

## REDI AWARDED \$1 MILLION FOR BUSINESS LOAN FUND

In July, REDI Inc. was awarded \$1 million in federal CARES Act funds to capitalize a new revolving loan fund to assist businesses in the region! These funds will be used to make low interest loans available to businesses affected by COVID to retain or create new jobs through working capital, machinery and equipment, inventory, or building acquisition. Additional information is available [HERE](#) or by contacting Chris Bowers at 641-814-8403 or [chris.bowers@area15rpc.com](mailto:chris.bowers@area15rpc.com).

## HUD OFFICIALS VISIT REGION 15

In September, the RPC hosted officials from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a tour of projects in Fairfield and Ottumwa. RPC Executive Director Chris Bowers and Senior Planner Bradley Grefe met with HUD Regional Director Jason Mohr and Iowa HUD Director Steve Eggleston, and IEDA representative Nichole Hansen. In Fairfield, the group joined with Mayor Connie Boyer and City Administrator Aaron Kookier and toured the town square to see the completed work of the CDBG Downtown Revitalization Project. The group also traveled to Ottumwa to meet with Main Street Director Fred Zesiger to view multiple HUD funded projects including upper-story rehabilitation, streetscape and stormwater, green roofs, Iowa's first green parking lot, and the Canteen alley. HUD and IEDA thanked Area 15 RPC for delivering the federal programs to the communities and implementing these successful projects. Area 15 RPC is recognized by HUD and IEDA as an important partner for delivering the Federal CDBG program to communities and implementing projects. At the end of the visit Mohr stated, "these projects are the highlight of our Midwest tour!"



Touring Fairfield's downtown improvements

## CARES FUNDING TO PROMOTE DIGITAL MARKETING

In May, Area 15 RPC was invited to apply for funding through the CARES Act by the U.S. Department of Commerce to "prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus...including for necessary expenses for responding to economic injury as a result of coronavirus". The funds will allow Area 15 to provide technical assistance and capacity building for cities and counties, local businesses, and other local stakeholders impacted by the coronavirus.

Through discussions with our 6-county economic developers, and research of business needs in our region, the decision was made to assist businesses with digital marketing needs. This work may include social media pages, photography, websites, online sales platforms, digital menus, etc.—all designed to reach customers through new platforms to increase customer base as well as serve customers in ways that reduce exposure during the pandemic.

Area 15 is in the process of hiring digital media vendors to directly assist businesses with their needs. RPC staff will work with the economic development offices in each county to market the program and pair businesses with an expert to help them develop and reach their marketing goals. Funding for this program will be available through June, 2022. For more information, please contact Holly Berg at [holly.berg@area15rpc.com](mailto:holly.berg@area15rpc.com) or 641-684-8402.

## OTTUMWA RECIVES FUNDING FOR 5-2-1-0 HEALTHY CHOICES INITIATIVES



The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced that Ottumwa will be one of five new communities to receive funding for the 5-2-1-0 – Healthy Choices Count! Program. Keosauqua will also continue into their third year of funding through the program.

The 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count! initiative, which began in Iowa in 2017, brings evidence-based strategies for healthy living into communities, schools, early care and out-of-school programs, health care practices and workplaces. These efforts are designed to reach children and adults where they live, learn, work and play. More information about the program can be found at [www.iowahealthieststate.com](http://www.iowahealthieststate.com).



## DERELICT COMMERCIAL/PUBLIC BUILDING DEMOLITION FUNDING

Funding is available for Cities and Counties with populations of 5,000 or less to address derelict commercial or public buildings within their jurisdictions. The purpose of the program is to reuse or recycle building materials and prevent them from ending up in the landfill. To be eligible: the buildings must be commercial or public buildings that are owned by the city or county, or that the government is in the process of taking ownership of, the building must not reside on the National Register of Historic Places and be vacant for six months or longer.

Cities and counties may use the funding to improve the attractiveness of their jurisdictions by renovating or deconstructing derelict buildings that meet the program's criteria. Funding may also be available for assistance with the following activities related to the property: asbestos inspection, asbestos removal, structural engineering analysis, and phase I and II environmental assessments. To have a successful application: cities and counties should have a plan for reusing the site or building and identified reuse opportunities of the building materials of the derelict structure.

The next application deadline will likely be late February 2021 and application materials can be found on the DNR website at: <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Land-Quality/Waste-Planning-Recycling/Derelict-Building-Program>

The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission has assisted several communities prepare successful applications. If your city or county is interested in the DNR Derelict Building Program and has questions or is interested in assistance preparing an application, please contact Chris Kukla at [chris.kukla@area15rpc.com](mailto:chris.kukla@area15rpc.com) or 641-684-8411.

## WAPELLO COUNTY CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa (PCA Iowa), in partnership with the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) recently awarded the Wapello County Children's Alliance \$95,000 for a Resilient Communities Project. The Project will focus on raising awareness of the trauma of child abuse and neglect and showcase how we, as a community, can work together to build strong families and prevent child maltreatment.



As part of the project, Area 15 RPC will assist the Wapello County Children's Alliance to conduct a needs assessment and strategic planning initiative to lead capacity-building efforts for the organization. "I am ecstatic to see this project begin in Wapello County. This is an opportunity for members of our community (from business owners to kids) to take accountability for the community we have created and what we want it to be. It is an opportunity to grow, learn and make changes so we can work to become a truly healthy community," explained Cara Galloway, Wapello County Children's Alliance Executive Council Member.

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa's mission is to empower community prevention efforts to provide safe and happy childhoods through collaboration with diverse partners, leading to a better future for Iowa. Prevent Child Abuse Iowa is based in Des Moines and has partnerships in nearly every county in Iowa. For more information, call 515-244-2200, or visit [www.pcaiowa.org](http://www.pcaiowa.org).

## ROAD AND PEDESTRIAN FUNDING AVAILABLE

Regional Planning Affiliation 15 is now accepting applications for Road and Bicycle/Pedestrian improvement projects within the five county RPA region. This region includes Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren and Wapello counties. Eligible applicants include city and county governments within the region. Applications are due April 1st, 2021.

Road funding may be used for reconstruction on any road with a federal functional classification of a minor collector or higher. This information is available online at: <https://iowadot.gov/maps/digital-maps/city-and-county-maps>. Up to 100% funding is available for eligible activities on eligible routes. Applications are available online at: <https://www.area15rpc.com/surface-transportation-program>.

Bicycle and Pedestrian funding may be used for the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements, safe routes to school projects, scenic highway turnouts and overlooks and historic preservation of transportation related structures. Projects must have a minimum cost of at least \$20,000 to be eligible and there is a minimum 20% match requirement. Applications are available online at: <https://www.area15rpc.com/transportation-alternatives-program-1>.

Projects should be generally ready to proceed prior to application: a concept statement should be developed, property or easements acquired, and other funding sources identified.

Projects awarded funding by the RPA, it will be able to start in October or November of the federal fiscal year programmed if all plans have been approved by the Iowa Department of Transportation. Projects should not start before receiving approval from the Iowa DOT, any activities undertaken before receiving this will not be eligible for reimbursement. Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis.

Potential applicants for either road or bicycle/pedestrian funding are strongly encouraged to contact the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission prior to applying to discuss their project and the amount of funding available. If you have questions, please contact Chris Kukla at [chris.kukla@area15rpc.com](mailto:chris.kukla@area15rpc.com) or 641-684-8411.

## NEW HOMES FOR \$75,000—DELIVERY INCLUDED!

Homes for Iowa, Inc. (HFI) is a nonprofit organization aiming to increase the supply of affordable housing in rural areas. In partnership with Iowa Prison Industries, houses are being constructed at a new Housing Production Center at the Newton Correctional Facility which allows inmates to learn trade skills such as plumbing, electrical work, and carpentry. Iowa Councils of Government manage program in coordination with HFI and other community partners. Area 15 RPC is the local contact for HFI inquiries and applications.

The homes are purchased directly from HFI and delivered to the designated site for \$75,000. Households earning up to 100 percent of the state-wide median income are eligible buyers of the finished home. Developer/Homeowner are responsible for lot acquisition, site preparation, foundation, utility hook-ups, concrete work and any additions such as the garage pictured above.



HFI's first home - located in Jefferson (Greene Co.). 1,200 ft<sup>2</sup>, 3 Bedroom, 2 Bath with 2-car garage added by owner.  
photo credit: Region 12 COG

Homes for Iowa is prepared to build 875 homes in the next 10 years. If you are interested in learning more about the Homes for Iowa initiative, please contact Matt Naumann at [matt.naumann@area15rpc.com](mailto:matt.naumann@area15rpc.com).

## CENSUS 2020 IMPORTANT DATES

July-September 2020	Census takers will work with administrators at colleges, senior centers, prisons, and other facilities that house large groups of people to make sure everyone is counted.
October 5, 2020	All area census offices will complete their work, the 2020 Census self-response and field data collection operations will end.
December 2020	Census Bureau will deliver apportionment counts to the President and Congress as required by law; preliminary census counts will be released.
March 2021	By this date, the Census Bureau will send redistricting counts to the states. This information is used to redraw legislative districts based on population changes.
Spring 2021	Other new census data will be released.

## CDBG DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECTS

### Oskaloosa Phase 2 Project Complete

Construction for the second phase of façade improvements in Oskaloosa is complete! This project renovated 11 facades on 6 buildings on the west side of Oskaloosa's courthouse square. The project received \$500,000 from the Iowa Economic Development Authority's (IEDA) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Downtown Revitalization Fund (DTR). Matching funds were provided by the City as well as each participating property owner. Final billing and project close-out expected by end of November.

### 2020 DTR Awards: Oskaloosa Phase 3 and Sigourney

Despite the uncertainty that COVID has brought to our world, two communities in the Area 15 Region pushed forward with applications to the CDBG-DTR program this year and both were funded! Continuing the momentum built over the last 4 years, Oskaloosa is moving forward with an unprecedented third phase of CDBG façade improvements. This time, the focus has shifted to the south side of the square. As with Phase 2, this phase will rehabilitate 11 facades on 6 buildings.

Sigourney has been watching improvements in Bloomfield, Fairfield, Oskaloosa, and Ottumwa and contacted RPC about the DTR program in late 2018. RPC staff completed a preliminary blight assessment for the City to help identify potentially eligible properties in early 2019. City staff organized a meeting with potentially eligible property owners to gauge interest in the program. With plenty of interest—particularly on the south side of the square—the City Council opted to move forward with a grant application.

In mid-2019, RPC staff helped procure for architectural design services and began working to develop the application, including a thorough slum & blight assessment of the selected target area for improvements. The City Clerk acted as a liaison between property owners and the architect. Once designs and cost estimates for the application were finalized, the RPC prepared owner participation agreements to for the City and completed the application in July to rehabilitate 12 façades on 7 buildings.

Both projects were awarded \$500,000 in CDBG funds in September. They are expected to be clear for bids in early 2021 with construction expected to be completed mid-2022. The typical process to take a façade project from concept to completion has been taking about 4 years, so if your community has downtown rehabilitation needs, contact us now to get started!



2018

Oskaloosa façade improvement phase 2 results

2020



2020

Sigourney façade improvement target area

photo credits: Brad Grefe

## WANTED: HOMEOWNERS IN DAVIS, KEOKUK, VAN BUREN COUNTIES\* HOME REPAIR FUNDING AVAILABLE

The AHEAD Regional Housing Trust Fund has submitted its 11th annual application to the State Housing Trust Fund. The application requests \$266,935 from SHTF to be combined with \$66,734 of local funds to continue providing housing assistance to qualified households in our six county area. All six counties provide local cash match, including Davis (\$1,751), Jefferson (\$3,369), Keokuk (\$2,102), Mahaska (\$4,476), Van Buren (\$1,514), and Wapello (\$7,125). The RHTF provided remaining matching contribution of \$46,397 from fees, repayments and interest earned on RHTF programs and services. The total project is \$333,669. Awards to be announced in December 2020. If funded, the program will be available to the region for owner and rental housing construction and improvements in early 2021. Common uses of the program include repairs to roofs, plumbing, electric, heating, and air conditioning. This program benefits families with incomes that meet Iowa's low to moderate income limits set by HUD. Applications are available online at [www.area15rpc.com/rhtf](http://www.area15rpc.com/rhtf). The AHEAD RHTF has been in operation since 2011 and helped rehabilitate over 215 homes, build 11 new homes and prevent over 700 households from homelessness. Contact Matt Naumann for more information at 641-684-6551 or [matt.naumann@area15rpc.com](mailto:matt.naumann@area15rpc.com).

\*INCLUDES JEFFERSON, MAHASKA AND WAPELLO COUNTIES

## UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Please note on DEADLINES to allow several weeks/months for planning to submit a quality/fundable application			
Program	Purpose	Deadline	Eligible Applicants
Fish Habitat Program and Wildlife Habitat	IDNR Programs and projects to improve fishing and wildlife habitat.	Last working day in November each year	County conservation boards
USDA Solid Waste Management	Assist various solid waste projects including studies and implementation.	December 31, 2020	Local governments
Small Town Sign Replacement Program	Up to \$5,000 of signs and posts per community on a first-come, first-served basis.	On-going	Cities
FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants	Purchase fire equipment, personal protection equipment, training, station modifications, wellness programs, and vehicles.	To be announced	Fire departments and non-affiliated fire and
IEDA CDBG Water and Sewer Program	Water and wastewater improvements: plants, mains, lagoons, pumps, towers, etc.	January 1, 2021	Local governments
IEDA CDBG Sustainable Community Demo	Innovative and creative projects to support community sustainability. Projects may include green energy and streetscape.	Open	Local governments
IEDA Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)	Tourism, recreation, & entertainment projects, such as museums, libraries, swimming pools, trails, large recreational areas, amphitheaters, etc.	January 15, 2021	Local Governments, Nonprofits
Derelict Building Grant IDNR	To address neglected commercial or public structures that have been vacant for at least six months.	February, 2021	Cities under 5,000 population
Paint Iowa Beautiful	Free paint to public service projects throughout Iowa.	February, 2021	Government or local organizations
Surface Transportation	Road and Bicycle/Pedestrian improvement projects within the five county RPA region	April 1, 2021	Local, County Governments
Solid Waste Alternatives IDNR	Programs to encourage landfill alternatives – recycling, diversion, new technologies, new manufacturing processes, etc	July 1, 2021	Local governments and solid waste agencies
MidWest One Foundation	Capital and building campaigns benefitting the greater good. Programming, Operation Expenses and Event Sponsorships	December 1, 2020	Nonprofits, Civic Orgs, Schools
Davis County Foundation	Arts & culture, community betterment, education, recreation, youth development, health/human services	November 1, 2020	Tax exempt organizations, local governments
Jefferson County Foundation	Educational, cultural and charitable purposes benefiting Jefferson County	June 1, 2021	Non-profit organizations
Keokuk County Foundation	Arts and culture, health, human services, community betterment, historic preservation, etc.	Last working day in October each year	Tax exempt organizations, local governments
Mahaska County Foundation	Arts & culture, community betterment, education, recreation, youth development, health/human services	February 2021	Tax exempt organizations, local governments
Van Buren County Foundation	Arts and culture, health, human services, community betterment, historic preservation, etc.	March 2021	Tax exempt organizations, local governments
Wapello County Foundation	Medical care and treatment, scientific research, rec facilities, education, public projects/quality of life	August 2021	Tax exempt organizations, local governments

### CONTACT US

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