

September 2020

East Central Iowa Council of Governments

ecicog.org

Newsletter

[ECICOG Secures Almost \\$6 Million in Federal and State Grants Over Summer Months](#)

Despite COVID-19 and a derecho, ECICOG staff have been working hard to bring federal and state funds back to our region – a critical component of our organization’s mission. Recently awarded grants include:

- \$4.25 million in business assistance revolving loan funds from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) through the CARES Act, effectively doubling the size of the program
- \$400,000 planning grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) through the CARES Act. The funds will be used for planning and capacity building to help support economic recovery from COVID-19.
- \$704,982 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing rehabilitation grants through the Iowa Economic Development Administration (IEDA). Congratulations to the cities of Coralville, Washington and Central City! Grant funds will be used to rehabilitate six homes in each community.
- \$540,145 in CDBG home buyer assistance grants through IEDA. Congratulations to Vinton, Coralville and Washington County! Funds will be used to assist five low-income buyers in each community with a home purchase.

If you need help evaluating funding opportunities or writing a grant application, don’t hesitate to contact a member of our team! [Contact us!](#)

[0% Interest Business Loans Now Available](#)

ECICOG has funding available for businesses needing access to capital. Any new or expanding business in Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, or Washington County can apply for funds through the ECICOG Business Assistance RLF, which has adopted policies designed to help local businesses during the pandemic, including new lower interest rates of 0-2%. Businesses can apply for up to \$500,000 and do not need a credit rejection letter. Eligible expenses include equipment or machinery, real estate, or working capital. [Contact Robyn Jacobson for more information.](#)

[ECICOG Rural Recovery Challenge Coming Soon](#)

ECICOG will be seeking proposals from communities and economic development organizations to support rural economic recovery and resilience following COVID-19. Up to \$5,000 will be available to implement proposals from selected organizations. Interested parties will be asked to include an overview of their project, goals of the project, how the project positively impacts our rural communities, and how the project ties back to economic recovery and resiliency in their proposal. Additional information about the challenge and submission instructions will be provided in the next few weeks. The \$25,000 challenge is being funded through the CARES Act and EDA. [Contact Economic Development Specialist Adam Bentley for more information.](#)

[Grants for Derecho Response](#)

While most of the derecho-related response will be coordinated through Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), there are two additional grant opportunities communities can consider. First, the Iowa Economic Development Agency (IEDA) offers an Opportunities and Imminent Threat program that can be used to assist low to moderate income individuals. You can find examples of previously funded grants [here](#).

Due to the federal disaster declaration, impacted areas are also eligible for disaster grants from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). EDA grants generally target public infrastructure improvements that result in job creation. Examples include industry parks, business incubators or expanded waste or waste water treatment capacity. EDA will occasionally support staff-driven initiatives, such as studying how to expand a certain cluster of industries. [Contact Economic Development Specialist Adam Bentley for more information.](#)

[Regional Funding Open for Transportation Project](#)

ECICOG announces the opportunity for local governments to apply for regional Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funds. Eligible projects will occur in federal fiscal years 2022-2025. You can find more information on these programs [here](#). [Contact Transportation Director Mary Rump for more information.](#)

[ECICOG Welcomes New Staff](#)

ECICOG is excited to welcome two new staff members to our team! Adam Bentley will serve as a Senior Planner/Economic Development Specialist. Prior to joining ECICOG, he worked as Assistant Village Manager for Waunakee Wisconsin, a community adjacent to Madison and has worked in City Manager offices in Iowa and Kansas. Adam's experience in economic development is broad, working in technical capacities, process refinement, policy development, and planning. He has worked with a variety of local and regional stakeholders to facilitate community development, growth, and organizational improvement. Adam holds a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Northern Iowa and an MBA from Texas A&M-Commerce.

Paula Mitchell started as a Planner/Grant Specialist as. Paula has more than 21 years of experience in affordable housing, working in both the nonprofit and government sectors, and more than 15 years of experience in grant writing and administration. Past roles include 14 years with the City of Cedar Rapids, where she led long term housing recovery efforts following the 2008 flood. Paula currently serves as a member of the City of Cedar Rapids' Affordable Housing Commission. She is a certified Housing Development Finance Professional.

Both Adam and Paula are looking forward to sharing their skills with the communities in our region! [Meet our team here.](#)

[Funding Opportunities](#)

[CDBG - Water/Sewer Fund](#)

Due: October 1

Funds awarded through this annual competitive program assist cities and counties with projects such as sanitary sewer system improvements, water system improvements, water and wastewater treatment facility projects, storm sewer projects related to sanitary sewer system improvements and rural water connections. The program is funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The goal of this program is to provide economic opportunities for people, especially those of low- and moderate income. [Click here for more information.](#)

[Trail Funding Now Available](#)

Due: October 1

The conservation education program shall serve Iowa citizens by providing effective curricula, program materials and educator stipends to increase environmental awareness and understanding of stewardship, and enhance natural resources. Applications may be submitted by institutions of higher learning, government agencies, including local school districts, nonpublic schools, area education agencies, organizations, and individuals with an Iowa residence. [Click here for more information.](#)

[Traffic Safety Improvement Program](#)

Due: August 15

Iowa DOT has a number of funding programs available for trail projects. Funding programs with October 1 application due dates are the Federal Recreational Trail Program, the statewide Transportation Alternatives Program and Iowa's Clean Air Program. Descriptions of these programs and application details are available on Iowa DOT's website. [Click here for more information.](#)

[More Funding Opportunities](#)

[Iowa Trails Summit 2020](#)

The Iowa Trails Summit has moved online for 2020! Three webinars will bring together trail blazers from across Iowa once a month, September through November, to learn, connect and collaborate from afar. Join us for one webinar or register for whole series and be entered into a raffle for a 2021 Trail Summit Registration. Professional and volunteer trail advocates alike are welcome. [More about the summit.](#)

[Orton Family Foundation Hosting Webinar Series on its Heart and Soul Approach to Community Development](#)

The Orton Family Foundation is hosting a free Getting Started with Community Heart & Soul Virtual Workshop series, starting on September 29. This five-part series will prepare participants to get started with Community Heart & Soul, a unique community development model that brings people together to build stronger, healthier, and more economically vibrant small cities and towns based on what matters most to everyone. It results in a clear path for the future while restoring pride, attracting new leaders, honoring history and culture, and building trust. Guided by three principles—"involve everyone," "focus on what matters most," and "play the long game"—Community Heart & Soul towns in 19 states from Maine to Washington are demonstrating resilience during crisis. [Learn more or register for the webinar.](#)