



VOLUME 35 ISSUE 3

May—June 2022

Census Bureau Update on 2016–2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5- Year Estimates

On March 17, the U.S. Census Bureau released the standard, full suite of 2016–2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year data products—down to the block group level. Following pandemic-related data collection disruptions, the Census Bureau revised its methodology to reduce nonresponse bias in data collected in 2020. After evaluating the effectiveness of this methodology, the Census Bureau determined the resulting data are fit for public release, government and business uses, and understanding the social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population and economy. Additional information and guidance are available at [ACS New and Notable webpage](#) and in the [press kit](#).

CALENDAR

May

May 9– 5:15 PM

NIACOG Board Meeting

May 20– 9:30 AM

City Clerks Meeting

May 30– Offices Closed for
Memorial Day.

June

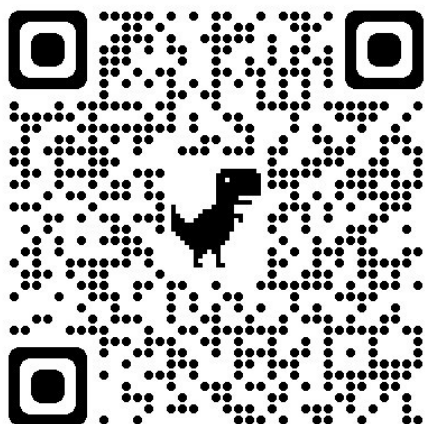
June 15– 12:00 PM

NIACOG Executive Board
Meeting

RESILIENCY

Preparing for a disaster is nothing new to businesses, governments and development organizations. Resilience planning is another matter; it recognizes that disasters and difficulties will happen and that immediate response is necessary. The opportunity to plan for resiliency is now, please download this free Resilience Toolkit and get started today! This toolkit is tailored to our region and has many helpful resources and ideas to assist in the planning process.

<https://www.iowaresilience.com/niacog>



QR Code for the Resilience
Toolkit NIACOG Resources

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New Laborshed Study for North Iowa Region

A New Study in the North Central Iowa Alliance region. Communities would include: Charles City, Forest City, Garner, Hampton, Mason City, Northwood and Osage. The study is a laborshed study. The study can be found on LMI laborshed's page (www.iowalmi.gov/laborshed(link is external))



Historic Preservation Tax Credit

The Iowa Economic Development Authority Historic Preservation Tax Credit is a \$21 million program that offers a tax credit incentive to developers who are trying to retain the historic character of a building that is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. A building could qualify for up to 25% of qualified rehabilitation costs in the form of a state income tax credit. A portion of the funding is reserved for projects of under \$750,000. These are almost always funded with applications accepted throughout the year. Additionally, the program also offers funding for larger projects, even multi-million dollar projects. Around 40% of all large project applications will be awarded. The applications are scored and awarded competitively. Applications are available now and open until July 15, 2022. Application rounds are held semi-annually.

For more information or to apply for Historic Preservation Tax Credit, contact

Jessy Willadsen at jwilladsen@niacog.org or 641-423-0491 ex 218.



Do you have in-fill sites or need work force housing??

Homes for Iowa, a non-profit organization, may hold the solution. In 2019 Iowa Prison Industries (IPI) built its first modular home for Homes for Iowa. The concept is a win-win situation for everyone. IPI trains offenders to build the homes on prison site, providing them with the skills needed in the construction trades. The homes built offer communities with much needed affordable housing and options to utilize in-fill lots.



The homes that have been built were typically 3-bedroom, 2-bath 1200 sq. ft. homes and a 2 bedroom model was recently introduced. The homes can be placed on basements or crawl space foundations. The current home price is \$90,000. Families purchasing the homes must have household incomes below \$100,000. To purchase a home you must work with your local COG. Orders are being taken for homes being delivered in 2023.



Once a lot is identified you must complete a Pre-Order Checklist. Homes for Iowa will determine if the lot is an appropriate site. After the site is approved, the community completes a Purchase Agreement and pays a \$1,500 deposit to secure a home and start the process.

If you are interested in the program, contact Heidi Nielsen at 641-423-0491 x 216 or hnielsen@niacog.org. More information is also available at <https://www.homesforia.com>.

What is NoRISC?

NoRISC is a coalition of cities and counties who have come together in order to provide OSHA required safety training for their employees and facility audits.

Who Needs Safety Training?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires safety training for all employees. This safety training is needed by all employees to prevent injuries and accidents of all types: Public Works Employees; Secondary Road Crews; Water / Sewer Department Crews; Janitors; City Clerks; Administrators; and Courthouse office staff.

Who are the current members of NoRISC?

Cities: City of Britt; City of Garner; City of Manly; City of Nora Springs; City of Northwood; City of Sheffield

Counties: Franklin County; Hancock County; Winnebago County; Worth County

Agencies: North Iowa Area Council of Governments

Interested in learning more information? Please contact Amber Andersen at aandersen@niacog.org or 641-423-0491 ex 228.

May is mental health awareness month. Please join the Iowa Healthiest State Initiatives and wear **GREEN** on Friday May 20, 2022 in support of those suffering with mental health problems.

Make It **OK**

Destination Iowa

Gov. Reynolds announces \$100M investment in Iowa's quality of life and tourism

April 6, 2022 (DES MOINES) - Gov. Reynolds today announced a \$100 million investment to bolster the quality of life in Iowa's communities and attract visitors and new residents to the state. The new effort, called Destination Iowa, will provide grants to help communities move forward on transformational, shovel-ready attractions. Cities, counties, nonprofits and other organizations can apply for Destination Iowa grants from four separate funds: Economically Significant Development, Outdoor Recreation, Tourism Attraction, and Creative Placemaking.

"Communities in all corners of the state are creating unique destinations that give visitors a reason to explore and residents a reason to stay," said Gov. Reynolds. Destination Iowa will help more communities across the state move forward in their efforts to boost tourism and economic growth while enhancing the quality of life for Iowans."

While Iowa saw a record number of Iowans and out-of-state travelers utilizing outdoor amenities such as state and county parks and recreational bike trails over the last two years, the hospitality industry in the State of Iowa experienced a 46.1% decrease in employment and there was an overall 29% decline in visitor spending as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Destination Iowa will provide new opportunities to create and invest in attractions that will raise Iowa's profile, welcome out-of-state travelers, and increase visitor spending while accelerating tourism's recovery. It will also spur local economies and contribute to efforts to recruit new members of Iowa's workforce.

Iowa has led the way in elevating its already unmatched quality of life through significant state investments in child care, broadband, housing and commercial aviation infrastructure projects, as well as a significant investment in the successful This Is Iowa ad campaign. This investment will build upon that momentum.

"Destination Iowa will inspire the kinds of attractions that Iowans take pride in and that will raise the positive profile of our state well beyond our borders," Gov. Reynolds said.

Applications will be accepted starting May 9. Funded projects must be completed by June 30, 2026. For more information on Destination Iowa, Funding is being made available through the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

If you have any projects of statewide significance in mind, contact Matt O'Brien at mobrien@niacog.org or at 641-423-0491 ext 214.



REGION 2 TRANSIT SYSTEM SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The Region 2 Transit System serves as the Regional Transit Authority for the eight county area, which includes: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago and Worth counties. Transit service is available for use by anyone in the area. Each service is tailored to the needs of local users.

The Region 2 Transit System operates 70 vehicles throughout the eight-county area.

Service is available for commuters, shoppers, students, seniors, persons with disabilities and travelers of all types. In most areas the transit vehicle will pick you up at your door and deliver you to your job, medical appointment, meal site, school or favorite shopping center.

The Region 2 Transit System is funded through the Federal Transit Administration, Iowa Department of Transportation, Elderbridge Area Agency on Aging, Medicaid, county and city governments, contract revenue, and fares. The system provides approximately 300,000 rides annually.

More than half of the transit service in our eight-county area is contracted through local governments, human service agencies, or municipal providers. This method promotes a low cost and reduces duplication of services.

Providers include: One Vision, Inc.; Access, Inc.; Comprehensive Systems, Inc.; City of Charles City; Worth County Public Health; City of Forest City; City of Algona; City of Lake Mills and City of Northwood.

The Region 2 Transit System also provides service directly using NIACOG employees the rides are dispatched from our office in Mason City. Those service areas include: Cerro Gordo County, Kossuth County, Mitchell County, and Winnebago County Region 2 also provides Complementary Paratransit per contract with the City of Mason City.

For more information, please see our website at: www.R2bus.org.



The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Coronavirus program is offering a Microenterprise Grant to assist businesses affected by the Covid-19 virus with five or fewer employees. This grant would be in the form of a forgivable loan that will be forgiven after just two years of compliance with terms of the grant. The Grant limit is \$50,000 with \$5,000 going towards administration cost. Grants are on a first come, first-served basis.

For more information, please contact Amber Andersen at aandersen@niacog.org or at 641-423-0491 ex 228.

Region 2 Transit System

Quick facts

- < A fully loaded Region 2 Transit bus gets 94 passenger miles per gallon and takes approximately 15 cars off the street.
- < The accumulated mileage of the Region 2 Transit System's bus fleet over the years is 3,350,144 miles or enough miles to circle the earth almost 134 times.
- < Average accumulated mileage per vehicle: 109,373 (*Federal useful life=120,000 miles*)
- < Average age of vehicles: 7 years (*Federal useful life = 4 years*)
- < Last year the fleet traveled over 678,000 miles or, to the moon 2 3/4 times.
- < Region 2's service area is 4,482 square miles.
- < We provided 387,775 rides in FY2021 or, 3.05 rides per capita.
- < FY2021 Average Cost Per Ride: \$12.87
- < The Region 2 Transit System has 70 vehicles that range from 21 passenger to 9 passenger buses.
- < The 10 contract providers for the Region 2 Transit System employ nearly 150 drivers and support staff.
- < The State of Iowa has 35 designated transit systems. 16 Regions and 19 Urbans. Iowa provided over 22 million rides. Iowa's public transit systems employ over 2,200 Iowans.
- < The Region 2 Transit System's Regional Economic Impact FY2021:
 - Paid out over \$1,735,678 in wages, salaries and benefits.
 - Purchased over \$234,676 in fuel from local vendors.
 - Spent almost \$138,266 in vehicle repairs and maintenance.
 - Distributed over \$2,625,616 in State and Federal transit assistance into local economies.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to City of Rake! The City was awarded \$69,000 under Iowa DNR's Derelict Building Program. Rake was assisted by NIACOG and the Iowa Waste Exchange in completing the grant application.

With the awarded funds, Rake demolished its community's old school building. On the site, a walking trail and park will be developed.

For more information on the DNR's derelict building grant can be found here:

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Land-Quality/Waste-Planning-Recycling/Derelict-Building-Program>

If you are interested in a DNR derelict grant, please contact Matt O'Brien at mobrien@niacog.org or at 641-423-0491 ex 214

NIACOG's Housing Trust Fund is looking for a few United States Veteran homeowners in need of home repairs. Examples of eligible repairs include: roof, siding, and window replacement, structural repairs, electrical and plumbing repairs, furnaces, water heaters, and accessibility updates such as ramps and walk-in showers. The household Income must be under 60% AMI (see table below). Other eligibility requirements include the following:

- * Home must be the primary place of residence
- * Must be owner-occupied
- * Must have homeowner's insurance
- * Spendable cash assets must be under \$25,000
- * Home cannot be a mobile home



PROGRAM INCOME LIMITS	1	2	3	4	5	6
CERRO GORDO	\$33,780	\$38,580	\$43,340	\$48,180	\$52,080	\$55,920
FLOYD	\$33,180	\$37,920	\$42,660	\$47,340	\$51,180	\$54,960
FRANKLIN	\$33,180	\$37,920	\$42,660	\$47,340	\$51,180	\$54,960
HANCOCK	\$33,720	\$38,520	\$43,320	\$48,120	\$52,020	\$55,860
KOSSUTH	\$33,180	\$37,920	\$42,660	\$47,340	\$51,180	\$54,960
MITCHELL	\$33,180	\$37,920	\$42,660	\$47,340	\$51,180	\$54,960
WINNEBAGO	\$33,180	\$37,920	\$42,660	\$47,340	\$51,180	\$54,960
WORTH	\$33,960	\$38,820	\$43,680	\$48,480	\$52,380	\$56,280

Contact Heidi Neilsen or Caraline Eggna at 641-423-0491 ext. 216 or 227

Summer Kale Salad with Blueberries, Strawberries and Feta

1 bunch of Kale, rinsed and dried

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons lemon juice (1/2 lemon)

2 tablespoons honey

1/2 teaspoon salt and
fresh cracked black
pepper

1 cup fresh blueberries

1 cup fresh strawberries,
sliced

1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese



1. Remove the tough stems from the kale and chop leaves finely. Transfer kale to a large bowl.
2. Drizzle chopped kale with olive oil and salt, then massage the kale for a few minutes using your hands to break down the fibers and soften it.
3. Season as follows: Add lemon juice and drizzle honey right over the kale. Use your hands again to work the lemon, honey and pepper into the salad. Adjust seasoning with more salt, pepper, lemon. Honey and olive oil if necessary.
4. Sprinkle kale with sliced strawberries, blueberries and feta cheese
5. Serve and enjoy!



NIACOG participated in the 2nd Annual Rise and Shine Relays for United Way's 2022 Campaigns. We were in the top 6 for our placement in the tricycle races. Congratulations to ServePro for winning the trophy again this year. We look forward to participating in the event again next year.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

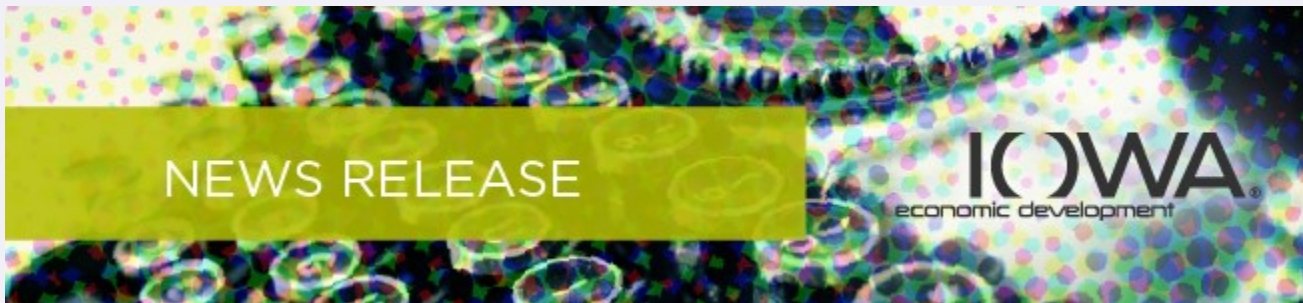


Merlin Bartz—Worth County

Maureen Elbert—Kossuth County

Richard Severin—Floyd County

Paul Norland—Winnebago County



Fourth Round of Iowa Energy Center Competitive Grant Program Opens

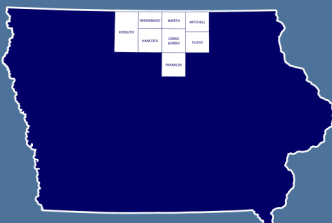
February 21, 2022 (*DES MOINES*) – The Iowa Economic Development Authority announced today the opening of the fourth round of the Iowa Energy Center (IEC) Grant Program. Designed to facilitate energy-related economic development in Iowa, the program will begin accepting pre-applications on Tuesday, February 22, 2022. Submissions must support projects and initiatives that align with the [Iowa Energy Plan](#) and IEC's activities and will be accepted through [iowagrants.gov](#) until March 22.

The IEC Grant Program is funded by Iowa's gas and electric utilities and is open to Iowa businesses, colleges, universities, and private nonprofit agencies and foundations. The program supports projects that provide a benefit to Iowa's residential and commercial customers. Projects must also aid in the implementation of at least one of the seven key focus areas of the Iowa Energy Plan: technology-based research and development, energy workforce development, support for rural and underserved areas, biomass conversion, natural gas expansion in underserved areas, electric grid modernization and alternative fuel vehicles.

Grant awards will range from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000, however, most grants awarded will be made in the range of \$150,000 to \$300,000. The IEC Board makes at least one funding announcement per fiscal year, and the application process includes both a pre-application and application phase. The updated program Policies and Procedures Handbook and Pre-Application Guide are available [online](#).

For additional program information, please contact Amber Buckingham at 515.348.6222 or iecgrants@iowaeda.com or visit iowaeda.com/iowa-energy-office/grants/.

***Information taken from the Iowa Economic Development Association Page.



North Iowa Area Council of Governments

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