

NIACOG NEWS

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NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

December-January 2009-10

City/County Employment law Handbook Available

An updated version of *The Employment Handbook*, a personnel summary guide for Iowa cities and counties, is now available through NIACOG. This is the fourth edition of *The Employment Handbook*, which addresses issues relating to hiring, workplace administration and termination for public employers.

The Employment Handbook, is made available by the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) who contracted with Von Bokern Associates, who has prepared all previous editions, the most recent published in 2005. Since that time, many human resource issues have changed including age discrimination, ADA, FLSA, FMLA and numerous other issues of concern for public sector employers.

To order *The Employment Handbook*, send a check for \$125 made payable to NIACOG, 525 6th St. S.W., Mason City, IA 50401.

NIACOG Revolving loan fund

NIACOG is now accepting applications for the NIACOG Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The Revolving Loan Fund was established by a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). An additional \$60,000 was leveraged from the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) as a match to the EDA award creating a loan pool of \$460,000. Counties within NIACOG's service area (Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago, and Worth) are eligible for revolving loan funds.

The program was established to provide a public financing tool to enhance business assistance programs and services to businesses and communities in the NIACOG region. It is the goal of the RLF to provide job creation and retention as a result of the loan.

NIACOG RLF funding is intended to fill capital financing gaps and is to be only part of the overall business strategy for financing. Initially, a portion of the funds will be for the benefit of businesses adversely impacted by the Disasters of 2008.

Revolving Loan Funds cannot be used for working capital, to acquire an equity position in a private business, to subsidize interest payments on an existing loan, to provide for the borrowers' equity contributions under other Federal agencies'

loan programs, to enable borrowers to acquire an interest in a business unless evidence is furnished in the loan documentation that doing so will save a business from imminent closure or will facilitate expansions with an increase in jobs, to provide funds to a borrower to invest in interest-bearing financial assets, or to refinance existing debt.

Applications are available from the NIACOG office. All complete applications must be sponsored by their local economic development corporation, and there is a non-refundable 1.5% loan processing fee. Applications will be reviewed by the established Loan Review Committee (one representative from each of NIACOG's counties). For more information, please contact NIACOG at 641.423.0491.

I-JOBS Water Quality fund

Many communities in the Region will have an additional pot of funding to access in the Spring of 2010. The I-Jobs bill (SF 376) allocated \$55 million to a new Water Quality Financial Assistance Program administered by IFA.

Of the \$55 million, \$35 million will be allocated to communities with a population of under 10,000 and \$20 million will be allocated to communities with a population of over 10,000. "**Community**" is defined as a city, county, sanitary district, water district, state agency, or other governmental body or corporation empowered to provide sewage collection and treatment services, or any combination of two or more of the governmental bodies or corporations acting jointly, in connection with a project.

To further illustrate how the definition of community and population affect this program, a County may apply on behalf of an unincorporated, un-sewered community. However, only those that will be served by the system are included in the population count.

Eligible projects in the Small Community Fund (under 10,000) include any project eligible for State Revolving Fund (SRF) including drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, etc. All projects will be prioritized based on the environmental benefit of the project, those with the greatest water quality benefit and scores will be the same as those used for the SRF. Applicants must be combined with an SRF loan.

I-Jobs Water Quality Funds will also include and affordability criteria in addition to the environmental score. This affordability criterion will be similar to that used for SRF

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) including *Median Household Income, User rates as a % of MHI, Unemployment Rate and Total Debt that the system has.*

CDBG Supplemental Disaster Funding

You may recall in the last newsletter, we provided information on several projects in the Region that were seeking CDBG Supplemental Disaster Recovery funds. Well, for those of you that don't recall, the projects are as follows and the award to the cities:

City of Wesley, Storm Sewer Improvements – The City of Wesley applied for \$788,320 to construct a detention basin and storm sewer relief tile to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$688,320**

City of Manly, Storm Sewer Improvements – The City of Manly applied for \$1,058,300 to be matched with \$150,000 from the Worth County Board of Supervisors and \$150,000 in local funds to install a 48" storm sewer to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$1,058,100**

City of St. Ansgar, Storm Sewer Improvements – The City of St. Ansgar applied for \$375,000 for drainage improvements including ditch construction and cleaning, culver and storm sewer pipe installation to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$375,000**

City of Sheffield, Sanitary Sewer Improvements – The City of Sheffield applied for \$693,000 to replace approximately 850 feet of sewer main, line approximately 9,500 feet of sanitary sewer main and rehabilitate 30 manholes to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$693,000**

City of Britt, Sanitary Sewer Improvements – The City of Britt applied for \$442,750 to install 1,700 feet of sanitary sewer main tile to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$442,750**

City of Rockford, Storm Sewer Improvements – The City of Rockford applied for \$385,000 to replace 1,080 feet of deteriorated storm sewer and install 1,150 feet of new storm sewer to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$385,000**

City of Bancroft, Sanitary Sewer Improvements – The City of Bancroft applied for \$566,000 to replace an undersized lift station, install 3,020 of undersized force main and replace the undersized lagoon inlet to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$566,000**

City of Lake Mills, Storm Sewer Improvements – The City of Lake Mills applied for \$956,000, to be matched with \$150,000 in local funds to install 7,600 feet of 48" HDPE storm sewer pipe to eliminate flooding and sewage backup as experienced during the 2008 flooding event. **AWARDED \$956,000**

Business Disaster Recovery Programs

Four new business disaster programs have been announced recently and are now accepting applications. The new programs are:

1. Expanded Business Rental Assistance Program
2. Loan Interest Supplement Program
3. Commercial Rental Revenue Gap Program
4. Residential Landlord Business Support Program

The initial Business Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) provides financial assistance to a business located in or planning to locate in a business rental space that was physically damaged by the 2008 natural disasters in the form of rental assistance. The expanded program (EBRAP) also provides assistance in the form of reimbursement for up to 50% of replacement costs of machinery, office equipment, furniture, supplies, and inventory physically damaged by the 2008 disasters, not to exceed \$50,000 per business.

The Loan Interest Supplement Program provides assistance to businesses who have obtained physical disaster loans or economic injury disaster loans from an eligible lender. This assistance is in the form of interest supplements, for up to 3 years, not to exceed \$50,000 per business.

The Commercial Rental Revenue Gap Program is designed to assist commercial building owners with cash flow to offset loss of revenue from rental space damaged in the disasters of 2008. This assistance is available for up to 12 months of lost rental revenue, up to \$25,000 per unit.

The Residential Landlord Business Support Program is designed to compensate residential rental landlords for lost rental revenue due to the 2008 disasters. Landlords providing affordable housing may be able to receive up to \$15,000 per tax identification number.

For more information and further eligibility guidelines, please contact the NIACOG office.

Hazard Mitigation Planning Grant Deadline Extended

HSEMD is extending the deadline for receiving HMGP-DR1763 Notices of Interest (NOI) and Project Applications by an additional six months. NOIs are now due on March 15, 2010 and applications are due May 1, 2010. Examples of projects include:

- Construction of tornado safe rooms (e.g., multi-functional community or school safe room);
 - Acquisition, structural relocation or elevation of buildings located in a special flood hazard area;
 - Structural and non-structural retrofitting of existing public buildings, facilities, or utilities to protect against wind, ice, or flood hazards;
 - Minor structural hazard control or protection projects such as storm water management (e.g., culverts, floodgates, retention basins);
 - Localized flood control projects, such as floodwall systems, that are designed specifically to protect critical facilities and do not constitute a section of a larger flood control system.
- There is not a funding limit on individual project applications. The estimated cost share for awarded HMGP project grants is Federal (FEMA), 75% maximum; Non Federal, 25%; State, 10% maximum; Local, 15%.

Transportation Happenings

The Regional Planning Affiliation 2, which administers federal Surface Transportation Funds including funds for roads, bridges, transit, planning and enhancements is pleased that all funds allocated to the Region through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) have been allocated to projects. You might better recognize these as the federal "stimulus" dollars. All of the projects have been programmed, bid and most have been constructed and completed. The projects are as follows:

County	Project Description	Total Cost Based On Letting Award	RPA/MPO Award with adjustments
Cerro Gordo	4 miles ACC Overlay on B30 from Floyd County Line to Mason City	\$1,037,107.31	\$1,035,684.03
Floyd	7.6 ACC Overlay on B60 from Cerro Gordo County Line to Marble Rock	\$1,164,011.97	\$1,164,011.97
Franklin	1 mile ACC Overlay on S56 from Hansell to IA 3	\$229,453.89	\$229,453.89
Hancock	3.5 miles ACC Overlay on B20 from R44 to US 69	\$388,597.96	\$388,597.96
Kossuth	11 miles ACC Overlay on R14 220th St to B14	\$1,428,683.31	\$1,428,683.31
Mitchell	ACC Overlay on A23	\$468,655.84	\$468,655.84
Winnebago	3.7 miles ACC Overlay on R60 from US 69 to Scarville	\$538,915.17	\$538,915.17
Worth	Bridge Rehab on 410th St. Over Shell Rock River	\$48,417.60	\$48,417.60
Worth	Bridge Rehab on 495th St. Over Shell Rock River	\$32,695.60	\$32,695.60
Region 2 Transit	3 - 176" Wheelbase Diesel Light Duty Buses	\$190,200.00	\$190,200.00
Total Funds Let		\$5,526,738.65	
ARRA Target			\$5,525,315.37

As you can see, the members of the Technical Committee and Policy Board were very diligent in spending the allotted funds. If these funds had not been spent, they would have reverted back to the Iowa Department of Transportation. You should also notice that the estimated total project costs were very accurate to what was available for total programming in the Region. This is a testament to the quality of engineers in the NIACOG Region.

Revamped WIRB Program Applications Due January 15, 2010

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) has announced funding for the next round of Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) funds. These grants, requiring minimal match, are used for various types of projects to prevent flooding, soil loss, and water degradation. The program has \$1.6M available for various applicants, including cities, public water and sewer districts, soil and water conservation districts, certain non-profits, county conservation boards and new this round counties. The funds are flexible with creativity rewarded.

Projects eligible for funding include, but are not limited to: those addressing agricultural runoff and drainage, flood prevention, stream bank erosion, municipal discharge, storm water runoff, communities without sewer systems, industrial discharge and livestock runoff. Enhancing this program this round is that funds can be used for flood prevention projects. While, in the past, projects that prevent flooding but failed to demonstrate a direct or documentable soil and water conservation benefit would be denied; now the program will fund creative flood prevention projects, which should open new opportunities in the NIACOG region. Each project can request up to \$500,000 in funding over five years; the previous limit was 3 years.

All applications are due on Friday, January 15, 2010 and will be reviewed by the Watershed Improvement Review Board.

Application materials can be downloaded from IDALS website at <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/IWIRB.asp>. To receive more information or ask questions, contact Jerry Neppel at 515-281-3599 or contact the NIACOG office.



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Happy Holidays
The NIACOG Staff



NIACOG CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Dec. 14 Executive Board Meeting @ NIACOG 12:00 pm
- Dec. 25 Merry Christmas NIACOG Offices Closed
- Jan. 1 Happy New Year NIACOG Offices Closed
- Jan. 11 NIACOG Board Meeting @ Bennigans in Clear Lake 6:00 pm Dinner 7:00 pm Meeting
- Jan. 13 HAZMAT Meeting @ NIACOG 1:30 pm
- Jan. 15 City Clerks Meeting 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

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