

October 2021 Updates

East Central Iowa Council of Governments

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[Deadline for ARPA Reporting Pushed Back to April 2022](#)

The US Department of Treasury just announced that the first reports for ARPA funds for non-entitlement cities will not be due until April 30, 2022. The previous deadline was October 31, 2021. Do you know how American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding can assist your city infrastructure projects or COVID response? Did you know that you have until December 31, 2024 to incur costs, but through 2026 to actually expend the funds? Are you familiar with the reporting requirements? ECICOG staff walked through these questions and more during a webinar on ARPA for small cities. [View the webinar recording here](#), and [download the presentation here!](#) ECICOG staff are happy to work with individual communities to help determine the best path forward with their ARPA funds. Contact Community Development Specialist Tom Gruis at tom.gruis@ecicog.org with questions.

[Envision East Central Iowa Focus Groups to Begin This Month](#)

Thank you to the 120 regional stakeholders who came together at the Envision East Central Iowa Community (EECI) Think Tank workshop on September 29 to discuss our region's future! Participants developed four plausible future scenarios, identified an expected future and a preferred future scenario, and began to discuss strategies to move the region toward the preferred future. It's not too late to join in the discussion! Several county and industry-specific focus groups will take place over the coming weeks. Visit talkto.ecicog.org/eeci for materials from the Community Think Tank and the schedule of upcoming events. As of this writing, EECI has conversations scheduled with the following counties and industries:

- Jones County
- Benton County
- Iowa County
- Washington County
- Linn County
- Engineering & Automation
- Insurance & Finance
- Food & Bioprocessing
- Education Technology & Services
- Bio-Technology & Medical Technology
- Linn County

Visit talkto.ecicog.org/eeci for dates, locations, and updates about the focus groups. Contact Adam Bentley at adam.bentley@ecicog.org with questions.

Iowa Arts & Culture Marketing Grants

Due October 11

Iowa Arts and Culture Marketing Grants support art and cultural organizations in their efforts to market their reopening, publicize the resumption of activities, or advertise steps taken to ensure a safe experience for visitors and audiences. These grants range from \$1,500 to \$20,000. Eligible organizations include:

- Performing arts organizations and venues
- Museums, zoos and aquariums
- Film and cultural festivals
- Historical sites and local historical societies
- Art and science centers
- Community arts organizations
- Cultural and entertainment districts
- Eligible units of government

Applications are due October 11. Visit [the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs website](#) for more information and application details.

New Empower Iowa Funds Available

Due December 1

On October 5, Governor Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) announced that \$500,000 is being allocated to following programs:

- Rural Innovation Grant Program: supports non-traditional ideas about current issues & challenges faced by rural communities
- Rural Housing Assessment Grant Program: supports the use of the “Profile of Iowa” tool, data interpretation, and implementation efforts
- Rural Child Care Market Study Grant Program: empowers communities to assess their current child care needs, market, and strategies
- Rural Return Program: supports creative programming to attract new residents to live or work in rural communities

These funds are available for rural communities with populations under 20,000. Guidelines can be found on [the IEDA’s Empower Rural Iowa page](#). Contact Community Development Specialist Tom Gruis at tom.gruis@ecicog.org with questions.