



NIACOG housing rehab project before (left) and after (right)



NIACOG NEWS

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May - June 2021

GREAT THINGS ARE HAPPENING!!!

When NIACOG's Housing Trust Fund Program and United Way of North Central Iowa (UWNCI) join forces, the results are nothing short of amazing! Since 2017, UWNCI has funded NIACOG's Emergency Repair Program. During that time, the program has funded emergency repairs for approximately 45 low-to-moderate income elderly/disabled households.

Many of these repairs are life-changing to the recipients. One household received a new water heater after going 15 years without hot water. Also, furnaces have been replaced, dangerous electrical situations have been rectified, accessible ramps have been installed, and inoperable plumbing has been repaired. The funding allows the individuals the peace-of-mind knowing that they can be safe and stay in their homes.

This year, the UNWNCI grant to NACOG's Emergency program is \$23,000 of Community Impact funding for 2021-2022, which will make it possible to continue this good work. We are grateful for the UNWNCI's involvement and for the impact that the funding will have on the elderly and disabled population in our region.

CALENDAR

May

- **10th** – NIACOG Board
7:00pm via Zoom
- **21st** – City Clerk's Association
9:30am @ NIACOG
- **31st** - Memorial Day, NIACOG Office
Closed

June

- **10th** – NIACOG Executive Committee
12:00pm @ NIACOG
- **14th** – Flag Day
- **20th** - First Day of Summer

TRANSPORTATION HAPPENINGS

The RPA 2 Technical Committee recently accepted applications for STBG/SWAP funded transportation projects to be completed in Federal Fiscal Years 2022-2025. Below is a table showing the funded projects.

STBG/SWAP Project Funding and Applications

SPONSOR	PROJECT	COST	YEAR
Mason City	Winnebago, 4th, 12th NE	-\$650,000	2023
	12th St. Bridge #8405	\$650,000	2023
Kossuth County			
	P 30	\$1,300,000	2025
Winnebago County			
	A 42	\$1,000,000	2025
IDOT			
	US 18	<u>\$1,000,000</u>	2025
Total New Money Requested		\$3,300,000	

IOWA TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (ITAP)

The RPA 2 TAP Committee received three (3) applications requesting funds this year. Two (2) of the applications were recommended for funding as follows:

Cerro Gordo County Conservation applied for and was recommended for \$387,000 to complete an extension of the Prairie Land Trail that begins at the gravel road west of Interstate 35 and ends into the City of Thornton. This project would be paired with a previously funded project from just west of the City of Swaledale to the gravel road just mentioned. By combining the projects, it is hoped that the project administration costs will be reduced resulting in a more efficient use of the funds. The Prairie Land Trail will eventually stretch from Mason City southwest to Belmond in Wright County.

The City of Lake Mills applied for and was recommended for \$87,000 to fund an extension of the existing City Trail that will run along Hwy 105 to the Dollar General Store driveway. The City is extending the City sidewalk system from the other side of the driveway. Between the two projects, the City's trail/sidewalk system will be greatly enhanced.

The City of Charles City requested funds for the extension of the Charley Western Trail on the north end of town. The Charley Western Trail is a multiuse pedestrian/bicycle trail that when totally completed will loop in or around the entire community connecting various points of interest along the route. This extension is being proposed as the City is already undertaking efforts to relocate the old Railroad Depot as a trailhead. This segment will connect that trailhead to the rest of the Charley Western Trail.

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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING FOR CITIES & COUNTIES

Every city and county throughout the United States is eligible to receive funds from the federal government as part of the American Rescue Plan. The amount of funding received by a respective city or county will be based upon its population. Eligible uses for the funds will include: water, sewer, broadband project(s) and possibly a few other items that include: economic impacts, bonuses for essential workers, and replacing lost revenues. A good article about potential water/sewer/broadband projects is available at this web address: <https://www.ruekertmielke.com/blog/2021/american-rescue-plan-projects>.

NIACOG will provide additional information as it becomes available. The rules require that funds be used by 2024.

IMPORTANT:

Although the funds aren't available yet, to avoid future delays, cities/counties are encouraged to prepare for receiving funds by making sure that they have the following in place:

DUNS NUMBER: If your city/county doesn't have a valid DUNS number, you can apply for one at <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/>. This is a free and simple process.

A DUNS number is a unique nine-character number used to identify an organization and is issued by Dun & Bradstreet. The federal government uses the DUNS number to track how federal money is allocated. A DUNS number is required prior to registering with the SAM database, which is outlined below. Registering for a DUNS number is free of charge. If an entity does not have a valid DUNS number, please visit <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/> or call 1-866-705-5711 to begin the registration process. If you are not sure if you have a DUNS number, you search for it at <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/lookup.html>; if your DUNS number exists, you can request that it be emailed to you after the search.

SAM REGISTRATION: (*counties only*): If your county is not registered with SAM.gov (required for counties only, not cities), your county will need to register to receive American Rescue Plan funds. (City funding is funneled through the State so cities do not need to be registered with SAM.)

SAM is the official government-wide database of vendors and registration with SAM is required in order to do business with the U.S. government. All Federal financial assistance recipients must register on SAM.gov and renew their SAM registration annually to maintain an active status to be eligible to receive Federal financial assistance. SAM registration is absolutely free. If an entity does not have an active SAM registration, please visit, [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) to begin the entity registration or renewal process. Please note that SAM registration can take up to three weeks; delay in registering in SAM could impact timely payment of funds. [Click here for a quick overview of SAM registration.](#)

RESTAURANT REVITALIZATION FUND

With the focal point of community interaction taking place at restaurants, we wanted to share information about a program to help them recover losses that has newly become available. The American Rescue Plan Act established the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF) to provide funding to help restaurants and other eligible businesses keep their doors open. This program will provide restaurants with funding equal to their pandemic-related revenue loss up to \$10 million per business and no more than \$5 million per physical location. For more information, Contact Amber Andersen, Community Development Planner, 641-423-0491 ex 228 or click below:

[Learn more about the SBA program here.](#)

Restaurant Revitalization Fund



sba.gov/restaurants



CARES RLF LOAN AWARDED

NIACOG was the recipient of \$500,000 from the CARES Act money for the Economic Development Authority's (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund (RLF.) The recipients of these funds were:

Crown Point Builders- \$125,000.00



Photo Credit from the Garner Leader in Garner,

*To buy a building in Klemme, IA. Crown Point (CP) will construct wall panels. Wall Panels were hard to find during COVID-19. This will benefit both Crown Point, who will use the panels to construct homes, and other companies that CP will market and sell towards. This is also exciting as it will add a new business to the town of Klemme, IA.

173° Craft Distillery- \$115,000.00

*For a new distillery coming to downtown Clear Lake. Following hardships faced by other distilleries during the pandemic, two brothers are going to open the distillery. The brothers' distillery is going to partner with Lake Time Brewery and local spirit stores to produce their one of a kind smooth spirits in North Iowa.

Iowa Powdercraft- \$125,000.00

*To buy a new blasting machine. The new machine will promote a quicker and safer way for their workers to blast metals. COVID reduced their work production as businesses were needing their powder coating services less. Now business is picking up and Iowa Powdercraft is needing a more efficient way to service their clients.



Farm and Home Publisher- \$125,000.00

*Virtual Platform App Development. A well-established business who is now making plot maps for farmers is looking to expand their business with inventing an interactive mapping/data platform. This app will be used all over the United States and can be customizable to any industry. COVID created difficulties for their business in securing data, so the company invested in leveling up their products. With the world revolving around online data today, this is a way to stay on the forefront for their business. NIACOG is excited to see how businesses can use this new app!

Between this program and our older RLF, \$227,000 is available to North Central Iowa businesses. Please contact us today. We would love to see if we can help. Contact Amber Andersen at 641-423-0491 ex.228 or your local EDC.

CONTRACTORS NEEDED FOR HOUSING PROJECTS!



Over the past twenty years, NIACOG has been the conduit for repairing roughly 400 CDBG housing projects in addition to 350 Housing Trust Fund homes.

The success of our housing rehabilitation programs are dependent upon being able to hire qualified and experienced contractors. We have been fortunate to work with many talented local contractors over the years; however, with the large growth in the number of houses that we are repairing each year, we are in considerable need of more contractors to continue to improve the housing stock in north Iowa communities.

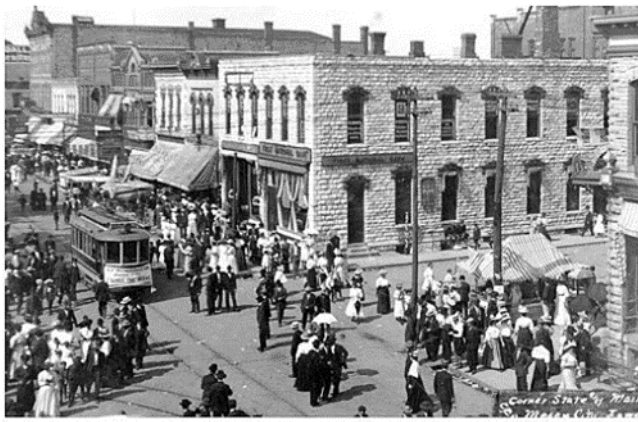
Our program offers some pretty significant benefits to contractors including a large supply of work, reliable payment, and a predefined scope of work. We are asking for your help to spread the word.

If you know of any contractors, please reach out to them and put in a good word for us so that we can continue to improve housing in your community.

Please contact Heidi Nielsen at hnielsen@niacog.org, or 641-423-0491 ext. 16 with leads or for more information.

IOWA HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT

The state of Iowa has 45 million dollars each year allocated to historic preservation in the form of tax credits. The tax credit is in place to give life to historic buildings in our communities. The State of Iowa is offering this to encourage retention of character-defining features of our historic buildings. Rehabilitation must meet the Secretary of Interior



Mason City, 4th of July, 1904 ~MasonCityPublicLibrary collection

Standards for Rehabilitation. A developer, could receive up to 25% of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures associated with the project. The tax credit can be used on both residential and commercial buildings and may be refunded or carried forward for five years. Multiple applications are allowed by the same person/business. Applications are awarded based on readiness. 50% of applications each year are awarded Iowa Tax Credits. IEDA staff stated that this is not a situation of if the credit will be awarded, but when the tax credit will be awarded. Spring 2021 applications are being accepted now until June 1, 2021 for an eligible project. The awards will be announced shortly after July 1, 2021.

If you are interested in applying for Iowa's Historic Preservation Tax Credit, please contact Dan Hansen (515-348-6212 or daniel.hansen@iowaeda.com). Visit <https://www.iowaeda.com/historic-preservation-tax-credit/> for more information.

FUNDING TREE PLANTINGS AND REFORESTATION



Trees Forever has partnered with public and private entities to be able to offer communities and citizens seedling trees and shrubs. Grants are available across Iowa to help diversify community forests and in areas that welcome the public. Projects may include planting seedling trees and woody shrubs in public spaces including but not limited to county and community parks, trail ways, roadsides, stream corridors, at schools and civic buildings, cemeteries and more. Some private planting options are available.

Grants are available to groups and organizations to help purchase seedling trees and woody shrubs. Trees Forever staff is available to help project leaders and volunteers plan and complete successful projects.

The application process is competitive and funds will be awarded while they last. Preference is given to applicants with thorough and complete documentation that meets all program guidelines.

If you have questions, feel free to email Emily Swihart, our seedling program head, at eswihart@treesforever.org or with a call at 563-260-1000

The backfill bill may be moving forward again (Senate File 587).

A number of years ago the State of Iowa imposed rollbacks on local property taxes, which reduced local property tax revenues to cities and counties; however, the state also approved backfilling (replacing) a portion of the local funding lost with state dollars. This year, a bill in the Iowa legislature proposed ending the backfill of the local funding lost due to the rollbacks. Although this bill had lost steam, recently, some activity has been noted. You may want to consider contacting your Iowa legislators to inform them of the impact this potentially lost revenue could have on the long-term financial stability of your community.

Broadband Bill HF 848 was signed into law by Gov. Reynolds.

The bill allows grants to be awarded to companies that expand broadband in Iowa. \$100 million is set aside in State money for the broadband expansion grants.

