

# Winter 2020

## East Central Iowa Council of Governments

[ecicog.org](http://ecicog.org)

### Newsletter

#### [Have You Set Your Goals for the New Year?](#)

ECICOG can help your community with annual city council goal setting sessions, strategic planning or consensus building workshops. If your group is struggling to come together around a common goal(s) or having difficulty breaking a goal(s) into actionable steps, we're here to help!

[Contact](#) Executive Director Karen Kurt for more information .

#### [Congratulations Blirstown & Brighton on Recent CDBG Awards!](#)

Both Blirstown and Brighton received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) awards of \$300,000 each towards upgrades to their wastewater treatment facilities. In the case of Blirstown, ECICOG wrote the application and will provide administration services. Brighton turned to ECICOG for administration of their grant based on the experience of ECICOG staff, after the application was written by another firm. "We know that wastewater management is a common issue in our area", noted Community and Housing Development Director Tracey Achenbach, "We encourage any community considering upgrades to get in touch with us to see if they might qualify for a grant." Achenbach noted that while many communities don't appear to qualify based on census income data, they often do qualify after an income survey is done.

[Contact](#) Community Development and Housing Director Tracey Achenbach for more information.

#### [Housing Rehabilitation Funds Still Available](#)

The East Central Iowa Housing Trust Fund and the Housing Fund for Linn County still have a few openings for housing rehabilitation projects in Benton, Iowa, Jones, Linn and Washington counties for 2020. Income limits do apply but no community match is required.

[Contact](#) Community Development and Housing Director Tracey Achenbach for more information.

#### [Loans for Homebuyers Looking at Rehabilitation](#)

USDA now offers [single family home loan guarantees](#) for low and moderate income families that allow buyers to incorporate the cost of home rehabilitation into their home loan. In Iowa, Washington and Jones counties, the income limit is \$86,850 for families of 1-4 individuals and \$114,650 for households of 5-8 individuals. In Benton, Johnson and Linn counties, income limits are even higher.

Contact your local lender or USDA Housing Specialist, Glenda Schroeder at [glenda.schroeder@usda.gov](mailto:glenda.schroeder@usda.gov) or 515-284-4444 for more information.

# Funding Opportunities

## [Derelict Building Grants](#)

*Due: Feb. 20, 2020*

The Derelict Building Program is available for Iowa towns of 5,000 or fewer residents to address neglected commercial or public structures that have sat vacant for at least 6 months. The application deadline is February 20, 2020 for applicants who are seeking funding assistance with conducting asbestos inspections, asbestos abatement, structural engineering analysis, building deconstruction and building renovation expenses. [Click here for more information.](#)

## [Iowa DNR Land and Water Conservation Fund](#)

*Due: March 15, 2020*

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program is a federally funded grant program that provides funds of 50% for outdoor recreation area development and acquisition. All Iowa cities and counties are eligible to participate. This program provides an excellent opportunity to develop a wide range of outdoor recreational projects that are in high demand. [Click here for more information.](#)

## [Paint Iowa Beautiful Grant](#)

*Due: Feb. 20, 2020*

Keep Iowa Beautiful and Diamond Vogel Paint are announcing the 2020 Paint Iowa Beautiful program. The program provides free paint to a wide variety of public service projects throughout Iowa.

“The seventeen-year partnership with Keep Iowa Beautiful allows Diamond Vogel to assist and work with the many local volunteers and organizations that help build stronger Iowa communities.” said Doug Vogel, Vice-President of Marketing, of the Iowa based company. “This is a great opportunity for many Iowans to improve the attractiveness and beauty of their community.” [Click here for more information.](#)

## [More Funding Opportunities](#)

## [Our Favorite Read This Month](#)

*13 Ways to Kill Your Community*

The title of our favorite read this month certainly grabs your attention. Doug Griffiths’ [13 Ways to Kill Your Community](#) delivers some tough but powerful messages for leaders of rural communities. We were especially intrigued by his thoughts on the messages we tell our youth. (Spoiler Alert: Don’t be surprised when your young adults leave if they are continually barraged with negative comments about the direction or future of your community.) This easy read is full of stories from Griffith’s years as a rancher, politician and “community therapist”. At the end, we had a better sense of the roadblocks that might be preventing some communities from taking control of their destiny. You can learn more [here](#) .

## [Check Out Our New Website](#)

[ecicog.org](http://ecicog.org)

We are excited to launch our new website this month! We will be continuing to refine the content this winter and spring.