

# July 2021

## East Central Iowa Council of Governments

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

### Newsletter

#### [Join Us for Webinar on New CDBG-CV Grant Opportunities: Thursday, July 22 at 3 p.m.](#)

New Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) opportunities for communities of less than 50,000 were recently announced by Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). IEDA has identified seven eligible activities:

- Public facilities/public spaces
- Public Wi-Fi/broadband access
- Micro-enterprise assistance
- Housing conversion
- Commercial façade improvements
- Food bank/food program assistance
- Daycare assistance

Grant applications will be reviewed and awarded as they are received. CDBG-CV grants must tie to pandemic recovery. They must either benefit low to moderate income individuals or prevent or eliminate slum and blight. ECICOG will be hosting a webinar on the CDBG-CV grant opportunities on July 22 at 2 p.m. Register for the webinar below. For more information on CDBG-CV grants, contact Housing & Community Development Director Tracey Achenbach at [tracey.achenbach@ecicog.org](mailto:tracey.achenbach@ecicog.org).

#### [Action Needed Now to Secure American Rescue Plan Funds](#)

Counties and cities have until August 4, 2021 to apply and secure funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) via the State of Iowa's submissions portal. Don't miss out on this opportunity! ARP funds can be used to backfill revenue losses due to COVID-19; cover staff expenses incurred as a result of COVID-19; support individuals or businesses who suffered losses caused by COVID-19; or for water, sewer or broadband infrastructure projects. The submission portal and short application are available on the [Iowa COVID-19 Local Fiscal Recovery Fund website](#). For additional resources, visit the Iowa League of Cities' [American Rescue Plan Resources page](#). Contact Economic Development Specialist Adam Bentley at [adam.bentley@ecicog.org](mailto:adam.bentley@ecicog.org) or Community Development Specialist Tom Gruis [tom.gruis@ecicog.org](mailto:tom.gruis@ecicog.org) for additional information.

#### [ECICOG Helps Alburnett Plan for Future Capital Needs](#)

ECICOG staff recently assisted the City of Alburnett in developing its first five-year capital improvement plan (CIP). Through the CIP development process, cities prioritize and plan for larger expenses such as road improvements, facility needs, or equipment replacement. In the case of Alburnett, ECICOG staff were able to identify areas where ARP funds or grants could possibly be used to offset costs. ECICOG also worked with the City Council and staff on common goals for next two years by identifying targets, timelines, and project champions. Contact Economic Development Specialist Adam Bentley at [adam.bentley@ecicog.org](mailto:adam.bentley@ecicog.org) for more information on capital improvement plans or council goal setting.

## [Affordable, Fully-Built Houses Delivered to Iowa City](#)

The first two Homes for Iowa houses were delivered to our region in early June! AM Management purchased the houses, which are located at 2433 and 2438 Indigo Drive in Iowa City. AM Management will have three more homes delivered this year. Homes for Iowa is currently taking orders for 2022. These “stick built” houses, constructed by inmates at the Newton Correctional Facility, are available at affordable prices for delivery throughout Iowa. ECICOG, as part of The Iowa Association of Councils of Governments, assists buyers with the application process. Buyers can be individuals, developers or non-profits. Additional information can be found at the [Homes for Iowa](#) website. Contact Housing & Community Development Director Tracey Achenbach at [tracey.achenbach@ecicog.org](mailto:tracey.achenbach@ecicog.org) for questions or application information.

## [Does Your Community Have a Plan for the Future?](#)

ECICOG is excited to be working with three cities in our region to develop their comprehensive plans. A comprehensive plan is an expression of the community’s vision for the future and a strategic map to reach that vision. Whether it is the development or preservation of open space or the redevelopment and revival of existing spaces, what a community will look like dozens of years from now depends on decisions made today. Because comprehensive plans represent the aspirations of a community, public input is critical. The City of Wyoming has taken the initial step of partnering with ECICOG, and the City of Bertram recently closed their resident survey, receiving responses from around a third of their adult population. The City of Lisbon’s engagement efforts are wrapping up soon, following two virtual townhall meetings, a public participation web page, a resident survey, outreach with the local school, and round table discussions. Contact Community Development Specialist Tom Gruis at [tom.gruis@ecicog.org](mailto:tom.gruis@ecicog.org) to learn how ECICOG can help your community plan for its future.

## [Planning Process Begins to Update Regional Economic Development Strategy](#)

Get Ready! ECICOG has launched “Envision East Central Iowa,” an update to our region’s six-county Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Conducted in partnership with the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, Iowa City Area Development Group, Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids Community Foundation and other urban and rural stakeholders, the project will focus on development strategies to advance our region following the disruption caused by COVID-19. Future IQ has been retained to guide the planning process. There will be many opportunities to participate; including individual surveys, county-based strategy sessions, and a region-wide think tank event. Watch for additional information over the next few months. To learn more about Envision East Central Iowa, contact ECICOG Executive Director Karen Kurt at [karen.kurt@ecicog.org](mailto:karen.kurt@ecicog.org)

## **Funding Opportunities**

### [ARP Arts Funding for Rural and Tribal Communities](#)

*Due July 22 & August 12, details below*

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has released two funding opportunities through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) to help arts and culture sectors recover from the pandemic. These are open to nonprofit arts and culture organizations, local governments, federally recognized tribal communities or tribes, and local arts agencies regardless of whether they have received NEA funding in the past. Links to guidelines, applicant resources, and other materials can be found [here](#). Applications for local arts agencies to sub-grant are due on **July 22, 2021**. Applications for arts and culture organizations, local governments, and tribes are due on **August 12, 2021**.

## People for Bikes Community Grant Program

*Due July 23*

The PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. Non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation, or community development; city or county agencies or departments and state or federal agencies working locally may apply for up to \$10,000. Contact Transportation Director Mary Rump at [mary.rump@ecicog.org](mailto:mary.rump@ecicog.org) for more information.

## Our Town Grant

*Due August 5*

Our Town is the National Endowment for the Arts' creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, the grant supports projects that integrate arts, culture, and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes. Visit the [Our Town website](#) to learn more. Contact Community Development Specialist Tom Gruis at [tom.gruis@ecicog.org](mailto:tom.gruis@ecicog.org) with questions or help applying.

## Traffic Safety Improvement Program (TSIP)

*Due August 15*

The TSIP's intent is to distribute funds for roadway safety improvements, traffic control devices, research, studies, or public information initiatives. Cities and counties can submit applications for up to \$500,000 per project. Learn more on [the Iowa Department of Transportation \(DOT\)'s website](#). Contact Transportation Director Mary Rump at [mary.rump@ecicog.org](mailto:mary.rump@ecicog.org) for more information about the TSIP.

## Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) - City Parks and Open Spaces

*Due August 15*

The Iowa DNR's REAP space funds 100% of parkland expansion and multi-purpose outdoor recreation equipment. Previously funded projects include prairie establishment, pollinator gardens, park cleanup, and land acquisition. Visit [the Iowa DNR website](#) to learn how to apply. Contact Environmental Services Director Jennifer Fencl at [jennifer.fencl@ecicog.org](mailto:jennifer.fencl@ecicog.org) with questions.