funds through the American Rescue Plan Act. We will keep you posted on the status of these funds.

NEW NIACOG PLANNER



Hi my name is Jessie Willadsen, and I am excited to join the NIACOG team. I grew up in Nashua and, after high school, I attended the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. My interest in science and environmental issues led me to completing a degree in Environmental Planning. Before coming to NIACOG, I worked at the Mason City Housing Authority as a Housing Specialist for four years and the City of Mason City as their Geographic Information Systems Analyst for twelve years. Prior to working in Mason City I spent five years as the Zoning Administrator for Webster County in Fort Dodge.

In my spare time I enjoy watching football specifically the Minnesota Vikings and Iowa Hawkeyes. When not watching sports, I enjoy spending time outdoors tending to the flower gardens and hedge trees my wife and I have planted on our property in Floyd. I have two daughters, and they are both attending college to become nurses following in the footsteps of their mother. I am excited to begin work on local housing CDBG projects and look forward to meeting with you to discuss the needs of your community.

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR FUTURE HEALTHIER?

ENCOURAGE KIDS TO LIVE 5-2-1-0!



The communities of Mason City (in its 3rd year) and Hampton (in its 2nd year) have received funding from the State of Iowa to market the 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count message and help implement projects compatible with the message. The long-term goal of 5-2-1-0 is to help reduce the significant rates of heart disease, stroke, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancers within Iowa's communities. The message is foremost being marketed towards Iowa's children 2-18 years of age; however, the message also applies to adults.

What does 5-2-1-0 stand for?

- 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- No more than 2 hours of unproductive screen time per day.
- 1 or more hours of vigorous physical activity per day.
- 0 sugary drinks - more water!

5-2-1-0 funds were used towards the following in the Mason City community to fund all or part of each individual project cost in FY21:

- Leadership North Iowa (Mason City Chamber) - 3rd Community Garden located on site of former Madison Elementary School.
- Youth Investing Energy in Leadership Development (Mason City Chamber) - Stain, repair, and mulch Prairie Playground in East Park.
- City of Mason City Parks and Recreation Department - 10 volleyballs for new sand volleyball courts
- Mason City Chamber - 180 colored drawstring backpacks for Moonlight Bike Ride.
- Cerro Gordo Public Health - Fruit and veggie tracking bracelet supplies
- Newman Childcare - summer childcare out door games

5-2-1-0 funds in Hampton for FY21 were used towards the following:

- Hampton Public Library - Summer reading kick-off with purchase of 42 "Picky Peggy (Science Solves It)" Activity books for children and families
- City of Hampton/Hampton Kiwanis - Half Basketball Court as part of Eark Park improvement project.
- Franklin County Youth for Christ - Lumber and material to build GaGa ball pit for middle school student out-of-school activities
- Hampton-Dumont Middle School/Franklin County Extension - Lumber for fencing around garden club planters.
- Hampton-Dumont Middle School - detention-grade outdoor fitness equipment for activity station project
- Franklin County Wellness Center - tennis racquets and balls for free tennis camps

If you want tips on marketing the 5-2-1-0 message within your community, contact Matt O'Brien at the NIACOG office. Communities receiving funding are selected by IDPH on a yearly basis based on certain health statistics.

HAMPTON-DUMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITY STATIONS



NEW CDBG-CV PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG-CV)

The Iowa Economic Development Authority is now making its CARES ACT (COVID) funding available to cities, counties, and their subgrantees. The program is first-come/first served. Costs over and above the grant amount must be funded locally. All Federal rules apply.

If you have projects ideas that fall under any of the types above, feel free to contact the NIACOG office to discuss eligibility under HUD and State of Iowa requirements. The following is an overview of the new CDBG-CV funding opportunities:

Every CDBG project must meet a national objective:

- Benefit to low-to-moderate-income persons (70% allocation)
- Slum & Blight elimination
- Urgent need

Eligible applicants:

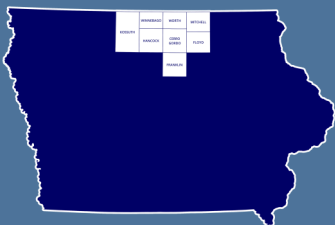
- All cities under 50,000 population
- All counties
- City or county on behalf of non-profit entity
- Project of applicant must be tied to COVID-19

The following types of projects are allowed:

- Public Facilities/public spaces (**Preventing COVID-19 spread**) - up to \$500,000 grant
 - Expansion/improvements to public

gathering /meeting spaces and public buildings: public schools, community centers, libraries, and outdoor public areas.

- Water and/or sewer improvements in a downtown area.
- Storm water improvements in a downtown area (tied to Iowa Green Streets)
- May not be used for operations or maintenance, nor for buildings used for general conduct of government.
- Public Wi-Fi/broadband access (**Preparing for a resurgence of COVID-19**) - up to \$500,000
 - Expansion of Wi-Fi in public meeting/gathering spaces
 - Expansion of broadband infrastructure to increase access by LMI households
- Microenterprise assistance (**Responding to COVID-19's effect on the economy**)
 - Assistance to a microenterprise for working capital, equipment, building improvements, and related costs necessary to sustain and expand a microenterprise.
- Housing conversion (**Preventing spread of COVID-19 and responding to effects on housing and the economy**)
 - Construction and development of existing space into new housing units.
- Commercial façade improvements (**Responding to COVID-19's effects on the economy**)
 - Improvements to multiple downtown facades in a community
- Food bank/food program (**Preparing for a resurgence of COVID-19**)
 - Purchase of additional food to meet increased demand.
 - Purchase of additional equipment necessary to accommodate increased service (such as more freezer space).
- Daycare (**Responding to COVID-19's effects on the economy**)
 - Purchase of equipment/ supplies tied to increased demand as parents transition back to work.
 - Funding to assist with training new staff hired in response to increased demand.



North Iowa Area Council of Governments

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